



From Slave to Pharaoh: The Black Experience of Ancient Egypt

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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