

“Wonders: City of Meroë”

Excerpts of information compiled by Jamila White for the PBS series “Black Kingdoms of the Nile,” 1999

Rulers of Nubia established their capital at Meroë around 300 B.C., and the kingdom lasted there for more than nine centuries. Forty generations of Nubian royalty are buried in Meroë, and every royal Nubian tomb is housed within a pyramid. Meroitic pyramids are smaller and differ in architecture from Egyptian pyramids...

Contrary to the popularly held belief that ancient Africans could not and did not develop their own written language, inscriptions in a distinct [Nubian] alphabet appear in Meroë as early as the 2nd century B.C. Widespread use of [this alphabet] on monuments indicates that a [large] percentage of the population was able to read it. However, the meanings of these inscriptions remain unknown as this hieroglyphic [style writing is not yet able to be translated].

Meroë is also famed for its massive iron production, the first large-scale industry of its kind in the Nile Valley. But the technology of this industry is historically credited to the Romans, and not the Nubians.

Article found at www.pbs.org/wonders/Episodes/Epi1/1_wondr4.htm