



## **ARE WOMEN THE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING THE KUSHITE PRESENCE IN EGYPT? SEVERAL REMARKS ON THEBES DURING THE TWENTY-FIFTH DYNASTY**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This paper highlights several issues regarding the Kushite presence in Twenty-fifth Dynasty Thebes. The Nubian influence in the iconography of the chapel of Osiris Heqa-Djet is discussed, as well as problems related to the identification of Kushites in the Theban necropolis, with the possible hints pointing to the Kushite connections of the deceased individuals previously identified as Egyptians.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The past several years have seen an increased scholarly interest in diverse aspects of the mid-1st millennium BCE Kushite presence in Egypt.<sup>1</sup> Among other things, the revision of the order of the Kushite pharaohs was proposed,<sup>2</sup> demonstrating that archaeology of the Late Period still has much to offer, and even the well-established chronologies may prove to be far from certain.

Furthermore, the exact date of the beginning of the Kushite rule in Egypt is also unclear. In various publications, different dates for the beginning of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty can be encountered: 754, 752, 747, 728, 722, or even 715 BCE.<sup>3</sup> Such disparities result from the scarcity of available literary sources directly relating to the Kushite conquest of Egypt, but also from the complicated and still poorly understood political situation, both in Egypt and in

Nubia, at the beginning of the 8th century BCE. Finally, for a long time the Kushite monarchy was perceived through an Egyptological lens, and, as such, Kushite texts, art and material culture—delusively Egyptian in appearance—were treated as if they represented the same values and beliefs as in ancient Egypt. These views have been recently called into question.<sup>4</sup> While such a general remark may seem rather imprecise for a discussion of the chronology of the Kushite period in Egypt, below I will attempt to demonstrate that careful examination of the iconographic, textual and archaeological evidence from the mid-8th century BCE Thebes may add more nuance to the debate regarding the beginning of the Kushite rule in Egypt, as well as the nature of the Kushite presence in Egypt and its impact on the local population and later Egyptian traditions.

### THE LIBYAN ARISTOCRACY AND THE PIANKHY VICTORY Stela

The most important document, always cited in reference to the Nubian takeover in Egypt, is Piankhy's Victory Stela, discovered in 1862 at Gebel Barkal.<sup>5</sup> Often treated as an account of a conquest of Egypt by the Kushite king Piankhy, the Victory Stela, written down in the 21st regnal year of this ruler (ca. 727 BCE) and describing events taking place at an unspecified time of his reign, in fact summarizes not a conquest, but a punitive campaign against Nimlot, prince of the Egyptian city of Hermopolis. The reason for the Kushite involvement in Egyptian affairs is given explicitly in line 7 of the text:

Namlot, count of Hutweret, has thrown down the wall of Nefrusy. (...) Behold, he has gone to be a subordinate at his (Tefnakht's) heels, having shrugged off allegiance to His Majesty (Piankhy).<sup>6</sup>

The first step taken by Piankhy after resolving to react to the news, was addressing his troops (line 8):

Then His Majesty sent word to the counts and generals who were in Egypt, the commander Pawerem, and the commander Lamersekny, and every commander of His Majesty who was in Egypt: "Proceed in battle formation (...)"

These two facts—that Nimlot of Hermopolis, according to the stela, was already supposed to be loyal to Piankhy, and that Kushite garrisons were stationed in Egypt—strongly suggest that Upper Egypt, or at least part of it, had already been subjugated by Kush before Piankhy started his campaign described on the stela.

The conclusion that the Kushite rule in Egypt had begun some time before Piankhy's campaign is in agreement with other textual, yet fragmentary evidence. Piankhy's granite stela from Gebel Barkal, preserved in two largely destroyed pieces, makes mention of a visit paid by Piankhy in Karnak in his third/fourth regnal year. The king partook in the Opet ceremonies, and then sailed north along with his army.<sup>7</sup> Piankhy's epithet *h<sup>c</sup> m w<sup>3</sup>st* suggests that he was crowned in Thebes,<sup>8</sup> while the well-known stela from Elephantine of Piankhy's predecessor, Kashta, names him the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, the son of Ra and the Lord of the Two Lands.<sup>9</sup> The recently published situla from the Walters Art Museum with cartouches of Kashta and Amenirdis I is also worth recalling here.<sup>10</sup> Finally, it has been observed that a major change in burial customs took

place in Thebes around 750 BCE, most probably in response to the changing political and social circumstances of the Kushite presence in Egypt.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, it would seem that at least from 750 BCE onwards, long before Piankhy's campaign described on the Victory Stela, Upper Egypt (or part of it) was under Kushite control.

However, despite the fact that no Theban ruler was mentioned in text of the Victory Stela, there is a long line of Upper Egyptian kings who can be dated to the mid-8th century BCE and whose relationships with the Kushite rulers remain unknown: Osorkon III, Takeloth III, Rudamun, Sheshonq VIa, Peftjauawybast, and Iny.<sup>12</sup> This paper's aim is not to discuss the chronological and prosopographical aspects of each of these monarchs' rule, but rather to offer some perspective on the Kushite influence in Upper Egypt in the time preceding Piankhy's campaign against Nimlot.

In her excellent, thought-provoking analysis of the Victory Stela, Kathryn Howley argued for a departure from an Egyptian model for understanding the Kushite concept of monarchy, and proposed to perceive the stela—its text and representations in the lunette—as a means of translating the Nubian tradition into the language of Egyptians symbols.<sup>13</sup> In her paper she pointed out a number of features present on the stela, which at first glance may seem Egyptian, but further analysis betrays their Nubian character: inscription on all four sides (which has no Egyptian parallel); the presence of multiple Egyptian kings, each acknowledged as a *nsw* and with his name in a cartouche (clearly in contrast with the Egyptian ideology of kingship); the presence of a horse in the decoration of the lunette (reminiscent of the Kushite tradition of horse breeding); and—most importantly for the considerations here—the unusual position of the only royal woman depicted in the lunette, Nimlot's wife.<sup>14</sup>

Nimlot's wife, labelled as representing all royal wives (*hmwt nswt*), is depicted standing in adoration between Piankhy (his image was erased in later times, but his cartouche remains intact) and Nimlot, who himself is represented in a peculiar manner: with a sistrum in his right hand, leading a horse (FIG. 1). The composition of the scene is atypical, with two rules of the Egyptian decorum violated: firstly, in Egyptian art, woman is almost never represented before man (the only exception being female rulers of Egypt),<sup>15</sup> and secondly, the subject is never shown in a dominating position with regards to a pharaoh.

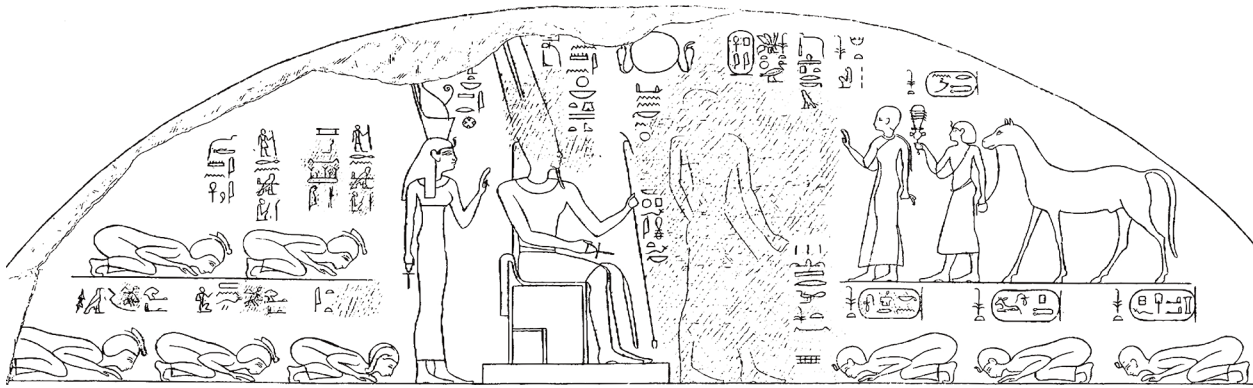


FIGURE 1: Lunette of the Victory Stela (after Mariette 1872, pl. 1)

The words spoken by Nimlot's wife,

"Peace be with you, O Horus, [Lord of the Palace...].  
The king has not belittled Hermopolis,"

correspond with the narrative of the stela, containing a detailed account of what happened after Piankhy's forces subjugated Hermopolis: King Nimlot sent his wife and other women of the harem to "appease Horus, Lord of the Palace (Piankhy), whose wrath is great, whose vindication is grand!" (line 34). Unfortunately, further description of this episode is illegible, but the result is clear: following the women's intervention, Piankhy agreed to speak with Nimlot and accept his surrender and gifts.

The motif of a woman serving as an intermediary between an entity of a higher status (Piankhy) and that of a lower one (Nimlot), often interpreted as a proof for Nimlot's "unmanliness,"<sup>16</sup> in fact has established parallels in Kushite art. On the Aspelta Election Stela it is a woman—the queen mother—who addresses the gods to grant Aspelta his kingship, not Aspelta himself. Angelika Lohwasser lists at least three other examples of such speeches, given by Kushite queens on behalf of kings on the occasion of coronation rites: in temples B300 and B500 at Gebel Barkal, and in the temple of Sanam.<sup>17</sup> Another category of texts in which a different woman seems to play the role of intercessors between one entity and another is the inscription of queen Katimala from Semna, in which Katimala

"was expected to act as intermediary between Amun and a king in a difficult situation."<sup>18</sup> Therefore I fully concur with Howley in interpreting the Hermopolis passage and the prominent role of Nimlot's wife in the lunette of the Victory Stela as a reflection of a special position of royal women in the Nubian society.<sup>19</sup>

Now that it has been asserted that the unusual composition of the Hermopolitan scene constitutes a Kushite component, let us introduce another, more surprising parallel to this scene, this time not from Nubia, but from Egypt. The scene in question is artistically and chronologically very close to the representations on the Victory Stela: exactly the same arrangement of the female and male figures occurs on a Theban monument, dated to the mid-8th century BCE, namely the chapel of Osiris Heqa-Djet in Karnak (FIG. 2).

In the scene on the original chapel's façade,<sup>20</sup> the God's Wife of Amun Shepenwepet I stands in front of the gods Amun-Ra, Ra-Horakhty, and Ptah. Behind her, separated from her and the divine figures by a table with offerings, stands her father, King Osorkon III. Shepenwepet interacts with the gods, shaking two sistra. Osorkon extends his right hand with a *mekes* sceptre towards the offerings, while in his other hand he holds a *hedj* mace and a staff.

Such an exceptional representation in Egyptian art, with a royal woman depicted closer to gods and therefore taking precedence over the king, has

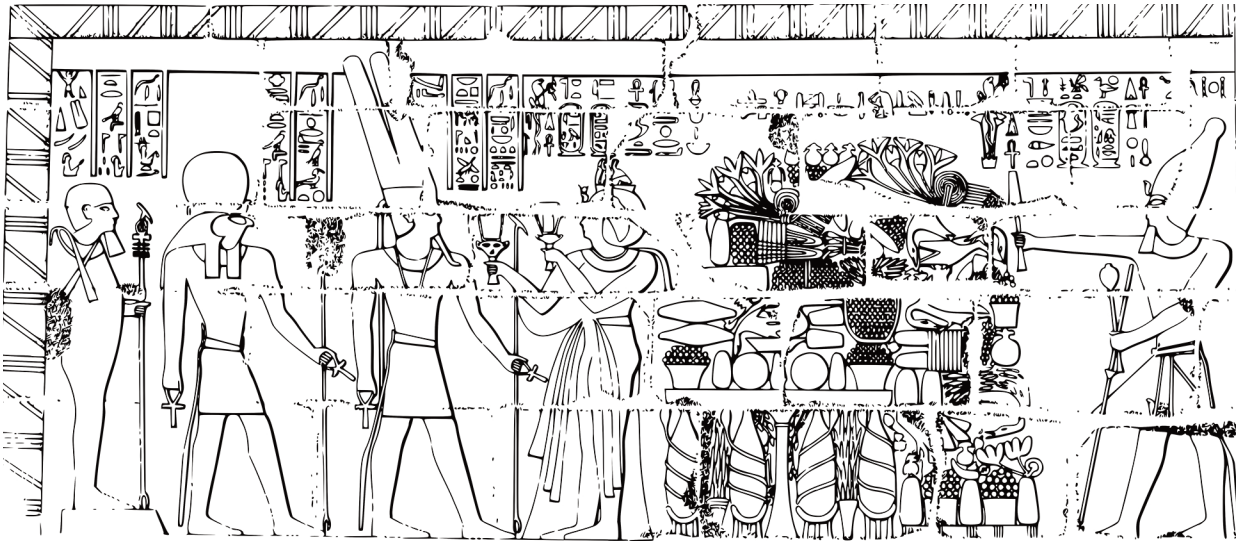


FIGURE 2: Shepenwepet I and Osorkon III worshipping Egyptian gods on the facade of the chapel of Osiris Heqa-Djet (after Redford 2004, 68 fig. 16).

gained some scholarly attention, especially recently.<sup>21</sup> Its similarity with the scene in the lunette of the Victory Stela, however, has not been noted. But how is it possible that a seemingly Nubian motif made its way to the Libyan chapel, built for Osorkon III and Takeloth III, with a depiction of the former<sup>22</sup> in a subordinate position to his daughter, but in the same moment with his name in a cartouche and with all the prerogatives of royal power? Is it just a coincidence that two analogous representations, straying from the general principles of Egyptian art in exactly the same way, appeared within a timespan of two or three decades, never to occur again?

The exact date of the erection of the chapel of Osiris Heqa-Djet, sadly, remains unknown. In all three rooms of the chapel (the first two built during the Libyan phase, and the third one during the Kushite period), Shepenwepet's representations occur on the walls;<sup>23</sup> in fact, it was proposed that the chapel had been built to commemorate her appointment as a God's Wife of Amun, which might have taken place around 760 BCE.<sup>24</sup> Its construction must have started towards the end of Osorkon III's reign, as his son Takeloth—Osorkon's coregent during his final years—was depicted in it with royal

regalia. Kenneth A. Kitchen set 754 BCE as the earliest date for the beginning of this coregency.<sup>25</sup> Recently, it has been proposed that the chapel should be dated to the years 768–764 BCE, with Rudamun's cartouches added around 755 BCE;<sup>26</sup> such a date seems very early, but in light of available evidence it cannot be ruled out.

In the lunette of the Victory Stela, the four kings of Egyptian cities—Nimlot, Osorkon, Iuput and Peftjauawybast—who had pledged their allegiance to Piankhy and paid their tribute to the triumphant Kushite monarch, nevertheless were depicted in a royal manner: each labelled as a *nswt*, with his name in a cartouche and with an uraeus on his forehead.<sup>27</sup> Is it theoretically possible that the presence of a Kushite motif on a façade of a Libyan chapel could indicate that the chapel was built in times when Thebes was already controlled by the Kushites, but with a local ruler—Osorkon III or his son Takeloth III—on the throne?

It is generally assumed by modern scholars that Shepenwepet I was the first God's Wife of Amun to appropriate a number of prerogatives, which were until then reserved for a pharaoh only, and that the sudden promotion of a God's Wife was a late Libyan



innovation. Unfortunately, the number of literary and iconographic sources related to the Libyan God's Wives and Divine Adoratrices is scarce, but it is agreed that Shepenwepet was the first divine votaress to assume epithets "Lord of the Two Lands" and "Lord of Appearances"<sup>28</sup> and a Horus name, and to be depicted as a main figure in suckling and crowning scenes.<sup>29</sup> As Lohwasser puts it:

The GWA [God's Wife of Amun] seemed to be more active from Shepenwepet I onward, at the beginning of the phase that saw more intensive contact with the emerging Kushite realm. The institution of the GWA was already increasing in power, and this situation was instrumentalized by the Kushites.<sup>30</sup>

However, if we remove the chapel of Osiris Heqa-Djet from the discussion, as assumed to be constructed by Libyan kings but under Nubian influence (perhaps as a preemptive move to install Amenirdis I as a God's Wife, or simply as a means of introducing the Kushite tradition of female royalty playing an intermediary between the realm of gods and the realm of people), the evidence for Libyan inspiration for the increase in religious and political importance of the God's Wife of Amun disappears as well. The only other monuments and objects that attest to Shepenwepet's activity as a God's Wife come from the period of Kushite dominance and/or are problematic in nature: a fragment of a stone vessel with the names of king Nimlot (justified), Shepenwepet I, and Amenirdis I;<sup>31</sup> remains of the priestess's supposed tomb-chapel in Medinet Habu (although no object with her name was found);<sup>32</sup> and the graffito from Wadi Gasus,

which, as now has been established, probably relates to Shepenwepet II, not her Libyan namesake.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, scenes that appear in connection with Shepenwepet I in the originally constructed part of the chapel of Osiris Heqa-Djet—suckling and coronation scenes—bear a closer resemblance to the Kushite way of portraying women than to contemporary Egyptian (or "Libyan-Egyptian") art. An unusual vulture headdress of Shepenwepet, visible on the jambs of the false door, worn by the priestess atop a short wig (or natural hair), surmounted by two plumes, Hathoric horns, and a



FIGURE 3: Suckled Shepenwepet I on the facade of the chapel of Osiris Heqa Djet (photograph by Marta Kaczanowicz).



FIGURE 4: Queen Katimala, the scene accompanying her Semna inscription (after Caminos 1994, fig. 1).

modius (FIG. 3),<sup>34</sup> closely resembles the crown worn by queen Katimala in the scene accompanying her Semna inscription (FIG. 4).<sup>35</sup> Moreover, the closest parallel for the representation of Shepenwepet being suckled by a goddess is on a silver amulet, discovered by Reisner in el-Kurru, where Piankhy's wife, Neferukashta, is depicted being suckled by Isis.<sup>36</sup> In general, the role played by Kushite royal women in temple rituals, as attested by representations from Napatan and Meroitic temples, was much more active than in Egypt. Nubian queens not only participated in rites in which Egyptian women could partake, such as shaking the sistrum or censuring, but also in those traditionally unavailable to Egyptian royal wives, such as pouring libations.<sup>37</sup> It is worth mentioning that a depiction of a libating priestess also appears on the wall of the Osiris Heqa-

Djet chapel, although the votaress performing the libation is not Shepenwepet, but her successor, Amenirdis I, shown in the Kushite addition to the monument.<sup>38</sup>

The link between the God's Wife Shepenwepet I and the previous God's Wives/Divine Adoratrices of the Libyan era is also weaker than usually assumed. The 9th century BCE chapel of Osiris Wep-ished in Karnak, believed to contain a representation of a Libyan God's Wife Karomama G on its façade, recently has been demonstrated to feature not a priestess but a goddess, while the chapel of Osiris Khenty-Imentet and Osiris Khenem-Maat, also with representations of Karomama, is now completely destroyed.<sup>39</sup> Shepenwepet's supposed burial in Medinet Habu, in a freestanding chapel, marks perhaps the most evident departure from the funerary practices of earlier priestesses. Both Karomama G and the mysterious Divine Adoratrice Qedmerut, possibly Karomama's successor, were buried in shaft tombs in the Ramesseum.<sup>40</sup> The erection of a freestanding structure for a female member of a royal family seems more closely connected with the Nubian tradition of freestanding tombs constructed for Napatan queens in el-Kurru and Nuri than with ancient Egyptian/Libyan customs.<sup>41</sup>

Burials of Shepenwepet I and later Kushite God's Wives in Medinet Habu have yet another ideological dimension. Starting from the Twenty-first Dynasty onwards, burial in a separate chapel within a *functioning* temple's precinct—and the Small Temple of Amun was a functioning temple, unlike the Ramesseum, at the time Libyan priestesses' burials took place—seems to be an exclusively royal prerogative. No traces of equipment unequivocally associated with an actual queenly burial were found in the royal necropolis of Tanis.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, no burial of a queen was discovered in association with the tomb of the Theban king Harsiese in Medinet Habu,<sup>43</sup> and now it is certain that Saite queens were buried separately from their husbands, and not in mortuary chapels in the precinct of the temple of Neith in Sais.<sup>44</sup> The concept of a freestanding tomb-chapel in Medinet Habu bears a striking resemblance not to contemporary queenly burials in Egypt, but to pharaoh's tombs. This, of course, may be interpreted in various ways: as means of elevating the status of a God's Wife, as a symbol of actual political power of priestesses of this era, and many more. However, I



believe it should be considered as an expression of Kushite perception of the role of male and female members the royal family, different from the Egyptian tradition: “complementarity” of their function in the Napatan ideology of power, as visible in location of burials of Kushite queens in royal cemeteries in Nubia, antithetical representations of Napatan king and queen on stelae, etc.<sup>45</sup> Therefore, the choice of Shepenwepet’s burial place and style of burial seems to represent Nubian influences rather than Egyptian. Alternatively, it can also be argued that the decision of burying Shepenwepet in a chapel opposite the Small Temple had already been made after the adoption of Amenirdis, daughter of Kashta, and the “Nubian-ness” of Shepenwepet’s tomb was a result of this, not of earlier Kushite intervention.

Kushite elements, visible in various aspects of Shepenwepet’s tenure as a God’s Wife (the decoration of the chapel of Osiris Heqa-Djet, location and form of her tomb, male iconography and epithets taken by her upon her “enthronement”) may, of course, be a consequence of close relations between the Thebaid and Kush in the 8th century BCE, not the subjugation of Thebes by Napatan monarchs during the reign of Osorkon III. After all, there are some “Nubian” components, or at least features betraying some resemblance with the Nubian tradition, in the period preceding the Kushite conquest of Egypt, such as “Kushite” architecture of the tomb of Harsiese in Medinet Habu (its plan and the presence of the staircase, similar to the royal tombs in el-Kurru).<sup>46</sup> There is no compelling proof to ascertain that the sudden elevation of the God’s Wife was a result of direct Nubian influence. Also, it cannot be entirely disproven that it was the Nubian queens that were inspired by Shepenwepet’s portrayals, rather than the other way round. However, taking into consideration the long history of powerful women in Nubia (visible in the archaeological material since the Neolithic period),<sup>47</sup> I think it is worth examining whether the sudden increase in significance of the office of the God’s Wife of Amun was a Kushite, not a Libyan/Egyptian inspiration—a possibility that, as far as I know, has not been seriously considered thus far.<sup>48</sup>

The hypothesis that the last monarchs of the Libyan Theban line, Osorkon III and his son Takeloth III, recognized the authority of the Kushites ca. 750 BCE or even slightly earlier helps us understand one more phenomenon: the burials of Takeloth III’s

offspring in the temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari.<sup>49</sup> Deir el-Bahari played an important role in Kushite Thebes (see below), and the necropolis located in the temple of Hatshepsut became a burial ground for some most prominent members of Theban aristocracy during the 8th and 7th centuries BCE, including several viziers, such as Padiamonet.<sup>50</sup> Why, however, were the descendants of Takeloth III allowed to choose such a distinguished site for their burials—especially with the Kushite God’s Wife residing in the City—if not because of that fact that they had acknowledged Napatan rulers before anyone else did? In the preserved textual and archaeological material there is no trace of anything that could indicate hostility between the house of Osorkon and the Napatan dynasty. Therefore, I believe that the theory of earlier contacts of the Theban and Kushite monarchs is worth closer consideration.

#### “THE FORGOTTEN VALLEY”—SOUTH ASASIF IN CONTEXT

The city of Thebes—the political centre with a well-attested Kushite presence—presents an interesting example of Kushite mobility. Closer scrutiny of the settlement pattern reflected in Theban archaeological sources provides the results far from what might be expected for pre-modern migration, especially in the context of “colonial” encounters between the Kushite and Egyptian populations in the mid-8th century BCE. It is visible especially in the number of women who arrived in Thebes during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, as well as the social structure of this group.

Kushite women who arrived in Thebes during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty represented various social strata. There were members of the royal family (God’s Wives of Amun Amenirdis I, Shepenwepet II,<sup>51</sup> and the still problematic Amenirdis II,<sup>52</sup> as well as a royal granddaughter, Wedjarenes),<sup>53</sup> but also representatives of lower elite or middle class (such as the lady Kheriru and two other females buried in Tomb VII in Asasif,<sup>54</sup> the lady Niu buried in TT 99,<sup>55</sup> or the priestess Kekuri).<sup>56</sup> The female members of the Napatan ruling house probably moved to Egypt due to political or ideological reasons, and therefore their presence in Egypt is not a surprise. Of the remaining women, Kheriru possibly accompanied her husband, Iru, buried in the same tomb, in his journey to Egypt, but Niu, daughter of a Kawa priest, apparently started her own family only after

moving to Thebes, where she married an Egyptian, either the fourth priest of Amun, Wedjahor, or his son.<sup>57</sup> There is no information of Kekuiiri's family relations.

The presence of female migrants among the Kushite newcomers during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty in Thebes seems unusual. It is often assumed that, for example, in Egyptian Middle Kingdom fortress communities in Nubia the majority of Egyptian immigrants were males.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, strontium analysis of remains of New Kingdom inhabitants of a Nubian colonial town of Tombos—a social context very much alike Thebes controlled by the Kushites—revealed that the proportion of men and women among the first-generation migrants was similar to 8th century BCE Thebes.<sup>59</sup> A possible, chronologically closer analogy for the pattern of Kushite mobility in Thebes could be the city of Lachish, excavated by the Wellcome-Marston Archaeological Expedition to the Near East in the 1930s, where the number of skeletons, supposedly belonging to the defenders of Lachish during the Sennacherib's campaign in the Levant around 701 BCE, came to light. The majority of the skeletons belonged to men, although the differences between sexes are not as great as could be expected: females constituted almost 40% of the examined remains.<sup>60</sup> The craniometric studies concluded that the examined population had close relationships with Egyptian-Nubian groups, leading to the hypothesis that there was a Kushite garrison or Kushite population living in Lachish in the 8th century BCE.<sup>61</sup> This claim was supported by representations of Egyptians/Nubians among the figures on the reliefs depicting Sargon II's Levantine campaign.<sup>62</sup> The ethnic identification of the defenders of Lachish, however, has been a subject of vigorous dispute, with the most recent studies pointing to the deceased being of local rather than Egyptian origin.<sup>63</sup>

Interestingly, while in Tombos Nubian women seem to have played the role of keepers of the indigenous traditions, being buried in a flexed position (as opposed to men, who followed the Egyptian custom of extended burials),<sup>64</sup> in Thebes it is the opposite, especially among the female members of the Napatan royal family. The Kushite God's Wives and Wedjarenes took new, Egyptian names and were buried in what at first glance seems to be a purely Egyptian manner.<sup>65</sup> No tumulus or other form of burial associated directly with Nubian burial customs and dated to the Twenty-fifth

Dynasty was identified in Egypt. Kheriru, Niu, and Kekuiiri's names are non-Egyptian, which could suggest that taking an Egyptian name was a privilege of the Napatan elite only. In contrast with that, however, all the Kushite pharaohs retained their birth names; the same is true for the Twenty-fifth Dynasty queens buried in Abydos.<sup>66</sup> Abandoning Kushite names in favour of Egyptian ones by the members of the royal family seems to be a phenomenon that could be encountered in Thebes more often than anywhere else in Egypt. In addition to the women mentioned above, Horemakhet, son of Shabaka, his son Horkhebit, and Nesishutefnut, son of Taharka, all bore Egyptian names and are known from Theban sources only.<sup>67</sup>

Of course, this does not mean that people who belonged to the lower social strata could not take an Egyptian name. A fascinating illustration of intricacies of changing names and identifying Kushites among the Egyptians is the case of the abovementioned lady Niu, daughter of a priest from Kawa. Niu's father's name was Padiamun, a common Egyptian name, particularly suitable for a priest of Amun.<sup>68</sup> Apparently, then, the Nubian priest took an Egyptian name, but then gave his daughter a Kushite one. Alternatively, there is a possibility that Padiamun was an Egyptian who was relocated to Kawa—we know of relocating temple personnel and craftsmen from Egypt to Kush under Taharka<sup>69</sup>—then married a Kushite woman, and gave his daughter a Nubian name. Nevertheless, an Egyptian name can hardly serve as an indicator of Egyptian ethnicity in Kushite Thebes.<sup>70</sup>

In Twenty-fifth Dynasty Thebes, five basic forms of burials can be encountered (TABLE 1): burial in a "new" rock-cut tomb (for example, the monumental "temple-tombs" of the South Asasif), in a free-standing stone chapel (such as the God's Wives chapels in Medinet Habu), in a free-standing mud-brick chapel (for example, the chapels behind the Ramesseum, excavated by the French-Egyptian mission), in a reused older tomb, and in a shaft tomb within a temple precinct (such as interments in the temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari). The only form in which no Kushite burial was identified so far is the last one (see below).

Some forms of burials—such as a burial in a stone mortuary chapel—under the Napatan regime seem to be restricted for Kushites only. The sole remains of what might be a Twenty-fifth Dynasty stone tomb-chapel belonging to an Egyptian known to me



TABLE 1: Types of tombs/burial modes in Twenty-fifth Dynasty Thebes.

TYPE OF TOMB/INTERMENT	WERE KUSHITES BURIED THERE?	WERE EGYPTIANS BURIED THERE?
Rock-cut tomb	Yes	Yes?
Stone mortuary chapel	Yes	No?
Mud-brick mortuary chapel	Yes	Yes
Reused tomb	Yes	Yes
Interment in a shaft within a temple precinct (no superstructure)	No?	Yes

is a sandstone block, discovered in Medinet Habu, with a depiction of Amenirdis and the Singer in the Interior of the temple of Amun, Diasethebseb, sister of the famous Montuemhat, which may come from Diasethebseb's tomb.<sup>71</sup> Firstly, however, Diasethebseb might have been buried in the first years of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, not the Twenty-fifth; secondly, it is unclear if the block comes from Diasethebseb's tomb or some other building; and thirdly, on the vignette of the Saite Oracle Papyrus (Brooklyn 47.218.3), Montuemhat and his son are shown with a skin colour "lighter than Harkhebi's [Shabaka's grandson] but perceptibly darker than the rest." It has been proposed that Montuemhat might have had some Nubian blood.<sup>72</sup> Relying on a skin colour in Egyptian artistic representations is a fallible method of ethnic identification (see, for example, the discussion on Hekanefer's portrayals in TT 40 and in his own tomb in Aniba).<sup>73</sup> Nevertheless, the possibility of Montuemhat's mother being a Kushite should not be ignored (Montuemhat's father seems to have originated from an Egyptian family).<sup>74</sup> If this was the case, then Diasethebseb's lineage and ethnic identity should also be reconsidered.

Similar doubts occur with regards to the construction of temple-tombs during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. It is now universally acknowledged that the first monumental rock-cut tombs in Thebes during the Late Period belonged to the Kushite officials, Karakhamun (TT 223) and Karabasken (TT 391).<sup>75</sup> Recent research showed that TT 209, a tomb of the same era, located near the two abovementioned tombs in the South Asasif necropolis, belonged to a

person of foreign, most probably Kushite, origin.<sup>76</sup> The only rock-cut tombs, probably started during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, whose owners' ethnicity cannot be established with certainty are those belonging to Padiamenopet (TT 33), Montuemhat (TT 34), and Harwa (TT 37). Reservations regarding Montuemhat's ethnic identity have been expressed in the paragraph above. As for Padiamenopet, very little is known about his genealogy; his tomb is conspicuous for mentioning neither the names of his parents nor even the king he served under. However, on the tomb's lintel, Padiamenopet is depicted together with his mother, welcoming his family members: three aunts and an uncle, with their children.<sup>77</sup> The predominance of female family members may point to the Kushite tradition of matrilineality, although it may be a Nubian influence, not an argument for Padiamenopet's actual ethnic identification. Similarly, Kushite features, shown by some of Padiamenopet's shabtis (such as broad nose, thickening of the lips, etc.),<sup>78</sup> may be a result of an attempt to imitate royal art—a phenomenon known well from other periods of Egyptian history—not a proof for Padiamenopet's Nubian origin. In the case of Harwa—the first person to construct his tomb in the Asasif area, not the South Asasif—his genealogy seems to point to a Theban origin, at least on his father's side.<sup>79</sup> Similarly to Padiamenopet's burial, the name of the ruling king does not appear in Harwa's tomb.

The most distinctive thing connecting the tombs belonging to the Kushites is their southern location. The Nubian God's Wives of Amun chose Medinet

Habu, the southernmost part of the Theban necropolis, for their resting place (following the tradition started by Shepenwepet I; however, it has been said above that it could have been the Kushite princess Amenirdis who was responsible for Shepenwepet's sepulchre's location), while the Kushite officials such as Karakhamun, Karabasken, or the owner of TT 209 constructed their tombs in close proximity to each other in the South Asasif necropolis, not far from Medinet Habu.<sup>80</sup> From Harwa onwards, officials' tombs were located in the north, in the area in front of the temples of Deir el-Bahari.<sup>81</sup>

Regarding the Medinet Habu interments, it is worth adding that the mortuary chapels of the God's Wives of Amun were also located to the south of the Small Temple of Amun—their divine spouse. Moreover, during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty Medinet Habu became a necropolis reserved for the God's Wives and the women associated with the God's Wife's court; no male burial of that epoch was discovered.<sup>82</sup> While examples of clusters of burials of men holding similar titles in the Theban necropolis are known at least from the Ramesside period onwards,<sup>83</sup> the opposite situation (clusters of burials of women representing the same professional groups) is highly unusual. Additionally, in the case of "professional clusters," the males in question were usually buried with their wives, while the priestesses interred in Medinet Habu apparently were buried without their earthly partners, which also may reflect the special position enjoyed by Nubian women.

The southern location of the tombs belonging to Nubians seems to be more than a mere coincidence, especially in the light of the later moving of the necropolis to the north. It has been proposed that sepulchres of Saite period officials were constructed in the Asasif area in connection with the Festival of the Valley, revived under the Kushite pharaohs, with the causeway of the temple of Hatshepsut serving as a processional route during the celebrations.<sup>84</sup> Religious rites related to the Feast of the Decade were re-enacted in the Small Temple in Medinet Habu and played an important part in the ideology of kingship of the Nubian rulers, as attested by the decoration of Taharka's edifice in Karnak and other Kushite temples of that period.<sup>85</sup> Why, however, was the South Asasif necropolis chosen for a burial ground for the Nubian officials, especially if the northern "spot"—the Asasif area—was still available

at the time the Kushite tombs were constructed? Was the southern location (perhaps a symbolic reference to the southern origin of the deceased buried in the tombs) the only reason for choosing the South Asasif for the burial ground of Kushite nobles?

An often overlooked aspect of the Asasif necropoleis—both South and North—is the layout of the valleys, on the foreground of which they are situated. Both are located on the causeways (actual or projected) of Middle Kingdom royal complexes: the Asasif cemetery on the Mentuhotep II's in Deir el-Bahari, and the South Asasif necropolis on the planned causeway of the unfinished mortuary temple of Mentuhotep III or IV, or Amenemhat I in the so-called Third Valley or the Valley of the Colours.<sup>86</sup> The spatial arrangement of the valleys and their monuments is identical, even though the second temple was abandoned very soon after its construction began. In both cases there is a royal tomb, located not exactly in the centre of the valley, but a little to the south,<sup>87</sup> and courtiers' tombs located on the king's left and right hand. Traces of the removal of the rock slope of the adjacent hillock and the Sheikh Abd el-Qurna hill indicate that the architects of the royal complex in the Third Valley intended to remove part of the rock face in order to create space for the causeway of the temple. Abandonment of the project resulted in the change of the layout—the focal point of the wadi in which the South Asasif tombs were located became the hill to the south of the Third Valley, originally of secondary importance, but during the Late Period a well visible landmark towering over that part of the necropolis.<sup>88</sup> On the hill, in the Middle Kingdom tomb MMA 1152, located on the axis of the South Asasif plain, remains of a plundered, but evidently rich burial were unearthed, dated to the Twenty-fifth or early Twenty-sixth Dynasty<sup>89</sup>—possibly of a Kushite or of someone from the company of the Kushite officials.

In contrast to Deir el-Bahari, researched for over a century and with the majority of nobles' tombs published, the Middle Kingdom sepulchres of the Third Valley, including the hillock to the south of the valley and the southern slope of the Sheikh Abd el-Qurna hill, have never received comparable attention. The tombs, surveyed and numbered by Herbert E. Winlock, were never published or even mentioned in the official reports.<sup>90</sup> It seems, however, that the majority of them bear signs of reuse during the Late Period.<sup>91</sup>

I would like to argue that the spatial arrangement of the South Asasif Late Period tombs was influenced mostly not by the New Kingdom monuments, but those of the Middle Kingdom. Such a view has been expressed by Dieter Eigner, who noticed that the centres of the Theban necropolis during the Late Period concentrated around Middle Kingdom sanctuaries and “sacred” places.<sup>92</sup> Apparently, the area of the South Asasif must have possessed features particularly attractive to the Kushites settling in Thebes during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty; more attractive than Deir el-Bahari, one of the most prominent sectors of the necropolis, at least from the Twenty-second Dynasty onwards.<sup>93</sup> The southern location of the valley might have been one of the factors contributing to the desirability of the spot, but perhaps worth considering are two other things. Firstly, if Dorothea Arnold’s hypothesis of the abandonment of the construction of the royal temple due to the moving of the capital to Lisht is correct, the majority of tombs in the neighbourhood (such as the abovementioned MMA 1152) were abandoned as well and therefore available for the families arranging burials of their deceased during the Late Period—in the times when the necropolis was already overcrowded and therefore free spaces were especially valuable. Secondly, as I have argued elsewhere, the hill located to the south of the Third Valley, well visible from the floodplain, resembles a pyramid in shape.<sup>94</sup> It seems particularly suitable for the Kushites, with their admiration for the Egyptian past and with Napatan royal tombs in shape of pyramids,<sup>95</sup> to select a place of burial located in the vicinity of both the Middle Kingdom royal complex, and the landmark establishing a visual connection between their sepulchres and the tombs in the el-Kurru necropolis.

The role of Deir el-Bahari during the Late Period, despite the concentrated efforts of the scholars, especially during the last decades, is poorly understood, mostly due to the lack of written sources. The hypothesis of the rebirth of the Festival of the Valley is based mostly on circumstantial evidence: the orientation of the Late Period monumental tombs along the processional alley to the temple of Hatshepsut, copies of reliefs in the tombs, and written sources from the Graeco-Roman era.<sup>96</sup> No material remains, however, that could be linked with the celebrations of this festival during the Late Period have been discovered. It seems that

the Third Valley—perhaps the “Forgotten Valley” would be a more suitable name—could be the key to solving the mystery of the origins of the Kushite revival of the Festival of the Valley and the sacred topography of the necropolis during the Late Period.

#### EGYPTIANS BURIED IN DEIR EL-BAHARI—OR WERE THEY REALLY?

This brings us to the crux of this paper: the methods and tools used to identify Kushites in Egypt, and the notion of the Kushite identity on its own. The Kushites were buried in Egyptian-style tombs, with seemingly Egyptian funerary equipment (there were several examples of typically Nubian grave goods, such as Kushite pottery,<sup>97</sup> discovered in Thebes, but these are invariably rare occurrences), and often adopted Egyptian means of expressing themselves, such as taking Egyptian names or portraying themselves as Egyptians. Moreover, the greatest innovations introduced by the Kushites—artefacts strongly embedded in the Egyptian cultural past but revived by the past-loving Nubians, such as bead nets<sup>98</sup> and stone shabtis,<sup>99</sup> or the revival of monumental funerary architecture—although originally seeming to occur only in connection with Kushite burials (at least in the case of the stone shabtis and monumental temple-tombs), soon became popular with the Egyptians and therefore cannot be used as ethnic markers. The only Kushite artefacts that did not gain widespread popularity seem to be wooden biers, popular in Nubia but known from only one Egyptian site,<sup>100</sup> and funerary statuettes with baskets on their heads, discovered in TT 99.<sup>101</sup> All the abovementioned factors make the identification of the Kushites extremely difficult, even though their presence in Thebes under the Napatan pharaohs seems certain.<sup>102</sup>

Such a situation finds its reflection in numerical data. The Kushites constitute a very small group of burials among all the published Twenty-fifth Dynasty interments—approximately 7% in total.<sup>103</sup> On the other hand, in David A. Aston’s magisterial work on Egyptian burial assemblages from the Third Intermediate Period, there is a visible increase in number of burials between the Twenty-second/ Twenty-third and the Twenty-fifth Dynasty: statistically, almost 7 times more people were buried in Thebes in the Kushite period than during the preceding reign of the Libyan dynasties.<sup>104</sup> This increase does not necessarily have to result from a



sudden wave of migration—it may be a consequence of a demographic growth or a change in burial practices—but it would be unreasonable to exclude Kushite mobility as a possible factor behind it, especially in the period when such mobility is expected. But where are the Nubian newcomers, if so few of them could be identified so far?

Moreover, the identity of some of those recognized in the archaeological material could be a matter of dispute. In 2010, Julia Budka presented a list of 20 tomb groups from Thebes, attributed by her to the Nubians. While the southern origin of some of the deceased, like those buried in Tomb VII or the owners of the South Asasif tombs, can hardly be doubted due to the presence of multiple factors pointing to their Kushite identity (names, pottery, modes of representation), in the case of the others it might be wondered if their identification as Kushites was not premature. For example, the only reason to recognize the three deceased interred during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty in the reused tomb TT 367 as Nubians was the discovery of linen fragments bearing the name of Taharka with one of the burials.<sup>105</sup> One may ask if such an object indeed could only have made its way to the tomb of a Kushite, or could it be given to any distinguished person, Kushite or Egyptian? In a similar vein, the burial of Tjesraperet, wet nurse of Taharka's daughter, discovered by Ippollito Rosellini in Sheikh Abd el-Qurna (the location of the tomb is now, sadly, lost),<sup>106</sup> was identified as Kushite on the basis of the name of the Kushite king; there is no compelling reason, however, to reject the hypothesis that Tjesraperet was an Egyptian, as her name, names of her parents and Tjesraperet's burial equipment would indicate.

On the other hand, some of the burials discovered in Thebes and datable to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, attributed to Egyptians, perhaps are worth reconsidering. One example of such is the interments in the temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari, "the best documented burials of native Egyptians from this time period," according to Aston.<sup>107</sup> The "Egyptian-ness" of the deceased buried in the temple in the Late Period has never been questioned.

In order to better understand the context, we need to go back to the very basic concept of any Egyptian tomb: namely, that it should consist of two components, an underground part with a burial itself, and an aboveground cultic instalment. In this

way, a tomb could be a point of interaction between the realm of the dead and the realm of the living.<sup>108</sup> In the Libyan period, a new type of burial was introduced: interments within temple compounds. The 1st millennium BCE pharaohs were buried in simple chapels in Tanis, then in Sais and Mendes.<sup>109</sup>

Together with this change in burial practices, first interments within Theban west bank temples started to appear.<sup>110</sup> The persons buried in temple compounds belonged to the upper echelons of the Theban society. However, people interred in the Theban temples such as the temple of Hatshepsut in Deir el-Bahari did not have chapels erected for them, as was the case in royal burials; the only new architectural features associated with these burials were shafts, ending in undecorated burial chambers. This begs the question: where were the activities associated with the cult of the dead performed?

Recently it was observed that the location of the burial shafts in temple of Hatshepsut was not accidental; they were located

below the scenes showing offering tables, lists of offerings, rows of bearers of offerings, slaughter scenes with a frieze of offerings above them, the texts which contain, among others, formulas intended as a means of assuring the deceased prosperity in the Netherworld, the scenes where kings are shown making offerings to deities or performing rites, etc.; Tomb X was executed below the false-door in the Chapel of Hatshepsut.<sup>111</sup>

Therefore,

it seems that the preserved architecture of Hatshepsut's temple (the walls were still standing apparently in the Third Intermediate Period) formed a religious (and functional) superstructure for the tombs executed inside the temple buildings.<sup>112</sup>

Indeed, the majority of the shafts in the temple of Hatshepsut were located under the abovementioned scenes, but there is at least one that deviates from this pattern: a shaft excavated in the Hathor chapel, on the middle terrace of the temple, discovered by Édouard Naville. The shaft was located in the second hypostyle hall (HS-II), under the northern wall.<sup>113</sup> On the wall, there are four registers of scenes: the first three from the top contain depictions of rows of boats, while the fourth one—a procession of rejoicing soldiers, "dancers of the royal boat."<sup>114</sup> The first group of soldiers, on the left hand side, are wearing short Nubian wigs and carrying tree

boughs, weapons, and royal emblems; the second group, depicted on the right, are dancing Nubians, holding sticks (“boomerangs”) and wearing ostrich feathers on their heads (FIG. 5). While the scene is labelled as depicting “the renewal of birth,” its iconography, as well as iconography of other scenes in the room, makes it clear that the primary aim was to associate Hatshepsut with Hathor<sup>115</sup>—in this case, Hathor in her role of the Eye of Ra (Tefnut, Sekhmet), returning from Nubia. Dancing Nubians are often portrayed as accompanying the goddess on her return to Egypt.<sup>116</sup> If Naville’s description of the position of the shaft is correct, it should be looked for under the depiction of the dancing Nubians.<sup>117</sup>

The shaft was discovered intact by Naville; inside, there were three burials deposited, two belonging to women, and one to a man, all datable to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty.<sup>118</sup> The earliest of them seems to be the burial of Nesmutaatneru, whose tomb equipment belongs to the transitional phase between the Libyan and Kushite style: she was interred in a new type of coffin, called *qeresu*, but also in a Libyan-style cartonnage. Nesmutaatneru’s burial was dated to ca. 700 BCE. Her son, priest of Montu Djeddjehutiuefankh, and the other woman buried in the shaft, the lady of the house Tabekenkhonsu, probably died around 680-670 BCE, as the style of their burial equipment suggests.<sup>119</sup> It was proposed that the deceased represent a collateral branch of a family of Hor A; in fact, Nesmutaatneru’s burial is the first extant burial of any member of this family.<sup>120</sup>

Nesmutaatneru’s parents bore Egyptian names: Tjaenwaset and Neskhonsupakhered.

It was pointed out by John H. Taylor that Nesmutaatneru’s coffins’ style, “stark and austere,” is somewhat exceptional.<sup>121</sup> Also unusual is the decoration of the footboard of her cartonnage case: it is occupied by a representation of Iunmutef, wearing a short Nubian wig and a leopard skin, over a large *h<sup>3</sup>st* hieroglyph (Gardiner N25), a determinative in words such as “necropolis,” but also “desert” and “foreign land.”<sup>122</sup>

The decoration over the shaft and iconography of Nesmutaatneru’s coffin suggest a Kushite connection. It is also worth mentioning that the Hathor shrine—despite its obvious Nubian connections due to the association of Hathor and the Eye of Ra—is also the southernmost part of the temple of Hatshepsut, which, in the light of the previously stated preference of the Kushites to locate their tombs in the southern parts of the necropolis, may be of significance.

The myth of the Distant Goddess and her return from Nubia seems to have played an important part in the ideology of Kushite power in Egypt—not surprisingly, if we take into consideration the southern origin of the Napatan pharaohs. Numerous references to the Solar Eye occur in the text of Piankhy’s Victory Stela, associating Piankhy with Hathor returning from the South—an angry goddess, who needs to be pacified by sistrum-playing Nimlot.<sup>123</sup> Taharka’s titles, present on his

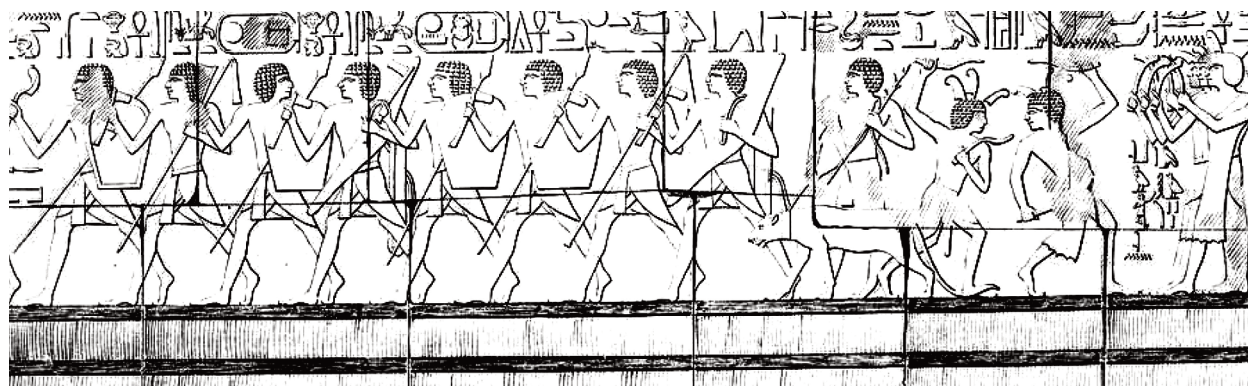


FIGURE 5: Nubians in the Chapel of Hathor, Deir el-Bahari (after: Naville 1901, Ppl. XCI)

Dahshur stela, identify him as “beloved of Bastet of Bugem,” establishing a link between the king and the Eye of Ra.<sup>124</sup> On the handle of a bronze mirror, discovered in the pyramid of Shabaka, a high priestess (most probably Amenirdis I) is depicted among Mut, Sekhmet, and Tefnut, the three goddesses symbolizing the Eye of Ra.<sup>125</sup> Finally, it was suggested that the Festival of the Valley, the sacred feast revived in the Kushite period, with its heliacal connotations and elements of drunkenness and celebration, was in fact a re-enactment of the myth of the Eye of Ra and its return from Nubia.<sup>126</sup>

Similar observations to those made by Szafranski in reference to the shafts in the temple of Hatshepsut can be made with regard to the 1st millennium BCE shafts in reused Theban tombs. The majority of shafts identified inside Theban tombs can be found under offering scenes. Four types of offering scenes can be listed here: scenes in which the deceased is seated on the chair and receives offerings; the deceased offering; offering-bearers; and, least often, offering lists. Unfortunately, due to the fact that shafts belonging to the later periods of tombs’ histories were rarely properly documented (if they were documented at all), and also due to the ubiquitous robberies of tombs, not enough information is available regarding such shafts and their dating. Location of selected 1st millennium BCE burials shafts in reused Theban tombs has been given in TABLE 2.

It is interesting to note that the only exceptions to the rule of locating shafts under offering scenes are the shaft belonging to the Kushite, Niu, placed under representation of a girl preparing bed and Bes, a deity extremely popular in Kush in the Napatan period, also in funerary contexts,<sup>127</sup> and that of anonymous person buried in TT 362, who chose to add an image of Nubians to the original tomb’s decoration. Elsewhere I have argued for a new method of research of such features, including not only the architecture and burial equipment associated with burials found inside the shaft but also position of the shaft in relation to the original function of a room and its original decoration.<sup>128</sup>

I believe that in all three cases—the family of Nesmutaateru, Niu, and the anonymous deceased from TT 362—their choice of a location of burial shaft was more than a mere coincidence. Unfortunately, our knowledge of mechanisms behind the tomb reuse in the 1st millennium BCE is very limited,<sup>129</sup>

not much is known about to what extent the families were free to choose from the available monuments and who was responsible for the selection of sites for “new” burials. However, it is worth stressing that interments in burial shafts in temple compounds on Theban west bank, although often treated as an entirely separate group of burials, in fact can be treated as a very particular type of tomb reuse. The Temples of Millions of Years, erected by the New Kingdom pharaohs on the edge of the Theban floodplain, in their basic concept were not temples of cult of a particular god per se, but played the role of cultic instalments for the royal tombs—functional superstructures for the burial apartments (substructures), located in the Valley of the Kings.<sup>130</sup> The separation of a pharaoh’s burial chamber and the offering chapel resulted in the common misconception that Theban private tombs differed from royal sepulchres in featuring scenes of daily life on their walls, while kingly tombs were to be deprived of them. In this sense, the burials in shafts in the temple of Hatshepsut were, in their original concept, no different from interments in shafts in any Theban tomb’s chapel—except for the fact, of course, that the temple in Deir el-Bahari was once a royal monument, while the majority of tombs belonged to private individuals. This, in turn, reveals the real difference between the burials of the 1st millennium BCE pharaohs and their subjects: the kings and God’s Wives were buried within functioning temples, dedicated to particular gods (the Small Temple in Medinet Habu was not a Temple of Millions of Years), while people buried in New Kingdom mortuary monuments were buried in reused tombs’ chapels—even if kingly ones. For Kushites arriving in Thebes, the surface of the wall above burial shaft, covered with sacred ancient images, could be another space for expressing self-identity, or, alternatively, serving religious purposes, ensuring that the mechanisms of Egyptian magic were put in motion, providing the deceased with necessary offerings. Taking into consideration that the reuse of older structures became the dominant burial rite in Thebes in the 1st millennium BCE, I believe that the location of new features in the tombs and temples in relation to the original decoration may be an important hint regarding the beliefs associated with funerary practices of that era, and for the Kushite period—also the identity of the deceased.



TABLE 2: Locations of selected 1st millennium BCE burial shafts in reused Theban tomb; *continued on next page.*

TOMB	LOCATION OF THE SHAFT	PERSON BURIED IN THE SHAFT	SCENE
TT 11	transverse hall, NW corner	anonymous (remains of a burial preliminarily dated by the excavator to the Twenty-sixth Dynasty, but the presence of a pit for canopic jars perhaps points to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty) <sup>a</sup>	offering scene
TT 32	long corridor, SW part	anonymous (remains of a burial dated to the Twenty-second/Twenty-fifth Dynasty on the basis of the presence of cartonnage fragments) <sup>b</sup>	offering scene
TT 40	transverse hall, NW corner	anonymous (the shaft does not belong to the original layout of the tomb, but the exact date remains unknown) <sup>c</sup>	offering scene
TT 55	columned hall, SE part (Mond's Pit 7)	anonymous (pottery found by Mond inside the shaft [Aston's type 78] points to a Twenty-fifth/early Twenty-sixth Dynasty date) <sup>d</sup>	offering scene
TT 57	transverse hall, NE corner	lady of the house Tareset (dated to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty on the basis of her shabti box) <sup>e</sup>	offering scene
TT 68	transverse hall, NW part ("Schacht III")	anonymus (remains found in the tomb indicate a Twenty-second–Twenty-fifth Dynasty date) <sup>f</sup>	offering scene
TT 99	chapel, SW corner ("Shaft A")	Wedjahor, fourth priest of Amun, most probably active under Shabaka (his coffin was found in Shaft A, but mummy in Shaft B) <sup>g</sup>	offering scene
TT 99	chapel, SE corner ("Shaft B")	Niu, daughter of the priest Padiamun from Kawa (Nubia), possibly Wedjahor's wife (her cartonnages were also found in Shaft A) <sup>h</sup>	girl prepares bed, with candle, statue of Bes, baskets, and toilet-box
TT 112	"right transept" (= transverse hall, N part)	Nakhtefmut (a shabti box, with a late spelling of the Osiris name, points to a date in the Twenty-fifth/early Twenty-sixth Dynasty) <sup>i</sup>	offering scene
TT 194	transverse hall, S part ("Schacht 1")	probably Amenkha or a member of his family, whose burial equipment, dated to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, was found scattered in the tomb) <sup>j</sup>	offering scene
TT 362	transverse hall, W half	anonymous (burial equipment points to a burial dating to the Twenty-fifth/early Twenty-sixth Dynasty) <sup>k</sup>	two Nubian figures adoring (scene added during the later phase of tomb reuse)

**TABLE 2:** Locations of selected 1st millennium BCE burial shafts in reused Theban tomb; *continued from previous page.*

<sup>a</sup>	Galán 2010.
<sup>b</sup>	Schreiber 2008, 49–63.
<sup>c</sup>	Davies and Gardiner 1926, 5.
<sup>d</sup>	Mond and Emery 1927.
<sup>e</sup>	Mond 1905, 66-67. The box's dimensions were given by Mond (28.5 x 14.5), but the units were not mentioned. According to Aston (2009, 235), if the dimensions were given in inches, it would point to a box of his type V or VI, but if in centimetres, the size would indicate his type VII or VIII. Since everywhere else in the report centimetres and metres were used, I am inclined to assume the latter.
<sup>f</sup>	Seyfried 1991. Schacht 3 evidently comes from a phase of tomb reuse. In his publication of TT 68, the latest phase discussed by Seyfried is the reuse of the funerary complex during the 21st dynasty; however, objects of later date (funerary figurines, pottery) were discovered inside the tomb (Aston 1995; Aston 2009, 236-237). No example of a Twenty-first Dynasty shaft, cut to accommodate burials in a reused tomb, is known to me; it seems most probable that the shaft must come from the later Third Intermediate Period.
<sup>g</sup>	Strudwick 1995
<sup>h</sup>	Strudwick 1995
<sup>i</sup>	Ryan 2016
<sup>j</sup>	Seyfried 1995. Although the date for the construction of the shaft was not given by its excavator, by analogy with other shafts cut in the 1st millennium BCE and the discovery of burial equipment dated to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty inside the tomb, I believe it should be dated to the phase of tomb reuse.
<sup>k</sup>	Pereyra et al. 2015.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the preceding paragraphs I aimed to highlight several issues regarding the Kushite presence in Thebes that may prove useful for proper understanding of political, social and religious changes of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty. The majority of the conclusions were drawn from the archaeological material from the Theban necropolis; ideally, such a study should be counterbalanced by the analysis of the settlement, but the possibilities of conducting archaeological research on Theban east bank are limited, and therefore one has to rely mostly on the data from the cemetery.

The exceptional role played by women in the Nubian society proves especially important when it comes to trying to differentiate between Egyptian and Nubian influence in Twenty-fifth Dynasty Thebes. Such a task is uneasy, mostly due to the nature of understanding of Egyptian material culture in the Kushite tradition. As demonstrated by Howley, Egyptian objects (and, as we have seen, other means of expressing oneself, such as names) often served as markers of status in the Nubian society,<sup>131</sup> which makes ethnic identification extremely difficult. In this paper I offered several observations on patterns visible in the archaeological material from Thebes, which could help us better

understand how the Kushites expressed their identity; their identity as a group (visible in the change in the understanding of the institution of the God's Wife of Amun, reflected for example in the priestesses' 'kingly' burials), but also individual identities (noticeable, for example, in the location of burial shafts under scenes alluding to Nubian traditions). The search for Kushites in Twenty-fifth Dynasty Thebes is an arduous undertaking, requiring constant questioning of the assumptions made in the process. The crucial problem is the definition of the identity itself. Were the persons born in Kush and relocated to Egypt any more "Kushite" than the descendants of the mixed families? What were the means of expressing their ethnic identity? Did they even feel any need to express it?

One of the greatest achievements of the Kushites in Egypt was restoring certain long-forgotten Egyptian traditions and establishing canons that stayed in fashion for the next centuries. This great achievement, however, proved to be also their greatest curse, blurring their material identities and making them invisible to Egyptologists trying to understand complexities of the 7th century BCE mixed Egypto-Kushite society.

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- 2017a; Broekman 2017b; Broekman 2017c; Jurman 2017.
- <sup>3</sup> For example: 754 BCE – Dodson 2012; 752 BCE – Dodson and Hilton 2010; 747 BCE – Clayton 2006; 728 BCE – Wilkinson 2010; 722 BCE – Hornung, Krauss, and Warburton 2006; 515 BCE – Baines and Malek 2002.
- <sup>4</sup> For example: Howley 2018.
- <sup>5</sup> Grimal 1981.
- <sup>6</sup> This citation, and all the following excerpts from the Victory Stela, are given after: Ritner 2009, 465–492.
- <sup>7</sup> Ritner 2009, 464–465.
- <sup>8</sup> Kahn 2014, 25.
- <sup>9</sup> Ritner 2009, 459–460.
- <sup>10</sup> Schulz 2009.
- <sup>11</sup> Aston 2009, 394.
- <sup>12</sup> Aston 2009, 19–38; Meffre 2016.
- <sup>13</sup> Howley 2015.
- <sup>14</sup> Howley 2015, 32–35.
- <sup>15</sup> Robins 1994.
- <sup>16</sup> Gozzoli 2001, 59; Jansen-Winkel 2006, 257, n. 159.
- <sup>17</sup> Lohwasser 2001, 68–69.
- <sup>18</sup> Török 1995, 212.
- <sup>19</sup> Howley 2015, 33.
- <sup>20</sup> The monument was later expanded by Amenirdis I and Shabataka, making the original façade the rear wall of the newly created room.
- <sup>21</sup> Redford 2004, 68–69; Ayad 2009a, 35–36; 124; Ayad 2009b; Adams 2011, 29.
- <sup>22</sup> Evidently alive at the moment of the construction of the façade.
- <sup>23</sup> Koch 2012, 114–120.
- <sup>24</sup> Ayad 2016, 90.
- <sup>25</sup> Kitchen 1973, 317.
- <sup>26</sup> Coulon et al. 2018, 275.
- <sup>27</sup> Ritner 2009, 468; Howley 2015, 33.
- <sup>28</sup> Adams 2011, 29.
- <sup>29</sup> Ayad 2016, 90.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Redford 2004; Pischikova 2014; Pope 2014; Pischikova 2017; Pischikova et al. 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Brunet 2005; Bányai 2013; Bányai 2015; Broekman 2015; Payraudeau 2015; Broekman

- 30 Lohwasser 2016, 126.
- 31 Jansen-Winkel 2007, 366; Meffre 2016, 52.
- 32 Hölscher 1954, 18–20.
- 33 Jurman 2006; Koch 2012, 42–43.
- 34 Ayad 2009a, 125–126; Ayad 2009b, 34–36. Normally, the vulture headdress would be worn on top of a modius or a long wig.
- 35 The difference being the absence of a modius and horns in Katimala’s depiction, and the presence of a sun disc (Darnell 2006, 8).
- 36 Pope 2014, 217.
- 37 Lohwasser 2001, 67–68.
- 38 Ayad 2009b, 39.
- 39 Coulon, Hallmann, and Payraudeau 2018, 272.
- 40 Jurman 2016; Griffin 2017.
- 41 Dunham 1950; Dunham 1955.
- 42 Despite the fact that the burial chamber prepared for queen Mutnodjmet, wife of Psusennes I, was discovered in NRT-III, no evidence for the actual burial was found, and the room was later used for the burial of Psusennes’ successor (Lull 2002, 19–162; Aston 2009, 39–61).
- 43 Hölscher 1954, 8–10.
- 44 Dodson and Hilton 2010, 244–247.
- 45 Lohwasser 2001, 71–74.
- 46 Aston 2014, 18.
- 47 Török 2009, 26.
- 48 It was proposed by Janice Yellin that scenes in the Osiris Heqa-Djet chapel showing Shepenwepet I being crowned and suckled were a later addition, made by the Kushites after Shepenwepet’s death (Yellin 1995, 256–257). However, while theoretically it could be possible for the small representations on the jambs of the false door, I find it very unlikely for the large scene showing Shepenwepet before Osorkon III, occupying the main part of the original façade of the chapel.
- 49 Aston 2014, 28–37.
- 50 Szafranski 2011, 144.
- 51 Hölscher 1954, 20–28.
- 52 Dodson 2002.
- 53 Russmann 1997.
- 54 Budka 2010b, 511.
- 55 Strudwick 1995, 93; Vittmann 2007, 148.
- 56 Budka 2010b, 513.
- 57 Pope 2014, 48. Budka (2010, 510) believes that Wedjahor was also a Kushite, but there is no evidence available to support this claim. However, identification of Kushites in Egypt during the Twenty-fifth Dynasty is difficult due to several reasons discussed further here, and therefore Budka’s hypothesis should not be discarded entirely.
- 58 Smith 2003, 192.
- 59 Buzon, Smith, and Simonetti 2016, 294.
- 60 Risdon 1939, 160–161.
- 61 Risdon 1939, 161; Musgrave and Evans 1981; Keita 1988; Franklin 2018, 684.
- 62 Reade 1976, 100; Albenda 1982, 8.
- 63 Keith 1940; Smith 1995, 71; Ullinger et al. 2005. I would like to thank the anonymous reviewer for references to these publications.
- 64 Smith 2003, 162–165; 198–199.
- 65 Although see the discussion on the erection of freestanding funerary monuments for women as an element of Nubian tradition above.
- 66 Vittmann 2007, 143–144.
- 67 Kitchen 1973, 390.
- 68 Vittmann 2007, 148.
- 69 Pope 2014, 52, 265.
- 70 Conversely, I know of no example of an Egyptian taking a Kushite name.
- 71 Corsi 2013, 538.
- 72 Parker 1962, 6.
- 73 Smith 2015.
- 74 Naunton 2011, 5–6.
- 75 Pischikova 2009; Pischikova 2014; Pischikova 2017.
- 76 Molinero Polo 2016.
- 77 Traunecker 2014, 210.
- 78 Gundlach 2013, 267.
- 79 Tiradritti 1999, 10.



<sup>80</sup> The only Nubians who seemingly erected a new tomb in the northern part of the necropolis were the Kushites buried in Tomb VII in Asasif.

<sup>81</sup> It needs to be added, however, that one more rock-cut tomb was located in the South Asasif necropolis during the early years of the Saite dynasty: TT 390, belonging to the lady Irterau. The tomb remains unpublished.

<sup>82</sup> Hölscher 1954.

<sup>83</sup> Schreiber 2018, 236–237.

<sup>84</sup> Bietak 2012, 144.

<sup>85</sup> Cooney 2000.

<sup>86</sup> Arnold 1991.

<sup>87</sup> Most probably, the shift to the south in the case of the Deir el-Bahari temple was necessary due to the presence of the cult cave of Hathor, already in the Middle Kingdom times, later replaced by Hatshepsut's chapel dedicated to the goddess (Bietak 2012, 132, n. 5).

<sup>88</sup> Kaczanowicz 2018, 226–228.

<sup>89</sup> Kaczanowicz 2018, 220–226. Taking into consideration the chronology of the South Asasif necropolis, however, it seems that the Twenty-fifth Dynasty date is more probable.

<sup>90</sup> The only exception being the tomb of Meketra (TT 280).

<sup>91</sup> Winlock's unpublished notes were kindly made available by the Metropolitan Museum of Art to Andrzej Ćwiek, the director of the Polish mission working on the hill to the south of the Third Valley.

<sup>92</sup> Eigner 1984, 27–28.

<sup>93</sup> Szafranski 2011.

<sup>94</sup> Kaczanowicz 2018, 227–228.

<sup>95</sup> Lacovara 2018.

<sup>96</sup> Bietak 2012, 144–146.

<sup>97</sup> For example in the Tomb VII in Asasif (Budka 2010b, 507).

<sup>98</sup> It was suggested that bead nets, which made their first appearance around 750 BCE (Aston 2009, 292–293), were an innovation inspired by Nubian tradition of beadwork, brought north by the Napatan rulers of Egypt (Bosse-Griffiths 1978, 106; Aston 2009, 399; Budka 2010a, 343).

Beads nets were identified on several Napatan period sites in Nubia (Edwards 2004, 134–135). It is worth noticing, however, that representations of beads nets can be found in the iconography of Egyptian coffins as early as during the Twenty-first Dynasty; see, e.g., the mummy board of Henuttawy F, buried in the tomb MMA 59 in Deir el-Bahari (Winlock 1924, fig. 24). While it is entirely plausible that actual bead nets were introduced under the Kushite influence, the concept of connecting nets made of beads, known from many representations of Egyptian gods and goddesses (Budka 2010a, 253), within the funerary sphere, was not new at all.

<sup>99</sup> From the 1st millennium BCE we know of eight individuals in Thebes who possessed stone shabtis: Amenirdis I, Shepenwepet II, Karakhamun, Harwa, Montuemhat, Wedjarenes, Diasethebsed, Padiamenopet (Gundlach 2013, i), and Ipy (Schreiber 2008, 81–82; pl. XV). All of them lived during the Twenty-fifth or early Twenty-sixth Dynasty; at least four of them were Kushites (Amenirdis I, Shepenwepet II, Karakhamun, Wedjarenes), and all but one (Ipy, on whom there is no prosopographical information) are well-documented members of the Kushite administration or court in Thebes. Moreover, the first person who possessed stone shabtis most probably was Karakhamun—a Kushite, as indicated by data from his tomb, pointing to a construction in the earlier part of the Kushite period (Naunton 2014).

<sup>100</sup> Aston 2009, 95.

<sup>101</sup> Musso and Petacchi 2011.

<sup>102</sup> Budka 2010b, 503.

<sup>103</sup> In the group of 284 burials dated to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty/early Twenty-sixth Dynasty collected by me, 20 of them could be relatively securely attributed to the Kushites (but see further discussion in the present paper).

<sup>104</sup> In Aston's catalogue, 399 tomb groups were identified in Thebes (TGs 647–1045). Within this set, 168 burials could be dated to the Twenty-first Dynasty (ca. 1069–944 BCE), 27 to the Twenty-second–Twenty-third Dynasties (ca. 944–750 BCE), and 89 to the Twenty-fifth Dynasty (750–656 BCE). The remaining tomb groups could not be precisely assigned to any

- dynasty (Aston 2009, 157–268). This gives the following number of burial per year: 1.34 for the Twenty-first dynasty, 0.14 for the Twenty-second–Twenty-third Dynasties, and 0.95 for Twenty-fifth Dynasty.
- <sup>105</sup> Fakhry 1943, 412; Budka 2010b, 512.
- <sup>106</sup> Guidotti 2008; Budka 2010b, 512.
- <sup>107</sup> Aston 2003, 147.
- <sup>108</sup> Dodson and Ikram 2008, 13–14.
- <sup>109</sup> Stadelmann 1971; Gosline 1995; Ritner 2008, 309.
- <sup>110</sup> Kaczanowicz 2019, 83.
- <sup>111</sup> Szafranski 2011, 146.
- <sup>112</sup> Szafranski 2015, 189–191.
- <sup>113</sup> Naville 1895; Naville 1898, 10. On the discrepancy between the location of the shaft given in the first report from work, and the location given in the final publication of the temple, see Kaczanowicz 2019, 85, n. 8.
- <sup>114</sup> Naville 1901, 1–2; pls. LXXXVIII–XCI.
- <sup>115</sup> Naville 1901, 1.
- <sup>116</sup> Morris 2011, 81; Ashby 2018, 64.
- <sup>117</sup> The shaft has not be relocated yet (Sheikholeslami 2003, 134).
- <sup>118</sup> Taylor 1984; Aston 2009, 213–214.
- <sup>119</sup> Aston 2009, 214.
- <sup>120</sup> Taylor 1984, 29.
- <sup>121</sup> Taylor 1984, 29.
- <sup>122</sup> Museum of Fine Arts Boston n.d.
- <sup>123</sup> Fitzenreiter 2011.
- <sup>124</sup> Eide et al. 1994, 163.
- <sup>125</sup> Dunham 1950, 57, pl. LXII.
- <sup>126</sup> Naguib 1991.
- <sup>127</sup> Petacchi 2014, 205.
- <sup>128</sup> Kaczanowicz 2019, 87.
- <sup>129</sup> Sheikholeslami 2017.
- <sup>130</sup> Dodson and Ikram 2008, 209.
- <sup>131</sup> Howley 2018.