

Chapter 5 – Ancient Kush



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Kush and Egypt

The Big Idea

The kingdom of Kush, in the region of Nubia, was first conquered by Egypt but later conquered and ruled Egypt.

Main Ideas

- Geography helped early Kush civilization develop in Nubia.
- Egypt controlled Kush for about 500 years.
- Kush ruled Egypt after winning its independence and set up a new dynasty there.

Main Idea 1: Geography helped early Kush civilization develop in Nubia.

- A group of people called the Kushites settled in a region now called Nubia and established the first large kingdom in the interior of Africa.
- The development of the Kushite civilization was greatly influenced by the geography of Nubia.

Nubia

- Ancient Nubia was fertile, due to annual flooding.
- It was rich in valuable minerals that contributed to its wealth.
 - Gold
 - Copper
 - Stone

- Farmers thrived there, and one became the king of a region he called Kush.
- The capital city of Kerma was protected from invaders by the cataracts of the Nile River.



Main Idea 2: Egypt controlled Kush for about 500 years.

Relations between Kush and Egypt became hostile. Egypt feared that Kush would become too powerful, so it invaded and conquered Kush.

Many Kushites adopted Egyptian religious practices, names, and language.

During a time of decline in Egypt, Kushite leaders regained control of Kush, becoming independent again.



Main Idea 3: Kush ruled Egypt after winning its independence and set up a new dynasty there.

Kush regained its strength and conquered Egypt under the direction of Kashta and his son **Piankhi**.

- Shabaka declared himself pharaoh and began the Kushite Dynasty.
- This dynasty tried to restore the old Egyptian cultural practices.

The Kushite Dynasty remained strong until the Assyrians drove them out.





Later Kush

The Big Idea

Kush developed an advanced civilization with a large trading network.

Main Ideas

Kush's economy grew because of its iron industry and trade network.

- Society and culture in Kush had elements borrowed from other cultures and elements unique to Kush.
- The decline and defeat of Kush was caused by both internal and external factors.

Main Idea 1:

Kush's economy grew because of its iron industry and trade network.

Kush devoted itself to increasing agriculture and trade. Within a few centuries, it became a rich and powerful kingdom again.

- Meroe, the kingdom's new capital, developed an iron industry.
- Resources such as iron ore and wood for furnaces helped the industry grow quickly.

Meroe became the center of a large **trade network**, a system of people in different lands who trade goods.



Main Idea 2:

Society and culture in Kush had elements borrowed from other cultures and elements unique to Kush.

- As Kushite trade grew, **merchants** came into contact with people from other cultures.
- As a result, the people of Kush combined customs from other cultures with their own Kushite culture.

Kushite Culture

Kushite culture was influenced by Egypt. They worshipped Egyptian gods, built pyramids, wore Egyptian clothing, and had rulers called pharaohs.

- The Kushites also had their own gods.
- They developed their own written language, called Meroitic.

The women of Kush were expected to be as active in society as the men. They often rose to positions of authority and power, especially religious authority.



Main Idea 3:
The decline and defeat of Kush
was caused by both
internal and external factors.

- **Loss of Resources**

- Cattle overgrazed the land, leaving nothing to hold the soil down and allowing it to blow away.
- Ironmakers used up the forests near Meroe. Military power declined when weapons were not produced.

- **Trade Rivals**

- Merchants set up new trade routes that went around Kush, weakening its trade.

- **Rise of Aksum**

- The Aksumite army of **King Ezana** took over when Kush's power started to decline.

History Close-up

Rulers of Kush

Like the Egyptians, the people of Kush considered their rulers to be gods. Kush's culture was similar to Egypt's, but there were also important differences.

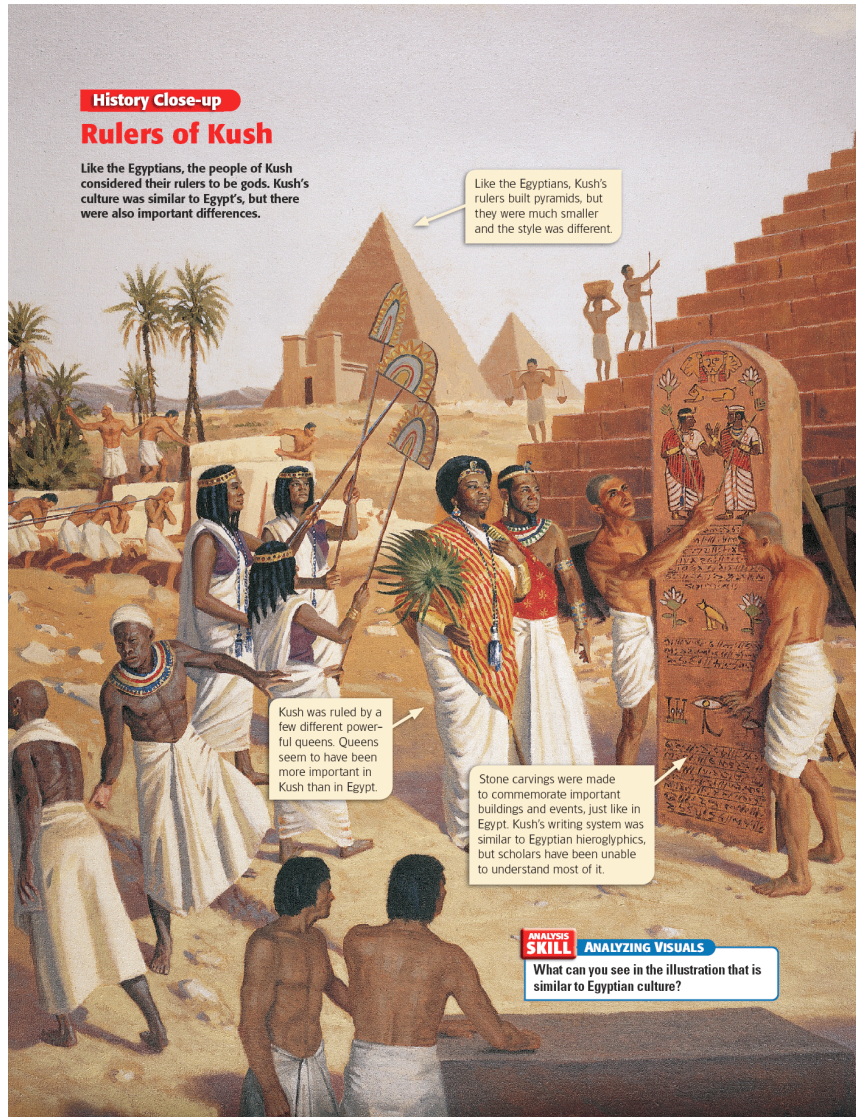
Like the Egyptians, Kush's rulers built pyramids, but they were much smaller and the style was different.

Kush was ruled by a few different powerful queens. Queens seem to have been more important in Kush than in Egypt.

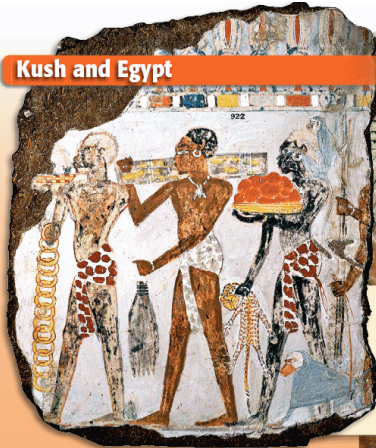
Stone carvings were made to commemorate important buildings and events, just like in Egypt. Kush's writing system was similar to Egyptian hieroglyphics, but scholars have been unable to understand most of it.

ANALYSIS SKILL ANALYZING VISUALS

What can you see in the illustration that is similar to Egyptian culture?



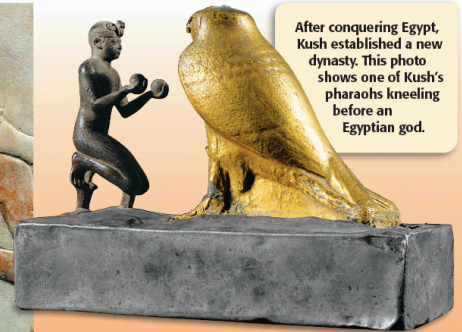
Kush and Egypt



Early in its history, Egypt dominated Kush, forcing Kushites to give tribute to Egypt.



Later, as Kush's power increased, its warriors invaded and conquered Egypt. This photo shows Kushite and Egyptian warriors.



After conquering Egypt, Kush established a new dynasty. This photo shows one of Kush's pharaohs kneeling before an Egyptian god.

ANALYSIS SKILL ANALYZING VISUALS

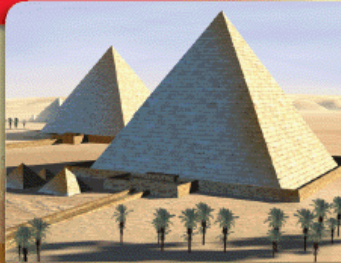
What did Kushites give to Egypt as tribute?



When the Assyrians invaded Egypt with their iron weapons, they forced Kush's rulers out of Egypt and south into Nubia.

Kush's Trade Network

Ancient Kush was at the center of a large trading network with connections to Europe, Africa, and Asia. Kush's location and production of iron goods helped make it a rich trading center.



Goods from the Mediterranean came to Kush through trade with Egypt.

EGYPT

Mediterranean Sea

• Giza

• Luxor

Nubian Desert

KUSH

Red Sea

• Meroë



Caravans from the south brought goods like leopard skins and ostrich eggs to Kush.



In Meroë, workers made iron tools and weapons, jewelry, pottery, and other goods.



At ports on the Red Sea, merchants traded Kush's goods for luxury items like silk and glass.

BIOGRAPHY

Queen Shanakhdakheto

Ruled 170–150 BC

Historians believe Queen Shanakhdakheto was the first woman to rule Kush. But because we can't understand Meroitic writing, we know very little about Queen Shanakhdakheto. Most of what we know about her comes from carvings found in her tomb, one of the largest pyramids at Meroë. Based on these carvings, many historians think she probably gained power after her father or husband died.

Drawing Inferences What information do you think the carvings on the queen's tomb contained?



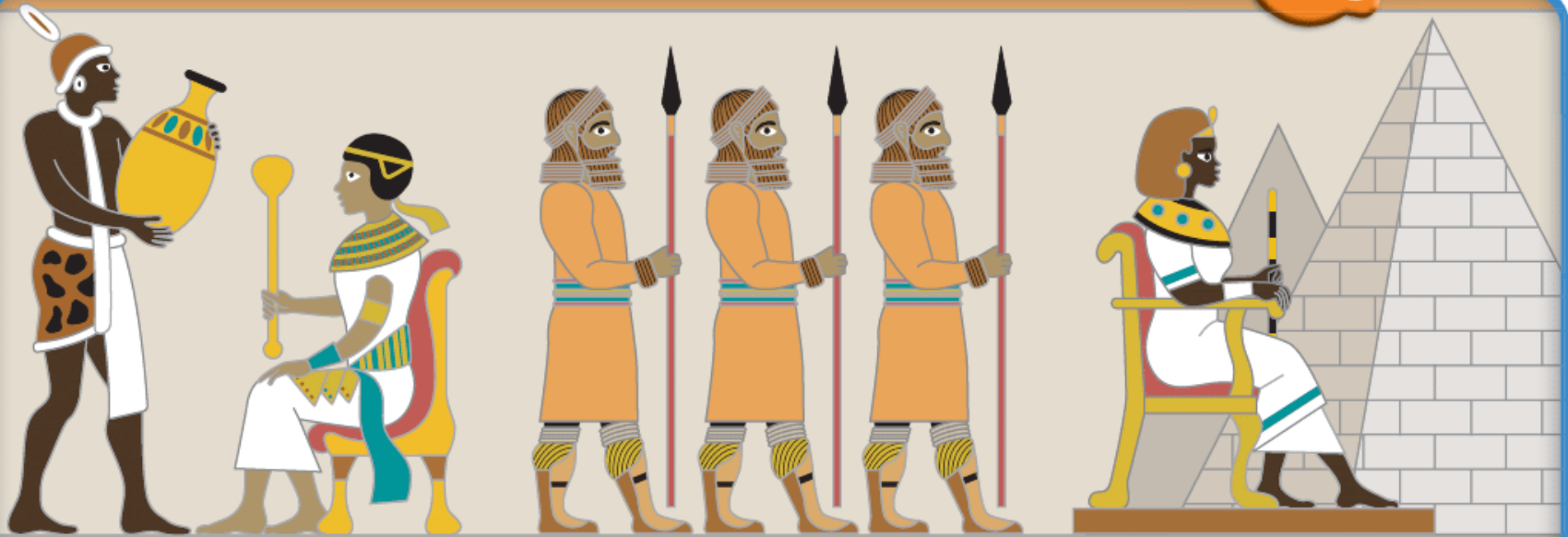
Ancient Kush



Visual Summary

Use the visual summary below to help you review the main ideas of the chapter.

**QUICK
FACTS**



Egypt dominated early Kush and forced the Kushites to pay tribute.

After Kush conquered Egypt, invaders forced the Kushites to move south to their ancient homeland.

Kush developed an advanced civilization that blended Egyptian culture with cultures from other parts of Africa.

