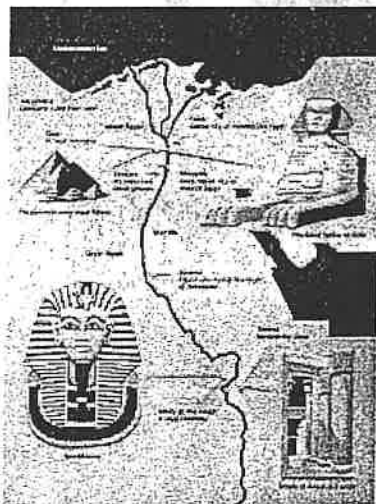
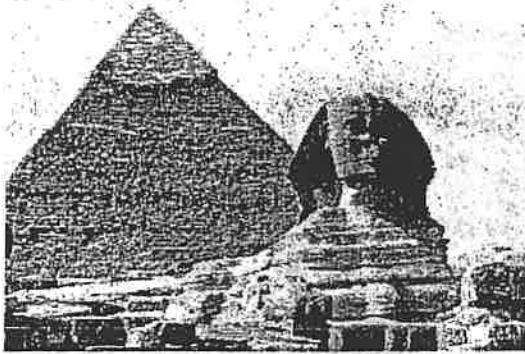


Ancient Egypt



The Geography of North Africa

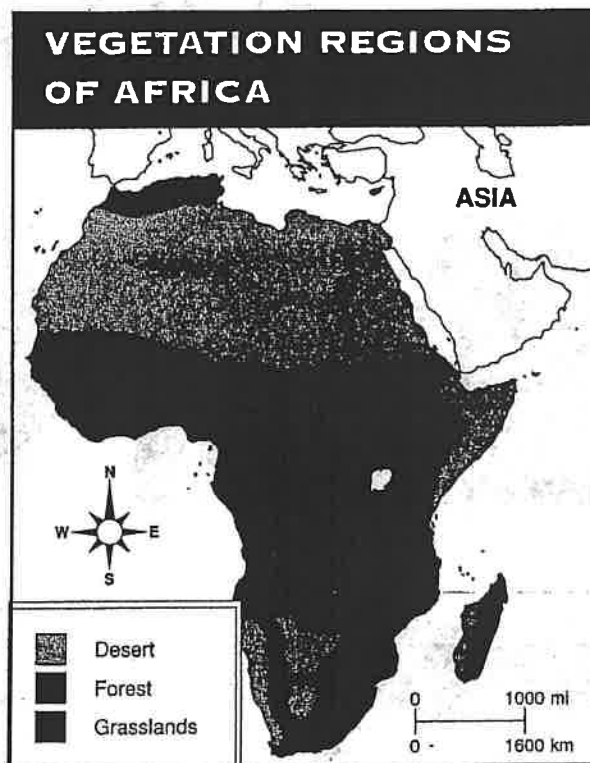
The Earth's largest desert and longest river can be found in the same continent—Africa. In fact, both are located in the northern part of Africa.

The world's largest desert is the Sahara. The word *Sahara* means "desert" in the Arabic language. The Sahara stretches through North Africa all the way from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Red Sea in the east. The huge desert covers about 3½ million square miles (about 9 million sq km).

The Sahara is near the equator, so temperatures stay high all year long. Little rain falls in the region, so the Sahara is not only hot but also dry.

Cutting through the Sahara is the world's longest river, the Nile River. The Nile flows south to north for more than 4,000 miles (about 6,400 km). The **source**, or beginning, of the Nile River is in Central Africa. The **mouth**, or end, is far to the north, where the river's waters empty into the Mediterranean Sea.

As with all rivers the land is higher at the source of the Nile and lower at the mouth. The land near the Nile's mouth is called the Nile Delta. A **delta** is low land formed at the mouth of a river by the silt the river drops there.



Review

CHECK UNDERSTANDING

1. What is the largest desert in the world? Where is it located?
2. What is the longest river in the world? Where is it located?

THINK CRITICALLY

3. Some early people settled on the Nile Delta to farm. Why do you think the Nile Delta was a good place to farm?

SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW

Three-Dimensional Map Activity Find a physical map showing Africa. Use this map to help you make your own three-dimensional map of all or part of Africa.

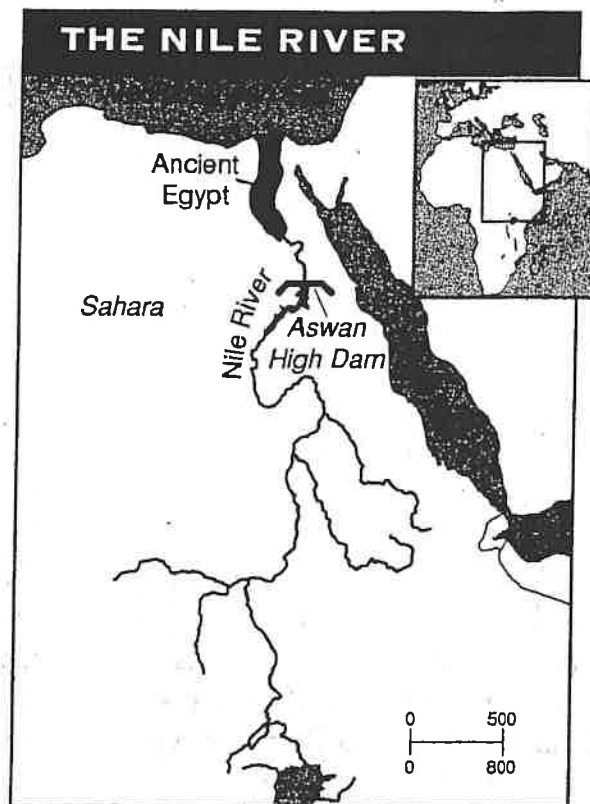
The Importance of the Nile River

Long ago, many people thought of the Nile River as the "giver of life." For thousands of years its waters allowed life to survive in the dry region.

Around 5000 B.C. early people began to settle along the Nile in what is now the country of Egypt. The early Egyptians led a more peaceful life near the Nile River than the Mesopotamians did near the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The Nile overflowed about the same time each year. The Egyptians knew that they could safely plant seeds as soon as the floodwaters left the land. They also knew to **harvest**, or gather, their crops before the floods returned.

Each year, the flooding of the Nile brought the early farmers a gift of new silt. After the flooding, a thin layer of this rich soil covered the ground. The new silt made the land ready to grow new crops.

The Egyptians needed more than fresh silt to grow crops. They also needed a steady supply of water. To get the water they needed, they built irrigation systems. Human-made ponds stored water to be used when needed.



Dams and dikes helped hold back floodwater. Canals carried floodwater back to the river.

In 1970 the Aswan High dam was built in southern Egypt. Because of the dam, the Nile River no longer floods its banks. Farmers now must use pumps to bring water to their fields.

Review

CHECK UNDERSTANDING

1. Into what body of water does the Nile River flow?

THINK CRITICALLY

2. Why have most Egyptians throughout history lived near the Nile River?

SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW

Diorama Activity Make a diorama that shows early farming in ancient Egypt. Include the Nile River, fertile land, crops, and the desert.

Pharaohs of Egypt

Today, the kings of ancient Egypt are known as **pharaohs** (FAIR•ohz). *Pharaoh* was an ancient Egyptian word meaning "great house." Early Egyptian kings lived in great houses, or palaces. By 1500 B.C. people began using the word *pharaoh* for the kings themselves.

To the Egyptians the pharaoh was the Son of Re, an important Egyptian god. The Egyptians believed that as a god, the pharaoh had special powers other people did not have. As a result the pharaoh had total control over Egypt. Whatever he said was done.

The title of pharaoh was **inherited**, or passed down from a family member. When a pharaoh died, the oldest son usually became the next pharaoh. If a pharaoh had no sons, another relative became the new ruler. Pharaohs were usually men, but not always. A woman named Hatshepsut (hat•SHEP•soot) served for many years as pharaoh. She even wore a fake beard just like male pharaohs wore.

TUTANKHAMEN'S
BURIAL MASK



For more than 3,000 years, pharaohs ruled over Egypt. When people today think of ancient pharaohs, the name *Tutankhamen* (too•tang•KAHM•uhn) often comes to mind. Tutankhamen became pharaoh when he was only nine years old. He ruled as pharaoh from about 1333 B.C. to 1323 B.C., when he died. Tutankhamen, or King Tut, is remembered most for his amazing tomb, which was discovered in 1922. Those who first entered the tomb saw gold everywhere. A solid-gold coffin held the pharaoh's body. All around were other beautiful and valuable objects.

Review

CHECK UNDERSTANDING

1. What is another name for an Egyptian king?

THINK CRITICALLY

2. How is the way the President of the United States governs different from the way an Egyptian pharaoh governed?

SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW

Biography Activity Ancient Egypt had many different pharaohs during its 3,000-year history. Pick one of the following pharaohs: Zoser, Khufu, Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, Akhenaton (Amenhotep IV), or Ramses II. Use reference books to find out more about the pharaoh you picked. Then, write a short biography about the pharaoh.

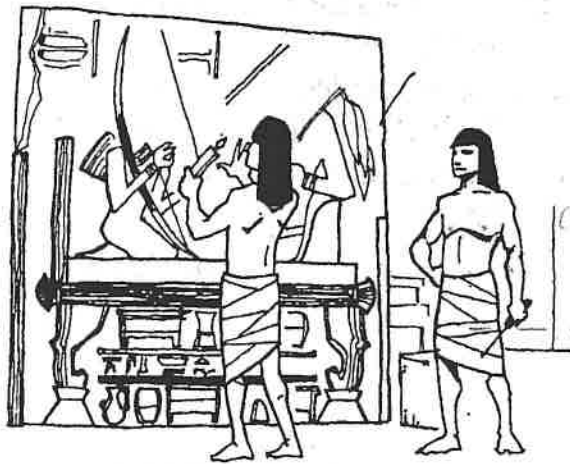
People of Ancient Egypt

Together, the ancient Egyptians formed an early society. A **society** is an organized group of people who follow the same set of rules and traditions.

Early Egyptian society was made up of several different **social classes**. A social class is a group of people all with the same level of importance.

At the very top of society stood the pharaoh. No one could match the ruler of all Egypt in importance.

Just below the pharaoh were the priests, government workers, and soldiers. Next were the scribes, who kept written records for the government.



EGYPTIAN CRAFTSPEOPLE

The scribes were followed by the merchants and skilled workers. Among the many different skilled workers were furniture makers, jewelers, painters, and stonecutters.

At the bottom of Egyptian society were the farmers. Farmers made up the largest social class. Most Egyptians made a living growing crops. It was the work of the farmers that kept the rest of society fed.

Some people living in ancient Egypt were not even thought of as a part of Egyptian society. These were the slaves. Most slaves were people who had been captured by the Egyptians during wars. Others were Egyptians who sold themselves into slavery to repay what they owed to others.

Men and women were treated more equally in Egyptian society than in many other early societies. Like Egyptian men, Egyptian women could own property and run businesses. Most Egyptian women spent much of their time caring for their home and their children.

Review

CHECK UNDERSTANDING

1. What kind of work did most people in Egypt do?
2. Who was at the top of Egyptian society?

THINK CRITICALLY

3. Why do you think scribes held a fairly high place in Egyptian society?

SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW

Diagram Activity Some people think of ancient Egyptian society as being like a pyramid. Think about why this might be so. Then, make a triangle-shaped diagram that shows the different classes of Egyptian society.

Pyramids and Mummies

The ancient Egyptians believed in a life after death. Because of this belief the Egyptians felt it was important to preserve the bodies of their dead. The earliest Egyptians buried their dead in the desert, where the hot sand helped to preserve the dead body. As time went on, the belief in a life after death became more important in Egyptian culture. So the Egyptians built **tombs**, or places for the burial of the dead.

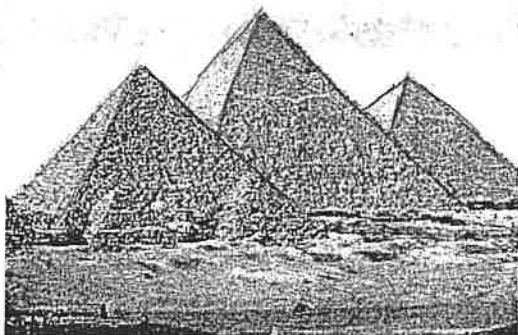
Some of the first tombs were made out of dried brick. These tombs usually were built below ground but some had levels above ground. The larger tombs had air shafts and hidden rooms. Gifts for the next life were usually left in the tombs of wealthy Egyptians.

Around 2650 B.C. an Egyptian architect named Imhotep (ihm•HOH•tep) built a new kind of tomb. Instead of

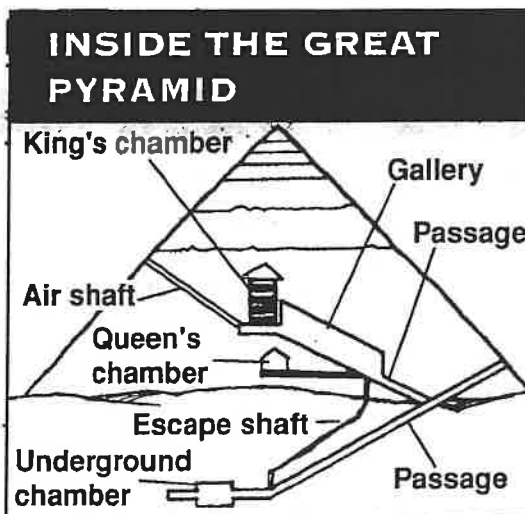
using brick, Imhotep used stone. Then he had another idea. He built one more tomb on top of the first and then another and another. Each layer was smaller than the one below. Imhotep had built a **pyramid**, or tomb shaped like a triangle. From a distance the sides looked like steps. Later pyramids had slanting sides instead of step-like sides. The pyramids became the special burial places of Egyptian kings.

The pyramids were built by farmers during the flooding season, a time when no farming could be done. Archaeologists now believe that it took thousands of workers many years to build just one pyramid. To build the pyramid, workers needed to cut and move huge stone blocks. The workers may have used ramps to move the blocks into place.

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PYRAMIDS OF EGYPT



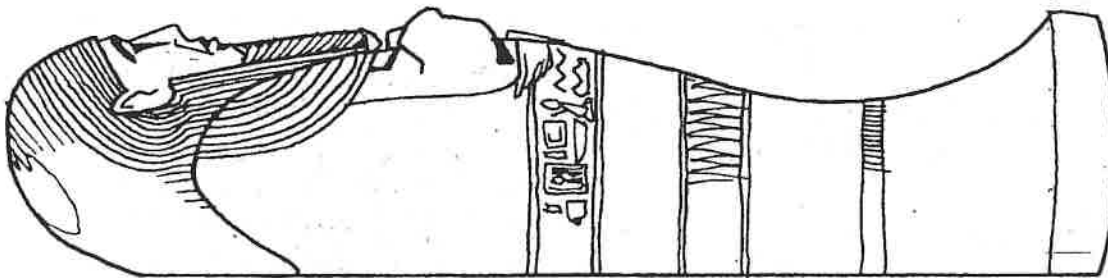
The building of tombs for the dead created a problem for the Egyptians. They learned that the dead body did not last as long in the tomb as it had in the hot desert. This led them to find better ways to preserve the body.

The first step the Egyptians took in preserving the body was to wash it. Then they removed all the organs, except the heart, from the body. They placed the organs in special jars. The jars were later stored in the tomb. The heart was left in the body because the ancient Egyptians believed it was the home of a person's soul.

After all the organs were removed the body was covered in a kind of salt. The salt soaked up the water in the body and caused the body to dry out. Then the body was rubbed with oils.

As the last step, the Egyptians wrapped the body in cloth. The body, or **mummy**, was then placed in a special case and put in the tomb. The whole process took about 70 days.

Today archaeologists study mummies and pyramids to learn more about ancient Egypt. Many of the artifacts recovered from the pyramids can be seen in museums around the world.



MUMMY CASE

Review

CHECK UNDERSTANDING

1. What is a pyramid?
2. Why did the Egyptians develop a way to preserve the dead body?

THINK CRITICALLY

3. Why do you think the pyramids were built as burial places for Egyptian kings and not for other Egyptians?

SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW

Art Activity Draw your own scene that includes an ancient pyramid. You may show either a finished pyramid or a pyramid being built.

The Great Pyramid and the Great Sphinx

The ancient Egyptians built many pyramids, monuments, and statues. Some of these structures were built so well that they still stand today. Many people go to Egypt to visit these remains of ancient Egyptian culture.

Two of the best known ancient Egyptian structures are the Great Pyramid and the Great Sphinx (SFINKS). Both are located near the city of Giza (GEE•zuh) in Egypt.

The Great Pyramid was built for the Pharaoh Khufu. Archaeologists believe it took about 20 years to build and was finished around 2500 B.C. Two other pyramids were built alongside the Great Pyramid as well as tombs of less important Egyptians.

East of the Great Pyramid lies the Great Sphinx. The Great Sphinx stands about 66 feet high (20 m) and measures 240 feet in length (73 m). The body of this huge statue is that of a lion. The head is of an Egyptian king or queen. Unlike the pyramids, which were built of stones moved to the building site, the Great Sphinx was carved out of rock that was already at the site.



THE GREAT SPHINX

For many years archaeologists have worked to discover why the Great Sphinx was made. Some believe it was carved to honor the Egyptian sun god Horus. Others believe it was created at Giza to guard over the pyramids there.

The Great Sphinx has seen damage from age, weather, and pollution. In recent years the Egyptian government began a project to preserve, or save, the Great Sphinx. Archaeologists have worked to drain away water from under the structure. They have also replaced damaged sections of the Great Sphinx. These efforts will help preserve the Great Sphinx for the people of Egypt and for future visitors.

Review

CHECK UNDERSTANDING

1. Where are the Great Pyramid and the Great Sphinx located?

THINK CRITICALLY

2. Why do you think the Egyptians put a person's face on the Great Sphinx?

SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW

Dialog Activity Suppose that the Great Sphinx was built by Pharaoh Khufu to guard his tomb. Write eight lines of dialog between Khufu and his chief architect about Khufu's plans. Be sure to describe how it looks.

Egyptian Writing

The ancient Egyptians used a kind of picture writing known as **hieroglyphics** (hy•ruh•GLIH•fiks). The Egyptians used hieroglyphic symbols mainly to represent sounds. However, some stood for whole words and ideas. By about 2600 B.C. the Egyptians were using more than 700 different hieroglyphics.

The Egyptians carved hieroglyphics into stone and painted them on metal and wood. They also used hieroglyphics to carve the name of a pharaoh and other information into a coffin, statue, or tomb wall.

For other important written records, the Egyptians developed a system of cursive writing based on hieroglyphics. As time went on, cursive hieroglyphics became simpler. Scribes wrote cursive hieroglyphics on **papyrus** (puh•PY•ruhs), a paper-like material.

Papyrus was made from the stem of the papyrus plant, which grew wild in ancient Egypt. The stem was cut into

strips and placed side by side on a flat surface. The stems were then covered with sap from the papyrus plant. A second layer of strips was laid across the first layer. The two layers were pressed together with heavy stones. As the papyrus and sap dried, the strips formed a single sheet. Many papyrus sheets were connected to form a **scroll**, or roll of paper.

EGYPTIAN HIEROGLYPHICS			
SYMBOL	ENGLISH WORD	SYMBOL	ENGLISH WORD
	Female		Male
	Life		Live
	Water		Mouth
	See		Eyes
	You		Peace

Review

CHECK UNDERSTANDING

1. What are hieroglyphics?
2. What are four different materials that the ancient Egyptians wrote hieroglyphics on?

THINK CRITICALLY

3. How is ancient Egyptian writing different from the present-day English alphabet?

SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW

Scroll Writing Activity With several classmates, write a story about an Egyptian papermaker. To write your story, use picture symbols that you have made up. Write the symbols on paper rolled up as a scroll. Share your completed scroll with the rest of the class.

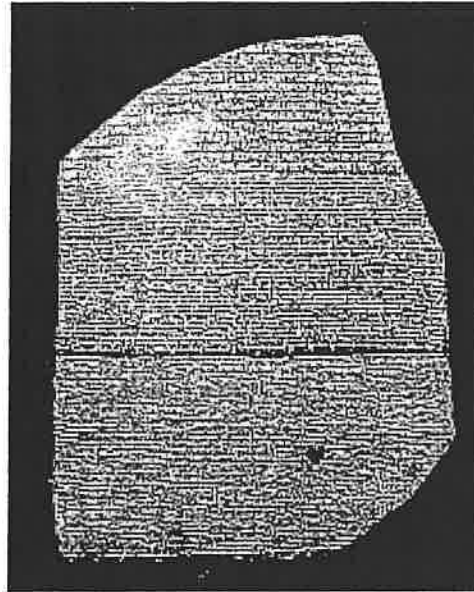


The Rosetta Stone

In 1798 the French invaded Egypt as part of a war against the British. A year later a French soldier found a large black stone near the city of Rosetta in the Nile Delta. A message had been carved on the stone in three different kinds of writing—Greek, Egyptian hieroglyphics, and Egyptian cursive. Although many people could read the Greek writing, the ancient Egyptian writings could not be read.

The Rosetta Stone was taken to Britain in 1801, after the British defeated the French. Experts from around the world tried to **decode**, or figure out how to read, the Egyptian writings by comparing them with the Greek writing.

Thomas Young, an English scientist, decoded some of the Egyptian symbols. In time, Jean François Champollion, a French scholar, figured out the meaning of all the Egyptian hieroglyphics and cursive writing.



THE ROSETTA STONE

Because of Young and Champollion, experts can now read Egyptian hieroglyphics. This has allowed archaeologists to learn about the lives of the ancient Egyptians from their own writings.

Review

CHECK UNDERSTANDING

1. What is the Rosetta Stone?

THINK CRITICALLY

2. Why do you think it took so long to decode the Egyptian writings?
3. How might our understanding of the lives of the ancient Egyptians be different if the Rosetta Stone had not been decoded?

SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW

Decoding Activity Write a sentence in English. On a separate sheet of paper, make a code key by listing the letters of the alphabet and assigning a different number to each letter. Rewrite your sentence using your assigned numbers in place of letters. Exchange your sentence with another student and try to decode each other's message.

Kush: Egypt's Rival

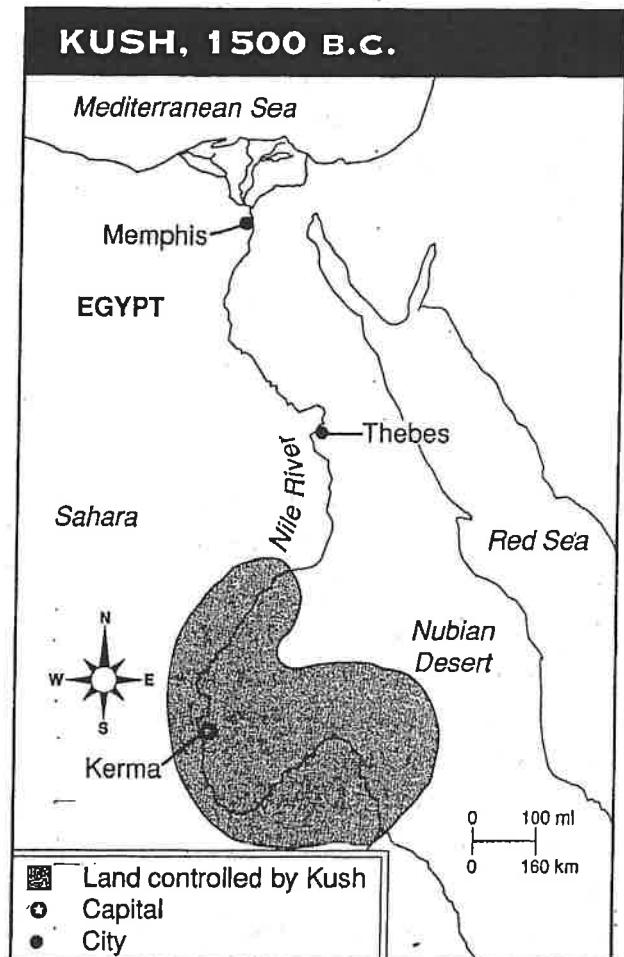
Egypt was not the only ancient civilization in Africa. Just south of Egypt, another civilization grew up in the land once known as Nubia. Nubia stretched along the Nile River from the southern edge of Egypt almost to where the city of Khartoum, Sudan, is today. The land of Nubia had many natural resources such as gold, copper, and granite.

People settled in Nubia as early as 6000 B.C. Like the ancient Egyptians, the people of Nubia lived alongside the Nile River where the land was best for growing crops. The fact that the Egyptians and the Nubians lived near each other meant that the actions of one often affected the actions of the other.

Nubia's location between Egypt and Southern Africa helped make it an important center for trading. The Nubians traded with the Egyptians as well as with people in Southern Africa and Southwest Asia.

The Egyptians began to want both Nubia's resources and the wealth the Nubians got as traders. By 2600 B.C., the Egyptians had taken over northern Nubia.

During this time, an **independent**, or free, kingdom formed in southern Nubia. The ancient Egyptians called the new kingdom Kush. The city of Kerma was Kush's capital. The Kushite people became known for the beautiful pottery they made and for their use of metals. As Kush grew, its trade with other lands grew too. By 1650 B.C.,



Kush had grown so strong that it was able to win back northern Nubia.

Soon, however, the Egyptians once again took over Nubia. The leaders of Kush fled their old capital at Kerma and set up a new capital at Napata. Napata lay farther south along the Nile River. Egypt continued its rule of Nubia for more than 500 years.

By 800 B.C. Egypt had grown weak. In 750 B.C. King Kashta (KASH•tuh) of Kush invaded southern Egypt. Kashta's son, King Piye (PEE•yeh), defeated all of Egypt by 730 B.C. The Nubians now controlled Egypt.

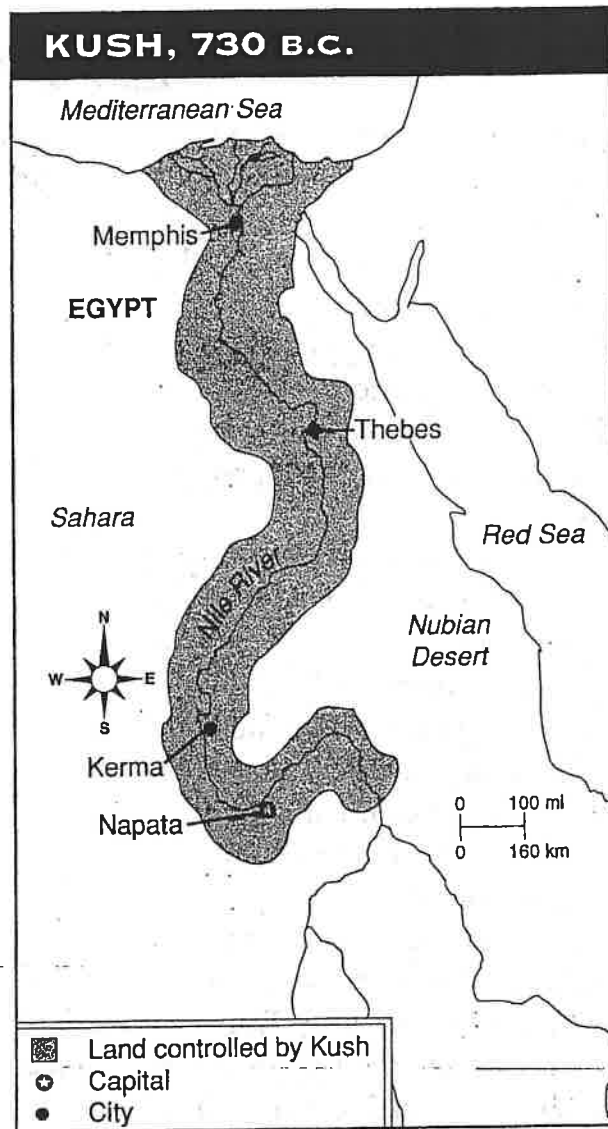
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The Nubians did not take over Egypt to destroy it. Instead they tried to return Egypt to its former greatness. During this time many Egyptian monuments were rebuilt. Egyptian scrolls were restored and kept safe.

Kushite rule of Egypt lasted until around 671 B.C., when invaders from Southwest Asia took control of the Nile Valley. Again Kushite leaders moved. This time, they built a new capital, Meroë (MAIR•oh•wee), even farther south along the Nile River.

Meroë was at the meeting point of several trade routes. It was also near iron mines. Meroë became one of the first African centers for making iron products. Meroë's iron products reached all parts of Africa as well as Southwest Asia and places along the Mediterranean Sea.

In the 200s B.C., Meroë weakened because traders began to use sea routes that bypassed the city. Kush lasted until about A.D. 350, when it was defeated by the African kingdom of Axum. The Kushite culture soon disappeared.



Review

CHECK UNDERSTANDING

1. What were some of the resources of ancient Nubia? How did these resources both help and hurt ancient Nubia?
2. What were the names of Kush's capitals? Where was the capital of Kush during the period of Kush's control over Egypt?

THINK CRITICALLY

3. Why do you think the use of sea routes weakened Meroë?

SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW

Map Activity Imagine that you are a trader in ancient Kush. Make a map showing Egypt, Nubia, Southwest Asia, and the Mediterranean Sea. Use other maps in this unit to add cities to your map. Draw routes that you think traders may have used to travel between cities. Use different colors for land routes and water routes.