

Executive Summary

State Party The Republic of the Sudan

State, province, or region River Nile State, Shendi Province

Name of property The Archaeological Sites of the Island of Meroe

Geographical coordinates:

(maps 1-19)

Meroe town site (Meroe 1) latitude N 16° 56.111', longitude E 33° 42.852'

North and South cemeteries (Meroe 2) latitude N 16° 56.243', longitude E 33° 45.423'

Musawwarat es-Sufra latitude N 16° 24.649', longitude E 33° 19.705'

Naqa latitude N 16° 16.121', longitude E 33° 16.420'

Textual description of the boundaries of the proposed property

Meroe: The site of Meroe is over 3 km east–west and more than 1 km north–south. It is bordered by the Nile on the western side, where the town site is located, and by the sandstone plateau on the edges of the desert, where the pyramids dominate the landscape.

Musawwarat es-Sufra: The monuments of Musawwarat es-Sufra are located in a basin surrounded on almost four sides of the site by a chain of hills.

Naqa: The ancient relics of Naqa are bordered by a chain of sandstone hills on the eastern side, while the areas to the north, south, and west consist of flat plains crossed by annual rain channels (wadis).

Statement of outstanding universal value

The Island of Meroe is the heartland of the Kingdom of Kush, a major power in the ancient world from the 8th century BCE into the 4th century CE. *Meroe* became the principal residence of the ruler, and from the 3rd century BCE onwards it was the site of most subsequent royal burials. It also has evidence for industrial activities, particularly iron-working.

The nominated sites (the Meroe town site with the North and South cemeteries, Musawwarat es-Sufra, and Naqa) comprise the best preserved relics of the Kingdom of Kush, encompassing a wide range of architectural forms and occupying a range of environments. They testify to the wealth and power of the Kushite state and to its

wide-ranging contacts with the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern worlds: this is the meeting place of the Pharaonic and Classical worlds and Sahelian Africa.

Criteria under which inscription is proposed (and justification for inscription under these criteria)

- **Criterion ii:** *exhibit an important interchange of human values over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design*

The archaeological sites of the Island of Meroe provide a detailed insight into the interchange of ideas between central Africa and the Mediterranean world along what was the major corridor to and from Africa over a very long period during the ancient world. The interaction of local and foreign influences are demonstrated by the architecture, art, iconography, religion, and language.

- **Criterion iii:** *bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared.*

All aspects of Kushite civilization were largely expunged by the arrival of Christianity on the Middle Nile in the 6th century CE. The nominated properties with their wide range of monument types, well preserved buildings, and potential for future excavation and other avenues of research are unique testimony to this, perhaps the greatest civilization of sub-Saharan Africa.

- **Criterion iv:** *be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history*

The pyramids at *Meroe* are outstanding examples of this highly distinctive Kushite funerary monument, and their intimate association with the well preserved remains of the urban centre is noteworthy. The evidence for iron-working is of considerable importance for studying the role of Meroe in the diffusion of metal-working technology in sub-Saharan Africa.

At *Naga* the ‘Roman kiosk,’ with its juxtaposition of architectural and decorative elements from Pharaonic Egypt, Greece, and Rome as well as from Kush itself, and the Lion Temple, which preserves superb reliefs of the Kushite gods and royalty, are of especial importance.

Musawwarat is a unique architectural ensemble with temples, courtyards, and domestic buildings, as well as major installations connected with water management, quarries, and industrial areas.

- **Criterion v:** *be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change*

The major centres of human activity far from the Nile at *Musawwarat es-Sufra* and *Naga* raise questions as to their viability in what is today an arid zone devoid of permanent human settlement. They offer the possibility through a detailed study of

the palaeoclimate, flora, and fauna of understanding the interaction of the Kushites with their desert hinterland.

Name and contact information of official local institution/agency

National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums (NCAM)

Address: PO Box 178, Khartoum, Sudan.

Tel. /fax: + 249 183 786784

E-mail: teharga2008@yahoo.com