

## Ancient African Civilizations

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### LD 5: The Kushite Acculturation Exercise

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**Introduction:** Acculturation is described by Webster's Third International Dictionary as "a process of intercultural borrowing marked by the continuous transmission of traits or elements between diverse peoples resulting in new and blended patterns." Given this definition, today's exercise will arise out of group discussion and collaboration, and each group will seek to define a list of traits that can be attributed to the Egyptians, and another attributable to the core Kushite pattern. Your primary task in this instance is to identify and describe those features of the Kushite lifestyle that were derivative of the Egyptian pattern, and those primarily derivative of the indigenous Kushite pattern.

**Instructions:** Using the Welsby (1996) text, The Kingdom of Kush: The Napatan and Meroitic Empires, and or the Henry Louis Gates' text, Wonders of the African World and Internet resources, you are to create a list of "traits" or artifacts and features that characterize Kushite society. The traits that you select should provide some basis for interpreting Kushite lifestyles and customs, and said traits should be accompanied by brief descriptions of what said traits say about the Kushite lifestyle. This reconstruction of the Kushite lifestyle should proceed much as you might proceed if you were applying for American citizenship and needed to determine the essential features of the lifestyle of the average American family, including domestic and religious customs and traditions, and social class and elite distinctions.

Use the following cultural categories or domains to provide a cultural description of the Kushite peoples. Having created your trait list and accompanying cultural description and interpretation, you are then to think about the essential features of the indigenous as opposed to the acculturated (Egyptian influenced) Kushite lifestyle. Because I realize that you may not all have the Welsby or Gates text readily at hand, we will begin the exercise in class as a group project, then you will follow through with the completion of the exercise outside of class contexts.

#### Cultural Categories or Domains

1. Physical Features and Language Characteristics
2. Religion and Funerary Ritual
3. Domestic versus Elite and Civic Ceremonial Architecture
4. Urban Settlement and City Planning
5. Rural Settlement and Domestic Lifestyles
6. Kushite Economics and Commercial Interactions
7. Kushite Art and Culture
8. Kushite Writing Systems
9. Dynastic Traditions and the Royal House