3-2 Egypt & Kushite Civilizations
Egyptian Timeline

- Old Kingdom (2700-2150)
  - Hieroglyphics and religion develop in Egypt
  - pyramids built
- Middle Kingdom (2040-1786)
  - extension of Egyptian control into Nubia
- New Kingdom (1570-1075)
  - militaristic - Hebrews enslaved
  - mummification perfected
I. Geography

• River dominates Egyptian world/thought
• Surrounded by desert with occasional oasis
  – Permits some trade
  – Defense from invasion
    • Contributes to feeling of safety
  – preserves artifacts
I. The Nile

- yearly flooding - no concern for soil depletion
  - Predictable
  - Irrigation systems
- Encourages
  - Trade
  - Communication
  - Political unity
I. The Nile
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The Nile

- Impact on religion
  - divided life - living and dying.
    - East (sunrise) is land of the living - cities, temples
    - West (sunset) is land of the dead - tombs
The Pharaoh

- God-King - unlike Mesopotamia
  - Temporal power
    - owns all the land and people and what people posses
    - law vs. Pharaoh’s will
    - irrigation
    - no city walls
The Pharaoh

• God-King - unlike Mesopotamia
  – Religious
    • direct descendant of the Sun god
    • controls access to the afterlife
    • July-Sept, during floods life is controlled by the Pharaoh
      – 365 day calendar.
The Kingdom of Kush

- The civilization of Kush thrived from about 2000 B.C.E. to 350 C.E.
- Kush and Egypt had a close relationship throughout much of Kush’s long history.
The Close Relationship between Egypt and Kush

- Signs of their close ties can be found in pictures on the walls of some Egyptian tombs and temples.
- A good example is the tomb of Hatshepsut, Egypt’s first female pharaoh.
The Egyptianization of Kush

• Kush was known for its rich gold mines
• Kush is also known as “Nubia,” which comes from *nub*, the Egyptian word for gold.
Kush was an important trading hub.

- Kush’s location and natural resources made it the center of trade.
- Kush linked central and southern Africa to Egypt.
- Pharaohs sent expeditions on ships south along the Nile to buy, or sometimes steal, goods.
Kush was an important trading hub.

- Egyptians traded:
  - grain
  - linen
  - beer

- Kushites traded:
  - gold
  - leather
  - ivory
  - timber

Egyptians even bought Kushite slaves.
The Egyptianization of Kush

• Several times Egypt raided Kush and took control of parts of its territory.
• During the New Kingdom, Egypt conquered Kush and forced Kush to pay tribute to Egypt in the form of gifts.
  – The pharaoh appointed a governor to make sure the tribute was paid every year.

The Kushites gave the governor:
- slaves
- ivory
- gold
- cattle
- ostrich feathers
- ebony

The Egyptianization of Kush
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- While Kush was under Egypt’s control, its society became “Egyptianized.”

Kushites spoke and wrote in Egyptian.
The Egyptianization of Kush

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Kushites worshiped Egyptian gods.

The statue depicts a striding god, with some of the attributes of Osiris and Amen-Re. Unfortunately, it has no associated inscription to identify the intended god, or the name of the ruler whose features it might bear. Stylistically, however, it is generally believed to represent the Pharaoh Tahaqqa, who ruled over the area of present day Egypt and Sudan from 690 - 664 BC.
The Egyptianization of Kush

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Kushites wore Egyptian clothes.
The Egyptianization of Kush

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- Kush’s famed archers were hired to fight in Egypt's army.

archer: a person who shoots with a bow and arrow
The Egyptianization of Kush

- While Kush was under Egypt’s control, its society became “Egyptianized.”

Princes from Kush’s royal families were sent to Egypt to be educated.
The Egyptianization of Kush

- Around 1100 B.C.E., Egypt’s New Kingdom collapsed.
- After this, Kush regained its independence.
- However, Egyptian culture persisted.
- About 900 B.C.E., a new line of Kush kings was established.
  - But even these kings continued to follow Egyptian traditions.
Kush conquers Egypt

- After the collapse of the New Kingdom, Egypt fell into political chaos.
  - At least 10 Egyptian kingdoms fought each other for power.
  - The constant fighting made Egypt weak and unstable.
- In the mid-700s B.C.E., Kush took advantage of Egypt’s weakness.
  - Kush armies invaded Egypt.
  - In about 730 B.C.E., the kings in northern Egypt surrendered to Kush’s King Piye.
Kush conquers Egypt

- After conquering Egypt, Piye declared himself pharaoh.
  - One of his titles was “Uniter of the Two Lands.”
- The kingdom of Kush now extended 1,500 miles.
  - It reached from the Kushite city of Meroë, on the southern Nile to the Mediterranean Sea.
Kush conquers Egypt

- In Egypt, Piye and his family became the 25th dynasty.
- Kushite pharaohs ruled Egypt for nearly a century (100 years)!
- Historians have traditionally called them the “black pharaohs.”
Kush conquers Egypt

- The Kushite pharaohs did not want to tear Egypt down.
  - They wanted to revive Egypt’s past glory.
  - They built magnificent new temples and pyramids in both Egypt and Kush.

- One of the most beautiful was the temple at Jebel Barkal.
  - It was modeled after the temple of Ramses II at Abu Simbel.

Computer generated image of the temples of Jebel Barkal as they might have looked about 700 BCE. The temples today are almost completely destroyed.

Jebel Barkal as it looks today.
Kush conquers Egypt

• In 671 B.C.E., an Assyrian king invaded Egypt.  
  – For many years, the Kushites tried to fight off the Assyrians.  
  – But the Assyrians used their advanced iron weapons to drive the Kushites out of Egypt.
• By the mid-650s B.C.E., the last of the Kushite pharaohs had returned to Kush.
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The Kush Capital of Meroë

• Kush’s original capital was the city of Napata.
  – In 590 B.C.E., Egypt invaded Napata and destroyed it.

• The Kushites decided to make Meroë their new capital.
  – Meroë was 300 miles south of Napata, safely out of Egypt’s reach.
The Kush Capital of Meroë

- Meroë’s location helped Kush remain an important center of trade.
  - Traders used the Nile, the Red Sea, and overland routes to transport their goods.
    - These routes took them through Kush.
  - As a result, Kushites traded with many lands.
The Kush Capital of Meroë

- Some lands, like African kingdoms and Arabia, were nearby.
- Kush also traded with such distant lands as:
  - Rome (on the peninsula of Italy)
  - India
  - possibly China
The Kush Capital of Meroë

- Meroë became the center of Kushite civilization.
- At its height, the city thrived as a great center of industry and culture.
- Meroë was well known for producing iron.
  - It had everything needed to make iron:
    - Rich supply of iron deposits
    - Forests (wood made charcoal)
      - Charcoal was used to heat the iron deposits
        » Once the hot iron separated from the rock, it was cooled in the Nile’s waters.
  - Ironworkers in Kush made a variety of things.
    - spears
    - arrows
    - swords
    - axes
    - hoes
Kush Returns to Its African Roots

- Artwork, clothing, and buildings no longer imitated Egyptian styles.
- Kushites worshiped an African lion-god instead of Egyptian gods.
- The Egyptian language gave way to a new, native language known as Meroitic.
Kush Returns to Its African Roots

• Kush art and architecture flourished.

Artisans made beautiful pottery, cloth, and gold and silver jewelry.

Rulers built grand palaces, temples, and pyramids.
Kush Returns to Its African Roots

- Kush also revived the African practice of female leadership.
- Powerful **kandakes** ruled Meroë.
  - They usually co-ruled with their sons or husbands.
  - They were considered goddesses and were very powerful.
- One of the greatest kandakes was Queen Amanirenas. She defended Kush against the powerful Romans in 24 B.C.E.
  - The Romans had taken over Egypt and were demanding tribute from Kush.
  - Amanirenas and her son Prince Akinidad, led an attack that destroyed several Roman forts on Kush’s borders.

**kandake**: a powerful female leader who co-ruled Kush with her husband and sons
Kush Returns to Its African Roots

• After three years of fierce fighting, Rome signed a peace treaty with Kush.
  – Kush no longer had to pay tribute to Rome.

• Under Amanirenas, Kush had defeated the most powerful empire in the world.
  – The kingdom of Kush survived for nearly 400 more years.
  – In 350 C.E., Kush fell to invaders from the African country of Ethiopia.