

***BANU AL-KANZ (colloquially, Bani Kanz)***

Originally a warrior tribe of mixed Arab and BEJA ancestry. They established de facto control over the Aswan area in [Fatimid](#) times, and one of their rulers was rewarded with the title Kanz al-Dawlah (treasure of the state) for his service to the Fatimid caliph. From then on the title was treated as hereditary by the successive chiefs of the Banu al-Kanz.

The [Ayyubids](#) inaugurated their rule in [Upper Egypt](#) by driving out the Banu al-Kanz, who retreated into the most northerly portion of Nubia. Here they amalgamated with already settled Nubian elements and in time adopted a Nubian dialect. They are the ancestors of the Kanuz Nubians of today (see NUBIANS).

In Nubia, the Banu al-Kanz established a quasi-independent Muslim principality within what was nominally the territory of NOBATIA. The Kanz al-Dawlah, even though a Muslim, became a figure of importance within the [Christian](#) Nubian kingdom, and may even at times have held the traditional office of eparch of Nobatia. Eventually he and his family became [allied](#) by marriage with the ruling house of [MAKOURIA](#) itself, and it was through that connection that in 1323 the Kanz al-Dawlah succeeded to the throne of the Christian kingdom.

The Banu al-Kanz had apparently lost control of the Nubian throne again by 1365, and thereafter they reverted to their outlaw ways. They plundered Aswan and the surrounding districts repeatedly in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and were largely responsible for destroying the overland trade between [Upper Egypt](#) and 'Aydhah on the Red Sea. They also played a significant part in the weakening and final destruction of the [Christian](#) kingdoms of Nubia. Their depredations ended only with the imposition of Ottoman rule in [Egypt](#) and Nubia in the sixteenth century. No trace of their warrior tradition survives among the Kanuz Nubians of today, who are peacefully resettled in the area around Kom Ombo.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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