

The Kingdom of Makuria and its Civilization

A Renewed Insight through New
Archaeological Discoveries

Ahmed Hussein Abdelrahman Adam



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Cover: Upper, the village and fortress of Khandaq; Lower, the River Nile near Khandaq, illustrating aspects of the terrain surveyed. (Photos: the author).



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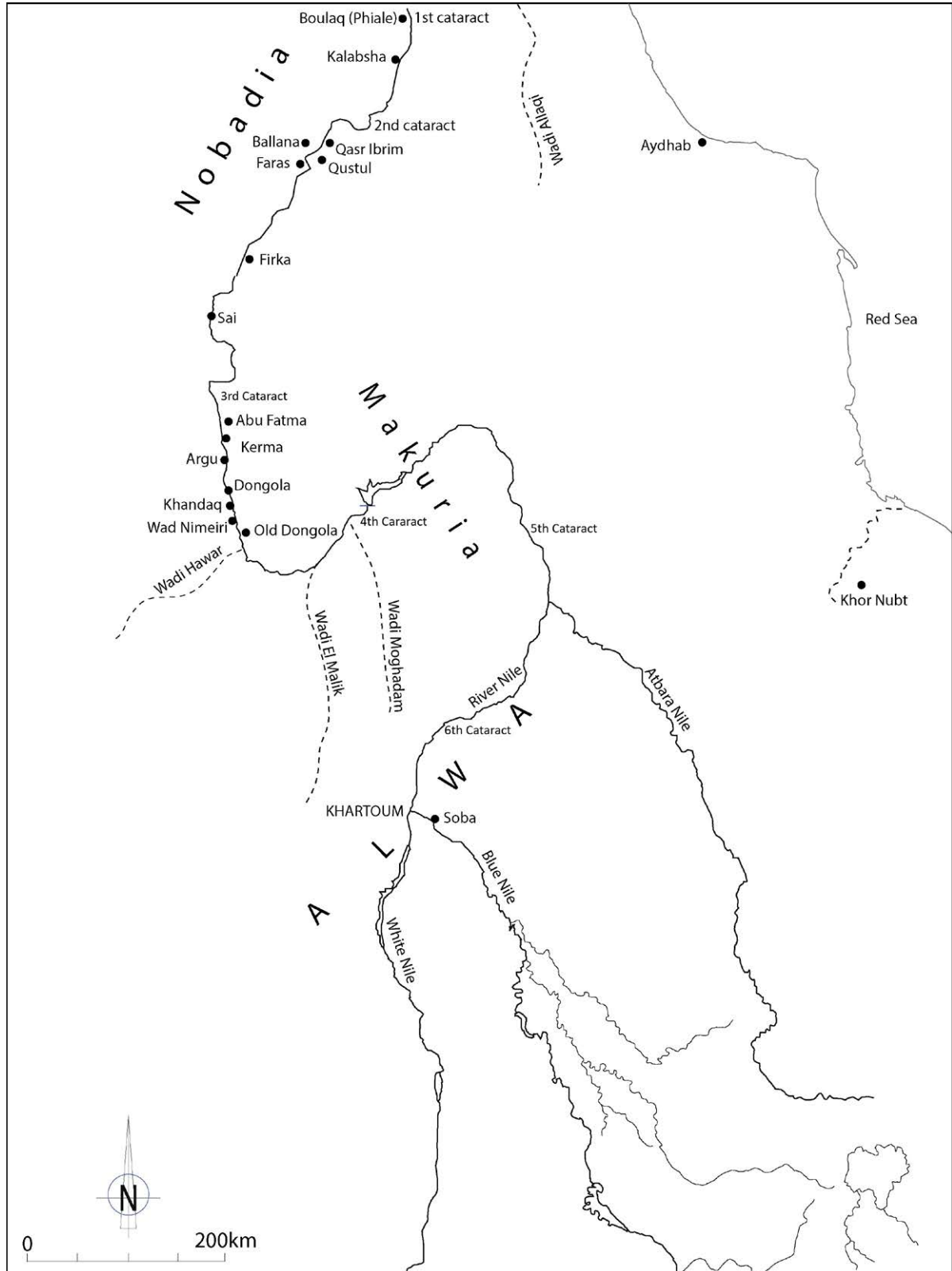
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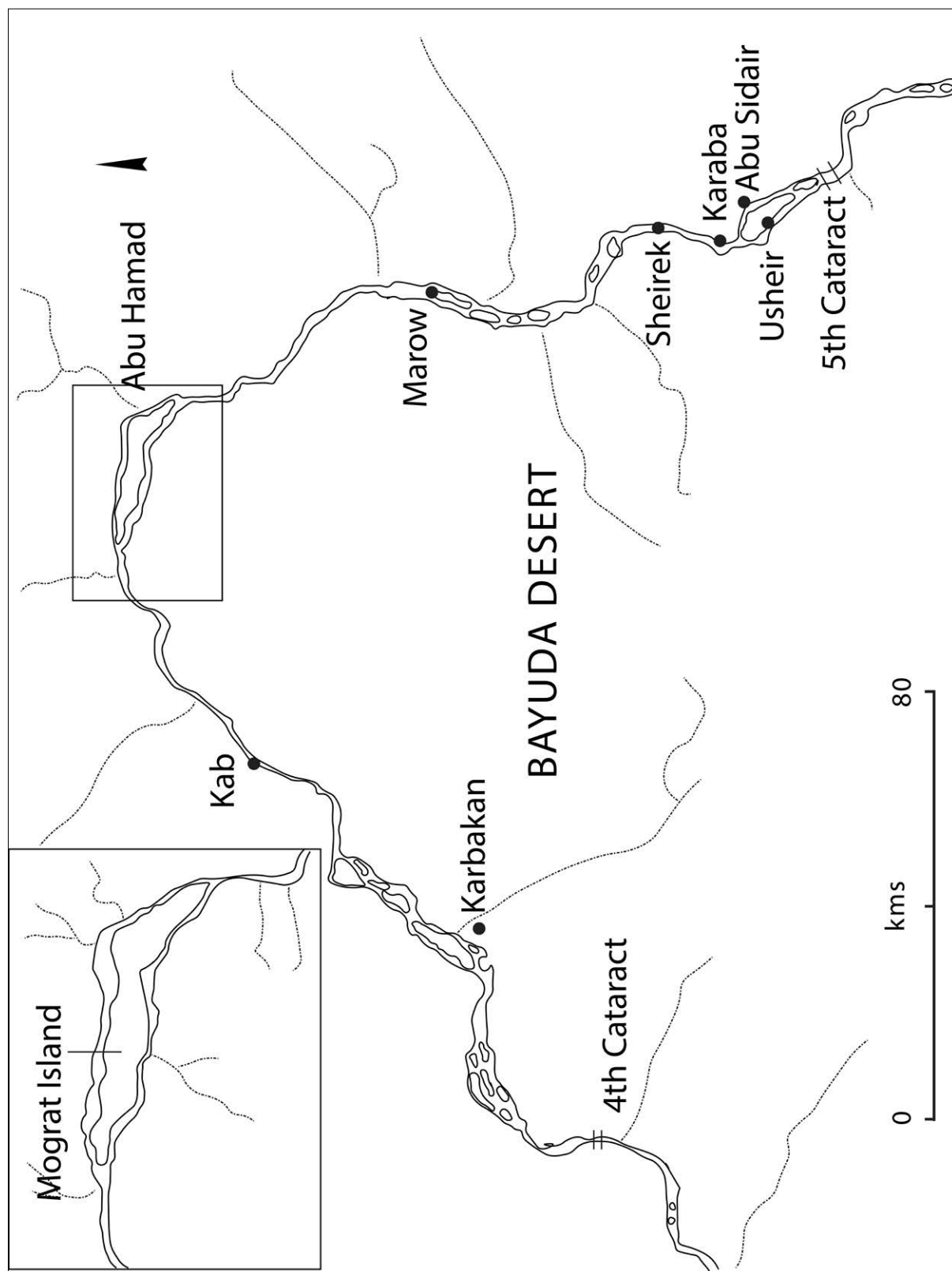
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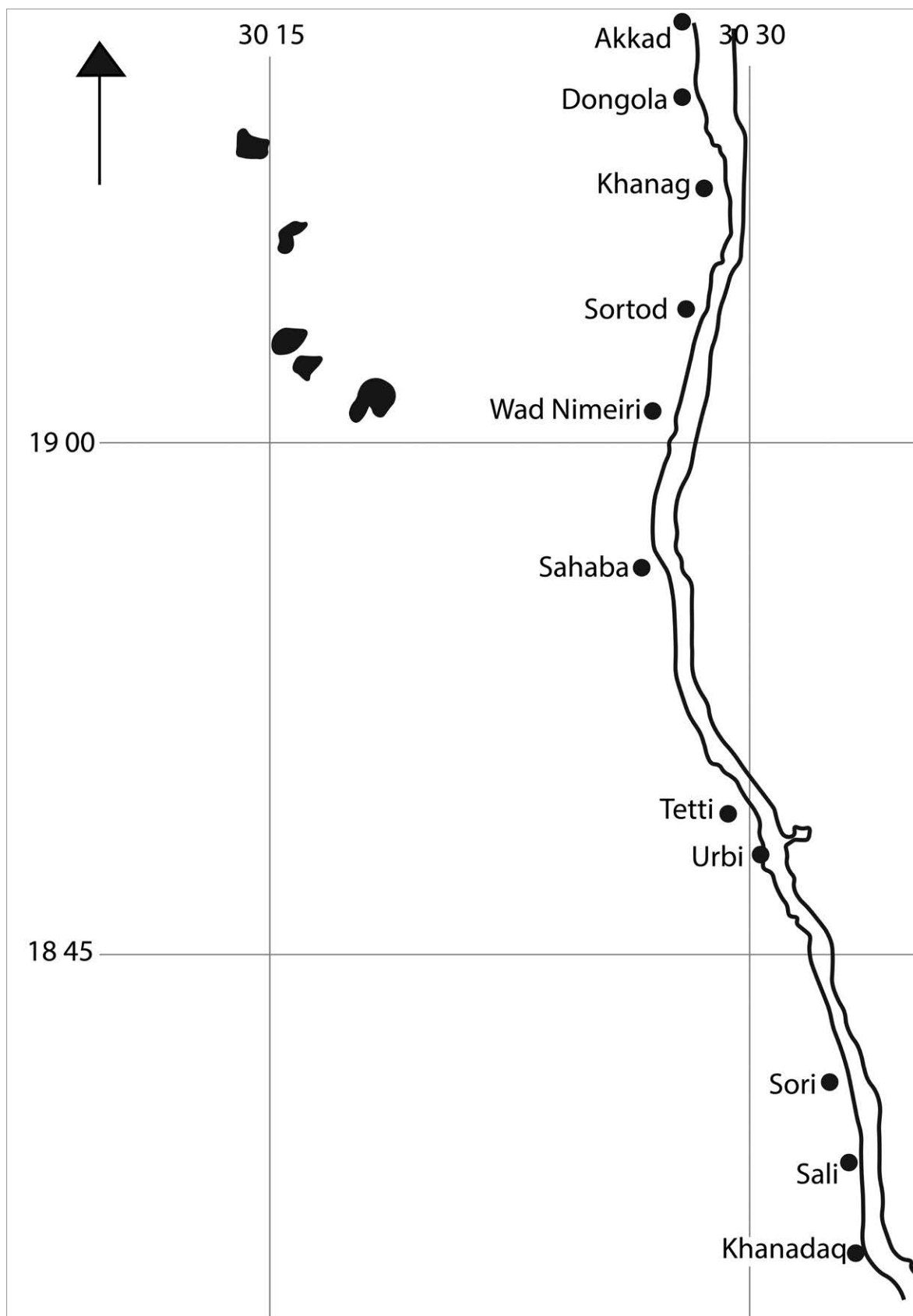
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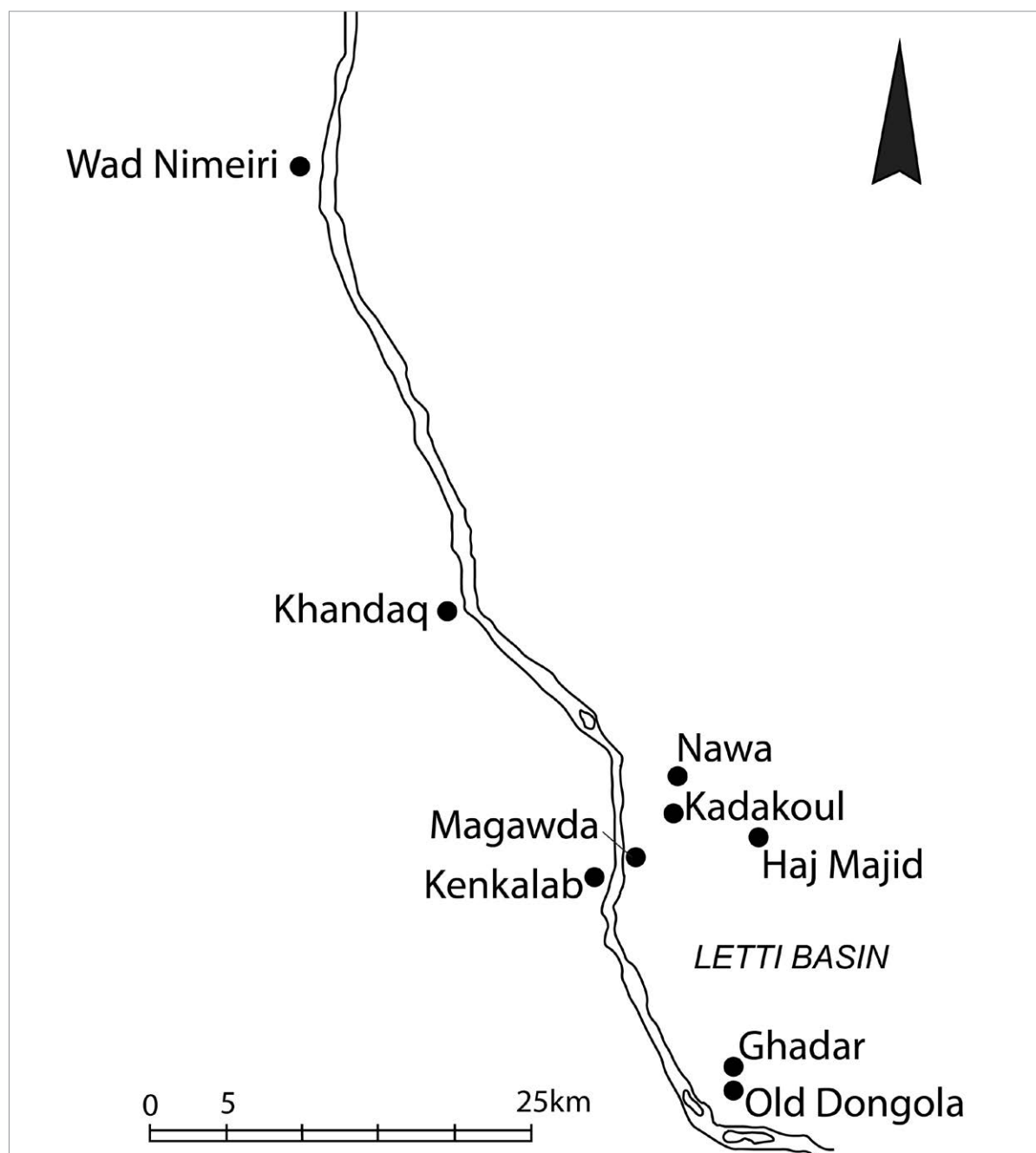
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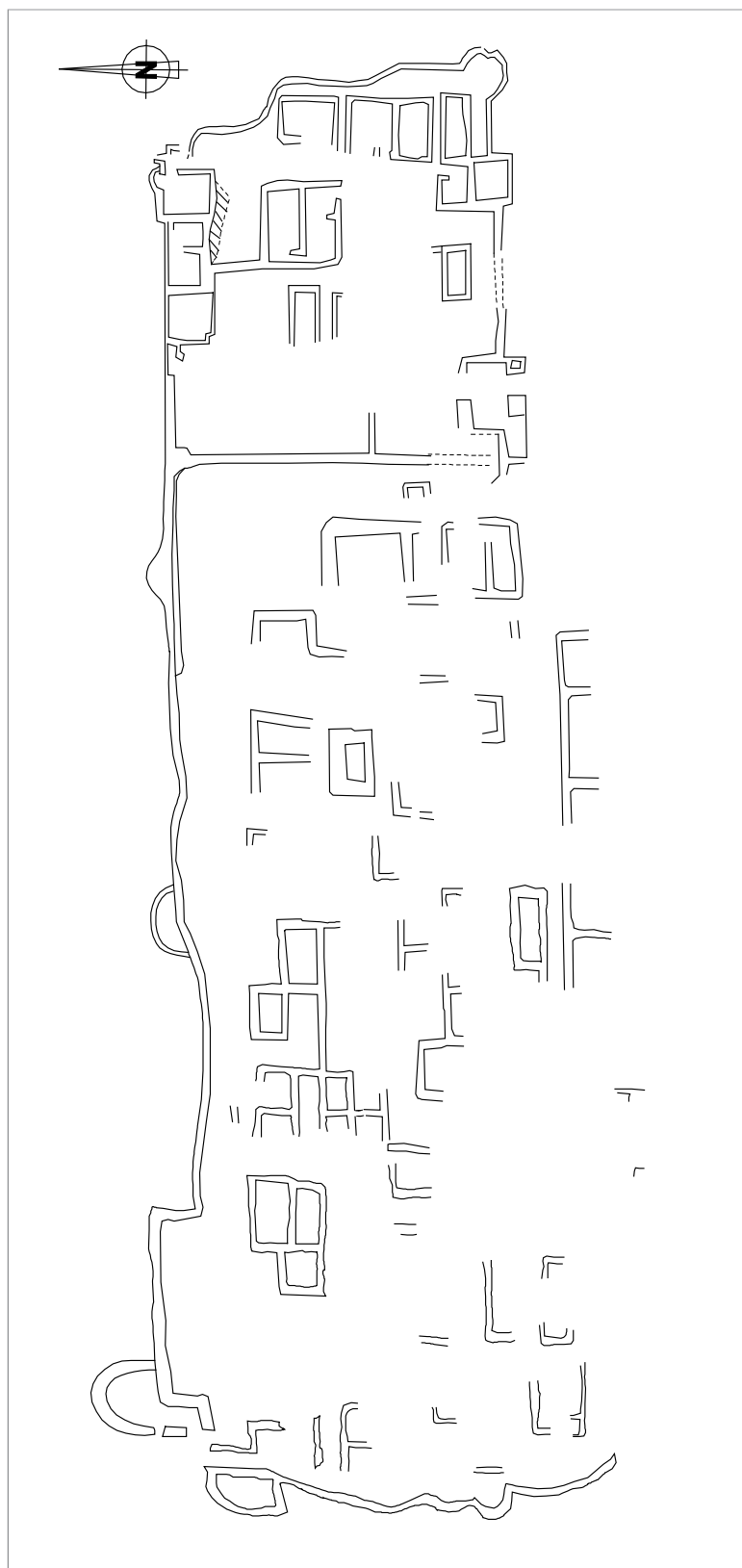
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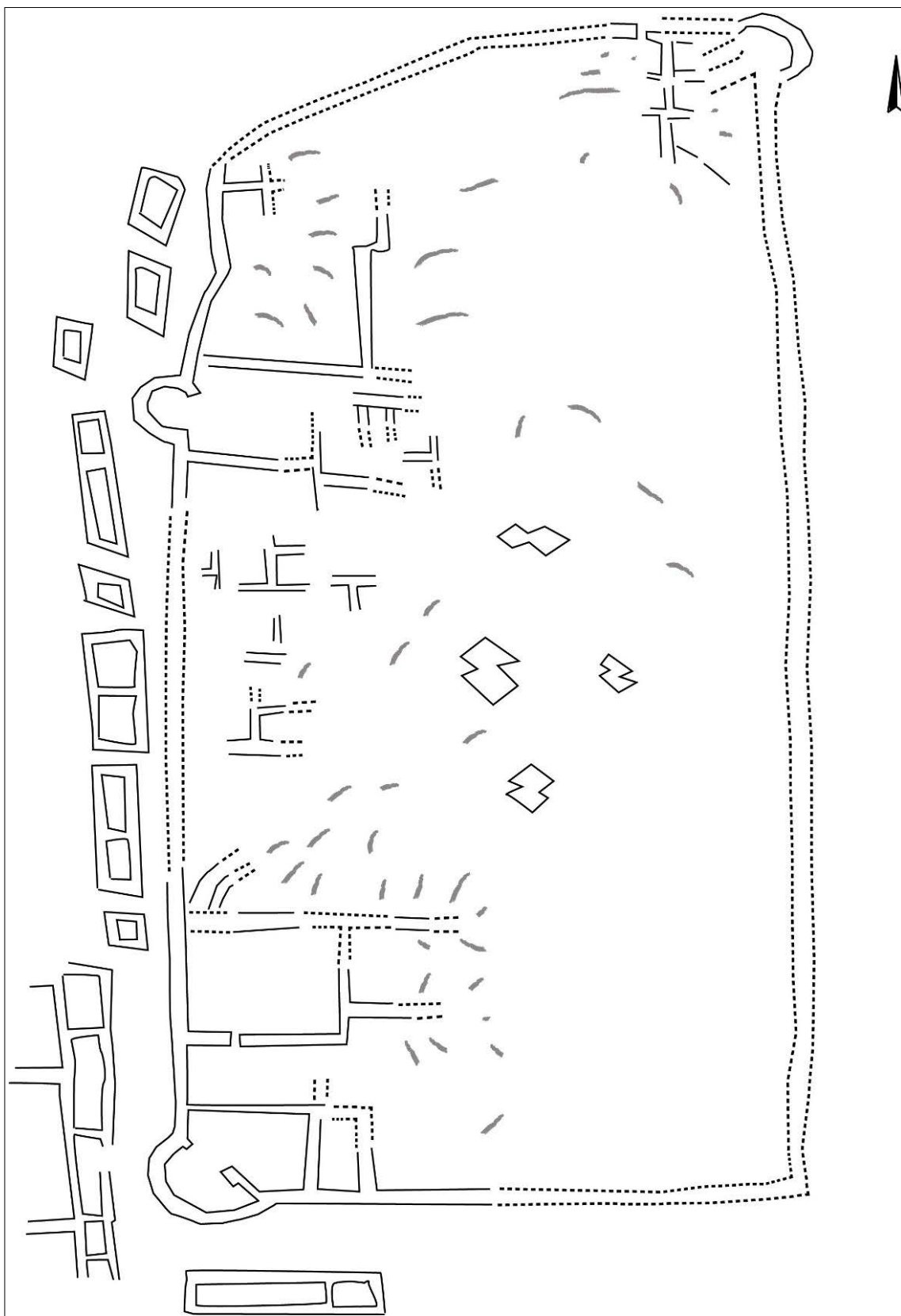
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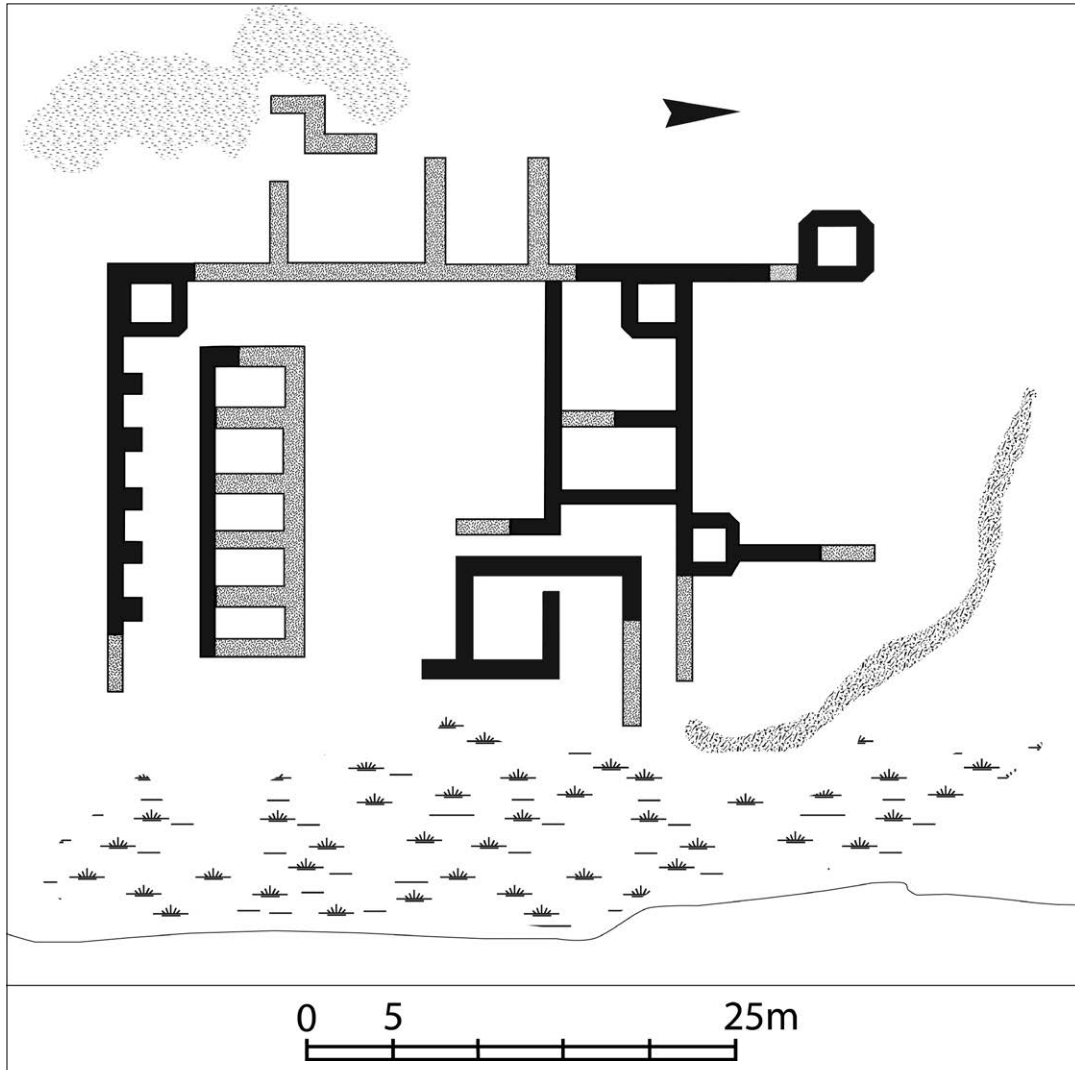
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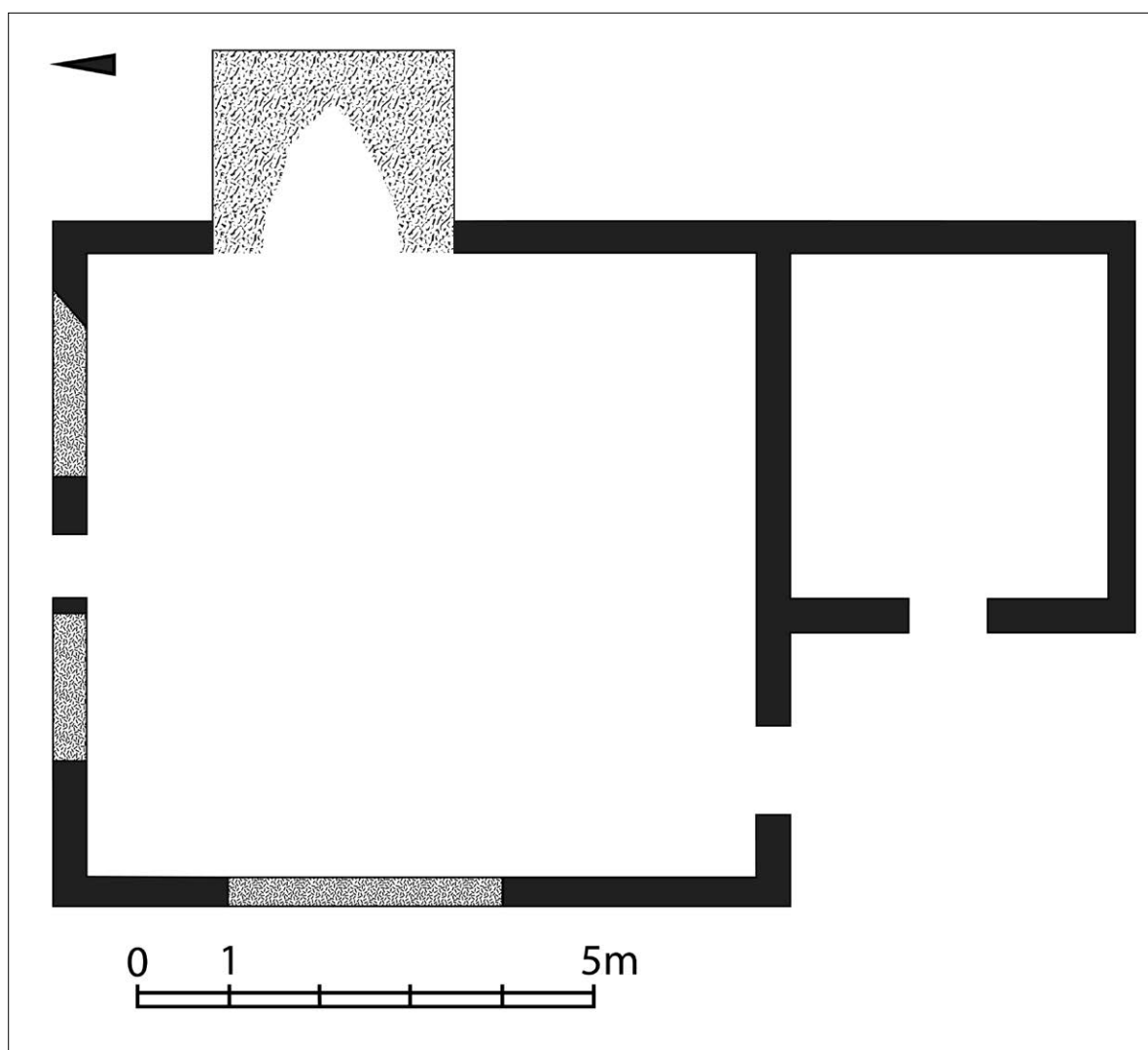
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Plan 4. Sketch plan of Ibn Abi al-Sarh (Ibn Abi As-Sarḥ) Mosque in Nawa (Drawn by the author)

CHAPTER ONE:

Introduction

1-1 Research Topic and Significance

Until fairly recently, most of the archaeological studies in Sudan focused mainly on excavating large sites and settlements for the purpose of determining their identity and their role in the region's history. These studies did not take account of the sites' distribution and the importance of kingdoms' positioning in the wider landscape. Nevertheless, these studies have contributed to the establishment of historical evaluations for Sudanese civilizations. Studies of the Kingdom of Makuria followed a similar pattern as its features and relations with the previous periods were not immediately obvious.

When the Kingdom of Meroe fragmented in the middle of the 4th century, new political forces emerged in northern Sudan which are traditionally known by the names Blimmies (a nomadic Beja tribe), Nobadians, and Nubians. Although the origin of these groups is not entirely confirmed, some of their antecedents must have been Meroe nationals. These post-Meroitic cultures showed some aspects of Meroe after its collapse. The basic elements in this culture were the Ballana culture, between the First and Third Cataracts, and Tangasi culture near the Fourth Cataract as well as the artefacts found in Hobagi graves (Lenoble 2004:115-124). There are differences, but these could be attributed to the distance from the Shendi Reach and subsequent regional developments.

In the middle of the 6th century, wars occurred between the Blimmies and the Nobadians. Greek sources motioned that the Blimmies (the Savage warriors) appeared for the first time in the Nile Valley in AD 250. It seems that they were a group of united ethnic clans. They were identified as being similar to the Medjai who were extensively mentioned in the old Egyptian texts and who were considered part of the Beja ethnic group (Gardiner 1947: 81). As for the Nobadians, they were different in culture and religion to the Blimmies. Their cemeteries date to the 3rd and the 4th centuries AD. The conflicts were resolved in favour of the Nobadians who established the Kingdom of Nobatia in the First Cataract. Nobatia might be equivalent to the Ballana and Qustul regions. The Nubians' movements in the Nile in the Upper Nubia area led to the establishment of the Kingdom of Makuria in a region which used to be dominated by the Tangasi and Zuma cultures. The region that had been controlled by Meroe became the Alwa Kingdom, which was founded by the descendents of the Meroitic kings, who may be related to Hobagi cemeteries that is located at the borders with Alwa. Thus, it can be stated that the Nubian Kingdoms converted to Christianity produced culture with common features distributed around the same previous geographical centres for the post-Meroe era. It should be noticed that variations in environment affected features, and components, of the kingdoms, and their internal and external communications.

The Kingdom of Makuria witnessed a variety of patterns regarding buildings, settlements, and cemeteries which were said to be Christian. Their geographical and linguistic borders are known from the historical sources.

Extensive archaeological work by many missions, especially the Polish, has been done on the Kingdom of Makuria. Despite this, there is shortage of data to adequately address such questions as its geographical extent. Its borders were unknown at the political and cultural levels because the majority of these studies were not concerned with these aspects. Regarding the governing system and its pillars in managing the Kingdom's affairs, the information is similarly sparse. This may be because the system had several experiments in a multi-ethnic and religious area where there were

many administrative jobs. Simultaneously, the King had many titles. Another reason was the nature of the urban and rural settlements. In addition, there is a lack of adequate known writings in Qustul and Ballana until the adoption of Christianity. After that, a number of languages such as Greek, Coptic and Nubian prospered.

The urban and trade centres played an integral role in the kingdom's history because of the weakness and lack of civilian settlement in Dongola, which was a political and religious centre with the governor's palace. Herein lies the central contribution of this study, which attempts to show the character of the Kingdom of Makuria, its political and cultural role through the archaeology of the capital Old Dongola and some surrounding centres. They were not subordinate, but they used to have an important role in securing the trade routes in the kingdom, especially on the western bank of the Nile. This area is large and opened the kingdom up to exploit the economic resources in Kurdufan and Darfur.

This study is therefore concerned with archival research. It critically re-examines previous studies on the medieval history of Sudan through integrating new archaeological discoveries with new insights into its settlement patterns and the fluid nature of the boundaries of the kingdom. Consequently, the study shows how this period comprised a network of cultural, political, and religious relations that affected regions inside the current state of Sudan outside the original boundaries of the Kingdom of Makuria.

1-2 Objectives

The study aims at:

1. Studying the rural sites and their role in understanding the political, economic, social, and religious reality in the Kingdom of Makuria. In addition, the study focuses on investigating the religious development and its impact on cultural and material production during the Christian period and after. This is accomplished through a thorough re-examination of the cultural continuity and disjunctures in those periods. A key component enabling this is Old Dongola, which was the centre of cultural and social unity, despite the differences in religious doctrines on the one hand and the differences among people holding the same doctrine on the other.
2. Identifying the basic features of the Christian settlements concerning their characteristics, components, types and their influence on the cultural continuity of the sites and showing the importance of the local environment and its integral role. The architectural, cultural and environmental elements will be looked at through linguistics and identifying linguistic and religious changes.
3. Identifying the political and cultural extension of Makuria Kingdom and its relations with the other kingdoms in Nubia pre- and post-unity. In addition, the study tries to establish the kingdom's rural and urban extensions around the capital, particularly urban centres that contributed to securing and supporting the capital economically, and defines their roles in the broader cultural development through their particular settlement features.

1-3 Research Problems

The research problems are:

1. Makuria was previously regarded as being represented by one area, in Old Dongola. This was both a consequence of and led to a scarcity of information and archaeological studies on other sites in the area. There are some unknown important religious centres, such as Marki and Kulma cathedrals whose geographical locations have never been identified despite their obvious religious role as centres with significant features. This can be attributed to deficiency in studies.
2. The majority of the research did not adopt innovative ideas in interrogating old data, with many focusing on the architecture and arts in buildings without investigating small sites or undertaking adequate social studies.
3. There is no consideration of the socio-economic and ideological aspects of the Kingdom of Makuria. Although there is much archaeological research on Makuria, researchers have tended to repeat paradigms used in older studies.

1-4 Research Assumptions

Even though there exist some environmental, economic, and political differences among these Kingdoms, there is also cultural homogeneity among them.

The research assumes that:

There is a level of cultural homogeneity among these kingdoms despite the existence of some environmental, economic and political differences.

There are some similarities between Makuria and the Sudanese kingdoms before and after it (Meroe and Fung) regarding continuity in governing systems and some of the material culture.

Dongola was the centre of governance and religious capital. After the collapse of the government, the power became scattered in several centres and provinces of the kingdom.

1-5 Research Methodology

The study adopted descriptive, comparative, and analytic approaches through discussing and evaluating the research problems. I collected, employed and recorded using a variety of methods such as surveying, recording maps, archaeological material and drawings, photographing, architectural features, verbal information and ethnography. These sources included:

Previous studies and reports: studies about various archaeological sites and the writings of Arab travellers and historians who visited the Sudan.

Results of the Sudanese and foreign primary surveys and archaeological studies about the sites of the area.

Primary national sources such as manuscripts, documents and verbal narrations.

The data were compiled and compared to historical texts. Places names in the texts were compared with the current names in the area and related to the Nubian languages.

1-6 Research Outline

The study comprises six chapters, inclusive of the introduction. The introduction presents the theoretical framework and the methodology. The second chapter discusses the study concepts and methods in the medieval period. It also describes the location of the area in addition to some scientific and theoretical problems such as the *Baqt* Treaty and the union of Nobatia and Makuria. Chapter Three is about Makuria archaeology, economy, literature and language. The fourth chapter deals with the study area between the Third and Fourth cataracts, the previous studies and the kingdom locations. The fifth chapter presents the field study while Chapter Six provides the analytical study.

CHAPTER TWO: Concepts and Methods in the Medieval Period

2-1 Introduction

The medieval ages play an important role in Sudan's cultural and urban history. Nevertheless, what has been written does not reflect the importance of this period and does not deal with all aspects of cultural, social, and political life. It is worth mentioning some modern studies, which attempted to explain some aspects of this age (e.g. Osman 1978, 1982; Sighiroon 2001; Welsby 2001; Al-Muatism 2004). Their key insight is that there is not only a gap between this age and the subsequent ones, but also that there is a cultural, social, and religious relationship between them. It has not been easy to define the medieval ages because of scarcity of sources and the interconnectivity of events. Historians (generally) agree that the medieval age in Sudan represents the establishment, prosperity, and collapse of Christian Kingdoms. The post-medieval age represents the period after the collapse of the Christian Kingdoms and the rise of the Islamic Kingdoms in Sudan since the beginning of the 16th century. This is followed by modern Sudanese history, which started with the Turkish invasion of Sudan in 1821.

Geography and geology plays an important role in the rise of civilizations, but it has not been sufficiently studied in Nubia and it needs to be linked to the historical context. Geologically, Nubia and Egypt are similar and dissimilar in nature. While in Egypt the Nile flows through an extensive and fertile land, in Nubia, except for a few areas, the agricultural soil does not extend the whole length of the Nile banks, but is found sporadically, which is of less value. In Egypt, the riverbanks are wider which permits more arable land.

Generally, the term 'medieval' has been exported from the west (like Al-Saltana Al-Zarqaa, the Fung Kingdom, paralleled with Al-Saltana Al-Ihamraa in Turkey). The term was suggested by the Europeans, who initiated these studies in the area in Europe. In the latter continent, the 4th century is considered the beginning of the medieval age and the 15th to be its end¹.

This concept of 'the Medieval period', internally and historically, focused only on Nobatia and Makuria while neglecting the Alwa Kingdom. While excavations were conducted in Soba, there are many more Christian sites on the Blue Nile banks, such as Banbonab, Umtakali, Iseilat, in addition to the White Nile sites. These may have been cultural urban centres in the Alwa Kingdom. Alwa also extended into Kurdufan, but these provinces have not been sufficiently studied and evaluated. Additionally, modern studies have revealed the existence of the Takaki Kingdom in the Fifth Cataract region. It was independent, and it played an important role in changing events during the Christian period and the Al-Fung Kingdom (Al-Muatasim 2002).

Moreover, this concept seems to be unsuitable because it fixed the end of all kingdoms during the control of Al-Fung, particularly the large provinces of Alawa that may have separated and established independent emirates at the sites of Al-Abwab and Al-Takaki in Kurdufan. This historical division has isolated the periods regardless of their historical and cultural continuity.

¹ This was based on political and social changes in Europe which were dominated by major changes in the form of Christianity and its relation to secular authorities; it was also the time when Western Europe entered the Renaissance and looked back to its Classical roots.

Some Christian preachers were found during the Meroitic period since the first century. One of them came to the kingdom during the rule of one of its queens during the first century AD; he served the queen but he did not have any religious impact. Other preachers crossed the borders to Ethiopia (Vantini 1978: 15). The post-medieval period was related to the establishment of the Islamic kingdoms in the beginning of the 16th Century. Archaeological work and medieval travellers' writings, however, prove that there were many Islamic features appearing early in the medieval age. One of these was the Abdullah Ibn Al-Sarh mosque in AD 651. In addition, Al-Maqrizi (1906: 110-113) mentions the existence of an Islamic neighbourhood in Soba. Some Fatimid documents were found in addition to pottery and glass in Ibrim, Soba and Dongola excavations (Welsby and Daniel 1993: 13). Additionally, some headstones were found in the early 19th century at Tafa, dating to 822, and at Kalabsha dating to 929. Ibrim Palace documents confirmed Arabic settlement in lower Nubia since the 9th century (Adams 1987: 332). De Villard conducted studies in the Miras area to identify the Arabic groups' impact on the Nubians. He found Coptic scripts with both Coptic and Hijri calendars dating to the 10th century (906-907) in Sakinia in lower Nubia (Adams 1987: 332). Moreover, other writings, which do not have any date except the Hijri, are of the same period (De Villard 1935: 119). The use of the Hijri Calendar demonstrates the Muslims' influence on Nubians.

In Sudan, some headstones in Khor Nubt in the eastern desert date to AD 877 and 945 and in Badi, 977-1045 (Soghayroun 2001: 15). Relics of a mosque and many remains were found in Wadi Al-Alagi in Darheb. It is believed that they date back to the Roman period (Castiglioni 1994: 31). In the middle of the 8th century, some Amawi groups arrived in Badi port on the Red Sea and settled there. Their relics were found in Khor Nubt west of Suakin port. A mosque was founded there in 831 (Crawford 1954: 86).

Similar archaeological indications are also found in western Sudan before the Fung Kingdom where some mosque remains were located in Ain Farah and Uri, dated to the 13th century (Soghayroun 2001: 16).

Evidence of this kind confirms the continuity between the medieval and post-medieval periods through the spread of Arabs and Muslims in the Christian Nubian kingdoms. Previous work, specially dealing with the period of the Islamic sultanates, focused on the history in Sudan generally and only briefly dealt with their history while discussing these periods solely in a regional framework. The purpose of this background is not to underplay the identity and independence of some historical eras, but to identify the interrelation between the Sudanese civilizations and their changes in culture, society, and religion that have formed the political and social structure of modern Sudan.

2-2 Medieval Age Study Methodology

The process of reconstructing the cultural and political history for a period in Sudanese archaeology is complicated because of the underpinning reliance on a variety of interdisciplinary methods. Reformulation of the history of the Makuria Christian Kingdom is the core of this study, based on the archaeological work that has been done in Nubia. This can be done through evaluating these studies and identifying their deficiencies.

Two approaches were adopted to explain and interpret the medieval ages. The first was Egyptology, and the second was the developmental approach: the first tending to use historical evidence whereas the second uses archaeological evidence. Both approaches study the full history of Nubia from pre-history to the end of the medieval age that extends for 5000 years. Each period of Sudanese history has its special features in addition to their commonalities (AlNur 2006: 33).

Through linguistic analysis, the continuity of some traditions (non-Christian and non-Islamic) can be traced. Coptic, Greek and Nubian texts were amongst those interrogated and their content related to the archaeological material, especially the post- Meroitic period in Sudan (AD 350 onwards).

It is problematic to reformulate the history of the transition to the Christian kingdoms, because of the archaeological evidence used. The Christian graves are different from the non-Christian during Meroitic and post Meroitic periods in Balana and Qustul in terms of funerary goods: the Christian graves have few or no funerary goods. Moreover, the same scripts that were on graves were also put on large buildings. The Meroitic pyramids and the immense funeral tumuli that distinguished the post-Meroitic period were not used for the Nubian Kings who were Christians. As for the Christian-period graves, studies have relied on the shape and orientation of the graves (east-west) in addition to the similarity of the graves' content in the same region or province. These included using lamps and some pottery that appeared to be of pre-Christian type, beside the decor in the superstructures. It is noticeable that there are no big buildings except the one for St. Johannes in Faras, which is in a form of a cube with a small dome. In addition, a circular dome was found in Soba built of red bricks and containing some Christian pottery sherds. All the Christian graves are flat in their external shape despite the existence of dome-shaped, cross-like graves, and rectangular stone headstones. It can be said that environment is an effective factor in the shape and size of the grave (Al-Nur 2006: 46). What is advantageous here is blurring the interrelation between the post-Meroitic and the early Christian period. But, blurring traditions are not enough to reveal all about beliefs and styles of worship. The existence of funeral furniture denotes that these graves are old (at the beginning of Christianity) and lack of it means that it was stopped temporarily by those who followed the new religion.

Here the question should be asked, to what extent are the political and religious changes after the collapse that led to the appearance of Christianity reflected in the archaeological record? It seems that the most obvious relation in terms of archaeological evidence is in the locations where human activities are directly linked with the changing events (Welsby 2003: 33). Adams and Al-Nur displayed three levels of field studies in Nubia: random, selective and comprehensive. At the selective level, rich royal and large sites were studied. These sites only illustrate the elite culture that does not contribute to the study of broader artistic and political history (Al-Nur 2006: 25).

Saint Mark introduced Christianity into Egypt and then it spread. Christians in Egypt confronted oppression in some emperors' eras such as Decius (249–251 AD) and Valerian (253 to 260 AD), (Masaad 1960: 47). This resulted in migration of Christians to the deserts west of the Nile and south into Nubia. The priests encountered the Nubians at the borders, as recorded in many of the priests' biographies. This communication resulted in Nubians embracing Christianity. This is proved by finding some crosses and Christian tools in the cemeteries of Nubian's Kings in Balana and Qustul (400-500 AD) (Vantini 1975: 72-76). Other evidence is a church in Faras built of mud bricks dated to before the fifth century AD (Michałowski 1988: 331).

In the middle of the sixth century, formal Christianity began. It reflected the conflict between the Egyptian and Roman churches and a contest between them to win supporters. In AD 540 a mission went to Nubia, representing the Miaphysite school, which succeeded in converting its people to Christianity in 543. The mission also succeeded in the Alwa kingdom in 580 and Dongola was converted to monotheism in 569-570 (Adams 1997: 398).

The dates given by Christian historians for the introduction of Christianity to the three kingdoms will not likely be the actual earliest dates. For example, in Alwa AD 580 is considered the date of introducing Christianity into the kingdom, but Longinus found that Christians in the capital of Alwa

came from Axum. Thus, this date cannot be considered as final and this confirms that any Christian material culture or buildings may precede this date.

The excavations conducted by Garstang (1909-1910-1913) in Meroe also revealed evidence of the existence of Christianity in the area of the royal city, and in Musawwarat where he found pottery identical to the type revealed in Christian context in Soba. This suggests that these temples were reused by turning them into churches. Moreover, this hypothesis is supported by the presence of cross-shaped Christian graves not far to the east. The re-use of these temples as churches may represent an early phenomenon, but the evidence is weak for the continuing importance of Meroe and Musawwarat in the Christian era. Thus, dating the introduction of Christianity to pre- 580 AD needs more research (AlNur 2006: 31).

2-2-1 Sources for Studying the Medieval Period

A number of different sources with historical, political, cultural and social dimensions are available for studying the medieval period. Despite their importance, however, they must be treated with some caution. Also, some studies on the Middle Ages still follow the general lines laid down by the early historians (Mutasim 2002: 5). These sources include historical and other modern sources such as archaeological studies, scientific literature and popular public sources. Some of the historical sources are descriptive, but they are useful to define some aspects of Christianity in the history of the period.

2-2-1-1 Historical Sources

These sources include the writings of travellers, geographers, and church historians who included basic important information on how Christianity was introduced into Nubia. The latter were marred by some deficiencies because of partisanship and loyalty to one sect rather than another, as they were written in the first period of the evangelization of Nubia. The most famous church historians were John of Biclarum, John of Ephesus, and Mahboob Al Manjabi who is considered the first historian writing about Christianity in Arabic (Al Gamel 1967: 57).

The writings of historians and Arab geographers covered Nubian history in the Middle Ages, particularly since the first wars between Nubia and the Muslims in AD 641-652 after the Arabs and Muslims had gained control of Egypt. Their interest in Nubia continued until the fall of the kingdoms of Makuria and Alwa and the Nubian conversion to Islam, and after the change in the political situation in Nubia and its relationship with the Islamic caliphate in Egypt. An example of these writings is Ibn Khaldun and Maqrizi and their mentions of Sudan in their books. These include a careful monitoring of the conflict between Nubia and the Islamic state in Egypt in addition to chronicling the shift of Nubians to Islam from Christianity. Similarly, we find many writings in Arabic in Arabic countries, examples of which are diverse such as Abu Salih the Armenian and the manuscripts written in Arabic, Nubian, and Coptic languages, in addition to the documents of Ibrim Palace and the Ottoman Archives in Cairo. There are 122 documents that deal with land issues, marriage and changes that occurred in Nubia during the collapse (Hinds and Hamdi: 1986).

One of the documents is a history of Nubia. The manuscript is composed of two parts, the first of which is attributed to Maqrizi. It focuses on *Baqt* and Muslims' first campaigns in Nubia. The second part is anonymous, but it is believed to be part of the manuscript by Barn (Central Documents Khartoum, No. Misc/1/15/191). One of the most important documents concerns the Alkonooz. It is about their deployment and integration with other elements. In addition, there is the royal marriage document about Dongola Rubaie King written in 733 H/AD1332 (Museum of Islamic Art Cairo number 4222) and

belonging to King Kanz Aldawla Abu Abdullah Muhammad bin Shuga, 717 H/1317 AD. It covers the royal lineage, titles and the evolution of marriage.

Another historical source is the writings of Western travellers since the beginning of the sixteenth century. They focused on early Christian Nubia especially with the beginning of the period of the Crusades, but most of them lacked correct information because it came without deeper knowledge or investigation of the conditions in Nubia. These included the Portuguese traveller Alvares, who spoke about the deterioration of the political and religious situation in Nubia (Alvares: 1661). Other travellers include Poncet (1698), Louis Norden (1743), Burckhardt in the period 1793 to 1815, Waddington and Hanbury (1822), Cailliaud (1822), Lepsius (1844), Budge (1897) and others. These travellers and historians recorded their observations in a huge literature about Nubia, and they included a large number of images. The value of these writings lies in drawing attention to the archaeology in the country (Ghaitas 1987: 13). These writings have been the foundation for many studies in subsequent periods.

Historical sources, particularly the writings of church historians, focused on the first periods of Christianity and tended to sectarian partisanship. Perhaps the most important observation in all these sources is the neglect of aspects of cultural heritage such as local language and the details of daily life, which are important sources for the study of history. Similarly, contemporary historical sources have been marred by specific religious orientations, for example Father Vantini tried to link historic and modern Christianity, stemming from his enthusiasm for the Christian presence in Sudan. Therefore, writing the history of nations is usually affected by selectivity deriving from the historian's political and other ideologies and theoretical frameworks.

2-2-1-2 Modern Sources (Scientific and Archaeological)

In the forefront of the modern sources come the visits and writings of such scholars as Mileham (1915). Other examples include Somers Clark (1912), Crawford, (1955) and Tamrat (1972), who shed light on the conflicts in the territory of East Africa and the Ethiopian highlands and their impacts on the kingdoms of Muslim Nubia and their fall. In addition, Shinnie (1955) wrote a book entitled *Excavations at Soba*. Moreover, Vantini wrote *Oriental Sources Concerning Nubia*, which contains a lot of Massad's book *Arab Sudanese Library*. We also find some writings of Sudanese archaeologists who have published a number of articles and studies on the medieval period in Sudan. For example, firstly Cuoq (1989) composed a book that dealt with the Nubian relationship with the rulers of Egypt in the Mamluk era. Other examples of modern sources include Welsby and Daniel (1993) about Soba, and Soghayroun (2001) about the medieval ages and post-medieval ages in Sudan through the study of Islamic archaeology and initial evidence for the spread of Islam in the Sudan. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Welsby (2002) published his book *The Medieval Kingdoms of Nubia*. There is also an important study on the Alabwab Kingdom (Altakaki Kingdom) and the Anaj by Mutasim Ahmed Sheikh (2002).

As for archaeological work, several archaeological excavations have been conducted. They have achieved important results that overcame some shortcomings that marred previous studies. The Archaeological Survey of Nubia from 1907-1911, led by George Reisner, focused on prehistoric periods, with Christian periods of less interest (Adams 1977: 271). There were few signs of interest in later period, with the engineer Mileham (1915: 23-37) drawing Christian churches in Dibera, Faras, Surra and Wadi Halfa. A similar situation was present during the second period of the Archaeological Survey (1929-1934), under the supervision of Emery and Kirwan (1938). However, the second survey did reveal the broad sequence of the history of the Christian era in Sudan. De Villard also conducted a comprehensive survey of Nubia that is considered an archaeological and ethnographic survey

simultaneously, as it set a connected history of that period. The product of this is four volumes entitled *La Nubia Medioevale* (de Villard 1935, 1938).

Because of World War II, work stopped but it recommenced in 1950 under the supervision of the Sudanese Archaeology Service. In this period, excavations took place at two locations that are considered the most important Christian sites in Nubia: Soba, the capital of Alwa Kingdom on the east bank of the Blue Nile south of Khartoum, and Al-Ghazali, near modern Meroe where many religious and civil buildings have been identified (Shinnie & Chittick 1961: 12).

The most important research stage was the third campaign of 1959-1965, which was under the supervision of UNESCO. The period represented a major challenge for archaeologists when they attempted to rescue the greatest number of sites threatened by the dam at Aswan. Several missions from various countries participated in the missions. Egyptian missions worked on the excavations in Tafa, Kalabsha, and Wadi Elsoboua, and Alexandria University Mission worked in Mount Adda (Al-Amir 1963: 35-38). It is noted that the Islamic burials found were examined immediately to avoid excavating Islamic graves, because of the lack of specialists in Islamic monuments amongst the members of the missions. This led to the loss of many graves. The Missions of the Oriental Institute of Chicago University and the Swiss Institute in Cairo also worked in the area between Khor Dahmet and the house of the governor (Seele: 1963). The Institute of Egyptian Antiquities, Charles University, Prague excavated in Tafa a temple that was built in the Roman era and used as a church in the Christian era. The Universities of Rome and Milan conducted excavations in Dahmet, Kalabsha, Akhmmedi, Tamat and other sites (Paz: 2004: 18). In Qasr Ibrim, the excavations of the Egypt Exploration Society were led by Emery from 1961, followed by Plumley. The Dutch Mission, an affiliate of the National Museum of Antiquities, excavated in the village of Abdullah Nerjee Ami 1962-1964 and published valuable reports about Christian and Muslim relics in Nubia.

However, the greatest successes were achieved by the Sudanese Antiquities Services in Menara Peninsula 1963-1964. The season was under the supervision of Adams, who conducted an evaluation study of the churches and houses. He divided the period into four: early, intermediate, classic and late Christian (Adams 1965: 311). He also studied Christian pottery and some post-Meroitic pottery (Adams 1986). The University of Ghana excavations led by Shinnie from 1961 to 1963 discovered the Christian city Western Dibeirah (Shinnie 1964: 196). The Polish Mission excavated Faras site 1961-1964. When the reservoir water threatened the Faras area, the mission moved to Old Dongola and worked outside the UNESCO campaign. It has yielded remarkable results and successes, and this mission is still working in Sudan. Next, there were excavations conducted in Old Dongola that are continuing. These excavations are considered among the most important excavations conducted in Nubia because they have added a lot to our knowledge of Christian Nubia's history, archaeology, and art, especially after the discovery of new monasteries and some churches in Old Dongola (Jakobielski & Scholz 2001). There are also the excavations of the University of Rome, led by Donadoni in the Sonqi Tino area of Batn Alhajar in 1961 where it revealed a Church containing some drawings from the Christian classic era and some cemeteries. (Donadoni 1961).

In the period 1966-1969, a mission led by Maystre worked in Ukmah and Swanky south. Its focus was mainly on religious buildings. In 1970-1971, the Sudanese Antiquities Services and its French Unit engaged in archaeological exploration to the south of the Second Cataract Project. The mission included the late Osama Al-Nur and representatives of the French Unit. It succeeded in completing the survey from Nwlati Island south to Sai Island, and most of the recorded sites date back to the Christian period (AlNur 2006: 102). More broadly, the University of Khartoum and the Sudanese Antiquities Services conducted archaeological surveys in the area between Berber and Abu Hamad in 1970. The works of the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums in 1971 and 1973 were led

by Issa and Comair in the province of Dongola and Al-Mahas area (Issa and Comair 1971). The British Museum Mission, led by Welsby, worked in Soba for four seasons beginning in 1981.

The University of Rome mission in 1988 archaeologically surveyed the Christian settlement near the Fourth Cataract, drawing upon the information in the Cayo reports of 1826. The result was the discovery of fortified a site called Kopant. On the ground surface, two groups of pottery fragments were found in addition to some Christian art believed to be dated to the early Christian period (Caneva 1988: 1-9). In 1989, the Canadian company Monenco conducted the environmental studies for the areas that would be affected by the Merowe Dam. It prepared a study of the direct threat to endangered sites and those that would later be affected because of the lake and climate change (Monenco 1992). In 1989, the expedition led by the Director of the Antiquities Service, the late Osama Abdul Rahman Al-Nur, and the French unit led by Jacques Reinold, surveyed the northern part of the West Bank of the Nile on Hekorh, Al Hamdab, Shri and Drtal islands (AlNur 2006: 55). In late 1989, the representative of UNESCO, Leclant, visited the Fourth Cataract area to enable UNESCO to make a global call to save the archeology of Al Hamdab (Leclant 1990: 4).

In 1991, a team from the Sudanese National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM) conducted a survey on the right bank of the Nile stretching from Al Hamdab area to Abu Hamad. This survey recorded a large number of archaeological sites dated to both historical and prehistoric periods. Moreover, the Claus University Spanish mission also worked in Jebel Barkal in 1996 (Salah Mohammed Ahmed personal interview, 2006). In 1996, the Polish mission from the the Gdansk Museum conducted archaeological survey and excavations in the area between the cities of Karima and Abu Hamad on the west bank of the Nile. It discovered and excavated a number of archaeological sites including cemeteries dating to the Meroitic, post-Meroitic, Christian and prehistoric periods. The mission continues to operate in the region to save the monuments affected by the Merowe Dam (Paner 1998: 115-132).

From 1995–1998, a joint mission from the Department of Archaeology at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities Studies, University of Dongola, and NCAM executed surveys and archaeological excavations on the east bank of the Nile in the north of the proposed site for the establishment of Merowe Dam. The area stretched between the villages of Aljabal and Umhizi in the north. The excavations resulted in the detection of many archaeological sites dating to the Neolithic, Meroe, post-Meroitic and Christian periods. It has excavated several tombs dating back to the period after Meroe in Alharaz (Abbas 2007: 55).

During the past few years, NCAM benefited from the joint British Museum/Sudan Archaeological Research Society mission, which conducted a survey in the East Bank of the Nile between Amri and Kirbakan. This mission is still working in the region (Welsby 2003: 26-32).

In the period from 2001 to 2002, NCAM organized a major campaign to save the archaeological sites located on the east bank of the Nile extending from the site of the dam to Dar Alarab area in the north. The Department of Archaeology at the University of Dongola and the Department of Archaeology at the University of Khartoum participated in this work in two stages. The first phase started in 2001 to save the archaeological sites threatened by the engineering activities of the dam construction that cover an area of 8 km and 2 km wide. The result of this campaign was the recording and test pitting tens of archaeological sites that date back to the prehistoric period, and tombs of Pre-Napata, post-Meroitic and Christian date, and others of unknown date. It also recorded many rock-art sites dating to historical periods. They include various drawings of animals, boats, and human forms. The campaign also excavated a large hill in Meroe Island. Ten tombs that dated to the Christian period

have been found on the top of the hill while post-Meroitic cemeteries were located lower down the hill. The campaign also explored settlement sites dating to the Christian period.

A number of stone tools have also been found spread over the surface of the island which date to the prehistoric period. The area, which stretches from the villages of Umjabal and Dar Al-Arab in the north, was also surveyed and many archaeological sites of all historical periods were recorded. The second phase of the work took place between January and April 2005, and it focused on exploring cemeteries located in Alharaz, which dates to the post-Meroitic period (Salah Mohammed Ahmed 2003).

This was followed by the work of NCAM and the University of Khartoum, in conjunction with the University of Dongola, on rescue archaeology in the Fourth Cataract region. In addition, they co-ordinated with the Spanish Mission in the Abbasid area between 2001-2003. They also worked on a project to rescue the archaeology at Al-Barkal (Salah Mohamed Ahmed personal communication, 2006). The California University mission, led by Stuart Smith working at the Tombos site, undertook important archaeological work that included most of the historic periods. The latter subsequently moved its work to the west bank in 1997-1998, where it conducted archaeological survey from the Akad area in the north to AlKhandaq in the south. This work revealed several Christian and Islamic sites (Smith 2002: 157-182).

Other archaeological missions' visits to Sudan continued either to resume the work started earlier or were undertaken in response to an appeal to save the heritage of the Fourth Cataract whose archaeology was threatened by the establishment of the Merowe dam. These include a University College London mission led by Dorian Fuller, which operated in the eastern bank of the Fourth Cataract (Fuller 1998: 52-5).

In early 2007, the Department of Archaeology at the University of Khartoum conducted archaeological and heritage survey in the region between AlKhandaq in the south to Wad Numeiri in the north. It identified many Christian and Muslim cemeteries.

The data collected by the above missions also resulted in large quantities of literary records that confirm the use of the Nubian language during most of the Christian periods. In addition, the Greek and Coptic languages were used. Arabic had been used in correspondence with the Arab traders and residents in Lower Nubia (Adams 1977: 478).

Despite the intensity of the missions that have worked in Sudan, especially the Christian-period archaeologies, their work focused on Lower Nubia. Perhaps due to the UNESCO campaigns in that region, the most important archaeological work in Upper Nubia was led by Shinnie in Soba and the mission of the Centre for the Study of the Mediterranean Archaeologies in Cairo (University of Warsaw) in Old Dongola.

With the emergence of these greatly important scientific results, a need for re-evaluation of the history of Nubia in general emerged. This resulted in many conferences and scientific symposia. The first of them was the Egyptian Academy symposium, 13 March 1965, in Cairo. In addition, seminars were held in Europe such as the one in Villa Hegel, Germany, in September 1969; studies on the history and the arts in Christian Nubia were presented. Also, a seminar was held in Warsaw, Poland in June 1972, at which the International Society for Nubian Studies was founded (Gheitas 1987: 3). Some conferences were held in Sudan such as the *Conference of African Civilization on the Threshold of the Twentieth Century* held in 1999 at the Department of Archaeology, University of Khartoum. Conferences discussing Sudanese history and Nubian and Meroitic Studies are still held every four

years. These studies are the most important sources for the study of the Medieval Ages in Sudan because they contain scientific results of archaeological studies of this period.

2-3 Problems Studying the Medieval Period

The Medieval age in Nubia is considered one of the most complex periods in the cultural and civilizational history of Sudan with regards to human groups, social structure, politicals, religious ties, and cultural exchanges with neighboring areas. These relationships brought about many complexities in the social, architectural and cultural aspects, in addition to the lack of resources relating to this period, particularly the archaeological sources.

There are some limitations with respect to the Christian period, namely that Western scholars did not give sufficient attention to Christian-period archaeology. They traditionally classified material from this period, especially the churches and religious architecture, as Coptic relics, having no archaeological value and in need of no further study (Al-Nur 2006: 32).

In the same context, African participation was weak during the campaigns to rescue the monuments of Nubia. Only the University of Ghana, represented by Peter Shinnie, participated in this campaign. This problem is multifaceted with major reasons perhaps due to the weakness of Sudan-African relations, weakness of resources, or lack of experience.

2-4 The Current Situation and the Future

The intensive excavations of the foreign and the Sudanese missions to save the monuments of Nubia ended in 1964, apart from the Merowe Dam rescue surveys and excavations. The former campaigns focused their explorations on Lower Nubia, particularly the Kingdom of Nobatia. It simultaneously opened the door for archaeological work on Christian Nubia in the south. Some missions, funded by UNESCO, continued to complete archaeological survey in the area of Batn al Hagar and also in some locations in the north Sudan in cooperation with the Sudanese authorities; most other missions withdrew, but a few remained to work south of the second cataract.

Two main sites where work is still in progress are Qasr Ibrim (the British mission) and Old Dongola (the Polish mission). Research at Qasr Ibrim provided a rich collection of documents and literary texts, Coptic and Nubian; some of the texts have been published. These texts are of paramount importance in understanding the process of constituting the Nubian State as well as the history of the bishopric of Qasr Ibrim and the history of Sudanese literature in the Christian era (Al-Nur 2006: 34).

The Polish mission excavations at Old Dongola project have been ongoing for more than 30 years until the present day. This mission has contributed significantly to our understanding with regards to Christian architecture. Recent work has started in the industrial district in Old Dongola which may contribute much to our understanding of the manufacturing of the Christian pottery in the Kingdom. The Greek texts also have a great importance, particularly the funerary stele from the eighth and ninth centuries. This allows for a review of our knowledge obtained so far about the epigraphic Greek and Coptic material discovered.

In addition, recent studies in Hambakol site can provide us an idea about the nature of the capital city and its direct surroundings. The Canadian project involves carrying out in-depth studies of cultural evolution in the residential heritage. There is evidence for the oldest Meroitic settlement as well as the Christian monuments in the surrounding areas.

It could be argued that there were two trends in studying Christian Nubia in the 1970s and 1980s. The first trend focused on the development of concepts that resulted from the archaeological rescue campaigns, and the second drew upon cognitive archaeology in examining populations and trade.

For the subsequent history of Alwa, the current exploration allows us to add a little. Following Ibn Salim Al-Aswani and Ibn Hawqal we can propose a question: to what extent was the subsequent archaeological work able to confirm the detail in the writings by these historians and contribute to rewriting the history of Christianity in the remote part in the south (Al-Nur 2006: 67).

Ibn Salim al-Aswani wrote that Soba had 'beautiful buildings and wide churches with much gold and orchards.' The King of Alwa's property was more than of Al-Makuria's King, and he had a greater army, more horses, and more fertile and wider land (Massad 1972: 91-99). Ibn Hawqal describes Soba as the most prosperous city in the country, which included a series of regular and uninterrupted villages on a continuous strip of cultivated land. Thus, the traveller could pass through many villages that linked together. He also mentions the presence of a large kingdom with wide provinces and many churches around AD 400. There were some monasteries, some on the Nile and some at its banks (Massad 1972: 62-76). Here we find that exploration conducted by Shinnie in Soba in 1950-1952 did not provide support for what Ibn Salim described, although Shinnie found what I believe to be a palace, and a quantity of imported Islamic glass.

The recent excavations carried out by the British Institute in Eastern Africa has focused on an area 80 meters away from Shinnie's excavations. They have resulted in the discovery of three churches; two of them were of cathedral size according to Nubian criteria. Their discovery caused a direct change in the acknowledged status of Medieval Soba and the Kingdom of Alwa (Welsby and Daniel 1993: 42-56).

These data cast doubt on current interpretations of the poverty of Soba and suggests the reliability of Ibn Salim, Ibn Hawqal and other Arab writers who refer to the kingdom. There were large public buildings in Soba especially the palace, partly excavated by Shinnie (1955) in mound (B). The presence of a huge neighbourhood building was also noted. Somers Clarke's (1912) excavations pointed to a church (cathedral) in mound (C) towards the river and some scattered Christian sites, which include many types of religious and civil architecture.

The future study of Christian Nubia is problematic. A large part of Nobatia disappeared under the dam water, excepting Qasr Ibrim. Most of the project work to rescue the archaeologies of the Fourth Cataract has not been published and is limited to studies of post-excavation work in central and southern Nubia. The work revealed some extensions of Nubian kingdoms, but it showed the limited archaeological research, especially in the central and southern parts of Nubia. The knowledge gaps remain enormous. There is a discrepancy between the number of sites that we assume to be inhabited in the Middle Ages, and the number that have been tested archaeologically. This makes any conclusions drawn from the available data tentative.

The period from the end of Meroe until the advent of the Christian kingdoms is unclear. Nubian history is a connected series, but we find that continuity between the post-Meroitic period and the kingdoms of Nobatia, Makuria and Alwa appears absent. These three kingdoms had been identified in the past by the structure of their transformation into Christian kingdoms and this special transition has been taken as a key feature of the archaeological record, tending to conceal their histories before the arrival of Christianity.

Welsby mentions the work of Kirwan and Emery on the post-Meroitic as the point of transition to the Christian kingdoms. He said that through their work in Ballana and Qustul some evidence

confirmed the existence of a new centre of political power in Lower Nubia in an area that had never had independence. This area had always been governed either by Egypt in the north or by the Kushites in Napata and Meroe. The rich artefacts provided some evidence of strong, albeit temporary, power in the indigenous population; *sati*-burial was practiced, and kings and queens were found in their burials with their crowns still on their heads. All these helped to indicate the truth about the existence of political power in the region (Al-Nur 2006: 37).

Many Egyptian documents of the Byzantine period made no reference to the buried kings in Ballana and Qustul enjoying the support of the empire to the north. If this support existed, it may have been financial and logistical. However, the kings of Lower Nubia buried in Ballana and Qustul who had not converted to Christianity were treated with tolerance by the Byzantines.

Modern archaeology is dynamic and efficient when it adds other sciences, while in the past, only survey and excavation was used. In addition to administrative weaknesses and lack of clear plans for the development of archaeology, a problem still exists. The transmission of the responsibility of the Department of Antiquities to different ministries for various periods has led to a delay in studies in this area. New survey techniques for fieldwork and interpretation have been developed: geographic information systems (GIS), remote sensing and others. Nevertheless, in Sudan, the techniques are still old-fashioned, the use of laboratory sciences in archaeology is missing, and there are deficiencies in architectural restoration techniques, which are advanced only by foreign missions.

Here, there is a need to find positive future visions to address the failures, the obstacles and the problems that have accompanied, and continue to accompany, archaeological research on the medieval age. The first step is the absolute necessity for publishing archaeological research quickly: interim reports, while important/essential, are not a substitute for the final report, which provides evidence of the whole site in detail. There is considerable need for comprehensive research, particularly national projects through an integrated vision for the study of man, the environment, archaeology, and culture, although some national projects have been following this direction. In addition, explorations in Sudan are also, to some extent, threatened by agricultural expansion, floods, rain, residential development and violations, which can lead to destruction. The first priority is the need to preserve the integrity of the sites. Therefore, there is an urgent need to take advantage of the medieval history to resolve the history of contemporary societal issues, by defining a vision for the management of cultural heritage in this period.

CHAPTER THREE:

History and Archaeology of the Kingdom of Makuria

3-1 Introduction

The northern political borders of Sudanese kingdoms (Map 1) moved over the centuries and millennia between Aswan, Wadi Halfa, and the Third Cataract, but the southern borders in most periods was in the current position in the Ethiopian highlands. This huge territory contains two parts: the desert and the land in the rainy zone. The line of separation starts from the south-west in the direction of the north east across Berber or to the north. This duality is the main player that control the history of this region. It has been reflected politically in the presence of two kingdoms Napata in the desert territory and Meroe in more arable land in the Shendi Reach. In the period following the end of the Meroitic State, the Nubian kingdoms converted to Christianity in the former Northern Province had two centres Faras and Dongola, while in the south Soba was in the rainfall belt. An independent kingdom, the Al-Abwab Kingdom, existed in the border between the southern desert territory centres and the rainy region; it consisted of several villages in the east bank of the Nile. These kingdoms had geographic features distinguished by the River Nile bank which affected their respective history and settlement activities.

Despite the environmental and geographical diversity and political independence of these kingdoms, the literature is marked by some degree of generalization. This appears in using the term Nubia regardless of the details for these kingdoms geographically, environmentally and politically, despite the existence of common cultural roots between these Kingdoms. Most of the information is imprecise with regards to borders, and the cultural and economic exchange between them. The primary motive was religion whether in the Christian or Islamic periods. With these unique geographical characteristics of the political, cultural and various transformations, the Kingdom of Makuria emerged in the late fourth century AD. It played a major role in changing the course of events and the relations between other Nubian kingdoms on the one hand and between Egypt, the world of the Mediterranean, Africa, on the other hand especially in the early seventh century.

3-2 Geological Typography of Upper Nubia

The regions of the kingdoms are characterized by the multiplicity of environments and climates. There is a large variety in the formation of the Nubian environments in Upper Nubia. Some were like Lower Nubia, such as the riverbanks, the islands, the desert, but others varied significantly especially in terms of terrain and topography. The region's geological formations are different in the fundamental crustal rocks formed in the Precambrian. The rocks include the entire Nubian desert region to the Red Sea area. The basic rocks comprise modern sedimentary rocks consisting of the Nile clay soil which makes up the cliffs, the Nile plains, solid limestone and some dunes separating the flood plains from the sandy plains. In general, the dominant rocks are sedimentary rocks of Nubian sandstone. There are also igneous rocks especially black basalt in limited quantities, especially in the mountainous areas with steep hills, as well as small amounts of metamorphic rocks (Al-Said 1996: 130).

The soil of the region consists of many domains such as flood-plain soil, which includes soil banks along the Nile, fertile clay soil with a dark brown colour found at the base, cliffs, along the length of 3 kilometers. This soil contains a high percentage of silt, which is renewed annually by the Nile floods. There is also the river soil (Al Garir) near the riverbank. This soil has a fine texture and it is one of

the finest types of soil and is often found overlying the flood water. Due to the scarcity of rain and the high level of evaporation, salt is moved from within the soil toward the surface, making the soil inclined towards salinity or alkalinity and it is always mixed with sandy soil.

The valley soils have a watery environment brought by wadis and creeks, and they are sometimes fertile but are mostly gravel. Among the most famous of these valleys are the Al-Himar valley by the Fifth Cataract and the Ga'ab valley, which is located north-west of Dongola and has a total area of about 500 acres. In addition, there is sandy soil found in the western and the north-western parts, but this is influenced by the Sahara and sand encroachment.

Perhaps the boundary between the desert and the valleys seems to be narrow; wherever agriculture stops, the desert begins. The desert has encroached on the Nile River in recent times because agriculture stopped in some places. Some places that are now desert used to be agricultural areas. Aerial and satellite imagery show the valleys, some of which used to be arable, and the agricultural lands which stretch for about one or more miles on both sides of the Nile. However, the latter dramatically decrease in some areas but perhaps the broadest of these areas are the basin of Karma, which covers an area of 7,000 square meters (Dongola Cartography Office).

3-3 Climate and Water Resources

Summer season begins from mid-April until the end of September, where the average High Temperature during this season is 47° Celsius. The winter season, which runs from October to April, has severe cold with 5° temperatures minimum during December and January and rises to between 17-20° during the months of October and November (Tom 1974: 13). As such, the region is characterized by scarcity and lack of rain, with little rainfall in the north, this resulted from the desert climate of the region and the non-arrival of the southwestern winds loaded with moisture to these parts.

In winter, the winds prevailing are the northeastern trade winds causing dust. The winds are characterized as drying in the Red Sea areas, which lead to enormous rolling dunes heading south. They also dump large quantities of sand and silt into the Nile River. The wind has been an active factor in the Nubian environment in most periods of history as it helps navigation along most of the Nile. Water sources in the region are represented in the groundwater and on the surface. The underground aquifers are due to porous rocks allowing the passage of water through them and which form water reserves. The River Nile is the only source in the region for the surface water besides some valleys, and seasonal creeks, because of the scarcity of rain in all parts of the Kingdom.

The region extended on both sides of the Nile from the end of the Fourth Cataract to Daba where the Nile turns to the south-west region. In this region, there are many valleys that are frequently filled by summer rains. The region is also characterized by wide agricultural floodplains (Al-Siad 1996: 70). The Nile width does not exceed five hundred meters around the rocky area at Daba, where it flows through Nubian sandstone rocks (Edwards op.cit: 93). The alluvial soil in this area forms a very narrow line ranging between 50-350 yards on the right bank of the Nile. This region's climate is dry desert and summer is considered the longest season of the year, when little rain falls, and it decreases when we head to the south. Winter is usually very cold and dry, but most plants can resist drought. However, temperatures often are high even in the coldest months of the year (Al-Tom 1974: 109).

3-4 Plants and Livestock

The region in totality is semi-desert impacted by regular droughts. Poor savannah trees and some grass are found in the area. In addition, there are other plants such as marakh, and tundub, and halfa (*Pennisetum setaceum*). On the banks of the Nile, the vegetation differs from that in the desert. The most important trees along the Nile are palms and some fruit trees. (Lebon 1965: 7).

Thus, the life of the population in this region is affected by the Nile, which makes a difference in the life of the community through the concentration of the archaeologies of different civilizations throughout history on the banks of the Nile River. This harsh environment also played an influential role in the presence of animals in the area. Animals come to the Nile to drink from far away because of the breadth of the desert land. We find that many of them are embodied through rock paintings, especially large hunting animals such as the elephant, rhino, hippopotamus, giraffes, and buffalo. Perhaps the only group remaining now are some types of small deer, about 30 miles from the Nile. They come at night to the riverbank to drink while we find other types distributed between the desert /domesticates especially horses, donkeys, cows, goats and some types of birds such as geese, wild parrots, hoopoe, cranes, hawks and others. In the Nile, we find many types of fish, crocodiles and poisonous reptiles, which are rare, and insects such as numitti and flies. Many of these animals and birds are immortalised through imagery and pictures on pottery and the walls of houses.

3-5 Civilizational History of the Kingdom

Mystery still surrounds the events associated with the emergence of the three kingdoms (Map 1), which were converted to Christianity in Nubia after the collapse of the Meroitic State. The Ezana inscription indicates that the Nubians settled in Meroitic cities along the Atbara River and Soba. The inscription's date is controversial. Littmann (1950: 114-118) believed that Ezana of Axum seized power between the second and the third quarter of the fourth century AD. According to the inscription, the Axumite army led by Ezana was sent to Kasu. However, we do not find any religious or cultural effects of Axum on the population of the Nile Valley (Kirwan 1981: 115-119).

The Kingdom of Makuria's capital was at Old Dongola and its borders extended to Mount Farka, which is sometimes known as Jebel Mao and Mama by the European travellers. Its southern borders in later periods reached the Al-Abwab Kingdom that was located between the Fifth and the Fourth Cataract. The northern part has split into Nwah (states) that included Sgulwda, Bakon, and Safed Baql. Sgulwad means the seven governors — walis (Massad 1972: 97). This is confirmed by the fact that Colodo or Kolodo in the Al-Kunuz language means seven, while the first part of the word (SA) is one of the names of popular places in Abu Hamad area — Barbar. It can be said that Sgulwda probably represents Al-Sakot zone and Bakon Al-Mahas area. Safed Baql represents the northern part of Dongola.

As for Nobatia, it was under the grip of Blemmyes and Nobadians since the third century. It was known as Nubiadia, Nobatia, or Al-Maris. The northern part was called Bilad Al-Ali, while southern part was named Bilad Al-Gabal. They united with the Kingdom of Makuria in one kingdom known as the Kingdom of Makuria or the Kingdom of Dongola. Through the great transformations witnessed by the United Kingdom, it has gone through several stages that can be summarized in the following:

3-5-1 The First Phase

This phase is bracketed from the end of the third century to the late sixth century, around the year 580 AD. It occurred after some population movements from Meroe and Beja regions toward the Nile. The kingdom used to have extensive relationships with Beznta. With the advent of missionaries,

settlement existed on the riverbank as evidenced by the construction of the churches. We also find granite stone carrying the name of Taharqa, later used for altar columns in the churches. We also find an obelisk of Atlanersa, which was moved from Dongola to Cairo in 1883 (Jakobielski & Scholz 2001: 74-75). In addition, there is an extensive spread of thick columns dating back to post-Meroitic period near AlGhadar Mountain. These were linked to the settlement area on the river around Dongola. Therefore, our knowledge about the history and archaeology of Dongola allows us to assume that this capital existed and flourished from the middle of the sixth century AD or a little more.

3-5-2 The Second Phase

This was the period of expansion in the spread of Christianity and before the official entrance of Islam in Egypt from AD 580 up to 640 (establishment period). The Kingdom witnessed great development in the realms of material culture: some temples were changed to churches, and some new churches were constructed. At this stage, Makuria was economically strong, depending on slave and crop trade. In addition, it had a strong and stable rule with an effective church. The relations with Constantinople and the Persians deteriorated in AD 611 (Michalowski 1982: 34).

3-5-3 The Third Phase

It was a period of dialogue and coexistence between Egypt and Makuria since Islam became the official religion of Egypt in AD 641. Until the middle of the thirteenth century after the emergence of the Mamluks and their direct interference in the internal affairs of the kingdom, there was a remarkable development in the commercial and cultural exchanges between the two countries. It resulted in the first *Baqt* agreement in AD 652, which organized the course of trade relations. This stage witnessed the union of the two kingdoms into one kingdom. Thus, the kingdom flourished commercially and culturally.

3-5-4 The Fourth Phase

This phase represented a period with the conflict with the Mamluks from the late thirteenth century. Internal problems exacerbated by military weakness affected Egypt and the conflict extended to the Kingdom of Makuria. The conflict continued until the Mamluks were able to eliminate Makuria's political power. This occurred through repeated military campaigns to Nubia. These resulted in the appointment of the first Nubian Muslim king raised in the home of Saifuddin Abdullah Brschmbo, who was inaugurated in the year AD 1317, and thus this step was the end of the Makuria Kingdom. Subsequently the kingdom witnessed a new conflict between Islamic, Christian and Arab elements which resulted in the Knooz ascending to the throne of Nubia.

3-6 Political and Administrative System

Different cultural periods in the Sudan since the introduction of Christianity yielded well-established political systems. They derived their strength mainly from the depth of religious ideology prevailing at the time represented by the king and his family. This underpinned the stability of the state and its wide territories. The embrace of Christianity in wider Nubia had an influential and effective role in the political activity because the acceptance of this religion by the rulers gave them clear legitimacy and restored the sanctity of the former Meroitic royalty. They needed an intellectual and religious base to help them win the loyalty of the people, to keep up with what was going on in the world at the time and to connect to the world's cultural centres.

Although they were not part of the Byzantine Empire, there were no persecutions against other religious beliefs. Christianity filled a void left by the erosion of old beliefs with the fragmentation

of the Meroitic State. From this point, the King represented the highest political and religious authority in the country followed in importance by the ruling class. Therefore, it can be said that political organization in Christianity in Nubia had many aspects of continuity from the first Nubian civilizations (Adams 1977: 413).

The importance of the King was represented through fashion, titles, and names that were bestowed upon him, such as the Great of Nubia (translated, it means "The King"), followed by the Nubian 'Oro'/'Uru'. Monneret de Villard described the royal symbols as consisting of the throne, an umbrella, and crown. The kings were depicted in some churches wearing rich and embroidered robes and they were crowned with golden diadem adorned with jewels. They were of Byzantine origin (Monneret de Villard 1938: 130).

The ruler's properties included land and people and he had the right to all the property of the Kingdom. The provincial governors enjoyed the same right. The people acted as the king's slaves working on the land for the benefit of their masters. They were bought, sold, dedicated, and acted as currency. Al-Aswani has pointed out that "that their king enslaved whoever he wanted, convicted or not, and he was not resisted. They have always obeyed him. He was crowned with gold, which was abundant in his country (Massad 1972: 90-102).

Consequently, the kings claimed that their legitimacy was divine. Rulers were depicted in the art, architecture, and literature of the Middle Ages as celestial objects and not worldly, where their rule was surrounded by an aura of holiness (Adams 1977: 411). There was, beside the king, an unofficial executive council which was composed of a number of officials and bishops.

As in the United Kingdom period, the king delegated some responsibility for the administration of daily life to princes. This has been explained in the inscription of Dndor in AD 559, which illustrates the evolution of property titles in Nobatia. It also refers to the existence of a number of employees next to the King: there were thirteen kings called "regional governors" underneath the great king who lived in Dongola. Their powers differed depending on their provinces (Kirwan 1938: 116). The greatest of these was the ruler of the House of Maris, which lay at the borders with the Islamic state in Egypt. Studies indicated his importance because of the signs of King he wore such as the crown coupled above the helmet decorated with a crescent and a koftan often (Michalowski 1974: 44 - 45). Some titles were given to him such as Hazark, which means the Deputy or the King's Representative ('Lord of the Mountain'), 'Lord of Horses', and Prince of Nobatia. He had traditional king's functions such as the establishment of churches and celebrating prayers where he is found in paintings at the Church of Abdul Qadir holding the model of the church with his own hands; he was responsible for the conduct of relations with Muslim Egypt and the control of travellers to Nubia.

He was also involved in some business deals. That was explained through the correspondence discovered in Qasr Ibrim including seven letters sent to Alabarrysh from a Fatimid official who owned ships in Aizab port on the Red Sea and he also had a business in Qus. This means that he acted informally as an agent of the Nubians sending them various goods and slaves (Adams 1977: 417). Therefore, he had the authority of the 'Lord of the Mountain' (which was his most famous title) and anyone who violated his orders was to be killed regardless of his status (Massad 1972: 97).

Next to the governors, another layer of officials who carried Byzantine titles written in the Nubian language. It was this staff who conducted communication between the Nubia and the surrounding areas, and we find that most of these employees were gathered around the king's palace, such as the First Secretary of Minors, the Financial Secretary, and the Judge, and so on (Vantini 1978: 106). We also find other staff headed by the Deputy King, but there were some complications in the management

systems and titles of staff. Some have no meanings now and others carry more than one meaning and may be due to the complexity of the titles of the Byzantine systems, where we find the continued survival of Greek titles and the use of the Greek language as the language of ceremony. Some of the regalia that adorn the kings undoubtedly suggest that the authority was still under the influence of Byzantine institutions even after the collapse of Byzantine power in the Near East. (Adams 1965: 41).

Overall, the political and administrative system in Makuria was organized in terms of the sequence of functions and tasks of the occupants where they were commensurate with the cultural and social structures, particularly with regards to inheritance of the throne by the son of a sister or the son of the daughter.

Despite the absolute power of the kings and the administrative stability that occurred, some political unrest resulted in rulers leading military campaigns and participating in some foreign wars against the Beja tribes and Arab immigrants. Apart from these intermittent wars, which included conflicts with Egypt, general stability in government saw King Kerka rule for seventy years from AD 850 to 920. He contributed significantly to the prosperity and development of the Kingdom of Makuria during the period of his rule (Vantini 1978: 92).

Some of the kings sought to consolidate the power of the government. Other kings appeared to be weak, especially those who were contemporary to the Mamluk period. Some of them tended to worship full-time such as Zechariah bin Mercurius (eighth century AD). The system of succession of the throne in all Nubia at the time was based on a line of inheritance which is adapted from ancient African regimes. They were based on the inheritance by the daughter's son or nephew, although there were some abuses in this regard which took some of the Nubian kings to the throne without it. We find that the status of women through the history of the Sudanese civilizations was very respectable. During the visit of the king of Makuria, Kerka bin Zachariah, to the Abbasid Caliph al-Mutasim in Baghdad, "... the mid-ninth century," he said: "things are in the hands of our women."

This system promoted the dynasty of the kings and helped create political and administrative stability in the United Kingdom. Also, Nubia enjoyed a sophisticated administrative system which was represented in the revitalization of internal and external relations with the Muslim world and Byzantium. That explained the ability of the Nubian kings to be aware of what was going on in the world at that time.

The royal residence of the Kingdom was in Old Dongola, which represented the most important urban centre in Christian Nubia. It was not only the royal seat of power, it was an important centre through its strategic location in the trade routes and had agricultural potential and perhaps historical significance. There is no archaeological evidence that confirms the existence of any other urban centres in Makuria that were as important as Old Dongola.

3-7 The Religious System (Church)

The nature of Christian religious and political thought was represented by the belief in the existence of a law higher than human law. They named it the divine law, the name of which is no different from the natural law. Christians believe that the whole world is subject to the law of one, as Christianity called for full equality between individuals. There is no difference between this and what the Roman philosophers held (Ezzat 1997: 4-13). These ideas and teachings continued in most parts of the Christian world, as they represented the intellectual base on which the religious and political policies were established, particularly in the Near East that represented the cradle of divine religions.

The canon system was closely associated with the administrative and political system because the king was the supreme authority in the kingdom, “politics and religion”. Despite the adoption in Makuria of the Malikani doctrine, some sources indicate that it also adopted the Yacoubi doctrine and fell under the spiritual leadership of the Egyptian Church. It appears it happened after the union with Nobatia.

The structural and administrative arrangement of the clergy was that the church included a number of priests and deacons who were responsible for some of the churches in the villages. The bishops performed some administrative tasks (Vantini 1978: 53). On the other hand, most of the priests were Egyptians. The patriarch in Alexandria blessed the bishops. There was an Episcopal cathedral in the Kingdom and thirteen diocesan cathedrals, seven of which were in the Kingdom of Makuria and six in the Kingdom of Alwa. Research indicates that five of them were in Qurta, Qasr Ibrim, Faras, Sai and Dongola while the location of the other two northern cathedrals and those in Alwa remains uncertain (Adams 1977: 417).

The Nubians eventually removed the foreign bishops, who were replaced by local ones. The Nubians included the King in the rank of the priesthood, and provincial governors also occupied some religious roles as well as administrative roles, such as the establishment of rituals within the structure (provided that their hands were not contaminated by murder; Massad 1960: 93). We find that Abu Saleh Al-Armani has pointed to the widespread existence of monasteries in the kingdom with many monks headed by the “Archimandrite” (“abbot”) and it was assumed that the position of bishop was served by a monk in the traditions of the Eastern Church. This trait was attractive to some of the kings who became worshippers as we noted above, such as Solomon and Zechariah who traveled to Al-Muntasir BiAllah Al-Fatimi, the caliph in Egypt, as a full-time worshipper until he died and was buried in the monastery of St George in Alkhandaq (Paz 2004: 123).

Consequently, we find that the church played an important role in the management of the kingdom (religion and power) and its foreign relationships, but it was more closely associated with the kingdom and its power. Thus, it became a tool for the elite for having power over the people. Trimmingham (1965: 76) indicates that the church did not become local, as was the case with Islam today. The reality of the imported Christian culture was based on Greek and Coptic; the services were led by religious rituals and chants, and those came to rely on the Nubian language and local pastors, but this was at relatively late periods.

Over time, the church lost its power, which was based on the royal throne and external support from the Alexandrian Church. After that, the Muslim kings ascended the throne in Makuria in 1317 AD. The support of the Alexandrian Church stopped because of the turmoil and political conflicts in Dongola and the extreme persecution of the Copts in Egypt (Adams 1977: 461). Thereafter, the Nubians headed to Ethiopia seeking some priests and monks, but the Ethiopian king did not accept that. Of course, the kings enjoyed a prestigious status with the church, because of their inclusion of Christianity in its first period and their role in supporting and establishing it, showing them committed to the Christian religion. The kings also played the role of mediator in church affairs, and the king of Dongola interceded with the patriarch to re-form a religious relationship between the Egyptian Church and the Ethiopian Church after a long break. They succeeded in that endeavor (Massad 1960: 98-99). This clearly confirms the regional role that was played by the Kings of Dongola in religious affairs and some relations with the Patriarchs of Alexandria. This was illustrated by paintings of pictures of kings with the Virgin and Christian clergy in many of the murals in Christian architecture. The practices confirmed that Christianity was established in the Nubian kings, but it was weak among the public. At the same time and despite this weakness, it created a kind of liberation in the social and cultural concepts related to holiness of the kings and priests and people began to

follow the trend represented in the worship of the God, a great and absolute influence. Later, the use of the Nubian language by the pastors created a local active cultural movement embodied in reliance on the performance of rituals and writing the Bible and religious hymns, in addition to the continuity of the development of art, Christian architecture, and the revival of local traditions and habits, past and present.

3-8 Economics and Resources

The United Kingdom's economy depended on many sources including agriculture, grazing and trade, both internal and external.

3-8-1 Agriculture

The Christian era in Nubia was characterized by a rapid economic development. The population of Nubia alone was 50,000 people (Trigger 1965: 168). The waterwheel played a major role in increasing the cultivated area where agricultural production had not been enough to feed the population. Al-Aswani states that the Nubians cultivated limited areas in the form of strips ranging in size between an acre to three acres. They planted twice a year, and they fertilized using animals' dung. They grew wheat, barley, beans, sesame, fruit trees such as grapes and so on. Date crops contributed to the improvement the standard of living in the country (Massad 1972: 94). They also planted onions, chickpeas, olives, radishes and other legumes (Idrissi 1970: 20). In addition, grapes and melons were grown in abundance in certain areas such as Blaq Island. Some agricultural crops were only found in Nubia and did not exist in Egypt in the Mamluk era (Maqrizi 1906: 195). Cotton was planted in Sgulwda area and it was used to make a primitive textile. Cotton was the main crop in the area as contemporary research indicates that when Salahedin Al-Leoobi pursued Nubian supporters of the Fatimids after the fall of the Fatimid Caliphate, he found cotton abundant in quantities and he did not hesitate to destroy it (Massad 1972: 101).

As for the agricultural cycle, the population of the Nile, from the First Cataract to Dongola's borders, ploughed their fields after the recession of the flood waters, as do the people of Egypt, because after the recession water does not rise to the height of the inundated valley. In the few parts where water does not fill, such as in Halfa and northwards, people used waterwheels (Burckhardt 1959: 123-125).

It appears that agriculture continued supplying the different lands in the kingdom and depended mainly on the territory of the Letti and Al-Silem basins, the areas of highest agricultural capacity in Nubia. The crops did not differ from its predecessor. Consequently, many farmlands were rehabilitated after disorder in the commercial economy. The area from Dongola until Alwa was the richest in Makuria where a high incidence of vineyards and fields of wheat and palm trees were found. The parts where there was no agricultural land depended on fishing and the practice of agriculture in the narrow and limited parts. The crops were grown without irrigation based on land saturated with moisture in the river flooding season; they tended be quick-maturing crops. The cultivation of major crops relied on the waterwheel irrigating limited areas (Tothill 1948: 742-750). In this part, many cattle herds were found. The Nubians raised cows and sheep in large numbers and they were an important and effective element in the agricultural activities; it was also in the Christian period that bones of pigs are first found (Michalowski 1966: 334).

3-8-2 Grazing

Nubia was famous among many historians in being full of different types of domesticated and non-domesticated animals. AL-Masoudi says that Nubians owned horses, camels, cows, and sheep, and their country contained huge animal wealth (Masoudi in Massad 1972: 49-57). The Beja area in the

Eastern Desert is the biggest area for breeding camels because Daraw, located 35 kilometers north of Aswan, was one of the largest markets which the Beja frequented (Maqrizi 1906: 193). Camels are still one of the main sources of wealth those areas. It is known that camels were the principal means of transporting and carrying commercial goods both internally and externally. Nubia was also famous for the diversity of other animals like sheep, goats, and cows that were used in waterwheels. Burckhardt pointed out the large number of cattle in Nubia, where payment was made in camels, goats, or cows. In many cases, we find cattle in the goods traded between the provinces of the kingdom (Burckhardt 1959: 122).

The groups that owned the herds of cattle were mostly related groups engaged in agriculture. They often grazed their herds on the banks of the Nile. These herds included a mix of camels, goats, cows and sheep. We see some cattle in the more homogeneous Beja region in the north, where breeding camels predominated, then see herds becoming increasingly mixed and diverse as we head to the south (MacMichael 1922: 240-241).

3-8-3 Internal and International Trade

Trade is one of the most important foundations of the Christian Nubian economy where the commercial exchange with the Beja played a major role. The Beja emerged as intermediaries in the trade between Nubia on the one hand and with the Arab Peninsula countries, on the other hand' this was due to their knowledge of the routes in the Eastern Desert. There were also Arab traders in the Red Sea centres who represented a link between the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa traders. Aizab was in close commercial contact with Makuria and Alwa Kingdoms. Massad (1972: 123) explains that ivory was one of the goods that were shipped from the port of Aydhab, along with gold dust, obtained from the area between Wadi Allaqi and Alwa. The fall of Makuria at the hands of the Mamluks helped to strengthen the commercial and cultural contact between Dongola and Aizab. There were some dealers and people from Aizab who fled to Dongola (Leo Africanus 1982: 558-9).

There was active foreign trade between the Nubians and the neighbouring countries. They had commercial stations on the Nile on Fila and Blaq Islands and Taqwa town on the Second Cataract and beyond. Makuria sold leather, eggs, and ostrich feathers to Egypt, ivory to Byzantium, and copper and gold to Abyssinia. Their commercial convoys reached the heart of Africa, to areas such as Nigeria and Ghana. The convoys of Nubians and their ships traded with the cities of the Hijaz, Aswan, and Qus (Massad 1972: 21-61). They used camels and boats in their convoys. The slave trade was the base of the economy. Traders came to Nubia and sold beads, combs, coral and others, and they used to take slaves who were in Egypt (Asttkhriri 1961: 42). This indicates that slave trade was well known in the kingdom before the *Baqt* agreement, which had a significant impact on the course of Nubian economic history. Despite certain constraints placed by the agreement, the Nubians were the key brokers of the slave trade in the Nile and gained considerable profit from it. Thus, orientation to agriculture was changed to the slave trade as a vital source of livelihood.

Nubia often used to refer to the tribes in Kordofan and Darfur. These centres continued to provide large numbers of slaves until late periods where Obied was one of the centres of this trade (Burckhardt 1959: 252-253). When slave convoys arrived at Aswan or other cities, the merchants stayed in one of the inns. The slaves were imprisoned in the ruined courtyards rooms where they spent the night and in the morning they were presented to the buyers in the market, at auction (Cuoq 1939: 12-13). There also were slaves from some areas in the Kingdom of Alwa as Yacoubi mentioned that Alwa was the centre of Nubia, which included various types of commercial goods, including the human element, and he maintains that "Muslims disagreed with it." About Beja, he says: "Muslim people come to it for trade" (Massad 1972: 124). Historians and writers, who lived through this trade, agree

that the Nubian slaves were the best type of slave demanded by traders, especially in the Islamic world because those slaves were distinguished by several qualities. Men were honest, sincere in work, organized, obedient, and strong (Maqrizi 1906:318). Women were famous for their compassion and for their responsibility in raising children. Therefore, doctors at that time advised people to choose Nubian women as wet-nurses for their children because of these good qualities (Idrissi 1970: 13). There were other ways to sell slaves. Jellaba (traders using money) used commercial goods to obtain access to villages in the slave areas; once present, they did not hesitate to kidnap children and get them to the place agreed on in advance for barter. Those children, then, were taken for sale in markets in Egypt (Magar 1995: 47-54).

Many scholars mentioned that the slaves themselves were divided into three categories according to age: the first was termed Al Khmis who were less than 10 or 11 years old; the second was termed Al Sdis who were between 11 and 14 or 15; the last group was adults who were over 15. Al Sdis was the most expensive of these categories.

3-8-3-1 Goods and Commercial Crops

Minerals were one of the most important commercial goods which had been mined since the early periods in areas such as Buhen and Wadi Allaqi. The Fifth Cataract area was a centre for mining in Shingeir valley. Despite the importance of copper as a commodity that attracted Egyptians, who established the oldest settlement in Buhen for smelting copper ore, copper was imported most of the time. Gold, despite its overall scarcity, was found in many parts of Nubia between Lower Nubia and the Red Sea. We find some other metals in the Beja Mountains and south of Aswan (Massad 1972: 11-13). In addition, iron and bronze were also found. There were some types of stones such as granite and sandstone, which was used in the columns in monuments but was not popular for export (Maqrizi 1906: 198). The precious metals were used to make decorative objects and were used in barter instead of currency. Iron and some cheaper metals were used in the manufacture of agricultural tools and domestic utensils.

The trade of the Nubia Kingdom concentrated in the Maris region (Maqrizi 1906: 190). Under Mamluk sovereignty business developed in the region, where it was done by direct payment with the Egyptian dinar, alongside a barter system. Egyptian traders used to barter their goods such as spices, almonds, cloves, clothes and some food with crops from Nubia such as butter, milk, sheep, corn and cattle, in addition to slaves and ivory (Burckhardt 1959: 190-192).

Although the members of the affluent classes preferred Byzantine clothes, the women wore long embroidered jilbabs colored with bobble thread (Hoffman 1967: 572-92). Egyptian clothes were very popular. Another commercial crop was Gum Arabic, i.e. (Acacia resin), which was an important Nubian commodity. It was used in the manufacture of some medical drugs, as well as in fixing colors. Gum was ranked first in the Arabic trade among export materials to Egypt and all over the world. Nubia was the only country in this trade as the best kinds of gum, with its bright whiteness and small granules, came from Kordofan (Massad 1960: 107).

Nubia was also famous for trading in musk plant (relative of the monkey flower). The musk plants grow in abundance on the hills and plateaus. Its trade was active during the period of the pilgrimage because of its fragrant odors. There are also ostrich feathers; its most expensive kinds came from Kordofan and Darfur. Convoys carried it to Egypt along the Darb Al Arbain. There was also frankincense, gathered by the Bedouin in the deserts and the Nile Valley. It was one of the most important exports to Egypt.

3-8-3-2 Trade Transport

The export roads to Egypt ran parallel to the Nile, and they carried all the Nubian products such as gold, ivory, ebony, ostrich feathers and other products (Massad 1972: 75-82). There was a desert road linking West Africa, Darfur, Nubia and the Mediterranean basin and it connected West Darfur to Debba area. Another one was from Alkhandaq and Goled to Egypt and the Mediterranean areas. A third road linked the Red Sea coast and then headed north toward Egypt and connected areas of Nubia with each other. In addition, there was the Abu Hamad Korosko road to Aizab and Suakin, which was known since the early periods of the Nubian kingdoms. Eugenius took this road in his journey from Nobatia to Alwa for proselytizing. The importance of roads linking the Nubian ports on the Red Sea, and Aizab with the Egyptian commercial cities on the Nile, emerged with the transformation of pilgrimage route from the mid-eleventh century AD onwards, when land routes were closed (Maqrizi 1906: 212).

Some forts were also constructed for the Nile trade. These forts included the Middle Nile forts such as AlUshair, Absidir; some forts in the Third Cataract area in Nawri, Mgab; and two forts in Markol and Shoofeen which were devoted to the slave trade (Osman 1978: 127).

3-8-4 Taxes

The political and economic influence of the church was strong since it was regarded as the regulator of the wealth and the power in the Kingdom. This was because of its collectively-organized working mechanism. The priests represented the middle class in a society that was not free of class and played their part in the collection of taxes on behalf of the king.

The monasteries relied on pieces of land to support the monastery's economy. It seems that families owned most of the lands. Perhaps the kingdom and the church benefited from that production in taxes on the land, animals, water-wheels and herding. The broad prosperity of the churches confirms that it had a base in the local economy (Adams 1977: 441).

There were some mining activities in the manufacturing centres belonging to the monasteries, but they were less than in the monasteries of Egypt and Europe. Although it was for the domestic-sufficiency of members, there were some outside the kingdom, including a pottery industry in the Faras monasteries, which were used for trade. We also find other industries such as baskets, mats and handmade pottery. Although they were not used as goods for trade but for local use in the important population centres, taxes were collected. Because of the importance of waterwheels in the agricultural economy, Burckhardt indicates that tax was imposed in varying ways according to authorities. In Halfa they paid six fat sheep and six ardeb (less than half the current quarter) of sorghum annually. This amount seems small and perhaps Burckhardt was mistaken, although he visited those areas at a relatively late period, in 1814. In addition, he said that they paid six sheep, ardeb of sorghum and linen clothing.

These are the most important features of the economic and commercial activity in Nubia in the medieval period. It was marked by diversity in all economic resources known in the ancient world. We find cattle used in trade and transporting goods. There was also diversity in the types of stone and the large number of quarries, which helped in upgrading the arts due to the availability of material and the quality of products; thus, their high value in markets and commercial centres. Therefore, development and prosperity in the economy granted extra power to the Kingdom of Makuria, which became world-renowned.

3-9 Architecture and Arts in the Kingdom

The arts are considered one of the most prominent areas to reflect the development of the civilization in Nubia in the Christian era. Despite the intensive studies in this region, nothing was revealed about the connection of the arts in Nubia to that known in Syria, Byzantium, Coptic art in Egypt, and some other outside influences. The local environment, cultural and social configuration have played a major role in the artistic production of Christian Nubia. Different types of religious architecture, civilian and military architecture flourished beside the development of decorative wall art and more.

3-9-1 Religious Architecture

The religious architecture represented the peak of development in Nubia. It is reflected in different architectural designs of churches, which spread dramatically in cities and urban centres and villages. The continuous archaeological work has shown the presence of a large number of churches in Faras, Qasr Ibrim, Old Dongola, Soba and Mugarat Island.

The Church derived its architectural design template from the Greek and Roman churches' rectangular shape, which spread widely in the northern areas and villages. It resulted in the development of architecture outside the big cities, which was called Nubian design. In this design the church building is rectangular with long axis from east to west. It is divided by columns from inside to the nave and had two aisles. A large part of the nave is closed from the east with an arch in the front, and there is a semicircular platform containing an altar. There are two rooms on either side of the front arch, connected to a narrow corridor running behind. The north chamber was used for church meetings, while the southern one was the place for baptism. There are two rooms in the western part at the two towers. The southern contains a ladder, but the purpose of the northern room is still unknown. The entrances of the church on the southern and northern sides directly head to the aisles and a platform for reading in the northern end of the central part of the nave.

There have been some attempts by researchers to divide the Nubian Church into stages of architectural development. Mileham believes that the most common kind is the basilica and the other type is the domed church (Mileham 1915: 12). Nevertheless, Somers Clark classified churches in the Nile Valley into three types, A. B. C. Subtypes A and B include Nubian churches the first of which is the famous basilica, while in the second the dome constitutes a prominent part (Clarke 1912: 31-32). De Villard has pointed out the influences on the Nubian Church and its relationship to the early church in other areas. He divided the churches into ones with basilican plan, churches with a central plan and others built inside temples (Monneret de Villard 1938: 111).

In subsequent periods, because of some intensive archaeological work, Adams classified the Nubian churches into the following patterns:

Style 0, from AD 500 to 650, is found at Karanog and south to the Abdul Qadir village.

Style T, from the year AD 500 to 1100, includes temples converted into churches.

Style 1 is basilican in style and includes large churches (1a), e.g. its example in Qasr Ibrim was 550-750, and other (1b) in Fila was 550-750.

Style 2, a Nubian-style exemplified by the early Daberh pattern (2a) 650 to 800 and the Buhen pattern (2b) 650 to 800.

Style 3, a classic style and it is represented by the Faras pattern (3a) 750 to 1100, the Abu Sir pattern (3b) 750 to 850 and the Tamat pattern (3c) 800 to 1250.

Style 4, the late Nubian-style, represented by the Sira pattern 1150 to 1400.

Style 5, represented by the models of Dabinarti and Abdul Qadir, dates to c. 1350 (Adams 1965: 87-139).

Despite Adams' exact division, some churches with more than one pattern have also been found. Adams' study was done prior to some recent discoveries that revealed new features in the architectural planning of Churches in Nubia. Archaeological studies in Old Dongola and Soba have revealed the existence of many churches such as the one with the cross shape, the Church with granite columns and the church of the monastery. They have a non-traditional arrangement that is not related to the architectural basilica or Coptic models, and they were probably a combination of various artistic influences, including domestic and foreign.

There are more comprehensive classifications of Nubian churches as they were divided into periods including various ages and stages. Each period has its features and important architectural influences on them. They are divided as follows:

3-9-1-1 First Period

It extends from the sixth century to the seventh or eighth centuries (Gartkiewicz 1982: 9-10) and it is divided into two stages:

The first phase was affected by the Christian church architecture in Egypt and centres located on the shores of the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean. Examples are the brick-built church in Faras under the old cathedral and the old church in Dongola at the turn of the first half of the seventh century. The planning here is basilican and it is believed that there were three slabs (roof pieces of the wings) and the structure is surrounded by rooms and the building material is brick, while wood was used in the ceiling.

The second phase has two trends, one is advanced and the other is traditional and conservative. The first trend is characterized by a basilican layout of three or five naves; sometimes it has two towers. This is exemplified by the first cathedral in Faras and the 'Church of the Stone Pavement' in Dongola. The second trend of churches is basilican with corridors. It is exemplified by the South Church at Faras (Michalowski 1965: 180-183) and the monastery church in Al-Wiz Palace. This trend is characterized by the continuous traditional trend in using mud-bricks and in some cases a combination of mud-bricks and coarse stones. It is more likely that the use of tombs had begun at this stage. This development was not accompanied by a change in the planning. It became the flagship model of the local Nubian church, and this trend formed the basis for the period that followed (Gartkiewicz 1982: 9).

3-9-1-2 Second Period

This stretched from the seventh or the eighth to the tenth or the eleventh centuries. It in turn is divided into two phases:

The first stage involved central planning and rectangular planning. Examples of the first one are the 'Church of the Granite Columns' at Old Dongola (Michalowski 1966: 289-299) and the Cathedral of Paul at Faras (Michalowski 1965: 180-183) and the church (cathedral) in Sai. Qasr Ibrim Cathedral is an example of the second trend (Plumley 1964: 3). Architectural influences on this direction include the local Nubian traditions, which were adapted to set up semi-circular apses (Gartkiewicz 1982: 9).

The second stage sees the advent of the cruciform church such as that in Dongola. It is one of the basic forms of the central advanced planning. The architectural influences were imported from Armenia and Byzantium, and it can be compared with the planning of some churches in Ephesus, Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople.

Parallel to this evolving trend in this period was a traditional, regional, and conservative building activity. It continued the rectangular pattern with a single axis plan (basilica or semi-basilica plan) using columns or beams; it is exemplified by Deir al-Ghazali Church, on the southern slope of Faras.

3-9-1-3 Third Period

This period extended from the tenth or the eleventh century to the fourteenth century. It is no longer possible to distinguish the main trend in this period, as it split into many parallel streams where the tradition was also mixed. The constructed churches witnessed modifications commensurate with the establishment of the central dome. Sometimes a new system of struts in the columns was introduced, as is the case in the 'Church of the Granite Columns' at Old Dongola. The columns became cruciform piers as in the church of Faras.

The architectural activities in this period reveal distinctive features in the churches. Its planning is based on the local traditional design imitation of a rectangle and the central designs reflect the latest achievement of the architecture of Nubia or the tradition of the production of the Byzantine centres directly, as well as a multi-axis hall design derived from Islamic themes. This in turn was subjected to two distinct influences in forming the eastern part of the church, which was to be called the Nubian style. The first was a diversification of the structure of the Syrian style, and the second is the idea of the dome developed at that time.

Churches of this period were based on four models. The first affected domed basilicas such as Tamat, the south Church in Sira (Mileham 1915: 43) and, Abd al-Qadir church (Clarke 1912: 54). In the second, churches were based on the Crusader central planning centred on a Dome and are exemplified by the Odndan church and the church of Sonqi Tino (Gartkiewicz 1982: 9-10). The third trend in church planning is based on the cross with domes and models of the Greek cross, with some rooms in the corners. Its models include the granite pillared church in Old Dongola which was represented in the setting of the central octagonal nave on the top of other parts of the church and its covering by a large dome (Michalowski 1966: 165-166). Another model is the Faras church and the Church of Angels in Tamat. The fourth trend highlights the multi-axis hall and tiles in an Islamic religious architecture system, in which prayer corridors were divided by columns into squares topped with similar domes (Gartkiewicz 1982: 94). Churches in Nubia have copied this tradition as in the St. Raphael church in Tamat and the church in Kaw where the influence of Islamic architecture is obvious in the squared multiple tiles hall. Churches, in this period, were built from bricks, which had become the material of choice.

As for the church location, scholars have asserted that there was a church for each city or village or set of religious buildings. The norm in the suburbs was to place the Church and surround it by graves, while in the centre of the area the church was placed under the cemeteries as in Qasr Ibrim. Sometimes religious neighborhoods were established as in Faras and Old Dongola, but it was not known whether they were built with the Churches or created in the following stages.

The construction materials were from the local environment. Mud-brick and mud were used from the silt of the Nile. The silt was also used in the covering of the walls, as well as the use of stone and burned bricks particularly in foundations and in some cases to build the lower parts (Garberg 1970: 10). Sometimes we find some churches that used all these materials, such as the Crusader Church and the 'Church of the Granite Columns' at Dongola, in which the stone was used for the construction of columns, while the walls were built of burnt bricks with some mud-brick. Wood has been used in the windows and interior furniture for churches (Adams 1965: 133-136).

Studies in the Nubian churches architecture clearly indicate that the structural activity was subject to the different times. As we have said, the architectural influences from Byzantium, Egypt, Syria, and Islamic influences during the Mamluk era also included the decoration, sculpture and various image types. The subordination of these churches to the trends mentioned above should be viewed not as separate groups, as happened in the division of Adams, where it turns out there are adjustments in the architecture of some churches.

The monasteries are amongst the most prominent architectural monuments of Nubia and are found near cities and the Nilotic urban centres such as Faras, Sira and others. As for Deir al-Ghazali, it was found in an oasis near Sanam Abu Dom. Some studies showed the simplicity in the composition of the Sudanese monasteries compared with the Egyptian ones, in addition to their small number. Other religious buildings include what is known as Bamoarh or silo, which was devoted to individual worship. One of them was found in Alzumh area near the Fourth Cataract (Shinnie & Chittick 1961: 33).

3-9-2 Civil Architecture

Houses in Nubia were constructed from local materials. These included mud, wood, palm or leaves for the roof. In the cities, some hard materials such as stones and burnt bricks were used, as is obvious at Old Dongola, Qasr Ibrim, and Soba. At the beginning of the Christian period, it was difficult to identify any Nubian housing plan. Narrowness became the dominant feature in the buildings, which started at the room in the front to the toilet at the back of the house. Menarti village was considered the most famous Christian village that was characterized by an organized planning in the late Christian period. We find the front gatherings of wide apartments. The rear rooms are small and the corridor is narrow. This building pattern emerged in most parts of Nubia especially in the north. Defensive considerations of another kind were included in this pattern and the buildings became fortified. They were sometimes provided with vaulted, carefully hidden rooms (Adams 1977: 434).

The Polish mission excavations in Dongola discovered a residential complex on the north side of the city. It dates back to the eighth and ninth centuries. Buildings with careful, organized planning, integrated internal spaces, and sophisticated equipment that included fittings for water supply and bathrooms with a heating system beside sophisticated decorations and wall paintings characterize this complex.

Knowledge of the units' architectural details increased when houses especially for men and others for women were discovered with the presence of breaks because of religious belief. A building on the outskirts of Dongola known as House (A) was found. It has a room (designated House A-3). It also has a bathroom with water pipes and furnace for heating. The walls are covered with pictures and paintings expressing religious ritual (Godlewski 1978: 107-117). Such palaces are found in the middle of several major centres and capitals and were constructed from burnt bricks, some stones, bricks, and sometimes mud. They are characterized by having large areas enclosing some small churches, located in Old Dongola in the western end of the city wall.

3-9-3 Military Architecture (Defence)

The military architecture includes castles, forts, houses and the fortified villages. The most important was the Qasr Ibrim, which also has a pre-Christian component. In addition, we find some forts in Dongola in the northwestern part of the city. They contained a number of towers, in which the upper areas were used for storage. This shows stability. An ancient fort is also present protecting the city, and its origin is pre-Christian (Godlewski 2002: 20-26). The Old Dongola forts were diversified and some of them date to the subsequent Islamic periods after repeated invasions by the Mamluks.

These defensive buildings were present in many parts of the country, particularly in the Fifth and the Fourth Cataracts. Some of them had commercial elements and others were specifically for control and protection from a prospective enemy especially during times of political instability and the relations with the Mamluks. These buildings probably had more than one function.

We also find some multiple-floor houses probably built for defensive purposes on the islands. They are located at the Second Cataract, constructed in houses whose walls were of carved stone sculptures. Walls were built around the villages in order to protect them from Arab attacks. In some villages, people built stores for use in cases of siege, with the church in the heart of the village. Some buildings were known as Fort Houses: housing units located on high, rocky, small, and rectangular bases, and built of mud, stone, bricks or only stone, spread. Fortified villages were also found in the Third Cataract area making use of defensive elements in the area, such as the mountains and the Nile which impeded movement (Abdul Majid 2007: 127).

3-9-4 *The Graves*

Many kinds of tombs are known as Christian, because of the direction of the graves in respect of burials that have not excavated. Explorations which were executed indicated a correlation with what is found in the subsequent periods despite the lack of external superstructure that matches the direction and shape of the vault. In addition to having some Almsarj lamps placed in the saints and the clergies' tombs, in Kulubnarti large numbers of burials were found with multiple external forms. The most famous is in a form of large mounds surrounded by unpolished stone and sometimes with mud bricks. The inner part was a rectangular chamber where the deceased lies on his back with his head to the west. A number of bodies were found packed together and most of the body tissues were well preserved while the shrouds were linen that has been sent to the University of Colorado for laboratory testing. The causes of death were also identified and range from the individual killed to various natural causes. They belong to the early Christian period (Adams *et al.* 1999: 191-199).

In Old Dongola three grave styles were identified. The first pattern is a rectangular room with two modes east-west piled around a black stone. The internal shape is a rectangular pit where the deceased lay on his back with his hands on the hip and the head to the west. There is no funerary furniture. It reaches a depth of 80 cm and is representative of public cemeteries. The second mode is a rectangular pit covered by burned bricks piled in the form of (v) from the outside. Internally, there is a rectangular pit where the deceased is placed on his back. Some headstones of stone were at the head and feet, and there are stones underneath the skull. This type was found in Soba. It represents the tombs of the kings, the ruling class and the nobility. The last pattern are rock graves carved into the rock with decorations on the inside in the form of a cross shape. They represent the tombs of the priests and because of the great care taken, they may represent tombs of kings, which can be compared to the tombs of the kings newly discovered in the Sinada area. They have small rooms, 2 x 1m, near which a small chamber was found near a small palace (Godlewski 2002: 44). This indicates that graves were constructed according to the class and religion of the deceased. The Polish Mission have also found rock-cut tombs.

3-9-4-1 *The Cemeteries of Makuria*

Two rock-cut tombs are to be found on the southeastern fringes of the modern village of El Ghadar, just 2.5 km away from the Citadel. The rocky rise is not extensive in size and its surface has been heavily eroded. A vast tumulus necropolis of post-Meroitic date extended close-by to the northeast, in the direction of Gebel Ghaddar.

Discovered by local inhabitants, the tombs were first explored in 1948, but no records were kept of these investigations. The tombs were cleared once more in 1971 and again in 1981. Of the burials and potential tomb equipment nothing is known except for a note in the NCAM archives, describing the finding of “fragments of bone and an earthenware lamp of about 13 cm in diameter” inside RT.1 (Jakobielski 1982a). The two tombs were quite evidently solitary in this location, cut into the soft sandstone and devoid of their accompanying superstructures, which have been eroded completely or, had they been raised of stone blocks, dismantled to salvage the building material. The tombs themselves are just 8m apart. They are furnished with burial shafts and a wide staircase leading to the burial chamber from the west. The layout leaves no doubt as to the Christian attribution of the tombs. The two are similar, but not identical, with a carved cross decorating the lintel on the facade of RT.1 and burial niches of anthropomorphic shape cut in the floor, leaving a rounded place for the head oriented to the west.

Tomb RT.2 with its two crypts finds a close parallel in a masonry tomb located beneath the apse of the Commemorative Building BX, although there the shaft entrance was placed on the east side for purely practical reasons. The only clue for dating is based on the lintel decoration from the facade of RT.1. No monumental tombs of a similar kind have ever been found in Dongola and not a single fragment of a funerary stela belonging to a Makurian king has been found so far.

Surely, the royal graves are still to be discovered, perhaps somewhere in the vaults of the church structures on the Citadel. On the other hand, considering the monumental aspect of the rock tombs and their localization near the tumulus cemetery and not far from the Citadel, one could suggest that they had been made for the rulers of Makuria, who had already moved their seat to a freshly constructed fortress on the citadel.

The entrance and interior of the two burial chambers of tomb RT.2 Cemetery 113 still retained the age-old Nubian tradition of being buried away from the residence. The architecture of the tombs is also telling. The stepped shafts descend directly into the burial chambers, as called for in the well-documented Kushite tradition well preserved on the late Southern Cemetery at Gebel Barkal, e.g., tombs Bar. 16–17; 19; 21–25 (Dunham 1957: 100–106), not to mention examples of post-Meroitic date from Ballana, among others. Unlike the tombs from Nuri and Meroe, however, there are no offering chambers in Dongola and this absence could be explained by a change of ritual imposed by the adoption of new religious norms. In the Christian tradition, the dead did not need to be furnished with any tomb equipment or burial offerings. The heavily eroded rock surface above and around the tombs provides no suggestion as to the appearance of the superstructures. A tumulus form is rather out of the question. It may have been a kind of stone structure within an enclosure wall. The crypts of the BX structure were associated with a large church building, whereas the much later Christian tomb superstructures of the 9th and 10th centuries took the shape of small monolithic buildings with a central dome set up over the grave.

Tomb RT.1

The shaft is rectangular, 4 m long, 2.70 m wide and 2.65 m deep. It contained a rockcut staircase of 11 steps, which were as wide as the shaft. The entrance to the burial chamber, 0.96 m by 0.94 m, was positioned centrally in the east wall. The facade was decorated with carved reveals and had a smoothed lintel, in the centre of which there was a cross inscribed in a circle, measuring 30 cm in diameter. A small niche, presumably for an oil lamp, was cut into the wall face to the right of the entrance. The rectangular burial chamber (2.60 m long, 1.20–1.50 m wide, 1.05–1.25 m high) had a cross inscribed in a tondo, set in a niche decorating the east wall. The cross is heavily damaged. A rectangular burial niche with rounded western end was cut into the floor of the chamber. It was

2.22 m long, 0.52 m wide and 0.34 m deep. Three vertical holes 6 cm across and 20 cm deep were cut into the floor of this specific form of coffin. There is no evidence of how the entrance to the burial chamber was closed; it may have been sealed with a wall of bricks.

Tomb RT.2

A rectangular shaft, measuring 3.75 m in length, 1.75–2.00 m in width and 2.10 m in height, was furnished with a nine-step staircase cut into the rock to the full width of the shaft. Two plain entrances opened in the east wall, giving access to two burial chambers. The northern one was slightly wider — 0.86 m to 0.68 m of the southern one. Both were 1.06 m high. The northern chamber was 0.96 m wide and 2.40 m long, the height being 1.08 m at the beginning. Towards the back of the chamber it narrowed both in width and in height to form a small niche at the end. The burial niche cut in the floor was of anthropomorphic shape, 1.98 m long and a maximum 0.52 m wide, carved to a depth of 0.34 m. In the rounded western end there appeared to be a ‘pillow’ under the head. The southern chamber was very much like the northern one in shape (1.48 m long by 1.10 m wide, 1.05 m high) and it was also furnished with an anthropomorphic niche cut into the floor, 2.10 m long and a maximum 0.58 m wide, the depth being the same 0.34 m. Both entrances to the burial chambers may have been sealed with fired-brick walls. Some pieces of red brick bearing traces of mud mortar used for bonding, were discovered in the fill. The entrances, however, yielded no evidence of any kind of blocking.

114 Cemetery

El Ghadar cemetery, the southern part being a tumulus cemetery. The cemetery of the town spread along the desert edge east of the town for about 4 km. The oldest part was in the north, near Gebel Ghadar, where the tumulus tombs of the 5th and 6th century were located (El-Tayeb 1994; Godlewski, Kociankowska-Bożek 2010). The centre, in the general area of the monastery, was composed of Christian graves dating from the 6th through the 14th century (Żurawski 1997a, 1999). Unfortunately, these structures are not easily recognizable on the ground surface. The southern end of the cemetery field with the characteristic qubbās can be linked with the period from the 15th century through modern times. The oldest Muslim burials from the 14th–15th century must have been near the Mosque, where rockcut tombs have been revealed in the eroded rock surface. The modern Muslim cemetery partly overlies Christian burials.

3-9-4-2 *General Characteristics of Tombs and their Location*

Christian graves were positioned also around the churches and cathedrals, as well as in crypts inside church interiors. Most of the burial chambers were square brick-built shafts that gave access to the underground chamber from the west. Burials were usually single, although communal graves are also known, especially in the neighborhood of the monastery, and rather from a late period, that is, from the 11th through to the 13th centuries.

The tombs near the monastery are usually interpreted as monks’ graves, although it has proved impossible so far to identify characteristics for distinguishing lay burials from monastic ones. The surviving funerary monuments present a considerable variety of form: a catalogue of these from the cemetery of Dongola was published by A. Łajtar (2011). The brick tomb superstructures can be rectangular and plastered, or they can be cruciform in shape with barrel-shaped arms, or finally, they can be cruciform in plan with a dome or cylinder in the centre. Each of these plastered superstructures had a place in the west front for fixing a funerary stela, below which there was usually a small square niche or box intended for an oil lamp. Ceramic crosses could have topped such

tombs, but none have been discovered in place. Extensive excavations of the necropolis surface have covered an area of more than a dozen square meters.

A few of the tombs investigated so far appear to have been exceptional. Their underground part is unique and it can only be presumed that the architectural appearance of the now-lost superstructure was not typical. Suffice it to mention a large tumulus tomb surrounded by numerous rectangular Christian graves raised of brick; the rock tombs with monumental staircase leading to a burial chamber from the west, interpreted as royal burials; the two crypts under the apse of Building X (BX), interpreted as the tombs of the apostles of Makuria (see pages 7, 40–41, 64); the grand tomb of a woman by the south wall of the east arm of the Cruciform Church and finally, the mausoleum of bishops in the Northwest Annex of the monastery (see pages 87ff). In the last-mentioned case, the funerary crypt of Archbishop Georgios, who died in 1113, holds a special position because of the exceptional redaction of texts of “Great Power”, inscribed in ink on the plastered walls and vault (Łajtar & Van der Vliet 2012).

An interesting phenomenon is the appearance in Dongola of commemorative monuments directly connected with the crypts and the individuals buried there. The oldest chapel of this kind was established in the mid 9th century. The long veneration of the two men buried in the crypts, lasting uninterrupted from the mid 6th century through the end of the 14th, has given rise to the idea that there were the burials of the “apostles” of Makuria. In the 11th century or at the beginning of the 12th century at the latest, an elaborate mausoleum with two chapels and a shared prothesis was established for bishops in the Northwest Annex of the Monastery of St Anthony the Great (see Mausoleum of Bishops, page 87). The issue awaits a detailed discussion in the light of similar complexes known from the Cathedral of Petros in Pachoras and from the church at Banganarti.

An overwhelming majority of the funerary stelae from Dongola was written in Greek (Łajtar 1997, 2001). No more than a few have been preserved that are actually in Coptic and they usually belonged to monks. One exceptional tombstone was that of Joseph, bishop of Syene. No early Arab stelae are known, but this is hardly surprising, considering that Muslims did not appear in Dongola in significant numbers before the end of the 13th century. Earlier residents of the Muslim faith would have been reduced to passing merchants and diplomats.

3-9-5 Arts and Small Industries

Nubia witnessed, during the Christian period, a great and sophisticated prosperity in arts and wall graphics associated mainly with architecture and marked by some external influences, particularly Byzantine and Coptic. Studies done by some scholars, explorers and historians in the early twentieth century played a large role in referring to many of the images that decorated the Nubian church. These include Mileham (1915), Griffith (1913, 1923, 1928) in the period from 1913 to 1928 and Monneret de Villard on wall images before the establishment of the UNESCO campaign. The importance of these writings is as a result of the loss of much of what was published: most of them have been rescued during the campaign to save the monuments of Nubia that helped increase knowledge in relation to the arts of the Nubia in that period.

Evidently, Faras site is the most important in these sites for the abundant quantities of images discovered in it that exceeded 160 wall drawings. They were shared equally between Sudan and the Polish mission. This was followed in importance with what was found in the Church of Abdullah Nirqi, which was discovered by the Dutch mission. It contained religious images in the church that were in a good state of preservation.

The archaeological relics in Dongola were mostly painted capitals and columns. In fact, only the capitals were decorated. They have been divided into two types. Type I capitals have a definitive shape and a decoration encompassing the entire waist. The decorative symbols were swags and simplified Greek crosses connected with each other and covering the whole surface of the capital and this reflects the influence of Byzantine art. They date back to the sixth century and some models are found in Dongola in the 'Church of the Granite Columns'.

The second type of the capital is represented by those made from ironstone in Kom church (E), which keeps the traditional arrangement of the capitals. It is striking to find the acanthus design that adorns the capitals which is clearly separated by four of them which support the corners and the other four that adorn the centres of the capital. The front and other prominent parts were adorned by a Cross or a flower shape. There are other types of capitals made of Nubian sandstone and granite with forms and decorations derived from different models. Perhaps the most famous of them were the spiral capitals that were found in the Church of the Granite Columns and not organized in the Church of the Cross. They are huge capitals in the form of simple coherent decorated blocks and they depict a cross and vases, these being the most prominent elements of the decoration (Jakobielski & Scholz 2001: 367-369).

Architectural ornaments in the form of windows were found in Dongola. They were made of sandstone and are characterized by a semicircular shape decorated by the Cross in the upper edge and the lower part is separated and decorated with overlapping lines. Besides the sandstone, ceramic was used in the windows for internal use or on the walls of churches. This became widespread for ease of implementation. Other elements of architectural ornamentation were also small icons, which were widespread throughout the Christian world. Dongola icons were characterized by not being intended for a wall as it was common, but to be placed on a barrier to highlight the painted side (Jakobielski & Krzyzaniak 1968: 143-148).

As for the classification of iconography, they have been divided into a number of styles in accordance with the special features of each type. Some images of bishops were used in the identification of the stages of the evolution of iconography in Faras Cathedral. The main possibility is that these religious figures were depicted during their lives as part of ritual (Jakobielski 1972: 54). Martens presented the latest classifications as follows:

- Violet-style — the eighth century AD
- Late-fashioned violet — the first half of the ninth century
- Transitional style — the mid-ninth century.
- White style — the second half of the ninth century
- Yellow and red style — the first half of the tenth century
- Multi-colour style I — end of the tenth century and the first half of the eleventh century
- Multi-colour style II — the second half of the eleventh century
- Multi-colour style III — the twelfth century
- Multi-colour style (late) — the thirteenth century and after (Martens 1982: 144).

The difference in the general classifications in the Christian models is confined to the models' number and features. As for the subject matter of the frescoes, they have included Christ in different shapes and bodies, the Panel of Birth discovered in Faras and the Virgin, the angels and their superiors, and the saints; sometimes travelling with some knights (some of them are in the Sudan National Museum). Also included are hermits, deacons, bishops, some members of the royal family, and rarely some Nubians (Michalowski 1965: 180-185). This situation has emerged more clearly in the Holy Trinity Monastery murals recently discovered in Dongola that represented a tremendous

development in the wall paintings in addition to their good state of preservation. Despite the modesty of some of them, the architectural decoration elements present a picture of the artistic taste of the Nubians and confirm their knowledge of trends prevailing and their contribution to the art found in the Christian world at the time (Jakobielski & Scholz 2001: 377-386).

Of the small industries, pottery is prominent. Christian period pottery is considered as one of the greatest types of pottery in the ancient world after Meroitic pottery. Old Dongola and Faras were regarded as the largest industrial centres during this period. The pottery industry in Faras followed the distinctive traditions of pottery industry and ornamentation known in the Christian world at that time. The first pots were red and they were free of decoration. They were manufactured to meet the needs of the monasteries and then expanded with the development of kilns and increase in production capacity. Thus, amphorae were made and decorated to give them aesthetic character. In later periods, a major shift in the fine-ware industry occurred by introducing geometric forms besides animal and plant motifs (Kolodziejczyk 1975: 316-321).

In the Dongola area there were two centres for pottery: Old Dongola and Deir al-Ghazali. These two centres produced a significant amount of advanced pottery despite the different techniques and methods of manufacturing in the two centres. Industries included some amphorae, pots and small cups coated in white, light yellow, or orange. The decoration on most of them were in forms of animals and plants; they were stamped in the middle. We also find the traditional slogans such as bird heads, crosses, which had become the main symbol influenced by Coptic art, but it differs in approach in aesthetics and in the accuracy of the drawings (Jakobielski & Scholz 2001: 337-367).

As for the traditional art industries that required a great deal of technical skills and the ability to innovate, these included textiles, which differed greatly from the Egyptian fabric that was based on linen, as the Nubians used leather and wool. Textiles were decorated with bright colors and sometimes decorated with drawings in the form of boxes. However, there is evidence that many of the designs of the Nubian ornaments, jewels and decoration were the result of Islamic thought and inspired by symbols such as the crescent and the six-pointed star. Although some of them existed since the early periods, the others seemed to have entered with the Turkish soldiers, who were sent to Nubia in 1520 AD. They worked in gold and silver mines, and they made iron tools such as axes and spears, leather goods such as shoes, baskets and dishes made of palm fronds (Zine El Abidine 1978: 178).

3-10 Education and Language

Education was confined in the Nubian kingdoms to religious teachings. The primary purpose of these teachings was to raise the status of the kings who had accepted this new religion. The public was not involved in this education. Thus, it was hard to accept this new reality, and at the same time, the language that was used was not known to the Nubians. This led to the weakness of the influence of the new religion. Nubians adopted Christianity on the orders of their kings, although the religious teachings were simple, so as to gain people's acceptance and knowledge.

The language used was only the Greek language, of which Nubians did not have any knowledge. The Nubian language was used in the late eighth century, since some Christian books were found written in Nubian (Sudanization of Christianity). The churches, which were distributed in all the Christian villages, represented the only educational centres in the kingdom. Nubia was famous in the medieval period for multilingualism such as ancient Greek, Coptic, Arabic and Nubian. Greek was the most common language in the Christian world, and later it became the language of the tribes in Nubia after the introduction of Christianity. It continued to be used in writing until after the transfer of the

Egyptian church to the Coptic language (Adams 1977: 431). Despite the importance of the language as a form of bonding and social networking, it was different in the Nubian community where the aristocracy members, administrators, and senior churchmen spoke the Greek language, while we find some clerics familiar with the Coptic language, which is believed to be the refugees' language. The religious rituals in churches were performed in Nubian churches in the Greek language, but in the eighth century AD, the Nubians translated these rituals into the Nubian language, which became the language of the rituals rather than Greek. The first written text dated to the year AD 795 (Griffith 1928: 55) and it was written in the late tenth century (Shinnie 1954a: 76). Evidence suggests that the spoken language in Dongola, known as the language of the medieval period, was one of the old languages of the Nile Valley that existed prior to the occupation of the modern Egyptian State in the region.

The Nubian dialects still held linguistic wealth represented in vocabulary borrowed from the Egyptian language, in addition to some titles and names that look Nubian recorded from the New Kingdom. For example, the word 'gold', which is written *nub* in Nubian and *nub* (*nbw*) in Ancient Egyptian, as well as the word 'king' that is *oor* in Nubian and other words and terms (Badr 1955: 47). In addition, some tombstones were found written in Nubian although most were mostly written in Greek. Later, the spread of Arabic is mainly associated with the spread of the Islamic religion, which reached its peak in the period of the Kingdom of Fung.

The modern Nubian language spread in the area between the First and Fourth Cataracts, in some areas of western Sudan and the Nubia Mountains regions and Meidob Darfur. It is divided into two main categories with each branch within the categories being closely related. There is a belief among some scholars that the Dongolawi dialect is the closest dialect to the ancient Nubian language, because it has more speakers than the Mahas dialect, and the Keynesian dialect is one of the branches of the Dongolawi. Also, we find some indications of the names of places in areas near Dongola in the north and south closer to the Dongolawi dialect such as the Osmakul area in the Almahas region, meaning 'stream of water', and Kagbar that means 'stud of ass', and others.

Because of the presence of the government seat (the capital) in the Dongola area after the union of Nobatia and Makuria, the centre of political and social activities moved to the region. Therefore, it is natural that the dialect used in Dongola became the main language in the United Kingdom, as a case in which the language rises to the rank of a national language because of several factors including political and social. This resembles what happened in Rome, as the Romans' language became the national and literary language of Rome and then spread all over the world due to the Romans' military victories (Furayah: 1989: 81).

Generally, multiplicity in languages led to many complexities in the administrative systems since there were some administrative titles which did not have a synonym, while others included more than one meaning. Some of them were recorded in the official correspondence and others were not adequately explained or illuminated (Osman 1982: 47-51).

3-11 Decline and Disappearance of the Kingdom of Makuria

Rulers in Islamic Egypt did not stop at receiving the *Baqt* imposed on the Nubians as stated by the text of the agreement. They also sought to intervene directly in the internal affairs of the Kingdom. This was represented by the appointment of the Nubian kings according to their own interests, for many reasons including securing the southern border of Egypt. By the end of the thirteen century AD, the Mamluks claimed control of Nobatia around the Second Cataract, but this claim has not been supported by the findings in the documents from Qasr Ibrim.

The deterioration of the Kingdom of Makuria coincided after the interference of King Daoud in the affairs of the Islamic state in Egypt after the infringement in the Azab port in 1272 AD, which represented a significant commercial importance to Egypt. The Mamluks sent a military campaign to the northern border which resulted in the sanction and the execution of many people, including the 'Lord of the Mountain' (Eparch). King Shakinda ruled after King Daoud. He showed full obedience to the Mamluks. They in turn sent a campaign to the northern borders of Makuria and it occupied Dow castle (Ida Mountain) and the Menara island. The 'Lord of the Mountain' and Al-Kinooz joined Shakinda. That campaign reached Old Dongola and King Daoud escaped to Al-Abwab Kingdom. Shakinda was inaugurated as a king and he made the Oath to be obedient to the Mamluks. Consequently, Makuria followed the Islamic state.

This policy followed by the Mamluks towards Nubia ignited discord within Nubians and intrigues and conspiracies occurred. Consequently, King Shakinda was killed and Barak was his successor, but he did not last long. Despite the fact that Shamamon was elusive, he suffered the fate of his predecessors. Kudanbas was the last Christian king in Al-Makuria. He discovered the Mamluks' intention to isolate him, so he suggested the inauguration of his nephew Kanz Aldawla because of his eligibility according to the matriarchal inheritance system prevailing, apart from being a Muslim. Although the Kinooz were friends to the Mamluks, the Sultan al-Nasir saw them as a great threat to their interests in the Al-Makuria, and Kanz Aldawla did not find support from them. That may be caused by the fear of a wider alliance with a governor of Arab and Nubian origin at the same time. Thus, he imprisoned Kanz Aldawla in Cairo. Then Saifuddin Abdullah Barshambo was proclaimed King of Makuria. Saifuddin grew up in the home of a Royal Mamluk and that was the beginning of the formal embrace of Islam in Dongola, where an inscription was placed, in the year AD 1317, in which was written "turn this place into a mosque for prayers" (Kropáček 1989: 410).

When Barshambo was crowned as a king in Dongola, the Sultan felt that things in Makuria had stabilized and he agreed to release Kanz Aldawla, who promised to return to Aswan to restrict himself to its affairs. Nevertheless, he declared himself king of Dow and travelled to Dongola. Barshambo was assassinated and the throne ended up in the hands of Al-Kunooz. They played a major role in the course of events in Nubia through trade and intermarriage correspondence with the Nubians. They also played a large role in the internal conflict as they were able to control Dongola, where the kings took refuge in the Dhow Palace in Maris. Dongola was in ruins and it became the main part of the Kingdom subject to chaos and degradation (Qusi 1976: 85).

Thus, the Nubians who claimed the throne were no more than tools in the conflict to control Makuria while the real fighters were the Mamluks' Al-Kinooz. They tried to intervene again, sending Abram to replace Kanz Aldawla, but he did not succeed in his mission, and the same happened for Kudanbas, but Kanz Aldawla fled to Al-Abwab to summon the strength to face the Kudanbas who retreated to the north waiting for support from the Mamluks, but they failed. Thus, the Mamluks lifted their hands-off Makuria and left it to its fate with Al-Kinooz. There seems to be an agreement that the attainment of the throne of Makuria by Kanz Aldawla marks the end of the Christian rule in the whole kingdom, but the northern parts were under the command of Christians rulers for over one hundred and fifty more years.

This case did not apply to Nobatia, which was characterized by its dry environment and the loss of grasslands that attracted people. Dawttawa (Dotawo[?]) managed to withstand the Islamic and Arabic tide from the north and the south until the end of the fifteenth century AD. The head of the Diocese of Nobatia retained his position as did the King of Dawttawa, though Nobatia Diocese were appointed by the King of Dongola, which collapsed in 1365.

The appointment of a Muslim king in Makuria with the consent of its people indicates that Makuria became a worldly kingdom. It was clear that the old alliance between the state and the church ended, and some kings such as Shekanda, Shamamon, and Kudanbas were not shown on the church walls and no reference stated that they were protectors of the religion.

In general, the Arab migrations continued to Al-Makuria, and some of them were directly involved in the conflict in the Kingdom. For example, Banu Ga'ad, Banu Ikrima, and Al-Kinooz supported one king against the other and settled in large numbers in Old Dongola. With the growing numbers of Arab groups, the Makuria king escaped and abandoned the southern parts of his kingdom to those tribes, leaving his kingdom to face its destiny. It seems that the collapse came from the opposite direction, the south: the Arabic tribes invaded Kingdom of Makuria at the beginning of the fourteenth century. Those Arabs came from the Red Sea Hills. The crown in Makuria came into the hands of the Muslims. The region from the Third Cataract in the North and the Fifth in the south, was "divided between the Arab kings, each one was called Mek. They were travellers with no knowledge about ruling affairs, they obeyed each other, and there was no depiction of the king in their country" (Ibn Khaldun 1906: 142).

Since 1464, and in another text from 1484, a curtain of silence descended on both Christian Nobatia and Dotawo cultures. The Ottomans, when they came in the middle of the sixteenth century down to the Third Cataract, did not find any trace of Dotawo or the archdiocese of Nobatia.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Previous Studies (Between the Third and Fifth Cataracts)

4-1 Introduction

The process of studying and classifying Christian sites relies on many archaeological and historical sources. The real beginning for studying this period of archaeology lies in the Nubian rescue campaigns of the mid-twentieth century. The diversity of the data uncovered necessitated the establishment of a rigorous methodology. This is because the material that was to be studied does not give a detailed and clear idea about many political and economic aspects of life, contrary to what was stated about the details of social life and its variables and the predominance and control of religious aspects on it.

When Makuria united with Nobatia in the seventh century, and perhaps at the beginning of the eighth century AD, commonalities were established between the sites. It seems that the desert region between the Fifth and Fourth cataracts (Map 2) was not in a state of permanent dependency to either of the two kingdoms, although we suspect it was subservient to Makuria for long periods in order to control the borders with Alwa, a major slave trade route.

We also find some archaeological evidence suggesting that there were common bonds with post-Meroitic sites in Makuria. The general features of the Christian period can be identified through pottery, religious architecture represented in the churches, civil architecture such as the palaces and houses and some castles and forts, the cemeteries, rock drawings, and isolated locations, which represent the major sites of the Kingdom of Makuria with its known historical boundaries between the Fifth and Third Cataracts.

Because of this diversity, there is a clear difference in economic and social activities and the components of the various sites, which are often associated with a number of elements such as environmental, political, topographic, and so on. These in turn influence the nature and importance of the sites. While we find that the political aspects of governance were associated more prominently in urban centres, the artefacts relating to life and industrial affluence were clearer in rural areas and villages by virtue of wider consumption.

The sites in this chapter were covered in the preceeding chapters based on previous studies since they are located within the region of Makuria. Many of them have been destroyed due to natural factors, population spread and so on. Previous studies created three regions, which includes the province of Dongola (inclusive of Dongola, the Fourth Cataract), and locations in the Fifth Cataract province on the southern borders of the kingdom, and then the Third Cataract region representing the northern borders of the kingdom before unity. The objective is to identify the nature of the archaeological research in the various regions and to verify these sites and their Christian character, especially since many of the sites in the region mentioned earlier in periods have not been revisited by recent studies.

4-2 Dongola Region

The term Dongola region (Dongola Reach) covers the area along the Nile between the Fourth and the Third cataracts (Edwards op.cit: 93 and Map 1). Old Dongola has played an important role in the political and cultural history of the Sudan during the Christian and Islamic periods as the capital of the Kingdom and headquarters during the Christian period. In addition, it was the first headquarters

of the Muslim ruler of Nubia, as well sharing great similarities in geographical and historical aspects with most parts of this region. This region includes all of the Fourth Cataract area and some Third Cataract areas.

The sites are characterized by variety in defensive structures and strategies. The diversity protected the ruling political power in Old Dongola and secured the trade routes linking the kingdom with neighboring regions. Egypt's transition to Islam increased the importance of these forts to perform these dual roles.

Archaeological research in the region between the Fourth and the Third Cataracts began back in the late eighteenth century, when the traveller Burckhardt presented an integrated description of most of the archaeological sites in Sudan as well as a discussion of the environment and society. The Frenchman Monneret De Villard described and sketched the churches from Diberah to Khartoum. His studies included some Christian sites in the area between the Fourth and Third Cataracts Monneret de Villard 1935: 12-27). However, serious studies were initiated by Waddington and Hanbury (1820-1821) in Jebel Barkal. They lived there about ten days and explored the pyramids and temples in the ancient capital of Kush. They painted them and conducted limited excavations on Argo Island. They also carried out mapping of the temple in Sulb. This map is still valid and does not lose its value because the temple parts disappeared later. The cemetery hewn into the rock in Dosha attracted their interest (Waddington & Hanbury 1822).

Cailliaud stopped on his way back from Meroe at Jebel Barkal and described the pyramids near Third Cataract. He explored a quarry where he found an unfinished statue (people of the region currently call it *Baoukijnonda*); it is similar to the statue in Argo Island. (Cailliaud 1825: 43-52). Hoskins also gathered a tremendous number of drawings, maps and charts of the Jebel Barkal temples. Then he visited Argo, Temps and Sulb, where he designed a map for the Temple and drew its ruins. With the help of the work of Champollion, he succeeded in identifying the name of the royal name for Senuoset III and Tuthmose III. He also visited Simna and Akama, and despite the fact that Hoskins' book contains important ethnographic information rather than strictly historical or archaeological, some of the various remarks still retain their importance even today (Hoskins 1835).

Rosger's memories contained sporadic observations concerning the archaeologies of Sudan. In 1838, he visited Dongola, Sennar, Fazhugli and Roseires, and he reached the southwestern regions of Abyssinia and he passed Jebel Barkal on his way back. Nevertheless, that material was presented in a confusing manner (Russeger 1839:238-322).

Lepsius' mission, on its way back from Meroe, had some time to study Jebel Barkal, Argo, Temps, Cspe, Sulb, Sadanaga, Sai Island, Simna, as well as the temples of Lower Nubia. Lepsius, who visited Deir al-Ghazali in 1844, gave a comprehensive description, including a horizontal section of the monastery church. He also carried many engravings and drawings with him to Germany. The inscriptions collected in addition to the obelisks belonged to Kush kings such as Piye, Aspelta and Nastasn along with the writings of historians and geographers Greeks and Romans that are considered the only sources started for Napata and Meroe (Lepsius 1853).

In the year 1884, three buildings were identified in the oasis region in Laqiya. One of them may be a onastery, but it is not clear (Gleichen 1905: 313). In 1897, Budge made his first trip to Sudan, but his memoirs did not contain much of interest to those investigating the situation in the country in the last years of the nineteenth century. The section devoted to the archaeology of the region between the Fourth and the Third cataracts, especially Napata, does not contain a lot but Budge mentions the views and assessments of the travellers who saw these structures before. His writings were

superficial. Nevertheless, Budge discovered one of the pyramids at Jebel Barkal, but the excavation was inaccurate and work stopped when he reached groundwater. He also briefly mentioned many of sites in the Province of Dongola such as Almuqal, Arak and others (Budge 1909: 80).

4-2-1 Writings and Archaeological Work in the Twentieth Century

The pioneering archaeological work in the twentieth century dates back to 1910-1912 when an Oxford University mission lead by Griffith worked in Faras and Sanam Abu Dom (Griffith 1913: 25-28). As well as Garstang in Alkawa and Meroe (Garstang *et al.* 1911: 1, 22), Reisner carried out excavations at Kerma in the period from 1913-1916. In the winter of 1916, he conducted a comprehensive study of the temples of Gebel Barkal and then returned in 1918-1919 to the Jebel Barkal temples to begin exploration in the royal Kushite cemeteries near Napata, Nuri and Al Kuru. After 1920, he explored cemeteries in Meroe (Begrawiya). His work included his description of many of the sites in the Province of Dongola (Reisner 1919: 35-67).

(Crowfoot also counted the number of sites in the regions of Romi, al-Bakri and Aorkati and others, which included Christian pottery pieces dating to the classic and late periods in addition to Islamic domes and castles; their historic periods were not specified (Crowfoot 1927: 141-150). In 1930-1931, the Oxford mission led by Griffith returned to work in Alkwa, and after his death Kirwan took action in the period from 1934-1936. Reports submitted by Nicholson on the Arak site also indicated the presence of some Christian pottery pieces to the east of Aldayig Mountain. Some Coptic inscriptions were also found in one of the graves (Nicholson 1933: 83). Monneret de Villard conducted a comprehensive survey of the Nubia area. His work is considered as an archaeological and ethnographic survey. He wrote a comprehensive history of that period in four volumes under the name of *La Nubia Medioevale* (1935, 1938). The University of Oxford mission, led by Macadam (1949), continued to work in at the site of Alkawa in the 1940s. This was followed by some survey work carried out by Arkell (1940: 12) who recorded other sites in the province, such as Salib and Abaker. In the same period, an initial study of Houd Liti site was conducted, including some of its Christian cemeteries, and others belonging to the post-Meroitic in general. Evidence was also found for Christian settlements as there was widespread presence of Christian and post-Meroitic pottery.

Crawford, in the winter of 1952-1953, undertook a mission to the region between the Fifth and Fourth Cataracts to draw maps of the Christian forts and churches in them like Aalashir Castle, Altarfyaah, Kru and others. The study also included a number of Islamic sites such as Wad Nimeiri, Khandaq (Alkhandaq) and Ahaiqih castels (Crawford 1955: 141-150). Chittick followed Crawford. He studied the caravan route from Napata to Merowe, which runs through the Bayuda desert. He recorded a number of sites dating back to the Christian period, such as Alghazali (Shinnie and Chittick 1961: 5-11), in addition to Shinnie's work in Tanagasi (Shinnie 1954b: 66-85) and Old Dongola and others (Shinnie 1955a: 96-98).

In the same period, De Bellefonds worked a site on the left bank of the Nile and he found a basilican Church composed of granite columns. He also found traces of other buildings within huge walls (De Bellefonds: 1958: 173). Other archaeological work was done by Southern Methodist University, which surveyed between Wadi Al Malik and Korti in 1966-1967 for a cultural link between prehistoric groups in central and northern Sudan (Marks *et al.* 1968: 319-323). The Warsaw University Polish mission has also worked in Old Dongola and Faras since the sixties until today. Its focus is on Christian sites (Jakobielski and Krzyzaniak 1968: 143-164).

Discovery work continued in Sudan, for example La Sapienza University mission, led by the Italian Roccati, worked in Natekmani Palace in Barkel since 1972 until now (Roccati: 1997: 12-18). Moreover,

Charles Maystre studied the Tabo site, one of the major sites of the Egyptian presence during the era of the New Kingdom and which was re-used in the Meroitic period, and later a church was built on the ruins of the site. He also found graves belonging to post-Meroitic and Christian periods (Maystre 1986).

This was followed by a Swiss expedition led by Charles Bonnet (1987: 36-37), which made a significant contribution to the Sudanese civilization by conducting integrated studies on the Kerma civilization since 1976 until now. In the 1980s, the number of missions in Sudan increased. For example, the Canadian Royal Ontario Museum mission, led by Chris Grzymski (Grzymski 1987: 6-13), worked in Houd Liti/Letti Basin. The French Mission of the University of Lille excavated at Kerma led by Brigitte Gratien. In addition, the Italian mission was led by Donatella Usai, who worked in Hilat Alarab in 2002 and in Sanam Abu Dom (Usai 2001: 11-20). In addition, the Sudanese Archaeological Research Society run by Derek Welsby worked in Alkwa and the eastern bank along the Nile southwards to Kerma (Welsby 1998: 15-20).

Since 1982, the French Unit led by Jaques Reinold executed work in Kadruka and Wadi Alkhoi opposite to Khandaq (Alkhandaq) and Dongola. It focused on prehistoric periods especially Neolithic (Reinold 1987: 17-56). The Royal Ontario Museum mission led by Chris Grzymski recorded the sites on the right bank of the Nile, such as Bakdembh and Sheikh Abdullah Monasir and others. It found settlement of various Christian periods and determined that the existence of a Meroitic site under the foundations of this settlement is possible. Late Christian and pre-Christian pottery sherds were found (Grzymski: 1987: 37). The Boston Museum of Fine Arts also began its work in Jebel Barkal, led by Timothy Kendall, which continues (Kendall 1992: 1-12). Meanwhile, the Polish expedition from Gdansk worked in Wadi Almahfoor and the Fourth Cataract in the Western Bank under the leadership of bogdan Żurawski. This mission recorded many Islamic sites (Żurawski 1998: 74-81). In the same year, The Mahas Survey Project began an archaeological survey project in the Third Cataract area. It included integrated studies of the language, history, settlement and the archaeologies and it continues even now.

The Polish mission, in conjunction with NCAM represented by Mahmoud El-Tayeb, worked at the site of Alghadar. It excavated the remnants dating back to the Meroitic and post-Meroitic periods. Some Christian and Islamic settlements were found. A number of hills and burial were dug in the site and it turned out that they belong to post-Meroitic and Christian periods; some pieces of Christian pottery were also uncovered (El-Tayeb 1994: 65-79).

A Spanish mission worked in Jebel Barkal in 1996. This was followed by Dongola University working in conjunction with NCAM to rescue the threatened archaeology of the Fourth Cataract. In addition, it was involved with the Uli Foundation, the Spanish Mission in Abbasi. The most important archaeological work that included most of the historic periods was carried out by the California University mission in the period from 1997-1998. It worked in Tombos site and then moved its work to the west bank. It conducted a survey of the area from Akad in the far north until Khandaq (Alkhandaq) in the south. It has revealed many Christian and Islamic sites (Smith 2002: 157-182).

4-2-2 Archaeological Work in the Twenty-First Century

The beginning of the twenty-first century witnessed groups of archaeological missions arriving into Sudan either to continue work started before or in response to the appeal to save the archaeology of the Fourth Cataract threatened by the construction of the Merowe dam. These included, for example, the University College London mission, led by Dorian Fuller, that worked on the East Bank of the Fourth Cataract (Fuller 1998: 52-51).

In early 2001, the Polish mission headed by Bogdan Żurawski worked at Sinada, Hamor, and Banganarti and on a religious building known as the Church in Sinada area. The latter may have been a monastery. Recent studies revealed that the building contained the palace and tombs of the kings of Al-Makuria. In addition, it was found that advanced technology was used in its construction and materials. Some writings in Greek and Nubian were found on some of the walls (Żurawski 2002: 20-23). The mission also found two churches in Banganarti built one over the other (higher and lower) where two layers of colorful decoration were also located. They contain figures of the saints accompanied by inscriptions in Greek, and the Evangelical texts used signify that their construction was likely to be between the sixth and eighth centuries.

Warsaw and Poznan Museums' missions continued work in different locations in Dongola Province either building upon previous work as at Old Dongola, or discovering other sites by surveying in the Abkar, Argi and the Karima-Silim road between 2003 to 2007. In early 2007, the Department of Archaeology, University of Khartoum conducted an archaeological and heritage survey from Khandaq (Alkhandaq) in the south to Wad Nimeiri in the north. This work identified many Christian and Muslim sites, especially cemeteries.

As for the locations in the Fourth Cataract, the region gained importance during the late Christianity period after the political disturbances arising from the Mamluk campaigns. This area was neglected in Arab sources which provide little information about this region in the late periods, probably due to the area's roughness and severity. A group of foreign missions led by the British Sudanese Assembly participated in the work. The British mission worked in Mays Island sites and some sites on the Fourth Cataract area. Light was shed on aspects that are of utmost importance, such as the political, economic and social aspects. It revealed significant results. For example, in architecture, it explained that there was great diversity in the construction of houses, despite the absence of a clear and orderly planning for the settlements, particularly the villages in Hoosh Aljiroof, Algabal, and Abu Haraz. Some churches containing religious images, drawings for churches, and inscriptions on the walls, were found. In addition, some huts with a circular shape in As, Sur, and Tibet Islands were found. Furthermore, large numbers of sherds of Christian pottery and cemeteries were present. There are forts and castle buildings which spread on the banks of the Nile. The purpose of these buildings was to protect the Kingdom of Makuria and to secure its trade routes from nomadic tribes that were roaming large areas along the Nile in the desert in search for pasture.

It is noticeable that most of the work between the eighteenth and mid-twentieth centuries had been concentrated on sites around Merowe and Napata. The Islamic era, therefore, was totally ignored and reported Christian sites are also rare. There was scarcity of information and studies on those sites, thus the research work concentrated on survey. Results indicated the existence of advanced architecture. It seemed to have been limited to Dongola. The lack of exploration of many smaller sites is only partially explained by the topographical locations. Sites were traced according to the previous studies and some recent ones that were done according to their geographical location from north to east along the River Nile (Table No.1)

Table 1. Dongola region sites

Site No.	Site Name	Geographical location	Type	Remarks
100-101	Tombos	Island	Fort	First fort on the borders of Dongola. It is traced back to Meroe and Napata and later to the Christian and Islamic eras.
57	Karma	Right bank	Settlement	The biggest settlement area in the region. Broken Christian pottery and toilet articles were found.
51	Kadarka	Right bank	Settlement	On a plain three miles away from the Nile, contains Christian and pre-Christian tombs.
4	Akad	Left bank	Fort	Opposite the River Nile with Amud fort or Church
84	Mashu	Left bank	Settlement	Belongs to the Christian era, with a church covered by water from the river.
63	Koya	Left bank	Cemetery	Christian and Muslim tombs were found and broken Christian pottery.
64	Kudi	Right bank	Tombs	Scattered Christian tombs covered with stones.
96	Teo	Right bank	Church, temple	Two miles from the River Nile. A church was built on the ruins of a Pharaonic temple.
66	Allagba	Agab valley	Settlement	Amounts of Christian pottery and a small monastery were found.
56	Alkawa	Right bank	Settlement	A Napatan- Meroitic temple with Christian pottery sherds.
52	Kayit	Left bank	Settlement	Between Wad Nimairi and Dongola Alurdi, containing remains of a church, (no longer extant).
99	Atteeti	Left bank	Settlement	A small settlement with some domed tombs of Christians.
102	Urbi	Left bank	Settlement	700m. from the River Nile with heavy pottery that might have been for pottery making.
104	Wad Nimeiri	Left bank	Cemetery castle	Overlooks the River Nile with a Christian castle and pottery belonging to post Meroitic, Christian & Islamic periods, and various Muslim tombs.
61-59	AlKandaq	Left bank	Settlement	Overlooks the River Nile directly. A Christian settlement with a fort and a large cemetery
17	Bagdimish	Left bank	Settlement	700m from the Nile, a Christian settlement covered with sand.
85	Skeikh Annuman	Right bank	Settlement	A small Christian settlement. Small pilgrims' bottles were found.
62	Kumi	Left bank	Church	Mentioned as a church at the site. No evidence is found.
3	Wad Adul	Right bank	Settlement	800m from the River Nile, belongs to post- Meroitic and Christian periods.
86	Nawa	Right bank	Settlement	Traced to Christian and Islamic eras with a mosque and several tombs.
55	Amantago	Right bank	Settlement	300m from the Nile. Unclear bases of a temple are seen with a lot of broken Christian pottery
6 – 7	Arab Haj	Right bank	Fort	300 m from the River Nile. It belongs to the late Christian era. A modern study is made by the researcher there.
36	Algoalid	Left bank	Settlement	Traced as a church; some of the Christians' buildings were covered by floods.
49-50	Kadakoul	Right bank	Settlement	700 metres from the Nile with heavy Christian pottery making.
78-81	Magawda	Right bank	settlement	Consists of a group of Christian sites, three have been enumerated.

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Site No.	Site Name	Geographical location	Type	Remarks
75-67	Letti Basin	Letti Basin	Settlement	One km. from Haj Majid with piles of Christian pottery
26-32	El Ghaddar	Right bank	Cemetery	Tombs belonging to the post-Meroitic era and the Christian era
105-106	Sheikh Wahab	Right bank	Settlement	A small Christian settlement. Small house furniture was found
47-48	Skeikh Joda	Right bank	Settlement	A small settlement with some domed Christian tombs.
37-40	Haj Majid	Letti Basin	Church	A church with columns, Christian and Islamic pottery Graves were found on a plain area about 9 km from the river Nile
77	Mawad	Left bank	Settlement C Bana	Piles of pottery and cemeteries of the Christian era were found.
54	Kankalab	Left bank	Settlement, Castle	Overlooks the River Nile, consists of a castle, several walls and many Christian domed tombs.
34-35	Sheikh Mahmood	Right bank	Settlement	Dates back to Meroitic and Christian eras, some Christian tombs are found.
41-42	Hambakol	Right bank	Settlement	It is 1000m. from the River Nile. The biggest settlement in Dongola.
58	Alkhilaiwa	Left bank	Settlement	Overlooks the river Nile. A church and Christian tombs were described, but have not been found subsequently.
88	Dongola Alajooz	Right bank	Settlement	The largest settlement during the Christian period that includes all types of remains.
43-44	Bakbul-Hamoor	Right bank	Settlement	Belongs to the Christian period with large numbers of domed tombs.
95	Sinada	Right bank	Settlement, Cemetery	Circular shape with a diameter of 200 m. it has a palace and cemetery of Makurian Kings.
10-11	Bengranti	Island	Settlement	Belongs to Christian period with Christian cemeteries.
97	Tangasi	Island	Cemetery	Christian cemeteries from stone and Christian pottery.
5	Alaleem Mountain	Right bank	Cemetery	A Christian cemetery with Christian tombs that belong to post-Meroitic period.
22	Firji	Left bank	Cemetery	Christian cemetery. The bases found might be of an Islamic gubba (domed tomb).
89-90	Roomi	Left bank	Settlement, Cemetery	Relates to the Christian period. It has a lot of cemeteries with domed tombs.
103	Orkatti	Right bank	Settlement	Meroitic? Used in Christian period with Christian pottery.
1	Sheikh Abdalla	Left bank	Cemetery, dome	A small Christian settlement where a Muslims' gubba was built.
14-15	Sheikh Batran	Left bank	Settlement, Temple	Some Christian cemeteries with an Islamic gubba nearby.
91-92	Salib	Right bank	Settlement, Temple	It has columns, broken burned brick and pieces of Christian pottery.
23	Aljabriya	Left bank	Settlement	It belongs to Christian period with a completely destroyed church.
9	Argi	Right bank	Settlement	It belongs to Christian period and has some Pharaonic remains.
2	Abker	Right bank	Cemetery	A Christian cemetery, 500 metres from the River Nile
24	Ganatti	left bank	Settlement	It has a basaltic church with granite columns.
21	Addaffar	Left bank	Settlement	It has a fort and a church with hall and columns.
33	Gaigernaritti	Island	Church	Church with columns and a few sherds of Christian pottery.

Site No.	Site Name	Geographical location	Type	Remarks
20	Jabel Adhaiga	Right bank	Fort	It is a Christian fort that might have been used before the Christian era.
8	Alaraak	Right bank	Cemetery	A Christian cemetery. Unidentified now.
76	Almagal	Right bank	Church	Church with columns and five entrances. Not found now.
12	Bakhit	Right bank	Settlement	It contains a Christian church with simple planning. Overlooks directly the River Nile in a rocky area.
45	Hizaima	Right bank	Settlement	It has a Napatan temple and Christian pottery, not found now.
107	Alzumah	Right bank	Church in a cave	A Christian church with Christian paintings and inscriptions.
65	Al Kuru	Right bank	Tombs	It has tombs and pyramids of the XXVth Dynasty, there are some Christian tombs.
98	Tungasi	Right bank	Cemetery, Church	There are post-Meroitic period cemeteries and other Christian cemeteries with a church.
53	Kajbi	Right bank	Settlement	Overlooks the River Nile directly. it consists of a castle, many walls and a domed Christian tomb.
19	Dibaiba	Left bank	Cemetery	It is 500 km. from the River Nile. It consists of different Christian stone castles and other tombs[?] for Muslims.
82	Meroe East	Right bank	Settlement	It is 500km. from the river Nile with various castles and palaces.
83	Meroe Um Dom	Abu Dom Valley	Tombs	Contains unexcavated Meroitic and Christian tombs. There is Al-Ghazali monastery not far from the east end of the valley, which consists of some religious residential units, and much Christian pottery.
94	Sanam Abu Dom	Left bank	Settlement	There are temples, Napatan houses and Christian pottery.
13	Jebel Barkal	Right bank	Cemetery	A small amount of Christian pottery. Excavation was carried out in some pre-Christian sites .
87	Nuri	Left bank	Cemetery	Traced to Napatan period. Christian pottery was found there.
16	Bilal	Right bank	unidentified	4km from the River Nile, with Christian inscriptions. Not identified.
46	Ashashi	Island	Settlement	Remains of church and ruined buildings with a little Christian pottery.

4-3 Third Cataract Region

This area (Map 1) has the greatest density of Christian sites due to the fact that it represents a natural border for this region. The region is also protected against invasions of Muslims from the north, partly due to the rocky and rugged nature overland and across the river.

This area has been of major political importance during pre-Christian periods and subsequently during the Islamic period. It is worth mentioning that there is a single source of information about the location of this region, which will be mentioned later, which represents the Archaeological Survey Project for Almahas area (Edwards and Osman 2000-2002).

4-3-1 Historical Studies

There are some early studies in this region which included a description of some visits and sites, e.g. the writings of travellers and Evliya Celabi (1938: 15-23) who described many of the Ottoman forts (Çelebi 1938: 67-90). During his visit to Sudan, Burckhardt also described the forts and the community, the environment and economic activity. Somers Clarke and Breasted (1908: 48) described a fort called Hanak which used brick and mud with a little stone for the foundation and the remains of some waterwheels.

4-3-2 Recent Studies

The work of archaeological survey project for the Mahas area really began in 1990. It integrated studies of the language, history, settlement, stability and effects in the Third Cataract area. It should be noted that the researcher was involved in the project starting from 1990 to 2008.

Through the archaeological survey in the province a large group of sites has been recorded on the banks of the Nile. In the islands, sites belong to different periods representing some of the Egyptian presence in the Sudan during the New Kingdom of Egypt, such as site Cspe and Chauvin Fort where a text dating to the Pharaoh Seti I was found. This shows the use of the site through the Egyptian presence in Sudan to the era of the modern Egyptian state. This site was a settlement and commercial centre in the early and late Christian period. There are also some sites that date back to the Christian and Islamic periods which are defensive in nature, such as castles (Osman and Edwards 2000-2002 and Table No. 2).

Table 2. Christian sites in the Third Cataract province (researcher design)

Site Name	Geographical location	Type	Notes
Sisa	Left bank	Fort, Settlement	There is a fortress at the top of the mountain, and there are different types of pottery: post-Meroitic Christian, Islamic and Fatimid period, especially Zja
Koka	Left bank	Settlement, Forts	There are many Muslim forts and some Christian pottery sherds
Wahaba	Right bank	Fort	Overlooking the Nile at the Third Cataract centre, a fortified Christian village at the top of the mountain with about 70 rooms. There is Christian pottery covering its surface that belong to different periods of time, which means there is cultural continuity at the site.
Sabu	Right bank	Settlement, stone drawings	There is a group of Christian pottery covered in piles of sand, and there are rock drawings in Mount Sabu including a Cross, churches and animals such as cows and elephants.
Hilaiba	Left bank	Settlement	Group of small sizes rooms characterized as fortified. There is the Christian pottery dating to the early and late period of Christianity.
Fareeg	Right bank	Cemetery, forts	A set of forts along the Nile constructed of mud-brick sometimes with the use of stone, there are the domed Christian tombs that cover the residential area.
Mashkeela	Right bank	Forts, Tombs	the survey noted five forts in the region, two of which date from the late Christian Period, while the others are from the period of the Ottoman and the late Muslim period. There is one fort next to the Nile, an Islamist stronghold, while the others are away from the Nile, at a distance of 1 km, which means that there is a significant correlation between these forts.

Site Name	Geographical location	Type	Notes
Nawri	Right bank	Settlement, fort	There are fortifications by the top of the mountain, and there is a Christian fortified village. Its pottery spreads back next to the classic and late Islamic pottery for the periods
Arduan	Island	Settlement, fort	A group of forts constructed with different materials of stone and mud brick and mud. Used in the Christian period and some later in the Islamic period. It also has large quantities of broken Christian pottery which dates to most Christian periods, which means that the island was a large and important settlement in the various Christian periods.
Maljab	Island	Fort, settlement	Includes a range of forts and settlements and almost match in shape and size with Arduan Island sites, where Maljab that it is a part of Arduan.
Jawgul	Left bank	Settlement, fortified village	Fortified rooms with thick walls and a small basilican church and a group of broken Christian pottery, Classic and Late
Maseeda	Right bank	Church, cemetery	Located at the entrance to the valley of the Nile, there is a small church with unclear wall paintings. There is also a rock-drawing of a warrior dating back to the Meroitic Period. There are also rock drawings of cows and elephants, as well as cemeteries that exist in the form of indeterminate mounds.
Aleeki	Island	Fort	There is a fort of stone in an elevated area at the entrance to Arduan Island and separated from the island by a seasonal stream to the south and the plain extended area.
Fageern Fanatti	Left bank	Settlement	There is a very complex extended set of Christian buildings with unidentified function, including bases of partially ruined church. There is also pottery from the Late Christian period.
Nab	Island	Fort	There is a small fortress of mud and scattered group of poorly-made Christian pottery sherds.
Masal	Island	Castle, cemetery	There is a Christian castle that was reused in the Ottoman period, and spreads in the area of large numbers of Christian cemeteries and Classic Christian pottery and late Islamic pottery.
Simit	Island	Forts, cemeteries	A group of fortresses dating back to the Meroitic or perhaps Napatan Period according to the pottery. There are also some Christian graves and Islamic tombs including <i>gubbas</i> .

There have also been some experimental test excavations of some sites by the provincial Department of Archaeology, University of Khartoum for the purpose of training students, e.g. at Mount Seesa, with which this researcher was involved. Results showed the existence of a previous settlement period since the Christian era after Meroe. There was an intensive settlement during the early and late Islamic period. Some pieces of Fatimid pottery and some grains, vegetables and animal dung and other types were found.

Excavations have been made in Tenari, Halaiba and Teeniki; some of these sites are datable to the Late Christian period partly on the basis of the presence of pottery relating to this period. Exploration in the area Halaiba by Department of Archaeology team of the University of Khartoum, in March 2005, led by Professor Mustafa Sadiq Azhari and the researcher, highlighted the importance of the site during the Late Christian period and its presence in a strategic region on the Nile near the Wahaba in the north and Nawra in the south. The exploration also added a lot of the fine details of the building layout and internal subdivisions. Buildings are characterised by rooms with small sizes 2×2m, as well as the thickness of the walls, which probably refers to the military and defensive nature of this building. Also, the surface of the site has large amounts of Christian pottery dating back to the Classic and Late periods. Evidence of the Muslim settlement, indicated by the Ottoman presence, was

also found at Teerni. Some Ottoman settlements were also found at Nanarti, Seesa Mount, Arduan Island, Maljab and other places.

4-4 The Fifth Cataract Province

This region includes all the sites which are located between Khartoum in the south and the beginning of the Fourth Cataract in the north. A large number of sites are especially recorded in the area between the Fifth and Fourth cataracts (Map 2 and Table No. 3). It represents the southern border of the Kingdom of Makouria.

4-4-1 Historical Studies

This region extends for a distance of up to 14 miles. It was first written about by Arab travellers and historians who visited Sudan such as Ibn Salim AlAswani in the tenth century, and Cailliaud in the nineteenth century. The most important works are those carried out by Jackson, who visited the region in 1920. They were a catalyst and guide for subsequent discoveries in the region. He mentioned the remains of archaeological sites and materials distributed in different places of the province, including from prehistoric, Egyptian and Meroitic periods followed by post-Meroitic, Christian period and early Arab periods (Jackson 1926: 1-26). Jackson referred to Christianity by the name "Church", which was applied by the locals metaphorically to all sites that date back to that period except Khor Al Kaneesa "Creek Church", which has no connection to that period.

The early period of the Arabs saw the construction of some of the most important buildings on small Island and Abu Hajar, Mugarat island and others. Some work had been done by Crawford on many Christian sites in these areas. The product of his work is three volumes: the first volume covers the region was between Atbara River and Goz Rajab, and the second on Abu Hamad area west of the Nile, whereas the third volume covers Abu Hamad east of the River Nile. Crawford found many Christian sites in these areas and gave a thorough description of the archaeological sites in the region, although archaeological work was interrupted for a long time.

4-4-2 Recent Studies

The resumption of work by the University of Khartoum, which set up projects to train students in the Department of History in 1971, saw Abbas Sayed Ahmed work on Mugarat Island which is located near Abu Hamad. The length of Mugarat is 33-mile and 5 miles wide. There are a number of small islands surrounding it. It also includes a number of sites including fortifications such as Karmel and Ras Al Gazira and Korti and Ahilaila and castles such as Al Galaa and Kedermah, as well as some graves dating back to different periods of time, Al Mahadia and the Christian period. Also, crosses, boats and some animals like cows and goats have been identified on some rock drawings in Seyhan sites and the Fikoal' Islands (Sid Ahmed 1971:15). Khader Issa Adam also worked in the area between the Alkarabah and Al-Shireik and found some Christian cemeteries and the others dating to the post-Meroitic in Dum Attoar Valley and Abu Sidair. He found some rectangular graves in the northern and southern regions (Eisa 1971: 54). While the work of Yousif Mokhtar in the region between AlAbeediya and Alkarabah, on monitoring of a number of Christian and Meroitic sites, also spoke about some of the important sites in the region such as Kurkus and Aldanqail and others (El-Amin 1971).

Muhammad Hafiz also done some surveys in areas focused on Marru Island, He has pointed out that the big castles in the region indicate its development and prosperity (El Hafiz 1973: 83). Haycock has pointed to those castles in the region and the importance of Alishair (*Al Usheir*) castle and Kurta which probably were constructed to protect the area from a prospective enemy (Haycock 1972: 7). In 2001, there was a comprehensive survey of Adhaiga area of the West and even Futwar on the left

bank of the Nile which was a joint venture between the Department of Archaeology, University of Khartoum, the National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums and Antiquities Research Centre and the University of the Nile Valley. In continuation of this work, the Department of Archaeology University of Khartoum carried out three seasons with the participation of the researcher in the period from February 2006 to January 2008.

These castles and forts that have been recorded from north to south, aligned with the course of the Nile, belong to the Christian period and include fortified positions at settlement centres. It should be noted that there are four sites mentioned in the early writings, but they have not been verified due to distance: Abu Gawiya, Khor Tibna and Arroom (Table No. 3).

Table 3. Fifth Cataract province sites

Site no.	Site name	Geographical Location	Type	Notes
7	Agaba	Mugrat Island	Tombs	Group of tombs. Christian?
56	Khor Almalih	Right bank	Cemetery	Round tombs with Christian pottery around them.
63	Assak	Island	Tombs	A few tombs found (5) similar to Christian tombs.
68	Khor Tiflah	Left bank	Settlement	Modern, Christian and pre-Christian pottery fragments
39	Karjakoal	Left bank	Cemeteries	A variety of graves (25) dating back to Christian and Islamic periods.
33	Alhilailah	Island	Cemetery	Variety of Christian pottery.
22-23	Falkoal	Left bank	Cemetery	Piles of Christian pottery in small sized buildings of stone.
29	Hadaheed	Wadi Agab	Cemetery	There are tombs in the form of a Christian Box-grave?
8	Emri	Right bank	Church?	Refererences to a church not yet found
17	Hallat Albeeb	Left bank	Settlement	The foundations of buildings of burnt brick and broken Christian pottery.
42-43	Klidoab Mount	Two banks	Fort	An area on the two banks of brick and fired Christian pottery.
73	Um Darras	Island	Settlement	Remnants of broken fired brick and probably a Christian building?
16	Barti	Island	Settlement	Remains of Pharaonic, Meroitic and possibly Christian periods.
18	Booni	Island	Tombs	A few Christian graves.
47	Karbacan	Left bank	Settlement	It includes large quantities of Christian pottery and foundations of buildings
67	Assoor	Island	Unidentified	A very small amount of Christian pottery
64	Salamat	Left bank	Unidentified	A very small amount of Christian pottery
36-37	Alkab	Left bank	Cemetery, fort	Two forts found may have been used in the late Islamic period. Christian cemeteries were also found.
28	Gargareeb	Left bank	Unidentified	Tombs of unspecified date, perhaps Christian

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Site no.	Site name	Geographical Location	Type	Notes
65	Salateeb	Left bank	Unidentified	Tombs of unspecified date, perhaps Christian
66	Ashallal	Left bank	Unidentified	Tombs of unspecified date, perhaps Christian
60-61	Ras Aljazeera	Mugrat Island	Fort	The site is located in the northern part of the island. domed Christian cemeteries
46	Kandi	Island	Cemetery	A variety of Christian graves scattered in high density.
1	Abar	Mugrat Island	Fort	Mud-brick. It is used in the subsequent Islamic period.
4-5	Abu Sidair	Left bank	Fort	Locally known as a church. Some Christian cemeteries
55	Alkuwaib	Mugrat Island	Fort	Remnants of Christian pottery.
38	Kadaita	Left bank	Unidentified	A small amount of Christian pottery.
44-45	Khazeena	Mugrat Island	Cemeteries	Covered with fired brick and the other in the form of a box-grave and circular mounds.
41	Kalasycl	Mugrat Island	Fort	Meroitic inscriptions and a fort including Christian pottery.
34-35	Habeel	Mugrat Island	Cemeteries	Several Christian cemeteries around the village.
30	Hajar	Mugrat Island	Settlement	Some buildings built of stone with plaster used.
40	Alkarmal	Mugrat Island	Fort	The largest Mugrat Island fortress used for long periods after Christianity.
9	Arjat	Mugrat Island	Settlement	Some buildings made of stone, and a little Christian pottery.
70	Attakana	Left bank	Cemeteries	100 Christian cemeteries were found (indicating the presence of high population density in the region).
48-50	Al Kuru	Left bank	Castle, fort	Some buildings of stone and a group of Christian cemeteries.
74	Um Hadeema	Left bank	Settlement	Remains of Christian pottery, is about 1 km from Kru
79	Aziwaira	Left bank	Cemeteries	Might date from the post-Meroitic and Christian periods.
53-54	Kurgus	Both banks	Fort	Egyptian presence. Also found a small church with pottery.
31	Hajar Almarwa	Right bank	Cemeteries	Unidentified cemeteries, possibly Christian.
12-13	Atmoor	Left bank	Christian village	The residential units and a small church and broken pottery.
2	Abu Dees	Right bank	Settlement	There are some remains of Christian pottery such as amphorae.
26-27	Aljiraif	Left bank	Christian village	There are various buildings and tombs covered with stones.
57	Marri	Island	Church?	Foundations of a building that might be a church were found.
58	Marru	Island	Settlement, cemetery	Group burials in the form of box graves, a castle of stone, and Early Christian pottery sherds.
76	Um Mirdi	Left bank	Cemeteries	Very few, opposite Marru island, on the right bank.

Site no.	Site name	Geographical Location	Type	Notes
6	Absoal	Left bank	Unidentified	A little Christian broken pottery, the type of site is unidentified.
10	Artul	Right bank	Church, mosque	Church with granite column, converted to a mosque.
51-52	Kuddi	Left bank	Castle	There are some remains of stone buildings, located in south-east Artul.
78	Zuma	Left bank	Cemeteries?	A group of burials of unspecific type.
69	Tarfaya	Right bank	Fort	Circular towers and Christian and Islamic broken pottery.
19	Dum Attoar Valley	Left bank	Cemeteries	A group of tombs covered with burnt mud-brick, might be Christian?
24-25	Gindissi	island	Fort	There were found a small fort and quantities of Christian pottery sherds.
14-15	Albagair	Left bank	Fort	A small fort like Tarfaya, kilns for making pottery were found.
75	Um Mirraikh	Left bank	Cemeteries	Tombs are found with a little Christian pottery.
72	Um Bait	Left bank	Cemeteries	Tombs are found with a little Christian pottery.
20-21	Asri	Left bank	Settlement	There are piles of multiple types of Christian pottery.
77	Al Mushair	Island	Castle, settlement	There are many rooms of the castle, there is a church destroyed completely, and there is another castle on the right bank of the Nile.
32	Al Hamdab	Island	Cemeteries	Large cemeteries dating back to the Christian Period; near it there is a huge well.

4-5 Determinants of Christian Settlements

There are different forms of occupation. There are settlement sites and sites of non-residential use such as cemeteries and places of worship. Settlement, as the location or places or sites that are home to members of the community, is where economic and social activities occur. These settlements are influenced by some environmental, political, economic and human determinants for the purposes of defence and protection. Sometimes we find more than a single specified factor available in one location.

4-5-1 Environmental Determinants

The Nile was of fundamental importance for the people of the kingdom because it is a permanent source of water, as well as for agriculture and animals. Besides, the weather has played a major and influential role in the settlement patterns. We find archaeological evidence for most of the historical and cultural periods indicating a high concentration of the population especially in the capitals of the Christian kingdoms by the Nile.

While we find this high population density along the river in the northern part Nubia, southern Nubia varies somewhat as a result of rainfall, though, we find a clear concentration in some river margins. Certainly, the dry desert environments, which are far from the River Nile, were not free from settlements. We find remnants of some of the Nubian groups through the presence of many small temples and settlements that of course reflect the existence of thriving and sophisticated centres.

There are areas affected by the terrain which are largely settlement sites that are on cliff edge. We find some castles concentrated in the valleys and Cataracts; in some cases, we find that the graves hint at settlement sites and it is clear that they relate to each other. However, there is some uncertainty, for example, ring-shaped tombs, which date back to the post- Meroitic in most cases, but in the late medieval period there are no settlements near these cemeteries, despite some cemeteries having churches in the vicinity.

Overall, the environment has played an important and influential role in shaping the patterns and models of settlements in the Christian period where there are desert environments in the north and savannah environments in the centre and south, and with varied forms of construction and housing units used in different buildings.

4-5-2 Political Determinants

Political factors are considered one of the parameters that can distinguish new patterns of large settlements and the collapse of others through elite movements and control. We note the continuation of settlement centres in the following periods of the Christian period in the southern outskirts of Magharra. Although there were fortifications found in the Nubia in the early periods, they took another dimension in Christian periods, especially late ones in terms of density and diversity and function.

4-5-3 Economic Determinants

These include agricultural, commercial and other factors. The main urban centres were production centres for goods, some of which were spread widely to all levels of society and the evidence is that the type and volume of pottery in the cities of Faras, Dongola Alajooz and Soba and other sites (Pluskota 1997) and possibly the exchange of specialized products with the countryside. The peri-urban sites differ from those of the surrounding rural sites.

The mechanism that has been followed in the economic exchange for the transfer of the product to the consumer is not well known and we assume it was to barter due to the lack of currency, either major urban centres developed in areas of sufficient agricultural sources close by to supply most of the necessities of life. Dongola was the heart of the agricultural economy of the Kingdom of Makuria.

What we find in the Middle Nile Valley, where dependence on agriculture is along the narrow River Nile bank, is a model of linear residential pattern of houses next to the fields and there may not be a link between the large administrative centres. There is evidence for the existence of animal stables also found within the housing at Hambakol and Deberah West (Grzymski 1994: 93-105). Settlements were not far from farms, but they stayed to work in the fields. We also found some settlements in the Nubian area on the caravan routes and some forts and castles, not only for the protection from a prospective enemy but also as centres for monitoring and controlling trade caravans.

4-5-4 Religious Determinants

Most of the settlements contain at least one church or more. There are many signs of burials around the churches especially in the Old Dongola sites. In general, the churches in many sites do not indicate the history of the settlement itself: the construction of religious buildings on the edges of settlement was the rule, - i.e. churches in many sites were surrounded by cemeteries and the religious houses (Jakobielski and Scholz 2001: 44-53). In some cases where the communities were surrounded by religious buildings, researchers could not determine whether these communities were contemporaneous or were built after the construction of these buildings.

We find that caves and monasteries in the Christian era scattered in multiple locations away from residential sites are in places where the special needs of the monks and priests were catered for. They are often walled. The buildings were constructed of mud brick except in capital cities where stone blocks were employed in such localities as Faras Cathedral, Dongola Alajooz and Qasr Ibrim. Thus, religious determinants played a major role in defining the nature of the settlement with the co-existence of Christian groups with other Muslims after the *Baqt* agreement which identified the type of settlement based on the religion of each community.

4-5-5 Determinants Relating to Defence and Protection

The defensive military architecture represents a kind of early Christian settlement where the situation required massive construction of buildings such as castles and forts. They differ in the means and ways, shape and architectural materials and construction technology.

Hundreds of castles and forts for the defence, protection and trade were built in the Christian period, especially in the Alabwab area, so as to protect the region from enemies and to exploit trade. The Alishair and Korta castles and others which appeared at the end of the Christian era then disappeared after they were no longer required; they were concentrated on the east bank of the Nile to protect the inhabitants of the vulnerable islands.

Sometimes more than one factor is found in a city or village or centre, for instance, Qasr Ibrim was an important centre the early Kushite period where many of the temples were re-used in early Christian periods until the later construction of houses along the prominent streets. Christian churches were built in high places and in other places built in the ruins of some houses with a large yard or field (Adams 1965: 74) This feature has become one of the characteristics of settlements in the Christian period. An example is the Safavi centre, but the quality of construction was less than many contemporary sites as it had been an administrative centre. It had been provided with a number of tools for that function.

Another characteristic of forts and castles is that they were used as the headquarters of the rulers and some are for the protection of churches and monasteries and to give it a religious aura like Kalpnarta Castle and Deir al-Ghazali. These castles also served commercial purposes and were considered as major commercial stations that distributed trade items, e.g. Chauvin and Markol and Nawra and Kajba Castle. People used to turn to them at times of the invasion and war. We also found some castles concentrated in certain areas such as at the Alishair and Tarfaya valleys. We also find some multiple-floor houses probably built for defensive purposes. These were also found on the islands located at the Second Cataract, including homes with walls containing carved stone sculptures and having walls built around the villages in order to protect them from the Arab raids.

4-6 The Components of Settlements

Generalizing about the planning and the nature of the settlements is not easy, despite the considerable similarity between settlements from the Christian period that are often based on stone foundations with extensive use of clay and mud brick. Thus, we find that the distinction between the stages of this period seems to be difficult because of the existence of multiple and diverse components, which often include the nature of the building and construction materials, number of rooms, building complexes and cemeteries. Next to the religious buildings were food waste and garbage and metal industries, as well as baskets and pottery, which is important for dating the sites. We find pottery in graves and more in the settlements, and sometimes we find some types of pottery that were made but not used.

In Old Dongola, where the fortified settlement in Kom (A) indicated dense occupation inside the settlement, are houses with old defensive walls and contemporary forts composed of two floors. Although there has been reconstruction of the fortifications around the building, it remained an administrative centre provided with the strong rooms and thick walls because of the needs of an integrated community as evidenced in some public spaces, streets and lanes.

The building materials change the further south we move. As we go south, the availability of wood increases as a major material for the building of the settlements in the Christian Period in the form of buildings constructed of wood and thatched with palm fronds. As for the villages, housing was contiguous in an irregular neighborhood. It was separated by zigzagging pavements where there was not a central plan, and it seems that it was not possible to know where housing units end and where others begin. It becomes difficult to distinguish and identify any housing plan (Adams 1977: 432). There were few walled settlements until the early Christian period. The fact that the northern Nubia settlements are all located near the caravan routes is due to the claim that they are probably built as apartment blocks.

The use of a special high-level toilet, necessitating the periodic removal of accumulated waste, represents one of the greatest developments in the Nubian housing architecture at the time; it was not present in any other period in ancient history.

Creeping sand threatened many villages. That this sometimes forced residents to migrate is shown by the re-use of the site with the construction of new housing on top of the high, sandy hills. They always followed the alignment of the old buildings. There have been defensive considerations behind the design, as usually found by the use of houses on the islands rather than on the protected highlands. As for the places for defence and protection centres, we find forts which represent defensive fortified units inside the cities. They contain the residence of the ruler, a palace and houses, military barracks, home to the local population exercising their normal lives inside the fort. The forts vary in shape and size and are surrounded by a wall punctuated by towers. The castles were the second type of buildings of a defensive and military nature; these were garrisons without the presence of civilians and built with more solid construction, and features offering protection. Castles are smaller than the forts. Pointed stones are found in the outer parts surrounding the fort or castle at regular intervals for the purpose of impeding the horses or fleeing soldiers, indicating that the attackers were horsemen.

The private homes were constructed of mud brick with many rooms having vaulted and sometimes flat roofs made of wood and straw mixed with mud. Neighborhoods were provided with piped water. The walls of these houses in the Nubian era of prosperity were thicker and painted white. Multi-storey houses were perhaps constructed and it is clear that the settlements in the Christian period were of a dual nature in which building materials were different.

Christian sites were divided based on their components and the differential nature of urban patterns: It can be called a built-up area that shows a relationship with the local government or officials at the level of the state and includes a number of styles and branches, such as the urban centres that include capital cities, cities and administrative centres common in provincial administrative functions such as the collection of taxes. There were defensive positions to guard and borders to secure at the trade routes and entrances to the Nile and the desert. Then there are the camps and finally markets. The village pattern is a community of people on whom the local economy depends - agriculturalists, traders, and sometimes industrial businesses. Each site has its own nature; there were administrative, industrial and religious buildings.

In most cases, we find that the towns and villages passed through several stages, including Dongola Alajooz, for example, the stage of small communities and villages, and the stage of villages and small towns. Then the commercial and industrial cities stage (and productive villages), and finally the main industrial, commercial and civil centre stage. However, there are huge cities with no history and there are some historical cities that have disappeared. There is also a functional definition that believes that an area's adoption of agriculture denies a city its civil status and classes it in a village stage because the characteristics of cities rely on industry and trade. Some cities have functional hierarchy, and there is also an administrative definition that defines the city as the administrative centre for the region, including the local council and staff, the courts and so on.

There is another definition of the city using features such as the general planning and internal divisions. Nevertheless, there are some cities that arose away from the River Nile. There are remote Nobatian centres in the north of Nubia that give a clear vision for the planning of cities and large urban centres, such as Ikhmindi. This is a well-planned fortified settlement whose nature has led to the need to create a centre of coherent units. The building plan was to set up a church on the main axis of the site. Some units and their entrances were arranged in relation to the castle or church, while other buildings were placed in the space between the church and the defensive walls. They were built in an overlapping rows with some graves. This indicates that the city planning had a very disciplined design with the soundness of the buildings.

Within the Kingdom of Makuria, Dongola looks well-established with its tremendous defences which are believed to date to the early sixth century AD. The remnants of Kom (A) appear in the centre of the city with a number of large organized neighborhoods and high fortifications next to the extensive religious architecture. For the villages, they did not occupy a central location, but were built in a place on the eastern margins of the region. The church was the permanent element in planning. The village plan seems in the later period to be very regular, although the walls of the village house units vary to a large extent in the guidance.

Despite their small sizes, villages were as dense as the major cities were and, except for a few cases, differed in terms of lack of public buildings and places for gatherings. Most of the residential places were contiguous in irregular neighborhoods; there was no clear central plan. There were often few graves though those present were sufficient to determine the type of settlement, because of the multiplicity of burial forms and the continuity of burial in the various periods.

4-6-1 Dongola Reach Sites

The high-density Christian sites (Map 4) around Old Dongola (*Dongola Alajooz*) are closely related. They are complex with a diversity of passages and tombs, palaces and churches: three churches are located in an area of a length of 190 m and a width of 55 m, which means that each church had a specific role. The city has clearly played a major role in the prosperity and development and the organization of administrative life in the Kingdom. It has a heavy religious presence and was a headquarters for the King, with the lack of evidence for the civil settlement. The suburbs and other administrative centres and some marginal sites contributed to this city, which in turn is situated as needed in order to provide economic services and secure the border and the capital on the one hand, on the other hand the administration of the borders of the States and its territories. This capital has existed and flourished since the sixth century AD or a little more.

Like most Christian cities Dongola was surrounded by several defence systems, which stood as a bulwark against Muslim Arab attacks in the middle of the seventh century. Thus, it can be said that Dongola had a number of types of fortifications, some early and others in the later periods as the

need arose, especially after the invasions of the Mamluks. This was done by the establishment and strengthening of the towers and the addition of interfaces to the stone walls built of mud-brick. It seems that the addition of huge defences and the presence of religious complexes around the city was intended to provide greater protection against the attacks that were expected from all sides.

Here we find that the Lati basin supported the centre in Dongola in economy and provided a measure of protection. This was the reality of the multiplicity and diversity of the Christian sites in the Lati basin, which was one of the sources of the agricultural economy in the Kingdom. With the collapse of Old Dongola, new administrative centres may have emerged in later periods which became the seat of the ruler, succeeding Dongola.

It is noted that fortifications are fewer in number north of Dongola; they are concentrated more in the Fourth Cataract. They are also present in more rugged areas in the province, such as Bakhiit, Kajbi, Merowe East and Dhaiga mountain. These four sites have some of the largest fortifications in the region. While two of them are found in a rocky and rugged area (Kajba and Bakhit), the others are found in a flat territory. There is close to 3 km between Merowe East and Kajbi, and 2 km between Bakhit and Dhaiga. It is noted that these forts were built together, while the others were built in several stages, as shown through their style of construction. The forts built in a single-stage are those at Dhaiga mountain and Kajba. Merowe East and Bakhit have used stone with mud to bond the stones. The number of stages of construction in Bakhit is more than in Merowe East. Also noted is the existence of graves in a Christian cemetery at Kajba and Bakhit, while cemeteries are lacking at East Merowe and Dhaiga. The Kajba fort was built for different purposes, including temporary refuge in the event of a surprise attack. This may explain the presence of the castle on the Nile, while there are residential buildings in a rocky area about 3 km far from the Nile. Merowe East has shifted from a religious building to a fort in the free natural fortification area which is of religious significance where it was perhaps built to establish the concept of the Christian religion in an area free from the presence of religious headquarters, except for the large and well-known Deir al-Ghazali, which is at about 6 km from Merowe East fort. Generally, there is a link between these sites, which form the protection for each other and play a complementary role in the economic and political arenas.

The functional role of these forts overlooking the Nile such as the Dhaiga site was probably for the purpose of Nilotic trade and control. The Bakhit fort seems more stable and cohesive through multiple components. It is large in size and has a distinctive and systematic form from multiple construction phases. There is a small church and Christian pottery of various periods. It may have been the seat of one of the thirteen rulers who have already been mentioned.

As for the history of these sites discerned through the nature of the building and the Christian pottery sherds, the Dhaiga mountain fort and Kajba go back to the early Christian period, though the Kajba Tower may be pre-Christian or Meroitic. But Bakhit Fort is datable to the Christian Period based on pottery and multiple stages of construction and the large size so as to meet the purpose of containing much of the populace in the face of Muslim invasions. Merowe East is attributable to the post-Meroitic Period and was used in the survey period, and also later in the Islamic period. Hieroglyphic inscriptions were found in the western section of the fort. In subsequent periods these forts were used as administrative centres for Ashaygia kingdoms of the late seventeenth century (Abdel-Rahman 2005: 133). There are some sites in desert areas as far away as Deir al-Ghazali, which lies about 6 km from the river Nile and is located in the area of Wadi Abu Dom, a major religious and residential complex probably devoted to the performance of religious and administrative roles of the communities residing in the desert. This is shown by the construction, which includes high walls and rooms of the holy Church, next to the presence of multiple kilns for the manufacture of pottery. We also find another site far from the Nile: Lakiya, which includes a chapel of burnt brick and

broken pottery representative of multi-type sites dating to the Christian periods. Lakiya is about 64 kilometers west of Dongola in Alagaab Valley, which is an important source of water for agriculture and grazing. It continues to play this role to today, due to the presence of many of the groups in this region. The further light on the urban Christian settlements describing the excavation of the residential remains at El-Ḥamra site, an important addition to the medieval archaeological map in the Sudan. Finding remains of such permanent settlements about 60 km away from the Nile indicates a large occupation in the desert during medieval (Christian) times west of the Nile. Furthermore, these results further show the role of El-Ga'ab depression area as a focus of urban settlement far from the Nile during medieval times. (Nasr, *et al.* 2020: 77). Although there has no clear evidence of an official presence of El-Ḥamra site, the stone building structure and domestic remains context indicate an ordinary peasant village grown in the desert during the time El-Ga'ab Paleo-lake was active. The distribution of settlement ruins in the large quart yard of the site and their context also indicate the development of a domestic settlement in classical medieval era into an urban settlement far from the Nile.

The building designs could be identified from the foundation, where the upper part of the building collapsed and mixed with the roof remains. Dwelling room structures, the precise door orientations, the thick walls made from stone and passageways outside the rooms – all of these are the features of traditional houses of the medieval era in northern Sudan. These features were identified in Old Dongola as late Christian occupation (Żurawski, 2006). House context from ceramic, fauna and flora remains, and dwelling layers were probably constructed in the middle Christian times on the bank of the depression above Aeolian sand.

The ceramic sherds and jars contain different pottery production qualities. Christian fine ware of small bowls and the large amphora (namely Egyptian amphora) made our comparatives to Christian sites.

Developed in mid-8th to late 9th century (Nasr and Tahir 2020:75-85) On the other hand examples of cooking pots, basins, Raika, Qussayba, may relate to Late Christian Nubian styles of ceramics. In addition, the decoration of the pottery included different relief elements from geometric bands, impression of two or three different stamps and paintings of birds and different cross stamps have also been identified as Late Christian traditions in the Sudan (Adams 1986).

The pottery characteristics were compared with those of medieval archaeological sites excavated at the Nile. The presence of different sizes of amphora vessels are typical to fragmentary and semi-completed amphora excavated recently at Old Dongola. These are classified as local amphora and dated back to 6th–7th centuries. The most similar traits between El-Ḥamra and Old Dongola amphora are the fine surface, an elongated body, flared necks, handles, the shape of the rims and painted mono- grams. Decorations represented on red and white bowls, basin and the small jars contained many similar elements of Nubian ceramic industries, such as elaborate cross design, zoomorphic center designs, frieze center and centerpiece elements, radial designs and different types of stamp (Adams 1986).

Evidence of food preparation and textile processing, such as spindle whorls, ceramic lamps, different kinds of jars, storage vessels, beads and crops can be assigned to the domestic sphere testifying the presence of permanent residence. However, there are no indications of official activities such as administrative offices, but there is evidence of different building designs around the church which may be the first sign of a forgotten urban settlement buried by sand in the desert for a long time. This can be compared to what Al-Idrisi and Ibn Al-Wardi mentioned about a Christian town in the

desert to the west of the Nile called Nuwaba. They described a small crowded town with urban living style in the desert of El-Ga'ab (Vantini 1987).

It is noteworthy that all the ceramics were not produced in the site, which is the evidence of the site's contact with population centers on the Nile. Also, other small finds like stone tools, ornaments and ceramic show civil use of an urban settlement. The site is also significant as an example a permanent settlement in this desert oasis, with many examples of domestic remains, which is important to the general understanding of the people's culture and lifestyle. The stratified settlement materials, with different amounts of artifacts, are very interesting to understanding the people's culture in the desert. At the same time, more accurate dating is needed to reconstruct the site's chronology, and extensive archaeological survey supported by GIS and remote sensing are necessary to discover the other buried parts of the site (Ibid: 85).

Generally, it is not possible to distinguish between the urban centres and rural settlements, in Makuria, because the both the urban and rural sites were built of mixed materials depending on the topography and the area, in order to obtain a high degree of protection due to the continuous attacks on the kingdom. At the same time, we can say that the urban centres of Makuria also display diversity in their architectural units and their evolution, while at the same time showing evidence of long-term stability through the pottery and multi-stages of construction. This is also shown in urban centres such as Wad Nimeiri, Mughrat, Nawri, Bakhit and Merowe East where we find the presence of the working class and craftsmen. There are sites which originated in the early days of Christianity, while the others appear in subsequent periods.

4-6-2 Third Cataract Sites

The Third Cataract area represents a natural border for Dongola Province. It has a natural defensive and fortified nature. A large number of fortifications have been found on rocky mountain tops overlooking the Nile, which did not immediately originate with the invasion of the Islamic state in Egypt. They were created for a number of purposes, including the pre-existing slave trade and therefore there might have been modification only for this trade to pre-existing fortifications.

Through studies made there, fortification is divided into three types. There were ancient fortifications re-used in the Christian period, the fortifications of the Early period and the fortifications of the late Classical period, while others were not reused or altered. Among the most prominent is Tambaki Fort Island, which is located in the centre of the island on a rocky outcrop area of 75x35 m and was constructed of stone. The foundations of a small church of a simple configuration were also found, along with broken pottery from Napatan, Meroitic and post-Meroitic periods; other pottery is Christian and Islamic which indicates that it was in use from the earlier periods of Christianity. They were to monitor the Nile trade. We also find that the post-Meroitic remains in Fort Mount Cisse, suggesting it was also already used in the pre-Christian period.

Some fortifications were constructed in the second period. Nauri Fort, a fortified village of great administrative importance with civil and administrative architecture, developed at a strategic location which overlooks the Nile. We find the heavy presence of pottery of various styles and periods as well as multiple stages of construction of the settlement. All this means long-term stability. It probably represented the administrative centre of one of the thirteen rulers who ruled the Kingdom. The presence of several locations in the region with political and commercial importance such as Chauvin, Joukol and Marakol and others must have been for managing the administrative affairs by a king or a governor. Nauri is the most appropriate location to fill this role. Perhaps this is confirmed in the protocol message in Nauri written by the Bishop of Sai in the year AD 1080. Nauri continued to

be one of the main administrative centres in the Ottoman Empire during their presence in the Third Cataract region.

The fortifications of the late period proliferated in most areas of Nubia in order to meet the political and security situation after the Mamluks took power in the late thirteenth century. Examples are Alik and Wahab. We also find large fortified villages spread with increasing Arab and Islamic migrations that invaded Nubia; these were waves of groups who looted and caused chaos. There was a need for security to protect Christian families, communities and property. Forts were established to support and protect the urban centres of the state and to function as a refuge for the rulers and to protect trade.

Having been used in the Islamic periods, some of the fortified villages were reused as administrative centres during the reign of the Ottoman Empire, for example the Khandaq (Alkhandaq) and Wad Nimeiri castles which were also used in the Mamluk and Funj periods. Although there is this great spread of Christian castles and sites in the Third Cataract area, we find scarce evidence for Christian sites north of Natri. There is a lack of fortifications on the left bank of the Nile in the area between Wad Nimeiri Castle and Akad fort which extends for about 84 kilometres. It is difficult to create defensive systems on those plains. Most of the fortifications were built in the mountainous and rugged areas to take advantage of natural defensive capabilities, which in turn determined the form and function of the fort.

If Nuri represents an administrative centre, as we reviewed above, there are some sites that seem to be of great importance, such as Fiqirnarti which looks like an administrative and religious centre and Kisanfraka, a possible complex of churches or monasteries.

There seems to be a match in the environmental and architectural aspects and cultural traits with the regions of Lower Nubia and these sites of castles and forts in the Third Cataract, such as the existence of the walled villages and fort houses. They are found in Abkanarti in Lower Nubia and are similar to such sites found in the Third Cataract area, especially on the islands, to take advantage of their resources and environmental defences. The soil was also fertile for agricultural activities in Diffi nouk and Jawgul and Malajab and other places. Despite these common cultural ties, it cannot be said for sure that they completely relate to Nobatia in the north of Nubia.

4-6-3 The Sites of the Fifth Cataract Province

The study of these sites confirmed great similarities underpinning the fortifications and settlements scattered in the region's islands. Fortifications have been found around numerous small settlements. These large fortifications were built to protect against outside risk, especially after the Arab Islamic conquest. Some were safe havens providing shelter for fleeing rulers from the Muslim siege, as did the Nubian King Shamamon. At the same time these fortifications played a commercial role, e.g. Alishair Fort and Tarfaya Fort. These fortified settlements usually include a number of private buildings for more than one family inside the fort. The small forts may have been allocated to particular families in sites where fortified enclaves have not been built. Some were for functions of control, e.g. Kape fort, where two forts were found side by side by the Nile. Forts were also found in plain areas such as Al Kuru Fort, which lies about 400 m from the River Nile and which is similar to Alishair Fort in the presence of an internal wall, doors with thick walls and a regular planning. As for the islands area, the Fifth Cataract is difficult. It restricts the flow of the river. Also, these sites see a high density of Christian cemeteries, suggesting a congestion of population. Mughrat seemed to be largest and most important of the river islands; it is 33x5 miles in size.

Thus, the density of the fortifications and castles (Alkarmal, Ras Aljazeera, Koarti, Mikaiseer, AbKadarma Castle, and Alhilaila) as well as the high prevalence of Christian burials that take many forms, including vaulted and the other in the form of a box grave, highlights the importance of this region. We find a large number of churches. The islands may have also had another function as the refuge of rulers because they were well-protected and economically prosperous. The desert tribes used to attack Makurian centres in search of pasture and exploiting weakness and chaos of the Kingdom. A centre or centres was needed to monitor these tribes. This was the reality of the heavy presence of civil architecture, forts and cemeteries next to the existence of some bishoprics, which are often associated with the presence of cathedrals. Mugrat seems to be appropriate to fill this role.

The East Nile region includes fortifications from different periods which were varied in general shape and size and type, and therefore it must not be regarded as being created solely for the purpose of defence. There were always dual roles: prosperity and disorder in different periods. And it turns out through these studies that the relevant sites represent a key source in the life of society. In Dongola province, there are few sites on the Nile in each of Lakiya and Deir al-Ghazali while sites abound on the islands and on the banks of the Nile. The Third Cataract area has been dominated by protected islands, a natural presence in the border area. In the Fifth Cataract, we find the Al Kuru site located on the plain. The others are also centred around the islands with some sites on the banks of the Nile. Through high-density of fortifications and Christian centres, it can be argued that these regions represented the northern and southern borders of the kingdom before the union period. Following up on these sites has confirmed the breadth of the Kingdom of Makuria and its inherent diversity. Whereas some of the sites were destroyed and turned into mounds difficult to assess without excavation, we found buildings such as castles and forts, houses and their contents whose roles and functions controlled the political and economic conditions of the regions of the Kingdom.

CHAPTER FIVE:

The Field Studies

5-1 Introduction

This chapter details the archaeological surveys and oral investigations undertaken during the first and second field seasons of the University of Khartoum's Northern Dongola Reach project, starting in 2007. The project consisted of archaeological and cultural surveys in areas west of the Nile. It used a multi-disciplinary approach which combined cultural and social studies with applied science in order to generate historical patterns from this region which can be applied to the study of ancient cultural change in the intermediate and post-intermediate historical periods in the Sudan. The data in this chapter also derive from some field work participation in other projects such as Mahas and the Fifth Cataract project. I also conducted field visits to other sites outside of the Department of Archaeology projects such as Fourth Cataract region sites.

5-2 Field Study Methodology

The Archaeological Survey of the Old Dongola area stretched between El Ghadar south and Nawa to the north for a distance of 36 km, while it extended eastward to the borders of villages in the Letti Basin area in the Haj Majid area. There were some sites on the eastern and western banks which were of direct relevance and this survey was the first to study the archaeology of these sites. The geographical locations of archaeological sites inside and outside this region have been identified to determine their function and history and to document their material remains. In addition to knowing the type and function and history of the sites, there are traditional oral sources and narratives that represent an important source of knowledge and interpretation.

The use of an oral heritage approach in this study is absolutely necessary. Oral narratives can contain a kernel of truth. They must also be placed into context through examining the factors that affect their credibility. They can be verified in accordance with known historical factors. There is also a relationship linking the significance of oral history and oral narratives where the latter can help to identify suitable sites to conduct archaeological excavations and surveys. It also helps in archaeological interpretation and sometimes we find that the archaeological evidence may confirm the validity of the oral narrative.

There is disagreement about oral studies, where some see it as not having any historical value because "primitives" have no sense of time or historical perspective. Others believe that narratives changed when handed down from one generation to another. In contrast, there is another group which correctly recognises the need to use oral narratives as complementary to other archaeological, linguistical and historical sources (Vansina 1972: 9).

Overall, oral narratives vary but mostly they are historically based, which gives them excellence and value through providing us with information about past periods. Their shortcomings can be addressed through using different sources. Ali Osman saw that there is an almost complete neglect of cultural heritage, which is an important source for the study of history next to the almost total neglect of the history of civilization. He and others rightly see the need to rely on multiple archaeological and historical sources, whether contemporary or not, and on oral accounts, ethnographic, linguistic and folklore studies (Osman 1982: 90).

The survey had two objectives:

1. Identify and record and clarify Christian sites within the boundaries of the study area and to discern their relationship.
2. Discern continuity within and between the historical, social and cultural accounts of the communities within the study area communicated through oral study.

5-3 Survey Strategy

Due to the breadth of the area that was surveyed, which included the Dongola area sites and some regional sites of the Fifth and the Third Cataracts and the distances between them, the study area has been divided into two parts: The first part of Dongola sector consists of the capital, Old Dongola, and components in and around the sites. The second part includes the Khandaq (Alkhandaq) and Wad Nimeiri areas, which are considered the nearest sites to Old Dongola (Dongola Alajooz) that look almost empty of civil and residential architecture. The study also included some sites of provinces of the Fifth and the Third Cataracts as part of a comprehensive survey of the Christian sites. Finally, there was the gathering of information from sources of oral heritage from the elderly, especially those speaking Nubian. Different scanning techniques for documentation and recording of the sites discovered such as a Global Positioning System (GPS) and drawing tools, measurement and imaging were used in addition to an initial reading of the site through physical, environmental and artefactual remains. Information was gathered from several trustworthy sources by writing and tape recordings. Sometimes, some tend to inflate the glorification of some of the events and people and there is also the quest for personal glory by linking some important historical sites to their families and their grandparents.

5-4 Left Bank Localities

5-4-1 Wad Nimeiri Site (Al Khannaq): N 19° 01.316' E 30° 27.887'

It is about 96 kilometers south of Dongola. The Khannaq name has disappeared from today's maps (Crawford 1951: 39). It is located directly facing the River Nile, bordered by Soortud village in the north and to the south by Sahaba village, while in the east it is bordered by the River Nile (Maps 3 and 4). The site is huge and consists of various palace extensions from the north and south (Plate 1, 1-3) in addition to a large number of diverse cemeteries. There are Christian, Islamic and unknown burials from different historical periods at the site, which was one of the administrative centres of the Funj.

The palace stands on a hill in the north-eastern end of the site and extends about a quarter of a mile to the south. It consists of walls built of stone and burnt bricks now turned a grey color, probably due to erosion. Inside the palace, we find twenty-seven rooms. Some of them are incomplete. Some features changed due to erosion and sand, which covered parts of them. Some of the rooms were built within the stone walls. Some were laid out in orderly lines. Sometimes wooden thresholds were preserved. It is noted that these buildings may have been modified with the bricks reused. In the south-western side of the palace is a conical tower-like a *gubba*-of mud-brick and mud. Near this, to the north, is another tower built of stone. There is another tower of stone as well as two northern and eastern towers built of stone. Inside the palace there are some rooms constructed of red brick. Stone partitions in these rooms in the form of 1x1 m boxes at the corners may have been for the storage of some important property. To the north of the palace there are the remains of large and small rooms but they are completely destroyed and they reach a maximum height of only about 20 cm. In the south there are other rooms but they are better preserved than in the north. They are

also built of brick and *galus* and show modern additions. In the middle of the south side there is a rectangular structure in the form of a bench 4m in length and 3m in height.

There are some *gubbas* inside the southern extension of the palace built from *galus* (rammed mud) and mud brick with one of them covered in red brick in the upper part. As for the south graves to the south of this, we find two polygonal *gubbas*. Three other largely destroyed *gubbas* and another polygonal one were all built from mud brick. They were all small at 3 × 2.5 m. Next to them are rectangular tombs covered with stones and gravel of dimensions 3 × 2.5 m. Next to them are some structures built of brick and *galus*.

The north Cemetery, which was probably the oldest of all cemeteries, is surrounded by stones in a circular shape and sometimes quasi-rectangular except for the modern cemeteries in which tombs are of gravel. There are two brick *gubbas* which seem to be very old, and the palace to the west about 500 meters away. There are similar *gubbas* attributed to the Mamluks. Spread inside the main building of the site at the palace are Christian and Islamic pottery. There is a wide range of crushed red brick and animal dung and shells, snails and other material.

What is noticable is the lack of Christian burials at this location, which means that there is another place used for burial, perhaps on the East Bank where there are many Christian cemeteries in various forms. Perhaps the reason is due to the nature of the low-lying region on the west bank. However, there are a multiplicity of Islamic tombs dating back to different periods of the early Islamic, Fung, Mamluk and Turkish eras, and other sites which confirm the continuity of this important site.

5-4-2 Khandaq (Alkhandaq) Site: N 18° 30.475' E 30° 33.958'

Khandaq is situated on the left bank of the Nile (Maps 3 and 4) to the south of Wad Nimeiri. It is between the villages of Salli in the north and Shabtot in the south and is about 70 kilometers south of Dongola Alurdi. It is in an area devoid of cataracts but containing many islands. It is volatile in formations because of continuous sand encroachment. It has been described by many travellers, describing windows that resemble the letter 'V'. Adington, who visited Sudan during the Turkish invasion, mentioned it as a trading centre linking the west and south of the Dongola and Kordofan regions. He also reported the presence of the Church converted to a mosque in the northern part of the castle.

In the twentieth century travellers and historians who visited Khandaq (Alkhandaq) focused on the description of the castle with high, thick walls and massive towers (Plate 2, 1-3). Of those, Crawford, who visited the region in the 1950s, described the castle as constructed from large blocks, which explains the function of this strong castle. Crawford described the presence of the Church in the northern part of the castle. He also pointed to the introduction of some architectural additions in the reign of Fung who used the castle as an administrative centre in the west Nile, where we find many houses and palaces of Islamic character surrounding this castle (Plate 3, 1-6) despite the fact that most of them were dominated by early and late Turkish character in their construction details. This suggests that this region became the administrative centre during the Turkish rule of the Sudan as well as in the period of the bilateral rule which clearly indicates the importance of this strategic location. This region is also linked to one of the kings of Alibdairiah called King Bashir; it was known as Bashir's Khandaq (ditch) in many historical sources since the eighteenth century and some groups still refer to it by this name.

5-4-2-1 General Site Planning

It is a castle built on a high bar facing the river. The southern part was built of large stones, while the north was constructed of large stones and bricks. The eastern wall of the castle was built on a high rocky area. It was very solid in the middle of the upper part thanks to three layers of stone that do not extend along the length of each wall. On the west side stones were placed in the same way. It is a rectangular building with a length of 200 m and a width of 80 m. It seems that the castle was two stories and was divided into two unequal parts. The upper part was built along the western wall and consisted of walls of stone and inside the two towers, one in the south-west of the castle corner and the other in the middle of the western wall, with some small rooms in this part (top floor). But in the northern and southern ends of the eastern side there are the remnants of stone walls, but these two are fully collapsed. The walls were made of stone and brick and were very thick (3x4m).

The second part consists of houses resembling towers and houses probably linked with a strange feature wall built of square stones and coated. The latter does not seem normal, but reused from other older buildings. This is shown more clearly in homes and rooms outside wall of the castle which date back to the Islamic periods. Palm trunks were also used in lintel doors and walls leading to the top floor. On the eastern side, overlooking the River Nile, are two towers, one in the south-eastern corner and another in the northeast corner. Next to it are a set of very small rooms which are perhaps for safety and protection or reception, especially if we take into account the fact they are at the main entrance of the castle next to the tower, with width up to 4 m while the thickness of the walls varies between 3-4m. *Galus* (rammed mud) was used in the construction and its exterior is faced with stone. It is likely that there was another entrance to the castle but the demolition of the northern and eastern walls makes it difficult to verify its existence.

At the centre of castle to the east and south of the small rooms are many natural rocks, and in one of them is a regular tunnel 5 m long and 40 cm wide, but its function is unknown. There is also a large amount of ash and animal manure in the form of small mounds and some botanical remains, including corn-stalks, halfa grass, palm kernels, and so on.

Houses stretch over a long distance almost a mile along the river and are surrounded by a wall of mud. At the entrance to many of the rooms there is some painted plaster. There are racks and wall cupboards. Despite the similarity of these houses in some components of construction material and shape, they look modern and were probably built in the late periods during the eras of Funji and later the Turks.

Spread across the site are a large group of graves that vary in shape and size and type. The most important kinds of graves are vaulted cemeteries locally called *tusskiah* (mass grave). One of them, with the dimensions 3x2 m, was studied. It was determined that most of the structure, containing the remains of a female in poor condition, had been destroyed because of the movement of vehicles and modern urban sprawl. Most of the existing houses are built on the graves. The graves are oriented north-south, including Christian cemeteries, and were built using fired bricks. Care must be taken in classification of these graves, as graves tending towards Islamic forms could be from the time of the transition from Christianity to Islam.

We find a large number of private cemeteries with Islamic *gubbas* and structures, and there are some *gubbas* from the Christian period; these were not vaulted. Some may date back to the establishment of Islamic customs with the *gubba* or structure being a symbol of a holy man (known as *bayan*). In addition, we find a high density of broken Christian pottery, which is more prevalent on the Islamic site. Some of the pottery was glazed. We also find large numbers of red and green painted plaster.

There are also grinding tools and some stone tools next to piles of animal dung and straw. Osteological remains includesome skeletons and bones of fish and animals.

According to oral narratives in the region, citing the narrator Abdullah Yassin, the area was a large market for all kinds of goods that came from Egypt, such as clothing, perfumes, incense and others. There were commercial convoys that came from Kordofan and Darfur loaded with many types of goods, including slaves. Perhaps Khandaq (Alkhandaq) was helped by its strategic location, resulting in itshaving been a commercial centre until the era of British colonial rule. The area was also the seat of the King Bashir. His grandchildren ruled until the beginning of the nineteenth century and entered into long wars with the Ashaygia group who raised havoc in those areas at that time. Most residents buried their dead, including along the east bank, where there are the tombs of many of the religious leaders in the population.

Therefore, we can say that the site of Khandaq (Alkhandaq) shows cultural continuity through time and that many houses' Islamic character was the result of restoration work. There has been much restoration work in the region to maintain its history.

5-4-2-2 Exploration of Khandaq (Alkhandaq)

A rescue excavation was conducted of the the tombs (Khandaq (Alkhandaq) Site 2). One of the burials known as *tusskiah* had the length of the grave, 3.5m north- south and 3m east-west. The exterior of the tomb was domed (vaulted). The vault was 75cm high. The mud-brick used ranged in the sizes between 36 to 40 cm length and 12 to 14 cm wide with a thickness of 6 to 8 cm. When the cemetery was excavated, the results show that it was very regular in the planning where it was cut into semi-solid rock reaching a depth of 50 cm. (Plate 4, 1-4).

Preliminary studies of the bones have shown the discovery of about 42 to 45 individuals of both sexes and some animal bones. All of them are in good condition and there is no disease. An incomplete pelvis and torso of a woman were found. Some other remains were could also be attributed to women. The cemetery witnessed a major shift and most of its parts were disturbed. Despite this major shift in the form of structures, most were apparently oriented east to west which is usually used by Christians.

This is a very important rescue excavation because of past and present destruction and because of its use as a place for trash. It has since been closed for the maintenance of the cemetery to build an upper roof

The study of this cemetery shows a striking similarity with some Christian cemeteries in Soba, but these tombs were more systematic, and the vaulted tomb is smaller in most cases than the few and irregular structures found in Soba. Also, these forms fully match what was found at the Fifth Cataract province in terms of form and the use of brick vaults, also dating back to the early Christian period. Christian pottery was also present on the surface of the cemetery.

5-4-2-3 New Discoveries in Khandaq (Alkhandaq)

One of the most important recent discoveries in the Khandaq (Alkhandaq) town through the excavations that took place in the castle (fort) was the presence of a number of levels of buildings (3 levels), which are completely similar to those discovered in Minarti in northern Sudan. It appears to be a pattern used in a number of fortifications and sites of the medieval sites. The buildings discovered in Khandaq (Alkhandaq) were built of mud bricks and mud with heavy use of animal dung, which seems to have been used for various purposes in addition to being an administrative and strategic center, it was a commercial and economic center to support the Kingdom and its capital,

Dongola, which is only 80 km away. The reason for the fortification role and the protection for which it was built, as the rooms had dimensions of 1 square meter and sometimes 2 square meters.

Through the preliminary studies conducted on pottery at the Khandaq (Alkhandaq) site (Plate 5, 1-3), it became clear that most of it dates back to the seventh century AD, which indicates that this fort was built since early periods of the medieval time, and some pieces of pottery date back to the different Islamic periods in Sudan, which means that there is cultural continuity at the site from the medieval the current Islamic period.

5-4-3 Kenkalab Site: N 18° 17.878' E 30° 41.487'

Located on the west bank of the River Nile (Map 4), the village of Kenkalab is just 50 meters from the Nile. The area under study consisted of two parts, the first part in the west end, which is a high hill with Christian pottery sherds spread over a distance of approximately 1000 metres covering its surface. There are some foundations of mud-brick and *galus* in the centre of a hill in the form of small rooms 2x2 metres. The second part of the site is a building of mud with a current length of 31 meters and width of 30 metres. The maximum height of the walls is about 6 metres. The building consists of several rooms of different sizes, most of which were destroyed by floods. Some of the walls of the building were demolished by the farmers who used them as building materials; fertilizer in agriculture and in the construction of homes. Also, there are a group of pillars ranging between 4-5 meters along the wall.

Some foundations also appear near the southern wall. There are about 5 rooms 4x5m in size. Openings are found on top of the walls. The palace also contains 3 towers. A square-shaped tower is located in the northwest corner with dimensions of 3x3 metres. The second tower is located in the southwest corner and is 4 meters in length and 3 meters wide. The third is located in the northeast corner, but is completely destroyed.

There are several observed stages of construction in the palace shown through the various walls of the building. We find some parts surrounded by pillars, which indicates the presence of fortifications for the palace that have been used through various stages. There are extensions to the palace in both western and eastern directions forming different rooms and extensions to the walls. A large variety of sherds of Christian and Islamic pottery were spread on the surface of the site inside and around the palace. There is also a large amount of burnt crushed brick and animal dung, ash, and some special grinding tools inside the rooms.

According to oral accounts cited by the former narrator Khalil Khairi the site represents a centre of Zibirab grandsons of King Hamad, who was a prince of one of the emirates, which arose after the deterioration of the Kingdom of Nubia. His grandchildren continued to rule the area until late periods. Dispersed in different parts of Sudan, they possess many of the streams and land on the east bank of the Nile and at Kankalab that were administered from Old Dongola (Dongola Alajooz).

5-5 Sites on the Right Bank

This includes the area extending south from the ancient city south of the current Ghadar (El Ghaddar) village till the village of Nawa in the north. (Map 4) It is bordered by Khor Letti (Letti Basin) on the east and the Nile River to the west. It has a length of 36 km to the north and a width of 9 km, and includes Ghadar(El Ghadar) and Hambakol, Maghawda and Karmkul.

The nature of the environment consists of a number of factors, including the River Nile whose flow has changed a lot. This phenomenon seems more pronounced in the Letti Basin along the River

Nile which includes a group of people, animals and plants that are different from many other environments. There are seasonal and non-seasonal islands. Some of them are uninhabited and others are not. Then there is the desert environment, the hills and large valleys that come from long distances and disgorge in the Dongola Alajooz area (such as King Valley, near Addaba and Wadi Hor).

5-5-1 Dongola Area (Old Dongola)

Reference was made to this region in many Arab Sudanese sources and manuscripts written by foreign travellers who pointed to the site of Dongola and the importance of the settlement before Christianity. Granite stone, which bears the name of Taharqa, was used in later periods for the altar of the Church of the Granite Columns. There was also found an obelisk for King Atlanersa, which was transferred from Dongola to Cairo in 1883. There are also tombs in the El Ghaddar mountain and Al Buqi areas (which is linked to settlement on the edge of the river) traced back to the post-Meroitic; its significance was as the most important royal settlement if not the only royal one in the Christian periods. Perhaps the most important reasons for this may be due to its location in the middle between the Third and Fourth cataracts which facilitated control of a large area of fertile land in the Letti Basin and over trade routes to Egypt and Kordofan. There is also a dry sandy land around the city creating a sense of isolation, which is reflected in the writings of travellers such as Poncet, who described the streets filled with sand hills and half deserted (Crawford 1951: 33).

The city is distinguished by being wide, and extensive, running along a hill and being surrounded by low walls of stone. There are piles of red bricks and stones which represent a number of settlements, cemeteries and churches, including the Throne Hall, which was transformed into a mosque in AD 1323.

Excavations carried out by the Polish mission in Old Dongola since 1964 have led to the discovery of many different religious and civilian buildings. The houses are characterized by organized water units and bathrooms with good systems, pipes and pottery ovens for heating. The interior decoration and paintings on the walls of the houses includes paintings dominated by Christian religious imagery. There are also many Islamic cemeteries and buildings in the eastern part of the city. High mounds in the site are covered with huge amounts of crushed red brick and broken pieces of Christian pottery and some local and imported Islamic pottery.

This region has included a number of urban and rural Christian centres. This study had to review some of the sites discovered and recorded through various field work projects conducted in the region such as Sinada site, Dongola Alajooz (the old city), Hambakol, Kadakoul, Kasi and Amintigo as well as parts of Haj Majid in addition to Khandaq (Alkhandaq) and Wad Nimeiri on the left bank (Maps 1 and 4).

The archaeological survey work carried out by this researcher in the region has helped to identify many other sites characterized by diversity of form and location and the periods to which they belong. Some sites were found when digging the foundations of modern homes. Local names were used for the sites, seeing the link between them and the region's history through the semantics of names. The reason was that those sites have been studied by survey in prior periods by Polish missions since the early eighties. Those sites were given one name without any regard for the development of integration of those sites so that the local name was neglected. However, it helped a lot in the interpretation of the sites to know the relationship between them during this study. The results were interesting to identify the areas that have been completely ignored as being Islamic sites without discussing their relevance to Christianity and their impact on the development of cultural continuity in the region.

5-5-2 Old Dongola Site (Dongola Alajooz): N 18° 14.027' E 30° 44.670'

This place (Maps 1 and 4) is a set of high and low hills occupied by various other buildings. There have been several previous studies through various field work done in Sudan since the arrival of the early travellers up to the regular works that are still carried out by the Polish missions. The studies have been concentrated in Old Dongola (*Dongola Alajooz*) as the capital of the Kingdom and have focused mainly on the components of the Christian site.

It includes churches, monasteries and palaces (Plates 6, 1-6 and 7, 1), private clerical burials, public houses, buildings and schools (Plate 8, 1-4), and Muslim cemeteries and other cemeteries. Here we find the monastery of the Holy Trinity, newly discovered in the northern part of the site, which consists of a number of rooms of different sizes. There are some entrances with undetermined purposes because of the lack of completed studies at the site. In the eastern part of the church attached to the monastery, the burial of an important deceased individual is found; this is surrounded by the tombs of some religious men, and another tomb with a cruciform shape extending from east to west with head to the west. On the edges of these graves there are some niches for lamps. About 700 metres to the west of this monastery another church is built of mud brick and which is very simple in its plan. On the southern side of the site we find the Church of the Granite Columns; this is constructed in a low area compared to other buildings; an altar of King Taharqa was found there. Columns that are believed to have been used in an earlier temple were also found (Plate 6, 6).

Just 6 meters to the southeast is the Cruciform Church, which is one of the largest churches in the site (Shinnie 1955: 96-98). The site is surrounded by a huge wall of mud-brick whose thickness ranges between 3-4 metres. It was built on a stone base and reaches a height of 5 metres in the northwest corner of the wall, which extends eastwards to the northwest corner of the chapel where it meets at the edge extending from the eastern end of the chapel to include some of the Islamic buildings that might point to these being contemporary buildings that were re-used in subsequent periods of the Islamic era. Other parts of the wall were destroyed. The building, which has been turned into a chapel, was built of adobe and burned bricks, which was used to strengthen the walls from the outside. We also find some additions in the building that appear through the strengthening of some of the red brick walls and stone arches as well as the closure of some arches and windows in the building, such as the part that has been converted into a sanctuary.

The building contains a number of stairs that lead to the upper floors. Dom and palm fronds are used in the building of the roof while the wood is used in the doors. Owing to the closure of most of the rooms of the building work was stopped, and we were not able to conduct a full study especially on the lower floor, which leads to an underground tunnel in the building. On the other hand, it is noticeable that the entire church sits outside the wall attached to the church except the southern palace, which is located in the middle of the western side of the wall. There are also a number of buildings and houses built with adobe with a little red-brick that was used in the piers. As for the building materials used in the site they were mud bricks, stones and burnt bricks that have been used to varying degrees. While we find the use of burnt bricks with a little stone in the (Deer Church) abbey church, which is considered the largest church in size, they used heavy red bricks in the Cruciform Church especially in the southern wall of the church which was constructed in the form of pillars. By contrast, the use of mud brick was in the western church. The Cruciform Church has granite columns as well as in the Church of the Granite Columns where there are 11 columns. The Church of the Wall was constructed of burnt brick and is located on the edge of the site on the western side of the River Nile. The church attached to the palace was built of fired brick and used some of the stones and adobe. The interior contained many mural paintings, such as a mural painting showing the Trinity.

Some of the niches found in the walls of buildings were made to put lamps in, as shown through the effects of burning on the walls.

The cemeteries have varied in terms of shape and size. We find the tombs of the clergy around the Monastery of the Trinity constructed of burnt brick and stone and painted. They have a cruciform shape (Plate 9, 1-2). But there are other cemeteries to the west of the tombs of the monastery which are mounds of burnt bricks and another with rectangular shaped tombs. As for the archaeological materials, Christian pottery is found in greater density on the site where we find a diversity in the shape and size of the sherds of mostly poorly made pottery. Beads and animal dung were also found with the remnants of ash around the red-brick buildings.

The Islamic city starts from the southern border of the Throne Hall and extends for about 2 km. Its width is about 1 km. It is built of adobe and burnt brick. It is noted for the presence of heavy foundations and walls of rooms in extended forms that look very complicated. Individual rooms exist within the city and have small entrances with a variety of decorations. High tower buildings with openings in the top are found and in the eastern part there is one complex of several houses. Rooms have dimensions of up to 18x20m and were constructed of green bricks and *galus*. In all the buildings we find some additions to the shape and size of the building and the existence of pillars constructed of fired brick with a few stones. There were spaces between the rooms. We also find a dense spread of Christian and Islamic pottery, especially glazed sherds, and some small pieces of bone of various animals.

Through the preliminary assessment of the site in terms of composition, building materials and archaeological remains, it is noticeable that there is complete similarity in the size of the rooms and the mud bricks used in the rooms and walls with those found in the palaces and buildings next to the churches and within the walls of the city. There are also similarities in pottery; we find large numbers of Islamic glazed pottery sherds inside buildings, which has spread since the early Islamic periods. Therefore, we can say that this similarity in these important aspects probably refers to a degree of contemporaneity.

The Islamic cemeteries are located on a very low area compared to the region constructed by the former architectural units. There are hills by the cemeteries, separated by a set of lagoons from the south-east and north-east, where they flow into the Nile by a wide channel located directly north of the Throne Hall. These cemeteries contain many kinds of burials that include domes (Plate 10, 1-4), special buildings and some houses and rooms. They also include regular forms of tombs which are distributed with multiple forms of burials on different hilly sites (Plate 10, 5-7).

There are other types of tombs, including tombs for multiple-burial of various plans; there are two types of these tombs one built of red (fired) brick and mud brick and the other of stone. The most complex building is that of Sheikh Mohammed Sati Suwar Addahab which consists of seven rooms. The function of some of the rooms are not clear. There are also many mosques in the cemetery (7 mosques), including what is believed to be the first mosque built in accordance with the *Baqt* Agreement.

Excavations showed the presence of many Christian relics in the lower layers, with the Islamic buildings constructed in the upper layers. It clearly demonstrates the cultural continuity of the site. It also refers to the important fact that sites should not be classified as Muslim sites through the outer form only, especially when we find a lot of archaeological material such as Christian pottery that covers large areas of Islamic sites. Oral narratives in the site confirm this fact, for example that from the narrator Nasser Mohammed Abbad. The northern *gubbas* in Dongola area are the oldest on

the site belonging to the kings and merchants, whereas the southern *gubbas* are later and belong to the holy men, such as Ghulam Allah Ibn Ayid, and were built on the ruins of Christian sites. It is noticeable that the roads and the power supply coming from Merowe Dam go through the middle of the site which leads to a natural change in the image of the site, and undoubtedly will affect the future of many of its components.

5-5-3 *Shambi Site 1: N 18° 18.184' E 30° 42.473'*

It is located at the southern edge of Almquaodh village just 550 metres from the River Nile. It is a very high hill that extends about 990 m, where this region includes about 8 sites. Covering its surface is red brick, Christian pottery sherds and grinding stones, especially on the upper parts. There are also the foundations of the buildings of adobe and some cut red brick. Some animal and fish bones are also found on the surface of the site.

5-5-4 *Shambi Site 2: N 18° 18.007' E 30° 42.570'*

It is located south of Shambi 1. It consists of a set of very high hills stretching about 1,900 metres (north - south) and it is the largest site in the region. The site has many of the foundations of buildings that stretch over long distances in the form of very small rooms 2 x 2 m. Others are a bit bigger. They were made of adobe and some pieces of burnt bricks. The surface of the location is covered by large numbers of pieces of wheel-made Christian pottery; some was hand-made and are of different shapes and sizes. There are also traces of burning and ash on the site in addition to the large amounts of red-brick, pottery sherds and large numbers of grinding stones.

5-5-5 *Shambi Site 3 (Hambuk Foag): N 18° 18.017' E 30° 42.870'*

It is 500 m east of Shambi 2. The site consists of a group of Christian and Muslim cemeteries that are known through the direction of well-known burial in the two periods. There are also other forms of burial moving from the southeast to the northwest. The cemeteries are found on the surface of very low-lying land and no superstructures show the graves clearly; they are only marked by some gravestones and used pottery on the vaults.

Through the burial customs on the site, this may represent the transition from Christianity to Islam, especially since the Nubian community was not fully aware of the proper Islamic burial rites in that early period. Oral histories in the region mention that these sites were centres for the family of the Shambi who are descendants of one of the kings who ruled the Makuria. They continued ruling those small emirates during the decline of Makuria. The 60-year-old Khalil Khairi, one of the interviewees, mentions that these castles were the headquarters of King Shamb's family who came from the Alwa Island. The grave of Hambuk Foag have been named after one of the princes of the family who was nicknamed 'Hambuk'; it means 'the empty thing'. He was so called because of the wooden horse he made and the pretense he made to children of being a king one day. When he achieved this when old, he continued to be called by this nickname.

5-5-6 *Shabba Site 1: N 18° 19.210' E 30° 42.546'*

It is located in the middle of Almqawda village, surrounded by houses on all sides and is about 700 metres from the River Nile. The site represents a hill of moderate height. There are some foundations at the top of the eastern part constructed of burned brick and mud brick. Christian and Islamic pottery covers its surface, together with some small pieces of plaster and red brick. In the northwest corner of the hill are some graves, but the individual graves are not clear on the surface. Soil was removed from the surface of the site by the local population which led to the identification of some

Christian cemeteries. Some of the skeletons were in very bad condition as a result of erosion at the cliff site. Other tombs were found to the east of the site, e.g. inside one of the houses when digging the foundations of some modern rooms. The latter is from the Christian period and is known locally as “The Sahabi Cemetery”.

5-5-7 Shabba Site 2: N 18° 18.984' E 30° 42.457'

It is located south of Shabba 1. It consists of connected medium-height hills and extends for a distance of over a thousand metres. The site has a range of mud foundations in the form of rooms and extended walls that seem to have breaks between the building units that have been found at semi-regular intervals. There are pillars of burnt brick.

Covering the surface of the site are various types of Christian pottery. The collection is one of the finest in the region in terms of colour and the degree of refinement and decoration. Through the initial reading conducted by the researcher on the site, it appeared to be a place of pottery manufacture due to traces of burning and ash very close to surface. There are many upper and lower grindstones. In one of the houses directly to the west of the site were about 17 utensils and pieces of stones (cooking pot stands) inside one of the large jars. They also found traces of burning and ash inside small brick and *galus* rooms in the houses.

Oral narratives in the region (narrator Mohammed Hussein Shabba, 60 years old, Almaqawdah area) mention that the site represents one of the centres King's family (Prince) Hussein, who was king of one of the emirates after the deterioration of the Kingdom of Makuria. These sites are assigned to the most important Muslim Nubian King Abdullah Barschambo; his family, including the Shabba family, settled there in the castles as their headquarters. the family owns considerable numbers of irrigation channels (*Sawagi*) in Maghawda and Khilaiwa Island on the west bank of the Nile, inherited from their grandfather, Prince Hussein Shabba.

The narrator also pointed out that many titles of Nubian kings who ruled Makuria were circulated and were named in several places like Hahenda (Shakinda) and Daoud, Kourgui and others.

The narrator Sheikh Abdul Qadir (60 years old, Almaqawdah area) emphasizes that the area was one of the fiefdoms of Prince Shabba, who owned a large number of slaves. There were still some slaves even in 1946. Halima Kiya (115 years old, the Heliopolis neighborhood area Shahenda) confirmed that this region had a large number of slaves who followed the princes of the region, and who were brought by merchants such as the merchant Kambal. They still respect their former masters. This trade ended with the arrival of the British.

Through fieldwork it is noted that there is a group of tribes from the Nuba Mountains, which was one of the places where slaves were brought from. This is clearly shown in their physical features. We find them living on the outskirts of the region in the south in Gagoab (meaning 'section') and Shahenda. They do not marry the Nubians in the region. And this shows that this trade continued for long periods where it was sometimes between the kingdoms, and at other times between traders or looters who took advantage of the weakness of the United Kingdom in periods of turmoil and chaos.

To the east of Shabba 2 site is a domed tomb (*gubba*) of a conical shape. It is constructed of burnt bricks with a height of 2-3m in an area surrounded by some fragments and multiple types of Christian and Islamic pottery, and other unknown stone tools; this is one of the phenomena that are repeated constantly in the sites of this region.

5-5-8 Haj Majid Site: N 18° 20.377' E 30° 46.058'

It is located east of Letti area (Map 4)-section two in an area surrounded by sand dunes. It is 9km from the Nile. The site includes different components including churches and Christian and Muslim cemeteries. There is a church of 5x4 metres in size (Plate 11, 1-2). There are some bases and columns that have on them drawings of palm trees. Other rock drawings are scattered away from the site of the church. A little to the south another church is made up of six columns, but the rest of the other parts are not clear except for the altar. There are around the foundations of mud-brick rooms with dimensions of 1x1 m and 2x1 m. Near these buildings are *gubbas* of Sheikh Majid and another of Sheikh Mahmoud, built of high quality burnt brick in bulk 36x18x8 m. One might notice that there is a high degree of similarity between the *gubbas* in the exterior building materials and the apse. To the east there is a little group of Christian and Muslim cemeteries and some *gubbas*. Christian and Islamic glazed pottery pieces are spread on the surface of the site (Plate 11, 3-4). The persistence of building the Islamic cemetery in Christian sites is noted. We find that these domes are constructed inside the church next to the area where pillars and Christian brick and broken pottery occur in the lower parts.

5-5-9 Kadakoul Site: N 18° 21.891' E 30° 43.188'

It is located (Map 4) north of Maghawda village, bordered by Amentigo in the north. The site consists a group of two high hills extending for a distance of 1200 metres north and south. The surface of the site is covered with a large amount of pottery with a variety of shapes and sizes. There are also some burnt pieces of crushed brick and regular stones found in one of cavity (30x40 cm). There are also some columns on the surface of the site. Also apparent are foundations of building constructed of fired bricks, but their forms are not entirely clear. There is ash strewn around grinding stones (upper and lower) on some of the borders of the site.

5-5-10 Kasi Site: N 18° 25.262' E 30° 42.610'

It is located north of Kasi village and south of the Kadakoul site. It overlooks the River Nile. It consists of a number of hills covered with some broken red bricks and remains of Christian pottery. In addition to the remnants of ash, milling tools are present in high density, but the site itself is in bad condition. There are also the foundations of a building, perhaps of a church or a former temple, with regular components of columns and burnt brick. The artefacts are distributed in several places separated by a few meters. One might observe that all of the components are similar, such as archaeological finds and types of foundations.

5-5-11 Arab Haj Site: N 18° 23.464' E 30° 42.976'

It is located in the centre of Arab Haj, 900 metres from the River Nile and 2.92 km north of Kasi. The site is built of mud-brick and adobe on a stone base with a small amount of burnt bricks. It is 1m in height. The length of the current building is 9 metres and the width is 8 metres. It reaches a maximum height of 6 metres in the southwest corner where a tower is attached to a square-shaped room with three columns of the walls whose thickness is 170 cm. They seem to have been much thicker originally as they have been eroded by various natural factors. Many parts of the building have also been destroyed due to the encroachment of modern houses. Oral narratives relate that the site was a Palace of Mahmoud's family, who emigrated to Kalanarti Island before returning once again to the area and found the palace completely destroyed.

5-5-12 Nawa Island 1: N 18° 26.283' E 30° 43.375'

It is located (Map 4) at the southern end of the village of Nawa at the northern end of the Letti Basin. The site is a large cemetery with its tombs spread out in several directions. There is a group of tombs from the period after Meroe whose diameters range from 3-4 metres and others whose origins are unclear from the orientation of burial. But the main site is the Islamic cemetery, although it surrounds a landfill lying from the south-east to the north-west. Among those forms is a huge tomb made of stone in a semi-rectangular shape reaching a height of 90 cm and having dimensions 3x4 m; it is surrounded by tombs oriented from east to west and another with an unknown orientation. The site has a few scattered sherds of Christian pottery and others unidentifiable due to different erosion factors that led to change their shape and colours.

5-5-13 Nawa Site 2 (Ater Annabi): N 18° 28.894' E 30° 42.823'

It is located in the centre of the village of Nawa Ala'tter. It is a mosque built of stones with dimensions of 14x14 m. Its maximum height is 4 metres towards the south. A soil mixture called "arrigaita" was used. Huge stones were also used in the form of doors and window lintels in the upper parts of the mihrab. It has two entrances, one on the south side with a height of 150 cm, width of 75 cm and a thickness of 75 cm. The other entrance is found in the north with destroyed walls and a width of 75 cm at the top of its western side. At the top of the southern side is a small window (skylight), 40 cm high and with a width of 50 cm. There is a room (4x4 m) attached to the building on the southern side, square in shape and built of stone; its entrance to the west had much blown sand. On the eastern side there is the mihrab, which has a height of 150 cm and width at the base of 200 cm and a thickness of 50 cm. The mihrab appears in a curved shape from the inside, but from the outside it appears in the form of a rectangle with a length of 3 x 2 meters.

In the eastern part are two mosques which represent the second and third phase of the mosques in the region. The informant Mohammed Fageer (58 years - Nawa area) indicates the mosque is known as Abdullah Ibn Abi al-Sarh's which was built during the period of the *Baqt* agreement (Plate 12, 1-4). People have continued praying in that mosque until recent periods. The northern part was destroyed by extremist groups and Salafis who have returned to the region in recent times. The informant Mohammed Nugud (87 years, Nawa district) dated the mosque to the year AD 922. The new mosque adjacent to the old one is known as Wad Abbad's. He pointed out that Christians were buried among Muslims in those tombs; this matter has continued until recently where one of the Christian doctors buried his daughter in a Muslim cemetery.

Concerning these sites in Dongola Alajooz (Old Dongola) area some have been studied others not. During the study of both the sites of Hambakol (Plate 13, 1) in the southern part and Amentigo in the northern area, we find that they represent very important centres due to their architecture. Studies conducted by the Polish mission at different seasons showed the importance of Hambakol as an urban centre. The great importance of the site is shown in its architectural components, with buildings having a number of rooms of different sizes. Amentigo site is also one of the most important centres due to its components and its great extent and we find widespread red-brick, broken mud brick and Christian pottery. In spite of its bad condition due to a road, the site represents one of the largest urban centres in the region: this is evident through the extent and the size of the site, the details of the building that comprises several rooms and some remaining walls of another building, probably a church, as well as the spread of a large number of grindstones and the remains of ash on the surface of the site. In the north-western side of the site are found some several cemeteries; some are Christian cemeteries while the attributions of others are not clear.

It should be noted that the field study includes some castles in the Fifth Cataract area such as Alishair (Alushair) and Abu Sidair or (Abu Sideir) castles. They represent the southern boundary of the region and that, in our consideration, is the southern boundary of the Kingdom of Makuria which allowed the possibility of an extension of the Kingdom to the east, lately dominated by Alabwab.

5-6 The Sites of the Fifth Cataract Province

The study included Alishair and Abu Sidair sites which are rich in large numbers of forts and castles of different shapes and architectural types. Also, this area extends to part of the province of Dongola in the Fourth Cataract area (Map 2).

5-6-1 *Usheir (Ausheir) Site: N 18° 29.1468', E 33° 40.9800'*

It is located on the west bank of the Nile just 5 kilometers north of the main cataract area. It is a massive fort (Plate 14, 1-4) made up of two parts. The main part is on the West Bank of the Nile. Its current length is 35 m and the width is 20 m. It is built of dark black stones with light use of mixed mortar, which consists of sand and plaster. The site consists of many rooms in the south-eastern corner. These are about 6 rooms with entrances opening into each other, where the stone has been used with a little mud-brick in the internal spacers (Map 2).

The other rooms are found in the southwest corner and about three rooms appear destroyed at the eastern walls; they were built of stone and mud-brick. There are three castle towers, one of them in the northwest corner, which is the largest in size and reaches a height of about 6 metres. There is also another in the southwest corner, connected to the rooms and with an entrance that opens towards the south. The third tower is found in the northeast corner and is very dilapidated. There are large numbers of Christian pottery sherds inside the castle. We also note the heavy presence of grindstones and animal dung, ash and traces of burning especially inside the rooms. Around the castle from outside the western side, there are also a group of tombs in the form of small mounds and another with an oval shape. Also noted are some stones installed on the ground in the form of regular wedges; those may have been used to impede the movement of enemies fleeing from the castle.

About 20 metres away is a burnt brick church. It has a niche in the east and an entrance in the north. Its walls are all destroyed and have been reduced to debris. It had a height of 16m during Crawford's visit, which means it was rectangular with dimensions of 5m in length and 4 m in width. Christian pottery sherds were scattered around it. There is also a group of tombs of the children of the local population, who believe that it is a place of pilgrimage to one of the elders in the region. Field surveys noted that there is a wall on the north side which connects the castle and the church and extends to about 30 meters in a semi-circular form.

The second part of the castle is located on the east bank of the Nile (Plate 14, 5). It is a rectangular building 20m in length, from north to south is 6m and it has a height of about 7m. It was built of stone and has two entrances, one in the west 1 m wide and the other in the north with a width of 1.5 m. It is located directly in the face of the main part of the other bank. It should be noted that the site is known locally as 'karakon' or prison, as the region's population believe that the building is a place to lock up slaves.

5-6-2 *Abu Sidair (Abu Sideir) Site: N 18° 33.010' E 33° 41.307'*

It is located 900 metres north of Usheir site, east of the River Nile. It is bounded on the north by Ab Sadir village and Alkaraba village on the south. The site represents a huge square-shaped castle;

it has a length of 40m and was constructed of stone and some pieces of burnt bricks which have been used infrequently in the various parts of the castle (Plate 15, 1-3). It has two entrances, one in the east, with a width of 4 m, and the other in the west of an unknown size due to the walls being demolished; the thickness of the walls at the entrance is 3m. Inside the castle in the northeastern part are some pieces of burnt brick rooms and stone rooms; they seem to be large in size through the uncovering of some of their foundations with dimensions of 5x4 m. There are Christian pottery sherds with some beads. There are also traces of ash and some grindstones. It is worth mentioning that there is another castle known as Abu Sadir in the interior of Mugarat Island. It differs in size and shape from the fort just described, and is in good condition in an area free from local residents.

5-7 The Third Cataract Province

5-7-1 Abu Fatma Site: N 19° 41.333' E 30° 24.250'

It is located on the right bank of the Nile at the beginning of the Third Cataract (Map 1). It has been pointed out by many travellers and historians such as Al Aswani, who described the Abu Fatima area as a dividing line between the Almahas and Aldanaqlah languages. This area has been considered a watershed between the kingdoms of Nobatia and Makuria. Later it became a subsidiary of the Kingdom of Makuria after the unification of the two kingdoms.

The site comprises a domed tomb (*gubba*) on a medium height mountain built of red brick, mud-brick and *galus* (Plate 16, 1). Some reports have pointed to the existence of hieroglyphic inscriptions. Also noted is the use of Christian Period red bricks of known sizes as well as Christian pottery spread thickly around the site.

The region is considered one of the richest areas of Sudan and the most intense and diverse in terms of environmental data. It is of enormous cultural and historical importance with a wealth of evidence, particularly in the period of the Middle Ages. It is strategically placed between the Third Cataract and the Dongola territory (Sahal).

A mission from the Department of Archaeology, University of Khartoum, and NCAM conducted a rescue excavation at the site in 2006. The researcher took part in this work. A number of key features have been identified by the presence of Muslim cemeteries in and around the *gubba*, most of which are of children. Some Christian sites, including residential units, have been identified by their covering by pieces of Christian pottery.

The site stands on a rocky hill with an area of about 160 × 54 metres and a height of up to 126 metres to the north-west of the current village of Abu Fatima. The site is composed of a very complex building much like what is known as a 'Fort House' or 'Castle House', widespread in the regions of Lower Nubia and the Third Cataract, and is topped by a dome. There are also stone wall foundations in the north and south of the site covering most of the high part of the rocky hill (Plate 16, 2-4). To north of the site, there is another building made of adobe. It is a very large and complex site and can be divided into a number of units; three of these are prominent. The main one consists of a fortified house and a *gubba*. The second, which lies to the north of the first unit, may be adjacent to that through an extended wall. Then there is the third unit. A wall surrounds the site on all sides. The first unit, the main unit, consists of two essential levels. The lower is a rectangular building of mud, stones and mud-bricks with an area of 11 × 9m. This lower unit has a number of rooms, most of which are clearly defined because they are destroyed. This unit appears to have a vaulted ceiling, especially on the east side. The upper part of it it has collapsed. There is entrance in the north for this area of the room (0.5 × 0.3 × 0.4m) and another opens below the building in the East Room, an area of 2.4 × 1m, which was detected during exploration. The upper part is a *gubba* built of red brick

and mud brick with the use of sandstone in the windows or small openings. This dome entrance is located on the south with a height of about 125 cm. There is a pillar in the east for the construction of the dome. Inside are two tombs from north to south. Its edges were built of adobe faced with mud bricks. We also find paint inside the dome with white lime; some traces are still present, although these may be relatively recent. The dome has suffered severe destruction in all parts, whether due to natural or human factors.

The second unit is located about 5m north of the first unit and may be adjacent to the first wall of the unit of stones, although that is not clear-cut in some of its parts. It is rectangular in shape with an area of 1.5 x 0.75m; only its foundations are adobe bricks with some of the pillars constructed of red bricks. The walls were demolished at ca. 50 cm thickness. The building is divided on the inside into a small number of rooms that are not organized and have unrecognizable features. The remaining ruins are only foundations. No traces of entrances are found. Some stones of the walls of the foundation were also collapsed. The third unit is the outer wall of the site and it is an accumulation of stones, burned bricks and sand. We also found a difference in the nature of the wall on the three aspects (west overlooking the Nile, north, east) while the south meets with the main unit. This wall is built of unorganised blocks of sandstone and quartz stones. The outer walls are up to a meter in thickness, the foundations of which appear above the sandy surface.

Spread over the surface of the site is a lot of pieces of Christian and Islamic pottery of different colors and shapes (for example Plate 16, 5), along with imported Egyptian pottery of another, unknown, type. There are stone tools, including grindstones. According to oral histories in the region, this was a site the people of the region used several times in the holiday seasons and for occasions such as weddings and circumcisions, etc. Sacrifices and vows of belief were also offered as there is the Sheikh's tomb. Narratives also show that the site name (Abu Fatima) is a metaphor for the Sheikh, who had a daughter called Fatima.

5-7-1-1 Archaeological Excavation

A rescue excavation has been carried out in the different units of this site. The focus was the East Room. The excavation revealed the skeleton of an adult male, Muslim. Placed next to him was a group of Islamic pottery, incense burners and inscriptions. It has been identified as based on the design of Christian incense burners. Also, a vaulted entrance has been detected inside the building at a lower level on the north-eastern side of the interior of the dome that might be the Sheikh's private room. Digging in the second unit was intended to find out more information about the details of the units and their relationship to each other. During excavation and the cleaning of the surface of the unit, eight Islamic graves were found distributed irregularly which is confirmed by the presence of a number of structures exceeding the number of the test-pits that have been dug. There was one test-pit made in the eastern wall of the building. Some archaeological material was recovered including Christian pottery. At the southern side of the site, small sized rooms have been detected and the adobe and cut stone wall extending into the first unit may have been contemporary with it. Excavations were also conducted in the western wall of the site to a depth of about a metre and a half. Excavations also occurred in the western facade of the site boundary adjacent to an old sandstone wall, with a layer of soft red bricks, which form very regular pieces; it may have been used before in a different function.

There was an attempt to reconstruct the site boundary on all four sides by using the building materials scattered around the site and cut stones from within the site which is situated on a mountain cliff. The process of reconstructing the boundary in accordance to the parts that were found was completed in plan only because the real height of the wall cannot be identified because of the destruction of all

parts of the site. It was concluded through the comprehensive fieldwork that the site is related to an early historical period (the period of Egyptian presence in Sudan). There appears to be cultural and civilization continuity that can be traced to the Christian and Muslim eras.

5-7-1-2 Conclusions from Excavation

Determining a time range for the *gubba* was not possible due to the unavailability of laboratories for dating skeletal remains. The date of the establishment of the *gubba* is unknown but it is traced back to the early Islamic periods that are contemporary to the Christian existence in the area on the basis of the architectural connection of the dome to other site components. There is great similarity in its nature and the building materials to those of the Christian Period. There has been borrowing between the Christian and Islamic periods since early times and this would have been especially true in an area that represents a borderline between two kingdoms that continually experienced periods of conflict and dialogue that ended in their unity as one kingdom.

The presence of the *gubba* in a border area may indicate that it has developed in the period of the conflict between the Mamluks and Makuria as a separator between two different religious countries, but we cannot say for sure. Archaeological work needs to be completed at this site and at its surroundings. Therefore, further archaeological and architectural studies are important to take advantage of all of these data to test these models and explore new avenues of very important research.

CHAPTER SIX: Analytical Study

6-1 Introduction

The methodology used for the study was based on field work and archaeological heritage in addition to comprehensive surveys to determine the nature of the sites and their components. Advantage was taken of archaeological surveys conducted in some locations in the Fourth and the Fifth Cataracts sites to compare the results.

In spite of the incomplete information obtained, the sites are of enormous importance. The data derived from the sites strengthens known historical information where oral narratives often determined the appropriate place to conduct archaeological work. The practical evidence derived the archaeological work of different types of architecture and cemeteries as well as other archaeological material such as pottery, tombstones, and study of some samples in the laboratory etc. Then comes the study of some of the features of society and the economy in the region. Studies by the various projects of University and Government departments have provided important information for the study area by virtue of its proximity to these regions. Previous studies of sites belonging to the Kingdom of Makuria were taken advantage of in order to determine the types of components and what can be extrapolated to explain various points that emerged during the course of this study, points that may have been influenced by political, economic or social events.

6-2 Analysis and classification of Sites

6-2-1 *The Old Dongola (Dongola Alajooz) Area (Map 4)*

Regional features extend in all directions, all with views of the Nile, which represents a very important environmental variable. The Haj Majid site though is situated in the Letti -Basin area, which was highly environmentally and economically important. These sites can be classified as graves, churches, palaces and houses. There are some natural sources that influenced activities in the Dongola area including the existence of minerals in the mountains and sandstone used in construction. There is a fertile strip of land along the Nile and in the Letti Basin which helped agriculture and animal grazing. The region is also strategically important and has natural fortification features which provide an opportunity to protect and control the trade. The study also therefore included cultural sources such as cultural heritage to help interpret the constructions, which integrated with linguistic studies. There have been religious and linguistic shifts. Since the end of the tenth century there have been two communities:

1. Christian society preoccupied with agriculture and some local industries and activities.
2. Islamic society concerned with advocacy and education and perhaps trade.

Despite that, the possibility of living in the city seems difficult because it is associated with the kings and their families. There is a scarcity of domestic dwellings. The dense sand may have represented an obstacle to the city's extension. I have relied on the suburbs and the countryside around them like Baganarti, Hambukol and Kankol and the Letti Basin land and others. In our estimation, it relied on rural areas in the northern part of the capital, as is the case in the region until today with products from areas like Janqoob, Maghawda, Kadakoul and Amentqo etc.

The city Old Dongola (Dongola Alajooz) includes a large number of Christian and Islamic monuments. There is diversity in the inhabitants of different tribes in the indigenous population: Arab and Nubian tribes such as Kababish, Alebesharien and Alebeshutab and others. Most of these came in the early period, but the great migration for the Arab groups especially Kordofan tribes happened before the rule of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. There are forts on the Nile front for fear of an attack from the open desert. Christianity seems represented by more than one type where we find Monophyite sects and Melikite sects. Through the heavy presence of the churches, one can say that there is a kind of priestly class in this kingdom. There is the Church of the Granite Columns and the Cruciform Church. There are two further churches, one of them next to the boundary which is perhaps for the soldiers guarding the boundary, and the other inside the wall. The latter is the only one in this area of the city. It was especially for the King who also had priestly status.

Another church built of mud-brick was found far from the area of the main churches and perhaps it was the Church for the public. The church wall bears the images of a number of saints and kings next to the Virgin and other imagery. This is embodied by the original Nubian kingdoms as indicated in some texts discovered in the Monastery of the Holy Trinity. Some of the terminology on the texts appears to refer to the Reviver of the Dead. As for the 'Royal Palace' (earlier thought to be a 'Church', which was turned into a mosque) it seems that the debate is still continuing about the nature of the building. Several alterations to the building were observed during the field work. It seems that the inner part of the niche is connected to the outer part. We also find plaster which is used in painting the mihrab which was originally an internal arch like many of the other arches in building. Some additions were made to the building in its last days. In terms of location, the palace is located in the northeast corner of the wall, part of the boundary. We deduced therefore that it was not right for the King to reveal himself to enemies in high places, as this would have made him an easy target. Studies were prohibited in the basement of the building, which is in our understanding the most similar to a watchtower. It was used to take advantage of the underground tunnel for the housing of the guards so that they could report the arrival of an enemy, and take necessary precautions. On the other hand, this boundary wall is apparently not enough to protect the city in a siege. Consequently, there may be other parts of the boundary wall that have not been detected, especially if we take into account that the historical writings reported the presence of seven walls surrounding the city.

There are multiple Christian and Muslim societies and communities around necessitating a strong economy with the ability to reconcile the two religions. The agricultural economy in the region depends on the land in the plains and valleys and a narrow strip along the River Nile. Some of the produce was stored as needed. This is reflected through the presence of some of the grain in designated places for storage, which was unique in the Christian sites.

Agriculture experience is long-standing in the Letti -Basin region as evidenced by the remnant of irrigation ditches. The River Nile strip seems of great importance to the city of Dongola which stood on the borders of the rural and urban centres around the area. Archaeological evidence confirms that there are sites with a number of elements of the local administration: material waste which includes churches, pottery and signs of food production. Standing out among these sites is Haj Majid, a part of the Letti Basin, and Amentigo containing a central compound.

There is a continuity of centres from Nawa in the north then Amentigo, Arab Haj and Kasi, followed by Kadakoul, Maghawda and Shabba sites 1 and 2, Jagob and Hambakol sites, all neighbouring the River Nile. They all have special pottery and other agricultural and industrial economy to support the capital in the south. While we find the finest places in the Kadakoul and Letti section 2 (width 9-11km), the high places in the Nawa district, eg Almaquawdah, are places where there are remains of housing and burials from various periods; the most common are Christian types. We find other

wide habitable lands on the West Bank in the area from as far north as Akad, to Al Goalid and Khilaiwa in the south, which may have been under the supervision of the administrative centres in Khandaq (Alkhandaq) and Wad Nimeiri. Therefore, the region represented an important centre to enable the Kingdom to meet the Bedouin groups of the desert tribes due to availability of water by the River Nile. There are also references to the existence of a number of wells having been drilled in the desert. In addition to the presence of the main grain silos, this region is the general main food basket.

Sites are similar in this zone in the nature of their architectural monuments and other remains such as pottery and tombstones of various materials. We find some similarity in architectural phenomena such as the presence of mosques in cemeteries in each of Nawa and Old Dongola, and in Khandaq (Alkhandaq) on the west bank of the Nile, which means there is cultural continuity at these sites.

The nominal significance of cultural continuity has confirmed these areas as the Kingdom itself (Makuria). There are also linguistic denotations known in the language of the current population. Old Dongola – Dongola Alajooz — capital of the state is ‘Tolgul’, where *To* means “abdomen” *Gu* means “earth” and *ul* means “relative”. It was so called due to the large population and the capacity of its lands. But the word ‘sha’ in the Nubian language is a single and a compound word with many examples of past and present such as Shabka (one of the kings of Napata) and Shambi which is a royal family existing now in Almaghawda. The origin of the word ‘Shanber’, ‘Sha’ means ‘bayonet’ or ‘king’ – ‘n’ is a linking word and ‘ber’ means ‘rod’ the meaning is ‘a straight rod drawn to a spearhead’. It describes the king by the justice, integrity and fairness of his approach. However, the word “Shabba” means ‘passionate’ or something to the point of madness. The meaning is also ‘mad King’ because he was fond of many bayonets and attaching them to his mount and even carrying some on his back.

It also means the ‘owner of bayonets’. This is a Nubian family title that is widespread in the northern villages, whereas, Almaghawda is the closest to the area of Old Dongola. It is traced to Abdalla Barshambo; the Arabic part of this name means ‘justice and righteousness’. The family of that king gained great respect and appreciation from the locals. They inherited the interior lands of the emirate. Some senior figures went south and founded the family of Shabu in the area of AlShaygia. Those who migrated within Nubia kept the origin of the name. When the second immigration arrived in the Hammour area, the Shabba family moved north to Argo where the king of Argo gave them lands on the island of Badeen. He protected them and let them have a homeland in Badeen called ‘Shabba badeen’. Some returned to their homeland in Maghawda while the others have stayed in Badeen up to now.

As for ‘shakenda’, it is well-known now that the ‘Shahenda’ family remains dispersed in the villages of Dongola. Their origin is in the neighborhood, which is located in the region between Kadakoul and Maghawda near the King’s residence. Therefore, ‘Shahenda’ has two syllables: ‘Sha’ means ‘the king’ and ‘Kond’ means ‘to deny’, thus the name means the ‘denied king’. As for the transition of Shukendada to Shahenda the people of the region are famous for that change of a letter as they say ‘Jahad’ for ‘Jakad’. Shakanda was a weak king and used to be attacked by enemies. Shammamon was locally known as the ‘devil’ for being brave and having a tendency to continually rebel against the kings; he had a local nickname meaning ‘always the highest’. He was often a rebel against the reconciliation agreement (*Baqt*). There is also King David (Dornahour), a family of great numbers, but the biography of the king showed his title was not good. There are some bishops mentioned in Makuria who are not well-known, such as Kulmi and Marki. Mr. Awad Shabba indicates that ‘Kulmi’ has two syllables, ‘Kul’ meaning ‘black stone’ and ‘Me’ means ‘stone belly’, so ‘Kulmi’ means ‘the belly of the black stone’. There is a word called ‘Kumya’ which means he owner of a hidden extraordinary power. There is an island in Goled called Kumi. As for ‘Murki’, it has several conjugations such as ‘Mur’ which means ‘cutting’ or ‘circumcision’ or it might mean ‘water pass’ that is ‘peninsula’; the

syllable 'mar' means 'border'. We find that 'Asmakol' at the mouth of Farja valley in the Farreg area means 'stream of water', and 'Markol' area to the west of it means 'water sector'. 'Ka' means 'house'. Therefore, it could mean a house or place of punishment. The 'Kundi' area means 'the leg cutter' and 'the house of obdience'.

Through these nominal, historical and archaeological connotations, we notice that one of these unknown bishops may have been in Nawri, which is undoubtedly the modern name for the region that had witnessed the settlement of different groups such as Arabs, Ottomans and Fung following the decline of Makuria. As well as local stories, the archaeological evidence is that cathedrals look architecturally similar in more than one site, e.g. those at Ksifreki and Faqirin Fenty in Almahas area and in the location of al-Bakhit (Alhilaila) area in the province of Dongola. This assumption is based on the fact that the three sites are positioned in strategic places in Almahas at the curve of the Nile that geographically matches local titles. This is the case for the site of Bakhit, which is located at the southern Nile curve above Addabba. Thus, these three sites include impressive architectural units as well as the presence of churches protected by strong defences; they are often either administrative or religious centres, or perhaps both.

6-2-2 West Bank Sites (Wad Numeiri- Khandaq (Alkhandaq)- Kenkalab; Map 4)

There are three features which can be seen in these areas: (1) physical planning where there are internal divisions of the houses that comprise the castle, (2) a huge cemetery containing a number of diverse Christian and Muslim and other indeterminate burials, and (3) the main citadel or the governor's residence, for the ruler of the region.

On the other hand, the study of these sites was also based on topography to determine the relationship with the sites around them. Trade networks play an important role in this respect because they attract trade from different regions. Some sites were created due to technical or religious considerations and represent some point before the big cities. Estimates of the civil and commercial importance of these two regions were made by the numbers of inhabitants based on food consumption, which is evident from the heavy presence of grindstones, pots and pottery sherds, and evidence of ash and other organic remains such as the bones of fish and animals. Although most cemeteries may have been used for a long time and represent accumulated population rather than being a representation of the number of residents who have lived at a particular time, we find a striking similarity in form and contents of the tombs and the direction of the burial, and so on, and these features match with other sites especially the site of Khandaq (Alkhandaq).

It appears that Wad Nimeiri was used in different periods. The castle was built in the pre-Christian period which is shown in the form, nature of the stone building and the widespread archaeological materials such as bricks and burned pieces of pottery, beads and sherds of glazed pottery which was famous in the Fatimid Period. The latter had a special relationship with Nubia since the agreement of the *Baqt*. The overall shape of the strategic location overlooking the Nile confirms the administrative and commercial importance of the castle, together with the internal components and their planning which includes a number of small housing units constructed in several stages. The coherent and accurate divisions between the residential units confirms a governing role for a large castle as a centre for trade in this region that looks completely free of large Christian sites stretching to the entrance of the Third Cataract area at the Akad site.

We find widespread Christian and Muslim cemeteries of all known types. Wad Nimeiri turned into an Islamic administrative centre in the reign of the Fung when the castle was used as an administrative headquarters. The most important characteristic is that conical *gubbas* exist in large numbers, which

resemble the *gubbas* of the southern province of the Fung. The presence of the Mamluks in the region who used the castle for a long time is shown in the most important tombs in the cemetery. They are tombstones like those in Kadamosa and Wahaba Mountain in Almahas region. Therefore, it is possible to say that Wad Nimeiri Castle represents an important centre on the west bank of the river Nile for the study of cultural continuity in Sudan.

Khandaq (Alkhandaq) castle shares some similarities with Wad Nimeiri in terms of overall shape and perhaps chronology and function. The latter includes the internal divisions of this castle in the small rooms and residential units with an advanced engineering design. The general shape of the main castle, where the court is located directly facing the Nile, is defensive in nature. It had a dual purpose of ruling and protection. As well as trade protection, it was the only centre to receive and send slaves from Darfur and Kordofan on to Wad Nimeiri from where they reached Egypt through various trade control centres in the Third Cataract.

It is also similar to some Third Cataract castles in Shaufeen and Markol. The use of stone in the style and method of construction allowed great opportunity to control the various aspects of the castle. They are built in almost one era which may have been the era of unification of the two kingdoms in an era of prosperity. Whereas the location of these castles on the West Bank gives an important indication of the Valleys in the West, the trade in the Napatan and Meroitic periods relied on the east of the River Nile. The west of the Nile was important due to population movements in various areas as well as environmental determinants.

It is most likely that Khandaq (Alkhandaq) was involved in trade and private slave trade until the late periods of the mid-nineteenth century. It was an important river port in the period of the Turkish rule. There was a large group of those slaves brought to Khandaq (Alkhandaq) where there was a large market (El Fasher) for the sale of slaves and some other goods. Also, most slave traders in that period were from the Aldanagla group and we cannot ignore their historic links with this popular trade.

Also, we find many of the additions of galus that covered the north and south of the castle, which were the high walls of houses. Through the preliminary study of some of them, they could be traced back to the early Islamic periods where some historical sources and oral narratives have mentioned that the site was the seat of king Bashir, one of the kings of Khandaq (Alkhandaq). Perhaps during the reign of the Fung or just before, the site was an administrative centre of the kingdom.

There are also many Christian cemeteries marked by the direction of the burial, which are locally known as Altowskiat. This confirms the presence of many people in a region which had been an administrative and commercial centre since the Christian period and was so up until the late Islamic periods. It also continued as a centre of the slave trade during the period of the late Turkish invasion. Perhaps the reason for this continuity is the strategic location of the region, which helps control the flow of traffic on the River Nile and movement by land, as well as the absence of the River Nile rapids that impede the flow of traffic coming in and out of the region. We find a wide spread of Islamic burials for a number of sheikhs that point to the arrival of new people into areas of Old Dongola, Sennar and Obeid and others. Some of these date to the early Islamic periods. The early Islamic period is also represented by a mosque inside the tomb: the mosque has a niche and a dividing line in the back whose function is not well known. It might have been used for prayers for the deceased, as it was the case in the presence of platforms for sermons in the cemeteries in this region and other surrounding areas.

The linguistic connotations in Khandaq (Alkhandaq) have confirmed its Nubian roots such as Kaji, Mar and Shaptot, and 'Gela Gela', meaning 'red' at Khandaq (Alkhandaq). Perhaps that name matches the appearance of the castle, described by travellers in the early periods as having a reddish or brownish colour to the stones of its walls. This confirms a strong Nubian presence in these regions and in particular population movements at the end of the Merotic Period towards the River Nile.

The two castles of Wad Nimeiri and Khandaq (Alkhandaq) represent the most important administrative and commercial centres during the Christian period and subsequent periods, especially the Islamic periods of the Fung and Mamluks. Historical sources have agreed on the continuation of the Fung for a longer period in the territory of Dongola who might have benefited from these centres, especially Wad Nimeiri which enjoys a strategic fortified location. Its importance stems not only from its geographic location west of Old Dongola but especially from the presence of many gubbas, (ie burials of Islamic saints) of particular importance to the people residing in the areas around these castles because of the intense Sufi presence in this entire region.

6-2-3 Fifth Cataract Sites (Map 2)

The Fifth Cataract Area is an area of enormous archaeological importance. Mugarat island and the sites a little in the south in Alishair and Abu Sidair are border areas such as the Third Cataract before the union. We find administrative, commercial and military architecture in the Third Cataract area. This island looks through its physical structure like an administrative and religious centre, especially if we take into account the existence of the bishop Shingair, and the concentration of burials and various churches and castles. We find Alishair Castle located at the confluence of a huge valley (the Valley of the Donkey). This represents a vital passageway from the River Nile to the Red Sea areas. This castle consists of the church and huge multiple buildings on the west bank of the Nile, and it is surrounded by some stone wedges to hinder the movement of soldiers and thieves trying to escape.

We also find a huge stone fort on the other side opposite the castle at the River Nile, which is locally known as the prison or the (Alkarakon). In the front of the castle is an out-port of the river's main port, which represents the centre for the exchange and purchasing of slaves between Makuria and Alwa. At the same time, we assume that these castles such as Alishair were settlements for a lot of groups during the times of turmoil and chaos, besides a commercial role, that befell the Nubian Kingdoms in the late Christian period. The population lived in small groups. It is also the case for Abu Sidair fort, the site of which was found through discovery of its clay foundations; its location is directly opposite the River Nile; it is close to Alishair fort (3 km). It may have played a prominent role for this important region in Alishair if we take into account that the main danger came from the north, from Egypt, and some of the rebel groups that traded outside the authority of the state. Consequently, there have been problems with Makuria as the Alawan kings were trying to trade directly with Egypt because of the sectarian conflicts with Makuria. They tried to cooperate with Nobatia so that there was one mediator instead of two. It is in any case correct that one cannot deliver a slave to Egypt directly without going through Makuria.

Alabwab was a separate kingdom most of the time which had good relationships with Makuria, where a group of kings who fled Muslim rulers pursuing them were welcomed by rulers such as Shemamon. However, we cannot rule out another trade route across the desert away from Makuria especially from the port at Alishair, which is located at the mouth of the Valley of the Donkey. It also had an influential military force in the later periods of the invasion of Muslims and Arabs, who became a permanent partner after the *Baqt* agreement. And thus, these forts and castles had dual roles in the region.

6-3 Study and Classification of Pottery

Some of the physical properties of the pottery were studied, including their weight, to quantify their density and colour. This was done by studying the pottery from Old Dongola (Dongola Alajooz). Its pottery was said to be similar to the pottery of other sites, so the purpose was to identify distinguishing characteristics. It also included laboratory scientific study of pottery by conducting physical and chemical analyses in order to understand the method of manufacture and its physical properties.

Colour is one of the physical properties of the material. The colour that is not absorbed is the one that determines the colour of the material. Colour can be identified clearly through the Munsell Colour Chart. Hardness is the relational chemical force between material molecules. It is measured through a steel ball of a specific type of pen pressed on the surface of archaeological material with a certain force for a certain time. The diameter of the hole caused by the ball in the surface of the material is measured. Material quality is determined by the density of a certain size, which is measured by displacement by placing the water re-weighed in a graded container with a certain amount of water. The volume of extra water is measured which is equal to the volume of material. Then weight is divided by volume to find the qualitative density.

The fourth stage is the chemical test where a chemical analysis is performed to find out the type of constituent elements of the vessel or sherd and to see their ratios of their amounts. Slices are taken from the pottery sherds and examined under the microscope in order to find out the presence of minerals or to study constituents of the body of the pottery sherds. Through a microscope we can see if pottery is made by wheel through the air bubbles that are longitudinally parallel. We find that the bubbles are horizontally parallel in the handmade pottery. It is also possible to see if the firing is slow: we find that the amount of carbon dioxide entering the vessel wall. If the firing is quick, the carbon is concentrated near the outer surface of the pottery. Materials added to the clay are known through inclusions. In the case of natural clay they are smooth; in the case of the presence of temper, such as crushed rock, inclusions are angular.

Based on these data, a scientific study was conducted by the laboratory of the Faculty of Science, University of Khartoum; the first stage was the selection of samples. The focus was on clay samples from the Old Dongola area (Dongola Alajooz) since it was not feasible to conduct a study based on many sites. Then each piece is put in a bag. Identifying labels were made with a reference number; the original site number that was given on the site was retained (given in brackets) so that it would not be lost when the sample is put in water. Later weight, size, quality and density are registered.

Next, each piece was weighed separately using a Mettler p1200 balance. It is sensitive, and is read in one per cent of a gram. After that, the volume was found of each piece by displacement by filling the displacement container with a known amount of water. The container is divided into units of measurement (in millimeters). The piece is put in the container then the extra water is removed until the measurement goes back its original mark. The extra water is equal to the volume of the piece. The qualitative density of the piece = $\text{weight} \div \text{volume}$. The colour of the sample is identified through the Munsell chart (Munsell 1992).

After conducting this study, the results were put in a table. The table includes part number, weight, size, qualitative density, colour, pottery type, industry, and whether made by hand or wheel, and then the surface treatment. It can be said from the foregoing observations that there is no significant difference between the Christian pottery in Dongola region in terms of color, size and density. The only difference is in the qualitative density. Thus, the existence of common and identical qualities

means similarity of pottery-making kilns. The pottery was probably made in the same centres from where it was distributed to other sites.

The pottery sherds that were collected from the study sites occurred extensively in the area of the old Dongola sites. Perhaps the high density of the pottery indicates high consumption of this item and the development of production and possibly of trade exchange. Based on the scattering of pieces of pottery and iron slag in Almaqawdah Kadkol area, there are small tubs for mixing the dough, besides broken pottery and ash. This is considered to have been an industrial zone in Dongola. There are some vessels that are probably buckets for watering. This clearly points to the importance of the region in the practice of agriculture and making related tools. Vessels found in these sites are manufactured with high efficiency for cooking and keeping liquids through a high degree of refinement. That is by cutting a circular motif in the form of three or six circles, with some lines sometimes with a reddish colour. There are also various yellow and white designs outlined by black external lines in the decoration found on pottery from the Kadakoul, Haj Majid and Maghawda sites. This appears from the twelfth century, and is similar to Ware R21 in the classification established by Adams (1986).

Table 4. The physical properties of some pottery from the site of Old Dongola

Piece number	Weight	Size	Qualitative density	Maufacture	Surface treatment	
2	93.4g	52cm ³	1.796	By wheel	Polished & decorated	Notes 2-Pieces weights converge each other but fit with objects 3-polished and unpolished pottery density differs from high to low. 4-The density of wheel-made pottery and handmade varies from high to low
3	93.25g	78cm ³	1.195	By wheel	Unpolished, undecorated	
4	62.7g	44cm ³	1.425	By wheel	Unpolished, undecorated	
5	29.7g	21cm ³	1.41	By wheel	Unpolished, undecorated	
6	23.1g	18cm ³	1.28	By wheel	Unpolished, undecorated	
7	23.15g	18cm ³	1.286	By hand	Polished & decorated	
10	11.15g	10cm ³	0.74	By wheel	Polished, undecorated	
13	92.8g	60cm ³	1.546	By hand	Polished, unpolished	
14	489g	30cm ³	1.6	By hand	Polished, unpolished	
15	24.95g	14cm ³	1.78	By hand	Polished inside, decorated	
16	92.7g	38cm ³	1.785	By hand	Polished undecorated	
79	30.05g	11cm ³	2.73	By wheel	Polished, decorated	
20	16.45g	16cm ³	1.175	By wheel	Polished & decorated	Pottery pieces have similar characteristics where the same number codes are given.

The pottery having a red color represents 80% of the total number of existing sherds. Some unfired pots were also found, suggesting heavy domestic production. Local pottery has much decoration, and it appears in larger amounts in the Trinity Monastery than the rest of the sites. The presence of Islamic pottery at these sites, which is a centre of the kingdom, means that the Islamic groups moved substantially into these sites, some of which continued functioning as administrative and religious centres. This is shown by the existence of Islamic *gubbas* and houses at some formerly Christian sites. The pottery of the Islamic period is characterized as handmade with simple decorations with reddish colour. Pottery dating to the early Christian period is present at the sites of Khandaq (Alkhandaq) and Wad Nimeiri. Red coloured pottery has been found mostly, whereas some black examples were found especially in the pottery of Wad Nimeiri. Through the examination of samples of sherds at these sites it was found that they were wheel-manufactured. Only six hand-made pieces were found in the Khandaq (Alkhandaq) area, while only three were found at Wad Nimeiri.

Other artefacts could not be studied in such detail as the pottery because they were not present on the surface in density. Also, cemeteries, in particular, cannot be classified depending on the external appearance only, without conducting excavations. Their importance comes from the fact that they provide an insight into chronology and into the prevailing forms of ideological, social and ethnic composition of the community. It would also help in the study of the physical appearance of the population. The real problem originates in the nature of the sites; of course, not all are rubbish dumps, which require much clearing before they can be fully investigated. For example, the tombs of the saints in Old Dongola highlight the importance of the form of the superstructure of the graves for assigning them to culture and period, but this is not possible in all the Christian cemeteries.

6-4 Results and Conclusion

This study yielded several important findings:

1. Although the origins of the Kingdom were not proved archaeologically, we find them in the Old Dongola (Dongola Alajooz) area through the remnants of the old stelae of King Taharqa and Asepelta. The developmental stages of this city are uncertain, but its origins are believed to date to the beginning of the sixth century AD when there was population movement. The high density of sites around the city tend to confirm this and therefore we can say that Old Dongola (Dongola Alajooz) represents the beginning of the historical periods in the region. The heavy presence of Christian architecture and walls of advanced construction, which are found in various churches and monasteries, as well as the widespread presence of the Nubian writing that was recently discovered, especially in the small village of Sinada (Plate 17, 1), where graves of Makurian Kings have also been found (Plate 17, 2-3) together with much pottery (for example Plate 17, 4-5), in the Old Dongola area and the Monastery Church confirms that this city was an important ancient centre for Nubian arts.
2. The most important Christian presence of the Kingdom of Makuria was in the Dongola region and, most importantly in the locations scattered around Dongola starting from El Ghaddar until Nawa where we find the large concentrations of urban and rural sites. Sites are also on the west bank. Perhaps this importance stems from supporting the capital economically, and from guarding and protecting the slave trade, in addition to controlling the movements of the tribes in North Kordofan and Darfur due to the importance of the Nile for these groups, and the importance of trade between the north and south. The nearest capital centres established in the Dongola region are located in Khandaq (Alkhandaq) and Wad Nimeiri for commercial, agricultural and other purposes. There are indicators of many irrigation channels (*Sawagi*) in

these areas and wells in the desert. Overall, the main purpose of these sites was to protect the land of Makuria and major trade.

3. Archaeological work confirmed the oral narratives collected in the area. Besides the implications of place names, there was cultural continuity of daily practices from pre-Christian into Christian periods. The Dongola area represents an important hub of these interactions. Some physical phenomena and late local narratives indicate the delay of the spread of Islam in the north of Sudan, where we find the spread of Christianity symbols such as the Cross and the Holy Trinity and certain practices such as carrying food and money and some palm fronds and placing them next to the deceased. There is also the persistence of some local celebrations known as (*koragi*) and certain industries such as metalworking, pottery making and others. Narratives in the Old Dongola area confirm that Friday prayers were often not completed due to the lack of a sufficient number of people for the sermon. The Friday prayers need a large number of people to be valid; hence local farmers could be paid to leave tending their crops and water-wheels (a type of *sawagi*) in order to make up the numbers in the congregation. This shows that Islam is associated with formal manifestations which those communities did not truly complete, and that in some periods, such as the Fung (1505- 1821), the culture was not devoid of some Christian practices. Also, people, but only a few, did not understand their religion fully. Therefore, it was natural that the indications are not clear as to whether the kingdom was Muslim during the deterioration of the Kingdom of Makouria in the light of a major conflict between different groups seeking to take power, such as Beni Kanz (the Kanz family), or looting represented by some Arab tribes and, on the other hand, the conflict between Nubians themselves, etc.
4. Oral narrations indicate that a large number of emirates and small kingdoms were established after the decline of the Kingdom of Makuria. The Shabbah emirate in Maghawda appeared in one of the centres preceding it. Also, the Shambi emirate emerged in peripheral areas of Maghawda in an area replete with physical evidence and evidence of settlement in rubbish-dumps in Hambok and other areas, while we find a stately mansion in Kankalab constructed by the family of King Hamad of Zubayrab which still exists. There was another emirate in the Arab Haj region, represented by the palace and some of the existing groups in Kalnarti Island. We also find the emirate of Alhkannaq, based at Wad Nimeiri which inherited the palace sites and Wad Nimeiri until the advent of the Fung who took control of the area up to Hanak in the north. The emirate, which in Khandaq (Alkhandaq) was under the rule of King Bashir, made the castle its own base. There is also the Addafar emirate that is located in a castle complex in Bakhit (Alhilaila). Kings of Shaygia such as Madeen, Subair and others ruled those kingdoms from huge castles east of the centres of Merowe. They were able to play a significant role in changing the course of events in the region stretching from Debba to the borders of the Almahas region. The biggest kingdom in existence through physical evidence and oral narratives of the emirates after Makuria is found in Argo area which was ruled by King Hamad Al-Zubair's family; there are dumps from settlement sites and castles of intermediate and post-intermediate periods. It is still known as the dynasty of kings and has reached fame through the wars that have brought them, Shaygiya and the kingdoms of Almahas together and later the Mamluks.
5. As for the borders of the Kingdom, the State of Alwa extended to the west and incorporated the Bayuda. Often sites on the west bank of the Nile were intended to control population movements in Kordofan and Darfur where some sites containing burials were found in the Bayuda which lasted until after Christianity. Perhaps the expansion in the west was due to environmental conditions. After the victory of Ezana over the Nubians, population groups spread into the territories of Nobatia, Makuria and Alawa. These incursions impacted directly on the border of Makuria with Alawa at the Fifth Cataract.

In the west, Makuria was very active in Darfur. It relied on Khandaq (Alkhandaq) castle as an administrative centre of the slave trade from the west, through the Wadi Hawar which flows into the Nile at Albaga near Khandaq (Alkhandaq), that is opposite Old Dongola (Dongola Alajooz) in the west. There might have been the slaves recorded as being brought from the Goran regions west of New Dongola (Dongola Alurdhi) who were sent to the Pope demanding conversion to Christianity according to local oral narratives. The reality indicates the great importance of the valley of Alagab as one of the main farming areas and water sources for groups from outside the local area. It is still the focus of tribes starting from Al-Qa'ab Albab then Al-Qa'ab Baudha and Al-Qa'ab Laghiya, and lately Al-Qa'ab Althawani. Inhabitants of these Qa'abs have reported through oral interviews that they depend on the valley for agriculture and irrigation. While they resort to old wells in the area when the valley's flow stops, they still trade with Goled, the neighbouring area to Akhandaq. This is because the Alwadi area in Addabba is near their residential areas. Khandaq (Alkhandaq) as a strategic location represents one of the most important river-ports in the past and present, and is therefore important to the vast farmland there. Slaves were classified and sent to the capital Dongola with what they needed of the agricultural produce.

The slave convoys are very important, as the trade represented an economic source in Nubia. There must have been a meeting place for the commercial caravan routes passing through this region from Kordofan and Darfur and some other provinces to the regions of the Kingdom of Alawa. Perhaps Alishair in the east and Khandaq (Alkhandaq) and Wad Nimeiri in the west are best suited among those areas for this role.

6. Studies have shown the existence of written texts in the Nubian centres in these kingdoms. Through this these kingdoms can be conclusively linked with the current Nubian groups. In the north, the Meroitic administrative centres in Karnooq turned into the administrative centres for the the post-Meroitic Period in Ballana and Qusul, and in Christianity to Nobatia. Also, Meroitic centres in Barkal turned into Alzumah and Tanagasi in the post-Meroitic and Makuria in the Christian period. The major Meroitic centres around the capital evolved into Alhobjee in the post-Meroitic. Then, Alawa in the Christian period, which included large parts of the land of Meroe. These developments mean that there is a significant common denominator of cultural ties between different places.

The circumstances that led to the kingdoms are represented in the population movements from Darfur to Dongola and Meroe to Kordofan and vice versa. The move began by the end of Meroe; three large concentrations formed in the post-Meroitic Period. Owing to the population movements, the Nubians spread their language which became the main language in the Nile Valley. Pollination between the Nubian languages and others, especially Meroitic, has taken place. The names of most of the areas became Nubian and recent studies have proven the existence of strong links with the Meroitic language in different areas, especially Dongola. Thus, the Sudan in the Middle Ages stretched from the Meroe and included Kordofan and Darfur and some of Alawa. While Meroe relied on trade goods such as fragrances, cosmetics and animals, foreign trade was very significant at the time. Makuria used the slave trade and the economy as the most important sources of power; one of the main manifestations of cultural change in Nubia between these kingdoms was in religion and the economy.

Dongola was itself one of the most important regions of the Kingdom of Makuria. It was the capital of the United Kingdom which took its name from the capital city (the Kingdom of Dongola). It is a capital filled with religious relics. The River Nile and the valleys where important economic and environmental variables whose control exerts huge power and control over trade and its protection.

It was a key issue in Christian and Islamic periods. It is unlike Nobatia which grew agricultural produce on a narrow strip that was also inhabited and which did not have all of the economic elements and human resources available within Makuria. It was sandwiched between two forces: Egypt in the north and Makuria in the south, Hence, the union was not based on the idea of annexation of regions or an expansionary trend, but on objective reasons, including that Makuria had a large population in addition to the availability of a sufficient number of slaves to work the vast streams in the Letti Basin and western Dongola, etc. which were not available in Nobatia. Some religious groups arrived such as Albdairiya and others since the late thirteenth century and early fourteenth century. They established some Khalawi religious centres and mosques which have had a significant role in community cohesion.

The city also played a major role in the rapprochement between the monotheistic religions, clearly showed through some ideological respects represented in the widespread *gubbas* in the religious and Islamic centres along with centres of Christian worship such as churches and monasteries within the walls of the city that are free of the churches except one (the Palace Church), which has not been destroyed despite the obvious control by Muslims in subsequent periods. We also find this intellectual and ideological compatibility in burial practices. There is a common idea in archeology that tomb construction and their contents reflect social and/or political status. While we find that most deposits from the occupation of previous kings of Meroe are well known, there is complete absence of tombs of Christian kings except for some newly discovered tombs found near the palace of the kings of Makuria which contained some Coptic and perhaps Nubian inscriptions Plate 17, 1. The burial of the King of Alawa, David and his tomb does not match with the richness of his kingdom and his status as king of this rich kingdom. The reality of this case is seen in periods subsequent to the Islamic Kingdom of the Fung, in which not a single burial of one of the kings has been recognized so far, despite the significant time difference from the civilization of Meroe. Despite that Islam does not call for prominent grave architecture, we find most of the elders and the clergy from the Fung and prior periods were buried in *gubbas* and structures in the areas of Abu Haraz, Sennar, Dongola and others. There is complete continuity between these periods.

7. Each period is an extension to the one before and the nucleus of what came later. The period of the Kingdom of Makuria is one of the important to study the sequence of the Christian and early Islamic periods. The multiplicity of private burials of different kinds spread dramatically in this region. This region experienced the largest and most important transitions in the history of Sudan's political and social aspects since Napatan times and even Christian and Islamic periods in the capital of Christian Makuria. It later became a major gathering centre of sheiks and clerics in addition to the economic importance of the region and control of the world trade movement between Sudan and Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea. Hence the region was important for the Islamic state in Egypt to control. The region continued to rule Sudan for more than 1,000 years, producing a kind of political and social unity. It also contributed significantly to the formation of some aspects of current Sudanese life. It represented a serious turning point in the history of the Sudanese civilization because it is associated with a major shift that resembles the transition from the rule of local religions to the rule of monotheistic religions from the Christian periods onwards, which lasted for about ten centuries and officially ended with the emergence of the rule of Islamic culture.
8. The nature of governance and relations with the Islamic state has played a major role in the formation of identity of the Kingdom that can be seen with the emerging Islamic *Dawa'a* (call) in its beginning when it was not expanding to Nobatia perhaps but aimed to secure the borders. The introduction of Christianity and Islam continued to add to the rich cultural history of the region which is one of the most ancient centres of civilisation in the world. Until the invasion of

Muhammad Ali Pasha, the most famous slave traders were from Dongola. Gold was also a major important economic export.

Monotheistic religions are considered the strongest in terms of power and money. It was the strength of Islam that played a big role in weakening the state, as well as increasing the risk posed by the desert tribes, especially the Arabs and Muslim merchants who had infiltrated the Nubian lands in large numbers from long before. Evidence of them is found in different areas in the north and east of Sudan, as already mentioned. Contributing to the infiltration of these groups, the power and the influence of Islam, more than any other, ultimately resulted in the destruction of the social and political organization in Nubia, and in turn led to the emergence of ethnically and religiously different groups. These factors intensified the conflict between them for power. Makuria divided into small emirates which each having their own entities and characters such as Datawa and Alabwab. Some of the emirates and the Islamic kingdoms such as Sakrab and Rikabiya arose from the ninth century. Later there appeared the kingdoms and emirates of Alkhannaq, Argo, Almahas kingdom, Koka kingdom and others. The Kingdom did not directly interfere in the emergence of the emirates and the early Islamic kingdoms. As the large presence of the *gubbas* of the other Islamic relics clearly suggests, the king agreed to the Muslims doing what they want without interference from his authority. This explains the presence of churches and monasteries and the many mosques and *gubbas* in one area.

The conversion to Islam, such in Nubia area represents a new transitional phase associated with new forms of rules of Islamic behaviour and different life. Arab Muslim groups were able to make a significant contribution to the Nubian traditions of Christianity. These included the taking of some of the names, titles and Islamic dress now present in Nubia, in addition to the phenomenon of Arabicizing Nubians which has been brought about through intermarriage. In general, the conversion of Nubia to Islam was not just a consequence of Arab and Muslim groups spreading from the north to the south. The spread was gradual from before the fall of the Makurian state and was clearly completed in the era of the Fung. Thus, there was a period of a social decline where Nubians merged into the Arab-Islamic culture and lost their independent identity. Competition arose between the two religions. There was conflict between some Christian groups and Islam during the Mamluk period. Apart from political conflicts, there are some doctrinal views on the performance of religious practices and rituals. Islamic prayer can be performed while travelling and in many other places ('land is made a mosque'; a saying of the Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him); in Christianity prayers are performed in the church. With the emergence of political systems in the Middle Ages, Makuria stretched across and covered most of Sudan; it was a strong state, which ruled for more than 1000 years (400-1500 AD) with its own culture and language. However, it is not given its due in the history of the Sudan. Rather, it is only mentioned as one of the three Nubian kingdoms. Some people think of it as a period of cultural decline in the absence of understanding of some important details regarding the political situation, but it turns out that there are many stages of the conflict in that period which have led to the current ambiguity which must be resolved and disseminated to the rest of the scholarly community.

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Personal interviews

- Professor Ali Osman Mohammed Saleh, Department of Archaeology, University of Khartoum – 2008.
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Oral Narrators

- Narrator: Sheikh Abdul Qadir, 60-year-old farmer, Almquaodh area, bar No. 1, field work 2007.
- Narrator: Halima Kaya, 115 years old, Shahenda area, bar (3), field work in 2007
- Narrator: Khalil Khairi, 60-year-old farmer, Almaqawdah area, bar (2), field work in 2007.
- Narrator: Abdullah Yassin 60 years old, Alkhadnaq area, bar (1), Alkhandaq archive project, the Department of Archaeology, University of Khartoum, 2006.
- Narrator: Mohammed Hussein almost 60 years old, (former Deputy Secretary General of the Sudan Workers Trade Unions Federation, Almaqawdah area, bar (3), Khartoum 2006.
- Narrator: Mohammed poor 60-year-old teacher, Nawa Alater area, bar No. 1, 2007 field work
- Narrator: Mohammed Nugud, 87 years old, Nawa area, bar No. 1, 2007 field work.

PLATES



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Plate 1. General view of Wad Nimeiri castle (Photographs: the author)



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Plate 2. Southern tower of Khandaq (Alkhandaq) fort (Photographs: the author)



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Plate 3. Ancient houses at Khandaq (Alkhandaq) (Photographs: the author)



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Plate 4. Types of group burial at Khandaq (Alkhandaq) (Photographs: the author)

PLATES



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Plate 5. Pottery types from Khandaq (Alkhandaq) (Photographs: the author)



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Plate 6. The Royal Palace and types of churches at Old Dongola (Photographs: the author)



1

Plate 7. Medieval palace at Old Dongola (Photograph: the author)



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Plate 8. Types of houses and Khalwa at Old Dongola (Photographs: the author)

PLATES



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Plate 9. The graves of the saints in Old Dongola (Photographs: the author)



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Plate 10. Early Islamic (Post-Medieval) cemetery at Old Dongola (Photographs: the author)



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Plate 11. Ruins of the church and pottery sherds from Haj Majid site (Photographs: the author)



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Plate 12. Ibn Abi al-Sarh (Ibn Abi As-Sarḥ) mosque in Nawa site (Photographs: the author)



1

Plate 13. General view of Hambakol site (Photograph: the author)



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Plate 14. General view and details of Usheir castle – 5th Cataract region (Photographs: the author)

PLATES



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Plate 15. General view of Abu Sidair castle – 5th Cataract region (Photographs: the author)



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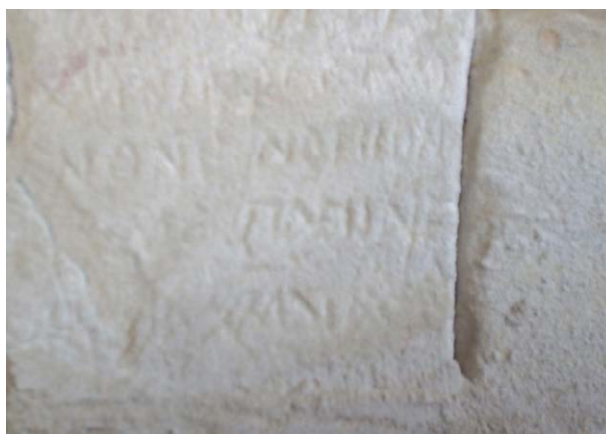


4



5

Plate 16. Castle house, domed tomb, graves at Abu Fatma site – 3rd Cataract region (Photographs: the author)



1



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5

Plate 17. Nubian text, grave of Makurian kings, and pottery sherds from Sinada site (Photographs: the author)



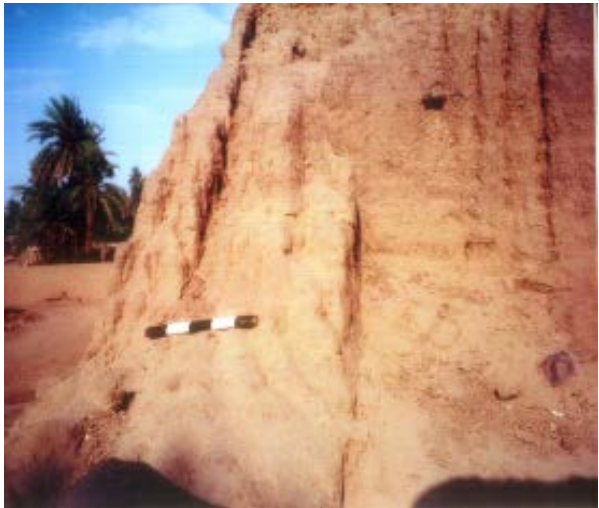
1



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Plate 18. Kadakoul sites destroyed since 2023. 1. General view of the Kadakoul site, 2. General view of the site of Kesi, 3. General view of the Arab Haj fortress, 4. The southern wall of the fortress



1



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Plate 19. Kenkalab site destroyed since 2023. 1. General view of the palace, 2, 3. Palace towers showing the thickness of the wall, 4. Mud foundations of small rooms

This volume offers a fresh reassessment of the Kingdom of Makuria, one of medieval Nubia's most significant Christian states in the Middle Nile region, through the integration of new archaeological discoveries and a critical re-evaluation of earlier research. Moving beyond traditional site-focused studies, it situates Makuria within its broader landscape, exploring settlement patterns, regional interactions, and the fluid nature of its political and cultural boundaries. The archaeological component comprises reassessments of sites already excavated, together with survey data and descriptions of test excavations at a total of 15 sites noted but not previously investigated in the Old Dongola, Third Cataract and Fifth Cataract regions. This survey data is significant for recording several sites that are no longer extant. Particular emphasis is placed on Old Dongola and its surrounding centres, revealing their roles in trade, administration, and cultural development.

By combining archaeological, textual, linguistic, and environmental evidence, the study reconstructs the complex networks that shaped Makurian society. It examines rural and urban settlements, religious transformations, and cultural continuity from the post-Meroitic period through the Christian era, offering new insights into governance, identity, and interregional connections across medieval Sudan.

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