

“Napatan Period (ca. 900 - ca. 295 b.c.)”

Excerpts of article included in website created by ThinkQuest Team 22845, 1998

(Note: Napata was the capitol city of Nubia for a time. Historians and archaeologists often refer to this period in Nubian history as the Napatan Period)

History

... Some scholars believe that the development of the Napatan monarchy took place without any influence from Egypt. Other scholars believe that the [Nubian] kings rose to power as a result of an arrangement between local Nubian chiefs and a group of Egyptian ... priests. These priests would have been left behind ... when Egypt withdrew from Nubia at the end of the New Kingdom. The priests perhaps needed the military power of local chiefs to maintain their position within the religious system of the local government, and so an alliance was formed. The lack of written evidence from the [Nubians] themselves prevents archaeologists from deciding which hypothesis is correct.

[The Nubian king] Piye left a large stela describing the major events in his reign. Piye apparently spend the first two decades of his reign peacefully at his capital at Napata, though the stela tells us he also ruled over southern Egypt. Then he received a request from officials at Thebes for military protection against a local ruler from the Egyptian Delta named Tefnakht, who wanted to rule over all of Egypt. Piye himself traveled north to Egypt and successfully pursued and destroyed Tefnakht's army. After this time, Piye used the ancient titles of the Egyptian pharaohs, though he never returned to Egypt and lived the remainder of his life in Nubia. Piye is generally considered the founder of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty in Egypt.

...Piye's son Taharqa (690-664 b.c.) stands out in the archaeological and historical records of the time. Although Taharqa spent much of his reign trying to repel Assyrian forces from Egypt, he was also able to carry out an extensive building program in Egypt and Nubia. Taharqa's renovations and additions are visible in the Theban temple of Amon at Karnak as well as in the Nubian temple of Amon at Jebel Barkal. He also constructed a temple at Kawa, which became an important religious center of the [Nubian] kingdom.

“Napatan Period (ca. 900 - ca. 295 b.c.)” (continued)

Daily Life

...the excavation of some cemeteries provides a glimpse into the life styles of non royal Nubian's during the Napatan Period. A non-royal cemetery excavated at the site of Sanam suggests that there were two main groups buried there: Nubian's whose bodies were buried in an extended position, and others who were buried in a contracted position. The objects found with the extended bodies were almost entirely of Egyptian manufacture, but the contracted burials seemed to contain more local pottery and locally made objects. This suggests that not all Nubian's had adopted Egyptian culture to the degree shown by the burials of their rulers.

The evidence from cemeteries does suggest that Nubian society at this point was basically two-tiered; a very small ruling class presiding over a much larger and poorer class, most of who were probably farmers. The [Nubian] rulers most likely gained their wealth, reflected in the size of their tombs and the luxurious objects found within them, from control of the gold mines in the desert to the east of Nubia.

Information found at <http://library.thinkquest.org/22845/kush/napatan.shtml>