



2. Meroitic Period (ca. 295 b.c. - a.d. 320)

History

The Meroitic Period is named for the capital city of the kingdom of Kush during this time, the city of Meroe. Located between the Fifth and Sixth Cataracts, Meroe's locale was called the "Island of Meroe" by classical writers. Though the term is some times still used today, the "island" is actually the area of the Butana Steppe, which lies between the Nile and the Atbara River, which branches off from the Nile to the east. The city of Meroe actually lies on the east bank of the Nile, not on an island in the river.

The reasons behind the shift of the capital from Napata to Meroe are not clear. Many scholars believe that Meroe grew as a result of trade with areas to the north. The Korosko road probably served as an important overland route, which avoided the problems of travel on the Nubian stretches of the Nile. The Korosko road left the Nile at Abu Hamed, and joined the river again in Lower Nubia; this cut out the Second, Third, and Fourth Cataracts, considerably shortening the distance between Nubia and Egypt. When the camel was introduced, probably in the first century b.c., this overland route would have become even easier. The Kushite kings might have moved to Meroe to gain more control over the trade with Egypt and, through Egypt, with the Mediterranean world. The Nubian rulers might also have wanted to move away from the influential priesthood at the Amon temple at Jebel Barkal. Whatever the reason, by about 295 b.c. the Nubian rulers had established themselves at the southern capital city of Meroe.

Phonetic	Consonant	Phonetic value	Phonetic	Consonant	Phonetic value
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𐎈	𐎉	u	𐎊	𐎋	ya
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