

Spring 2025 Arts of Asia Lecture Series

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It is Amun Who Made Me: A Tale of Two Houses

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Storytelling: Successor to the kingdom of Napata that developed in Nubia down to the region of the 4th cataract after the withdrawal of the ancient Egyptians, the Kingdom of Meroe emerged 300 miles further south, between 5th and 6th cataracts. Centered on the fertile plain of Shendi, in the heart of the Butana region, the kingdom's capital, Meroe, is also the home of the royal necropolis, with the famous pyramids. The transfer of the capital city from Napata to Meroe was the work of the founder of a new "dynasty", the sovereign Arkamani I, who reigned around 270/260BC. The kingdom of Meroe controlled an area of up to 1000 miles of the Nile Valley, from the region of Khartoum at the confluence of the White and Blue Nile rivers, north to the Egyptian border, between IIIrd c. BC and IIIrd c. AD. This new state was certainly the most extensive political structure known in sub-Saharan Africa, at least until the nineteenth century.

Alternative term: Palaces, large residences, temple.

Categories of Nubian Artworks: Statues, steles, monumental architecture, temple reliefs

Further divisions under figurative patterns: Religious, Historical, Portrayal, Animals

Three major features of Sudanese narrative pictures:

- To act as state propaganda and legitimize royal power
- To structure the urban fabric with religious topography in a new state core
- To use ancient architectural patterns and adapt them for local needs

Terms: mudbrick architecture, ancient urbanism, royal pageantry, religious landscape, political network

Section One: The Kingdom of Napata and the legitimacy of royal power

First Kings of Napata	Burial location
Qomaloye	Ku. 6
Alara (780-764 BCE)	Ku. 9
Kashta (775 – 755 BCE)	Ku. 8
Piankhy/Piye (755 – 721 BCE)	Ku. 17
25th dynasty (kings of Egypt from 721 to 663 BCE)	
Shabataqo (714 – 705 BCE)	Ku. 18
Shabaqo (705 – 690 BCE)	Ku. 15
Taharqo (690 – 664 BCE)	Nu. 1
Tanuetamani (664 – 656 BCE)	Ku. 16
Kingdom of Napata (656 – 270 BCE)	
Atlanersa (2 nd half of 7th c. BCE)	Nu. 20
Senkamanisken (2 nd half of 7th c. BCE)	Nu. 3
Anlamani (end 7th c. BCE)	Nu. 6
Aspelta (end 7th c. BCE. – beginning 6th c. BCE)	Nu. 8
Aramatelqo (first half 6th c. BCE)	Nu. 9
Malonaqene (first half 6th c. BCE)	Nu. 5

Analamoye (6th c. BCE)	Nu. 18
Amani-nataki-lebte (second half 6th c. BCE)	Nu. 10
Amanikarqo (second half 6th c. BCE)	Nu. 7
Amaniastabarqo (end 6th c. BCE– beginning 5thc. BCE)	Nu. 2
Siospiqo (first half 5th c. BCE)	Nu. 4
Nasakhma (5th c. BCE)	Nu. 19
Malowiamani (5th c. BCE)	Nu. 11
Talakhmani (second half 5th c. BCE)	Nu. 16
Amannot-e-erike (second half 5th c. BCE)	Nu. 12
Baskakeren (second half 5th c. BCE)	Nu. 17
Harsiotef (first half 4th c. BCE)	Nu. 13
Akh-Aritene (4th c. BCE)	Nu. 14
Amanibakhi (second half 4th c. BCE)	?
Nastasen (second half 4th c. BCE)	Nu. 15
Aktisanes / Gatisen (end 4th c. BCE)	Bar. 11
Aryamani (first half 3rd c. BCE)	unkown
Kashtamani (first half 3rd c. BCE.)	unkown
Piankhy-erike-qo (first half 3rd c. BCE)	unkown
Sabrakamani (first half 3rd c. BCE)	unkown
Empire of Meroe (270 BCE – 340 CE)	
Arkamani I (270 – 3rd c. BCE)	Beg. S. 6
Queen Bartare (3rd c. BCE)	Beg. S. 10
Amanislo (3rd c. BCE)	Beg. S. 5
Queen Kanarta (3rd c. BCE)	Beg. S. 4
Amanitikha (second half 3rd c. BCE)	Beg. N. 4
Kanakht (second half 3rd c. BCE)	Beg. N. ?
Arnekhmani (240 – 215 BCE)	? Beg. N. 53
Arkamani II (end 3rd c. BCE)	Beg. N. 7
Adikhalamani (first half second c. BCE)	Beg. N. 8
Tabirqo (first half second c. BCE)	Beg. N. 9
Queen Nahirqo (first half second c. BCE)	Beg. N. 11
Taneyidamani (second half second c. BCE.)	Beg. N. 12
Pakhedateqo (end of the second c. BCE)	? Bar.
Unknown Queen (end of the second c. BCE)	Bar. 8
Nakidenasene (first half of the first c. BCE)	Beg. N. 13
Horus Kanakht (first c. BCE.)	Beg. N. 20
Queen Amanirenas (second half of the first c. BCE)	? Bar. 4
Teriteqas (30 BCE)	Beg. N. 21
Prince Akinidad (end of the first c. BCE)	? Bar. 2
Queen Amanishakheto (end of the first c. BCE)	Beg. N. 6
Queen Shanakdakhete (end of the first c. BCE)	–
Queen Nawidémak (first half of the first c. CE)	Bar. 6
Amanakhabale (first half of the first c. CE)	Beg. N. 2
Queen Amanitore (first c. CE)	Beg. N. 1
Natakamani (first c. CE)	Beg. N. 22
Prince Arikankharor (first c. CE)	Beg. N. 5
Prince Arakakhatani (first c. CE)	Beg. N. 14 et 15
Prince Shorkaror (first c. CE)	Beg. N. 16
Amanakhareqerem (first c. CE)	Beg. N. 17
Amanitenmomide (end of the first c. CE)	Beg. N. 40
Unkown King (first half of the second c. CE)	Beg. N. 41
Unknown King (first half of the second c. CE)	Beg. N. 18
Queen Amanakhatasene (first half of the second c. CE)	Beg. N. 19
Tarekeniwal (second half of the second c. CE)	Beg. N. 34
Aritene-yesbokhe (second half of the second c. CE)	Beg. N. 38
Pisakara (second half of the second c. CE)	Beg. N. 36
Amanitaraqide (end of the second c. CE)	Beg. N. 36

Adeqetali (beginning of the third c. CE)	Beg. N. 30
Takide-Amani (first half of the third c. CE)	Beg. N. 29
Teqoride-Amani (second half of the third c. CE)	Beg. N. 28
Unkown King (end of the third c. CE)	Beg. N. 51
Talakhide-Amani (end of the third c. CE)	? Beg. N. 25
Prince Maloqorebar (end of the third c. CE)	Beg. N. unkown
Unkown king (beginning of the 4 th c. CE)	Beg. N. 27
Unkown Queen (beginning of the 4 th c. CE)	Beg. N. 26
Yesbokhe-Amani (first half of the 4 th c. CE)	Beg. N. 24
Aryesbokhe (first half of the 4 th c. CE)	Beg. N. 16 (reuse)

Ku. = Kurru
 Nu. = Nuri
 Bar. = Gebel Barkal
 Beg. = Begrawwiya
 (Meroe)

Section Two: A new political network in Sub-Saharan Africa

The culture of Meroe is particularly innovative and more rooted in local traditions, when compared to the Egyptian substrate of Napata. Although Egyptian gods are well represented in the official religion, as demonstrated by the architecture and iconography of the great temples, indigenous cults are also well represented (the lion-god Apedemak, or Sebiuameker). The royal iconography also demonstrates the hybrid nature of the Meroitic culture, between Egyptian heritage and local tradition. The invention of writing to transcribe the language of Meroe (instead of Egyptian hieroglyphs, which were abandoned at the turn of the millennium), or the profound renewal of the ceramic repertoire, are evidence to suggest the major overhaul of the state core in the region at that time.

Persuasion: ceremonial, political, cultural

Largest political structure in Sub-Saharan Africa of the period. Idiosyncratic cultural exchange.

Instruction: Didactic, informative, daily use

State piety, traditional customs, historical anecdotes, and illustrations

Entertainment: Amusing, engaging, and new research field

Daily life and religious needs, transmission of theological paradigms, historical figures, craftsmanship.

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7. Welsby D., *The Kingdom of Kush: The Napatan and Meroitic Empires*, London, 1996.

Website with the ISAC Museum Nubia collection:

<https://isac.uchicago.edu/museum-exhibits/robert-f-picken-family-nubian-gallery>