World History Chapter 5 Lesson 4

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| **The Kingdom of Kush**  **ESSENTIAL QUESTION *Why do civilizations rise and fall?*** | |
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| *The kingdoms of Nubia and Kush were influenced by Egyptian culture, and they continued many Egyptian traditions.*  **The Nubians**  [*SS.6.G.2.1*](https://connected.mcgraw-hill.com/ssh/AE39A72A-CCB8-11DD-A7C8-69619DFF4B22)*,*[*SS.6.G.2.2*](https://connected.mcgraw-hill.com/ssh/AE3A74FC-CCB8-11DD-A7C8-69619DFF4B22)*,*[*SS.6.G.2.4*](https://connected.mcgraw-hill.com/ssh/AE3C6500-CCB8-11DD-A7C8-69619DFF4B22)*,*[*SS.6.G.2.6*](https://connected.mcgraw-hill.com/ssh/AE3E6242-CCB8-11DD-A7C8-69619DFF4B22)*,*[*SS.6.E.1.3*](https://connected.mcgraw-hill.com/ssh/AE4BC69E-CCB8-11DD-A7C8-69619DFF4B22)*,*[*SS.6.E.3.2*](https://connected.mcgraw-hill.com/ssh/AE4E2B6E-CCB8-11DD-A7C8-69619DFF4B22)*,*[*LA.6.1.6.1*](https://connected.mcgraw-hill.com/ssh/D9F77C74-4B74-11DB-ABAF-F681ADECFD11)  ***How did Nubia and Egypt influence each other?***  In addition to Egypt, other civilizations flourished in Africa. One of these African civilizations was Nubia, later known as Kush. Nubia was located south of Egypt along the Nile River in present-day Sudan.  Cattle herders were the first people to settle in this region, arriving about 2000 b.c. They herded long-horned cattle on the **savannas** (suh • VA • nuhs), or grassy plains, that stretch across Africa south of the Sahara. Later, people settled in farming villages along the Nile River.  Unlike the Egyptians, the Nubians did not **rely** on the Nile floods to create fertile soil. Their land had fertile soil and received rainfall all year long. Nubian villagers grew crops such as beans, yams, rice, and grains. The Nubians also hunted for food. Their hunters and warriors excelled at using the bow and arrow.  **The Rise of Kerma**  Gradually, the stronger Nubian villages took over the weaker ones and formed the kingdom of Kerma (KAR • muh). The Nubians of Kerma grew wealthy from agriculture and the mining of gold. Their kingdom developed a close relationship with Egypt in the north. Kerma's central location in the Nile valley benefited the Nubians. It made Kerma an important trade link between Egypt and the tropical areas of southern Africa. From Kerma, the Egyptians acquired cattle, gold, incense, ivory, giraffes, leopards, and enslaved people. They also hired Nubians to serve in their armies because of their skills in warfare. Kerma's artisans produced fine pottery, jewelry, and metal goods. |  |

Workers built tombs for Kerma's kings, usually on a smaller scale than Egyptian tombs. Like the Egyptian pharaohs, the kings of Kerma were buried with their personal belongings, including valuable gems, gold, jewelry, and pottery. These artifacts were as magnificent as those found in Egypt's royal tombs that were built during the same time period.

**Egyptian Invasion**

Egyptian armies invaded Nubia in the 1400s b.c. After a 50-year war, the Egyptians conquered the kingdom of Kerma and ruled it for the next 700 years.

As a result of Egyptian rule, the Nubians adopted many of the beliefs and customs of Egyptian culture. For example, the Nubians worshipped Egyptian gods and goddesses along with their own Nubian deities. They learned to use copper and bronze to make tools. The Nubians adapted Egyptian hieroglyphs to fit their own language and created an alphabet.

By the end of the Middle Kingdom, Egypt was weak. It could no longer govern its conquered peoples effectively, and the Nubians were able to break away from Egyptian rule.

**The Rise of Kush**

By 850 b.c., the Nubians had formed an independent kingdom known as Kush. Powerful kings ruled the country from its capital at Napata (NA • puh • tuh).

The city of Napata was located where trade caravans crossed the upper part of the Nile River. Caravans came from central Africa, bringing ivory and other goods. They stopped at Napata for Kushite products and then continued on to Egypt. The Egyptians traded with Kush for goods the Egyptians could not make. Such trade brought wealth to the traders and kings of Kush.

**Kush Conquers Egypt**

In time, Kush became powerful enough to **challenge** Egypt. About 750 b.c., a Kushite king named Kashta (KAHSH • tuh) invaded Egypt. His soldiers reached the city of Thebes. After Kashta died, his son Piye (PY) became king and completed the conquest of Egypt in 728 b.c. Piye founded the Twenty-fifth Dynasty that governed Egypt and Kush from Napata.

The kings and wealthy people of Kush continued to admire Egyptian culture. Kushites built white sandstone temples and monuments similar to those in Egypt. The Kushites also believed in a close relationship between their rulers and their deities, many of whom were Egyptian. For example, when a king died, Kushite officials met at the temple to ask the Egyptian god Amon-Re to appoint a new leader:

"So the commanders of His Majesty and the officials of the palace . . . [found] the major priests waiting outside the temple. They said to them, "Pray, may this god, Amon-Re . . . give us our lord. . . . We cannot do a thing without this god. It is he who guides us. . . . " Then the commanders . . . and the offcials . . . entered into the temple and put themselves upon their bellies before this god. They said, "We have come to you, O Amon-Re, . . . that you might give to us a lord, to revive us, to build the temples of the gods, . . . ."

—from *The Selection of Aspalta as King of Kush*

﻿The Kushites also built small, steeply-sloped pyramids as tombs for their kings. Some people in Kush, however, adopted customs and styles similar to those worn by southern Africans. This included wearing ankle and ear jewelry. By this time, the people of Kush also had developed their own style of painted pottery. The elephant, a sacred animal in Kush, was used as a theme in sculpture and other arts.

**Using Iron**

Kush ruled Egypt for about 60 years. In 671 b.c., the Assyrians invaded Egypt. Armed with iron weapons, the Assyrians defeated the Kushites, who only had bronze weapons, which were not as strong. The Kushites fled Egypt and returned to their homeland in the south.

Despite their defeat in Egypt, the Kushites learned how to make iron from the Assyrians. Farmers in Kush used iron to make their hoes and plows instead of copper or stone. With better tools, they were able to grow more grain and other crops. Kushite warriors also created iron weapons, which boosted their military strength.

**The Capital of Meroë**

About 540 b.c., Kush's rulers moved their capital to the city of Meroë (MEHR • oh • ee), near one of the Nile's cataracts. This move made them safer from Assyrian attacks. The Nile River continued to provide a means for trade and transportation for the Kushites. Large deposits of iron ore and trees were nearby and were used to fuel furnaces for making iron. As a result, Meroë became a major center for iron production as well as a busy trading city.

Kushite kings modeled the layout and design of Meroë after Egypt's great cities. A temple dedicated to the god Amon-Re stood at the end of a long avenue lined with sculptures of rams. The walls of palaces and houses were decorated with paintings. Small pyramids stood in the royal graveyard, modeled on the larger pyramids of Egypt. Meroë, however, was different from a typical Egyptian city because it contained iron furnaces. Huge columns of smoke poured out of iron furnaces. Heaps of shiny black slag, or waste from iron making, lay around the furnaces.

**A Trading Center**

Meroë was at the heart of a large web of trade that ran north to Egypt's border and south into central Africa. Kush's merchants received leopard skins and valuable woods from the tropical interior of Africa. They traded these items, along with enslaved workers and their own iron products, to places as far away as Arabia, India, China, and Rome. In return, they brought back cotton, **textiles** (TEHK • styls), or woven cloth, and other goods. Kush's merchants used their wealth to build fine houses and public baths like ones they had seen in Rome.

Kush remained a great trading kingdom for nearly 600 years. Then, another kingdom called Axum (AHK • soom) emerged near the Red Sea in eastern Africa. Axum is located in the present-day country of Ethiopia. Axum gained its strength from its location on the Red Sea. Goods from Africa owed into Axum. Over time, it served as a trading center for the ancient Mediterranean and East African worlds. Around A.D. 350, the armies of Axum invaded Kush and destroyed Meroë.