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## EGYPT AND NORTH AFRICA: CULTURAL CONTACTS (1200-750 BC)

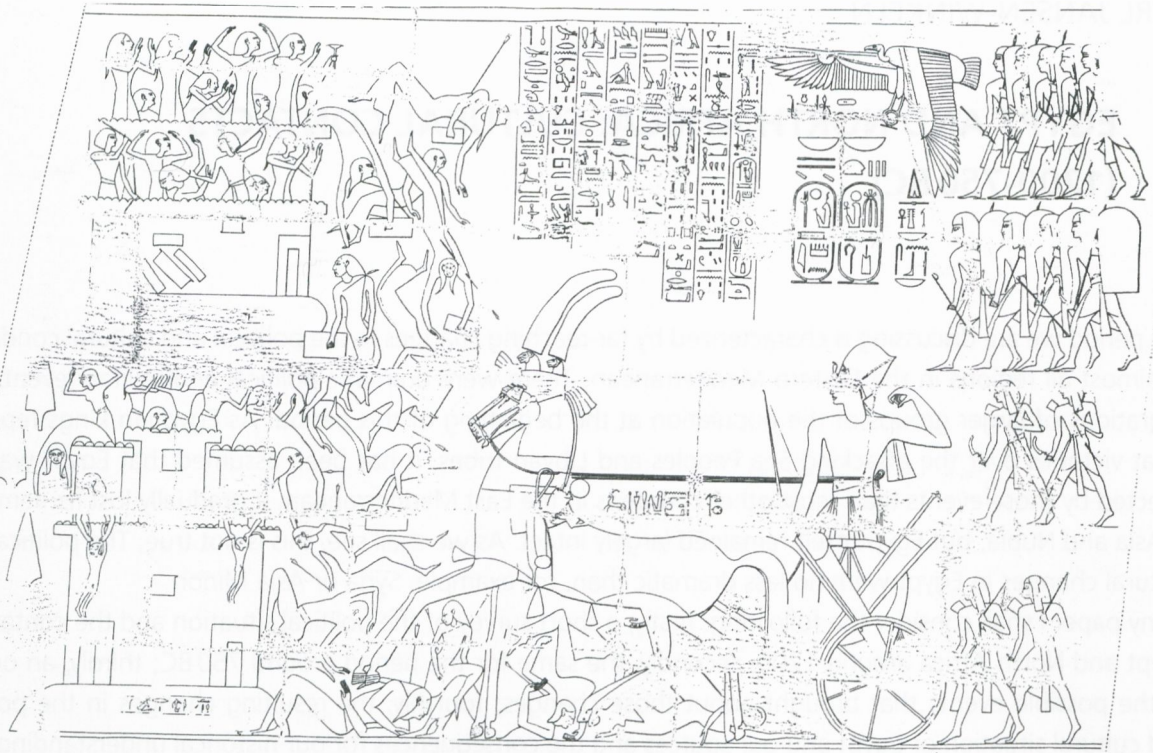
The period we are discussing is characterized by far-reaching changes in the political and cultural conditions of almost all regions in the Eastern Mediterranean. There were dramatic political and military events and migrations of larger groups of the population at the beginning of this period. As Egyptian kings reported great victories over the attacking Sea Peoples and Libyan tribes, it has been assumed that Egypt was less affected by those events than most other countries in the East Mediterranean. It gradually lost its »empire« in Asia and Nubia, but Egypt itself remained largely intact. As we shall see, this is not true. The political and cultural changes in Egypt were no less dramatic than, for example, Syria or Asia Minor.

In my paper I shall consider the following: firstly, a short survey of the political situation and the contacts of Egypt and North Africa around 1200; secondly, the same for the period around 750BC; thirdly, an outline of the possible events that brought about those changes; fourthly, the resulting changes in the political and cultural situation of Egypt and our sources and the consequences for our historical understanding; and finally the changes in the relations and contacts to the neighboring countries and cultures. Although my subject should be Egypt and North Africa, I must confine myself mainly to Egypt and its culture and cultural contacts. This is due to the fact that practically nothing is known about North Africa west of Egypt in the period following 1200BC until the founding of the Phoenician and Greek colonies. I will come back to this point later in the paper.

Around 1200BC, Egypt had been an impressive empire for more than 300 years, controlling considerable territories both in the north (Palestine and Syria), and in the south (Nubia).<sup>1</sup> Egypt was one of the few great powers in the Eastern Mediterranean. It had an efficient and centralized administration, and the head of the state, the king, was theoretically an absolute ruler responsible for all political, economic, military, and religious matters. The lavish representation of the pharaohs of the New Kingdom is not only shown in their residences and funerary monuments, but also in the temples of the more important gods which are modernized and enlarged, often on a huge scale. Typical of the New Kingdom are extensive reliefs showing Egyptian victories over various enemies<sup>2</sup> (fig. 1). These historical representations and inscriptions are not only an indispensable source for our knowledge of Egyptian history, but also contain essential information about other peoples and cultures, e. g., the Libyans or the Sea Peoples, both mainly known from Egyptian sources. But Egypt was not always at war during this period; they also maintained peaceful relations with their neighbors. The Egyptian influence on Nubia was particularly imposing, with a number of temples even being built there.<sup>3</sup> About the contacts to Libya and possible cultural exchanges, next to nothing is known. Nevertheless, we are informed about an attempt to transform Libyans into Egyptians: Ramesses III tells us on a stela that Libyan prisoners of war were settled into strongholds of the victorious king: »They hear the Egyptian language, serving the king, he makes their language disappear, he changes their tongues«. <sup>4</sup> Although we do not know whether these efforts to obtain Libyan assimilation were successful, we do know that at the very least, Libyans used the Egyptian language for writing and had assumed the Egyptian religion when they became the rulers of Egypt in the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty.

The contacts of Egypt to the Aegean islands have always been poorly documented, and the evidence for the period of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty is especially meagre<sup>5</sup> – apart from the confrontations with the Sea





**Fig. 1** Capture of Arzawa by Ramses III. – (After Epigraphic Survey 1932, pl. 87).

Peoples. The relations to the Near East, to the Hittites, the Palestinian and Syrian cities and princes are, on the contrary, relatively well attested, in Egyptian as well as in foreign sources.<sup>6</sup> To sum up, Egypt certainly had close ties to the entire Eastern Mediterranean world in the Late Bronze Age, there is mutual influence in many fields: most important and widespread probably in arms and military equipment but also in the material culture such as pottery, architecture, literature, and even in medicine: the Hittite king asked for Egyptian physicians,<sup>7</sup> and in Egyptian medical papyri magical spells in the Cretan language can be found.<sup>8</sup> The situation around 750 BC, shortly before the Nubians conquered the country, is completely different. Egypt had lost all its foreign territories and was ruled by Libyan princes. Upper and Lower Egypt were separately governed and managed, and both regions developed quite differently. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, the governor of Upper Egypt has been a military commander or a general, who is at the same time High Priest of Amun at Thebes; some of these governors even assume royal attributes. Lower Egypt is ruled by a king of Libyan descent, who is the overlord of numerous Libyan princedoms, dominated by chieftains of the tribes of Meshwesh and Libu,<sup>9</sup> at the same time military commanders and High Priests. These local princedoms existed only in Lower Egypt, and they are surely attested from about 800 BC, but their origins probably date much earlier (**fig. 2**). In time, the tendency to disintegrate and form local princedoms became perceptible in Upper Egypt as well. The victory stela of the Nubian king Pianchi,<sup>10</sup> written shortly after 750 BC, gives us a quite realistic picture of the political landscape of Egypt: there were five kings, including Pianchi, and twelve princes ruling in Egypt. Some decades later, at the time of the Assyrian conquest of Egypt, the annals of Assurbanipal mention even 16 local rulers in Lower Egypt and four in Upper Egypt.<sup>11</sup> The new system of government with the concentration of political, military, economic, and clerical power in the hands of local rulers led to the dissolution of most national and local administrative institutions. This disappearance of official institutions and the hereditary character of almost all local rulers is the most important reason for the growing centrifugal tendencies, leading to increasingly smaller political territories. The political situation in Egypt is thus characterized by a great number of more or less independent political



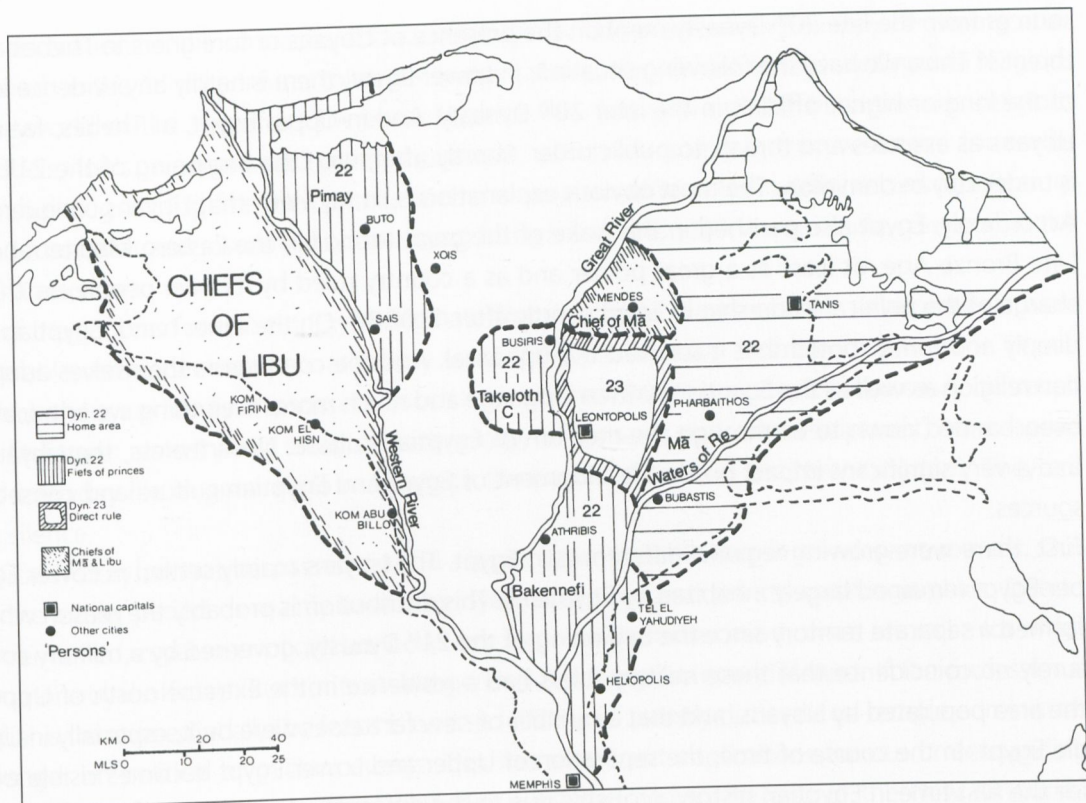


Fig. 2 Possible distribution of Libyan princedoms in the Nile Delta during the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty. – (After Kitchen 1996, 346 fig. 4).

units, which are mainly concerned with inner affairs. Consequently, our knowledge about the relations to countries abroad mainly stems from non-Egyptian sources. To sum up, the picture of Egypt of 750BC is totally different from that of 1200 in almost every respect.

How did these changes come about? Unfortunately, there are no explicit sources which could tell us what happened in Egypt, and we can only hazard guesses. For a long time, Egyptologists believed that the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty was the first Libyan dynasty, the beginning of Libyan rule in Egypt: although their military attacks had been successfully repelled, the number of Libyans in Egypt steadily grew by way of recruitment of mercenaries and peaceful immigration. Finally, they managed to become very influential, and were able to install the Libyan prince Shoshenk as king of Egypt, thus founding a new dynasty. The rulers of the preceding 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, in that view, are still Egyptian, but it was a period of transition and growing Libyan power.<sup>12</sup> There are many inconsistencies with this scenario, however. For instance, some of the rulers of the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty already had Libyan names, the royal families of the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty were closely related, and the kings of both dynasties were buried in the same cemetery at Tanis, a rather modest group of small tombs. But most important is the fact that all the fundamental differences and structural breaks between the New Kingdom and the Libyan Period begin immediately after the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. On the other hand, the 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty are similar in almost every respect.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, it seems a reasonable assumption that the Libyan rule in Egypt began immediately after the end of the last Ramesside dynasty. And the fact that it was an abrupt change of power would suggest that it had been a violent takeover rather than a peaceful transformation.

This view is supported by additional evidence. Lower Egypt during the time of Ramses III is still very well documented, with many monuments and written sources. In the later 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, however, there are fewer and fewer documents, which are mostly confined to the regions of Memphis and Heliopolis. Under the last Ramessides, there are only sources from Upper Egypt and Nubia left, especially from Thebes. These Theban



sources from the late 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty mention the presence of Libyans or foreigners in Thebes as an imminent threat.<sup>14</sup> Thus, we have the following situation: in Lower Egypt, there is hardly any evidence left for activities of the king or higher officials in the later 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. And in Upper Egypt, at Thebes, far inland, we find Libyans as enemies and threats to public order. Shortly after, with the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, Egypt is under Libyan dominion. The most obvious explanation is, in my view, that Libyans conquered the country. Accordingly, Egypt also perished in the wake of the great turmoil in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age, at least as a great power and as a country ruled by its own people, as the Libyans took charge of the political leadership in Egypt shortly after 1100 BC. On the other hand, Egyptian culture was so deeply and firmly rooted that it survived this upheaval. And the conquerors themselves adopted the Egyptian religion as well as the Egyptian written language and much more: everything we know about them has been handed down to us through the medium of Egyptian culture. Nevertheless, the Libyan rule in Egypt had a very significant impact on the development of Egypt and Egyptian culture and consequently on our sources.

First, there were growing regional differences in Egypt. The Libyans mainly settled in Lower Egypt while Upper Egypt remained largely inhabited by Egyptians. This distribution is probably the reason why Upper Egypt formed a separate territory since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, governed by a military commander. It is surely no coincidence that these military rulers had a residence in the extreme north of Upper Egypt, near the area populated by Libyans, and that a number of new fortresses were built, especially in Upper and Middle Egypt. In the course of time, the separation of Upper and Lower Egypt becomes visible even in writing, for the first time in Egyptian history, probably due to the different administrative systems. At the end of the Libyan Period, we find in Upper Egypt a cursive script called Abnormal Hieratic, and in Lower Egypt, the so-called Demotic Script came into being, with both writing systems being rather different. Later, during the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, Demotic was to become the script used all over Egypt, according to the growing importance of Lower Egypt. Actually, it is during the Libyan period that we can observe the beginning of a trend that can be traced down to the Ptolemaic Period: The political centers were increasingly located in the north, while Upper Egypt lost much of its importance.<sup>15</sup>

The impact of Libyan rule on the development of the Egyptian society should be particularly prominent, but sources are unfortunately scant in this regard. Under the influence of Herodotus (II, 164-8), it is generally assumed that the Libyans formed a kind of warrior caste. The Egyptians, on the other hand, were mostly farmers and artisans, except for upper class priests and scribes. Due to the disappearance of most governmental institutions, as mentioned above, it was the temples that became almost exclusively the centers of administrative and intellectual activities. The priests were not only responsible for the cult of the gods, they also served as scribes and civil servants. We have, therefore, a society similar to that in medieval Europe, with a ruling class of warriors, a kind of clergy responsible not only for religious matters but also for everything that has to do with writing and language, and a broad lower class of peasants and artisans.<sup>16</sup> The rather strict seclusion of classes and professions observable in 1<sup>st</sup> millennium Egypt down to Roman times, therefore, is probably also an inheritance of the Libyan period.

In any case, the political and cultural developments in Egypt during this period clearly had a negative effect on the sources we usually draw on in Egyptology. This dearth of sources, especially concerning political history, is due to several reasons. Firstly, the new (Libyan) kings were buried in very modest tombs and they ceased to build funerary temples immediately after the end of the New Kingdom. Accordingly, there was no longer an institution responsible for the construction of the royal tombs comparable to the worker's community of Deir el-Medina. That means that a large part of those buildings and institutions our earlier sources came from is no longer available. Secondly, most officials ceased to build new private tombs, they mostly placed their burials in reused old tombs. And the few new tombs we know from that period no



longer contain decorations and inscriptions about everyday life. This is a tendency already beginning after the Amarna Period; in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium, tomb decoration, if any, was almost always confined to religious themes and the world of the hereafter. There are likewise very few grave goods from the non-religious sphere, like models, tools, weapons and other equipment, which are a very instructive source for earlier periods. Thirdly, building activity, like the construction or renovation of temples had decreased significantly. Consequently, decorations and inscriptions concerning historical events (which were quite common in the New Kingdom) are scarce.

Because most of the sources for ancient Egypt originate from tombs or temples, these developments were to have considerable consequences: there are many areas of Egyptian history and culture during the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium for which there are hardly any sources, much more so than earlier periods. This can easily be traced in the relevant literature: almost every study on technology, on artisans, tools and equipment, on weapons and military or everyday life in general do not include the periods following the New Kingdom. They are passed over in silence.

Although political history cannot be passed over in silence, there is still a dearth of relevant sources. Our knowledge of the earlier periods is mainly based on royal inscriptions and private autobiographies. Due to the facts just mentioned, royal inscriptions are now very rare. On the other hand, there are still a lot of biographies from non-royal officials. But content and general tendency are now different. If the professional life of the official is mentioned at all, the focus is on the fulfilling of priestly duties or on temple administration, and no longer on political or military events. This has significant implications for our understanding of the relationship and the contacts of Egypt with her neighbors. Up to the end of the New Kingdom, Egyptian sources are quite informative in this regard; they contain important information about the Mitanni, the Hittites, the Libyans, or the Sea Peoples. After the end of the New Kingdom, most foreign affairs in which Egypt was involved are known to us only from non-Egyptian documents, such as Babylonian or Assyrian inscriptions, the Old Testament, or Greek historians. On the whole, the great changes that took place between 1200 and 750 BC not only had an enormous impact on Egyptian culture, but also on our understanding and interpretation of this culture. But our knowledge of Egypt's contact with other cultures is particularly affected for a number of reasons: because Egypt had to withdraw from foreign territories and was no longer involved in their affairs, and local rulers became increasingly concerned with their own businesses, the sources that remain today are not very informative.

In what follows, I will try to sketch briefly what is known about Egyptian political and cultural contacts, the proper subject of this conference.

First, I will address Egypt's relations to Nubia, although it is located far from the Mediterranean area. Since the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, about 1550 BC, Nubia had been occupied by Egypt up to the fourth cataract. Nubia was to supply manpower as workers and soldiers and, above all, the Nubian gold mines were exploited.<sup>17</sup> Egyptian control of this part of Nubia lasted until the very end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, when the Egyptians abandoned it in an orderly manner and evacuated their officials, soldiers, and belongings. Actually, no traces at all were left in the buildings of the former Egyptian administrative centers in Aniba, Sesebi, or Amara.<sup>18</sup> It needs to be noted here that this sudden evacuation of a large area is yet another argument that the changes at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty must have been dramatic events, and not the outcome of a long-term development. Thereafter, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, no traces of Egyptian presence in Nubia remain. Indeed, the archaeological record is so meagre that many archaeologists thought that Lower Nubia had been downright depopulated after the New Kingdom.<sup>19</sup> But this is almost certainly untrue.<sup>20</sup> The archaeological evidence is indeed very similar to what we find in Egypt at the same time: apart from the tomb and temple complexes at Tanis and Thebes, next to nothing could be found throughout the rest of Egypt because no new tombs and temples were built.



Later, a new center of Nubian power gradually emerged in the region of the fourth cataract around the capital of Napata, which apparently did not directly succeed Egyptian colonial administration and bore no connection to it, at least in the beginning.<sup>21</sup> In time, however, Egyptian religion and culture once again exerted an influence on the Nubian rulers of Napata, and soon after, they tried to extend their own power to the north. At 750BC or shortly thereafter, Upper Egypt was already under Nubian control, and during the following decades, the Nubian kings succeeded in conquering the whole of Egypt, thus establishing a short-lived empire until they were again expelled from Egypt by the Assyrians between 670 and 660BC.

The relation of Egypt to the Aegean world would be more important to the purpose of this conference, but, unfortunately, there are very few sources on this subject dated after 1200BC. The beginning of this period is characterized by the famous conflicts with the Sea Peoples,<sup>22</sup> who were known in Egypt as pirates and pillagers from at least the 14<sup>th</sup> century BC. Under Ramesses II, they could be found as mercenaries in Egyptian service. The Sherden or Shardanu contingent played an important role in the battle of Kadesh. Thereafter, the highlights in the conflicts between Egypt and the Sea Peoples are the battles in the reign of Merenptah and Ramesses III, when the Sea Peoples were defeated and driven back in a land and sea battle. The reliefs and inscriptions on the temple of Medinet Habu describing this battle are the most famous and eloquent source we have on the Sea Peoples. These two battles are »highlights« insofar as they are the only dramatic events reported. It is extremely likely that the Egyptians, too, suffered defeats during these conflicts, but, of course, they did not leave monumental records describing their own failure.

After the battle of Ramesses III, it is the Sherden who are most frequently mentioned in Egyptian sources. In Papyrus Harris, the legacy of Ramses III, they are even reckoned among the addressees of the text, together with other troops and officials (75.1).<sup>23</sup> In Papyrus Wilbour, a land-list from the time of Ramesses V, we find them as landowners or tenants in Middle Egypt, perhaps mercenaries who were given arable land.<sup>24</sup> In the region of Herakleopolis there are mentions of five Sherden fortresses towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, which were probably meant to repel the invading Libyans. After a short period in the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty, this same chain of strongholds began to be called »the five fortresses of the Meshwesh«.<sup>25</sup> They had obviously been occupied by the Libyans. The latest evidence of the Sherden is a donation stela dating to year 16 of Osorkon II (about 860BC), in which »fields of the Sherden« are mentioned.<sup>26</sup>

The Tjeker or Sikalāyu, another important tribe of the Sea Peoples, are mentioned as pirates in the story of Wenamun at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty. This story is certainly not a genuine diplomatic report as was initially thought, but a work of literature.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, some of the protagonists of the story are historically attested, and what is told about the historical setting seems generally trustworthy. The Egyptian envoy Wenamun, who sails to Byblos in order to buy timber for the sacred bark of Amun at Thebes, meets the Tjeker at the seaport Dor and in Byblos and, on his flight after a conflict, he happens to land on the shore of Cyprus. Incidentally, this is the only source addressing the relations between Egypt to Cyprus during this period. It is not until 570BC, during the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, that we have more detailed information about relations between Egypt and Cyprus. Here we are informed by Greek historians, above all Herodotus and Diodorus.<sup>28</sup> The same is true of Egyptian contact with the Aegean Islands during the early Iron age; the first substantial piece of information on this contact dates to a time after the period considered in this paper. Accordingly, the Sea Peoples left some traces in Egypt, and their impact may have even been greater than is usually believed. But nothing is known about any other influence of the Aegean region on Egypt.

On the other hand, there is a certain influence, albeit very indirect and modest, of Egypt in the opposite direction. The so-called Aegyptiaca – small objects, especially amulets, figurines and faience vessels – are again evident in the Aegean region in the strata of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, indicating a break of at least 200 years.<sup>29</sup> The relations between Egypt and the Near East were always very close and important, and traditionally they have been given special prominence in Egyptological and Near Eastern studies. Unlike the relations to Libya



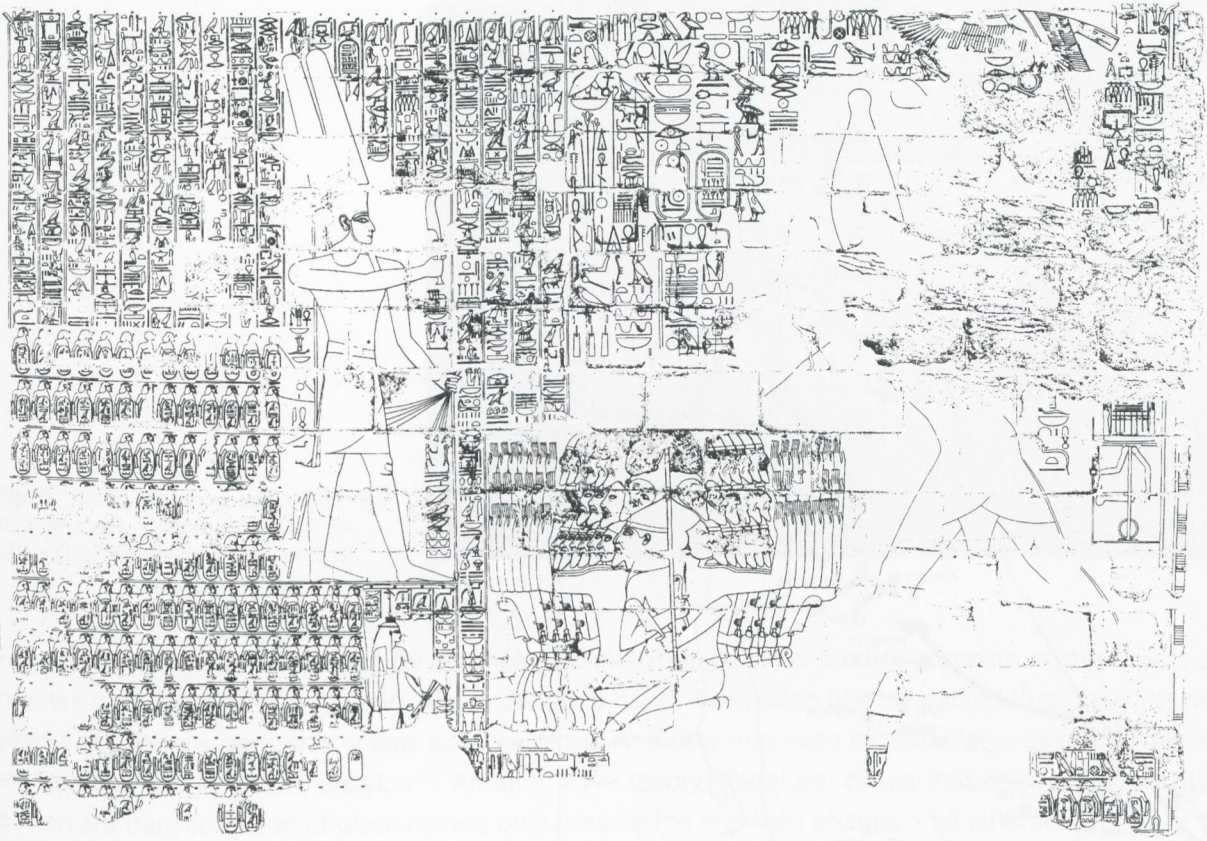


Fig. 3 Triumph scene of Shoshenq I at Karnak. – (After Epigraphic Survey 1954, pl. 3).

or Nubia – for which only Egyptian sources are extant – we have in some cases sources from both sides at our disposal, making it possible to form a more coherent picture. The Egyptian possessions in Palestine and Syria, at least partially preserved during the reign of Ramesses III, were eventually lost two or three decades later.<sup>30</sup> Thereafter, very little is known about Egyptian activities in this region, but we learn from the literary story of Wenamun that Egypt was no longer able to exert any political or military influence. The new neighbors of Egypt, the Philistines, are mentioned in the so-called Onomasticon of Amenemope from the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty. Even 200 or 300 years after, there was a statue of an Egyptian official who was sent to Canaan, the land of the Philistines.<sup>31</sup>

But our main source of Egypt's contact with this region after 1000 BC is the historical books of the Old Testament. In the first Book of Kings (9, 16f), the close ties of King Solomon to Egypt are illustrated: he marries the daughter of an unnamed Egyptian pharaoh, probably Siamun, the last but only ruler of the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty. This Egyptian king had conquered and destroyed the city of Gezer, and presented it as a sort of »wedding gift« to his son-in-law. King Solomon also receives horses and chariots from Egypt (10, 28-9), but, on the other hand, these relations do not seem to remain entirely cordial. Two of his opponents, Jeroboam and Hadad of Edom, are seeking asylum in Egypt and are well received there (11, 14-22; 11, 40). In the case of Jeroboam, it is king Shishak or Shoshenk, the founder of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty, who granted asylum. All of these events are known only through the Old Testament; there are no Egyptian sources to support this, but this comes as no surprise because such matters are not recorded in monumental inscriptions. Doubts about the historicity of these reports in the Old Testament (as have been expressed, for example, about the pharaoh's daughter), are not very convincing, however<sup>32</sup>. And at least the campaign of the pharaoh who destroyed



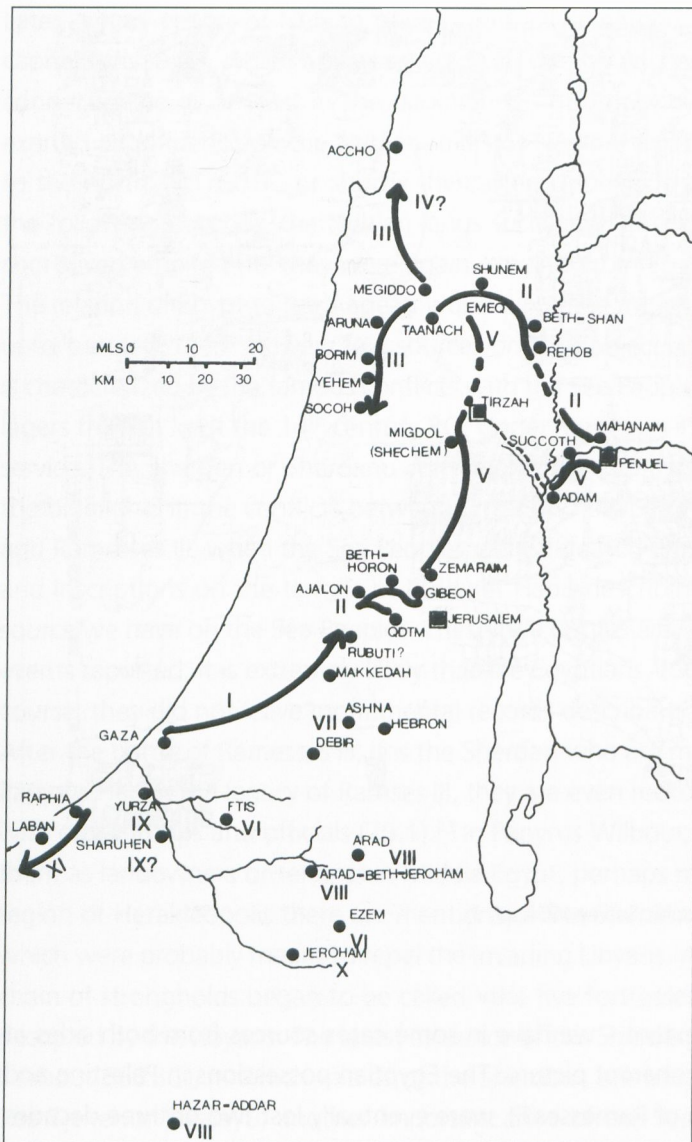


Fig. 4 Supposed route-segments of Shoshenq's campaign in Palestine. – (After Kitchen 1996, 434 fig. 9).

Gezer may be attested in a small fragment from Tanis. King Siamun is shown striking a man who is, according to the form of his weapon, believed to be a Philistine.<sup>33</sup>

Soon after, however, in 925 BC, an event took place for which evidence from both sides exists, namely the Palestinian campaign of King Shoshenq. This campaign is reported twice in the Old Testament (1 Kg, 14, 25-28; 2 Chr, 12, 2-9), and in Karnak, on the exterior of the so-called Bubastide Gate, we have a triumphal relief of King Shoshenq together with a topographical list,<sup>34</sup> which is incidentally the last representation of its kind in Egyptian history (fig. 3). We learn almost nothing about the purpose of this campaign, neither in the Bible nor in the inscription at Karnak, the latter of which contains a lot of conventional elements but also unusual ones. Above all, the topographical list is highly original.

It is opportune here to provide more information about these lists in general, for they are not only of interest for Egyptology but also for other disciplines, and they have indeed been much discussed in various contexts. The more extensive and original (not copied) lists, which appeared since the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty in connection with triumphal reliefs,<sup>35</sup> have frequently been used to reconstruct the routes of the Egyptian armies invading Palestine, an idea first put forward by the Old Testament scholar Martin Noth in the 1930s.<sup>36</sup> It is assumed that the topographical lists gave us the names of the towns captured or occupied during the campaign.





**Fig. 5** Section of topographical list in the triumph scene of Shoshenq I at Karnak. – (After Epigraphic Survey 1954, pl. 9, B).

For the campaign of Shoshenq, for example, Kenneth Kitchen has tried to reconstruct the »route-segments« of the Egyptian army<sup>37</sup> (fig. 4). On the other hand, it has often been remarked that these lists never yield a continuous route that seems to make sense. And they may even include places out of the reach of an Egyptian army, such as Babylon.<sup>38</sup> An alternative theory, therefore, claims that these lists are nothing but an arbitrary collection of place names, only compiled to highlight pharaoh's all-embracing power.<sup>39</sup> But this is even less convincing. If these lists were designed for this purpose, one would expect them to contain place-names from all known countries, including Libya, Asia Minor, or the Aegean Islands. However, they are usually quite specific, and confined to the region in which a campaign took place. Another interpretation seems much more plausible. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty, such lists have a conventional superscription: »List of these northern and southern countries whom his Majesty slew, making a great slaughter among them, whose inhabitants were brought as captives to fill the storerooms of his father Amun-Re«. <sup>40</sup> These lists do not show places but rather bound captives, who are identified by place-names (fig. 5). Accordingly, I think it is reasonable to assume that these lists simply designate the places prisoners came from.<sup>41</sup> Understood in this way, the layout of these lists do not present any difficulty, but, of course, they can no longer be used to reconstruct a military campaign.

Apart from such military clashes, there are also traces of peaceful Egyptian influence in southern Palestine, such as small objects (Aegyptiaca), Egyptian names on ostraca, or the use of Egyptian measures.<sup>42</sup> Of particular interest is the fact that there is also literary influence. The »Instruction of Amenemope«, for instance, which is a typical specimen of Egyptian wisdom or instruction literature, is usually dated to the 21<sup>st</sup> Dynasty. A passage in the Book of Proverbs is very closely related to this text, with almost every verse having a parallel in this Egyptian text. The parallels are too closely related to be explained by a common stock of Oriental or Near Eastern wisdom. And a single older text serving as *Vorlage* for both versions is virtually excluded, because most of the parallels are gathered together in one single passage in the Hebrew text, while they are scattered all over the Egyptian instruction. Therefore, and because of the date, it is quite clear that it was the Egyptian text which was used by the author of the Proverbia Salomonis, and not the other way around.<sup>43</sup> Further north, at Byblos, fragments of statues of three Egyptian kings of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Dynasty, Shoshenq I, Osorkon I (fig. 6), and Osorkon II have been found, two of them with Egyptian as well as Phoenician inscriptions.<sup>44</sup> It has been proposed that these statues were diplomatic gifts but it seems more probable, not least because of the Phoenician inscriptions, that they were traded to Byblos and reused. Nevertheless, even a





**Fig. 6** Statue of Osorkon I from Byblos with Egyptian and Phoenician inscription. Louvre AO 9502. – (After Stierlin/Ziegler 1987, fig. 111).

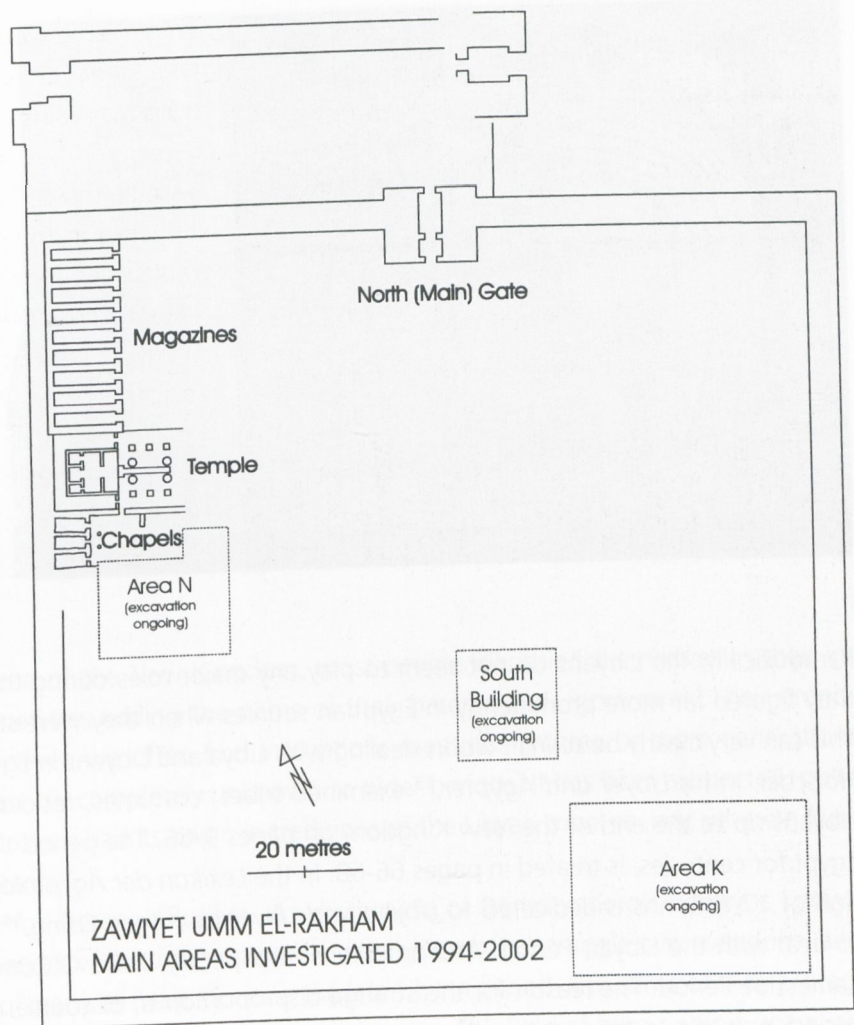
Libya and North Africa between 1200 and 750 BC are a particularly problematic chapter. There are hardly any archaeological remains from this period in North Africa, in Marmarica and Cyrenaica, and the textual evidence is not much better. The Egyptians, too, did not pay much attention to their western neighbors for a long time, probably due to a lack of economic interests. Before 1200 BC, in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was a trading post at Marsa-Matruh (Bates Island).<sup>45</sup> The pottery found there was predominantly Cypriot but also contained some Egyptian material.<sup>46</sup> A little west of Bates Island, at Umm el-Zawiyat Rakham, about 320 km west of Alexandria, was a much larger Egyptian fortress, erected or at least in use under Ramesses II<sup>47</sup> (fig. 7). Similar fortresses are known from El-Alamein (95 west of Alexandria) and Gharbaniyat (40 km west of Alexandria).<sup>48</sup> All these strongholds were apparently no longer in use after 1200 BC. From the beginning of the period discussed in this chapter, we have some news on several Libyan tribes and their confrontation with Egypt. The most prominent among these tribes are the Meshwesh and the Libu (*Rbw*), from which the Name Libya is derived. For the next few centuries they are frequently mentioned in Egyptian sources. The most important and instructive sources are the reliefs and inscriptions concerning the Libyan wars of King Merneptah, the successor of Ramesses II (shortly before 1200 BC), and Ramesses III (about 1180 BC), especially in his temple of Medinet Habu. The various depictions supply information about the appearance, dress, hairstyle, and headdress of the Libyans, as well as about the circumcision in the different tribes, the looted haul of weapons, and their material culture, etc.<sup>49</sup> They are almost always shown as enemies in war scenes, with only very rare exceptions, for example in the famous representation in the Book of Gates<sup>50</sup> (fig. 8). From North Africa west of Egypt, however, no sources of any kind are available.

As mentioned above, the Libyans managed to conquer Egypt and to establish themselves as the new rulers and warrior class of the country shortly after 1100 BC. This Libyan domination of Egypt lasted for several centuries; there were even, at least in some western regions, Libyan rulers down to the Persian and Ptolemaic period. Accordingly, we should expect more ample information on both the Libyans themselves and

simple reuse would show the appreciation of the Byblite kings for Egyptian sculpture. Phoenicia had always maintained close economic and cultural ties to Egypt, and this relationship remained after 750 BC. Despite these examples, the evidence of Egyptian influence in the Near East is scarce for this period. This is even more obvious for influence in the opposite direction, due to the very poor source material in Egypt. The textual and archaeological evidence is so scant, especially in the Third Intermediate Period, that almost nothing can be said in this regard. To sum up, we may assume that there were rather close ties and frequent contacts between Egypt and the Near East, but probably not to the same extent as in earlier and later periods.

Libya and North Africa between 1200 and 750 BC are a particularly problematic chapter. There are hardly any archaeological remains from this period in North Africa, in Marmarica and Cyrenaica, and the textual evidence is not much better. The Egyptians, too, did not pay much attention to their western neighbors for a long time, probably due to a lack of economic interests. Before 1200 BC, in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was a trading post at Marsa-Matruh (Bates Island).<sup>45</sup> The pottery found there was predominantly Cypriot but also contained some Egyptian material.<sup>46</sup> A little west of Bates Island, at Umm el-Zawiyat Rakham, about 320 km west of Alexandria, was a much larger Egyptian fortress, erected or at least in use under Ramesses II<sup>47</sup> (fig. 7). Similar fortresses are known from El-Alamein (95 west of Alexandria) and Gharbaniyat (40 km west of Alexandria).<sup>48</sup> All these strongholds were apparently no longer in use after 1200 BC. From the beginning of the period discussed in this chapter, we have some news on several Libyan tribes and their confrontation with Egypt. The most prominent among these tribes are the Meshwesh and the Libu (*Rbw*), from which the Name Libya is derived. For the next few centuries they are frequently mentioned in Egyptian sources. The most important and instructive sources are the reliefs and inscriptions concerning the Libyan wars of King Merneptah, the successor of Ramesses II (shortly before 1200 BC), and Ramesses III (about 1180 BC), especially in his temple of Medinet Habu. The various depictions supply information about the appearance, dress, hairstyle, and headdress of the Libyans, as well as about the circumcision in the different tribes, the looted haul of weapons, and their material culture, etc.<sup>49</sup> They are almost always shown as enemies in war scenes, with only very rare exceptions, for example in the famous representation in the Book of Gates<sup>50</sup> (fig. 8). From North Africa west of Egypt, however, no sources of any kind are available.





**Fig. 7** The Ramesside fortress of Umm el-Rakham. – (After Snape 2003, 153).

their former homeland from the period when they were the undisputed masters of Egypt, down to 750 BC. But the opposite is true. There are indeed a lot of persons with Libyan names, kings as well as non-royal persons, but apart from some Libyan titles, we can hardly find anything that can be identified as being specifically Libyan. This applies without restriction to language and texts: everything written, from monumental inscriptions to administrative and private texts on ostraca and papyri, is written in Egyptian. Nobody, it seems, tried to render Libyan texts and language (apart from the names). We do not even know if they spoke a single language, or several languages or dialects. What is more astonishing, however, is that there seems to be no discernible influence on the Egyptian language – hardly any loan words or foreign words from that period that could be identified as Libyan. The situation is not very different with regard to religion: the Libyans adopted the Egyptian religion, probably even before they conquered Egypt. Nevertheless, one should expect some specific Libyan gods or customs, but nothing of the sort exists. Even more remarkable – almost unbelievable – is the fact that there are no archaeological remains which could be assigned to Libyan presence or activity. There is not even any Libyan pottery in Egypt. David Aston, an expert on pottery, recently presented a comprehensive compilation and classification of the funeral equipment used in Egypt between 1100 and 650 BC.<sup>51</sup> Besides Egyptian pottery, he mentions Palestinian, Phoenician, and Cypriote pottery, but nothing Libyan<sup>52</sup>. In short, the Libyan period in Egypt, which lasted several centuries, has left no archaeological traces.





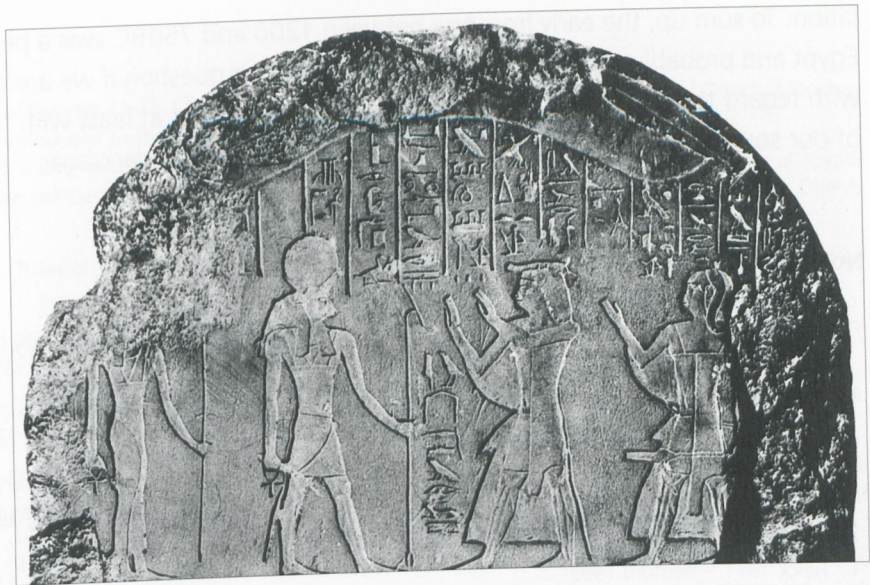
**Fig. 8** Libyans in the »Book of Gates« (Tomb of Sethos I). – (After Hornung 1982, 147 fig. 120).

Paradoxically, the Libyans do not seem to play any major roles during the Libyan period. On the contrary, they figured far more prominently in Egyptian sources when they were still enemies, in the New Kingdom. This can very clearly be seen in works dealing with Libya and Libyans in Egyptian history altogether. Wilhelm Hölscher, in his *Libyer und Ägypter*,<sup>53</sup> examined tribes, costumes, residential areas, and the history of the Libyans up to the end of the New Kingdom on pages 9-66. The period thereafter, when the Libyans ruled Egypt for centuries, is treated in pages 66-68. In the *Lexikon der Ägyptologie*, a long and detailed contribution of 17 columns is dedicated to *Libyen und Libyer* by Jürgen Osing.<sup>54</sup> But just a few lines are reserved to deal with the Libyan Period. And an extensive paper by David O'Connor<sup>55</sup> is explicitly confined to the Ramesside Period. The reason for this strange disproportion is, of course, the lack of sources from the later period, pointing to the fact that there is nothing distinctly Libyan. Until quite recently, this situation had led to the conclusion that the Libyans got very quickly integrated into Egyptian society and lost their Libyan identity. But this is certainly not true.<sup>56</sup> Libyan rulers and princes made it very clear, in their representations as well as in their names and designations, that they were Libyans and not Egyptians, even centuries after the end of the New Kingdom. These princes are called *wr ʕ* in Egyptian, the usual designation of foreign rulers, even the title Chief of Foreigners (*wr ḥ3stjw*) is mentioned several times. They quite often kept their Libyan names, and are depicted with the Libyan feather, even in very traditional religious contexts, e. g., the burial of the Apis-bull (fig. 9). And indeed, the political power of these princes was doubtless based upon their Libyan identity.

The lack of archaeological evidence for the Libyan presence in Egypt is probably due to the fact that there was a clear division of functions and duties between the Egyptian and Libyan population – the Libyans were mainly warriors, and were thus able to live on the production of Egyptian peasants. Herodotus tells us (II, 168) that every member of the Machimoi, his name for the Libyan warrior class, was entitled to twelve fields (about three or four hectares), and could live on their revenues. That means, all those responsible for agriculture and production, namely peasants and artisans, were Egyptian, as well as the priests responsible for cultural activities. And I think it is this division of functions that accounts for the lack of specific Libyan evidence.

Nevertheless, even if most Libyans kept their Libyan identity during their long stay in Egypt, they must have been deeply affected by the Egyptian religion, language and culture. But there should also be some Libyan influence on Egyptian culture as well. Characteristic of the age of Libyan rule in Egypt are, for example,





**Fig. 9** Stela (upper part): Highpriest and Libyan Prince Padiese before Apis. Louvre IM 3736. – (After Malinine/Possener/Vercoutter 1968, pl. VIII).

extensive genealogies. Until the end of the New Kingdom, most people identified themselves in their inscriptions by name and titles, sometimes adding the name of their parents and, more rarely, their grandparents. In the Libyan period, however, we often find inscriptions mentioning three or more generations of ancestors, sometimes more than 20, completely unknown to older periods. It has been suspected, quite convincing to my mind, that this custom had its origin in traditions of the Libyan tribal society, wherein family relations are particularly important.<sup>57</sup>

Secondly, there may be evidence for literary influence. A whole cycle of Demotic heroic poetry is known from the Ptolemaic and Roman period, with stories on heroic deeds, combats, struggle over weapons, and so on. The historical background of many of these stories is the late Libyan period, and some of their protagonists like Inaros and Petubastis are known from contemporary sources. This kind of heroic epic is unknown from earlier periods, and even alien to the older Egyptian tradition. It probably originates from Libyan oral poetry.<sup>58</sup> The long interval between the historical background, real or alleged events, and the written tradition is not at all unusual in this kind of literature, if one thinks of Homer or the Nibelungenlied, for example. But back to the early Iron Age: I mentioned at the beginning that almost nothing can be said about North Africa. We have no evidence for any connections of the Libyans with their former homeland west of Egypt during the Libyan period. And the first archaeological and textual information from or on North Africa is of a later date, after the founding of the Greek and Phoenician colonies, as well as the chapter on Libya by Herodotus (IV, 168 ff.). For the time before 750BC we have to rely on mere conjecture. Nevertheless, it seems likely that Libya and North Africa were not isolated but had more or less close relations to the rest of the Mediterranean world. Even in the 14<sup>th</sup> century there had been a trading post at Bates Island, and, during their fights for Egypt, the Libyan tribes had been in close contact with some of the Sea Peoples, at one time even in an alliance. Moreover, the fact that they had horses and chariots points to economic connections. We may also suppose that the connections with their homeland were not cut after the Libyans had conquered Egypt. The following could give us a hint. The tribe of the Meshwesh is by far the most important in the early and middle Libyan period, and the Meshwesh settled mainly in the eastern and central Nile delta. Shortly before 750BC the Libu, settling mainly in the western Delta, became more and more important and powerful. It is the Libu who became the most serious opponents of the Nubian 25<sup>th</sup> Dynasty and, most probably, they were also the forerunners of the 26<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. It is not unlikely that their growing power was stimulated by further immigration and reinforcement from Libya west of Egypt. But, of course, this is specu-



lation. To sum up, the early Iron Age between 1200 and 750BC was a period of fundamental changes, for Egypt and probably also for North Africa. It is an open question if we are entitled to speak of a »Dark Age« with regard to culture and cultural contacts in general, but at least with regard to the quantity and quality of our sources, especially on cultural contacts, it was a quite dark age.

## Notes

- 1) For the details and the relevant textual and archaeological sources cf. Morris 2005.
- 2) Cf. conveniently Heinz 2001.
- 3) Hein 1991.
- 4) Kitchen 1983, 91, 6-7; 1990, 21.
- 5) Cf. Helck 1995.
- 6) Helck 1971. – Redford 1992.
- 7) Edel 1976.
- 8) Helck 1995, 83-87.
- 9) Yoyotte 1961; cf. also Kitchen 1996, 346 fig. 4; 367 fig. 5.
- 10) Grimal 1981.
- 11) Onasch 1994, 36-59. 118-119.
- 12) Cf. Kitchen 1990, 23-24.
- 13) Cf. in greater detail, Jansen-Winkel 2001, 159-173.
- 14) Haring 1992.
- 15) It is significant that there are, for the first time in Egyptian history, many more monuments extant from Lower than from Upper Egypt during the 26<sup>th</sup> dynasty. In the same period, Thebes became a purely religious centre and lost all its political importance.
- 16) Cf. Jansen-Winkel 1999, 15. 20.
- 17) Cf. Zibelius-Chen 1988, 69-135.
- 18) Zibelius-Chen 1989, 330-332.
- 19) Cf. e.g., the map in Baines/Málek 1980, 49 (»Lower Nubia: Depopulated«).
- 20) Cf. Zibelius-Chen 1989, 332-334.
- 21) Kendall 1999.
- 22) Leahy 2001.
- 23) Erichsen 1933, 91, 4. – Grandet 1994, I, 335; II, 214.
- 24) Gardiner 1948, 80.
- 25) Jansen-Winkel 2001, 170-171.
- 26) Jansen-Winkel 2007, 131-133 (69) line 4.
- 27) Gardiner 1932, 61-76. – Schipper 2005.
- 28) Cf. Lloyd 1988, 170-172.
- 29) Hölbl 2000; 2005.
- 30) Morris 2005, 707-773.
- 31) Schipper 1999, 193-196.
- 32) Cf. Kitchen 2001, 380-381; 2003, 110-112.
- 33) Montet 1947, 36 pl. IX, A. – Kitchen 2001, 379.
- 34) Epigraphic Survey 1954, pls 2-9. – Wilson 2005.
- 35) For a classification of topographical lists in general cf. Kitchen 2009.
- 36) Noth 1937-1938.
- 37) Kitchen 1996, 434 fig. 9.
- 38) Wilson 2005, 32.
- 39) Wilson 2005, 36-47.
- 40) Cf. Jansen-Winkel 2008, 170-171.
- 41) Jansen-Winkel 2008, 171-172.
- 42) Mumford 2007.
- 43) Cf. Laisney 2007, 239-246.
- 44) Schipper 1999, 172-177. 298-299 figs 11-13.
- 45) White 1999.
- 46) Snape 1998, 1083 note 19.
- 47) Snape 2003.
- 48) Snape 1998, 1081.
- 49) O'Connor 1990.
- 50) Hornung 1991, 262.
- 51) Aston 2009.
- 52) Aston 2009, 318-319.
- 53) Hölscher 1937.
- 54) Osing 1980.
- 55) O'Connor 1990.
- 56) Cf. Jansen-Winkel 2000, 3-13.
- 57) Leahy 1985, 55.
- 58) Quack 2005, 60.



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