

Chapter 3: Early Africa and Egypt: 3-4b Trade and Egypt's Influence on Africa

Book Title: World Civilizations

Printed By: Colin Morris-Moncada (006279659@coyote.csusb.edu)

© 2018 Cengage Learning, Cengage Learning

3-4b Trade and Egypt's Influence on Africa

As a wealthy land, Egypt needed few imports. But there were some items Egyptians did need to import, and trade provided rare items whose monopoly was an important pillar of the monarchy. Wood was hard to find in a land where every acre of arable land was needed for agriculture, so large-scale projects like palaces, pyramids, and temples required the importation of timber. As early as the Old Kingdom, the pharaohs spent a great deal of time building trade, especially with timber-rich Byblos in Phoenicia, which provided valuable cedar. To the south, successive pharaohs sent expeditions into [Nubia \(Region of Africa south of Egypt, located roughly in today's Sudan. It was where the ancient African kingdoms of Kush and Meroe were found.\)](#) to obtain ivory and gold. Known to the Egyptians as the "Land of the Bowmen," Nubia also provided slaves whom Egypt's generals employed in special auxiliary units of archers in the pharaohs' powerful armies.

The pharaohs of the Middle and New Kingdoms embarked on ever more ambitious campaigns to expand Egypt's trade throughout southwestern Asia and south of the first cataract, deep into the chiefdoms of Nubia. When bronze technology caught on, pharaohs of the Middle Kingdom extended conquests into the Sinai Peninsula, where copper and gold were mined. And when the eastern Mediterranean emerged as an important commercial region (see [Chapter 8](#)), Egypt competed fiercely with other kingdoms of southwest Asia to maintain control of its lucrative trade routes. Yet it was trade to the south that remained the most valuable to Egypt.

The pharaohs organized naval expeditions to the Land of [Punt \(To ancient Egyptians, the lands that probably included southwest Arabia and the Horn of Africa.\)](#), where there was trade in luxuries such as spices, frankincense, myrrh, and gold from India, southern Arabia, and eastern Africa. The New Kingdom pharaohs pushed their conquests down to the third cataract of the Nile, into the Nubian land of [Kush \(\(kuhsh\) Kingdom in northeast Africa that had close relations with Egypt for several centuries in the pre-Christian epoch.\)](#) (Kuhsh, as in "cushion"). At Thebes, a high court official (the "King's Son of Kush") administered Kush as an Egyptian province until 1070 B.C.E., when it achieved independence. With the might of Egypt weighing on it for so many centuries, it was in Nubia where Egypt's cultural influence was the most substantial. The population gradually became Egyptianized: its kings ruled in a style redolent of Egypt's pharaohs, its religion incorporated Egyptian gods, and its royalty were even interred in small pyramids.

Chapter 3: Early Africa and Egypt: 3-4b Trade and Egypt's Influence on Africa

Book Title: World Civilizations

Printed By: Colin Morris-Moncada (006279659@coyote.csusb.edu)

© 2018 Cengage Learning, Cengage Learning

© 2020 Cengage Learning Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means - graphic, electronic, or mechanical, or in any other manner - without the written permission of the copyright holder.

