

Ahmed Mansour

Behind the Scene: Religion at the Service of Politics in Ancient Egypt: Views from Philae Island

Abstract: The Philae Island witnessed successive political and religious debates between different people: Ptolemies, Romans, Meroites, Nobades, Blemmyes and Christians. When the Ptolemies decided to extend the southern borders of Egypt to include the Dodecaschoinus (Lower Nubia), and then Diocletian ordered to move back to Elephantine, a new political situation was created. The Meroites, then the Nobades and Blemmyes were allowed to have control on the island. In this new and combined political atmosphere, religion was used to reflect power, control, as well as diverse cultural connections between different ethnic groups.

In the ancient Egyptian society, religion was perfectly used to strengthen the political situation of the sovereigns. For example, the cult of Isis and Osiris was used as tool to attract visitors to the island, and thus, praising the Ptolemies. In addition, the Meroites had defended their right to access the temple of Isis and borrowed the statue of Isis for ten days to accomplish religious rituals. Moreover, they established “The Meroitic Chamber” which includes important scenes of the Meroite delegations. Meanwhile, when Christianity was acknowledged as the official religion of the Roman Empire, the Christians were keen to use this official and political recognition to close the pagan temples and to build new churches on the island.

Keywords: Philae, Nobades, Blemmyes, Meroites, Romans, Dodecaschoinus, Diocletian, Philae, Roman Egypt, Nubia

Introduction

In ancient Egyptian society, religion was ideally suited to strengthen the political situation of the sovereigns, and thus, it became a backdoor tool for rulers to help retain their grip on the state’s economic and political affairs. At Philae Island, the cult of Isis and Osiris was used a tool to attract visitors to the island from different destinations, which in turn brought praise for the Ptolemies. In the meantime, the Nobades and Blemmyes had defended their rights to access the temple of Isis in order to borrow a statue of Isis for a period of ten days, in order to accomplish religious rituals in their

Note: I would like to thank William Joy for his effort to proofread my paper.

homelands. Moreover, the Meroites established 'The Meroitic Chamber' which includes important scenes of the Meroite delegations who visited the island to negotiate politics with the Roman ambassadors. Then, when Christianity was introduced as the official religion of the Roman Empire, the Christians were keen to use such political recognition either to transform the pagan temples on Philae Island into churches or to build new churches on the island.

Because of this, Philae Island witnessed successive political and religious conflicts between different groups of people. These included political rulers such as the Ptolemies, the Romans, and their political rivals, including Meroites, Nobades and Blemmyes. When the Ptolemies decided to extend the southern borders of Egypt to include the Dodecaschoinus (Lower Nubia), and then Diocletian ordered it moved back to Elephantine, a new political situation was created. The Meroites, followed by the Nobades and Blemmyes, were allowed to have control on the island. In this new and combined political atmosphere, religion was used to reflect power and control, as well as the diverse cultural connections between different ethnic groups.

The purpose of this paper is to help understand how religion served politics on Philae Island, through shedding light on the different groups of people who took control of the Island.

Part One: Historical Overview

Seven kilometers to the south of the Aswan Dam lies the most important island of the ancient Egyptian religion. Philae was revered as the location which received the first indication of the Nile flood.¹

Since Philae was said to be one of the burying-places of Osiris, it was held in high reverence all the Egyptians from north to the south, and on it, the Ptolemies started to build a series of temples first dedicated mainly to Isis, and then to other deities. Also, Philae Island included the last pagan temples in ancient Egypt, which were later closed and transformed into churches in the sixth century AD. Indeed, the present island is not actually the original site, since Philae Island became submerged after the construction of the High Dam in the 1960s; therefore, the Philae complex was dismantled and relocated to the nearby Agilkia Island, as part of a wider UNESCO project (Fig. 1).

During the late period (712–323 BC), Philae Island became a sacred land, but the priests of Isis were in conflict with the priests of Khnum, though they eventually took control of the island for the worship of Isis.² Subsequently, the Ptolemies began an extensive campaign of building on Philae. They also chose to extend the southern bor-

1 Beness/Hillard 2003, 206.

2 Cauville/Ali 2013, 3.

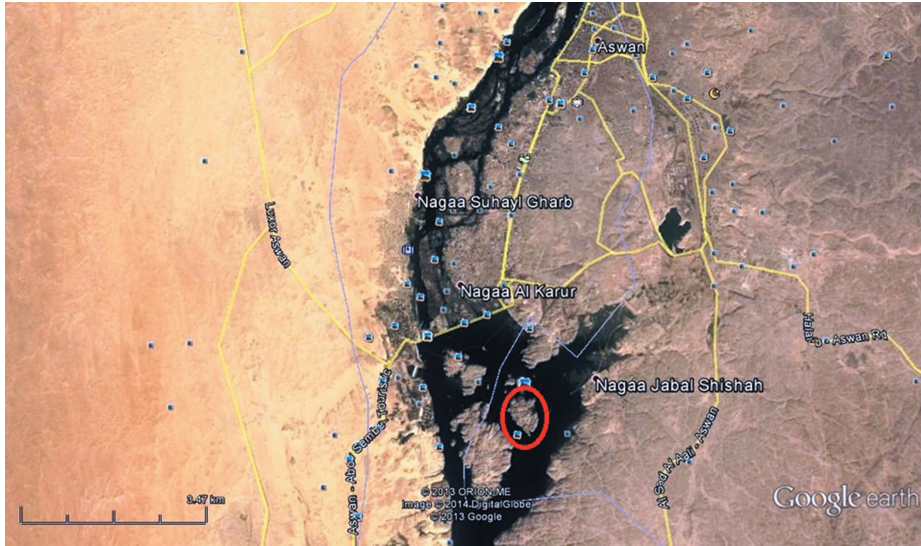


Fig. 1: A General View of the First Cataract Area, where it shows the Philae Island. Photo: © 2023 Google, adapted by A. Mansour.

ders of Egypt by 75 miles/120.7 km (12 *schoenoi*), and thus the Dodecaschoinus became an Egyptian nome. Ptolemy V (Epiphanes) dedicated the Dodecaschoinus³ to Isis in an attempt to legitimize Ptolemaic rule over the region. The land extension had trifold benefits: religious, political and economic. In addition, Ptolemy VI (Philometor) is represented, in the Dodecaschoinus stela (29 July 157 BC = year 24 of Ptolemy VI), as making an offering to Osiris and Isis of the territory of Dodecaschoinus (Fig. 2).⁴

Ptolemy VI (Philometor) was keen to strengthen his political-religious authority, and thus, the economic dominance through the donation of the land to the priests of Osiris and Isis. When Egypt became a Roman province, the Roman emperors started to construct important buildings on Philae, such as the ‘Gate of Hadrian’.⁵ The gate was important as it faces Biga Island and served as a departure point for the procession bark of Isis to visit Osiris at the Abaton.

³ Dodecaschoinus extends from Aswan to El-Maharraqa city, and it is probable that the city El-Maharraqa corresponds to the ancient toponym of Takompso. See: Cauville/Ali 2013, 186.

⁴ The (symbolic) donation act of Dodecaschoinus to Isis by the conquerors of Egypt highlighted the politic power granted to the temple institution in Philae (Török 2009, 400–401). A decree of Ptolemy VI (Philometor) (180–145 BC) donating the region was carved in 157 BC on a stela set in front of the eastern tower of the second pylon of the temple, and later englobed inside a chapel built around it. Augustus was represented while donating Dodecaschoinus to Isis in a relief on the eastern exterior wall of the temple (Hölbl 2004, 147–150).

⁵ Cf. Haeny 1985, 215–216.

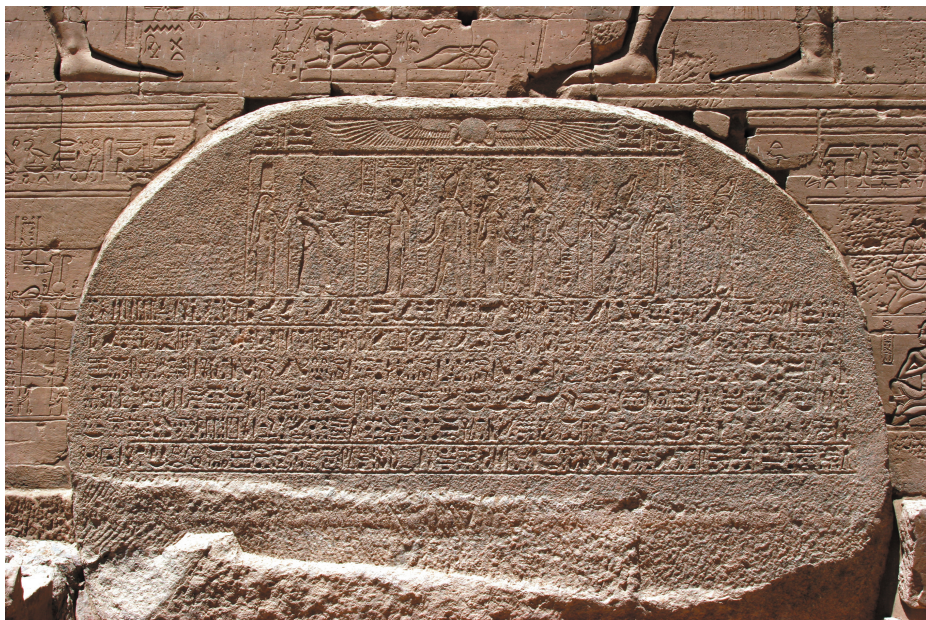


Fig. 2: The Dodecaschoinus stela. Photo: © A. Mansour.

The Roman policy with the southern neighbors of Egypt was not peaceful, and after a series of serious wars with the Kingdom of Meroe, Diocletian ordered in 298 AD to move back the borders of Egypt to Elephantine rather than the Dodecaschoinus.⁶ Thus the region fell to the Meroites until the beginning of the fourth century,⁷ and then it was controlled by the indigenous Nobades (a branch of the Nubian people) and the Blemmyes from the Eastern Desert. These two groups of peoples filled the space left by the Romans and the Meroites.⁸ By the fourth and fifth centuries Christianity started to extend to different parts of Egypt. Thus, Philae received the first Christians who then began to convert some parts of the island into cultic places for the new religion.

⁶ Procop. 1.19.27–37; Cauville/Ali 2013, 6.

⁷ FHN 1998, 1188–1193.

⁸ Dijkstra 2004, 150.

Part Two: Struggle for Political and Religious Dominance

As mentioned above, the political situation of Philae changed over the centuries and as a consequence different religious factors came to the surface, each playing a role in the control of the island.⁹ Because of this, it would be beneficial for the sake of this paper to have a general understanding of the various communities who lived, accessed or controlled the island, behind the official scene. The approach to contextualize this view is to answer the following questions (4W) Who, When, Why, and What? – Who were allowed to access or control the island? When did they access the island? Why? And what evidence remains of their presence?

The Meroites

The political presence of the Meroites began in the second century and culminated in the third century AD when Meroe itself began to fall into decline. Their presence was distinguished by the range of languages used in their inscriptions, the number of graffiti, the status of the titles held, and the involvement of Meroitic royalty. The Meroites served as intermediaries between Roman Egypt and Africa, and provided Egypt with exotic African goods. In turn they imported goods from Egypt such as wine and jewelry. Thus, the Meroitic rulers were keen to control Lower Nubia as a province in order to maintain control of such lucrative trade with Roman Egypt.¹⁰ When in 298 AD, Diocletian ordered a move back to Egypt's old borders at Elephantine rather than the Dodecaschoinus, the Egyptian temples were no longer supported by the Roman rulers and increasingly abandoned by Egyptian worshippers. Meroitic rulers sought to expand their control of Meroitic Nubia by gaining ritual control over the temples of Lower Nubia.¹¹ In this regard, we can examine the Wayekiye family of priests, who frequently used the same name for its members; they were either priests or civil administrators, and served as the local representatives for the Meroitic ruler in his dealings with the Egyptian temples of Lower Nubia. They left behind them a wealth of inscriptions, in Demotic, Greek, and Meroitic, during eight generations in which they are attested in the Dodecaschoinus.¹²

As usual in ancient Egypt, religion and politics are two sides of the same coin. When the Meroites had their access to the island, their religious activities at the Isis temple reflected a twofold, behind-the-scenes political statement, as they practiced their rites in the Egyptian tradition, specifically the funerary rites for Osiris in the

⁹ Dijkstra 2004, 150.

¹⁰ Ashby 2016, 165.

¹¹ Ashby 2016, 115.

¹² To read more about the Wayekiye family, see: Ashby 2016, 115–120.

Khoiak festival.¹³ Moreover, through offering financial support for the Isis temple, particularly when Roman Emperors neglected to support Egyptian religious institutions, they in fact sought to curb their power.¹⁴

Behind the scene, it seems the Meroites were aware of the significance of the Khoiak festival and made certain that their kings were celebrated at Philae by their representatives on that day. As noted, the Dodekaschoinos served as a buffer zone between Meroe and Roman Egypt, and because Philae had the dominant temple of that region, the temple complex served as an appropriate meeting place for the representatives of Roman Egypt and Meroe to discuss political issues. Three high official delegations from Meroe to Roman Egypt are represented in the graffiti of Philae: Sasan (253 AD),¹⁵ Manitawawi and Bekemete in the Meroitic Chamber (c. 260 AD),¹⁶ and Abratoye and Tami (c. 261 AD).¹⁷ Indeed, the inscriptions¹⁸ of the three diplomatic missions from Meroe contained embedded religious as well as political messages: pious statements, descriptions of religious rituals, and donations of gold.

In this regard, it should be emphasized that the longest Demotic inscription on the island is Ph 416. It is twenty-six lines in length, covering an entire block of stone.¹⁹ It was incised on the 10th of April 253 AD and relates to historical events that happened over a period of two years. This inscription tells us that Sasan,²⁰ son of Paesis, was sent from the side of the King of Meroe to Philae to give homage to Isis in order to help faraway people. Sasan brought 10 talents of silver (about 273 kg, see Fig. 3).

Moreover, there are two important inscriptions at the Gate of Hadrian: REM 0119, which belongs to the king Yesbokhe-Amani (Fig. 4) and REM 0121 by a certain Yeby (Fig. 5).²¹

13 The month of Khoiak, lasting from 27th November to 26th December, marked the end of the Nile flood; at this time the resurrection of Osiris, of whom the cult being intimately linked with the fertility of the land, was celebrated in order to assure the continued richness of the soils. During Khoiak, and in other boat processions, Nubian deities visited the Isis temple, strengthening the connection of the Meroitic society with Philae and its goddess.

14 Ashby 2016, 170. Solange mentioned that, during the month of Khoiak, the annual arrival of the Nubian priests as representatives of the Meroitic ruler, confirmed the that Kushite kings arrived with the Inundation, to associate themselves with the life-giving forces of the flood as well as with Osiris.

15 Sasan is identified by the title of Meroe's "Great Envoy to Rome". Pope 2014, 577–582.

16 The Meroitic chamber contains Meroitic inscriptions and pictures dating to the third century AD and shows a procession of Meroitic officials. It seems that the influence of the Meroites in the third century AD was so great that they were allowed to have a separate cultic room on the island. Bum-baugh 2011, 66–69.

17 Török 1978, 217–222.

18 The Meroitic inscriptions are concentrated in three areas of the temple complex of Philae: the Birth House (Mammisi), the Meroitic chamber and the Gate of Hadrian. The inscriptions which are written in both Demotic and Meroitic are concentrated in the Birth House and on the Gate of Hadrian.

19 Griffith 1935, 112–119, Ph. 416.

20 See Pope 2009, 74, note a.

21 Leclant *et al.* 2000, 269.

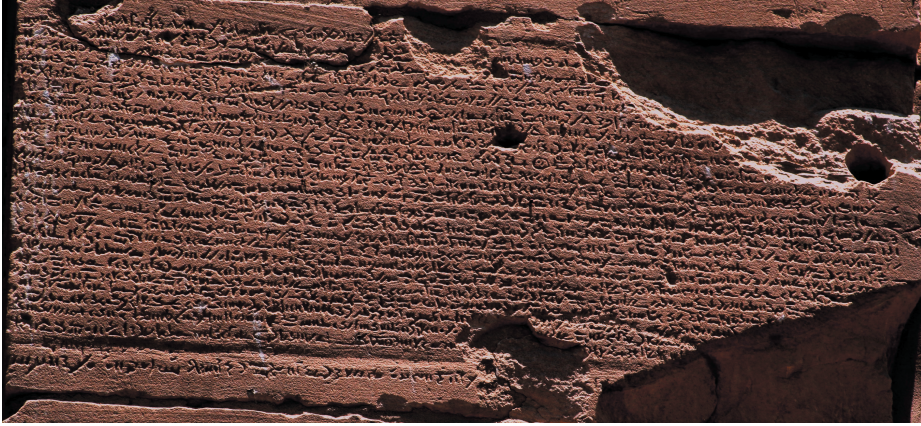


Fig. 3: The Ph. 416 which commemorates the visit of Pasan, messenger of the King of Meroe to Philae.
Photo: © A. Mansour.

REM 0121 is an adoration inscription dedicated to Isi by a certain Yebye, who is ascribed as the messenger of Wepwawet. According to its paleography the inscription dates back to the fourth century AD.²²

Behind the scenes, the entire event is of supreme importance for the visiting Meroites as it represents the transmission of power from the deceased king Osiris to his legitimate successor Horus. Therefore, the Meroitic king Yesbokhe-Amani (circa 300 AD)



Fig. 4: King Yesbokhe-Amani's inscription, Philae Island. (REM 0119). Photo: © A. Mansour.

²² Leclant *et al.* 2000, 271.

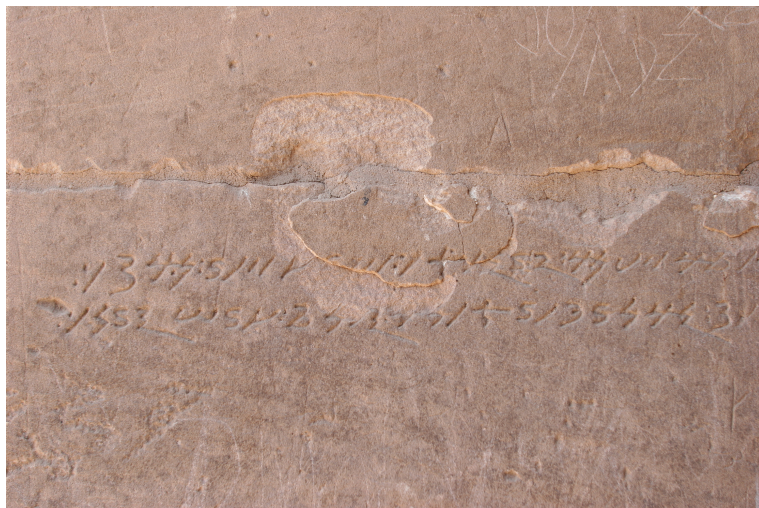


Fig. 5: An adoration inscription dedicated to Isis, by a certain named Yebye, Philae Island. (REM 0121).
Photo: © A. Mansour.

usurped the image of the Egyptian king and left his Meroitic-language *proskynema* above it. Through this act, the Meroitic king received the legitimacy of his rule from the Egyptian deity, i.e. Osiris.²³ According to Ashby, the Meroites were concerned to perform suitable rites to ensure the revivification of their deceased king, and since Osiris and Isis were considered as their divine parents, they were careful to provide the appropriate funerary rites for Osiris during the visit to Philae,²⁴ thus they dedicated two preferred graffiti areas to the revivification of their king and its relation to Osiris Wennefer: the southwest corner of the Pronaos and the Gate of Hadrian.

Finally, according to Dijkstra the study of the demotic inscriptions has defined a group of thirty-six graffiti left by Meroites. They are pilgrimage inscriptions and are distinguished by the Meroite names. These inscriptions are longer and contain extra personal and religious feelings, such as appeasing prayers.²⁵ The inscriptions mention the festivals in which the Meroites participated as well as the rich gifts of gold that they brought from their king. The principal festivals mentioned, were occurred in the month of Khoiak, the celebration of Osiris' resurrection, as well as Isis' Feast of Entry.²⁶ The Festival of Entry held great importance for the Meroites. The festival in-

²³ Ashby 2016, 186–187; Ritner 2003, 374.

²⁴ Ashby 2016, 173–173; Ritner 2003, 374.

²⁵ Dijkstra 2005, 65–66; Griffith 1912, nos. 95–6, 121–5 = REM 0095–6, 0121–5.

²⁶ Philae was closely linked with the Abaton: Isis was the deity in charge of reviving Osiris, she was the giver of life, the protectress of Osiris, and therefore she was worshipped in order to expect a good yield in return. In the Gateway of Hadrian on Philae, two Ptolemaic decrees have been recorded in hieroglyphs which give us a clear impression of the cult. One of the most important rituals was the

cluded a visit by Isis to the Abaton on Biga Island in order to pour milk and water libations for her husband Osiris.²⁷

The Blemmyes

There are two reliable ancient sources that inform us about the Blemmyes: the reports of the Egyptian diplomat Olympiodorus who visited Lower Nubia around 420 AD, and the historian Procopius who described the Roman retreat from the Dodecaschoinus by Emperor Diocletian in 298 AD. Olympiodorus mentioned that he met with the chiefs and priests of the Blemmyes in Talmis (Kalabsha), who convinced him that they controlled the area as far as Prima (Qurta or Qasr Ibrim) as well as the emerald mines (Mons Smaragdus) in the vicinity.²⁸ Meanwhile, Procopius reported that Diocletian (284–305 AD) ordered the Roman troops to retreat from Dodecaschoinus in Lower Nubia, while asking the Nobades to control the area in order to prevent further attacks from the Blemmyes.²⁹ A result of this new political situation on the southern Egyptian frontier was an invasion of the Blemmyan tribes into Egypt. They also began to play a more effective role in the socio-political scene, because they gradually settled in the area during the fourth century AD.³⁰

Blemmyan incursions into Egypt were on the model of wavy attacks. The earliest attacks on Egypt by these tribesmen occurred during the reign of Emperor Decius in 249–251 AD.

Around 394 AD, the Blemmyes dominated the Dodecaschoinus until about the middle of the fifth century AD, when they were defeated decisively by the Nobatian king Silko.³¹ The Blemmyan control of Lower Nubia (394–453 AD) caused the Blemmyan kings to appoint cult presidents at Kalabsha. A Greek graffito states, “The king named these presidents (*klinarkhos*) and chairmen (*epistates*).”³² This provides evidence for the remarkable integration of Blemmyan cults into the traditional Romanized urban cult life of the former Dodecaschoinus as well as for the Blemmyan policy to leave intact the existing social and administrative structures in Lower Nubia.

ferrying of Isis across the Nile from the gateway to the Abaton every ten days (the Egyptian week) to unite her symbolically with her husband and to perform the customary rites. Milk and water libations were poured and food was laid down for the deity. Although access to the Abaton was prohibited for pilgrims, they could watch the scene of the crossing of Isis from the colonnade that had been built in the reign of Augustus. See: Žabkar 1988, 51.

27 Bumbaugh 2011, 66.

28 FHN 1998, 1127.

29 Procop. 1.19.

30 Dijkstra 2004, 252.

31 FHN 1998, 317.

32 Hågg 1986, 281–286; FHN 1998, 313, 1136.

However, a new behind-the-scene situation came to surface, when a political confrontation started between the Blemmyes and the Nobades. During a period of increasingly persuasive Byzantine enforcement of the predominance of Christianity, the Blemmyan kings and their prophets militarily defended their traditional access to the temple at Philae. The development of a Christian community on the holy island of the goddess Isis brought the two groups of worshippers into an escalating series of clashes over their shared sacred space.³³ Behind the scene, the Blemmyes would not waive their right of access to the temple at Philae or the borrowing of the divine statue of Isis. The image of the Isis statue was of high importance for the sake of Blemmyan worship in Lower Nubia.

The allocation of land, appointment of prophets and cult association presidents were the main means through which tribal kings administered their territory and showed their control in Lower Nubia. Therefore, the loss of access to Philae would have destroyed the symbolic control of Lower Nubia. Indeed, the conflict was between the dominant religions to be practiced in Lower Nubia: traditional pharaonic religion as practiced by the Blemmyes versus the emergent Nubian Christianity practiced by the Nobadian tribes.

When Emperor Justinian ordered that the temples of Philae be closed, the Roman military carried out his order sometime between 535 and 537 AD, seizing the divine statues and arresting the last priests. While the Blemmyes continued to be attested in administrative papyri and in religious contexts from the sixth century, they never regained control of Lower Nubia.³⁴

The Nobades

After the withdrawal of the Roman legions, the Meroe Kingdom had to control Dodekaschoinus and consequently the southern borders of Egypt, protecting it from the Blemmyan menace. The fall of Meroe in around 300 AD led to a new political situation which needed a rearrangement of powers in Lower Nubia as well. In addition, after the collapse, Nubian local rulers apparently become independent rulers in their provinces.³⁵ However, this fragmentation of power obviously made them vulnerable to raids or infiltration by nomad tribes, a change that caused a redistribution of power. The Nobades appeared to control the political entities formed by post-Meroitic local rulers in southern Lower Nubia.³⁶ During the course of the fifth century, the indigenous Nobadian tribes gradually attained the upper hand in the region, and they were united into a kingdom which became christianized in the course of the sixth century.

³³ Ashby 2016, 263; Ritner 2003, 374.

³⁴ Ashby 2016, 263–264; Ritner 2003, 374.

³⁵ Török 1977, 38–41.

³⁶ Zacharopoulou 2016, 232–233.

A confirmation of the equation between Nubians and Nobades is provided by a Demotic graffito from Philae dated to 373 AD.³⁷ In this inscription the scribe, a priest from Philae, has added the remark that the Blemmyes and Nubians had been in conflict with each other, as a result of which the processional boat (or bark) of Isis had been away from Philae for two years, but that the bark had been returned in the year in question. At the same time, the account of Priscus, which was written in the fifth century AD, describes the Blemmyes and the Nobades as bringing a statue “to their own country,” which is clearly northern Lower Nubia, in 452 or 453 AD; this evidence confirms that the indigenous Nubians were later called *Nobadae*. The graffito in Philae may also be the first indication of Blemmyan settlement in the Dodecaschoinus.³⁸

Part Three: Commentary

Philae has a long history of multi-facet conflicts. In Ptolemaic Egypt, the area of Dodecaschoinus was annexed to the benefice of Isis temple and its clergy. The Isis temple, and thus, Philae Island kept its traditional attraction to the southern peoples from upper Nubia, the Blemmyes and Nobades. Indeed, the Isis temple managed to stay open for much longer than any other major Egyptian temple. As a result, a great flow of pilgrims came to Philae from Egypt and Nubia. The inscriptions left on the walls communicate the behind-the-scene religious sentiments, describing a way of worship that preserved Egyptian traditions but also expressed typically African forms of piety; requesting prophecies for example were common.

The political situation in the region of Lower Nubia was not stable enough to constitute a centralized political state. The political nature of Blemmyan tribes and Nobadian societies was tribal, and this resulted in many minor kingdoms controlling small territories. Thus, it was not strong enough to have a unified royal policy toward the temples of Lower Nubia, and particularly the Isis temple at Philae. The tribal political nature of such societies changed in the late fourth and first half of the fifth century by the emergence of a unified state in the early to mid-sixth century AD. The Nobadae converted to Christianity and established three Christian kingdoms (Nobadia, Makuria, and Alwa, see Fig. 6).³⁹

Moreover, studies of the Philae graffiti have shown that the priesthood of the Isis temple era were actually appointed from distant Meroe at the southernmost fringe of Upper Nubia during the final centuries of the Roman. Indeed, Philae seems to have been as important to Upper Nubia and vice-versa to Rome: analysis of Meroitic policy has concluded that patronage of Philae was essential to the sacred legitimization of

37 Griffith 1937, 104–105; *FHN* 1998, 1110–1112.

38 Dijkstra 2012, 242.

39 Gardberg 1970, 14–16.



Fig. 6: The freestanding churches erected on the northern part of the island. Photo: © A. Mansour.

Meroitic kings. This link may well be echoed in Maximinus's later insistence that his treaty with the Nubians farther south be ratified in Isis's temple at Philae.⁴⁰

The original contribution of this study to scholarship is that there are important details behind the scenes that reflect differing angles of views. It is widely noted that Philae is an attractive sacred place for people. Many provincial officials visited Philae and left their names on the walls of temples.⁴¹ The conflicts had risen between different ethnic, religious and political groups to declare their dominance on the island, not only for religious purposes, but, also for political reasons. Once more, for a behind-the-scenes conclusion, the capable Nubian priests learned the Egyptian sacred scripts: hieroglyphic, hieratic, and demotic. Thus, they were able to hold the highest positions in the temple administration for the service of Meroitic kings, who employed Nubian priests to perform the funerary rites of Osiris on behalf of the Meroitic ruler. Finally, this paper affirms the expansion of the cult of Isis beyond the borders of Egypt, which made her temple at Philae Island an arena for behind-the-scene debates between different groups of people who wished to control it.

⁴⁰ Emberling/Davis 2019, 72.

⁴¹ Foertmeyer 1989, 68.

Bibliography

- Ashby 2016: S. Ashby, *Calling Out to Isis: The Enduring Nubian Presence at Philae*, Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of The Division of The Humanities in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Chicago 2016.
- Bumbaugh 2011: S. Bumbaugh, *Meroitic Worship of Isis at Philae*, in: K. Exell (ed.), *Egypt in Its African Context: Proceedings of the Conference Held at the Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, 2–4 October 2009* (BAR 2204), Oxford 2011, 66–69.
- Cauville/Ali 2013: S. Cauville, M.I. Ali, *Philae Itinéraire du visiteur*, Leuven 2013.
- Dijkstra 2004: J. H. F. Dijkstra, *A Cult of Isis at Philae After Justinian? Reconsidering P. Cair. Masp. I 67004*, ZPE 146 (2004), 137–154.
- Dijkstra 2005: J. H. F. Dijkstra, *Religious Encounters on the Southern Egyptian Frontier in Late Antiquity* (AD 298–642), (unpubl. Diss.), Groningen 2005.
- Dijkstra 2012: J. H. F. Dijkstra, Blemmyes, Nobades and the Eastern Desert in Late Antiquity: Reassessing the Written Sources, in: H. Barnard, K. Duistermaat (eds.), *The History of the Peoples of the Eastern Desert*, Los Angeles 2012, 238–247.
- Emberling/Davis 2019: G. Emberling, S. Davis, *Graffiti as Devotion Along the Nile and Beyond*, Ann Arbor 2019.
- FHN: T. Eide, T. Hågg et al. (eds.), *Fontes Historiae Nubiorum (FHN) III*, Bergen 1998.
- Foertmeyer 1989: V.A. Foertmeyer, *Tourism in Graeco-Roman*, (unpubl. Diss.), Princeton 1989.
- Gardberg 1970: C. J. Gardberg, *Scandinavian Joint Expedition to Sudanese Nubia*, vol. 7, Copenhagen 1970.
- Griffith 1912: F. L. Griffith, *Meroitic Inscriptions: Napata to Philae and Miscellaneous*, nos. 95–96, London 1912.
- Griffith 1935: F. L. Griffith, *Catalogue of the Demotic Graffiti of the Dodecaschoenus I*, Oxford 1935.
- Haeny 1985: G. Haeny, *A Short Architectural History of Philae*, BIFAO 85 (1985), 215–216.
- Hågg 1986: T. Hågg, *Blemmyan Greek and the Letter of Phonen*, in: M. Krause (ed.), *Nubische Studien*, Mainz 1986, 281–286.
- Hölbl 2004: G. Hölbl, *Altägypten im Römischen Reich. Der römische Pharao und seine Tempel II*, Mainz 2004.
- Beness/Hillard 2003: L. J. Beness, T. Hillard, *The First Romans at Philae* (CIL 1².2.2937a), ZPE 144 (2003), 203–207.
- Leclant et al. 2000: J. Leclant, A. Heyler, C. El Naggar, C. Carrier, C. Rilly, *Répertoire d'épigraphie méroïtique*, Tome I, REM 0001 à REM 0387, Paris 2000.
- Pope 2009: J. Pope, *The Proskynema of a Meroïte Envoy to Roman Egypt* (Philae 416), *Enchoria* 31 (2009), 68–103.
- Pope 2014: J. Pope, *Meroitic Diplomacy and the Festival of Entry*, in: J. R. Anderson, D. A. Welsby (eds.), *The Fourth Cataract and Beyond, Proceedings of the 12th International Conference for Nubian Studies*, Leuven 2014, 577–582.
- Ritner 2003: R. K. Ritner, *The Victory Stela of Piye*, in: W. K. Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt: An Anthology of Stories, Instructions, Stelae, Autobiographies, and Poetry*, New Haven 2003, 367–385.
- Török 1977: L. Török, *Inquiries into the Administration of Meroitic Nubia I–II*, *Or* 46 (1977), 34–50.
- Török 1978: L. Török, *Two Meroitic Studies: The Meroitic Chamber in Philae and the Administration of Nubia in the 1st to the 3rd Centuries AD*, *Oikumene* 2 (1978), 217–222.

Török 2009: L. Török, *Between Two Worlds: The Frontier Region Between Ancient Nubia and Egypt 3700 BC to AD 500 AD*, Leiden, Boston 2009.

Žabkar 1988: L.V. Žabkar, *Hymns to Isis in Her Temple at Philae*, Hannover 1988.

Zacharopoulou 2016: E. Zacharopoulou, *The Emergence of the State of Nobadia and the Byzantine Policy*, in: T. Sansaridou-Hendrickx, B. Hendrickx (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference on Graeco-African and Afro-Byzantine Studies at the University of Johannesburg (27 October–1 November 2014)*, Johannesburg 2016, 213–249.