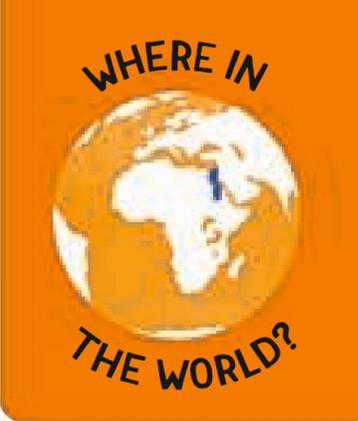


THE NUBIANS

African people from what is now the Sahara region began to move towards the River Nile in Nubia (modern day Sudan) in approximately 5000 BCE.

One of the first cradles of civilisation, Nubia was brimming with gold, incense, ebony, ivory and other precious commodities. The Nubians used these to trade with other tribes and peoples, including the Egyptians in around 3000 BCE.

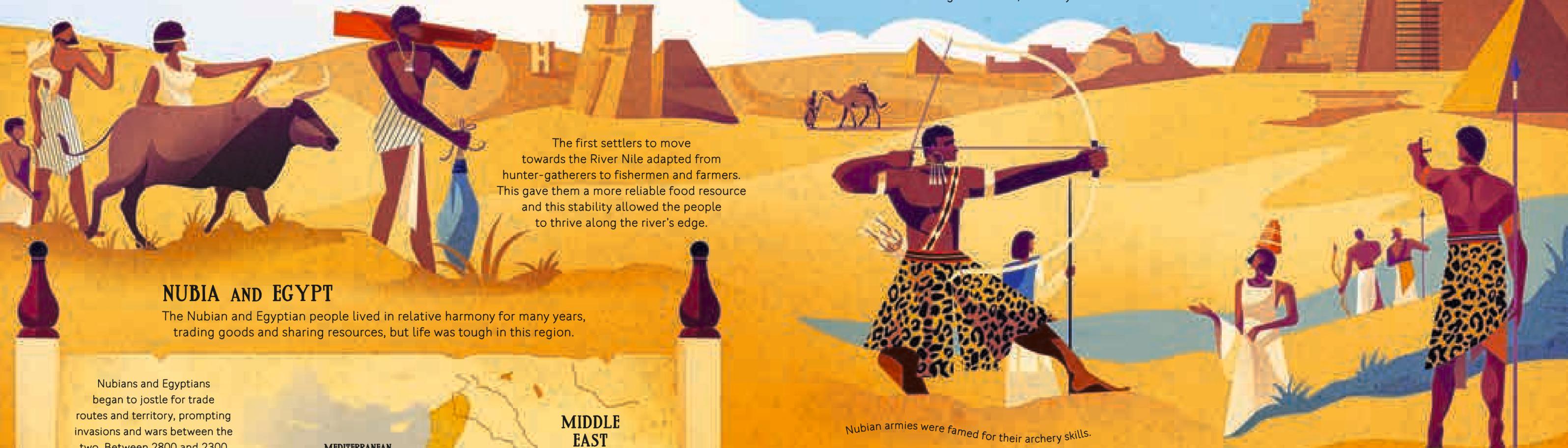


MEROITIC ALPHABET

Nubians helped develop the Meroitic alphabet. As the language is so old, however, few people alive today can understand their ancient writings.

NUBIAN PYRAMIDS

There are almost twice as many pyramids in Sudan as in Egypt, and the debate as to who built their first is hotly contested amongst historians. Pyramid-like structures were built by many separate cultures and civilisations around the world, including the Aztecs, the Assyrians and the Romans!



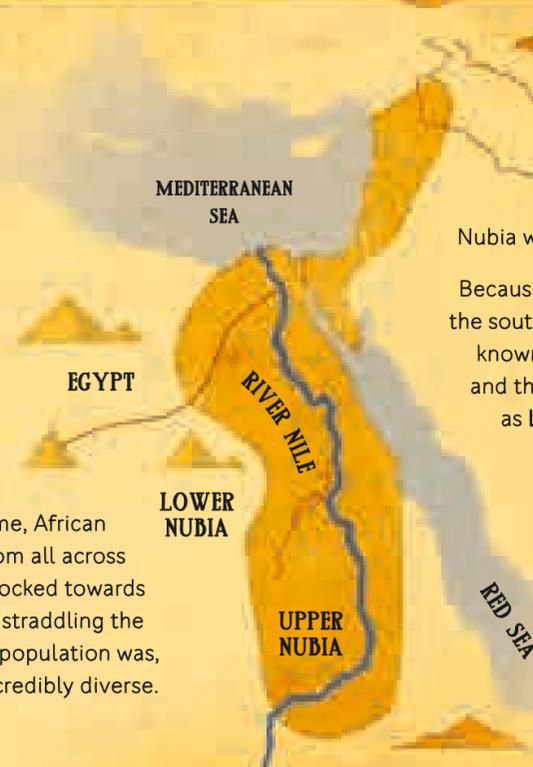
The first settlers to move towards the River Nile adapted from hunter-gatherers to fishermen and farmers. This gave them a more reliable food resource and this stability allowed the people to thrive along the river's edge.

Nubian armies were famed for their archery skills.

NUBIA AND EGYPT

The Nubian and Egyptian people lived in relative harmony for many years, trading goods and sharing resources, but life was tough in this region.

Nubians and Egyptians began to jostle for trade routes and territory, prompting invasions and wars between the two. Between 2800 and 2300 BCE, for instance, the Nubians may have been forced out of Lower Nubia by the Egyptians.



MIDDLE EAST

Nubia was divided into two regions.

Because the Nile flows northwards, the southern part of the territory was known as **Upper Nubia** (or Kush) and the northern part was known as **Lower Nubia** (or Wawat).

Not only did the river allow people to access water and fertile land, it also provided the means to transport heavy goods over long distances, improving trade with surrounding areas.

THE A-GROUP

The A-Group was the earliest known Nubian culture, existing from approximately 3800-2800 BCE. We know little about their way of life, but archaeologists discovered a host of A-Group burial sites, containing some exquisitely intricate pots, figurines, artefacts and carvings, along the banks of the Nile in the 1960s.

It is thought that the A-Group formed some of the first trade routes and even managed to acquire olive oil from the Mediterranean.



QUSTUL

Archaeologists found several tombs in a place called Qustul. Some of the graves belonged to Nubian rulers and officials.

Although most of these tombs had been looted and few objects remained, archaeologists did find an incense burner, ornately carved with pictures of boats, creatures and deities. It is a staggering 5,000 years old!

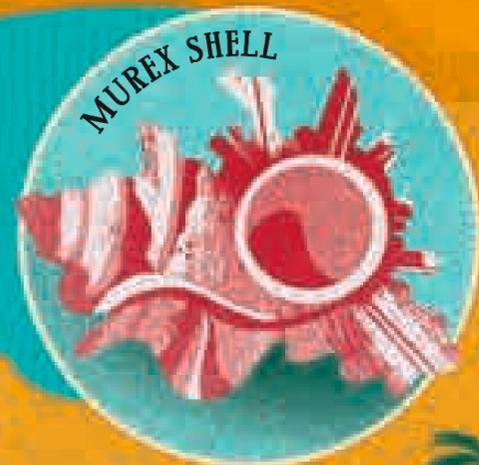
AFRICA

Over time, African people from all across the south flocked towards the regions straddling the Nile. Nubia's population was, therefore, incredibly diverse.



THE PHOENICIANS

The first Phoenician settlers were from the Middle East but the empire expanded into Africa and Europe, using the Mediterranean Sea as a bazaar in which to travel and trade. The Phoenician ports would have been stocked with spices, precious metals, foods, fabrics, timber, livestock, arts and crafts. Their ships spanned three continents to acquire and scatter goods.



TRADE

The Phoenicians accumulated a great wealth by trading along a vast network of shipping routes. Their settlements were strategically built in parts of north Africa, the Middle East and southern Europe. All sorts of things were traded, including glassware, wood and furniture, but also more unusual items, including a purple dye made from murex shells that the Grecian upper classes used to colour their togas and tunics.



GLASSWARE

The first glass used by humans was obsidian, also known as volcanic glass. Obsidian is formed when hot magma and gases heat sand beneath the Earth's surface. This product is then spat out when the volcano erupts, and cools to form a solid mass. Obsidian was used to make arrowheads, jewellery and art more than 6,000 years ago.

It wasn't until 3500 BCE, however, in Egypt and Mesopotamia, that humans discovered how to produce their own glass in ovens and kilns. The Phoenicians then used bellows to create furnaces that could reach scorching temperatures. They also experimented with glass production, eventually 'blowing' the material to create hollow vessels, such as jugs, vases and perfume bottles.

MIDDLE EAST

CARTHAGE

Carthage was built in the 9th century BCE and was one of the largest cities of its time. It was the epicentre of trade for the Phoenicians and its geographical placement was perfect. A large population could be sustained thanks to the proximity of a huge freshwater lake and the sea.

Carthage was eventually invaded and Phoenician buildings destroyed by the Romans during the Punic Wars. The Romans then rebuilt the metropolis in their own style and some of their ruins can be found in modern-day Tunis, Tunisia.

AFRICA

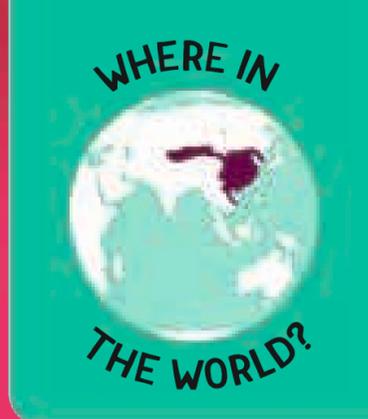
ALPHABET

Though the Sumerians were the first to create a written language, the Phoenicians were the first to develop an alphabet, where letters (consonants and vowels) could be ordered to create different sounds. Incorporating 22 letters, their alphabet would eventually influence the Greek alphabet and the alphabet we use today.



THE ANCIENT CHINESE

China was governed by many rulers and families during ancient times and 'dynasties' were established, whereby leadership was passed from one generation to another. The time of the Han Dynasty (206 BCE-220 CE) was a particularly pivotal era, amid which many existing cultural practices were first introduced.



CONFUCIUS

Confucius was a teacher and philosopher. His work argued that individuals should treat each other the way they would want to be treated, and focussed on the importance of family and education. A classical Chinese education was quite different from the curriculum now taught in schools – pupils studied archery, calligraphy, mathematics, music, chariot-driving and ritual as their core subjects.



TEA

Aside from water, tea is the most popular drink in the world and it was first created by the Chinese.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1971, construction workers found the Lady of Dai, a 2,000-year-old mummy dating back to the Han Dynasty. The mummy was so well preserved that some of her blood vessels were intact.

THE SILK ROAD

The Silk Road was a pivotal trading route between parts of Africa and Europe in the West and India and China in the East. The Chinese network of pathways was established during the Han period.

PAPER

Cai Lun is thought to have invented paper from the bark of a mulberry tree in 105 CE. Archaeological evidence shows that paper was in existence before this time, but it was Cai Lun's apprentice who ensured the growth of its popularity throughout China. The production of paper also led to the creation of bank notes for the first time.

GREAT WALL OF CHINA

The Great Wall of China is the longest man-made structure in the world. It was built to protect the country from invading hordes and stretches, weaves and winds a staggering 21,196km (13,170mi) through rugged terrain. The wall was developed over the course of several centuries by different Chinese tribes and leaders. Many clans created walls to protect themselves in the 7th and 8th centuries BCE, and Qin Shi Huang, the first Chinese emperor, started connecting the ramparts to create a solid wall in the 3rd century BCE.

UMBRELLAS

China can experience some severe weather patterns and the umbrella was originally used to shield the rich from blistering sunshine.

The Romans, on the other hand, used umbrellas to protect against heavy downpours.

THE VIKINGS

The Vikings hailed from Denmark, Norway and Sweden in the Scandinavian region of Europe and created small farming communities and fishing villages, rather than sprawling cities, throughout their lands.

Many Vikings began to leave their homeland towards the end of the 8th century (CE), sailing to France, Ireland and Scotland, probably as a result of waning resources. The Vikings developed their own unique culture and sailed to islands and areas in the Atlantic Ocean that had never before been visited by Europeans.

COMBS

Viking men and women alike are often depicted with long, luscious locks of hair. Why would this be?

Well ... archaeologists have unearthed plenty of examples of Viking combs, many of which are intricately carved from deer antlers. Historians believe that warriors may have even carried combs on their belts and that grooming was an integral part of Viking culture.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Vikings were originally referred to as Danes, long before the country of Denmark was given its name.

EXPLORATION

The Scandinavian landscape is rich in a mineral called magnetite, which is known for its magnetic properties. The Vikings were rumoured to have been the first to harness its qualities by creating compasses, enabling them to navigate great distances.

The Viking Empire used Iceland as its primary naval hub, launching ships across the Atlantic Ocean in order to expand its territories. Erik the Red is said to have been the first European to discover Greenland in the 10th century and his son, Leif, travelled all the way to North American shores at the turn of the 11th century. Erik created his very own Viking colony in Greenland, but Leif and his men were forced from Canadian lands when they were attacked by natives.

GLASSES

Many peoples in history lay claim to the invention of spectacles. The Vikings have a strong claim, as archaeological exploration of the Swedish town of Fröjel in 1999 uncovered crystal lenses almost 1,000 years old.

SKIS

Ancient cave paintings suggest that the first skis may have been fashioned more than 20,000 years ago in Asia, but it was the Vikings who tinkered with the design and used them on a regular basis. Skis help spread their user's weight over a larger surface area and were used as a safe means of travel over the ice and soft snow abundant in Scandinavia.

WHERE IN



THE WORLD?

THE OLMECS

The Olmec civilisation emerged more than 3,500 years ago and controlled much of Mesoamerica from approximately 1200 BCE - 400 BCE. It was the first major empire in this region and many of the Olmec practices, technologies and teachings were adopted by the Maya and Aztecs.



CHOCOLATE



The Olmecs are recognised as being the first to harvest, grind and roast cacao beans in order to create a popular bitter-tasting drink circa 1500 BCE. This recipe was passed from generation to generation and the beverage was infused with herbs and spices for different occasions. When sweet-toothed Europeans invaded in the 16th century and discovered the recipe for themselves, they began to add sugar. Drinking chocolate soon became popular as a sweet treat across the continent.

Chocolate as we know it today has only existed for a few centuries and the first chocolate bar wasn't made until 1847.

RUBBER

The Olmec people harvested a milky liquid called latex from trees and plants more than 3,000 years ago and combined it with juice from other flowering plants to make rubber. Ingredients were then added in different quantities to produce rubber that was hard or soft - excellent for ball games!



DID YOU KNOW?

Cacao beans were particularly valuable in ancient times and were used as a currency by Mesoamerican peoples. According to an Aztec text, 100 beans could be traded for one turkey.

THE MAYA

Unlike many civilisations, the Maya did not build an ever-expanding empire but existed as a collection of city-states with a shared culture and religious system.

This civilisation flourished between 300 CE and 900 CE and its sophisticated cities, some of which can still be seen today, demonstrate just how advanced the Maya were in their astounding understanding of astronomy and mathematics. Maya people continue to live in some rural Central-American communities.

MATHEMATICS

To help them with their astronomical calculations, the Maya had an elegant mathematical system with three symbols: a shell for zero, a dot for one and a bar for five.

TIME

The Maya followed both a 260-day ritual calendar and a 365-day solar calendar which was divided into 18 months of 20 days.

Wait ...
 $18 \times 20 = 360$...

So what did the Maya do with the remaining five days? Well, they were considered to be very unlucky and the Maya spent those ominous hours praying to the gods.

One of the reasons keeping time was so important to the Maya was because different time periods were considered to be gods in their own right and time itself was worshipped.

WHAT IS A CITY STATE?

City states govern their own affairs and are independent of the country or territory surrounding them. City states have existed for an incredibly long time, and modern examples include Monaco, Vatican City and Singapore.

