



From Slave to Pharaoh: The Black Experience of Ancient Egypt

By Donald B. Redford

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In *From Slave to Pharaoh*, noted Egyptologist Donald B. Redford examines over two millennia of complex social and cultural interactions between Egypt and the Nubian and Sudanese civilizations that lay to the south of Egypt. These interactions resulted in the expulsion of the black Kushite pharaohs of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty in 671 B.C. by an invading Assyrian army.

Redford traces the development of Egyptian perceptions of race as their dominance over the darker-skinned peoples of Nubia and the Sudan grew, exploring the cultural construction of spatial and spiritual boundaries between Egypt and other African peoples. Redford focuses on the role of racial identity in the formulation of imperial power in Egypt and the legitimization of its sphere of influence, and he highlights the dichotomy between the Egyptians' treatment of the black Africans it deemed enemies and of those living within Egyptian society. He also describes the range of responses—from resistance to assimilation—of subjugated Nubians and Sudanese to their loss of self-determination. Indeed, by the time of the Twenty-fifth Dynasty, the culture of the Kushite kings who conquered Egypt in the late eighth century B.C. was thoroughly Egyptian itself.

Moving beyond recent debates between Afrocentrists and their critics over the racial characteristics of Egyptian civilization, *From Slave to Pharaoh* reveals the true complexity of race, identity, and power in Egypt as documented through surviving texts and artifacts, while at the same time providing a compelling account of war, conquest, and culture in the ancient world.

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Editorial Review

Review

Donald Redford is one of the few scholars in Egyptology blessed with the ability to convey complex ideas in a lively manner that engages the attention of lay readers. At the same time, his historical insights and depth of knowledge are widely respected in the field, and in his new work, he shows why.

(Ogden Goelet, New York University)

This engrossing narrative takes us away from the modern racial politics into a world strikingly different from our own, where war and conquest were a present reality, and Egyptians and Nubians regarded each other as foreigners. Donald Redford shows us why historical writing, if it is to be truly informative, must always be based directly on ancient documents and accurate understanding of the archaeological evidence.

(Mary Lefkowitz, author of *Not Out of Africa* and co-editor of *Black Athena Revisited*)

The first full-scale study in English of relations between Egypt and Nubia in antiquity... Trenchant and illuminating observations abound.

(*Choice*)

A welcome addition... Professor Redford has demonstrated that more obscure material can be presented in a way that is fresh, exciting and accessible.

(Chris Naunton *Egyptian Archaeology*)

A detailed but spirited account of a theme that has often been marred by tendentiousness and partial thinking.

(John Ray *American Historical Review*)

From Slave to Pharaoh presents a lively account of this period of Nubian rule during Egypt's 25th Dynasty.

(Mariam Ayad *Odyssey*)

A timely contribution to the rapidly growing literature on Nubian and Sudanese studies.

(Richard A. Lobban, Jr. *International Journal of African Historical Studies*)

A well-argued synthesis for this period, its politics, administration, and building activity.

(Arthur Verhoogt *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists*)

An easily readable volume that offers considerable insight into a convoluted period of Egyptian history.

(Jacke Phillips *Journal of African History*)

A welcome addition... There is much that should stimulate interest in this fascinating area.

(David Edwards *Chronique d'Égypte*)

The first example in history in history of reverse colonization!

(Peter J. Brand *Patterns of Prejudice*)

About the Author

Donald B. Redford is a professor of classics and ancient Mediterranean studies at the Pennsylvania State University. Among his many books are (as editor) *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Egypt* and *The Oxford Essential Guide to Egyptian Mythology*, and (as author) *Akhenaten, the Heretic King* and *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*.

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Thomas Baxter:

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Stacia Cobb:

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