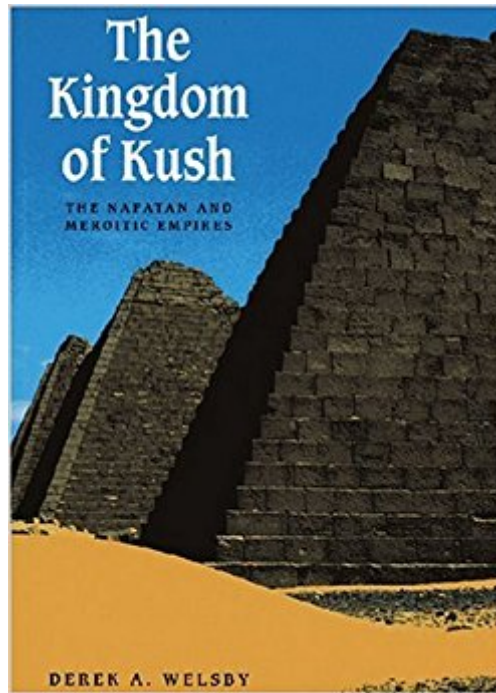




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The Kingdom Of Kush: The Napatan And Meroitic Empires



Synopsis

Accessible and interesting study of Egypt's neighbours to the south over 3,000 years from the A Group to the arrival of Christianity in the Sixth Century AD. KMT Magazine says of this book; "of the several book treatments of these cultures appearing in the 1980s, the present volume is easily the most accessible and concise. reading it one has the sensation of encountering a wholly alien, yet thoroughly fascinating civilisation for the first time. Afrocentrists take note".

Book Information

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Markus Wiener Publishers (December 31, 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1558761829

ISBN-13: 978-1558761827

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 6.8 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 3.4 out of 5 stars 7 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #776,875 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #60 in [Books > History > Africa > Sudan](#) #460 in [Books > Textbooks > Humanities > History > Africa](#) #617 in [Books > History > Ancient Civilizations > Egypt](#)

Customer Reviews

...a reliable, up-to-date guide....Welsby's book presents the archaeological evidence extensively in illustrations and plates. Welsby's early and concluding chapters (1-3, 9) trace the rise, greatness, and "fall" of the Kushite kingdom in great detail and with frequent reference to points of scholarly disagreement. The book's middle chapters (5-8) treat a variety of topics: "Religion and Funerary Ritual", "Architecture", "Urban and Rural Settlement", "The Economy", and "The Arts and the Art of Writing". They rely heavily on architectural remains and plans and on artefacts excavated in temples, palaces, towns, and cemeteries. Kushite pyramids and tombs (and their grave goods), inscribed stelae, statues, reliefs, skeletons, and pots [and] such objects of daily life as clothing, musical instruments, toys, and cosmetics. [Welsby's] aim...is to "provide a balanced account of the history of the Kingdom of Kush and the lifestyle of its inhabitants throughout its thousand-year history". In this The Kingdom of Kush admirably succeeds....it is hard not to agree with the author that "[s]tudying the Kingdom of Kush is like a detective story" full of "intriguing problems"... --

Classical Bulletin 75, no. 2 - 1999

An excellent textbook overview of the Kush civilizations in Egypt & the Sudan. Makes clear what is known and what is NOT known.

I'll give this book 4 stars to counterbalance the castigations of other reviewers, which to me seem excessive. If you know little or nothing about the southern neighbors of the ancient Egyptians, who even briefly ruled in Egypt when the pharaohs were finally losing their grip for the last time, this book will provide you with a very good idea of who these people were. I have read it, and I recommend it.

Author Derek Welsby spares every effort to clarify Kushite history. Here's an emblematic sentence: "El Kurru should perhaps be considered as a candidate for the location of Krtn with its royal palace." Is it possible to cram more conditionals into a single sentence? The text is filled with clauses such as "of which we are largely ignorant", "we have no way of knowing", and "no indisputable evidence exists". Admittedly, this may indeed reflect the true state of affairs of our knowledge, or lack thereof, of the Kingdom of Kush. But to me the faults in the writing extend beyond failing to clarify an ambiguous situation or hesitancy in choosing between alternative explanations. Place-names are frequently introduced without explaining whether they are ancient or modern names. The relevant geography is treated as if the reader is already an expert in the Nile's meanderings. References are brief and seldom help in evaluating a citation's specific interpretation. Succeeding paragraphs do not often link together. Sentences are often opaque, doggedly refusing to surrender their meaning ever after repeated readings. And where the history of Kush touches on an event that may already be known to many readers - that being the Kushite intervention against Assyria in its assault on Jerusalem in 701 BC, as ambiguously recounted in the Old Testament -- Welsby fails to treat it with the rigor the episode deserves. He fails to recognize both that 1) the accounts in Kings I and II are superficially inconsistent and 2) resolving the discrepancy shows that the Kushites in fact saved the kingdom of Judah from certain destruction at a crucial moment in its history. (An absorbing and fully convincing exegesis is provided by Henry Aubin in "The Rescue of Jerusalem".) The photographs - many in color - are extensive, stunning and provide an eloquence the writing lacks. The best that can be said of the diagrams, including a few meagerly drawn maps, is that they are no worse than the text.

I have rarely read a more disappointing book than *The Kingdom of Kush* by Derek Welsby. Badly organized with no continuity, I assume the publisher's editorial staff was on vacation when this one

came through. The book is the literary equivalent of the 50 yard dash for people with no sense of direction. Hummingbirds spend more time in one place than Mr. Welsby spent with any one facet of his book. Unless you happen to be a scholar specializing in the Kingdom, you will be quickly lost as the author zigs and zags through myriad arcane tidbits that are probably significant to someone. There is no effort to establish a context, set out a chronology, or discuss the historical significance of the topic in general terms that an intelligent, but unschooled lay person could understand. Perhaps the target audience was the six other experts fluent in this field; for the rest of us, the book is a useless garble of facts and pontifications. Equal criticism goes to the History Book of the Month Club who marketed the book with no indication that you needed a PhD in the topic to follow the book. The bio describes Mr. Welsby as an assistant keeper and field archeologist. While it appears that he is indeed quite knowledgeable in the field of Kushite history, I would recommend that he stick with his day job or get real editors.

This is a beautiful and captivating book. It differs completely from other books about the black Pharaohs, which are often ideological and controversial. This book provides proof, with photos from archeological sites. It informs us about life in the cities and in the countryside and about ancient black religions. Kush was not Egypt, but it ruled Egypt for a period of time. The book is also affordable, which I greatly appreciated.

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Interesting book, but tried to use European fantasies of being African, indigenous (Egyptian) or Black (the modern European term for African). However it does have some very good information. When you get past the imperial European denial. You can find some good information in this book. Ancient Nubians and the other ancient Africans, the Kamites (their real name) called Egyptians thousands of years later by the Greeks.

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