

Northeast Africa

Iron, Gold, and the “Other”
Brokering Societies

Comparative Timelines

Aegean

- Early Bronze Age: 3200-2100BCE
- Minoan Crete: 2100-1450 BCE
- Mycenaean Greece: 1600-1050 BCE
- Greek Recovery: 1000-750 BCE
- Archaic-Classical Greece: 750-323BCE
- Roman world: 510BCE-235CE

Southern Nile

- Egyptian rule in Nubia: 3500-2100 BCE
- Kushite kingdoms: 1570-1100 BCE
- Nubian encroachment on Egypt: 1100-663 BCE
- Meroe : 350 BCE –CE 300
- Axsum: CE 100-1100

Precursors to Civilization

- Mosaic pattern agriculture, lateral trade in foodstuffs
- Concurrent practice of hunting-gathering, millet/sorghum agriculture, tree-fruit horticulture, and nomadic pastoralism



Nomadic Pastoralists and TransAfrican trade

Nomadic herder burials at Kerma, on the Nile

Egyptian/Nubian Geography

- Upper and Lower Nile
- Cataracts as natural boundaries
- Upper and Lower Nubia
- Dongola Reach: First Cataract to Nile confluence



Trade Route Technology

“Shadow of Egypt”

- 3500-2100 BCE
- Trade began centuries before Egyptian takeover
- Old Kingdom pharaohs sent armies
- Middle Kingdom pharaohs fortified the Nile cataracts (eg. Buhen, 2nd cataract)

Kerma: Lords of Kush

- Ca. 1570-1528 BCE
- Took advantage of Egyptian decline during Hyksos revolt
- Kerma a true urban site: palace, temples, wharf and harbors, defensive walls, royal cemetery
- Earliest subSaharan state

New Kingdom Egypt and Nubia

- 1528-1100 BCE
- Kerma destroyed, Nubia pacified and colonized
- Reinvestment in “infrastructure” (esp. food production) to stabilize access to trade goods
- Egyptian use of “indirect rule”
- Adoption of many Egyptian cultural elements

Jebel Barkal and the “Shadow of Nubia”

- 1100-730 BCE
- Nubian rulers shift again to take advantage of Egyptian decline, end of New Kingdom
- Close link between secular and sacred authority, but kings and priests separate
- Ruling dynasties begun here run from 806BCE to CE 320

Nubian Pharaohs

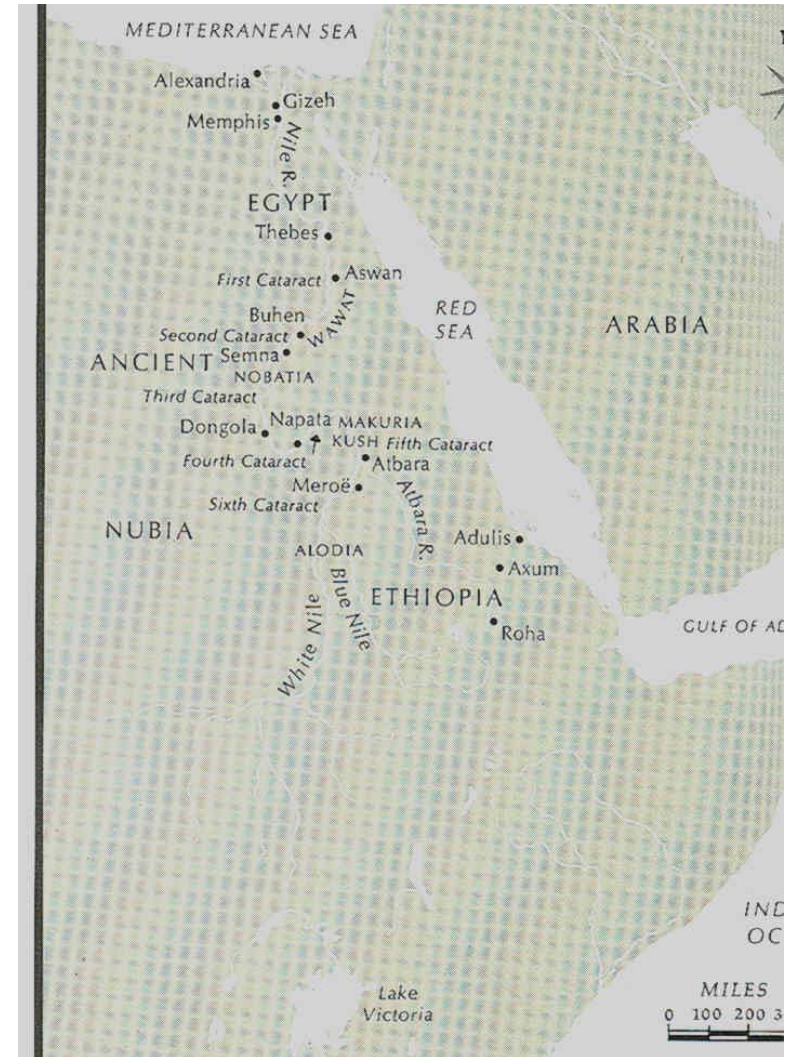
- 730-663BCE
- Close administrative linkages between Jebel Barkal and Thebes at this time
- Nubian capital shifted to Napata
- Ended in Kushite defeat, leading to rise of Meroe, further south

Meroe, Kingdom of Iron and Gold

- Ultimate trading empire: exploiting locally controlled craft production plus absolute command of trade networks
- Developed indigenous script, as yet undeciphered
- Massive iron-smelting complex
- Divine rulers, with strong matrilineal structure (mother-son ruling dyad)

Axum: Shift from River to Sea

- Axum conquers Meroe from the Ethiopian highlands, shores of Red Sea
- Active player in growing Indian Ocean trade
- Gradual reorientation of subSaharan trade from Nile to Red Sea, Indian Ocean
- Principal sites: Aksum, Adulis, Matara
- Development of extensive slave trade (parallel to Mediterranean world)



Rise of the Indian Ocean Trade

Ca. 500 CE – 1100 CE

