

**Site of *pr-srkt* (Pselkis) in lower Nubia
(Historical and cultural significance)**

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Radwan Abdel Rady Sayed Ahmed

Department of Egyptology-Faculty of Archaeology-Aswan University

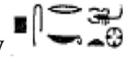
radluxegy@yahoo.com, dr_radwansayed@aswu.edu.eg

Abstract

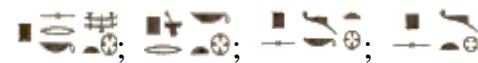
This paper deals with the historical and cultural study of one of the important cities in Egyptian Lower Nubia during the Greek and Roman periods, it is *pr-srkt* (Pselkis) and its political, religious, economic and cultural roles through various sources.

Keywords: Pselkis, Egyptian Lower Nubia, Greek and Roman times, Religious importance, cultural importance, political importance, economic importance.

1. Writing forms:

 *P-srkt* "The House of the Scorpion" or "The House of the Scorpion-Goddess (Serket)", which is derived from the original form  *Pr-srkt*, which has not been found yet (Gauthier, 1925).  *Hwt-p-srkt*, "Temple of the Scorpion-Goddess (Serket)", a rare form for a name of a city  *P-srkt* in the Egyptian Lower-Nubia (*W3w3t*) (Gauthier, 1927).

 *Psrkt*,  *Pslkt* (Blackman, 1911).

 *Psr(k)t* (Budge, 1921, 994). Also it could be pronounced as: *P-srk*, *P-srk(t)*, *P-slk*, *P-slk(t)*, *srk*, *srk*, *srkt*, *slk* and *slkt* "The Place of the Scorpion" (Brugsch, 1879). Greek: Ψελκις; Ψελχίς. Latin: Pselcis-Pselchis-Pselkis. Ethnic: Pselkites (Geo ID: 1949) (Verreth, 2008).

In Fact, the Greek name of the city Pselkis, or rather the Greek pronunciation of *P-srk* or *P-slk* has been kept the original and old Egyptian name of the place.

The name is possibly derived from that of the goddess Selkt, or from the emblem of personal title of some prehistoric chief; or may be the locality was notorious for the number of scorpions in ancient times, but it is at least as likely that the original Nubian place-name was written down with the signs for the nearest Egyptian sounds (Firth, 1915).

2. Site:

A city in the Lower-Nubia on the left (western) bank of the Nile River, the recent site of "Dakka" (Gauthier, 1925). Today "Dakka", where ruins and remains of an important temple from the Ptolemaic Period are still found (Gauthier, 1927; Maspero, 1886; Weigall, 1907).

It is Dakka (Monument) in Wadi Qenus, the Egyptian Perselqet or Pselqet, and the Greek and Roman Pselkis, Pselcis, Pselchis and Spelcis. It is opposite to Quban (Settlement) in the same Wadi, the Egyptian Baki, and the Greek and Roman Contra-Pselchis (Fig.1) (Salvoldi & Geus, 2017).

It is located in the region of *Triakontaschoinos* in Lower Nubia for a distance of about 300 miles between the First Cataract and the Dal (Second) Cataract (north of Firka, now no longer exists), it includes the Lower Nubia and the Eastern deserts of Southern Egypt and Northern Sudan from the First almost up to the Third Cataract (Weigall, 1907; Burstein & Borough, 2000).

The modern villages of Birba and Dakka are built at the river's edge, and behind them lies an extensive plain about eight kilometers long by one and half wide, composed of alluvial Nile mud, suggesting that in ancient times there was a shallow reach of the river at this point at flood time, in which the slowness of current allowed a deposit of mud north and west to be farmed each year, and the mud is banded westwards by the sandstone. Just to the south of Dakka temple is a considerable depression, the contour of which is only 17.5 metres above the sea. Behind Dakka, about ten kilometers inland, runs the caravan road from Kalabsha to Korosko. There is a station or halting place four kilometers west of the river, where travellers have in all ages carved their names and sentiments in Egyptian, Meroitic, Greek, Latin and Arabic. Traces of quarrying exist here, although building stone is procurable along the desert edge nearer the river (Firth, 1915).

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3. General short history:

Nubia's territory extends from Upper Egypt through Lower Sudan, stretching from the First through the Sixth Cataract of the Nile (Fig.2). Through Nubian history the Nubians had contact with other populations including Egyptian and Ethiopians. These similarities between Egyptians and Nubians were so striking, the social structures even resembled one another; Nubians also had kingdoms and state-level societies. Common social structure may have been due the interaction between the two populations, likewise, the extended into the Twenty-fifth Nubian Kingdom; Ethiopians were the rulers of what has been referred to as the "Ethiopian Dynasty". Many other populations had contact with the Nubians, including the Bedouins and Greek. The Nubians evolved biologically and culturally without much contribution of gene flow from outside groups. The archaeological evidence suggests that some of the Nubian cultural transitions were smooth and not indicative of the integration of another population in the area. However, other cultural transitions yielded major shifts in artifacts, grave form, and language the suggested prolonged contact with other populations. Thus, the Nubians archaeological records is peppered with both smooth abrupt transitions, which implies that the amount and nature of contact of outside groups varied throughout Nubian history (Gadde, 2009).

The history of Lower Nubia begins from the ages of Prehistory according to the rock art and rock inscriptions in this region which have been recorded and studied by the former Czechoslovak Institute of Egyptology, Charles University in Prague between 1963 and 1965, when the Institute surveyed two sections of the valley in Lower Nubia in the framework of the UNESCO-organized salvage campaign with the object of recording the rock art and rock inscriptions doomed to disappear underneath waters of the Lake Nasser, where the team in charge managed to gather a large corpus of Rock Art (Fig. 3) (Suková, 2016).

Lower Nubia (*W3w3t*) extended between the First Cataract and area named Batn el-Hagar (The Belly of the Rock), which is a narrow river strait located south of the Second Cataract. The area was inhabited by the sedentary Nubian C-Group, identified with the *Nhsyw* mentioned in Egyptian sources. Another Nubian Group, the *Md3yw* of the Egyptian texts, was semi-nomadic and lived in the Eastern Desert. This group is commonly identified with the Pan Grave cultural remains. Lower Nubia was geographically an inter-mediary between Egypt and Upper Nubia, and it acted as a mediator between both areas. In Facts, the organization, administration

and control of the Nile area in Lower Nubia were in the hands of the Egyptian state through the control of the fortresses. The Nubian C-Group inhabited the area and maintained relationships with the Egyptians, but they controlled neither the river pass nor the core-periphery goods exchange. Besides gold, Egyptians imported ebony, ivory, myrrh, incense and Panther and Leopard skins from Nubia. Egyptian pottery was found at Kerma, and it shows a patron of exchange that suffered changes over time. Control over Lower Nubia can be explained not only by pure economic necessity on the part of the Egyptian state to assure the arrival at certain luxury goods; but also, and perhaps more importantly, this arrival was completed by questions of ideological character that had much to do with the role played by luxuries in the conformation of Egyptian society. Lower Nubia was a linking area between a core (Egypt) and a periphery (Kerma). The state's ideology played an important part in the new social order imposed upon this linking area (Flammini, 2008).

The New Empire colonies of Thothmes III and Amenhotep III which are found scattered throughout Nubia do not seem to have remained in a very prosperous condition. The foreign wars of Ramses II may, through conscription, have reduced the male population of Lower Nubia, but it is more probable that the neglected and deserted condition of the country was due to the emigration of the population southwards to Ethiopia and its capital Napata, during the late New Empire and the succeeding period.

Archaeological speaking, it is difficult to fill the gap between the fall of New Empire and the Ptolemaic Period, not more than half a dozen graves between these dates having been discovered by the survey between Shellal and Dakka (Firth, 1912; Breasted, 1906).

According to the inscription of the Nubian queen Kadimalo (Semna West, 8th Century BC. Temple of Dedwen and Sesostris III, Façade, beside the entrance on West, second register), the historical setting can be determined only hypothetically. The appearance of an independent king and a queen in Lower Nubia imaginable in the later reign of Ramesses XI when, in regnal year 19, the former viceroy of Kush Panahesy, who revolted in year 17 against his king, was forced to retreat to Lower Nubia where he established his own rule. The independence of Lower Nubia from Thebes was, however, only temporary, and after Panahesy's death it seems to have been governed again by viceroys of Kush appointed by the rulers of Twenty-First, Twenty-Second, and Twenty-Third Dynasties. The last viceroy of Kush Pamiu, is attested around 775-750 BC; and his office may have become extinct as a direct

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consequence of the appearance of a new power in Nubia. By the reign of Kashta (ca. 760-747 BC) the regions of Napata and Meroe were united into a kingdom; and at an, unfortunately in datable, point in his reign Kashta appeared in Upper Egypt and claimed Egyptian Kingship. Queen Kadimalo, a lady originating, according to her name, from the region of Meroitic-Speakers in the South, may be brought into connection with the northward advance of the young Kushite Kingdom that prepared Kashta's appearance in Upper Egypt (Eide & Others, 1994).

In the Saite Period (Dynasty XXVI) Psamtik II (595-589 B.C.) son of the king Necho II (610-595 B.C.) led a foray into Nubian in 592 BC, marching as far south as the third or even the fourth Cataract of the Nile, according to a contemporary stela from Thebes (Karnak), which dates to year 3 of this king's name and refers to a heavy defeat that was inflicted upon the kingdom of Kush. As well-known graffito inscribed in Greek on the left leg of the colossal seated statue of Ramesses II, on the south side of the entrance to the temple of Abu Simbel, records that:

"When king Psammetichus came to Elephantine, this was written by those who sailed with Psammetichus the son of Theocles, and they came beyond Kerkis as far as the river permits. Those who spoke foreign tongues (Greek and Carians who also scratched their names on the monuments) were led by Potasimto, the Egyptian by Amasis".

Kerkis was located near the fifth Cataract of the Nile which stood well within the Kushite Kingdom. The Kushite capital was sacked under the reign of the native Kushite king Aspelta who was the younger brother of Anlamani and the son of Senkamanisken. The year 3 Karnakstela is dated to II shemu day 10 of Psamtik II's reign told us about his campaign against Kush. As a result of Psamtik's devastating campaign, Kush's power was crushed, and its kings from Aspelta onwards lost any opportunity of ever regaining control of Egypt. Instead, the Nubian rulers decided to shift their capital farther south from Napata to the relative safety of Meröe. Curiously, however, Psamtik II does not appear to have capitalized on his victory. His troops retreated back to the first Cataract, and Elephantine continued to the southern border of Egypt. An outcome of this campaign was the deliberate destruction of monuments belonging to the 25th Dynasty Kushite kings in Egypt by hacking out their names and the emblems of royalty from their statues and reliefs (Goetz & McHenry, 2003).

This was the first confrontation between Egypt and Nubia since the reign of Tantamani. A Kushite king named Anlamani had revived the power of the kingdom of Napata. Psamtik II's campaign the Kushites may have had to re-conquer Egypt. The Egyptian army advanced to Pnubs (Kerma) and the capital city of Napata in a series of fierce battles, where they looted its temples and destroyed the royal Kushite statues (Bonnet & Valbelle, 2005; Brier, 1999; Haaland, 2014).

The Ptolemies conquered and controlled the northern portions of Lower Nubia known as the *Dodekashoinos* (Δωδεκάσχοινος, "Land of the Twelve *Schoinoi*") or *Triakontaschoinos* (Τριακοντάσχοινος, "Land of the Thirty *Schoinoi*"), though they last lost control of them during the Upper Egyptian Revolt 205-186 BCE, and possibly again toward the end of the Ptolemaic Period. The Ptolemies founded several temples in Lower Nubia, at Debod, Talmis (Kalabsha), Pselkis (Dakka), and Primis (QasrIbrim), and probably a garrison at Primis as well, which may have served as nuclei for new settlements. A Greek honorific decree on Sehel Island dedicated to Ptolemy VI and the provincial governor (*Stratēgos*) Boethos records that the Later founded two such new settlements, Philometoris and Kleopatra,

somewhere in the Lower Nubia (

<https://www.cambridge.org/core/terms.https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781316286364.008> : 2/8/2020. 06:57 PM, Seven:

The Ptolemaic Period (332-30 BCE), 250-1).

4. Pselkis in the Ptolemaic and roman periods:

Under the Ptolemies, Lower Nubia one more because populations, although the causes which led to this are somewhat obscure. The Egyptian seem to have been attracted into the country partly from religious motives, and a considerable population would, no doubt, have accompanied Arkamen (Ergamenes) when he fled into Lower Nubia from his capital Napata. The prince founded a little kingdom which extended from Maharraga to the First Cataract and built the temple of Dakka to adorn his new capital. The Roman established a protectorate over the Lower Nubian princes, and they seem to have recognized that the country was Ethiopian territory. An invasion of the Ethiopians, however, resulted in their signal defeat (B.C. 23) at the hands of Petronius, the prefect of Egypt, and the district was organized as a Roman military province. By the third century, however, the Roman garrisons were reduced or withdrawn, and the frontier placed at Aswan. The Hamitic tribes of the Eastern Desert (Bisharin, Hadendowa), known to the classical writers as Blemmyes, now overran the country, and Diocletian seems to have been forced to introduce a fresh Ethiopian or Nubian colony-the Nobadae-to cope with them (Firth, 1915; Bevan, 1927; Török, 1997; Török, 2009; Solieman, 2014; Cavenaille, 1970; Criniti, 1973 ; Lesquier, 1918).

5. Pselkis wine-series:

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In the Summer of 1992, 18, and, a year later, 15 more Ostraca were rediscovered in the Museum of Classical Archaeology of the University of Cambridge, they originate from Pselkis (Dakka) in Nubia, which was excavated by C.M. Firth in 1909-10. The Texts belong to so-called "Pselkis Wine-Series", being receipts for wine addressed to the kibariatwr, and can be dated to the second half of the second or early third Century A.D (Csaba La' da & Rubinstein, 1996; Firth, 1915; Gau, 1822; Wilcken, 1899; Préaux, 1951; Préaux, 1955; Fink, 1971).

6. Romano-nubian pottery and x-group of psilkis:

Necks of amphorae (with strainer in neck) and dishes with sprays of foliage in black with orange bands batched in brown from Roman Period, very similar to the ware found north of the temple of Dakka during 1909-1910, which appears just to precede the X-group pottery and falls into the general class known as Romano-Nubian of which X-group types are the latest examples. Also the desert road from Dakka and Korosko again approached the river just south of the Bab Kalabsha (ancient Talmis) (Firth, 1915; Wooley & Randall-MacIver, 1910).

The Group of B and C were separated Nubian cultures existed throughout Nubia during the Kerma Period. The next Nubian group to occupy Lower Nubia was the Meroites, a state level society, who returned to the area after a long hiatus, approximately, 1000 years later, the population that moved into Lower Nubia after hiatus was actually Nubian. The cultural continuity between the Meroites and other Nubians implied that the Meroites were a Nubian group returning to Lower Nubia after abandonment of the area. Cultural continuity may have continued with the X-Group, who were very similar to the Meroites, there are evidence that suggested cultural continuity between the Meroites and X-Group, pottery, iron spears, arrowheads, and tools were similar between the two groups. This evidence has led other scholars to conclude that the Meroites evolved into the X-Group, who transitioned into the Christians. Some artifacts suggested the X-Group was a mixture of the different populations living in the area, including the Blemmyes, Nobatae, and any other foreign peoples who migrated to the area during the Meroitic Period. The Christians time Period followed the X-Group with uninterrupted cultural evolution, which is especially apparent in the slow changes in ceramics (Fig.4) (Gadde, 2009; Williams, 1960).

7. Pselkis as a roman military base (oppidum):

The Romans had been established a large series of military campaigns with intensive garrison for the purpose of "border defense" along the vast area of Egyptian Lower Nubia (Fig.5) (Desanges, 1969; Speidel, 1988).

There are a large numbers of papyri and Ostraca which had been found in Pselchis (Dakka) from Roman Period when it was an *Oppidum* or a big military point at the south of Egypt in the border line between Egypt and Nubia. These sources from Pselkis have provided us with important data (lists) which contain all information about the Roman garrison were camped in this region and in Lower Nubia in general from the reign of emperor Augustus to the end of the reign of emperor Diocletian. These sources told us about the personal names, military ranks or titles, names of troops, and the origins (countries) of the soldiers in the Roman army, such as:

Egypt, Syria, Libya, Palestine, Africa, Numidia, Italy, Greece, Spain, Phoenicia, Cilicia, Galatia, Cyrenaica, Paphlognia, Pamphylia, Caria, Tripolitania, Gaula, Bithynia, Pannonia, Paphos and Liburnia (Cavenaile, 1970).

The Ostraca of Pselkis give some data as to the life of the garrison at Pselkis. The names of the soldiers confirm the indigenous recruitment of the Roman army in Egypt, being besides certified by the "Father-Lands" of soldiers indicated in the main text. The chief interest of the receipts of Dakka consists in the fact that they bring us some particulars as to the pay (Préaux, 1951).

Pselkis was a military base. The general disposition of the Roman army reflects these major preoccupations (figs.6a and 6b). Given the very significant problems involved in feeding and watering troops posted to the deserts, the army bases-the *hiberna* of the troops-remained, throughout, on the Nile. From these bases men were out posted as required, to guard travelers, to protect the essential watering places on the cross-desert routes, and to supervise the extraction and guard the transportation of the of the minerals, many of which formed an imperial monopoly (Maxfield, 2011; <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/229809763> on 27 August 2019).

8. Pselkis as a famous touristic site in the roman period:

In a Greek votive inscription from Dakka (13 BC.), on the thickness of the pylon entrance of Thoth Temple. This inscription was found in the temple of Dakka (Pselkis) in the Dodecaschoenus, it was carved in honour of a god by a traveler who

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passes his shrine or a pilgrim who has come expressly to pay homage to the god in question:

"I, Harpocras, travelling upstream t[o]gether with [...] the ambassador and Tamias the scri[be] [to] our lady the queen (the goddess Isis), have come and made my ob[eisance] here befo[re] our lord Herm[es....] b[o]th for myself a(n)d for Anthousa a[n]d for [Ale]xa[n]dria. In the year 17 of Caesar (Augustus), (in the month) Meche[ir....]" (Eide & Others, 1996).

Philae and Dodekaschoinos Temples, especially Talmis (Kalabsha) and Pselkis (Dakka) were so famous sites for travel, tourism and pilgrimage in the Roman Period. We have already the primary sources as evidences which prove the travel survives in the form of informal inscriptions as graffiti in Greek, Latin and Demotic. Ancient Travel and Tourism in Upper Egypt extended to the limits of Lower Nubia where the border with the Meroe Kingdom was Hierasykaminos (EL-Maharaqa) about 70 miles to the south at the southern end of Dodekaschoinos (Rutherford, 2011).

9. Pselkis as a place of the different cultures interaction:

In fact, the site of Pselkis in the Greco-Roman Period is considered a rich and plentiful data source for all sides of Geographical, political, military, economical and even social aspects of the city which reflects the ancient life of that unique place located between two different worlds and cultures: Egyptian and Nubians. Through the distinguished and variable texts which found there which written in Hieroglyphic, Hieratic, Demotic, Greek, Latin and Meroitic and had been inscribed on stones, papyri and ostraca man could gain a huge mixed cultural wealth and knowledge in one important and vital place in Ancient Egypt (Verreth II, 2008; III, 2009; V, 2011).

11. The history of the temple of dakka as a part of pselkis's history:

Dakkeh marks the site of the ancient Pa-Selk "The Abode of the Scorpion", which name was written Pselkis, and by Strabo is called Pselche. There are indications of early cemeteries in the neighborhood, and one may suppose that the town already existed in the archaic times. In the desert behind Dakkeh there are extensive cemeteries of the Middle Kingdom, and here the temple stone bearing the name of Amenemhat of the XIIth dynasty was found. The names of Thothmes IInd and IIIrd and Sety 1st have also observed on stones unearthed here, and one may therefore

regard the history of the town as being continuous throughout dynastic times. The temple as it now stands was built by the Lower Nubian king who calls himself "The King of Upper and Lower Egypt Amendet Anhtaara, son of the Sun (Re) Argamen living for ever, beloved of Isis", commonly called Ergamenes (*Irġ-Imn*), a contemporary of Ptolemy IInd, IIIrd, and IVth, a king who has already been discussed with reference to his work at Philae. Ptolemy IVth Philopator himself added some of the reliefs and he records the cartouches of Ptolemy IIIrd, his father, Berenice, his mother, Arsinoë IIIrd, his sister and wife, and Arsinoë IVth, his daughter, the Vestibule was added by Ptolemy IXth.

There are a number of Greek inscriptions in different parts of the Temple, one of which mentions that in the thirty-fifth year of Ptolemy IX the pronaos was built and dedicated to Hermes Paotnuphis. The sanctuary was built by an unidentified Roman pharaoh. An inscription here records the fact that Saturninus Veteranus Aquila executed the gilding of parts of the temple. Dakkeh was the scene of a great battle between the Romans and Ethiopians in the year 24 BC. While Aelius Gallus, the third prefect of Egypt, was engaged in a badly managed and unsuccessful war in Arabia, the Ethiopians, under their queen Kandake, revolted and, with 30.000 ill-armed men, successfully besieged Aswân, Elephantine, and Philae, defeating the three Roman cohorts which were stationed there. Gaius Petronius, the successor of the disgraced Aelius Gallus, hurried and pushed the Ethiopians back to Dakkeh, where, after three days of useless negotiations, he defeated them, following to Napata, their southern capital. Strabo mentions an island near here to which the Ethiopians fled, this may have been the Island of Derâr, which lies a few miles to the south of Dakkeh. In Christian Times the temple was used as a church by inhabitants of Dakkeh. The temple was dedicated to the Thoth of Penubs, also written without the initial *P* which stood for *pr* "The Abode of". The word Nubs, it should be added, means the "Sycamore Tree". This city is perhaps to be identified with Kôrteh and Ofundîneh in Upper Nubia. Thoth is called "*Lord of Penubs in Takens (Lower Nubia), Lord of Dakkeh, Twice Great Hermoplois, Beloved of Biggeh, Lord of the Land of the South*". Many other gods were also worshipped here, whose figures will be seen in the reliefs, Arsnuphis, Osiris, Isis, Horus, Hathor, Thoth and Tefnut (Weigall, 1910; Lohwasser, 2020).

During the removal of Dakka temple in the 1960s to the site of Wadies-Sebua, some reused stone blocks from Thutmose III, Seti I and Merneptah were discovered which originated from an earlier New Kingdom structure in or near Quban (Contra Pselkis). Also names of the Meroitic king Arqamani (or Ergamenes II), Ptolemy IV,

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Ptolemy IX from the Ptolemaic Period, and the emperors Augustus and Tiberius from the Roman Period have been read in the inscriptions of the temple (Wilkinson, 2000; Arnold & Others, 2003; Arnold, 1999; Müller, 2013; Budka, 2013, Königtm, 2015; Roeder, 1930; Porter & Moss VII, 1975).

Through some plentiful inscriptions from the temple of Dakka (Hieroglyphic, Meriotic and Demotic), dated back to different periods (Meroitic: Late 1st Cent. B.C. and Mid-3rd Cent. A.D.; and Roman: 10/11 A.D.; first half of the 3rd Cent. A.D.). These texts could be proved that this temple was used for a long time as a center of the financial administration of the domains of Isis and Thoth in the region of the Dodecaschoenus (temples affairs) under the responsibility of the high rank officials in its government called the Strategos or the District-Commissioner (*p3-mr-mš* or briefly *mr-mš*) and *p3-krny* (the agent) of Isis of the Abaton and Thoth of Pnubs as official activities (Eide & Others II, 1994; III, 1998).

12. The temple of dakka as a court (place of judgment) and giving oaths:

There are two Demotic graffiti from Dakka dated back to the reign of king Aqrakamani, 29 or 25 BC. It was suggested that Arakamani's year 3 falls within the period of Meroitic occupation of the Triacontaschoenus in the second half of 25 BC. Another, perhaps more plausible dating would, however, be to the brief period of the popular revolt in the Triacontaschoenus before April 17, 29 BC. These Demotic texts dating from the late 1st Century BC and the 1st Century AD.

"Copy of this...of the kings, and "Menai" the district-commissioner, the agent of Pharaoh, the agent Isis, the Waab-priest of Isis, under this good thing that he did for Isis, exchange for the breath of the king for his nostril, namely, the services for the great goddess Isis, mistress of the Abaton and (of) Philae, in exchange for the life of the kings again, forever. Written by the scribe of the temple-complex of Isis of the Abaton and of Philae "Hr-m-3h t Harmakhis" son of "P3-di-Hr Petehôr". And the great council made "this" writing of judgment.....today. Third regnal year, Fourth month of Winter [last day], of king Aqragamane and the queen Naytal, his mother" (Eide, Others II, 1994).

Also, there is a long demotic inscription of a person called Albe. It was inscribed on the south face of the north-west corner pillar of the pronaos of the temple of Thoth at Dakka, it may dated back to 57 A. D. It is the only one of the inscriptions recording oaths taken in the presence of a non-Egyptian *mr-mš* of the Dodecaschoenus which belongs to the type using the formula *hp3-nh*, "text of the

oath". It records an agreement concluded before Alba and Mas (Eide & Others II, 1994).

13. Religion at pselkis:

The Temple of Pselkis (Dakka) was dedicated by the Meroitic king Ergemenes *Irḳ-Imn* to the god Thoth Pnubis "Lord of EL-Dakka", and later another Pronaos was dedicated to him as "Hermes Paotnuphis" by the king Ptolemy IX. The shrine built by Ergamenes at Dakkeh to have been specially dedicated to Thoth of Pnubs , the name *Pr-nbs*, or *P-nbs* ("House of the Sycamore") reminds one of the old name of the village is now called Ofedwineh (about 10 kilometers distant from Pselkis), this village was known in the Roman Period as HieraSykaminos. In the temple of Ofedwineh the sacred Sycamore is frequently depicted, and there also the goddess Isis is represented as seated under a tree, while Thoth stands beside her. It is possible that the place-name Pnubs may have derived its origin from the sacred Sycamore of Ofedwineh, Thoth of Pnubs is represented at times as an ape seated under a tree (probably the nbs-tree). Both in Dakkeh and in Dendûr Thoth of Pnubs appear in human form (as Shu) (Boylan, 1922; Blackman, 1911; Baldi II, 2015).

14. The unique meroïtic scene of the goddess serket at the temple of dakka:

Although the ancient name of Pslkis site is *Pi-srḳt* as a dedication for the ancient Egyptian goddess *srḳt*, man found no mention of her in a text or in a scene among the heavy numerous and different inscriptions of the temple, except one scene in the origin chapel of the site from the reign of the meroïtic king Ergamenes.

On either jamb of the doorway of the adytum, the Nubian king Ergamenes is shown making a prayer to Thoth of [P]nubs and slket and to Isis of Philae (Weigall, 1910).

15. The archaeological remains of dakka:

The Predynastic Period when Nubian was culturally one with Egypt, the Early Dynastic age when the economic causes which eventually produced the civilization of the Old Kingdom, were hardly felt in Nubia, the rise of the native cultures south of the First Cataract in the Old and Middle Kingdom, provisionally called the B-and C-groups, and their disappearance under the New Kingdom, when Nubian, through conquest, became culturally and, to a certain extent, racially, one more a part of Egypt. From the centuries between the New Empire and the Ptolemaic Period, there are hardly any remains. Lower Nubia seems to have become a frontier state of the Ethiopian Kingdom, and almost uninhabited. Under the later native Ethiopian princes and the Ptolemies, the country was rapidly repopulated, and a fresh impetus

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was given to temple building; the ruins of older buildings being, in some cases, used as quarries. During the Roman rule, the Nobatae tribes introduced into the country by Diocletian to cope with the invading Blemmyes, and it is possibly to them that the singular graves of what is known as the X-group Period, are to ascribed. Finally, the Christian and Moslem Periods have left considerable cemeteries in the neighborhood of the ruined towns of the mediaeval and the villages of the present, population.

The site of Dakka has the remains of different cemeteries from Prehistoric, Early Dynastic Periods, Old, Middle, and New Kingdoms to the Greco-Roman Periods, Byzantine, Christian and Islamic Times (Firth, 1915).

Originally, there was an enclosure wall running around the temple, but this is now destroyed. There is much evidence that a temple of Thothmes IIIrd existed on this site, Gau believed that it was to the right of the present edifice (fig.7).

The remains of the ancient town lie around the temple, a large quantity of potsherds being all that is left of the once important Pselchis. The main portion of the town seems to have been 500 yards to the north of the temple. In Murray's Handbook it is stated that there was a Roman custom-house near the temple (fig. 8 a and b), and that many Ostraka have been found on its site (fig.9) (Weigall, 1910).

Conclusion:

in the Greco-Roman The name of ancient Pselkis (the modern Dakka) -

period has been driven from the ancient Egyptian origin *p-srqt* or *p-slq*, so that the greco-roman name keep the ancient Egyptian one with a little change of pronunciation.

- The Egyptian name of Pselkis was written in different writing forms: *pr-srkt*; *p-srqt*; *Hwt-p-srqt*; *psrkt*; *pslkt*; *psr(k)t*; *p-srk*; *p-srk(t)*; *p-slq*; *p-slq(t)*; *p-srq*; *p-srk*; *p-srkt*; *p-slq*; *p-slkt* with the meanings of: "The Place of the Scorpion" or "The Place of the Scorpion-goddess *srqt*" or "The Place of *srqt*", and for its name *Hwt-p-srqt* with the meaning of "The Temple or the Mansion which belongs to Serket's place".

- This name was given by the ancient Egyptians to this place perhaps due to a kind of local cult for the scorpion-goddess "Serket" there, or maybe for the reason of the

plentiful numbers of scorpions were in this place in ancient times as it was the sacred symbol of the goddess Serket, or it was an emblem of a personal title of a prehistoric chief of a tribe or ancient village there.

- The Greek and Roman transcription of the ancient Egyptian name could be pronounced as: Pselkis, Pselchis and Pselcis.

- Pselkis is located in the Egyptian Lower Nubia on the left (western) bank of the Nile River (the recent Dakka).

- Pselkis is located in the opposite of Quban on the right (eastern) bank of the Nile River, so the Greco-Roman name of Quban was Contra-Pselchis "that one which in the opposite of Pselkis= Dakka". Where there were an important ancient village with a small temple of Horus Baki (Quban), and a fortress for guarding and protecting the ancient vital road to the mines of the gold in Wadi Alaqi and the Eastern Desert.

- Pselkis was situated in the region which enclosed sites and cities from the Island of Philae to Hierasycaminos (Maharraqa), this large-limit region was known in the classical studies and in the writings of the Greek and Roman geographers, writers and travelers as: Triakontaschoinos and Dodekaschoinos between the First and Second Cataracts of the Nile.

- The connection and relationship between Egypt and Nubia is occurred by the great political, geographical, demographical, economical, cultural and anthropological roles of the ancient Egyptian Lower Nubia (Wawat) through different periods from prehistory to Islamic times. It is the vital historic corridor and caravan road to Upper Nubia (Kash or Sudan) and Africa. Pselkis was an important part of that corridor through its rich history.

- The region of Triakontaschoinos and Dodekaschoinos has witnessed many historical events and actions in the Pharaonic, Ptolemaic and Roman Periods among Egyptians and Nubians as a boundary-region between two different worlds.

- The Temple of Dakka is the most important and attractive monument remained in the site of Pselkis. It is considered an essential part of the history of the ancient city. There are many evidences emphasized that the beginnings of the architectural activities in the site dates back to the New Kingdom (18th Dynasty, the king Thothmois III and Amenhotep III). The architectural activities were continued in the next times in the Ptolemaic Period with military and security appearances in the

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site (Ptolemies II, III, and IV) who all lived in the time of the Merotic king Ergamenes who first established a small shrine in the site and dedicated it to the Egyptian-Nubian god "Thoth-Penubis" (Thoth of the Sycamore Tree), we also read the cartouches of Ptolemy IX. From the Roman Period we could read the cartouches of the emperors Augustus and Tiberius in the inscriptions of the temple.

- Around the temple of Dakka, there were many remains of the ancient Pselkis city: graves, tombs, pottery and old buildings from Predynastic, Old Kingdom, Middle Kingdom, New Kingdom, Greco-Roman Period, Coptic (Byzantine) and Islamic times were discovered during survey works between years 1906-1910.

- The ancient site of Pselkis has been witnessed the cultural interactive and the human activities among the Nubian B, C, D, X-groups and the Egyptian, Greek, Roman and Christian inhabitants of the city.

- Beside the name of Thoth-Penubis, the patron god of the temple of Dakka, we could read another names of deities known in the region of the Lower Nubia in the inscriptions of the temple: the Egyptian Thoth, Isis of Philae, Wepset, Nehmet-Awy, Amun, Osiris, Horus, Hathor, Tefnut and Arsnuphes. For the goddess Serket, she is mentioned one time only in the original chapel of Meriotic king Ergmenes at Dakka.

- when the Meriotic king Ergmenes has been fled into the Lower Nubia from his capital Napata, he founded a little new kingdom which extended from Maharraga (Hiera Sykaminos) in the south to the first Cataract in the north, his new capital was Dakka (Ancient Pselkis).

- In the Roman Period Pselchis was the center of the roman garrisons by the 3rd century AD, where the Lower Nubia became a Roman military province. Through papyrus and ostraca discovered there at Dakka, Pselchis was considered as a roman oppidium or a big military base. In this site, the 3rd roman prefect Petronius has defeated the Ethiopians and Belmys tribes who attacked the Lower Nubia in 23 BC.

- Pselkis gave us through its rich sources (papyri and ostraca) precious information about the military life of the solders and the Roman army in general, which centralized in this area as an important military zone between Egypt and Nubia, also in order to guard the desert routes to the quarries and mines, especially, the gold in the Eastern Desert and the ports on the shores of the Red Sea for economical and military purposes.

- Pselkis was a famous touristic site in the Greco-Roman Period as it has been described in the writings of the classical geographers and travelers. Many of travelers came to visit Dakka and gave praying for them and for their families and present offerings to the god of Dakka temple "Thoth-Penubs", they put their hopes and prayings in the inscriptions inside the temple. It was an important station for travelling and pilgrimage.

- Pselkis is a rich source for the plentiful and previous ancient texts and inscriptions (Hieroglyphic, Hieratic, Demotic, Coptic, Merotic, Greek and Latin), which gave us a panoramic idea about the distinguished sides of the life in this ancient Egyptian city.

- Pselkis was a unique center of cutlers interaction and a source of huge mixed cultural wealth and knowledge in one place among different nations and cultures: Egyptians, Ethiopians, Greeks, Romans, Christians and Muslims.

- Pselkis was a big center of wine trading according to the huge numbers of potsherds, pottery, wine-jars and ostraca receipts remained in the site around the temple, these jars were placed and stored in the store or customer- house (Canteen) of the roman soldiers near the temple. These remains told us by the receipts of receiving about the huge amounts of wine, it may was consumption by the solders themselves, or as a famous trade object in economical manner.

- The temple of Dakka was used as the financial administration of Isis and Thoth in the region of Dodecaschoins through high rank officials (temple affairs) called: Strategos and the agent of Isis of Philae Island and Thoth-Pnubs.

- The temple of Dakka was a place of judgment (court) and giving oaths.

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Figures

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Fig. 1: Location of Dakka on the Western bank of the Nile at Lower Nubia.

Salvoldi, D. & Geus, K., "A Historical Comparative Gazetteer for Nubia", p. 167.

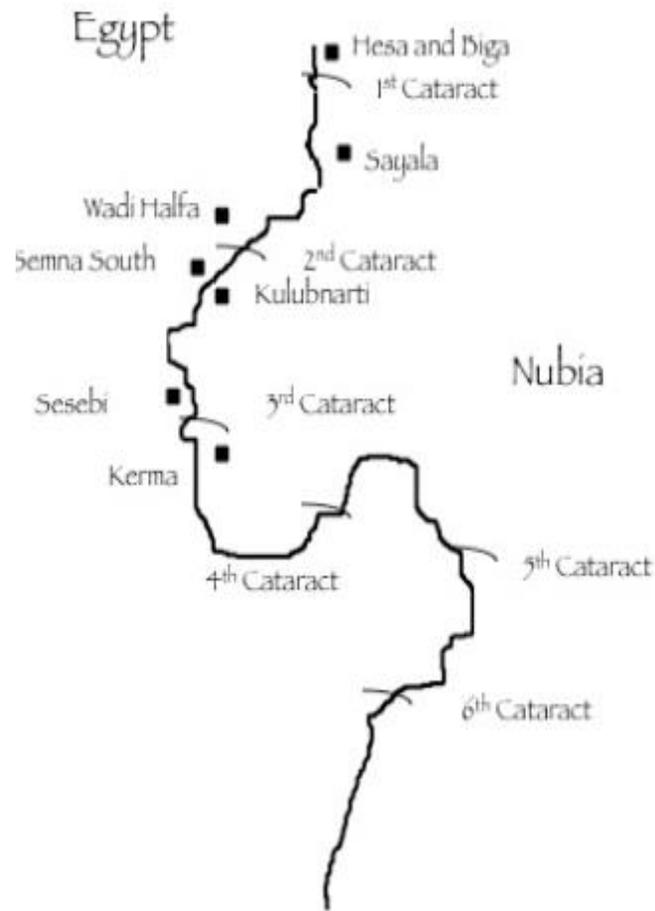
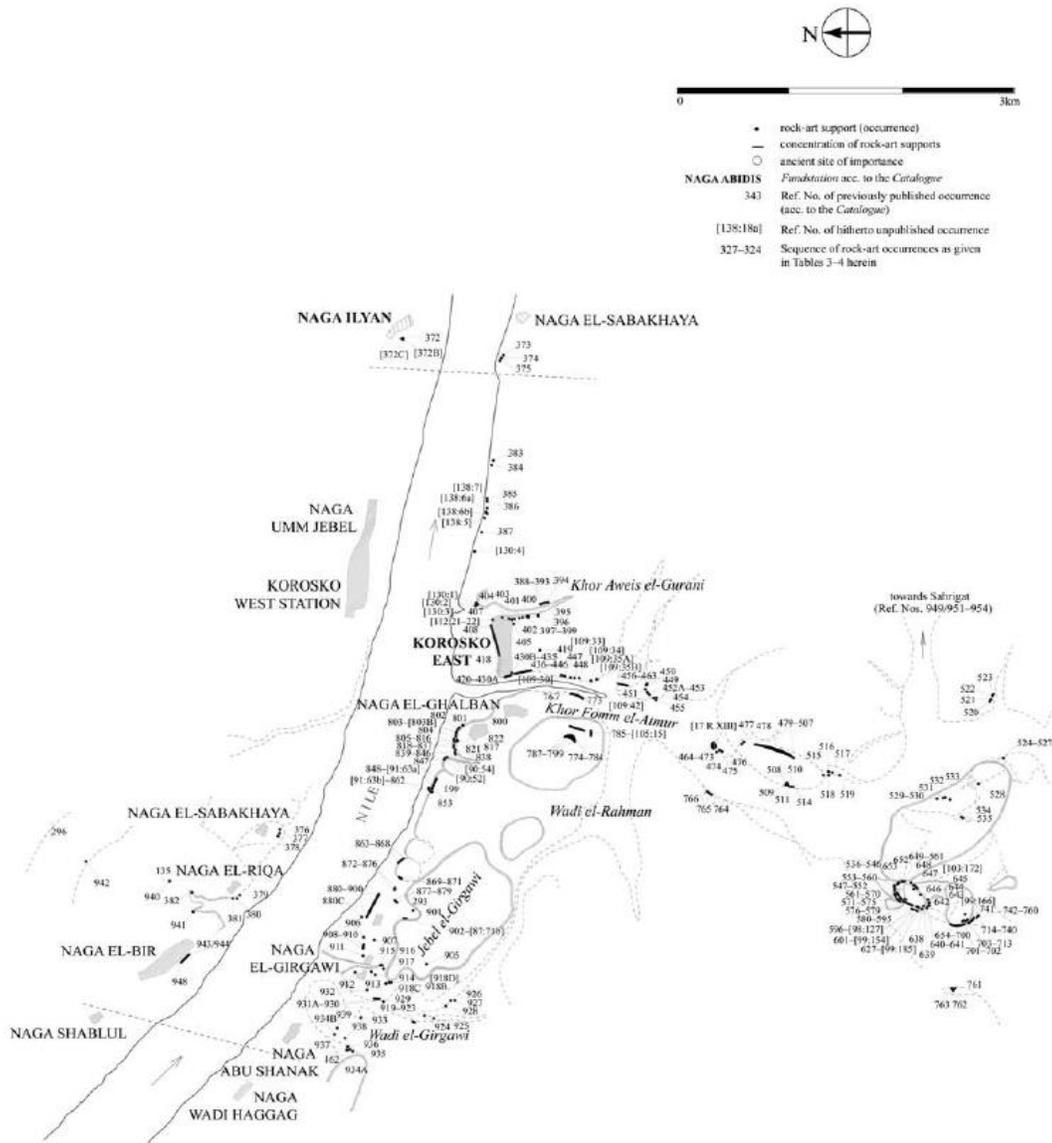


Figure 1. Map of Nubia.

Fig.2: Nubia's territory stretching from the First through the Sixth Cataract of the Nile.

Gadde, Population Structure of Lower Nubia in the Mesolithic-Christian Groups, p. 51.

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Map 16 Map Minute 17 and 16: distribution of all localised rock-art occurrences

Fig. 3: Distribution of Rock-Art in Lower Nubia.

Suková, L.V., "The Rock Art of Lower Nubia (Czechoslovak Concession)".
ResearchGate (8 March 2016).

Table 1. Nubian time periods.

Time Period	Dates
Paleolithic	12,000-15,000 years BP ¹
Mesolithic	5000-11000 years BP ²
Neolithic	5000-2700 B.C.
A-Group	3300-2800 B.C. ³ ; 3400-2400 B.C. ⁴
C-Group	2300-1800 B.C. ³ ; 2300-1200 B.C. ⁵
Kerma	1800-1200 B.C. ³
Pan-Grave	1786-1550 B.C. ⁶
Nubian Hiatus	1000 B.C. – 100 A.D. ⁴
Meroitic	0 – 350 A.D. ³
X-Group	350-550 A.D. ³
Christian	550-1500 A.D. ³

¹ Adams (1977)

² Based on Greene et al. (1967) and Hassan (1986)

³ Nielsen (1970)

⁴ Carlson and Van Gerven (1979)

⁵ Carlson and Van Gerven (1979) estimates of Lower Nubia

⁶ Strouhal and Jungwirth (1980)

Fig. 4: Nubian time Periods.

Gadde, Population Structure of Lower Nubia in the Mesolithic-Christian Groups, p. 51.

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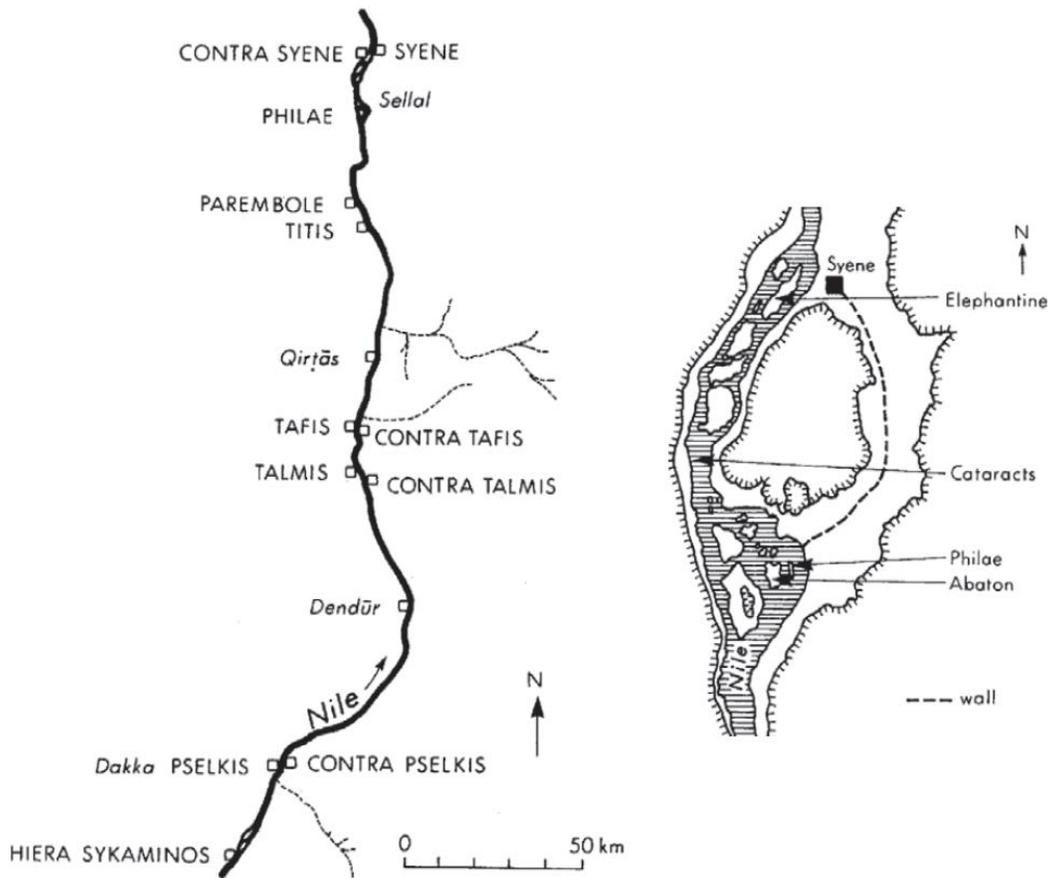


Fig. 5: Roman Military Campaigns of Border Defense in Lower Nubia.

Sabino, P.Y., Campamentos y Defensa del Territorio en el Egipto Romano, Espacio Tiempo y Forma, Serie II, Historia Antigua, t. 16 (2003), p. 126 (plan).

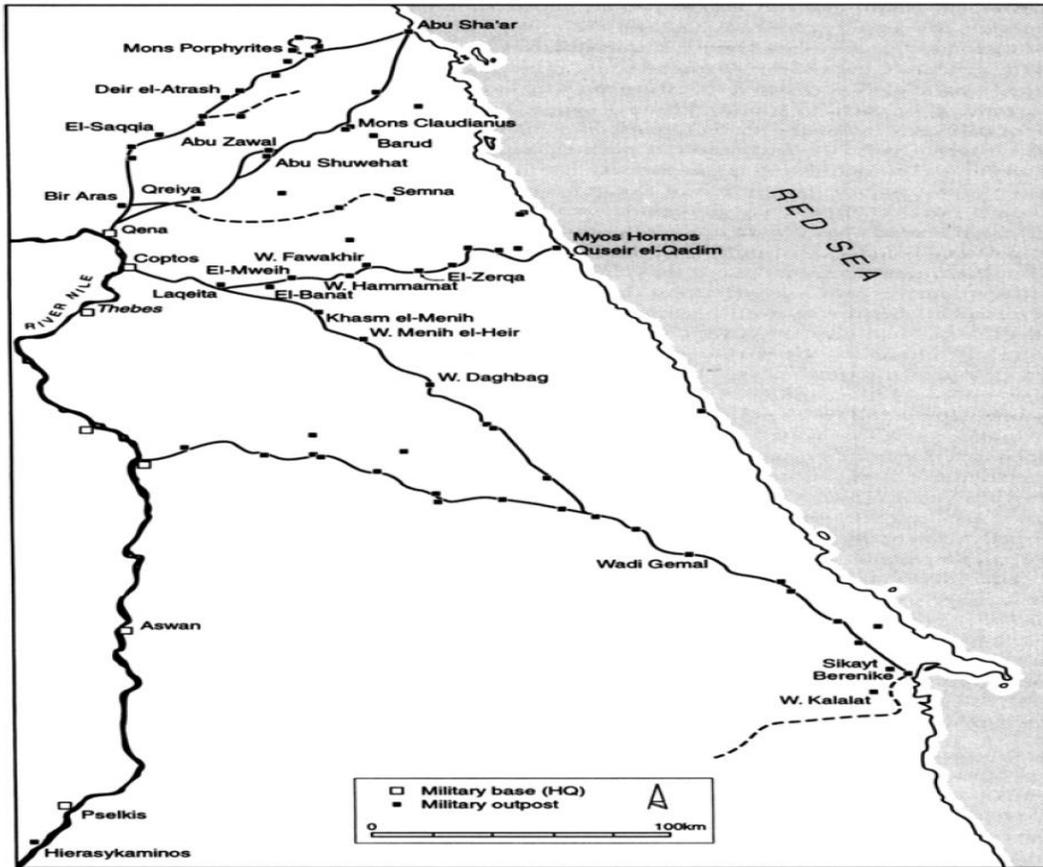


Fig. 6a: The General Disposition of the Roman Army (the Major Preoccupations in the Eastern Desert)

Maxfield, V.A., "Ostraca and the Roman Army in the Eastern Desert", pp. 154, 155 (fig.1).

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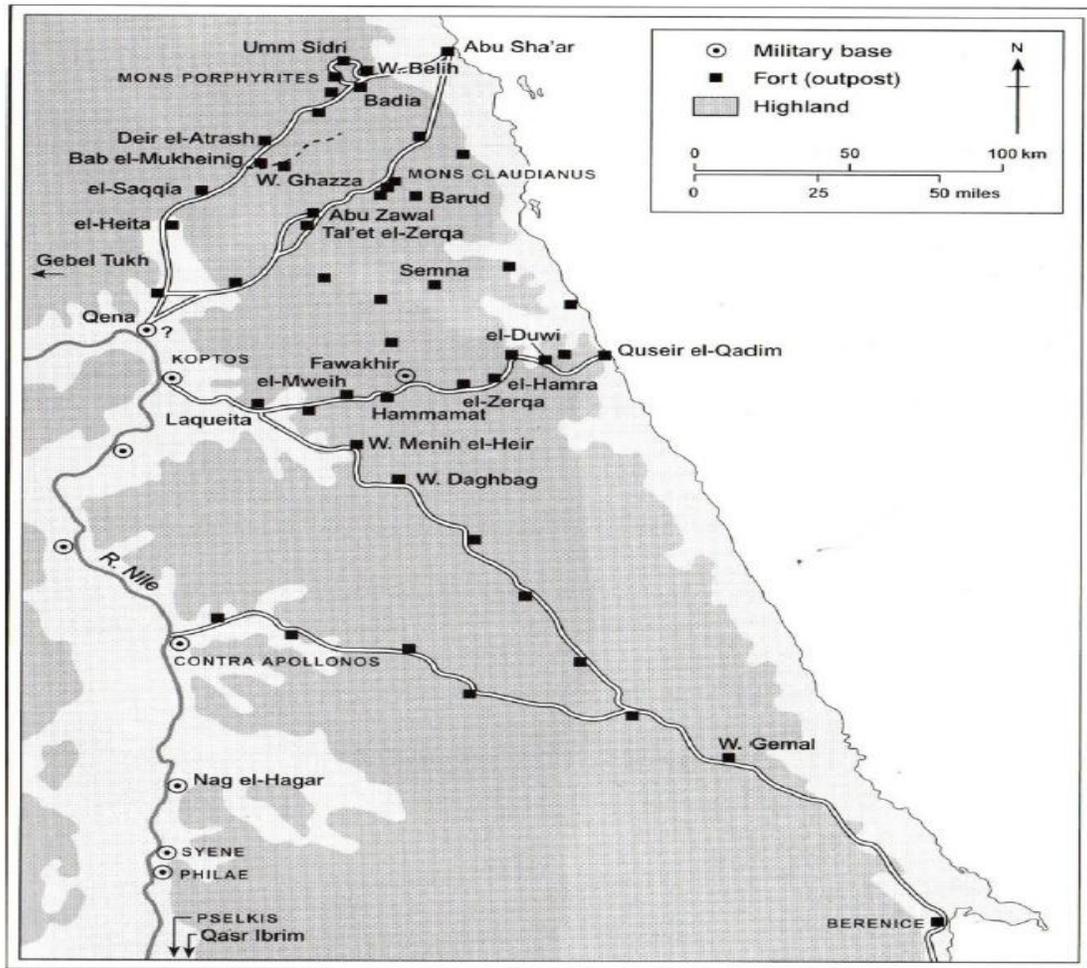


Fig. 6b: Positions of Roman Forts and Military Bases Through Egypt.

Wiseman, R., *On the Back of the Army: A Comparative Study of Romanization in Britain and Egypt*. Master Theses, History Department, College of Liberal Arts, The Graduate College, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, December 2011, p. 106 (fig. 12).

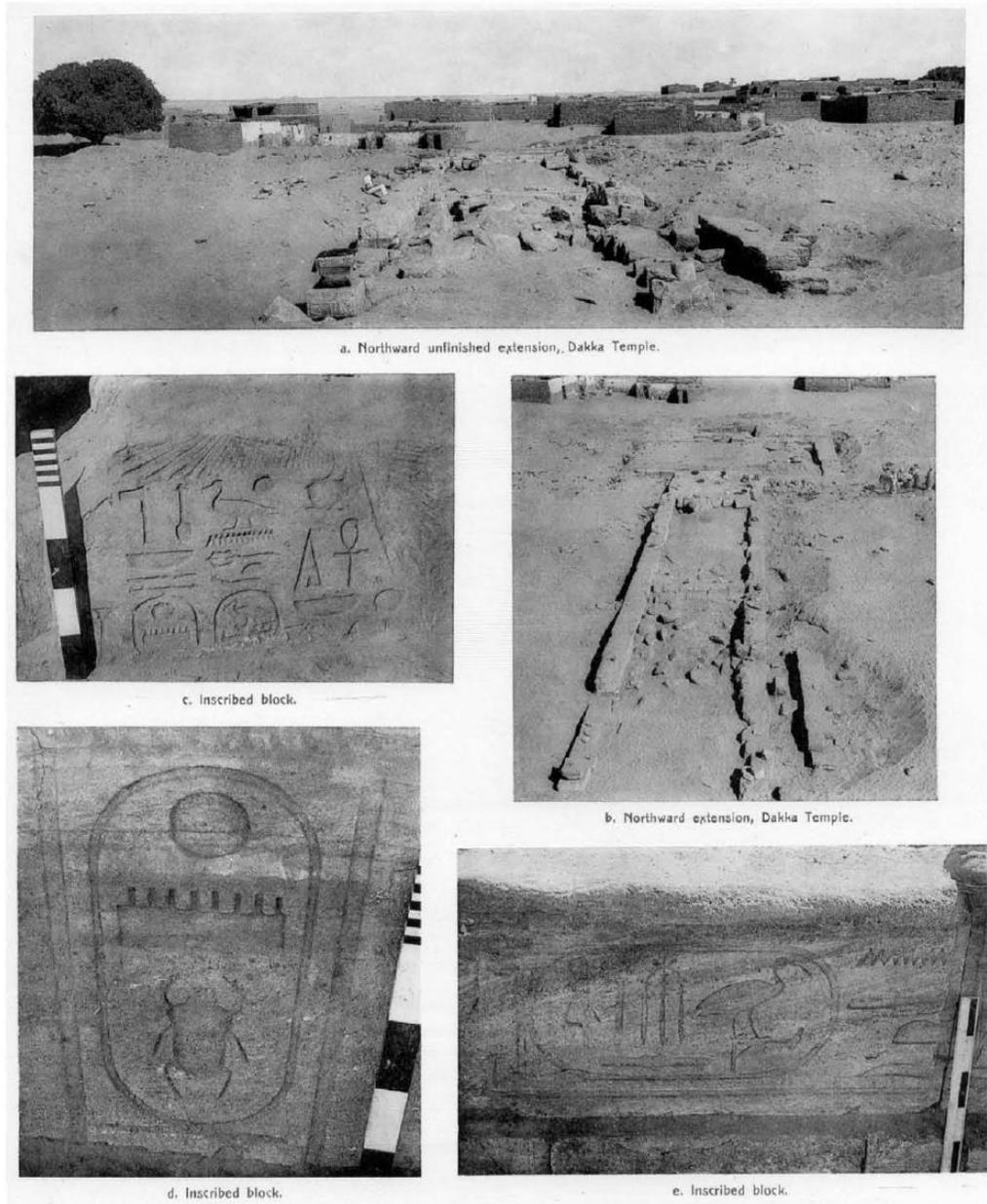


Fig. 7: The Northward Extension of Dakka Temple (Ancient Temple of Thothmes IIIrd, 18th Dynasty, New Kingdom).

Firth, Report for 1909-1910, PL.25.

Site of *pr-srkt* (Pselkis) in lower Nubia
(Historical and cultural significance)



Fig. 8a: Plan of the Small Mud-brick Structure (Roman Custom-house) near the Temple of Dakka.

Firth, Report for 1909-1910, p. 25, fig. 2 and PL.23b.



b. Canteen or Customs House. East side.

Fig. 8b: The Remains of the Roman Custom-house near the Temple of Dakka.

Firth, Report for 1909-1910, PL.23b.



a. Pottery deposit near Canteen or Customs House, Romano-Nubian period.

Fig.9: Romano-Nubian Pottery near the Site of the Custom-house at Dakka.

Firth, Report for 1909-1910, PL.23a.