

Lesson 1 Nubia and the Land of Kush

MAIN IDEAS

Geography The region of Nubia had connections with Egypt.

Government A powerful king of Kush conquered Egypt and ruled as pharaoh.

Economics Meroë was an important economic center linking Egypt and the interior of Africa.

The Region of Nubia

ESSENTIAL QUESTION In what ways were Nubia and Egypt connected?

Upper and Lower Nubia

- **Nubia**—African region south of Egypt, includes modern Sudan
- Nubia was divided into two areas
 - upper area was southern, upstream
 - lower area was northern, downstream
- People of Nubia lived along Nile
 - southern Nubia's moist climate didn't limit farming to Nile valley

REVIEW QUESTION

What geographic feature connected Egypt and Nubia?

The Kush Civilization

ESSENTIAL QUESTION What were some of the achievements of Piankhi?

Cultural Relations Between Egypt and Kush

- Egypt controlled parts of Nubia between 2000 and 1000 B.C.
- Egyptian art, architecture, religion influenced Nubia
- Egypt declined and Nubian kingdom **Kush** became powerful
- Kushite nobles went to Egypt; brought back rituals, writing system
 - adopted Egyptian customs, clothing styles; adapted pyramids

Kush Rises to Power

- Kushite king **Piankhi** attacked Memphis, Egypt, in 751 B.C.
 - eventually controlled all of Egypt
- Two periods of Kush history
 - Napata was capital during first period, Meroë during second period

Political and Commercial Relations with Egypt

- Piankhi united Kush and Egypt, established dynasty on Egypt's throne
- Piankhi was declared Egypt's pharaoh, started 25th dynasty
 - lived in Napata, capital of Kush
- Napata was located on trading road around Nile's cataracts
 - Nubia was rich in goods scarce in Egypt (ivory, animal skins, timber)
 - trade center spread Egyptian goods, culture in Africa and beyond

The Decline of Kush

- Taharqa, a later Kushite ruler of Egypt, fought Assyrian invasion
 - Assyria conquered Egypt in 671 B.C. with iron weapons, bows, arrows
 - Kushite bronze weapons were too weak

Horses and Chariots

- Assyrians drove chariots; their army was the first to have a cavalry
- Assyrians defeated Kushites, took control of Egypt and parts of Kush
 - Kushite kings retreated south

REVIEW QUESTION

How did Piankhi become the Egyptian pharaoh?

The Kushite Capital of Meroë

ESSENTIAL QUESTION Why was the Kushite city of Meroë an important economic center?

An Economy of Ironworking and Trade

- Around 590 B.C., Kushite kings chose **Meroë** as a new capital
 - located on the Nile and on trade routes; had access to gold, iron
- Kushites mined nearby iron ore deposits, learned to smelt iron
 - **smelting**—heating material from Earth’s crust to separate the elements
- Traded iron, gold, ivory in Africa, Arabia, and heavily in Egypt
 - Egypt under Greek rule beginning in fourth century B.C.

A Rich Culture Develops

- Some Kushite gods were similar to Egyptian gods like Amon-Re, Isis
- Nubian women were important
 - queens included Amanirenas, Amanishakheto, Amanitore
- Early writing used hieroglyphics, later had 23-symbol alphabet
- Royal tombs in Kush were pyramid-shaped, built of stone
 - Kushite kings often mummified

REVIEW QUESTION

In what ways was Meroë economically important?

Lesson Summary

- Nubia and Egypt interacted with each other.
- The Kushite king Piankhi conquered Egypt.
- The Kushite capital of Meroë was a trade center.

Why It Matters Now...

By studying the history of Nubia, we learn of the important role played by Africans in ancient history.