

The Middle Kingdom 2008-1759 B.C.

History from Literature

Rise of Dynasty 12 (1938-1759 BC)

- The Prophecy of Neferty

“Then a king will come from the South,
Ameny, the justified, by name
Son of a woman of Ta-Seti, child of Upper Egypt,
He will take the white crown,
He will wear the Red crown;
He will join the Two Mighty Ones (i.e. the
crowns)”

Prophecy of Neferty

- Written at the beginning of Dynasty 12
- “Predicts” that the next king will be Amenemhet I (1938-1909 BC)

Capital Moves from Thebes to Itj-tawy



“Prophecy” continues

Asiatics will fall to his sword,
Libyans will fall to his flame,
Rebels to his wrath, traitors to his might,
As the serpent on his brow subdues the rebels
for him.

One will build the Walls-of-the-Ruler,
To bar Asiatics from entering Egypt...

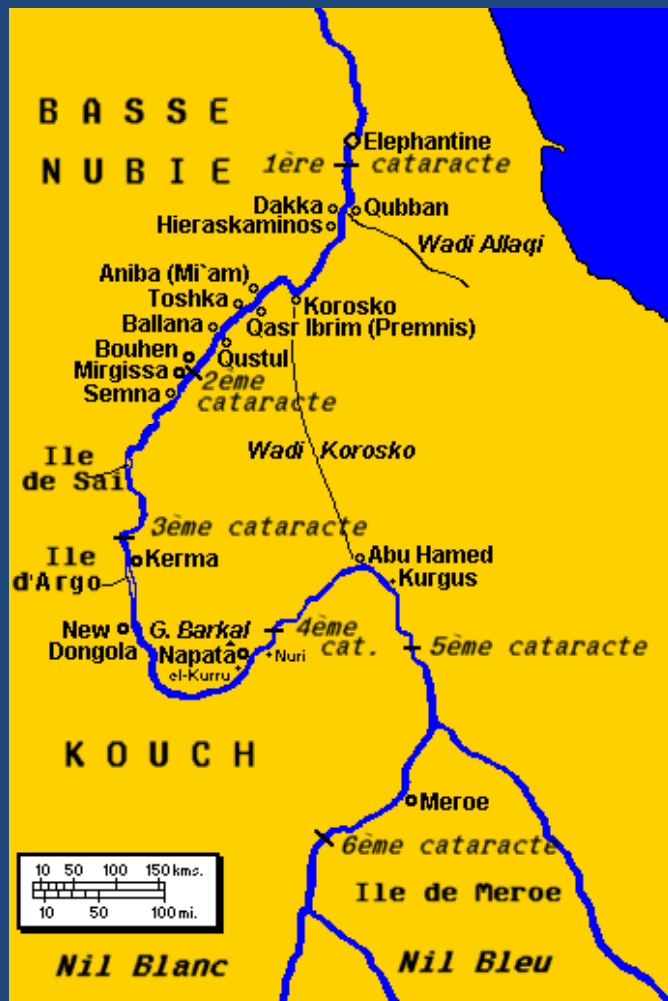
Itj-tawy

- Capital probably moved to defend country against Asiatic invasions.
- New capital signals new beginning
- Remove bureaucrats from old power bases
- Return to centralized government
- Rising level of wealth for king and bureaucrats

Story of Sinuhe

- Starts with battle in Libya
- Also includes the “Walls-of-the-Ruler”
- Other forts in Semna and Quban in Nubia

Fort at Semna



End of Amenemhet I's reign

Teaching of Amenemhet for his Son

“It was after supper when night had fallen, and I had spent an hour of happiness. I was asleep upon my bed, having become weary, and my heart had begun to follow sleep. When weapons of my counsel were wielded, I had become like a snake of the necropolis. As I came to, I awoke to fighting, and I found that it was an attack of the bodyguard.

Teaching (cont.)

If I had quickly taken weapons in my hand, I would have made the wretches retreat with a charge! But there is none mighty in the night, none who can fight alone; no success will come without a helper. Look, my injury happened while I was without you, when the entourage had not yet heard that I would hand over to you when I had not yet sat with you, that I might make counsels for you;

Teachings (cont)

For I did not plan it, I did not foresee it, and my heart had not taken thought of the negligence of servants.”

Compare what we know from “Sinuhe” about this event.

Reign of Senwosret I (1919-1857 BC)

- First 10 years were a “co-regency”
- More forts in Nubia (now at Buhen)
- Importing from Nubia gold, amethyst, turquoise, copper, gneiss for jewelry
- Importing stone from east (Sinai)
- Founded Karnak temple

“White Chapel” of Senwosret I



Examples of relief, Senwosret I



Tomb of Khnumhotep at Beni Hasan

What does Sinuhe add?



Senwosret III (1837-1818 B.C.)



Senwosret III



- What do the statues of Senwosret III and the Story of Sinuhe tell us about individuality in the Middle Kingdom?

More from Sinuhe

- What does the hymn tell us about the attitude to the king?
- What can we learn about the royal court?