

Editorial

— Tine Bagh

The 41st annual meeting of CIPEG took place 23-27 September 2024 at the Museo Arqueológico in Madrid (MAN). The theme was 'Making the old new again: Refurbishing museum spaces', with many interesting papers and, as always, excellent networking. [The programme and abstracts](#). Esther Pons Mellado, Isabel Olbes and MAN were the perfect hosts, and CIPEG wishes to thank them for a wonderful conference, a fine visit to the Debod Temple in Madrid, and the final excursion to Toledo.

The deepest impact of the meeting came with the briefing on the ongoing looting and destruction of museums and archaeological and historic sites in rebel held areas of Sudan by Maha S. Ayoub, Ambassador of Sudan to Spain. Also heartbreaking was the paper

by Shadia Abdu Rabu Abdelwahab and Ikhlas Ahmed Idriss, of the Sudan National Museum, Khartoum, 'The impact of the war for the Sudanese culture heritage and mitigation of the risk'. Both were later recorded on video from the residence of the Ambassador, and at the CIPEG General Assembly a [statement](#) was discussed and subsequently published on the CIPEG webpage together, with the [video](#). This issue of CIPEG e-News is dedicated to Sudan.

Other CIPEG matters

Museum Matters III took place online on 9 November 2024, with the theme 'Museum Storerooms and Care for Collections'. It started with a keynote by Maha S. Ayoub updating us on the ongoing situation in Sudan 'Museum objects during conflict in Sudan'. A version of the paper is included in this issue of the CIPEG e-News. Forty

colleagues participated in MM III, and the subsequent papers covered various countries and diverse types of storage facilities. The programme and abstracts may be found [here](#).

As part of the ongoing process of the revision of the ICOM Code of Ethics, [its first draft](#) was discussed at the CIPEG General Assembly in Madrid. The meeting commented that:

- In general, the draft is on the one hand vague and on the other hand very specific. CIPEG therefore said 'no' to all five principles, as they all need to be refined.
- The new code of ethics repeatedly speaks of decolonisation, looking more to the past and its consequences than to the present and the future of museums in today's war zones or totalitarian systems.
- There is no direct mention of human remains, as the draft only speaks of 'sensitive material' and 'anatomical

The participants of the CIPEG Annual Meeting in Madrid in front of the Temple of Debod, originally located 15 km south of Aswan. It was donated to Spain by the Egyptian government in 1968 as a sign of gratitude for Spain's participation in the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia.



collections'. CIPEG considers the articles of the old code of ethics more relevant.

- CIPEG asks for a discussion of accessioning policies for museum donations to be included as this is not black and white.
- The repeated use of the word 'should' (134 times) needs to be considered and changed, in some cases to 'must'. For example, in the important 'Museums should combat the illegal trade in natural or cultural property'.

Read more about the [revision of the ICOM Code of Ethics](#).

ICOM General Conference and CIPEG 11-17 November 2025 in Dubai

In November 2024 the Chair of CIPEG took part in a seminar in Dubai where the ICOM General Conference 11-17 November 2025 in Dubai was discussed in connection with the participation of the International Committees including CIPEG. The main theme will be 'The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities', the main venue being the Dubai World Trade Centre in the center of Dubai and close to the Metro. CIPEG will have three sessions of one and a half hours, and we will dedicate each session to one of the three subthemes of the conference, Intangible Heritage, Youth Power and New Technologies. CIPEG will also have a so-called off-site day, and we are working towards the possibility of visiting Louvre Abu Dhabi, one and a half hour's drive from Dubai, and the Archaeological Museum Saruq Al-Hadid in Dubai. Call for papers and call for the applications of bursaries will be sent out in the beginning of 2025. ■

- > cipeg.icom.museum
- > [Facebook](#)

Museum objects during conflict in Sudan

— Sudan's Ambassador to Spain, Maha Ayoub

Introduction: the war in Sudan

War appears to be, sadly, a fact of human life and history. We keep hoping that each war will be the last and that humanity will have learned the lessons of each conflict, between nations or adherents of certain beliefs, or even people sharing the same country and the same beliefs. Personally, before the war came to my doorstep and threatened the lives of my own family – my brother, my aunts and uncles and cousins – war seemed very far away and even senseless and unreal. It was like a movie or something completely fictional that you watch on TV or at the cinema.

We, in Sudan, have lost everything: our homes, our jobs, and almost everyone I know has lost some family members in some way due to the war. One of my colleagues here in Madrid, a diplomat at our embassy, lost 83 family members this week, killed by the militia. Their town in the Gezira State has been under siege for the past 2 weeks. Her own brother was taken prisoner and murdered by the militia in the capital

Khartoum in June. Today the Arabic media is reporting that those killed in her village number 138.

The figures are truly staggering:

- 12 million Sudanese have had to flee their homes;
- 8 million children are out of school;
- 3 million Sudanese are refugees in neighboring countries;
- 11 million people are facing imminent famine and disease;
- only one hospital is operating in the capital Khartoum, and it's an Italian specialized cardiology hospital not equipped for other purposes;
- 20 museums have been either destroyed or looted.

This is when reality hits you, when people you know are the victims. When the places that you love have been lost forever. The war in Sudan receives little coverage in the international media. I don't know why, but it's true that the war in Ukraine and now the unbelievable horrifying assaults in Palestine and Lebanon, are more fully reported on. In all cases, war is a deplorable thing that leaves behind only stories and people

Sudan's Ambassador to Spain, Maha Ayoub (right) and Shadia Abdu Rabu Abdelwahab (left) at the CIPEG Annual Meeting in Madrid 2024.



without addresses. And that is what is happening to us in Sudan.

Museums & archaeological sites

The problem before us is twofold: the protection of the existing museums and archaeological sites, and how to tackle the sale of illicit stolen artifacts. The capture by the militia of the capital Khartoum, and several major towns, in a large swathe of the country meant that many museums were exposed to danger. Some of these museums were destroyed by direct shelling; some were looted. In total, over 20 museums fall under this category.

In addition to these museums, 48 archaeological missions were excavating in Sudan, mostly in the North, but also south of Khartoum, at Soba. Because of the shortage of space in the central museum stores, the archaeological missions kept the pieces in their own stores, awaiting documentation and cataloguing. The onset of the war in 2023 meant that the teams were obliged to leave Sudan, and little is now known of the condition of the sites themselves or the contents of their stores.

Museums known to have been completely destroyed

- **Nyala Museum**, which also held archaeological and ethnographic pieces was completely vandalized then hit by shelling and destroyed.
- **Al Geneina Sultan Bahr el Din Museum** was the former palace of the Sultan of the Masalit tribe, a historic building in itself. The militia targeted this particular museum as part of their ethnic cleansing operations against specific tribes and communities. All the historical documents, manuscripts, clothing, and weaponry were stolen, and the building itself shelled extensively.
- **Sultan Ali Dinar Museum** in El Fasher was bombed and partially

destroyed, however, some of the collection was saved and removed to a secure location.

These three museums are in Darfur, where the militia have almost complete control of the territory, and are holding the town of El Fasher under siege.

- **The Sudan Ethnographic Museum** in Khartoum. This museum, itself in a historic building, has been completely destroyed by shelling. Its collections included anthropological and ethnographic pieces from all regions of Sudan.
- **Museum of Traditional Music** also in Khartoum, was completely destroyed in crossfire between the armed forces and the militia.

Museums known to have been looted

- **The National Museum** We know from satellite images that large trucks arrived at the museum entrance and left for the borders of South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Chad. Following this, museum pieces were spotted for sale in street markets of these countries, and even on online platforms. So, this is a strong indication of the looting and theft that has taken place. However, we have no accurate information on the state of the museum today, as it is in an area held by the militia.
- **Al Khalifa Museum** in Omdurman was also looted and partially destroyed by shelling. This museum is the former residence of the successor of the Mahdi, Khalifa Abdullahi Al Ta'aishi, and dates to 1888. It held pieces of great importance to the history of Sudan, covering the Ottoman period, and the British colonial era from 1888 to 1956, including weaponry, vehicles, clothing and Quranic manuscripts.
- **Republican Palace Museum**, dating to 1905, in a historic building, this museum held presidential gifts,

original documents and treaties, and vintage official vehicles.

- **Al Mahdi Museum** located in the former residence of the Mahdi, and containing valuable original manuscripts and personal artifacts belonging to the Mahdi and his descendants.
- **Museum of the Judiciary** contained historical documents pertaining to the development of the legal and constitutional system of Sudan.
- **Museum of Women in Ahfad University**, the first university for women in Africa and the Islamic world. It documents the role of women in the history of Sudan, and advocates for the rights of women and girls.
- **Military Museum located in the Ministry of Defense**, is dedicated to the development of the armed forces since pre-colonial times.
- **Ibrahim Hegazi Museum** in Omdurman, a museum showcasing ethnographic and historical material from the city of Omdurman.
- **Petroleum Museum** located in the Ministry of Petroleum Central Oil Laboratories, is displaying the historical stages of oil extraction in Sudan, as well as samples of oil, rocks and geological features.

Presumed to have been looted and/or destroyed

These museums are located in militia-held areas and therefore we have no precise information on their exact status.

- **University of Khartoum Natural History Museum** was tasked with the acquisition, collection, preservation and documentation of Sudan's natural heritage of flora and fauna, including fossils. It took a direct hit at the beginning of the war in 2023, and we believe all its contents were lost.
- **Museum of Geology** held a display of all the geological eras of Sudan, its gems, land formations and rock specimens dating back millions of

years. We know that this museum, also located under militia control, also took a mortar hit, but we have no precise information on its current state.

- **Al Gezira Museum** in Wad Medani. The Gezira State is under militia control, and we have no information regarding its status. This museum held archaeological pieces as well as ethnographic collections.
- **Sennar Museum** located in the militia-held area in the town of Sennar. We have no information regarding its current status. This museum also held archaeological and ethnographical collections.
- **Shekan Museum** located in the town of El Obeid in Kordofan State. Nothing is known of the current state of the museum, which is also in rebel-held territories. This museum was dedicated to the battle between the Mahdist forces and the Egyptians led by Hicks Pasha in 1883, which resulted in the defeat of the Egyptian army.
- **Nile Valley Museum** located in the River Nile State, held an extensive historical sequence of Sudan's civilization from the stone age to the advent of Islam.

So far safe:

- **Kerma Museum** in Kerma
- **Jebel Barkal Museum** at Jebel Barkal
- **El Damer Museum** in El Damer,
- **Railway Museum** in Atbara
- **Abu Hadab Heritage Museum** in Suakin, on the Red Sea Coast
- **Red Sea Museum**

These four museums are untouched, as they are in a government-held area

What we need from you here and from the International Community:

- To stand with Sudan and its people at this difficult time and strengthen the bonds of cooperation with its

institutions to preserve the material and archaeological heritage of the country, and assist with developing an Action Plan for the rehabilitation of the museums that have been damaged or destroyed.

- To condemn the violations committed by the rebel militia and their attacks on archaeological sites and museums in several states in Sudan, the most serious of which was the looting of the National Museum in Khartoum.
- To call upon the International Community to coordinate its efforts through mobilizing governments, institutions, law enforcement agencies and experts to strengthen mechanisms to prevent the illicit trade in stolen Sudanese antiquities.
- To reiterate your support of the efforts of the competent Sudanese authorities under the leadership of the National Cooperation for Antiquities and Museums to recover the stolen antiquities and other objects looted by the rebel militia.
- To support the establishment of an observatory unit to monitor and track stolen and illegally exported antiquities.
- To advocate through the international community, UNESCO, and Interpol for the recovery of all archaeological and heritage collections that were stolen by the militia and ensure their return to Sudan.
- To lobby with your governments and federal institutions to prevent the sale of illicitly obtained artifacts from Sudan through auction houses, internet and online platforms, and other means.
- To raise awareness regarding the theft of historical sites throughout the world, and how this obliterates efforts to gain a comprehensive understanding of humanity's history and shared civilization.
- To continue your important work in solidarity to raise awareness of the Nubian / Meroitic civilization

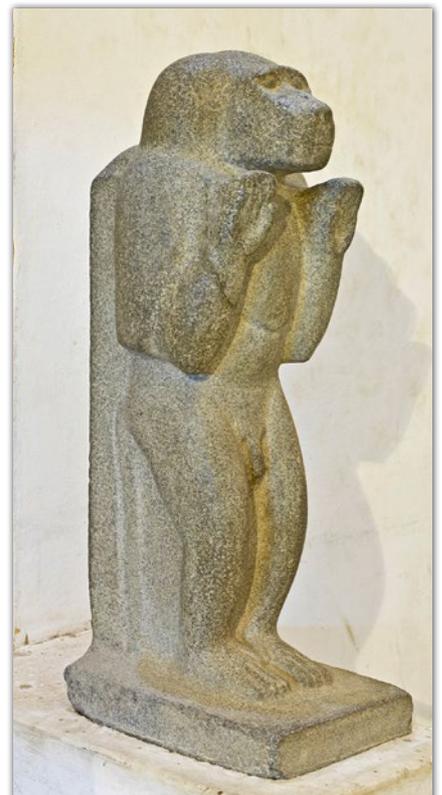
and highlight its importance as an indigenous African civilization.

Thank you

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The participants in the CIPEG Madrid meeting were briefed on the ongoing looting and destruction of museums and archaeological and historic sites in rebel held areas of Sudan by the forces of the militia, which adds to their litany of heinous crimes against humanity and history. The final statement of the CIPEG international conference which took place in Madrid in September has been an important wake up call, and we really thank the participants and members of CIPEG for this.

Baboon statue from the Temple of Taharqa, Kawa. Sudan National Museum, SNM 2689 (Janne Klerk, 2014)



13th International Conference for Meroitic Studies

9-13 September 2024, Münster, Germany

— Angelika Lohwasser, Institute for Egyptology and Coptology, University of Münster, Germany

Meroitic Studies covers research concerning the Kingdom of Kush/Meroë, from its emergence during the 9th/8th century BCE to its decline during the 4th/5th century BCE. It embraces archaeological, philological and pictorial sources from the Middle Nile Valley as well as documents and representations from outside (Egyptian sources, classical authors). The overarching research goal is to gain insights into social structure, way of life, kingship, religion, writing and language, chronology, art, architecture and material culture.

The 13th conference was hosted by the Institute of Egyptology and Coptic Studies at the University of Münster from 9 to 13 September 2024. Owing to the current conflicts within Sudan, the whole conference was held in a hybrid format, so that Sudanese colleagues could not only listen passively in their respective locations – whether in Sudan or, having fled, in another country – but also actively give presentations and participate in discussions. We were also able to set up a conference hub at the Jebel Barkal Museum, as the Karima region is not directly affected by the

war. This brought together not only our colleagues but also interested members of the public. The opening event on the first day and the panel 'Cultural Heritage in Crisis' on the last day were also broadcast to Cairo, at both the Institut français d'archéologie orientale and the German Archaeological Institute.

Münster hosted 120 international participants, a total of 87 lectures were delivered on the three main themes (Kush and the outside world; History and Chronology; Religion in Kush), and also on further research. The current situation in Sudan prompted us to add an additional theme and to discuss it in the plenary session on the last day, rather than in parallel sessions. This was 'Cultural heritage in crisis'. In particular, colleagues from Jebel Barkal and Cairo were given the opportunity to speak, giving us an insight into the sometimes-alarming state of the antiquities of Sudan. The opening lecture, by Dr. Salaheldin Mohamed Ahmed, was also devoted to this topic, but the speaker also referred to earlier threats – such as the construction of dams – and presented proposals for preventive measures and short-term



Karima Hub (photo: M. Ahmed Abbas)



Cairo Hub on Monday 9. September in the Institut français d'archéologie orientale (photo: S. Marchi)

responses. On the final day, participants adopted a declaration calling for an urgent resolution of the conflict and the protection of cultural heritage. ■

> Institute for Egyptology and Coptology

The participants in person in Münster (photo: C. Geiger)



Sudan : Living Cultures at the Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Archaeology, UCL

— Sarita Mamseri, Eyman Osman and Anna Garnett

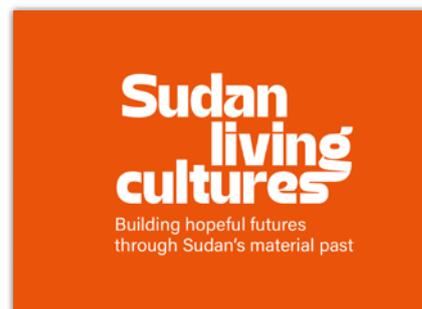
Sudan Living Cultures is a collaborative knowledge-exchange project between the Petrie Museum, artists, academics and independent researchers. Using existing collections data, this project seeks to enhance our understanding of Sudanese material heritage by embracing indigenous ways to learn about the past. By making space for alternative ways of knowing, we hope to offer new interpretations of the material on display. The Petrie Museum is working in partnership with Sudanese individuals and communities in the UK, Sudan and across multiple diasporas with key aims:

- To spotlight Sudanese material heritage on display in the Petrie Museum
- To share knowledge of the collection with people of Sudanese descent in London
- To embrace indigenous understandings of the material and where appropriate share learnings through interpretative displays
- To develop new ways of accessing the collection through digital technologies
- To stand in solidarity with our Sudanese museum colleagues through teaching,

research and cultural engagement exchange for the continuation of Sudanese knowledge production

The first phase of this project (April – November 2024) resulted in a museum site-specific digital art showcase. This collaboration between the Petrie Museum and three independent artists showcased the power of transgenerational knowledge through material heritage and artistic practice. Artists Ahmed Akasha, Dina Nur Satti and Yasmin Elnour produced three sets of works viewable on digital screens in the Museum in October and November 2024. Through the mixed media of digital collage, traditional pottery making and video performance, the works respond directly to Sudanese material on display, prompting a dialogue between essentialised historical objects and living cultural heritage. Importantly, they drew on familial generational knowledge to understand the power of ritual, spiritualism and local human technologies in Sudanese culture.

The created artworks revive knowledge



of ancient traditions and present ideas for the next generation. They seek to inspire hopeful futures based on a deeper multi-layered understanding of the past. For the artists, the project has achieved a greater sense of the purpose and significance of Sudanese material heritage at the Petrie Museum. The next phase of Sudan Living Cultures will build on the successes of this pilot project through newly formed relationships and explore the Petrie Museum's Sudan collection through creative collaboration, research and co-production.

Sudan Living Cultures (first phase) is funded by UCL Innovation & Enterprise's Knowledge Exchange programme. It is part of the Architecting Futures season at UCL Museums, bringing together culture, collections and research towards common hopeful futures.

Sarita Mamseri is Programme Manager, UCL Museums and Cultural Programmes

Dr Eyman Osman is an Independent Project Consultant

Dr Anna Garnett is the Curator of the Petrie Museum of Egyptian and Sudanese Archaeology, UCL. ■

> [Sudan Living Cultures Project](#)

> [Sudan Living Cultures: Digital Art Showcase](#)

> [Petrie Museum Website](#)

The Sudan Living Cultures: Digital Art Showcase at the Petrie Museum, October 2024

(Image: Kirsten Holst/UCL)



Nubian archaeology in Geneva

Sudanese artefacts in the Musée d'art et d'histoire

— Noémie Monbaron, Adjointe scientifique en Égyptologie

The collection at the Musée d'art et d'histoire (MAH) in Geneva includes archaeological artefacts from three Sudanese sites: Kerma, Tabo and Akasha. The origins of this collection date back to 1965, when Charles Maystre initiated excavations in Sudan. Leading an archaeological expedition affiliated to the *Centre d'études orientales* of the University of Geneva, and supported by the Foundation H.M. Blackmer, Maystre embarked on this endeavour with a team of enthusiastic colleagues, including archaeologist Charles Bonnet, who soon became director of excavations. The Swiss team conducted excavations at Tabo from 1965 to 1974, at Akasha from 1966 to 1972, and at Kerma beginning in 1972. After Maystre's retirement, Bonnet continued the work through the newly established *Mission archéologique de l'Université de Genève au Soudan*: his legacy endures today through the *Mission archéologique suisse-franco-soudanaise de Kerma-Doukki Gel*. In line with the practice of

the time, archaeological finds from these sites were divided between Sudan and the expeditions. Maystre brought the artefacts back to Switzerland, entrusting them to Bonnet and his new team.

During the 1980s, it was decided to establish a permanent exhibition on Sudanese archaeology at the MAH. The most representative objects from Akasha, Tabo and Kerma were selected and subsequently donated to the museum. This new exhibition 'Kerma et archéologie nubienne' was on view from 1993 to 2005. In 2006, it was relocated to a new room and its display was updated, a configuration that remains largely unchanged today. Visitors are greeted by a life-size image of the statue of Taharqa, discovered by Bonnet in Doukki Gel in 2003, before embarking on a journey through Nubian history. 300 objects are presented in chronological order, spanning from prehistoric times to the Christian era, while two scale models

depict the town of Kerma, providing insight into Nubian architecture.

This exhibit will have to include more material from Tabo in the future since, in 2020, Bonnet donated all the remaining material from this site — over 1000 items in total. Following the recent completion of its inventory, an interdisciplinary team has begun studying this material. The aim is to publish a comprehensive account of the Tabo excavations, drawing on archival records preserved at the University of Geneva. The looting of the National Museum in Khartoum — where Sudan's share of Tabo artefacts was held after 1976 — has made this work a priority. By publishing this material, we hope to provide critical parallels and share valuable data with the collectivity. ■

> www.mahmah.ch

General view of the Kerma exhibit

(© Noémie Monbaron, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Ville de Genève)



The Tabo display

(© Noémie Monbaron, Musée d'art et d'histoire, Ville de Genève)



The Enigmatic Treasure of a Napatan Queen

— Denise M. Doxey, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston*

Having excavated in Sudan for more than two decades in the early twentieth century, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, houses one of world's largest and most important collections of ancient Nubian art. While many objects are well-known masterpieces, the vast majority are primarily of archaeological interest to scholars and students. Sometimes these small finds, mostly unseen by the public, offer important and fascinating glimpses into the daily lives of their owners. Such is the case with a group of finds from the tomb of Queen Khensa at el-Kurru (pyramid Ku4).

Khensa was the principal wife of King Pi(ankh)y, who ruled the kingdom of Napata during about 743–712 BCE and who conquered Egypt, extending the Kushite empire from northern Sudan to the Mediterranean. She appears to have died and been buried during the reign of Taharqa (690–664 BCE), in a pyramid that stood in a prominent location close to that of her husband. Although the tomb had been robbed, the excavators nevertheless uncovered impressive objects such as a large silver

bowl bearing her cartouches (MFA 21.3091), a double-spouted silver cup for pouring libations (MFA 21.3092), and a pair of silver rods topped with the heads of deities (MFA 21.324-325). The function of these last items is unclear, but they might be stirrers or oversized kohl sticks. The magnificent jewelry found in the tombs of other women in Pi(ankh)y's family offers a hint of the riches that must have accompanied Khensa's burial.

A group of humbler though equally intriguing objects suggest that the queen took an unusual interest in natural history and materials. These include brightly colored stones, flint nodules in interesting shapes that often resemble human and animal forms, and a fossilized sea urchin (MFA 19.2274 and 19.2343). A small cup made of banded agate (MFA 21.300.1. Figure 1) makes magnificent use of the stone's natural patterning. Some stones have been carved into shapes such as a pomegranate (MFA 19.2282), a human (MFA 19.2305. Figure 3), and a realistically rendered snail shell with a hieroglyphic inscription (MFA 24.942).

One otherwise unremarkable pebble (MFA 19.2303. Figure 2) was wrapped with gold wire to form a piece of personal adornment. In one case (MFA 19.2315), an artificial nodule of banded stone was made of black and white faience. While the function of such items (if any) remain unclear, one can only imagine Khensa's desire to bring them with her to the afterlife. ■

> [Museum of Fine Arts](#)

3. *Miniature human figure, 690-664 BCE Travertine (Egyptian alabaster). Harvard University - Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition. (Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)*



1. *Agate cup, 743–664 BCE Agate. Harvard University - Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition. (Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)*



2. *Pebble with gold bands, 690–664 BCE Stone, gold. Harvard University - Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition. (Photograph © Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)*



'Kush', 'Ethiopia', 'Nubia' and 'Kush' again

— After V. Rondot and M. Millet, Pharaon des Deux Terres. Lépopée africaine des rois de Napata, Paris, 2022, p. 30-32

The names given to the territories over which the line of kings of Napata, their predecessors, and their successors reigned, have varied across sources and eras. We know from hieroglyphic texts that the inhabitants of the region around Napata called their country Kush, one of the terms that the ancient Egyptians adopted for them, as did the Bible. The Classical authors called it Ethiopia, while the word Nubia appeared with the first European explorations in the Nile Valley. Thus, as Egyptology developed, explorers used these terms as synonyms, which is why the 25th Dynasty of Manetho can still be described as a 'Napatan', 'Ethiopian', 'Nubian', as well as a 'Kushite' dynasty. These same Kushite sovereigns have also been dubbed 'African', 'Ethiopian' or 'black' pharaohs.

Kush and the ancient Egyptians

The Egyptians gave the general name of *Ta-seti*, 'The-Land-of-the-Bow', to the territories extending south of the 1st Cataract of the Nile, the natural and historical border of ancient Egypt. During the Old Kingdom, the name of *lam* appeared, which we now know designated the kingdom of Kerma. It

was during the Middle Kingdom, when the territory up to the 2nd Cataract was taken over by Egypt, that in Egyptian began to call this same region 'Kush', the name given to it by its inhabitants. After the conquests of Thutmose I, the term was extended to embrace the region south of the 2nd Cataract, perhaps up to the 5th. With the annexation of the region by Egypt, the region south of the 1st Cataract was placed under the administration of a viceroy, the 'King's Son of Kush'. The peoples living south of Egypt were commonly referred to by their northern neighbours as *Nehesyu* 'Blacks', while the personal name *Pa-Nehesy*, 'The Black', became widespread, becoming the prototype for the Biblical (and modern) name 'Phineas'. The indigenous name Kush persisted down to the end of paganism in the 4th century CE.

From Kush to Ethiopia

When, at the Ptolemaic court, by the order of Ptolemy II Philadelphos (283–246 BC), the Jews in Alexandria translated the Bible into Greek – the Septuagint – *Kush*, which had passed into Hebrew as the term for the area beyond the 2nd Cataract, was rendered

by *Aethiops*, the 'Country of the Burnt Faces', or 'Country of the Black People'.

Nubia?

We must resolutely abandon the popular, but fanciful, etymology that derives 'Nubia' from the word *nub*, which means 'gold' in the ancient Egyptian language. We know today that if this part of the Nile Valley ended up being called Nubia by the *mappaemundi* of the 12th century, explorers, historians and finally contemporary archaeologists, it is because of a Meroitic word *nob*, used to describe its inhabitants as 'attached to the soil'. Having passed into Greek, it became the ethnonym *Noba/Nobades*, which Arab chroniclers took up, calling the region the *Dar al-Nouba*, 'the territory of the Nubians'.

This is how this vast region, which includes several of the key locations for in the ancient history of Sudan and Egypt, from Prehistory to the Christian kingdoms, came to be designated, according to an 'archaeological' tradition, by the word 'Nubia', featuring in the titles of such recent syntheses as *Ancient Nubia. African Kingdoms on the Nile* (2012), *Handbook of Ancient Nubia* (2019) and *The Oxford Handbook of Ancient Nubia* (2021).

The modern name 'Sudan' comes from the Arabic *Bilad al-Sudan*, 'the Land of the Blacks', a term used during the Turkish-Egyptian conquest in 1820. In his travel diary of 1827, Linant de Bellefonds, speaks of the 'land of the Sudans'. During the long process of rediscovery – geographical and historical – of the Middle Nile Valley, it has thus been designated in various ways. ■

> 2022 Exhibition, Louvre, Paris

King Taharqa and falcon Hemen (E 25276 © 2021 Musée du Louvre, Dist. GrandPalaisRmn / Christian Décamps)

