Nubian Architectural and Environmental Features Before and After Displacement: The Model of the Village Tūmās wa ʿĀfya

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The Nubians are an ethnic group living for centuries in old Nubia. For a long time, the Nubians ruled kingdoms and created an empire. Many years later, because of the colonial settings and the division of Egypt and Sudan, Nubia was divided into two main regions: Upper Nubia (the Sudanese Nubia), and Lower Nubia (The Egyptian Nubia), which stretched along a 320-kilometer sector of the Nile Valley between Aswan and Adindan that used to connect Egypt with Sudan. The Nubian valley is mostly very narrow, lined with mountain slopes, steep above the right bank. At the time of resettlement in the early 1960s, an estimated 50,000 Nubians lived in thirty-nine villages, divided into three basic residential areas, settled by three main groups, Kunūz, Arabs, and Fadija. Their main economic activities were based on agriculture largely in their original homeland.

As overseers of a rich social legacy, Nubians preserved a special lifestyle. Their towns were spots of home and focused on social connections, well established in family ties, ancestral traditions, and the atmosphere of the local area. The engineering of their homes, which were built neighborhood materials, such as mud brick, gave an impression of their association with the land and demonstrated their cleverness. The relocation and resettlement process during the 1960s upset this customary way of life, moving the Nubians to adjust to new conditions while endeavoring to keep up with their social character.

The northernmost of these groups, formerly living in the area between Aswan and As-Sebua, are the Kunūz. Their close relatives in the southernmost Egyptian Nubia, located between Korosko and Adendan, are the Fadijja, who often call themselves "Nūbi." Between these two groups (the Kunūz and Nūbi), various Nubian Arab tribes settled down in the fourteenth century CE along a thirty-kilometer stretch of the Nile Valley lined with hills on the right bank, between Wadi el Arab and as-Singari. This settlement cut the Kunūz off from the Fadijja. Another ethnic group, the Ababda, originally nomads of the Eastern Desert also gradually began settling down, recently in some Kunūz villages and Arab villages.

The different settlement examples of these gatherings made rich embroidery of societies in Nubia. Each gathering contributed its practices, dialects, and customs, yet they shared other components, particularly a profound association with the Nile, which supported their lifestyle. The Nile was a wellspring of water as well as the core of horticultural practices, supporting a scope of harvests that were crucial for their economy. Over the long run, this mixing of various Nubian and Bedouin backgrounds encouraged an extraordinary social character that survived outside impacts, including dislodging. Today, the tradition of this assorted legacy remains critical, giving us an understanding of the flexibility and versatility of Nubian culture.

A house (*nōg*) is more than a physical object for the Nubians. Feeling at home was not questioned by the Nubians before the resettlement. The loss of these homes was a traumatic experience for many Nubians. For their purposes, a house is profoundly imbued with social importance and stands as an image of legacy and personality. Each home addresses the heredity of a family, and is designed for shelter as well as for protecting customs and building up local area bonds. Worked with remarkable compositional components to suit the Nubian way of life, these homes were valued spaces where day-to-day existence, festivities, and family customs unfurled. The deficiency of these homes was a horrendous encounter for some Nubians, as the resettlement evacuated them truly as well as cut off the association with these social and hereditary spaces, leaving a void that new residences couldn't fill.

Familiarity with the house, its history, and knowledge about its parts and surroundings facilitated a sense of belonging and attachment to the house. Ownership of the house was not only physical, but it was emotional and cultural as well. The theme of control was important in transforming the house into a home. It ensured safety and security through privacy. This was achieved by controlling what was communicated to others as well as controlling

access and boundaries. The meanings communicated by different parts of the house, rooms, furniture, and decorations, were all understood by the inhabitants and by the community at large. The layout and orientation of each space within the home were chosen with purpose, ensuring that the architecture reflected and honored the cultural values of the family within.

The newly-built resettlement villages of the 1960s took the same names as the former ones, but the names of the hamlets (*nujūʿ*) were discontinued. These *nujūʿ* were essential to the Nubian social structure, as each hamlet was typically inhabited by extended families or clan members. The discontinuation of these hamlet names, which held significant cultural value, represented a loss of identity for many Nubians. In Old Nubia, the *nujūʿ* were more than just geographical locations; they were markers of lineage, community, and shared history. In the resettlement villages, however, this intricate social fabric was disrupted, as families were grouped based on household size rather than kinship. Without the hamlet names, the sense of belonging and continuity with past generations was diminished, making the transition to the new settlements even more challenging.

The old *nujūʿ* were based on family and clan relationships. Each *najaʿ* was distinguished from the others. Inhabitants of the *nujūʿ* were mostly members of the same clan. In the resettlement villages, the government planners ignored this important cultural feature. The street layouts in the resettlement villages are organized based on house sizes: rows of adjacent houses all had the same number of rooms. Hence Nubian families ended up with neighbors who shared not family relationships but family size.

This paper compares traditional old Nubian houses before relocation and the new governmental dwellings built for them following their forced displacement. I also find it necessary to situate the relevant events and developments in two broader contexts:

a) the relevant aspects of Nubian culture that pertain to the meaning of home, kinship, and community; and
b) the specific history of Nubian resettlement.

In my opinion and experience, this two-fold contextualization serves its purposes best if it is accompanied by a synopsis of the governmental resettlement policies, plans, and difficult interactions between government officials and Nubians. This synopsis is of course limited, due to the space constraints of this paper.

The Nubian settlements known as *nawāhi* (villages) had several unique characteristics, in terms of settlement patterns and housing

after 1902. The reservoir was completed in 1902 and the completion of the construction of the old Aswan dam and its elevation took place in 1912 and 1933. These changes to the landscape disrupted ancestral settlement patterns and housing, albeit differently depending upon the settlement. I describe the most important characteristics below.

Before the construction of the dam, nonetheless, all Nubian *nawāhi* firmly looked like the principal design. The network design, with its organized lines of homes, represented the profound association of the Nubian nation to the Nile, which was integral to their lifestyle. This plan not only took into consideration the proficient utilization of room on the flatlands but also cultivated a feeling of public living. As families resided one next to the other, every family fostered a harmonious day-to-day existence interlaced with that of their neighbors. The efficient design mirrored the solidarity and relationships among individuals, and it gave a dependable system for overseeing assets, land, and the connections that supported their networks. After resettlement, nonetheless, these customary arrangements were upset, supplanting a natural and socially established structure with a more unbending plan that did not completely resonate with the Nubian lifestyle.

There were two types of settlement patterns in Old Nubia:

1. the grid pattern that is usually found in the southern part of Nubia on flat lands where dwellings were organized in rows parallel to the Nile; and
2. the free pattern that was usually found in northern Nubia where the settlements stood mostly on hills leaving the flat lands for agriculture.

But, before the dam, all Nubian *nawāḥi* followed the grid pattern.

Tūmās wa ʿĀfya

The old village of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya was located 220 kilometers upstream of Aswan, and next to the village of Derr, on the west bank of the river. Derr was the capital of Lower Nubia, and the headquarters of the Kāshifs who were nineteenth-century Nubian "governors." Its name, Tūmās wa ʿĀfya, was derived from a Nubian phrase meaning "son good," i.e., "good son." It epitomized the well-established social upsides of family honor and consideration in the local area. This town was among the numerous in Nubia that held huge verifiable and social significance. The place of Derr as the capital further elevated what remained of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya. Such villages, with their solid familial associations, confronted

significant misfortune with resettlement, as the uprooting eliminated individuals from their genealogical terrains as well as disturbed the social texture of their networks.

Tūmās wa ʿĀfya consisted of eight major hamlets: Sāb, Mansour, Ambaray, Himerīye, Mārya, Moradāb, Ōba, and ʿĀfya. Each of these consisted of smaller *nujūʿ*. The two major *nujūʿ* were Ōba and ʿĀfya. Ōba consisted of Ōba, Bahjōra, Nejarīye, and Karkar, while ʿĀfya consisted of Fāshir, Shibakīye, Dinabe, Fūdabe, Shagīg, Arab Hille, Hinesabe, Jelegāb, and Khērēn.

Tūmās wa ʿĀfya was not affected by the construction of the old Aswan reservoir in 1902 or by its first heightening in 1912. But by its second heightening in 1933, the government divided the Nubian villages according to the following classification:

1. villages that flooded temporarily during the closing of the reservoir gates but when the gates reopened, and the reservoir water level went down, people were able to plant for a shorter period; and
2. villages that flooded permanently and lost any possibility for future farming.

In the first category, government compensation was (in principle) paid for palm trees and houses, while in the second category compensation was for palm trees, houses, and farmland.

As a result of the second heightening of the Old Aswan reservoir, the government decided in 1933 to expropriate all the territory under 122 meters above sea level. The government issued Act No. 6 of 1933 which excluded from the final expropriation some villages that were located on high lands. This Act was specifically designed to undermine the opportunity for Nubians to file claims against the state or government. They were deprived of the right to contest and sue the authorities, which was permitted under the other existing laws at that time. This move contributed to the instability of Nubian rights, as Nubian communities found themselves trapped between the legal challenges that prevented them from defending their rights and interests in the face of government policies regarding land expropriation.

These villages were deemed to be partly safe from flooding for part of the year, which might be enough to plant and cultivate for a few months. The owners of these lands received compensation for the part of the year in which they could not farm due to flooding. That compensation equaled half of the assessed value of their land. The land thus partly compensated remained, legally speaking, in the ownership of its previous owners. Tūmās wa ʿĀfya was one of

Figure 1.
In 1933, seven families from Tūmās wa ʿĀfya moved to Edfu.

the villages that experienced this situation. As we shall see, this had some important consequences for how the resettlement events unfolded.

About seven families from the hamlet of Moradāb decided to resettle north about 270 km to Beheera and Ridasiya (urbanized Rideesiye) in Edfu instead of rebuilding on higher grounds in the old location (figure 1).

In response to complaints from villagers to the effect that they could not benefit even partially from their flooded farmlands, the government issued a decision in July 1942 to expropriate all the farmland of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya and to pay the remaining half of the compensation of the affected lands. As a reaction to this, all landowners in Tūmās wa ʿĀfya withdrew their previous complaint and demanded instead that the government either reassess the value of their lands or give the affected owners comparable properties in other locations unaffected by the heightening of the reservoir.

In 1951 the government approved the expropriation of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya and allocated an area of 8,000 *feddans* near Esna to be sold to the affected people.

From that moment, the people of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya were somehow assumed by some officials to be connected to Esna, although they had not, at that time, left their homeland.

Officially, those people owned "unseen" agricultural lands in Esna. The government issued a decree in 1954 to expropriate their land in the old site of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya. In January 1954, the government

held the equivalent of 30% of the compensation due to the affected people of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya as a deposit for land reclamation which, as promised, would be sold to them in the Esna region. However, the operations were put on hold in 1959, for the government decided to stop such sales because by that time plans to build the High Dam were firmed up. Although the government had, as mentioned above, withheld 30% of the compensation, it did not start building the infrastructure needed for land reclamation.

The 8,000 *feddans* near Esna came with specific terms that were not always made clear to the affected Nubian families. These documents highlight the sense of uncertainty and confusion felt by many as they navigated this forced sale of land. While the government offered this land as compensation, families were often faced with bureaucratic challenges that made the acquisition process lengthy and complex. Furthermore, there were financial implications attached to the land allocation, which required the Nubian families to pay for property that was ostensibly meant to replace their lost homes. This added burden underscored the ongoing struggle for fair and adequate compensation and the challenges the Nubians encountered in securing a new foundation for their displaced communities.

Tūmās wa ʿĀfya's Traditional Housing

The houses were built in the form of a rectangle with an area roughly from 200 to 1000 square meters, depending on the site and topography. Many factors have affected the design of the old Nubian houses, such as the climatic, geographical, and the social needs.

The standard house layout included the following components:

The Main Entrance:
In numerous customary Nubian homes, the primary entry is intended to represent both friendliness and protection. It frequently includes enlivening components, such as complex carvings or painted themes that mirror the family's legacy or status. These decisions about the house plan create an inviting atmosphere at first entry and prompt guests to understand the family's social situation.This cautious meticulousness in the entry region features the significance of family and local area associations, as well as the conventional meaning of the home as a space of solace and regard.

The Maḍyafa:
The *maḍyafa* is more than just a guest room; it holds cultural importance as a place of hospitality and honor. In Nubian homes, guests are treated with the utmost respect, and the *maḍyafa* serves

as a dedicated space for welcoming them. Often, it is decorated with beautiful textiles, traditional wall art, and comfortable seating that reflects Nubian customs. Its location near the main entrance symbolizes the open-hearted nature of Nubian hospitality, while also ensuring that guests can enjoy a private space without disrupting the household's daily activities. The proximity of the *maḍyafa* to the courtyard allows for easy access to the open area, where larger gatherings or shared meals may be hosted under the shade. Additionally, the *maḍyafa* furnishings and décor are often chosen carefully to showcase the family's heritage and pride. Embellished with locally crafted items, such as woven mats and pottery, the room serves as a display of Nubian craftsmanship and artistry. Guests might be offered traditional refreshments, like hibiscus tea or dates, further emphasizing the cultural practices associated with hospitality. In many homes, family photos and ancestral artifacts are displayed, connecting the guests to the lineage and stories of their hosts. This warm and inviting space reflects the Nubian values of generosity, respect, and a strong sense of community.

The Courtyard:
It is an open space in the middle of the house. It is found in all Nubian houses and different areas. It opens to all rooms of the house used for living purposes. It holds a significant environmental and climatic role in addition to the social one.

The Decorations:
The decoration of the Nubian houses is related to the history of the Nubian dwelling. The decoration takes the form of dolls, fans, and veils, in addition to the paste ceramic dishes on the walls.

High Dam and Nubian Resettlement

Before 1963, in both Egypt and Sudan, Nubians lived between the First and Fifth Nile Cataracts in areas of the Nile Valley where floodwater and other types of irrigation were mainly restricted to a narrow fringe of alluvial deposits continually at risk from desert encroachment. Lower Nubia stretched upstream from north of Wadi Halfa as far as Aswan. Unlike the current barren surroundings of Kom Ombo, all of Lower Nubia in 1962 was a starkly beautiful environment. On both sides of the river, desert sands, interspersed with rocky hills, came down to the water's edge. A total of 553 sparsely populated hamlets (*nujūʿ*) spread along the way. According to the 1960 Egyptian census, the total resident Nubian population

was 98,609 and belonged to three distinct ethnic *cum* linguistic groups, two of which spoke Nubian languages.

In this region, the Nubians developed a way of life closely tied to the Nile, which provided water, fertile land, and a means of transportation. Each hamlet, or *najaʿ*, was typically composed of extended family units, forming small, tight-knit communities. The agricultural practices here were adapted to the narrow stretch of fertile land along the riverbanks, where they grew crops such as sorghum, dates, and vegetables, depending on the seasonal flooding. Fishing also played a role in their sustenance. This way of life, however, was vulnerable, with desert sands encroaching on the farmlands and limited access to other resources, leading many Nubian men to migrate for work. The beauty of the landscape was matched by the cultural richness of its people, who maintained vibrant traditions, languages, and a strong sense of identity despite their challenging environment.

First came the Mattokki/Kenzi-speaking Nubians whose seventeen villages extended for approximately 150 kilometers upriver from Aswan. They represented 36% of the total population and were the most seriously affected by the construction of the Old Aswan reservoir. It is worth noting that some of the Kunūz villages close to Aswan had already been forced to relocate three times, moving up to the reservoir's edge or downstream to and below Aswan with each heightening. All their date palms had been destroyed and most of the year all of their agricultural land was inundated. Cultivation was restricted to only a few months each year when the reservoir gates were open. Then, only quick-maturing fodder crops for the few cows, donkeys, and small stock those villagers kept, as vegetables, could be grown.

Despite these hardships, the Kenzi-speaking Nubians maintained a strong connection to their land and traditions, adapting their agricultural practices as much as possible to the changing conditions. Their resilience was evident in their ability to cultivate whatever little land remained available, even as they coped with the annual cycle of flooding and depletion. However, the frequent relocations took a toll on their way of life. Traditional date palm groves, which were integral to both their economy and culture, had been decimated, along with other crops that once thrived on the banks of the Nile. The Kunūz people, whose livelihoods had been so deeply intertwined with their ancestral lands, faced increasing uncertainty and a growing sense of dislocation with each move. The construction of the Old Aswan reservoir marked a turning point in their history, as they struggled to hold onto their identity in the face of relentless environmental and social upheaval.

In some areas, huge dunes encroached into the reservoir. Owing to the lack of income-earning opportunities in the old villages, labor migration rates among men may well have been the highest in the world. Men from these villages frequently left for extended periods to work in cities like Cairo, Alexandria, and Khartoum. This labor migration was not only driven by limited local employment but also by the strong pull of economic opportunities in urban areas. As a result, families often relied on remittances sent home, which became essential for their livelihoods. Over time, this pattern of migration created deep social and economic ties between the Nubian villages and the cities, as well as a significant cultural exchange. While men worked away from home, Nubian women maintained the households, cultivated small plots of land, and preserved traditional customs, which helped keep their culture alive despite these long absences.

Immediately upriver from the last Mattokki/Kenzi-speaking villages, there was a relatively small population (10% of the total Nubian population in 1960) of Arabic speakers whose seven villages edged the reservoir for the next forty kilometers. They will not be further considered in the present analysis. In the next stretch upriver, the Mahas-speaking Fadijja community inhabited approximately twenty-one villages that extended roughly 120 kilometers southward. Representing about 54% of the total Nubian population in 1960, the Fadijja people spoke the second Nubian language and were generally more geographically dispersed. Their villages were typically located in elevated areas, providing a measure of protection against flooding. However, they also faced challenges due to the inundation of their agricultural lands. The Fadijja maintained a close relationship with the river, relying on it not only for sustenance but also as a vital part of their cultural and social practices. Despite their relative isolation, the Fadijja preserved unique cultural expressions in their language, art, and customs that distinguished them from both their Kenzi-speaking neighbors and the wider Egyptian and Sudanese societies.

Closer to the Sudanese border, the reservoir narrowed so that the last Nubian village in Egypt, Adindan, came closest to showing the type of Nubian economy and livelihood that must have existed before the construction of the Old Aswan Reservoir. The Fadija's closer ties to Sudanese Nubia fostered cultural exchange and economic interactions that were less impacted by the colonial and governmental policies that affected other Nubian communities. This blend of geographic advantages and cultural continuity meant that the Fadija, particularly in Adindan, were able to maintain their traditional livelihoods longer than those in more affected areas,

which experienced multiple displacements due to the construction of the reservoir.

Furthermore, Adindan economic practices were not only about agriculture but also encompassed trade with neighboring regions, allowing for a more diverse economic base. The village likely served as a hub where local agricultural products were exchanged for goods from surrounding areas, maintaining economic vitality and cultural identity despite the encroaching pressures of development and modernization. Thus, Adindan is a significant example of what traditional Nubian life was like before the transformative impacts of the Old Aswan Reservoir.

The High Dam is an embankment dam, built, between 1960 and 1970, across the Nile south of Aswan. Its significance largely eclipsed the previous Aswan reservoir. Based on the success of the old reservoir, then at its maximum utilization, construction of the High Dam became a key objective of the government following the Egyptian Revolution of 1952. With its ability to better control flooding, provide increased water storage for irrigation, and generate hydroelectricity, the Dam was seen as key to Egypt's planned industrialization. The High Dam was not just an engineering marvel but a symbol of national pride and progress for Egypt. It was constructed to address the chronic issues of flooding that had plagued the Nile Valley for centuries, which often resulted in devastating consequences for agriculture and local communities. The dam's capacity to regulate the flow of the Nile meant that farmers could rely on a more consistent water supply for irrigation, significantly boosting agricultural productivity. Additionally, the creation of Lake Nasser behind the dam provided a massive reservoir that enhanced Egypt's water management capabilities.

Moreover, the High Dam played a pivotal role in the country's energy sector. By harnessing the power of the Nile to generate hydroelectricity, it provided a sustainable energy source that supported industrial growth and urban development. This influx of electricity was crucial for powering factories, schools, and homes, thereby contributing to the economic modernization envisioned by the post-revolution government. The Dam also became a focal point for national and international attention, symbolizing Egypt's aspirations for self-sufficiency and its commitment to harnessing natural resources for development. However, while the High Dam brought significant benefits, it also led to complex social, economic, and environmental challenges, particularly for the Nubian communities who were displaced as a result of its construction.

During 1956-57, the Permanent Council for National Production and Development carried out physical and aerial surveys to

determine the potentially flooded areas and the number and location of villages that were to be affected. The study reported, among other things, the impossibility of resettling the Nubian people around the shores of what was to be called Lake Nasser. Consequently, the study recommended resettling the Nubians in a new site north of Aswan. In response to these findings, the government-initiated plans for the resettlement of the Nubian communities, emphasizing the need to provide adequate infrastructure and services in the new location. The proposed site aimed to replicate some aspects of Nubian life, including access to agricultural land and social facilities. However, the logistics of relocating thousands of people posed significant challenges and many Nubians were apprehensive about leaving their ancestral homes. They were deeply connected to their land, culture, and traditions, making the transition a complex and emotional process.

The resettlement plan also involved consultations with local leaders and community members, although many felt their voices were not fully heard in the decision-making process. This led to growing concerns about the adequacy of the new arrangements and the potential loss of cultural identity. Despite the government's assurances, many Nubians worried that the move would disrupt their social fabric and way of life. As a result, the implementation of the resettlement plan was met with resistance and skepticism, highlighting the broader tensions between governmental policies and the lived realities of the affected communities.

The Dam is remembered by most Egyptians as one of their former leader's greatest accomplishments, a towering monument to the modernizing aspirations of an independent nation. President Nasser's 1960 speech addressed the Nubians and promised them that these changes would bring modernization and community-building:

> "The prosperity which shall cover the Nubians is enormous because it shall bring all Nubians together on a correct foundation to build a strong, healthy society."[1]

The contrast with reality could not have been greater. For the Nubians who were living in Old Nubia, the Dam destroyed a way of life. It flooded Nubian land along 500 kilometers of the Nile. At the time of its inauguration, it was the largest rock-filled Dam in the world. It created a new reservoir, Lake Nasser, which spilled over into Sudan. A large migration occurred, taking 100,000 Nubians

1 Nasser, Gamal Abdel. *Address to the Nubian People.* Speech delivered January 11, 1960. YouTube video. https://youtu.be/6gfVfVI3a3A.

of forty-four villages from their ancestral homeland, away from a way of life based around the river Nile for thousands of years, to desert life in villages built for them in the area of Kom Ombo (50 kilometers north of Aswan), known as New Nubia. The effects of the High Dam on the Nubian people were profound and far-reaching. The displacement of 100,000 Nubians not only severed their ties to their ancestral lands but also led to significant cultural dislocation. As they were forced to abandon their homes, many faced the loss of not just physical structures but also the cultural heritage embedded in their communities. The newly established villages in Kom Ombo, while designed to provide basic shelter, lacked the emotional and historical connections that the Nubians had with their original homes.

Moreover, the transition from a river-based economy to a desert environment posed serious challenges for their livelihoods. The agricultural practices that had sustained the Nubians for generations were disrupted, and many found it difficult to adapt to the new economic realities of life in New Nubia. While the government hailed the High Dam as a symbol of progress and modernization for the Nubians, it marked the beginning of a struggle to maintain their identity and way of life in the face of overwhelming change.

Before the eviction, the government tried to come up with a conciliation plan for resettlement. Relocation sites were chosen by the government to be in Kom Ombo. The construction of new villages for the Nubians was set in the plan, and models for these villages were shown and displayed to the Nubian people. Based on interviews with Nubians, some recall this period by saying it was a period of promises. The government promised them compensation for their homes by giving them new homes in the new resettlement villages and good compensation for their palms. The river Nile was scheduled to change course in May 1964, as such the need to proceed with the resettlement was pressing. This time pressure was coupled with an international campaign to save the ancient Egyptian monuments in Nubia, an action that was led by UNESCO as a coordinator between Egypt and the involved nations. The government's efforts to devise a resettlement plan were met with mixed reactions among the Nubian population. While some were hopeful about the promised compensation and new homes, others felt skeptical about the sincerity of the government's commitments. Many Nubians cherished a deep emotional connection to their ancestral lands, and the thought of being uprooted from their homes was distressing. This uncertainty led to a sense of anxiety among the community as they faced the impending changes. As the date for resettlement approached, the Nubians found themselves in a

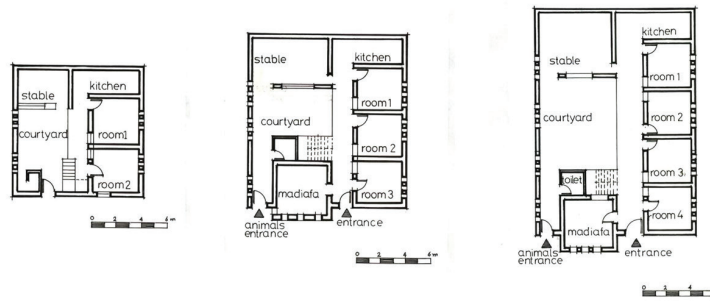

Figure 2.
The three prototypes of houses for the new villages.

state of limbo, caught between the hopes for a better future and the fear of losing their cultural heritage. The urgency of the situation intensified as the government pressed forward with plans to relocate them to Kom Ombo, but the true impact of such a dramatic shift on their lives and identities remained uncertain.

As an example of the Residential Unit's Design to Settle the People of Nubia, the National Organization for the Dislocation of Nubians established a set of recommendations for planning and designing the new villages. These guidelines stated that the houses should be identical using only three prototypes of the design. The prototypes were designed according to the number of rooms in each type (figure 2).

Nubian Resettlement Policies

The government policy consisted of an integrated and coordinated approach involving technical, social, and economic measures. This approach reflected some basic ideological principles of post-revolution Egypt.

A survey to collect demographic data about Nubia was part of an effort by several governmental agencies to carry through the resettlement scheme in the targeted period.

A national organization called "The National Organization for Nubian Resettlement" was formed as an intermediary between different ministries and agencies involved in the project. The Ministry of Housing and Development was assigned the task of planning the villages and designing the houses. The project faced several difficulties from the very beginning. The designated area for the project formed half a circle around land owned by the Wadi Kom Ombo Company and covered an area of 35,000 *feddans*. The land was

all deserts with no roads or water sources existing before the project started. Other amenities were absent as well. Accommodating professional and technical staff on the site was, therefore, out of the question. The Ministry of Housing decided to undertake the complex planning and design work from its main headquarters in Cairo. Despite the challenges, the Ministry of Housing aimed to create a structured environment that would support the resettled Nubians. They conducted detailed planning sessions to ensure that the new villages would reflect the cultural heritage of the Nubian people while incorporating modern infrastructure. The vision was to design homes that met the needs of the population, emphasizing community living and accessibility. However, the lack of local knowledge and understanding of Nubian cultural nuances often resulted in designs that did not resonate with the community's values. This disconnect led to frustration among the Nubians, who felt that their voices were not adequately heard in the planning process. As the project progressed, it became clear that the aspirations for a harmonious integration of modernity and tradition would require more than just physical structures; it demanded a deeper engagement with the cultural identity of the Nubian people.

The main planning and design premise was to ensure equality among the families by providing the same house design to families that had the same number of household members. As well, it was decided to use locally available construction materials to keep construction costs under check and to be able to complete the project in time.

The preliminary study of the project concluded that 30 villages were required to accommodate all the villages and *nujūʿ* of Lower Nubia. It was estimated that 16,000 housing units were required to accommodate families who were living in Nubia at the time of the preliminary study. For those who were working outside Nubia at the time, another 7,880 houses were to be built later as a second stage.

To maintain the geographic configuration of the villages in Old Nubia, the planners decided to keep the same arrangement of villages by locating the Kunūz villages in the northern part, the Arab villages in the middle, and the Fadija villages in the south. The names of the old villages were used for the new villages. In each of these three groups, a "central" village was designated as a service center. Each contained a large mosque, a police station, a health unit, an elementary school, and an agriculture cooperative. An administrative capital for the entire resettlement district — Nasser City — was built in a central location. Finally, the district was to be included as one of the regional districts of the Governorate of Aswan. In addition to these planning measures, special attention was given

to the social and cultural dynamics of the Nubian communities. The aim was to create a supportive environment that fostered connections among families and maintained their cultural identity. The layout of the new villages was designed to encourage community interaction, with communal spaces such as parks and gathering areas integrated into the planning. However, as the construction progressed, it became evident that the government planners underestimated the importance of the traditional social fabric of the Nubian society. Many residents expressed dissatisfaction with the new arrangements, feeling that the designs did not adequately reflect their customs and lifestyles. This oversight led to tensions within the community, as many felt their cultural heritage was being overlooked in favor of a standardized model. As the Nubians moved into their new homes, they began to adapt the structures to better suit their needs, incorporating elements of their traditional architectural styles to preserve their identity amidst the changes.

To comply with the deadlines, the planners decided to locate the villages close to each other, contrary to the initial planning scheme which envisaged that the location of each village be close to its allocated agricultural land. Villages were built on both sides of the existing Aswan-Cairo highway.

This decision to cluster the villages together, rather than distribute them across the landscape, was driven by time constraints and logistical considerations. However, it also resulted in significant challenges for the Nubian communities. By placing the villages close to one another, the planners inadvertently disrupted the traditional way of life that the Nubians had maintained for generations. The spatial arrangement, which prioritized accessibility over cultural relevance, led to a sense of disconnection from their agricultural roots. As the Nubians settled into their new homes, many felt a profound loss, not only of their ancestral land but also of the communal and familial ties that had been woven into the fabric of their former villages. The new village layout lacked the organic flow and interconnection that characterized their old settlements, leading to feelings of isolation and frustration among the residents as they grappled with the reality of their new environment.

The construction method recommended for the project by the Cairo planners was to use partly dressed limestone to build the walls and reinforced concrete roofs on top. The traditional mud-brick construction system of Nubian houses before the resettlement was not considered.

Tūmās wa ʿĀfya and High Dam

A few months before resettlement some Nubians from Tūmās wa ʿĀfya complained to the government that they didn't want to move to Esna but preferred to be with the other Nubian villages near Kom Ombo. On June 11th, 1963, an official governmental committee tried to reconcile the points of view and to persuade those who insisted on immigrating to the Kom Ombo to move to Esna according to the original plan.

As detailed above, the original plan was to resettle the village to Esna according to the choice of its people to be close to the eight thousand *feddans* they had bought in the late 1930s.

It appears that both groups were unwilling to change their positions. To deal with this controversy, the committee ran a referendum to find out how many wanted to immigrate to Kom Ombo. Since the original plan was to resettle them in Esna, the officials announced that it would submit to the people's desire to move to Kom Ombo but on three conditions. First, the families had to officially relinquish any claims to the land they had previously purchased in Esna. Second, they would have to agree to be treated like other Nubians who were being resettled in Kom Ombo, meaning they would not receive any special privileges or considerations. Finally, they were required to forgo any requests for specific land allocations within the Kom Ombo area.

These stipulations were intended to ensure a smooth transition while also managing the logistics of the resettlement, but they also reflected the government's underlying desire to maintain authority over the process and minimize any potential complications that could arise from individual land claims:

a) to relinquish, officially, the land they bought earlier in Esna;
b) to accept being treated like the rest of the Nubians (who were to be resettled near Kom Ombo); and
c) to not request any specific area or site in the Kom Ombo resettlement district.

On the understanding that all concerned were to accept these three conditions, the government ran a referendum in June 1963. The results indicated that the people of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya (1363 families) were of two opinions. One-third (364 families from Āfiye hamlets: Fāshir, Dinabe, Fūdabe, Shagīg, Arab Hille, Hinesabe, and Khērēn) chose to be resettled in the Kom Ombo district, in a location between the villages of Gustul and Abu Simbel. The remaining two-thirds (999 families) chose to be resettled near Esna (figure 3).

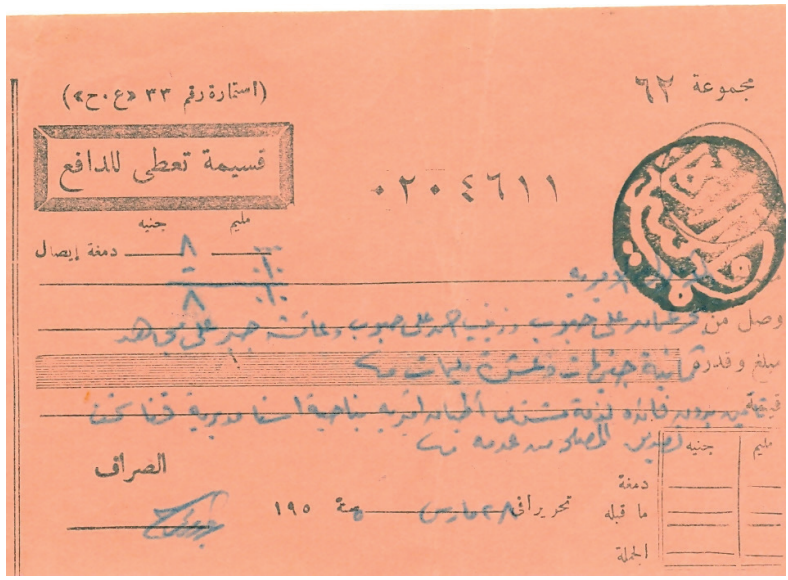

Figure 3.
The author's grandfather's 1954 receipt of the compensation as a deposit for farmland reclamation in Esna.

In Esna, the government built the following facilities: three primary schools and one preparatory school, a co-op association, a social services unit, a clinic, a post office, a telephone office, a police and fire unit, four stores, and three mosques.

The families who were resettled in the Esna project were located in three main villages, each of which had two sub-villages:

- "Tūmās wa ʿĀfya Wāḥid" (Arabic for "1") was uninhabited until 1970 and was located at 25°16'54.50" N, 32°30'42.98" E. The main settlement was called *Al Ra'īsiya* (Arabic for "main"). Its sub-village was called Khalīliye-Ashmāwi.
- "Tūmās wa ʿĀfya Itnēn" (Arabic for "2") was located at 25°19'52.41" N, 32°29'25.23" E. Al Ra'īsiye was called Moradāb-Mārya. Its sub-village was called Izbet el Zeet-Izbet el Sāb.
- "Tūmās wa ʿĀfya Talāta" (Arabic for "3") was located at 25°22'46.24" N, 32°28'43.34" E. Al Ra'īsiya was called Mansur-Sāb. Its sub-village was given three different designations: *Alif* (Arabic for "A") included Shibakīye, Jelegāb, and Āfiye), *Be* (Arabic for "B"), and Gīm (Arabic for "C") included Ambaray, Ḥimerīye, and Ōba) (figure 4).

Apart from the above three "villages," the government built an additional "village," called Tūmās wa ʿĀfya Arbaʿa (Arabic for "4"). It was located at 25°23'12.84"N, 32°28'46.72"E. It was to be inhabited by non-Nubians most of whom were originally from Esna; they used to work and live in the Sudanese town of Wadi Halfa close to

Figure 4. Resettlement of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya from the Original Village to Kom Ombo and Esna.

the border with Egypt. When the time of resettlement came, these Upper Egyptians preferred to come back to Egypt instead of going to Khashm al Gerba (southeastern Sudan) with the rest of Wadi Halfa's Nubians.

In 1970, the government had almost completed the reclamation of the farmland that the people of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya had previously paid for from their compensation. These lands were located five kilometers west of Esna. For accounting purposes, the lands were divided into nine agricultural areas and were serviced with pump stations, canals, and roads.

At this point, the people of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya requested to move closer to their farmlands and the government responded positively. At that moment, internal immigration began. People from Tūmās wa ʿĀfya Itnēn moved to Tūmās wa ʿĀfya Wāḥid near their farmlands (in agricultural areas numbers 1, 2, and 3), while half of the people of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya Talāta (hamlets Ōba, Sheppakeyyah, and Telegraph) moved to Tūmās wa ʿĀfya Itnēn closer to their land (in agricultural areas numbers 8 and 9). People of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya Arba'a moved into Tūmās wa ʿĀfya Talāta to clear the area that was chosen to serve as a temporary location for an army officers' school (a move that was deemed necessary due to the circumstances surrounding the war with Israel at the time) (figure 5).

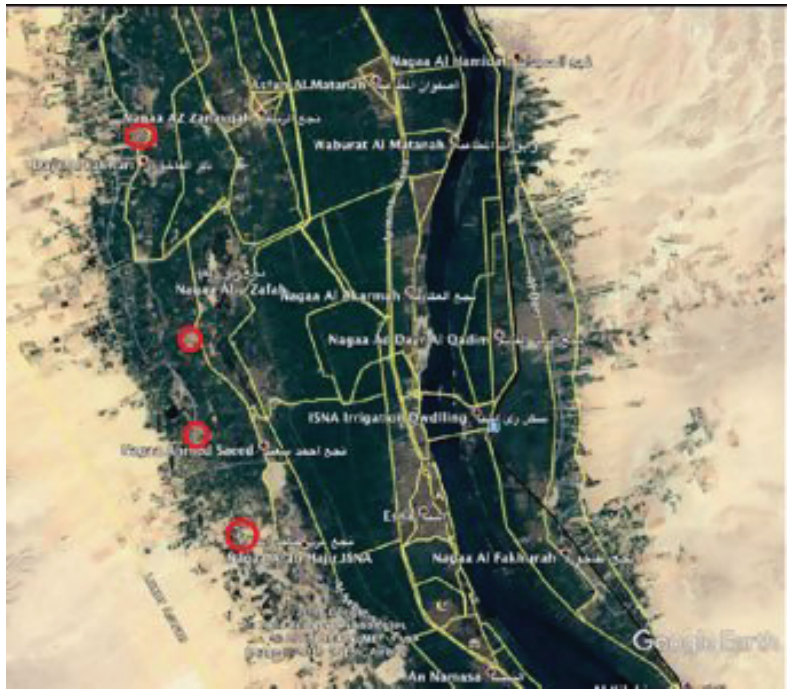

Figure 5.
Tūmās wa ʿĀfya villages in Esna.

Later, in 1978, and like the other moves described above, the other half of the people of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya Talāta moved into a newly built village that was called Tūmās wa ʿĀfya al Wusta (Arabic for "central"). It was located at 25°18'29.26" N, 32°29'32.73" E and was close to the farmlands that belonged to the people from the hamlets of Mansour, Sāb, Ambaray, and Himerīye. These lands were in agricultural areas numbers 4, 5, 6, and 7.

In the late 1970s, the Egyptian government decided to auction off the houses in the village of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya Talāta, which attracted many non-Nubians from nearby Upper Egyptian villages. These newcomers purchased homes at the auction and established their residences in Tūmās wa ʿĀfya. Consequently, although these individuals were not of Nubian descent, their identification documents officially listed them as residents of the village. This development introduced a demographic shift in Tūmās wa ʿĀfya, gradually transforming the cultural and social landscape of the village.

In the seventies and eighties, the villages described above had acquired numerous cultural facilities including youth centers. During games, tournaments, and competitions, interactions between youths from different villages resulted in some identity-based conflicts. Cases of harassment and quarrels were reported

especially among youths who were born after the resettlement of 1964.

At the end of 2007, the government gave the same name — Tūmās wa ʿĀfya — to a cluster of a hundred new houses built on the Western shore of Lake Nasser at approximately the same location as the original village of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya (22°46'53.75" N, 32° 1'54.62" E) in Old Nubia. One hundred families were settled there. Each was allocated five acres of reclaimable land. None of these families were from Tūmās wa ʿĀfya originally. None were Nubian.

Thus, after nearly forty-five years from the time the Nubians resettlement outside of their ancestral homeland, there existed seven different villages carrying the same name Tūmās wa ʿĀfya officially. Yet only four of these are now inhabited by Nubians. These are Tūmās wa ʿĀfya Wahed, Itnēn, Al Wusta, and Nasr al Nuba. The other three, Talāta, Arba'a, and al-Nuba al-Gadīda, are inhabited by non-Nubians whose national identity cards show them as citizens of places with Nubian names.

As almost always happens when national governments invoke "national interest" or "national security" to relocate groups of citizens geographically, significantly different cultural cum ethnic populations end up living away from their kin and, instead, lived in close proximity to non-kin.

Thus, in the case of the people of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya, some families ended up near Esna and some near Kom Ombo. To work around their arbitrary separation, families continue to spend time and scarce monetary resources visiting each other. From the early 1970s, countless families used the annual school midyear break to visit their estranged relatives. The frequency of these visits tended to increase as the means of transportation improved. An equally significant manner of expressing the deeply felt resistance to the arbitrary separation of kin is evident in the continuation of marriages between those near Esna and those near Kom Ombo.

The tangled history of Nubian resettlement summarized above leads to a clear and inevitable conclusion: uprooting people and arbitrarily separating them from each other geographically does not override and does not reduce the feelings of shared cultural cum ethnic identity among them. Despite nuanced differences, Nubians in Egypt and Sudan are one.

The government's resettlement housing policy

A prefabricated building method was suggested for the construction of the houses, especially since the house floor plans were appropriate for that type of construction. This option was quickly abandoned

because the village sites were far from available factories in those days, and the time allowed for construction was too short to allow for the development of new factories to meet the resettlement needs. Another reason for rejecting the prefabricated method was its high cost which was estimated to be 160% higher than the traditional method of construction that was ultimately recommended for the project.

Planning of the resettlement villages

The National Organization for Nubian Resettlement established a set of recommendations for planning and designing the new villages. These guidelines stated that the house designs should be developed using only three design prototypes. The prototypes were based on the number of rooms in each type (see figure 2).

The large house consisted of 4 bedrooms, a *maḍyafa/mandara* (guest room), an open courtyard, a kitchen, a stable, and a toilet. This type was to be assigned to large families which had seven or more members. The medium house consisted of three bedrooms, a *maḍyafa,* a courtyard, a kitchen, a stable, and a toilet. This type was to be assigned to families of five to seven members. Finally, the small house consisted of two bedrooms, a *maḍyafa,* a courtyard, a kitchen, a stable, and a toilet. The small house was to be assigned to families of less than five members.

A fourth type was later added at the request of the Ministry of Social Affairs to accommodate small families of two members, single widows, or bachelors. This type contained one room, a courtyard, a kitchen, and a toilet. The idea behind this scheme was to provide equality among the Nubian families.

The openings for doors and windows in all the rooms were to be oriented north to bring the much-favored wind into the rooms, and small high openings were to be made on the opposite side to create cross-ventilation.

The houses were allowed only one frontage to reduce the total necessary street lengths. For the two largest types of houses, it was recommended that the design include two entrances: one for the inhabitants and their visitors and the other for the animals. Each house was to have a separate *maḍyafa* to receive and entertain guests. The *maḍyafa* was not covered but left for the Nubians to cover it the way they wished.

These recommendations and guidelines were presented to the housing and planning professionals so they could use them in developing the plan for the villages and the design of the houses. The planning of the villages did not always adhere to these

recommendations but yielded occasionally to technical and financial considerations.

To save as much construction material as possible and use less of the land area allocated for housing and, at the same time, minimize the outside walls exposed to direct sun, the houses were organized in groups as back-to-back rows. The streets were oriented north-south to minimize their exposure to the sun and to allow the rows of rooms inside the houses to be oriented north. By using the back-to-back arrangement only half of the houses were oriented to the desired north direction while the other half was oriented south.

Attitudes toward resettlement were, predictably, mixed with hopes and dreams, and varied. People who enjoyed economic stability in Old Nubia were not enthusiastic about moving. Among them were the few prosperous farmers, shopkeepers, boat owners, and government employees. Age and sex were also important in determining people's attitudes toward resettlement. Young people tended to be optimistic, and men looked forward to a more exciting life and a broader range of economic and social opportunities. Women anticipated speedy marriages or more frequent reunions with their husbands.

Nubian house and the attitudes of the administration

It is important to consider the general attitudes of the administrators as well as the Nubians to be able to understand how the environment emerged in the atmosphere that prevailed at that time. As an overall generalization of the situation, the government was viewed as an entity of itself. One has a different personality as a government employee than his normal one outside the office. Bureaucracy alienated people from the authorities including government employees.

Nevertheless, the government's approach toward Nubian resettlement was unilateral, i.e., there was no actual Nubian participation in plan formulations. The Nubian voice was always heard but seldom taken into account except in cases where it was possible to accommodate Nubian desires easily within the general framework of the government aims.

Administrators — belonging mainly to social strata whose outlooks were quite different from those of the Nubians — typically saw (and continue to see) Nubians in terms of stereotypes involving backwardness and stupidity. Based on these implicit assumptions and latent attitudes, officials tended to think that Nubians should accept with gratitude what is offered to them.

From the Nubian point of view, the government was seen as an instrument of imposition and control. They viewed the government employees who served in Old Nubia as inexperienced and/or "exiled" into this remote area due to underperformance or misdeeds. Nubians had very little contact with government officials or other citizens due to their relative geographical isolation and apparent cultural differences. Because of their past experiences, Nubians hardly trusted the administrators' promises and plans.

Nubians were particularly displeased with what they saw as arbitrary, sudden, and unannounced changes in government policies and plans. For example, the design of the large house type was altered and the back alleys, which were intended to separate the animals' entrances from the people's entrances, were omitted and both types of entrances were placed next to each other on the same side of the house. Another example has to do with a heat-insulation construction system (based on the use of hollow concrete block roof construction technology) that was initially proposed for the entire settlement project. This was dropped during implementation without explanation or consultation. The flat reinforced concrete slabs that were implemented were not insulated and allowed the heat to penetrate the rooms, where poor ventilation trapped the heat inside.

The elitist attitude held by the resettlement officials allowed them to dismiss or trivialize the value of the Nubians' participation in the planning and designing of the villages and houses. For example, it was mentioned in the Ministry of Social Affairs report on the resettlement of Nubians that the Nubians were consulted during the design stages of the houses and that a full-scale house model was built for Nubian delegates and representatives to see and comment on it. Yet the houses that were later built proved unacceptable to the Nubians. Either these delegates were shown a different model from the one used in the implementation, or the delegates did not communicate all their disagreements to the officials. It is also possible that the officials dismissed the views offered by the delegates who they considered to be uneducated Nubians. Be that as it may, the result was the same: a growing rift between Nubians and officials and a tendency to implement plans that were unsatisfactory to the Nubians.

It is of course easy to attribute sources of Nubian dissatisfaction to time and resource constraints. However, this was not always the case. An example will illustrate. The resettlement houses, regardless of type or size, included an animal stable inside the houses. A stable inside the house is a typical feature of rural housing in Upper Egypt, but this arrangement was culturally unacceptable to the

Nubians. It was a design feature that was based on misinformation about Nubian culture. It was, we should add, easily avoidable by, for example, building collective stables at the end of house blocks without additional costs.

Similarly, the design of resettlement houses proves that their architects conceived houses mainly as sleeping shelters, not as places for living in the manner that Nubian culture required. Services were provided according to the number of rooms in each house. In short, the designers did not understand the social, cultural, and community aspects of the Nubian way of living. Such understanding would have enabled them to avoid basic design mistakes and to earn the acceptance of more Nubians.

The Nubians who were not residing in their original villages at the time of the resettlement were not assigned houses in the newly planned villages. They became known as *al-Mughtaribīn* (Arabic for "expatriates"). Different Nubian ethnic groups which were not neighbors before the resettlement became neighbors because of the planning scheme which located their villages close to each other. They shared services and were forced to be in contact with each other which created problems, especially for villages that belonged to ill-matched groups.

Esna houses

On Tuesday, May 26th of 1964 the first group of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya families arrived at Esna by train. They were received by a committee headed by the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs, the Governor of Qena, the Mayor of Esna, and many other officials.

The region represents a complete residence that has its special nature as a result of the site circumstances and its determinants, which had a role in village construction materials and design. The village planning concept came as a routine instead of planning beside the Nile, and the village must be divided according to residential units and not according to related links to the basic home, in which the residential units join from three sides to save spaces for constructing and save one elevation for every habitat to reduce roads surfaces in which the residential units became attached.

Basics of Settlement of Families and Individuals in the New Villages (Villages of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya)

The government built limited housing for families that were displaced from Nubia to Esna, and the settlement was based on the governmental inventory that was carried out before the construction

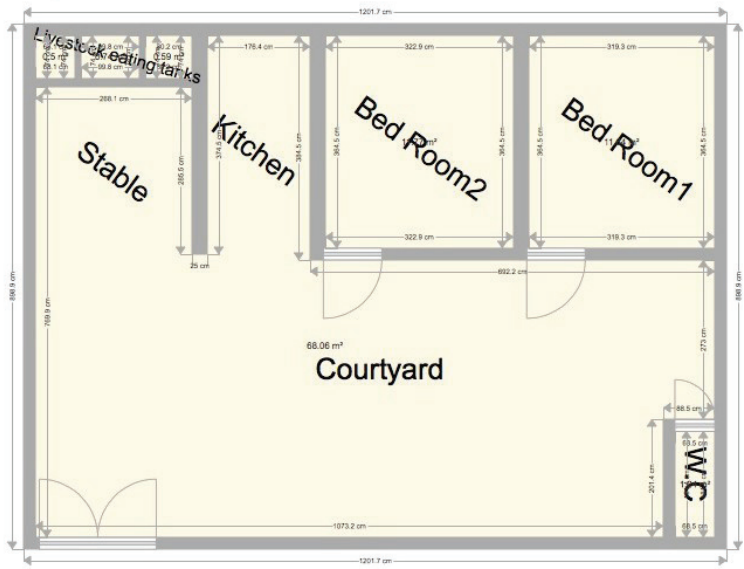

Figure 6. Layout of government-built houses at Tūmās wa ʿĀfya as issued by the government.

of the High Dam. The number of families is estimated to be about 200, and due to the absence of expatriates, who were out of Nubia during the inventory process, they were not given dwellings. As my grandfather observed at the time, this "means that there has been no intense stability for the sons of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya in Esna because there are no residences for expatriates." These dwellings were distributed according to the size of the family, and the residential models were also designed on this basis, not for considerations of social status or the area of the old dwelling, or kinship ties.

Tūmās wa ʿĀfya Talāta and Itnēn have been completed while Tūmās wa ʿĀfya Wāḥid was under construction. As I mentioned above, similar house types were grouped in blocks and separated from each other by twenty-meter-wide streets. The house type used here was the two-bedroom house in the middle of which was a 12 by 5-meter courtyard, two 3.60 by 2.80-meter rooms, a 3.60 by 1.80-meter kitchen, a 3.60 by 3.60 meter stable, and a 1 by 2-meter toilet (figure 6).

In the Esna houses, the roof slabs used the hollow concrete blocks I mentioned before. The walls of the houses were built to a height of two meters if the surrounding areas were not to be roofed. Otherwise, the roof heights varied from 2.5 meters to 3.0 meters. Since the authorities built only one type of house in the Esna villages, larger families were assigned two adjacent housing units which the occupants joined subsequently.

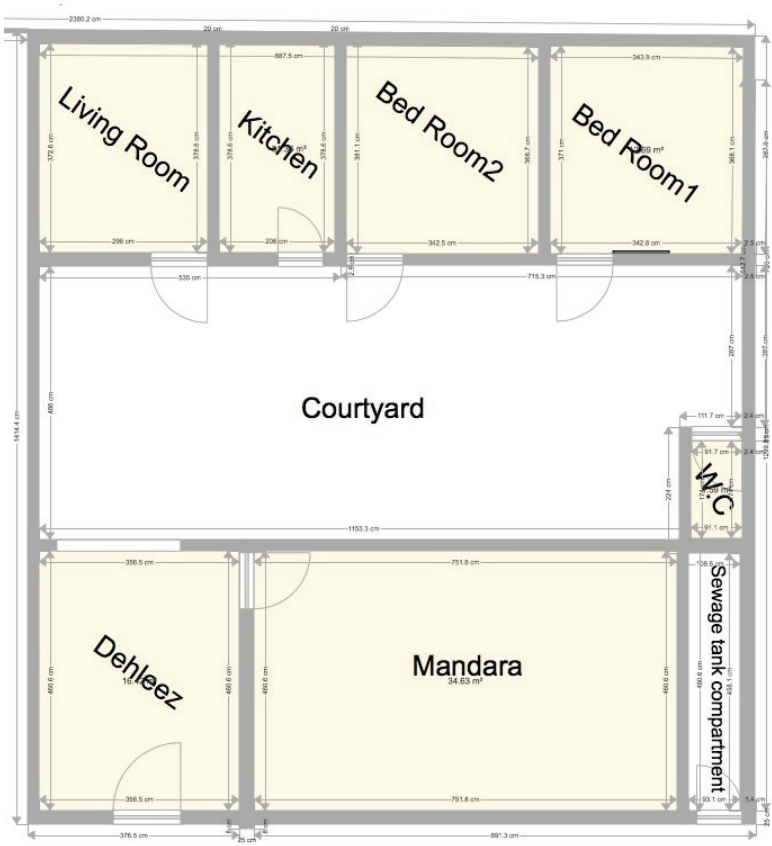

Figure 7. Layout of government-built houses at Tūmās wa ʿĀfya after modification by residents.

The displacement of individuals from their native social environments — severing deep-seated cultural roots to relocate them into modern housing — remains under-examined from both a sociological and humanitarian perspective, particularly regarding the impact on the traditional Nubian identity. Despite fifty years having passed since their resettlement, a sense of displacement persists. This lack of integration has forced them to adapt their living spaces based on evolving functional and communal needs, driven by shifting family structures and the changing requirements of modern life. Alongside this, the architectural and urban interferences of the users in a time interval of fifty years were focused on the level of the elevations and facades and the interference on the level of the residential unit due to the multiple changes done by the user to adapt to the new situation. The relocated community started to make changes and modify captions to the new residences built by the state, to make the individual feel balanced, which is his ability to

express himself. The furthermost things expressed by the users are the inheritances surrounding him.

As expected, Nubian families started to modify the government-built houses almost as soon as they moved in. The first stage of modification typically involved rising them to roughly the 3-meter level. In many cases families covered the courtyard with thick mats made from a plant that grows in canals and draining ditches; they placed these mats over tree branches or trunks. Some more ambitious families modified the house floor plan to create a combined unroofed space for a stable, kitchen, and Nubian bread oven.

In the second stage of modifications, families enlarged the total house space by adding up to five meters to its front and replacing the courtyard and new kitchen roofing with palm branches and later with corrugated metal sheets panels (figure 7).

In 1978, the building of the village of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya El-Wusṭa included all house prototypes (1, 2, 3, and 4-bedroom types, see figure 2) with, in certain cases, a difference in the wall construction material whereby red bricks replaced limestone blocks. It is worth mentioning another aspect of the modifications that the Nubian people made to their new houses in this and other villages. From the mid-sixties to the beginning of the eighties, the builders who modified Nubian houses were Nubians, and they used the same mud-brick sizes and brick-making molds that were used in Old Nubia (length: 25 cm, width: 12.5 cm; depth: 7 cm) and that are quite different from those typically used by Upper Egyptians, known locally as Ṣaʿīdis (length: 20 cm, width: 10 cm, depth: 7 cm).

Starting from the 1990s, some Nubians modified their houses in what can be considered a third stage, one that involved replacing mud-bricks and mud mortar with red bricks and concrete. Then, ten to fifteen years later, some started to rebuild entire houses or parts of houses using new foundations, reinforced concrete columns, and slabs, while preserving, as much as possible, the essential identity of the Old Nubian houses.

Concluding remarks

The relation between the human and the environment is reciprocal, each one affects and is affected by the other, and the result of this interaction expresses its cultural dimension, thus forming the architecture that forms the physical frame that includes the inhabitants.

Traditional local heritage is a true mirror of the culture of the society across the ages, through its elements and its effect on the

behavior, lifestyle, beliefs, and arts of people. It is also an inspiration for a lot of the heritage marks in architecture and buildings.

The traditional building is considered the sum of knowledge, experimentation, and interaction with the surrounding context and reflects the response to the attempts to fulfill human requirements along with the history of societies. Meanwhile, it is the true record of the culture of the society and its local heritage.

The Nubians migrated in 1964 into villages different in nature and climate to their original villages. They moved into houses with different designs from their originals. The Nubians made several direct adjustments to the architecture of their new houses and villages to fit their physical and emotional needs. They interacted with the new urban context in the new settlement villages.

The emigration was accompanied by an emotional emigration through different experiences and cultural and environmental values obtained from old Nubia, which the Nubians firmly held, even if they contradicted the pressures and definitions of the new place.

The change in the natural environment due to the migration from Old Nubia to the new settlements was accompanied by a change in the activities and cultural and economic behavior of the society, which reflected directly on the characteristics of the Nubian personality and gave it new values. Instead of being ranked according to ethnic or familial origin, financial ability and economic status became the main determinant of the social ranking.

The unsuitability of the emigration villages and houses in general for the Nubian culture and habits is notable. The limited spaces of the houses did not fulfill the extended family's needs. In addition, the division of the village was into sectors, each including a standardized house model (one, two, or three rooms) which was distributed according to the number of family members, without taking into consideration the degree of relation and the classic division of Nubian villages into *naja*ʿ and residential communities based on related families. The basic units of the new Nubian community became the separate family with a separate house ending the role of the extended family that lived in a big house or multiple neighboring houses.

The Nubians — despite all the negatives of the emigration and the different architectures of new villages — retained a lot of the aspects and details of their heritage special culture, habits, and traditions.

I hope that the above discussion has now set the record straight concerning the timing of and the circumstances surrounding the resettlement of the people of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya to their new villages

near Esna and Kom Ombo. I also hope that the discussion relayed a sense of how difficult and often winding the road has been.

In the absence of the forgoing documentation of the difficulties and disappointments encountered by the Nubian people, and in fairness, by the government officials as well, the seemingly simple phrase "Nubian resettlement" would lead to a false impression that the process had clear aims, a clear beginning, and clear end. The reality, as I hope I have been able to convey, was/is anything but straightforward.

Finally, it is necessary to underscore the resilience and resourcefulness of the Nubians whose determination to keep their culture alive was manifested in the modifications they made to the mass-produced houses they were presented within the resettlement villages.

Afterword

Bahr Osman Habbob, my maternal grandfather, was born on August 7, 1910, in the village of Tūmās wa ʿĀfya, near Derr (Nubia) in the Aswan Governorate. He started his education at the village's Quranic school at five. In 1920, his older half-brother Maher Osman came from Cairo, brought him to the city, and enrolled him in an elementary school in the Maʿrouf district. Two years later, he was transferred to another school in the Abdeen district, where Bahr advanced to the fourth grade. However, shortly before the exams, a dispute arose between his half-brother and Bahr's mother, which led to his withdrawal from school despite objections from his teachers and the principal. Bahr had been at the top of his class each of those four years.

After leaving school, Bahr worked various jobs, including as a doorman at an Italian school in Alexandria, and later as a bank collector, a position he held until he retired at sixty. From 1930 to 1975, he served as secretary for the village association for Tūmās wa ʿĀfya in Alexandria.

Upon retirement, he returned to his village, which had been relocated to Esna in the Qena Governorate in 1964 due to the construction of the High Dam. Bahr Habbob passed away in 1981, leaving behind a son, three daughters, and several grandchildren. I, Maher Habbob, am his eldest grandchild.

Bahr Habbob left his children a valuable legacy upon his passing: agricultural land, several houses, a library with 3,000 books, and his personal diaries. He also preserved many documents related to events and issues affecting his village and Nubia, particularly those concerning the construction of the Aswan Reservoir and the High

Dam. Bahr gathered these materials over the years, not only as a reader and intellectual but also in his role as secretary of his village association in Alexandria for over 45 years.

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