

R.F.Tylecote, Esq,
University,
Newcastle upon Tyne.

16th June, 1975.

Dear Mr. Tylecote,

Thank you for your letter of 11th June last. I will be very interested in seeing a copy of your first report, and in due course of your second.

As to the date of the Aksumite invasion, it seems to me clear that Meroe did not exist as a state in the sense that it was in the first three centuries A.D., at the time of the main inscription usually ascribed to Ezana (Littmann, D.A.E. no.11) where he refers to the Noba and the black and red peoples. A further reference to the Noba is in the new inscription (J.des Savants, "Une nouvelle inscription grecque d'Ezana, roi d'Axoum", Anfray, Caquot and Nautin, 1970, pp.220-74). In neither of these inscriptions is there any clear reference to a town of Meroe.

The inscription, Littmann 11, is that in which he refers to the Lord of Heaven, usually interpreted as indicating that he had become a Christian; and in the new inscription it is quite plain that the king had embraced our faith. These inscriptions are generally ascribed, as no doubt you know, to the period around 320-350 A.D. Mlle J.Pirenne has however put forward a theory that the conversion to Christianity took place in the fifth century. She ascribes Littmann No.11 and the new inscription to Ezana, who ruled at the end of the fifth century, and if she is right (and most people think she isn't), then of course the relevant inscriptions and the invasion which seems to have reached the area of Meroe, are later by a century and a half than has formerly been maintained. [Ezana!]

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,



Neville Chittick
Director