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## ANCIENT EGYPTIAN INFLUENCE IN THE SUDAN

by

J. VERCOUTTER

One of the problems which faces the Historian when dealing with the earliest history of the Sudan is that of Historical Criticism. There are dual sources for this period: Egyptian texts and paintings on the one side; archaeological remains found in the Sudan on the other. But the former, which are not yet all gathered together, are biased, and the latter are little known or incomplete. As long as the archaeology of this country is not systematically explored, our knowledge of its early history will be more or less influenced by the personal views of Ancient Egyptians about the Sudan, views which are unfavourably coloured by the fact that the first relations between the Lower and the Upper parts of the Nile valley were warlike. Notwithstanding these difficulties, which we must keep in mind, if only to remind us that our reconstruction of the History of the Sudan is still conjectural, it is possible to give a general idea of the interrelations which from the dawn of history linked Egypt with its southern neighbours.

Since Herodotus it has been a commonplace among historians to begin with a short introduction on the physical geography of the country, even if this geography had but little to do with what they had to say. Not to break so general and commendable a practice, we will see how and why physical geography played a part in the early influence of Egypt in the Sudan, but before doing so I should like to stress the fact that for the History of the interrelations between Egypt and the Sudan we must take into consideration not only the geography, but also the ethnology of the country. Unfortunately, if the Nile Valley is still— even taking into consideration the minor changes in flora and fauna—basically the same as it was five thousand years ago, the same cannot be said of the peoples who inhabited the country. The Nile Valley has always been a temptation to the nomads dwelling in the adjacent deserts—if only to get water for their cattle during the droughts in the desert, and as early as 1900 B.C. the Ancient Egyptian texts stressing the then unhappy condition of Egypt remarked :

*“lo, the nomads now come with their cattle to drink the Nile waters”.*

But the Sudanese part of the Nile Valley is at a disadvantage compared to Egypt—indeed the wider the valley, the denser the population. During periods of political stability the Egyptian population has always been sufficient in numbers to keep the nomad invaders away from the rich agricultural soil of their country. This was all the easier since the Eastern Desert, the only one which was really inhabited, is narrower in Egypt than further south. On the other hand, the very narrow strip of cultivated land in Nubia could not feed so large a population as in Egypt, with the result that the sedentary peoples, being few in number, have always been an easy prey for the far more numerous tribes living in the extensive eastern and southern deserts. This explains why we can assume from earliest times in the Northern Sudan, successive waves of nomadic invaders—first maybe the B-Group peoples, then the C-Group peoples, the X-Group, the Nobatae of Latin sources. With one exception, however: the Dongola reach of the Valley, where the richer banks seem to have always fed a greater number of men who more easily resisted invasion, and formed, therefore, for many centuries, the real heart of the Sudan.

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To illustrate the difficulties the Egyptians faced when they started their advance southwards, we will join one of the troops which King Djer (about 3250 B.C.) sent to Ta-Seti—“The Land of the Bow”—as the Northern Sudan was then known to

the Egyptians. The gathering of the army was done not at Aswan, as one would imagine, but further north at Gebel Silsile near Kom-Ombo, about 50 km. north of Aswan, which was then called "The Head of the South". The First Cataract Area was entirely in the hands of Sudanese tribes, with the result that from the very start the Egyptian crews of the small ships which formed the expedition had to fight their way through the rapids of the Cataract where bowmen could shoot safely at them from the rocks towering over the rapids, when the full force of the crew had to be put ashore to tow the ships southward. Anyone who has seen the rapids beneath the Aswan Dam will realize the difficulty of such an enterprise, and will wonder why the Egyptians of the First Dynasty started it at all. The answer is first the insecurity of the Southern Province. Egypt unified at last, some fifty years before under King Menes, had begun to expand its agriculture considerably, devising the system of the "hods", or irrigation basins and canals, to make the best possible use of the water provided by the annual Flood. The benefit of this invention was an increase in the cultivated land. Warlike tribes coming from the South were an everyday danger for the peasants of the Southern Province, and furthermore they stopped the advance of agriculture. Hence the King's desire to stop the aggressors by making his own incursion into the Nubian country. Secondly, from this early period we can suspect the desire of the Egyptians to get from the Sudan valuable raw materials such as ebony and ivory, which were found in the graves in Egypt from Predynastic times onwards.

A. J. Arkell has shown that King Djer went as far south as the Second Cataract near Wadi Halfa, entering the present Sudan and conquering the whole of what was to be known later as Lower Nubia, that is the part of the country between the First and Second Cataracts. I will take this opportunity to remind you that historically, geographically, and ethnologically, the Border between Egypt and the Sudan is not, as now, at the 22nd parallel, but much farther north at the *First Cataract*.

The chances are that at this time (around 3250 B.C.) the Egyptian Army did not conquer the country permanently. From time to time they sent armed forces which plundered the country and, by keeping the tribes on the alert, prevented them from coming and raiding Egypt. This is shown by the very place chosen by King Djer's general to engrave his Victory Inscription: an isolated hill not too far from the River, but easy to defend and with a clear view of the whole country, so that any advancing force could be easily detected and there was no longer any danger of surprise attack.

But if the Egyptian penetration to the Second Cataract during the Old Kingdom was not a permanent one, it led none the less to important results: the peoples of the country became accustomed to the Egyptian Civilization which was now flourishing in the lower valley, and imported objects and copper. This explains how we came to find, only three years ago, a magnificent alabaster vase of the First Dynasty, in a Sudanese settlement at Faras near Wadi Halfa. The people living in this part of the Sudan at this time are known as the A-Group. They belonged to the Hamitic race and were, therefore, closely related to the predynastic Egyptians, from whom it is impossible to distinguish them physically. Unfortunately, we have not enough archaeological data on the A-Group people in the Sudan to form a clear idea of their civilization. We do not even know how far south they extended. The discovery by A. J. Arkell, at Omdurman, of red polished pottery clearly related to the Egyptian predynastic pottery seems to point to the fact that the A-Group tribes might have occupied the whole Northern Sudan, at least as far south as Khartoum. But until this Omdurman Bridge culture has yielded human remains, we will not know if the people who created it belonged to the Hamitic race, or if they came from another stock but had trade relations with the true A-Group people, and had more or less adopted their culture.

The Archaeological Survey of Nubia conducted in Egyptian territory from 1900 onwards, has shown that the A-Group culture disappeared progressively from the beginning of the Egyptian Old Kingdom (2770–2420). This may be the result of Egyptian raids, which were pursued during this period as we know from an Egyptian Inscription, which records that during the reign of King Snefru (about 2700 B.C.) 7,000 prisoners and 200,000 head of cattle were captured in Sudanese Nubia. Taking the text at its face value, if we compare the number of prisoners with the number of cattle, we can infer that the Nubian tribes were then chiefly cattle breeders, and hence largely nomads. So there might be other explanations for the impoverished state of Lower Nubia at this time recorded by the Archaeological Survey; the explanation being either that the A-Group tribes moved southwards out of the reach of the Egyptian army, or were themselves replaced or overwhelmed by newcomers from the South, as we could deduce from the fact that the skulls found in the B-Group graves show definite traces of negroid blood.

As is often the case with the Egyptian Old Kingdom, so rich in monuments, we have but little data on the historical events of the Fourth Dynasty, the Dynasty of the famous Cheops, Chephren, and Mykerinus. It is probable that the policy of military raids on the Southern territories was continued by them, since they quarried Diorite in the Western Desert no more than 70 km. from the Nile Valley in its Sudanese reach, but we have no real evidence, and we have to wait till the end of the Old Kingdom—after the Fifth Dynasty—to get more historical information on the Sudan.

By the end of the Fifth Dynasty, the Egyptians, it seems, had firmly settled their boundary at Aswan, since an inscription there records that in the fifth year of his reign King Merenre, of the Sixth Dynasty, came in person, and the princes of Medja, Irtet, and Wawat, that is the whole of Lower Nubia, paid homage to him; and from a small text found nearby it seems that Unis, the last king of the Fifth Dynasty, did the same—so that while Nubia south of Aswan was still free, it had nevertheless strong links with the Egyptian monarchy.

From this time Aswan and its local princes will play an important part in the history of Egyptian relations with the South, and Elephantine is the stronghold from which all southward expeditions will start. To make these expeditions easier, Merenre, fourth king of the Sixth Dynasty (about 2300 B.C.) the last dynasty of the so-called Old Kingdom, asked Weny, the Governor of the South, to dig canals through the First Cataract. Weny boasts of having done the work in one year.

Whether or not it was the result of the work of Weny, it is a fact that expeditions to the South were far more frequent during the Sixth Dynasty than ever before. Most of these expeditions were peaceful: their obvious aim was to explore the southern countries, and to try and get the valued products of the south: incense, ebony, ivory, leopard skins, and so on. How far south these expeditions went is still open to doubt. Reisner, the American Egyptologist, was of the opinion that they might have reached Sennar on the Blue Nile; Arkell suggests that they went at least as far as Darfur. But the fact is that the only geographical names mentioned in the Egyptian texts refer to small countries between the First and Second Cataracts: Wawat, Irtet, Sethu, and Iam—and one wonders why, if the Egyptians went so far south as the Blue Nile, they did not give any names to their discoveries. We know that the Ancient Egyptians could be boastful, and from time to time they say in their inscriptions: "*This is the real truth, there is no lie in it*", which, instead of reassuring us, leaves us somewhat doubtful about the veracity of all the texts.

However, we must keep an open mind and not be hypercritical, as a few facts seem to show that they really went quite far south. For one thing it is obvious from the texts that they explored the desert roads, since they used asses for the transport

of water, and they would not have had to do so if they had limited themselves to the countries between the first and second Cataracts, where transport by river is much easier than by land, as is shown even today, when all the traffic between Wadi Halfa and Shellal is still by steamer. Furthermore, when excavating Kerma, a little south of the Third Cataract, Reisner found, under the Middle Kingdom level, fragments of vases of the Sixth Dynasty. Maybe this discovery is not as conclusive as it seems, but we have to bear it in mind, and we can presume that by the end of the Old Kingdom the Egyptians had probably reached the Third Cataract area, where they were in a position to get, by barter, most of the materials they were looking for.

We have now surveyed more than one thousand years, and I will summarize the position so far reached by Egypt in the Sudan. While the border between Egypt and the Southern countries is now firmly established at the First Cataract, it does not seem that between 3250 and 2200 B.C. the Egyptians ever tried to establish themselves permanently in the country. They contented themselves by trading with the tribes, sending them faience and alabaster objects, ointment, honey, woven cloth, and maybe copper, and getting in exchange, as I have mentioned above, resins, woods, ivory, oils, certain special kinds of grain, incense, myrrh, and leopard skins used as ceremonial dress for religious purposes. Furthermore from time to time armed expeditions brought back slaves and cattle. But this exchange was not the only benefit Egypt drew from the Sudan at this period. It seems that as early as 2400 B.C. Sudanese were employed in the Egyptian army as mercenaries, and it is certain that Egyptians of the Old Kingdom married Sudanese women, even in the royal family, as can be seen from pictures in the tombs. So that the people from the two countries knew each other well. If we except the few military expeditions sent by Pharaoh from time to time, to release the pressure on the walls of Elephantine, this period, on the whole, was one of peaceful penetration when the Egyptians tried to make the best of the trading road between Egypt and Central Africa which passed through the Northern Sudan. Of course, this part of the History of the Sudan is chiefly known from Egyptian sources, so that it is difficult to appreciate what the Sudanese really got in return from Egypt. Future archaeological research in the Sudan should give the answer to this question.

The period of some two centuries (from 2240 to about 2150 B.C.) between the end of the Old Kingdom and the rise of the Middle Kingdom, is known to Egyptologists as the First Intermediate Period. It is a period of social troubles, disorder and anarchy in Egypt, so that we have but few records of what was going on in the country, which had divided itself into small feudal principedoms. It seems that trading with the south had stopped, if we take at their face value the laments of an Egyptian sage of this time, who complained that a special kind of oil, which came from the Sudan, did not reach Egypt any more. Incidentally, the text shows that we must not value ancient trading according to our own view of the economic importance of raw materials. A product of little economic use could be of immense value because it had religious significance to the importer. What is true of a special oil is also true of the leopard skin, which was part of the dress used by the funeral priest during the burial ceremonies even of ordinary people.

But if the Egyptians did not go south any more, it seems that the Sudanese seized the opportunity to go north themselves, and Egyptian texts mention the happiness of the Medja—possible the Beja of today—wandering in the Nile Valley. It is probable that the invasion of Egypt by the tribes dwelling between the First and Second Cataracts would have been even more far-reaching, had they not themselves been subject to attack, probably from the south-west.

We have no information as to the precise date of the arrival in Lower Nubia of the new invaders, who belonged, it seems, to another branch of the red-brown Hamitic race, but with a slight admixture of negroid blood. It is possible, as A. J. Arkell suggests, that they were but the descendants of the people who lived further south during the preceding period and developed the Omdurman Bridge culture. Anyway they settled in the valley between the First and Second Cataracts, and introduced into this part of the country a completely different culture. They were chiefly cattle breeders, and it has been suggested that their move to the Nile Valley was due to the "increasing dessication of their old homelands".

While the C-Group people were installing themselves in Lower Nubia, politics in Egypt had undergone an important change. Central power was no longer at Memphis, near modern Cairo, but at Thebes, the present Luxor. One can see in the displacement of the chief city of Egypt, the reason why, from the beginning, the new power took a still more active interest in the south than its forerunner, the Sixth Dynasty. It is true that after a while, the Pharaohs of the Twelfth Dynasty came back to Middle Egypt, but all of them came originally from the southern part of Egypt and therefore pursued the policy of expansion southwards initiated by their predecessors, the kings of the Eleventh Dynasty.

With the rise of the Middle Kingdom, Egyptian policy towards the Sudan underwent a profound change. Pharaoh did not content himself now with sending trading caravans, and from time to time a military expedition. Henceforth he pursued the military conquest of the country, thus sowing the seeds of the future policy of the New Kingdom. What were the reasons for this change? One can but guess. However, two facts thrust themselves upon us: first, the establishment near the Border of Egypt of the newcomers, the C-Group people; secondly the search for gold mines.

It has been suggested, it is true, that the C-Group were a peace-loving people, but one cannot but be impressed by the strength of the fortresses which the Egyptians built in the area inhabited by them. Professor Emery is now excavating one of these fortresses in the Sudan at Buhen, and anyone passing through Wadi Halfa can see for himself that the fortification system devised by the Middle Kingdom engineers was as good, if not better than, and quite as complicated as, any medieval one. Surely the Egyptians would not have taken such pains had they not felt insecure among the inhabitants of the country. This gives a first motive for the new Egyptian policy—a desire for security on their southern border.

The second incentive for the conquest of the Sudan is new too. While, during the Old Kingdom, the Egyptians were asking for wood, ivory, ostrich feathers, incense, leopard skins, and so on, from the South, they are now prospecting for gold, and the Sudan is going to be for all the centuries to come, one of the Eldorados of the Ancient World.

When did the search for gold start? The Old Kingdom lists of products from the south do not mention it—but one suspects that during their stay in the south the caravan leaders of the Sixth Dynasty got information about it, or saw gold dust in the possession of the Sudanese. Alternatively, during the military campaigns of the Eleventh Dynasty some Egyptians may have witnessed the same phenomenon that struck Linant de Bellefonds in 1820 when, during a flood of the Wadi Allaqi, he saw gold dust in the silt washed away by the waters. This would explain why prospecting seems to have started in the Wadi Allaqi and extended afterwards to all the mountainous districts near the First and Second Cataracts.

The conquest initiated by the kings of the Eleventh Dynasty as early as 2060 B.C. was pursued and achieved by the pharaohs of the Twelfth Dynasty. Sesostri I, second king of the Dynasty, most probably reached the Third Cataract area and by the time of Sesostri III, about 1880 B.C., at least fourteen strongholds had been built between Semna, at the Head of the Second Cataract, and Elephantine; and Egyptian settlers from the Theban region had installed themselves in fortified towns in the shadow of the strongholds. But one remarkable fact is that all the Egyptian fortresses built in the Sudan—with two exceptions—are either on the West Bank of the river or on small islands, one of the exceptions being the stronghold of Kuban, obviously built to protect the road following the Wadi Allaqi towards the gold mines, while the other, the fort at Serrah, could have been erected for the same purpose. This fact shows clearly that the Egyptians did not feel secure on the East Bank of the Nile because of the ever important nomadic tribes of the Sudanese Eastern Desert, mentioned above.

By the end of the Twelfth Dynasty, all the Western Bank of the Nile between Aswan and Semna was considered as part of Egypt, and Sesostri III erected at Semna three boundary stelae giving definite instructions to the commanders of forts not to let anyone pass the border, except for trading purposes. By chance an archaeological find in Egypt gave us proof that the king's orders were strictly obeyed. About sixty years ago, in the ruins of the Ramasseum, was found a bunch of hieratic papyri, some of them dating back to the Middle Kingdom, among which were some loose leaves, known now as the "Semna despatches". They are some of the daily reports sent to Egypt by the Commanders of the Egyptian strongholds in the Sudan. In one of them the Commander informs headquarters that on such and such a day he received news about some nomads wandering in the desert, and that, accordingly, he had immediately sent a patrol which was able to find them and bring them into the Fort. The despatch ends by giving the number of people (thirty-two men) seized by the patrol, and, as a good official should, he reports to his superior that the people were sent back where they had come from after having been fed. This tiny incident in the border life, gives vivid colour to the stereotyped sentences of the royal stelae, which otherwise might have been thought meaningless boastings.

Their border firmly established at Semna, the Egyptians did not stop at that. While they were achieving the conquest of the northern part of Nubia, they pursued in the South the efforts of the trading caravans of the Old Kingdom. They reached the very heart of the Sudanese kingdom of this time, the Dongola reach of the Nile, and started doing business with the Sudanese kings. The capital of the kingdom was then at Kerma (not very far from New Dongola). The Egyptians introduced there their building methods, and erected, on behalf of the Sudanese king, a huge brick chapel, known now as the Eastern Defufa; but at the same time, they seized the opportunity to build themselves a fort to protect their trading centre.

It has been suggested, and some scholars still believe, that an Egyptian governor took the place of the local king and ruled the country on behalf of Pharaoh. This governor, named Hepidjefa, might have died at Kerma and been buried there according to the local customs, since statues of himself and his wife were found in one of the Kerma graves; but other scholars prefer to assume that the statues of Hepidjefa found at Kerma were either given to the Sudanese king by Hepidjefa himself, or brought back later from Egypt by a Sudanese king. Personally, I prefer the latter explanation, for the simple reason that the real grave of Hepidjefa is known . . . and is in Egypt!

If we agree, and I think we must, that during the Middle Kingdom the Egyptian settlement at Kerma was only a trading centre—then, from the material recovered by

excavations on the site, we can see how important was the Egyptian influence on the Sudanese kingdom. Faience objects, statues, alabaster vessels, beads, scarabs, jewels—Egyptian objects are indeed numerous and of excellent workmanship. But they should not blind us to the fact that the purely Sudanese objects found beside them are of as good workmanship as the Egyptian ones—the pottery, particularly, is wonderful and Egyptian potters of the same period would have been unable to produce it. It is obvious that a mixed culture, basically Sudanese but superficially Egyptianized, developed at Kerma. This civilization, which we will call the Kerma Culture, survived after the fall of the Middle Kingdom in Egypt and the subsequent surrender of the forts south of Aswan.

Recently important information on the history of the Sudan during the dark period which followed the Middle Kingdom has been discovered. The most important is the text of the Kamose stela discovered at Karnak three years ago. Kamose, king of Egypt about 1600 B.C., was fighting against the Hyksos who still occupied the Lower part of Egypt. In the Karnak stela, Kamose mentions that an Egyptian patrol in the desert intercepted a message from the Hyksos King to the King of Kush. From the text of the message, which is given in full in the Egyptian, it appears that the Hyksos King was then trying to arrange a combined attack on Egypt, from the South by the troops of Kush, and from the North by his own army, the reward being, as he puts it vaguely, "Then we shall divide the towns of Egypt between us". We do not know if the Hyksos king, his first message having been intercepted, sent another one, but the text shows definitely that the Sudanese kingdom was strong enough to be an important factor in the politics of the Seventeenth Century B.C. As a result, it explains a number of facts so far misunderstood, the main one being that after the retreat of the Egyptian army from Nubia, some time around 1780 B.C., a unified Sudanese power took over from the Egyptians.

This power was not systematically hostile towards Egypt. Not only did it send mercenaries to the Theban kings, but it also had Egyptians in its employment. An Egyptian text of this period throws a delightful light on what was then happening in the Sudan. A certain Haankhef, a military officer, writes on his funerary stela, found at Edfu, that he was for six years in the service of the King of Kush, and that at his retirement he brought back with him twenty-six *deben* of gold—a weight of nearly five pounds—so it seems that the Sudanese Government of the time not only had short term contracts for expatriates, but used the bonus system too.

Haankhef was not the only Egyptian official we know of, who was employed by the King of Kush—so we may assume another powerful factor in the Egyptian influence in the Sudan, namely Egyptians in Sudanese service. The result of this influence was obviously the greater strength of the kingdom of Kerma or Kush, as it appears in the Kamose stela. But the sad part of the story is that this new power was now a danger to Egypt, and that is why the pharaohs of the New Kingdom could have no rest until it was destroyed. So the achievements of the Sudanese Kingdom of the Seventeenth Century led, in the long run, to the Egyptian conquest of the Sixteenth. But the seeds of independence were not lost, and personally, I have no doubt that the Sudanese kings of Napata, who, nine centuries later, came to power in the Dongola region, were but the descendants of the Kerma rulers.

*After Dr. Vercoutter had read his paper the following discussion took place:—*

*Mr. Kirwan* asked whether the lecturer could throw any light on the connection between the C-group people and the Kerma culture. The C-group had lived in the area between the first and second cataracts ; and the fact that no signs of wounds had



been found on their bodies seemed to indicate that the relations between the C-group and the Egyptians had been peaceful.

*Dr. Vercoutter* replied that it was true that no signs of wounds had been found, nor were there any weapons in the graves of the C-group people. This might of course be explained by the possibility that weapons were thought to be too valuable to be deposited in graves. It was hoped that further excavations would increase our knowledge of the Kerma culture.

*Sayed Nasr el Hag Ali* asked why the peoples of Ancient Nubia had no names other than Group A, B, C, etc.; and *Sayed Justice M. I. El Nur* further enquired why this system of nomenclature embodied so large a gap between the C-group and the X-group.

*Dr. Vercoutter* replied that this literal nomenclature was an indication of our ignorance of the real identity of these peoples; with the possible exception of the X-group, their proper names were unknown. The wide gap between C and X was intended to indicate that a long period of time had elapsed between the appearances of these two groups.

*Dr. Fawzi Gadallah* said that he believed that the claims made in Ancient Egyptian inscriptions, that very large numbers of A-group people had been killed or captured, must have been exaggerated. Expeditions which were in effect no more than raids could hardly have inflicted casualties on the scale claimed.

*Dr. Vercoutter* replied that in his opinion *Dr. Gadallah's* scepticism was justified; but as the inscriptions themselves were our sole evidence there was no means of checking the accuracy of the statements they contained.

*Mr. Sanderson* said that the Old Kingdom inscriptions seemed to record the interchange of material objects and of personnel only. Was there any other evidence, which might throw light on a possible exchange in religion or culture?

*Dr. Vercoutter* replied that for this period no evidence other than that of the inscriptions was available.

*Professor Sandon* asked whether the commodities in which Nubia traded with the Old Kingdom were the indigenous products of Nubia, or whether the Nubians themselves traded with more remote regions and brought the products of these regions to points where they could be exchanged for Egyptian goods.

*Dr. Vercoutter* replied that he himself would very much like to know the answer to this question. It was his own belief that the Nubians did send out trading caravans into the remoter interior, but of this there was no definite proof.

*Sayed Mustafa Mohammed Khojali* asked whether the Ancient Egyptian religion had influenced the Nubians in any way.

*Dr. Vercoutter* said in reply that there was some evidence of a possible interchange in religious ideas in the Kerma area. In one of the Kerma graves, a funerary boat had been found. It was therefore possible that the Egyptian religion had been introduced; but the mere presence of the boat was not of course proof of this.

*Sayed Nassif Ishag* asked what kinds of pottery had been found in the Kerma region.

*Dr. Vercoutter* said that the typical Kerma pottery was of two kinds, one black-and-red and the other coloured. Both kinds were very thin and hard.

*Sayed Nasr El Hag Ali* said that he was particularly interested in the continuing influence of historical traditions. Were there any present-day survivals of Ancient Egyptian influence in Nubia, where that culture must at one time have been so strong?

*Dr. Vercoutter* replied that such survivals undoubtedly did exist, although their point of origin could not be precisely dated. For example, in Northern Province, boats were still being built to the same design as those of the Ancient Egyptians; and the thin plaits of hair worn by little girls in the Halfa region were clearly descended from the style which was fashionable in Ancient Egypt and is frequently depicted in funerary paintings.

*Professor Murray* said that he had noticed that the lecturer had only once referred to a resemblance between ancient and modern names, although other writers on this period made much use of such resemblances.

*Dr. Vercoutter* said that he believed that such apparent resemblances should be used only with the greatest caution. *Mr. Kirwan* added that in his opinion one of the greatest shortcomings in the study of the Ancient Sudan was that superficial resemblances between ancient and modern local and tribal names had often been made the basis for sweeping historical generalisations for which there was no other evidence.

*Sayed Mustafa Mohammed Khojali* asked whether the speaker could give any further information about the influence of Ancient Egypt upon Ancient Nubia in such spheres as architecture and religion.

*Dr. Vercoutter* said in reply that our knowledge of the history of Ancient Nubia was as yet of necessity very limited. There were over four hundred known sites of archaeological interest in the Northern Sudan; of these only twenty-six had been partially explored and none had been completely explored. An answer to *Sayed Mustafa's* question must therefore await further knowledge derived from much more extensive excavation.

*Dr. Collinson* asked whether there was any evidence that the Red Sea route between Egypt and the Sudan had been used during the Middle and New Kingdoms, or whether communications had been limited to the Nile Valley route.

*Dr. Vercoutter* replied that during the periods with which he had been dealing there was no such evidence. The earliest record of the Red Sea route dates from Ptolemaic times, when Egyptian travellers are mentioned who must have touched at ports on the Red Sea coast of the Sudan.

*Sayed Mohammed Ahmed Ali* asked whether there was any truth in a local tradition that a tunnel existed between Buhen and the near-by pyramids.

*Dr. Vercoutter* said that as yet nothing had been found which could substantiate such a belief.

*Sayed Justice M.I. El Nur* remarked that today the resources of cultivable land between the second and third cataracts was very limited, yet this region appeared to have been prosperous in ancient times. Was there any evidence of greater rainfall in the ancient period? Could the speaker give any estimate of the former prosperity of this region?

*Dr. Vercoutter* answered that an archaeological air survey of the region had revealed that there had certainly been more cultivation in ancient times than at present; but he did not think that its agricultural resources had ever been very great.

*Dr. Taha Baashar* asked about the historical significance of the excavated site at Omdurman. What had been the shape and attitude of the bodies found there? Could any information concerning cultural or religious ideas be deduced from the finds?

*Dr. Vercoutter* replied that the excavations had been conducted by Mr. Arkell, and that he had found no bodies, but only artifacts. The pottery found showed techniques similar to those employed in the pottery of pre-dynastic Egypt. The conclusion was that the Omdurman people were of the same culture as those of the northern provinces of the Sudan. But there could be no certainty until human remains had been found.

*Sayed Doleib Mohammed El Mahdi* remarked that the lecturer had referred to trade in such substances as incense and resins. These commodities were not now produced in Sudanese Nubia. Was the climate in those times more suitable for their production, or were they imported from elsewhere?

*Dr. Vercoutter* said that these commodities might either have been produced in the Dongola reach, or have been brought from a region further to the south-east. He thought the latter was the more probable explanation.

*Sayed Mohammed Allam* disagreed with the speaker's view that the Kerma civilisation was basically Sudanese and only superficially Egyptian. He believed the reverse to be the case.

*Dr. Vercoutter* answered that no one could be certain until there had been very much more excavation. One difficulty was that all the sites so far excavated had been in the extreme North of the cultural area, within the present Egyptian boundaries. Until sites further to the south had been fully investigated, it was impossible to generalise with any great confidence.

*Sayed Mustafa Mohammed Khojali* remarked that the lecturer had made it clear that the main factors in the influence of Ancient Egypt upon the Sudan had been commerce, conquest and migration. Which did he think had been the most important?

*Dr. Vercoutter* replied that at first the main interest of the Egyptians had been the acquisition of raw materials from the Sudan. Later, as the Sudanese kingdoms became stronger, they began to present a potential military threat to Egypt, and fears for their southern frontier led the Egyptians to invade and conquer parts of the Northern Sudan.

*Sayed Mirza Hamza* asked whether any precise definition could be given to the region known as 'Kush'. Some writers seemed to include Ethiopia within its borders, and some even used the name to indicate a region extending as far as India.

*Dr. Vercoutter* replied that up to the time of the Middle Kingdom, the name 'Kush' was applied only to a restricted region between Sai and Semna. From the time of the New Kingdom, the word was used to denote the region as far as Kurgus, but not further south. Later still, the name 'Kush' was used by Semitic writers to denote the whole of the Meroitic kingdom. *Mr. Kirwan* added that he thought that it was only in the earliest period that the name had been used with any great precision.

*Professor Butler* asked whether there was any evidence from Egyptian paintings of the physical appearance of the Sudanese in ancient times.

*Dr. Vercoutter* said that paintings had been found in a tomb near Wadi Halfa which seemed to indicate that at the time of the early New Kingdom, the Sudan was inhabited by three races, respectively black, red-bronze and nearly yellow in colour.

*Dr. Hadi El Nagar* said that he had recently seen in the museum at Damascus some remarkable surgical instruments which had been used by the Ancient Egyptians. Had the lecturer any information about the surgical instruments used in the Sudan in ancient times?

*Dr. Vercoutter* replied that he had no such information, as no surgeon's grave had yet been found in the Sudan.

*The Chairman (Dr. Tijani El Mahi)* intervened to say that we now knew a great deal about Ancient Egyptian medicine and surgery from papyri which had been translated, although many of the drugs and diseases described in them could not now be identified. There were descriptions of the use of animal extracts for treatment, and of both surgical and magical treatments. The influence of Ancient Egyptian medicine upon other peoples, particularly the Arabs and the Greeks, had been very great. The Ancient Egyptians knew both the symptoms of and the treatment for hysteria ; they knew of sedative drugs for inducing sleep. Of course many of the diseases in the Sudan in ancient times may have been local phenomena for which local treatments would doubtless have been used ; but these local treatments may well have had a basis in Ancient Egyptian medicine. It was quite possible that investigation in Northern Province would reveal the use of Ancient Egyptian medical methods in local traditional treatment.

*The Chairman*, in thanking *Dr. Vercoutter* for his interesting and learned paper, said that it had been an admirable illustration of a remark by Sir Winston Churchill: "The longer you can look backward, the further you can look forward".