

# Topics in Middle Kingdom Warfare

Battle scenes in private tombs

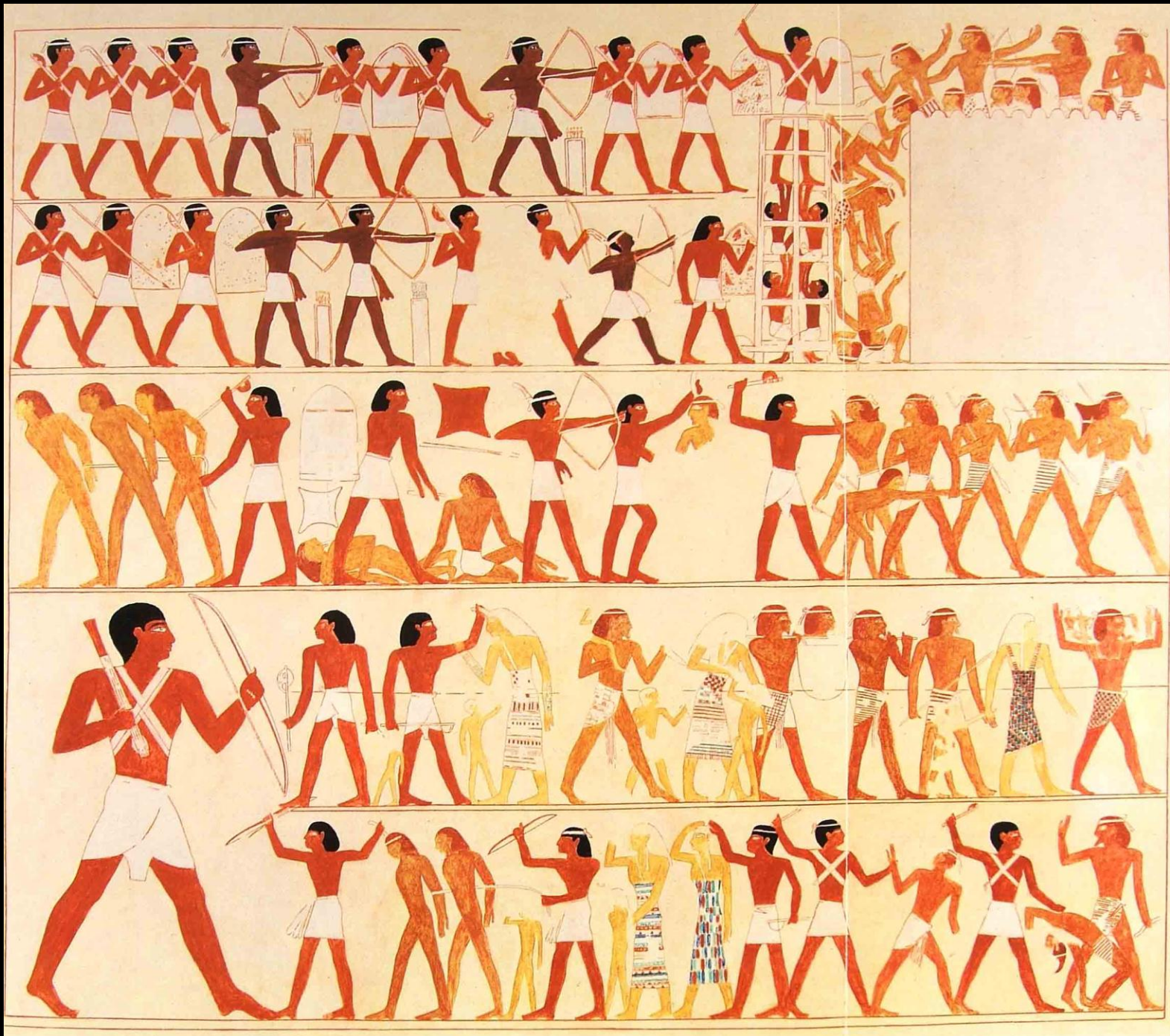
Slain soldiers of Deir el Bahri

Literary Texts

Nubian Fortresses



Seige of a town, private tomb of Inti from Deshasha, late Old Kingdom





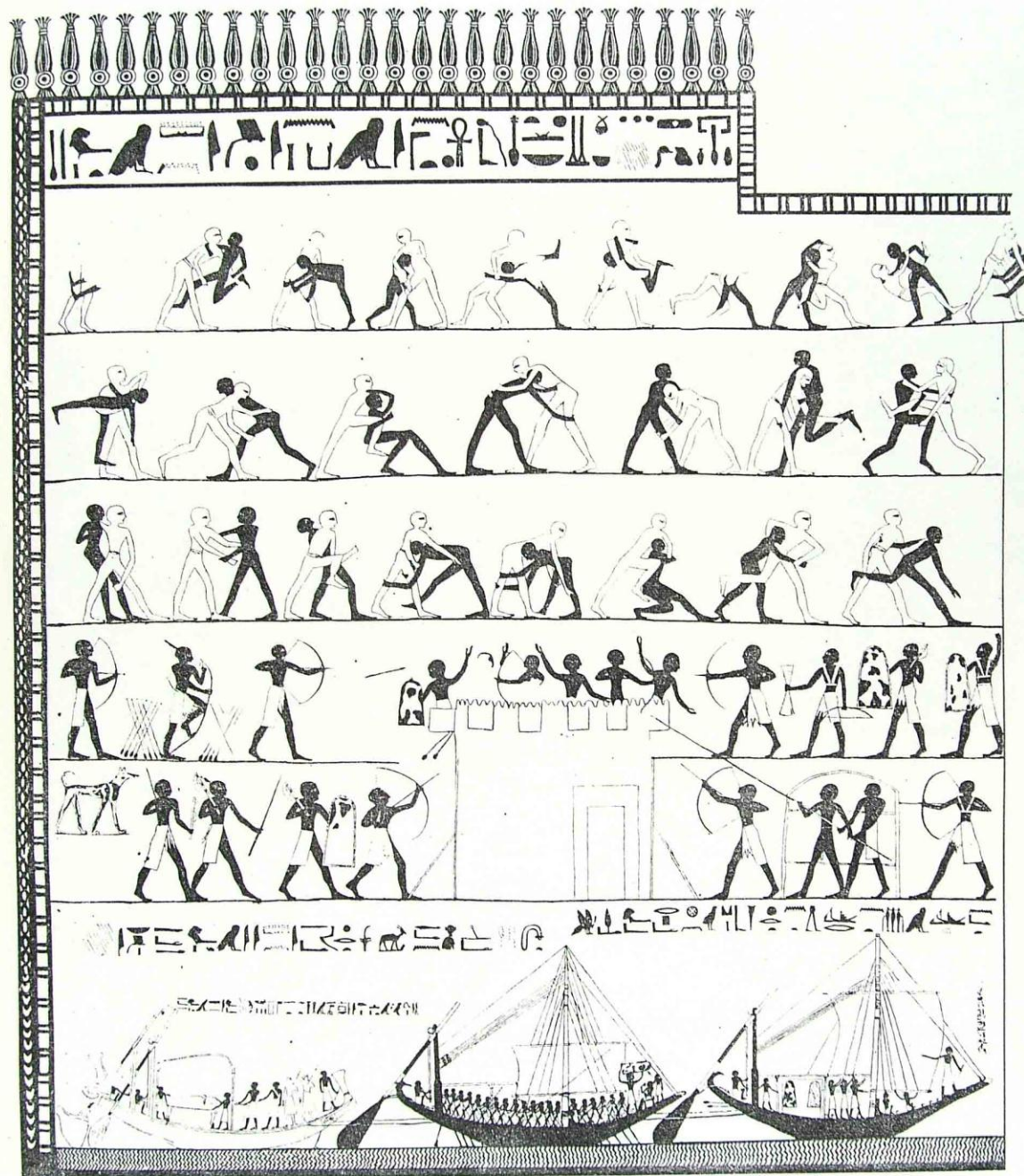




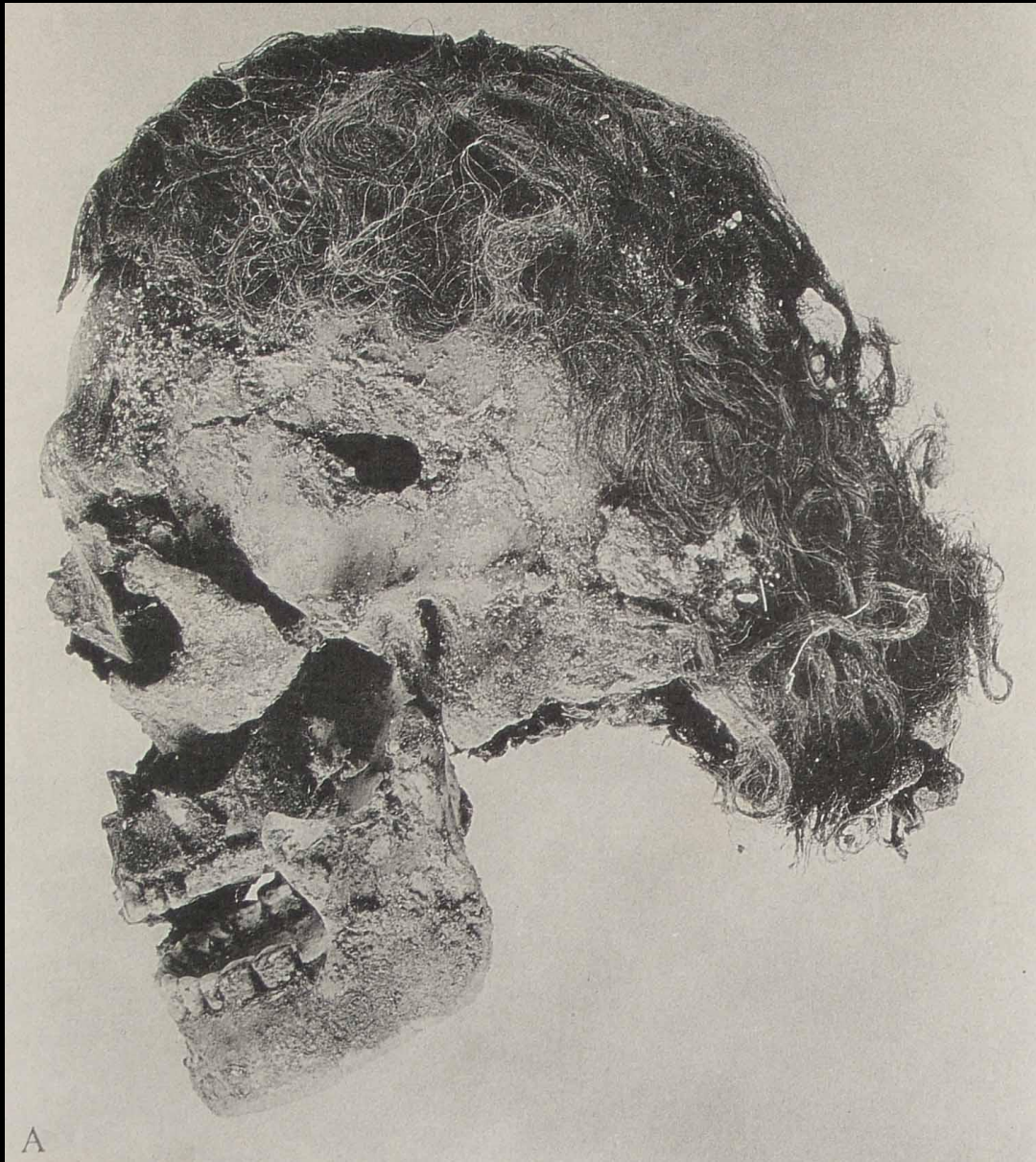


Private tombs at Beni Hasan showing warfare, late 11<sup>th</sup> (?) to early 12<sup>th</sup> Dynasty



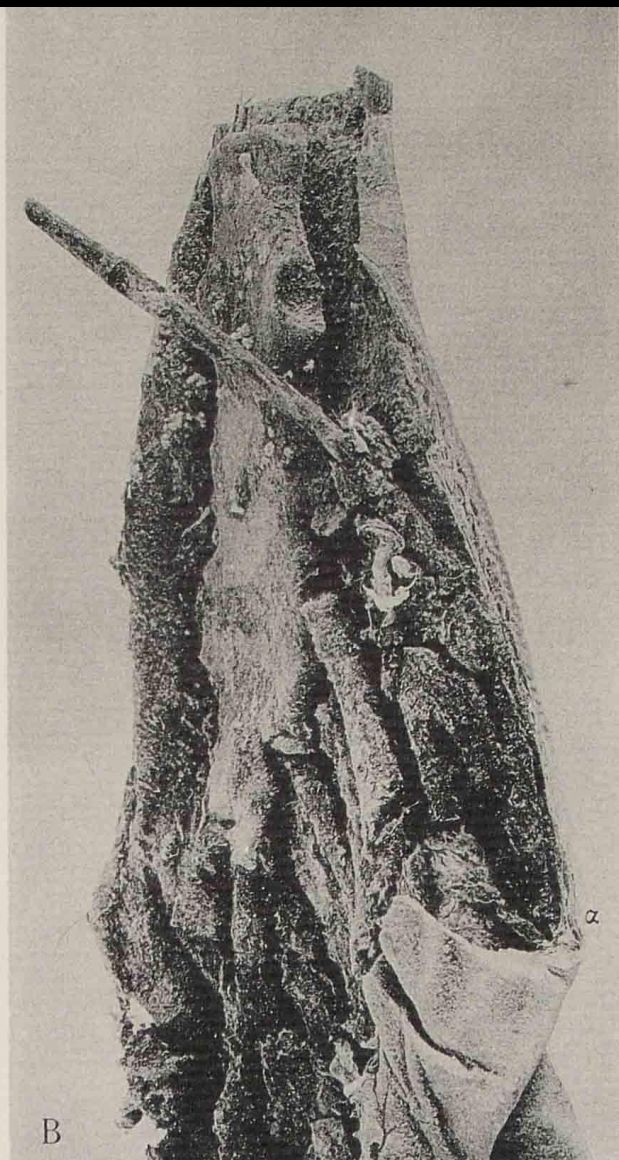
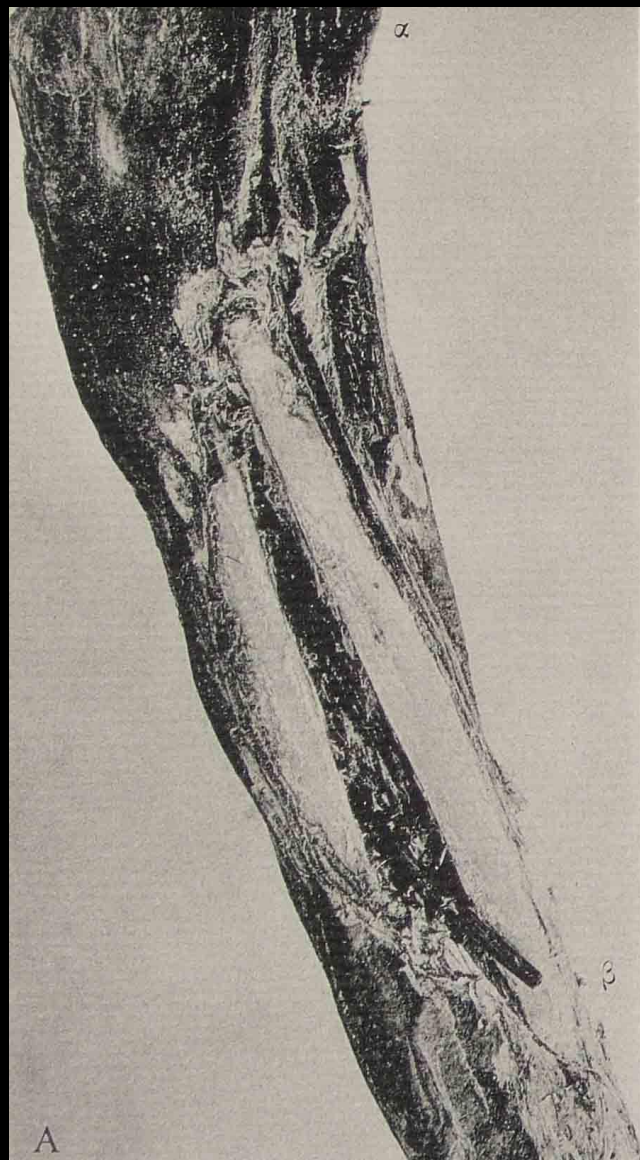




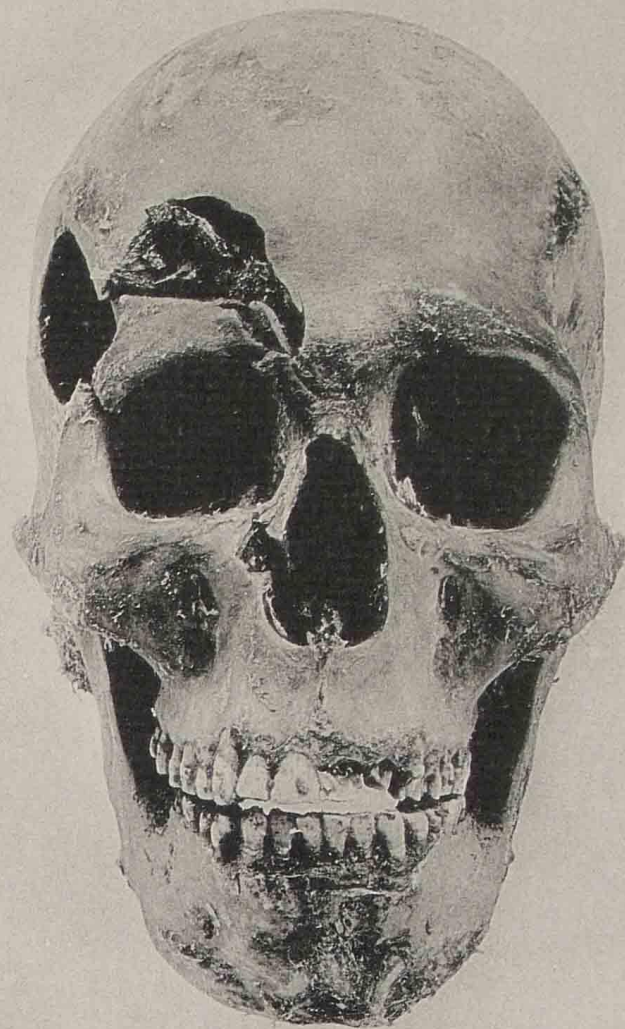
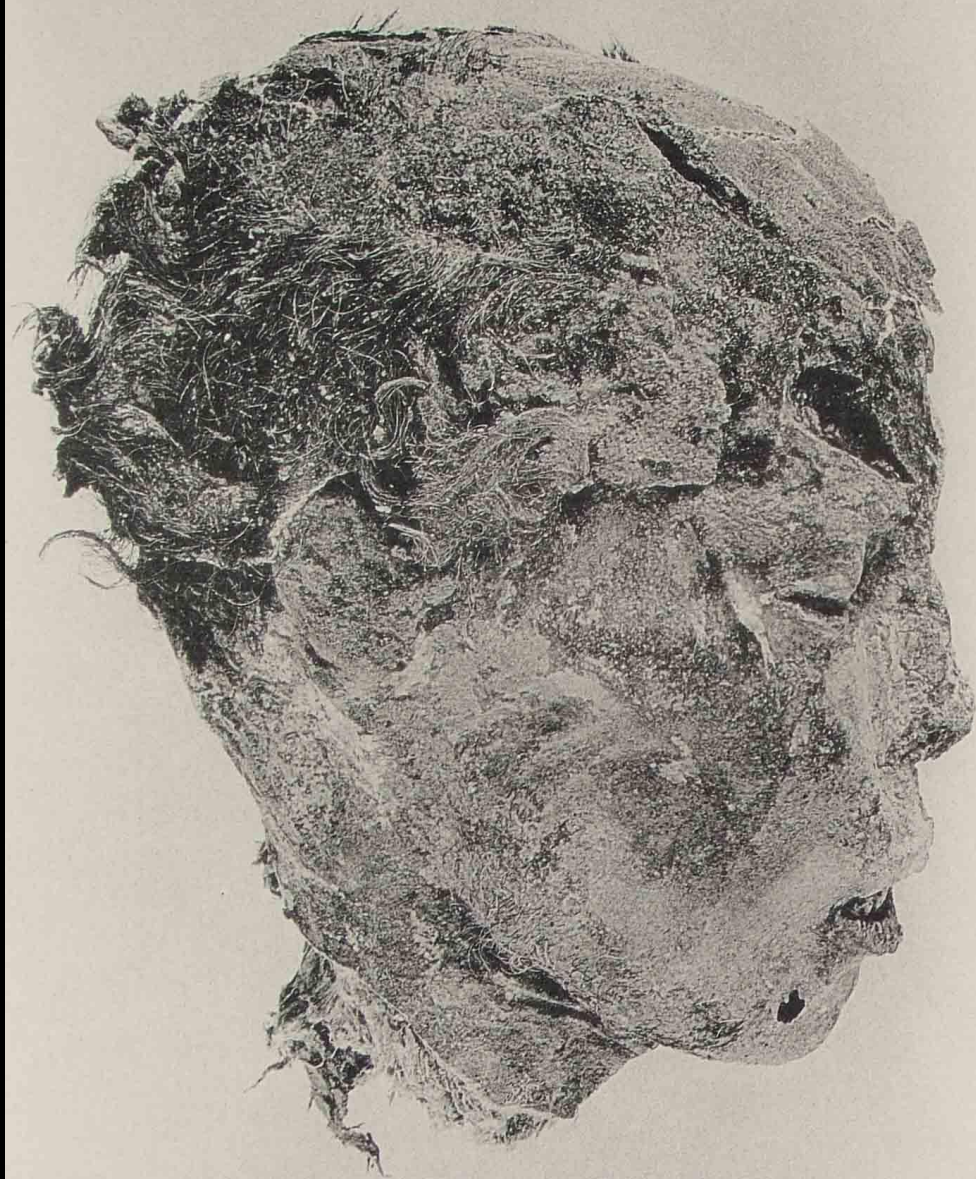


The Slain Soldiers of Deir el Bahri, Thebes

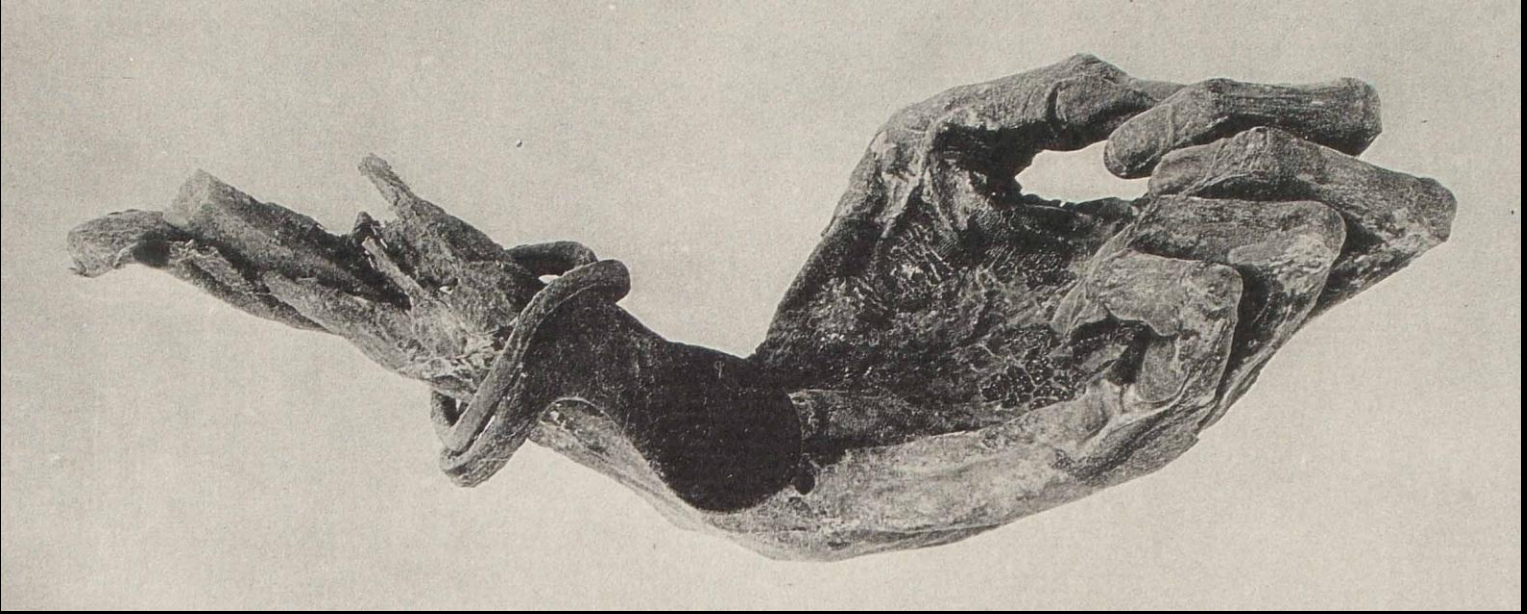
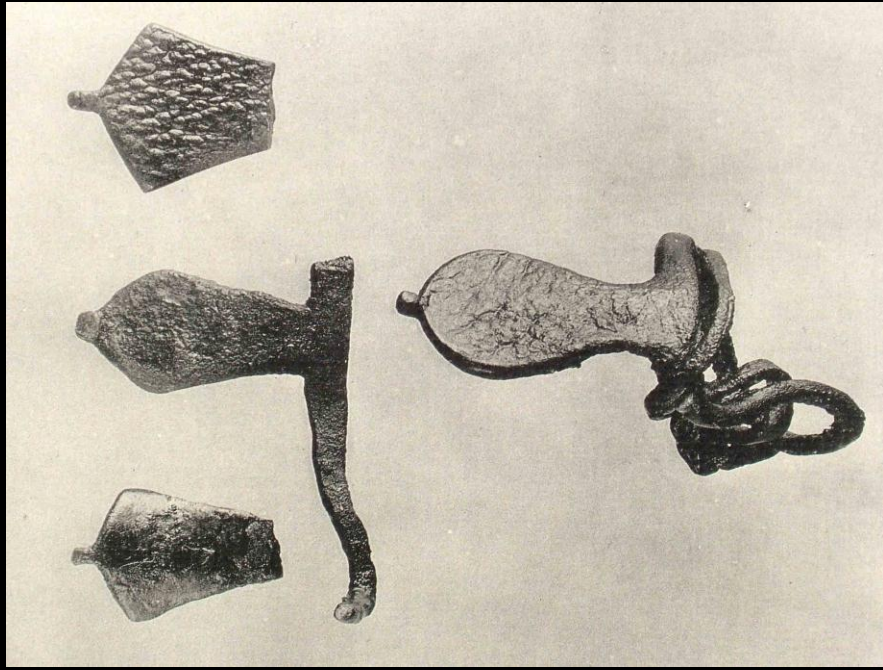


















- Literature as a source for Middle Kingdom Warfare
- Issues: date, genre/purpose
  - Prophecies of Neferti (18<sup>th</sup> Dynasty)
  - Instruction of King Amenemhat
  - Instruction for King Merikare
  - Tale of Sinuhe



## Excerpts from the Instruction of King Amenemhat

You who have risen as a god,  
Give heed to what I shall say to you,  
So that you may reign over the land, rule the shores  
And bring about an abundance of what is good and beneficial.  
Maintain your vigilance against those who should be subordinate to you,  
But who turn out not to be so,  
Men in whose loyalty one can place no trust;  
Do not let yourself be alone with them...

If I could have quickly taken weapons in my hand,  
I would have made the cowards retreat in turmoil.  
But no one is strong at night, and none can fight by himself;  
No successful result can come about without an ally.

And so ruin occurred while I was without you,  
When the courtiers had not yet heard that I would hand over to you.

I subdued (the land) as far as Yebu,  
And turned my course back to the Delta.  
I stood on the borders of the land and perused its interior;  
I fulfilled the supremacy of power by the manifestation of my might...  
I was one who increased the grain,  
(For I was) favored by Nepri;  
Hapy gave me honor on every field,  
So that none hungered during my years...  
I subdued lions, I captured crocodiles,  
I enslaved the men of Nubia, took prisoner the Medjay,  
And I forced the Asiatic tribes to cower away like dogs.



Excerpts from  
the Instruction  
for Merikare

I raised troops from them on my accession.

Advance your officials, promote your [soldiers],

Enrich the young men who follow you, Provide with goods, endow with fields,

Reward them with herds.

Do not prefer the wellborn to the commoner,

Choose a man on account of his skills,

Then all crafts are done ---...

Guard your borders, secure your forts,

Troops are useful to their lord.

...

Troops will fight troops

As the ancestors foretold;

Egypt fought in the graveyard,

Destroying tombs in vengeful destruction.

...

I attacked This straight to its southern border at Taut,

I engulfed it like a flood.

...

The dues of the Northland are in your hand,

For the mooring-post is staked in the district I made in the East

From Hebenu to Horusway;

It is settled with towns, filled with people,

Of the best in the whole land,

To repel attacks against them.

May I see a brave man who will copy it,

Who will add to what I have done,

A wretched heir would disgrace me.

But this should be said to the Bowman:

Lo, the miserable Asiatic,

He is wretched because of the place he's in...

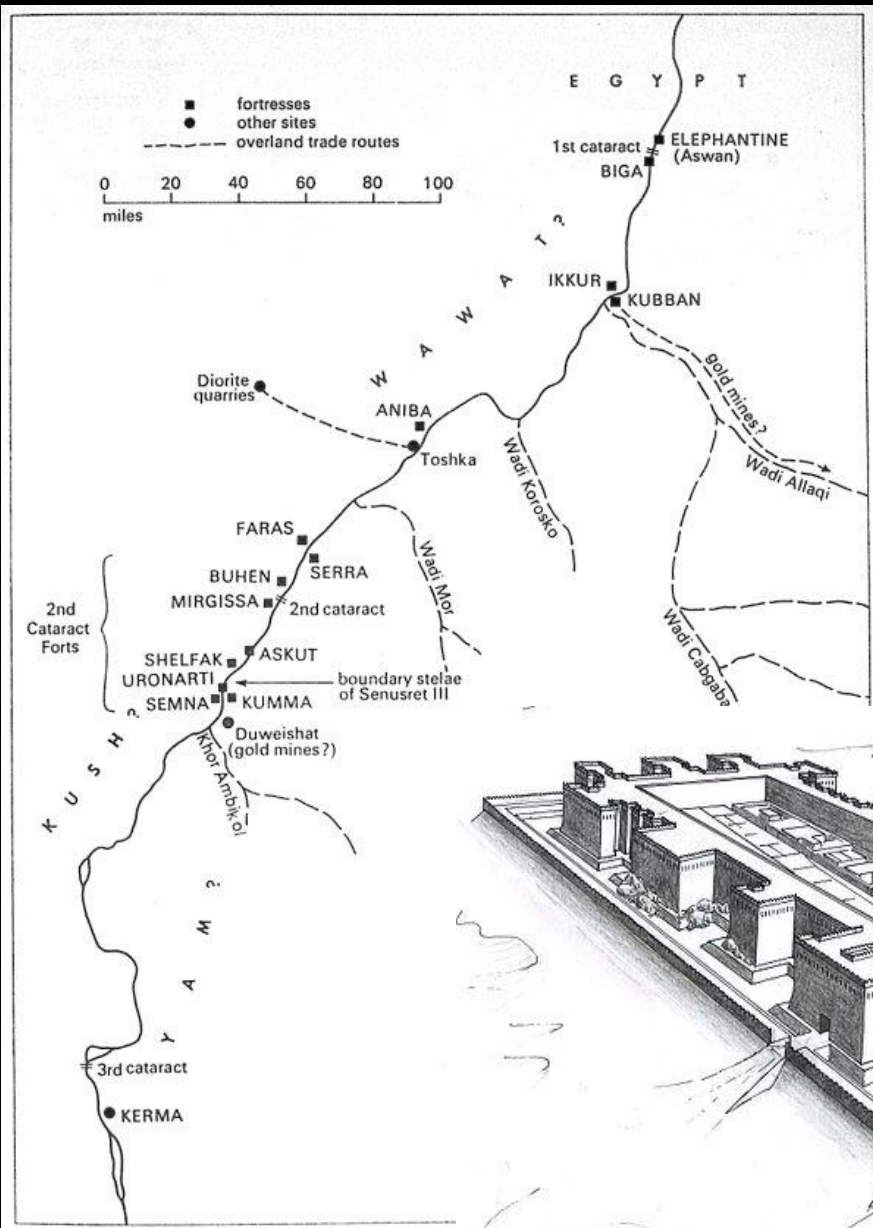


# From the Tale of Sinuhe

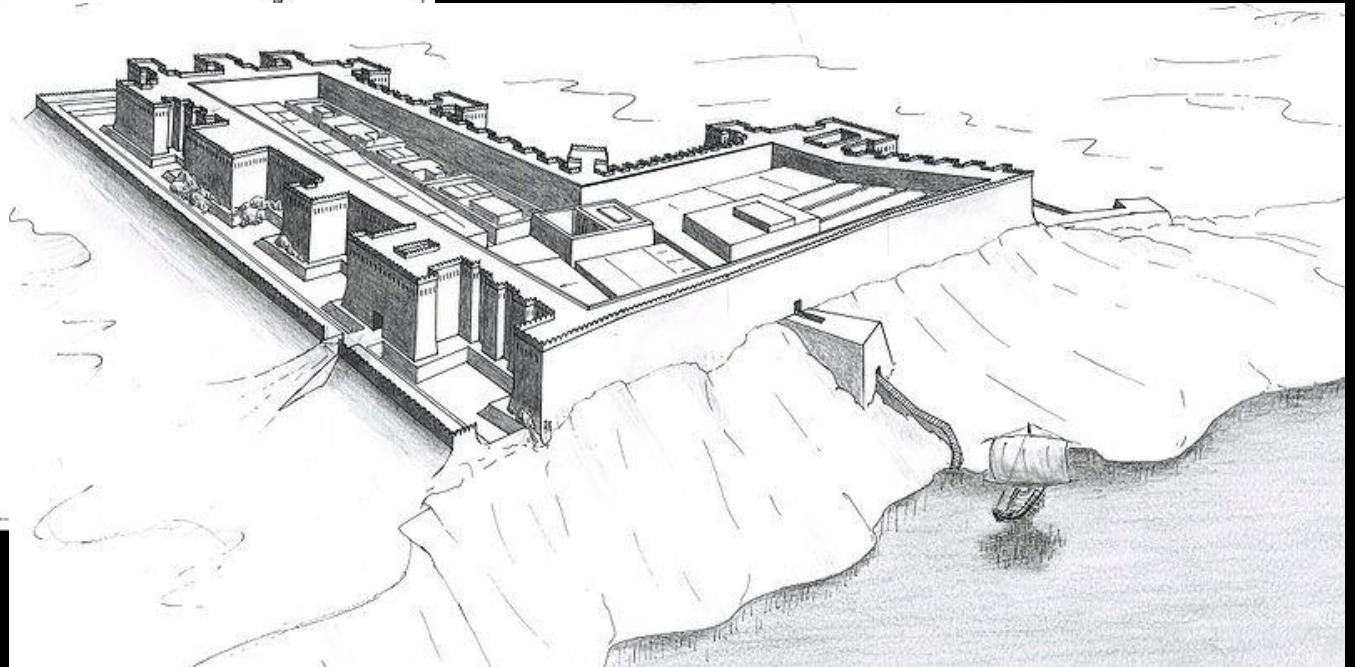
His majesty, however, had dispatched an army to the land of the Tjemeh, with his eldest son as its commander, the good god Senwosret. He had been sent to smite the foreign lands and to punish those of Tjehenu. Now he was returning, bringing captives of the Tjehenu and cattle of all kinds beyond number. The officials of the palace sent to the western border to let the king's son know the event that had occurred at the court. The messengers met him on the road, reaching him at night. Not a moment did he delay. The falcon flew with his attendants (shemsu), without letting his army know it.

...

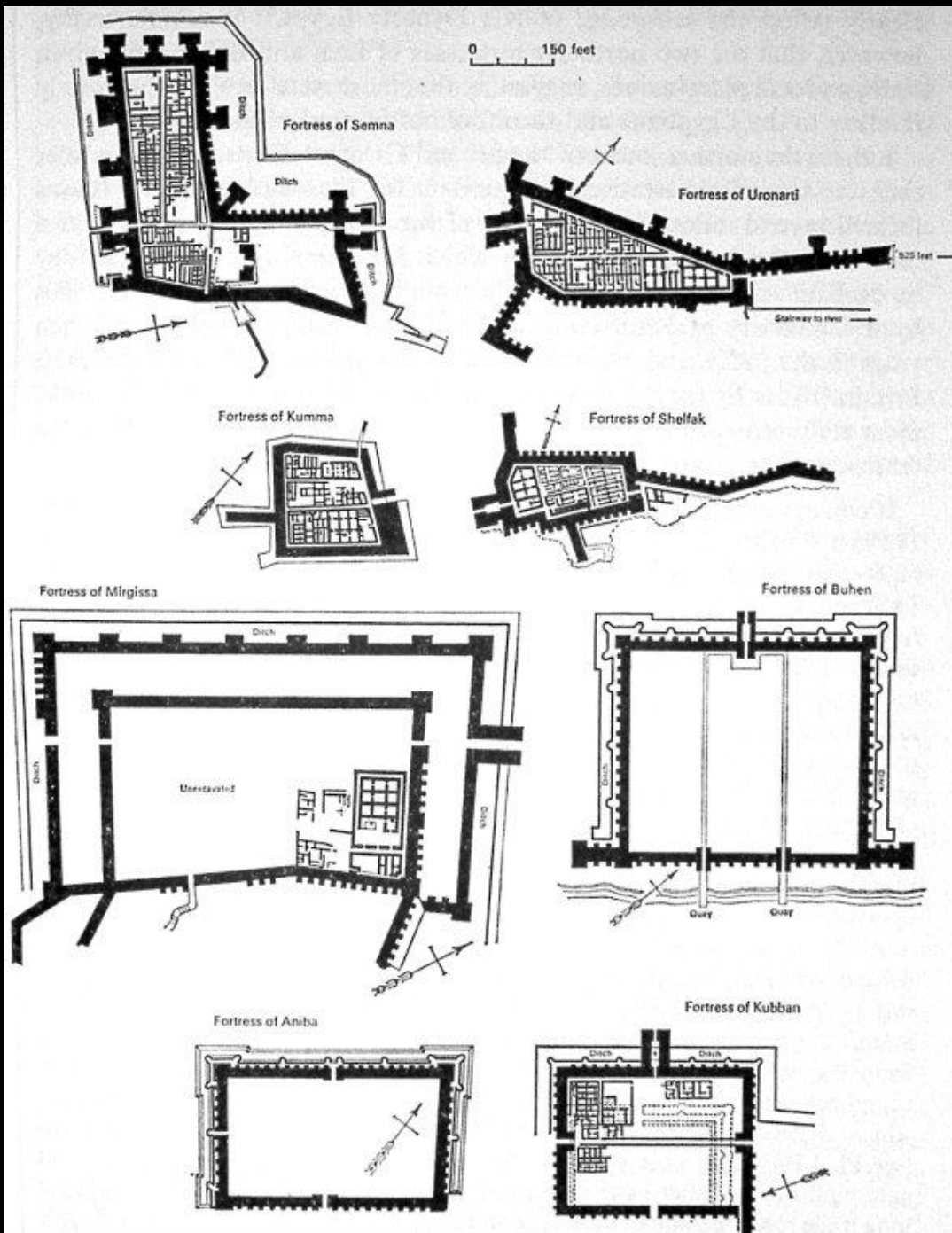
He was the smiter of foreign lands,  
While his father stayed in the palace,  
He reported to him on commands carried out.  
He is a champion who acts with his arm,  
A fighter who has no equal,  
When seen engaged in archery,  
When joining in the melee.  
Horn-curber who makes hands turn weak,  
His foes can not close ranks;  
Keen-sighted he smashes foreheads,  
None can withstand his presence



Map of the Second Cataract showing locations of fortresses of the Middle Kingdom; reconstruction of Semna fortress (below)



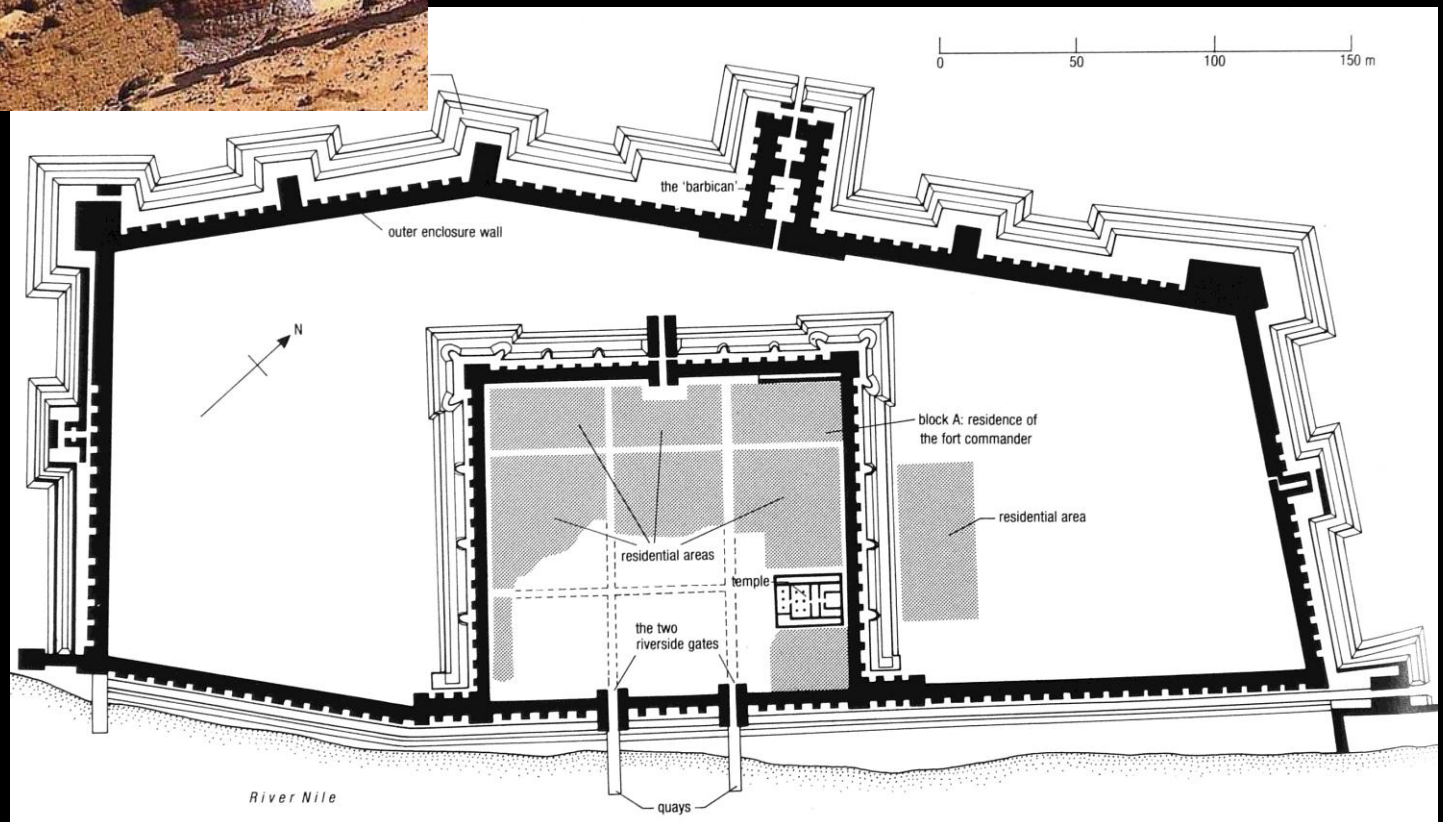




Different plan types of Nubian fortresses



Fortress at Buhen





# The Semna Dispatches



Excerpts from two:

“...Six other Nubians arrived at the fortress ‘Powerful is Khakaure, the deceased’ (Semna), in order to do some bartering according to this...in the fourth month of the second season, day 8. What they had brought was bartered. They sailed south on the same day to the place they had come from.”

“...The frontier patrol that set out to patrol the desert margin extending near the fortress ‘Repeller of the Medjay’ in Year 3, third month of the second season, last day, has returned to report to me saying ‘We found the track of 32 men and three donkeys...’”

## First Semna Stela of Senwosret III

Southern boundary, made in the year 8, under the majesty of the King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Khakaure Senwosret III who is given life forever and ever; in order to prevent that any Nubian should cross it, by water or by land, with a ship or with any herds of the Nubians, except a Nubian who shall come to do trading in Iqen (Mirgissa) or with a commission. Every good thing shall be done with them, but without allowing a ship of the Nubians to pass by Heh (the region around Semna), going downstream, forever.

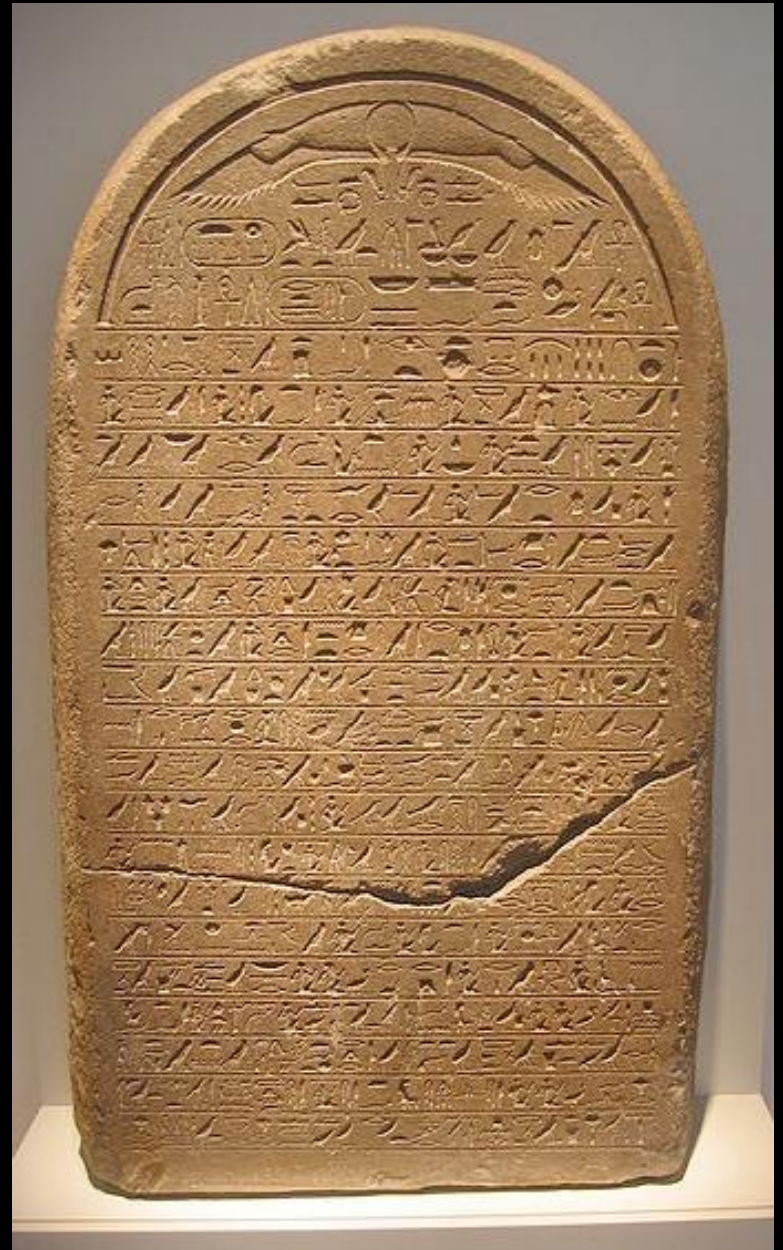


Second Boundary Stela of Senwosret III from Semna  
(a duplicate found at Uronarti)

“...I have made my boundary further south than my  
fathers,  
I have added to what was bequeathed me.  
I am a king who speaks and acts,  
What my heart plans is done by my arm...

Attack is valor, retreat is cowardice,  
A coward is he who is driven from his border.  
Since the Nubian listens to the word of mouth,  
To answer him is to make him retreat.  
Attack him, he will turn his back,  
Retreat, he will start attacking.  
They are not people one respects,  
They are wretches, craven-hearted...

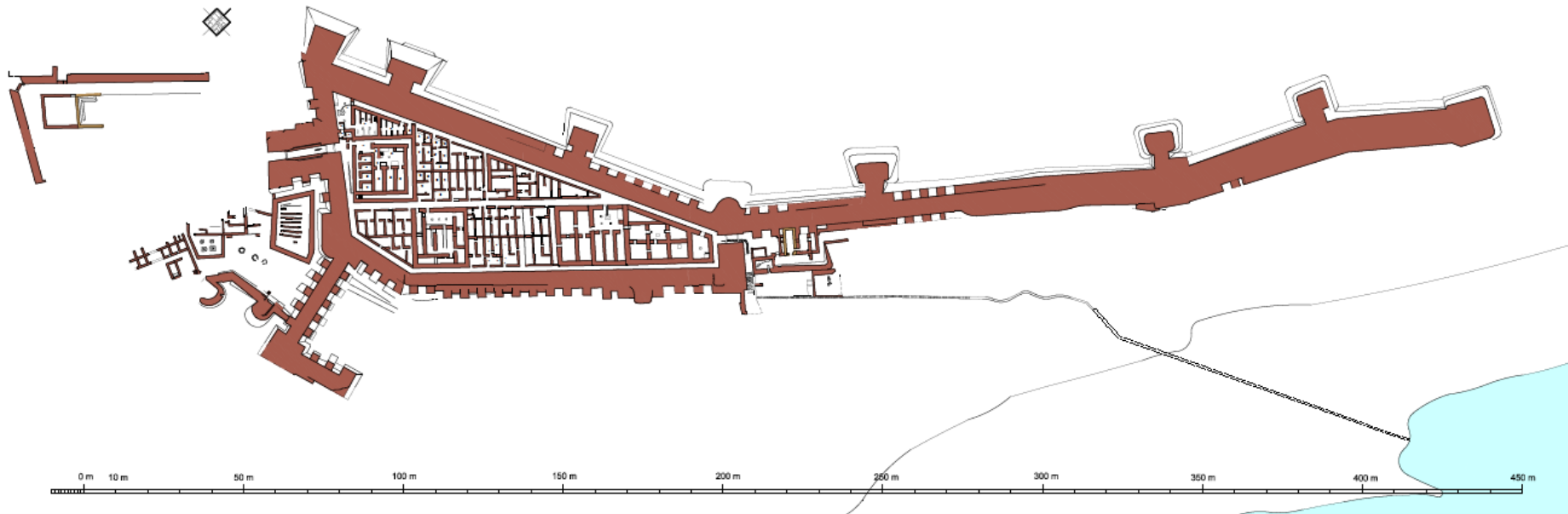
As for any son of mine who shall maintain this border  
which my majesty has made, he is my son, born to my  
majesty. The true son is he who champions his father,  
who guards the border of his begetter. But he who  
abandons it, who fails to fight for it, he is not my son,  
he was not born to me...”











## Uronarti fortress



Wooden hieratic tag, stone weight set, and wooden ration token from Uronarti







