

Kingdoms of the Nile

Module 4

Lesson 5



MAIN IDEAS

1. The geography of early Nubia helped civilization develop there.
2. Kush and Egypt traded, but they also fought.
3. Later Kush became a trading power with a unique culture.
4. Both internal and external conflicts led to the decline of Kush and Aksum.

Key Terms and People

Piankhi Kushite king who conquered all of Egypt

trade network a system of people in different lands who trade goods back and forth

merchants traders

exports items sent for sale in other countries or regions

imports goods brought in from other countries or regions

Queen Shanakhdakheto the first woman to rule Kush

Aksum an ancient kingdom located near the Red Sea in northeast Africa

King Ezana Aksumite king who destroyed Meroë and took over the kingdom of Kush

Lesson Summary

THE GEOGRAPHY OF EARLY NUBIA

The kingdom of Kush developed in Nubia, south of Egypt. Just as in Egypt, yearly Nile floods provided fertile soil and farming thrived. The area was also rich in gold, copper, and stone. Kerma (KAR-muh), the capital city on the Nile, was protected by a cataract, or stretch of shallow rapids.

How was Kush like Egypt?

KUSH AND EGYPT

Kush and Egypt were trading partners. The Kushites sent Egypt gold, copper, ebony, ivory, and slaves. At times, Kush and Egypt were at war. By around 850 BC, Kush had freed itself from Egypt and was a power again. During the 700s under the king Kashta, the Kushites began to invade Egypt. Kashta's son, **Piankhi** (PYANG-kee), conquered all of Egypt by the time he died.

Lesson 5, *continued*

Piankhi's brother became pharaoh of the Kushite dynasty. Egyptian culture thrived. But by 670 BC, Assyrians invaded Egypt. Their iron weapons were better than Kush's bronze weapons. Kush lost control of Egypt.

LATER KUSH

Meroë (MER-oh-wee) became the center of a **trade network**. Africa's first iron industry developed here because iron ore and wood for fuel were available. Egyptian and Greek **merchants** shipped goods from Kush and sent them to the Mediterranean and beyond. Kush's **exports** included gold, pottery, iron tools, ivory, and slaves. **Imports** included luxury items from Egypt, Asia, and the Mediterranean.

The Kushites worshipped their own gods and developed their own writing. Women were active in society, and some rose to positions of authority. **Queen Shanakhdakheto** (shah-nahk-dah-KEE-toh) was the first of many women who ruled Kush.

THE DECLINE OF KUSH

By the AD 300s, another trading center, **Aksum** (AHK-soom), located in what is now Eritrea, began competing with Kush for trade. The Aksum leader **King Ezana** (AY-zah-nah) invaded, and Kush fell.

Aksum became a major trading power. Traders also brought new beliefs, such as Christianity. In the late 300s, King Ezana made Christianity the official religion. Aksum was never conquered, but it became cut off from its allies. The people of Aksum then retreated to Ethiopia.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Summarize Pretend you are a Kushite leader in 850 BC. Write a short essay summarizing the details of a plan to defeat Egypt.

What made Assyrian weapons better than Kushite weapons?

What items did Kush export?

What was the role of women in Kushite society?

Circle the name and kingdom of the ruler who eventually defeated Kush.

Lesson 5, *continued*

DIRECTIONS Look at each set of four vocabulary terms. On the line provided, write the letter of the term that does not relate to the others.

- _____ 1. a. Piankhi
b. an Egyptian
c. son of Kashta
d. a Kushite
- _____ 2. a. Piankhi
b. trade network
c. Meroë
d. a system of people in different lands who trade goods
- _____ 3. a. merchants
b. traders
c. Egyptian and Greek
d. King Ezana
- _____ 4. a. imports
b. exports
c. goods brought in
d. fine jewelry and luxury items
- _____ 5. a. imports
b. exports
c. items sent out
d. gold and slaves
- _____ 6. a. King Ezana
b. first woman to rule Kush
c. 170 BC to 150 BC
d. Queen Shanakhdakheto
- _____ 7. a. King Ezana
b. Queen Shanakhdakheto
c. King of Aksum
d. destroyed Meroë
- _____ 8. a. in northeast Africa
b. near the Red Sea
c. ruled by women
d. an ancient kingdom