

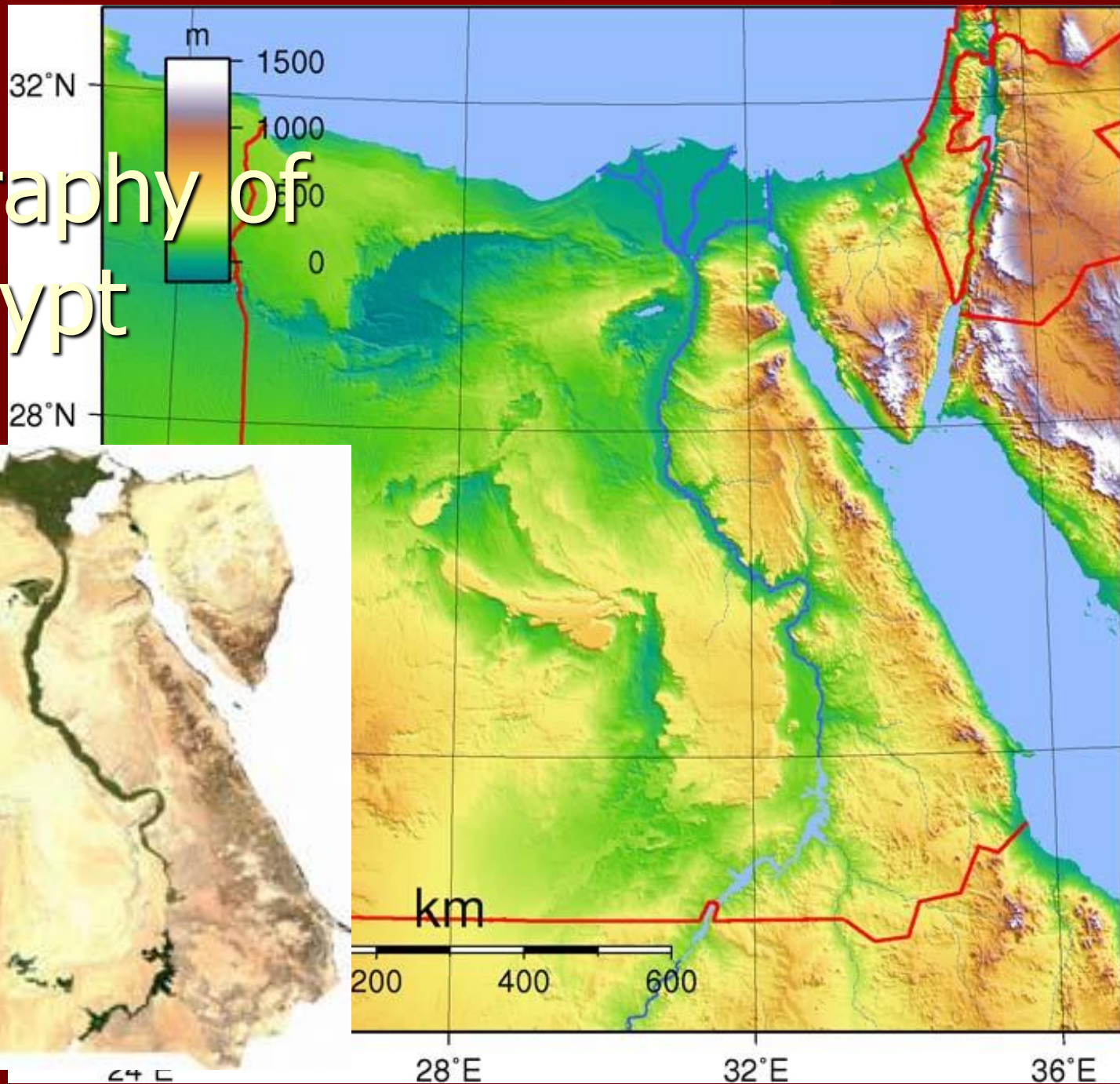
Week 4, Monday

Ancient Egypt and its environmental background

HPAR4002 – Introduction to Archaeology
Dr Katharina Zinn



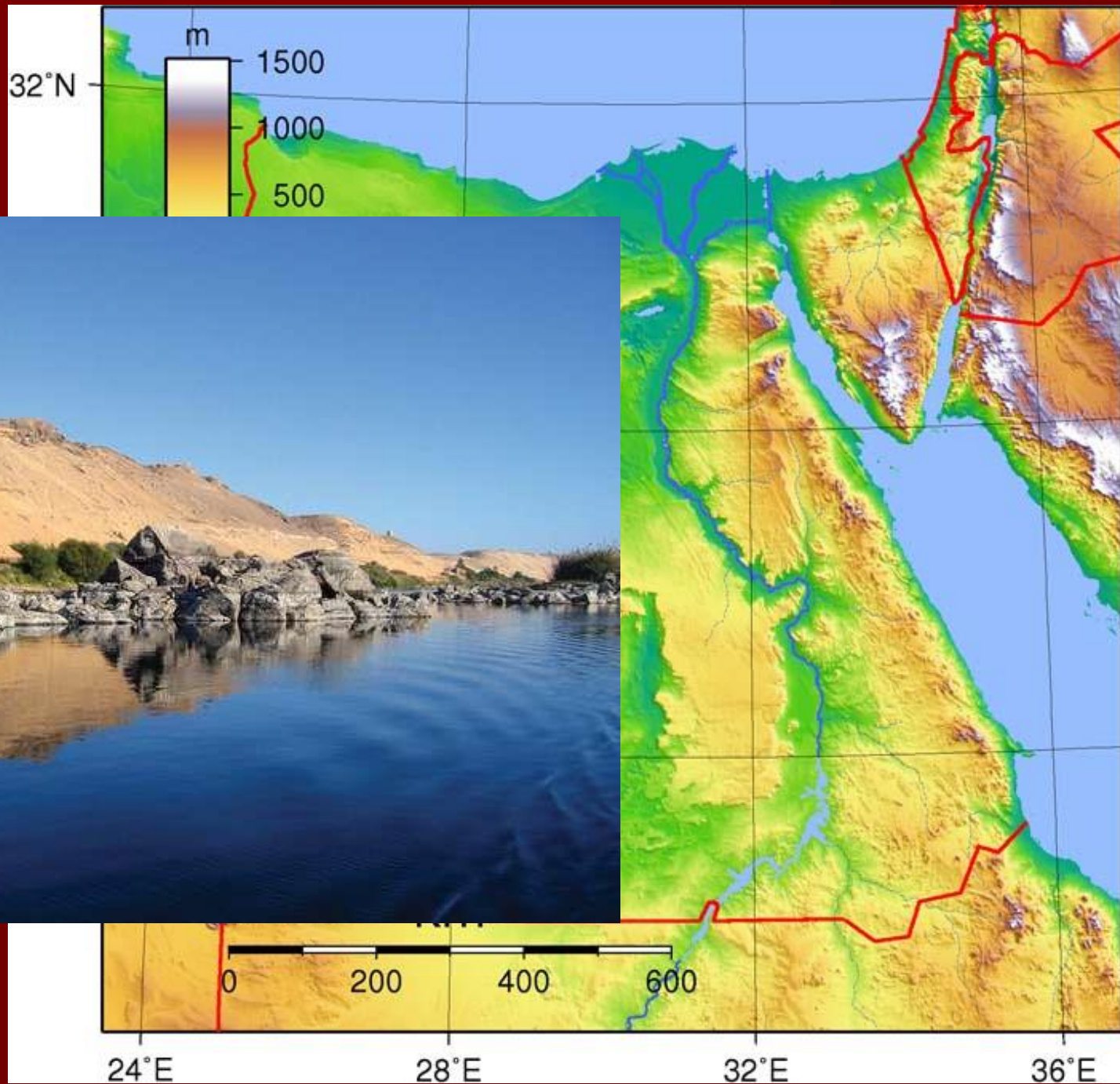
Topography of Egypt



Ancient Egyptian concepts of geography / topography

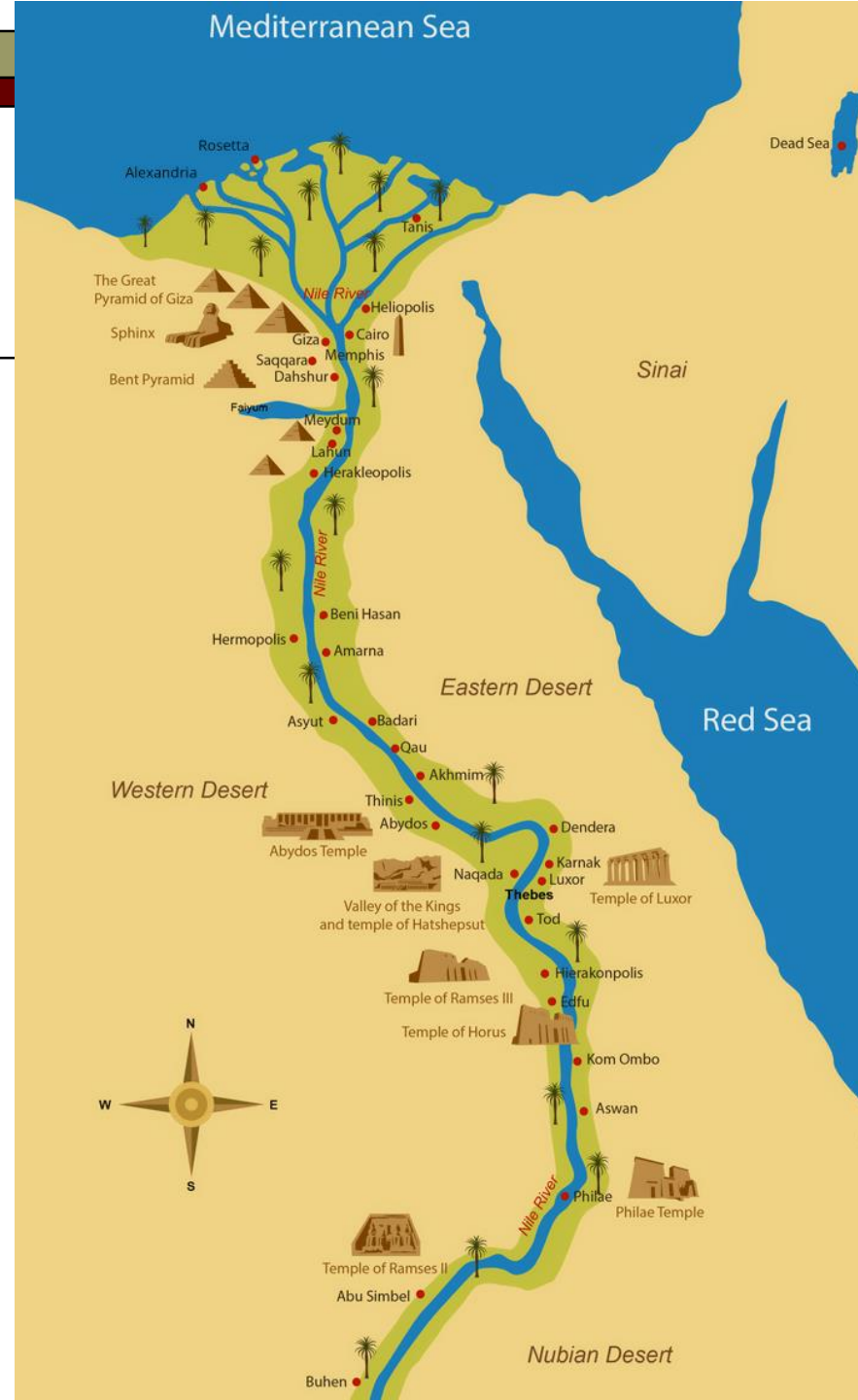
- country was divided into two distinct geographical sections:
 - the black land (the fertile banks of the river Nile) – Km.t (kemet) → place of order
 - the red land (the barren desert that covered the rest of the country) – *d̲sr.t* (djeseret) → place of chaos

The Nile



The landscape of the Nile

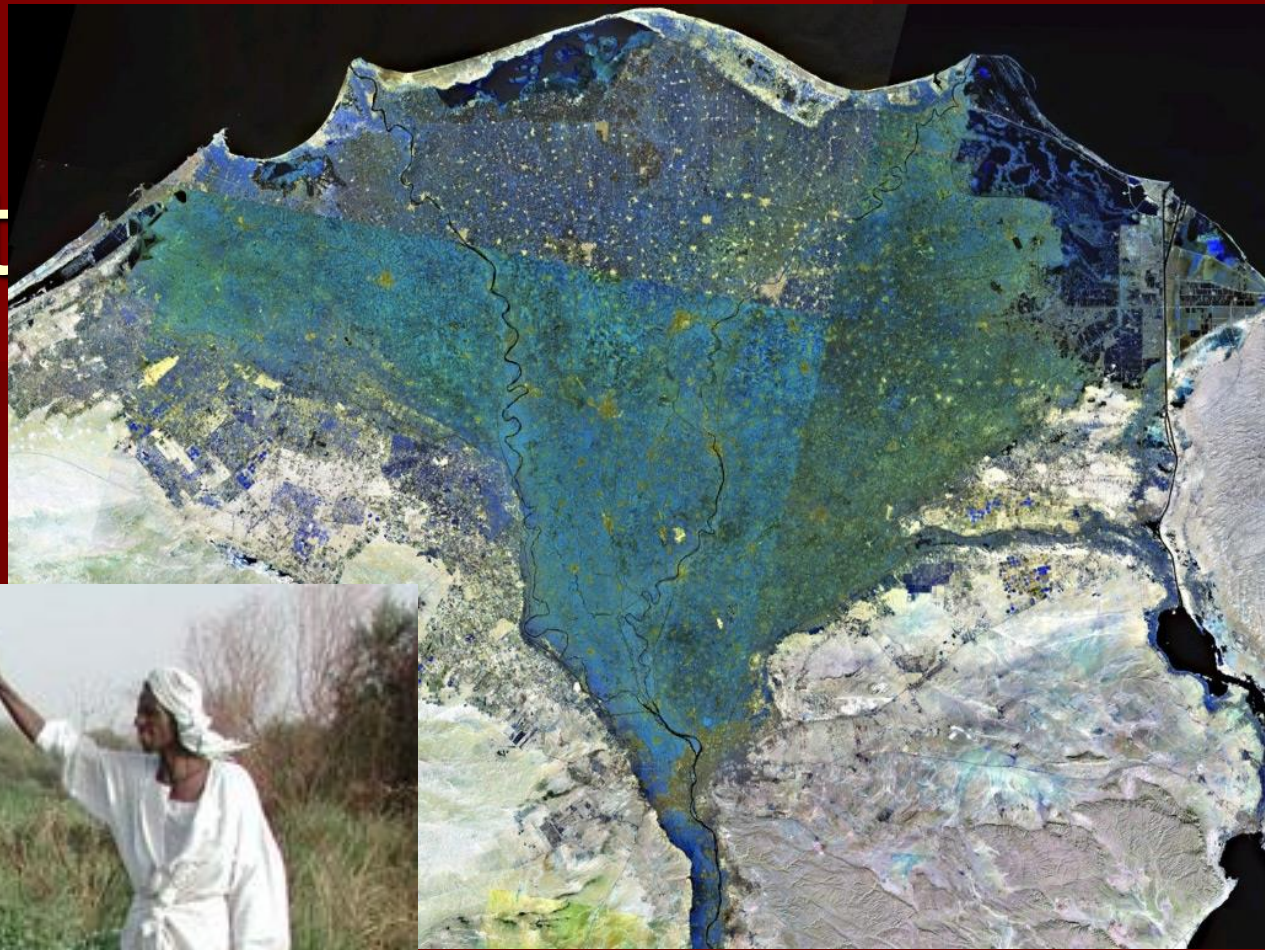
- Differs greatly
 - River basin – Upper Egypt
 - Delta – Lower Egypt



Nile near Dendara Upper Egypt



The Delta Lower Egypt



The Nile

- ❑ Arabic **Baḥr Al-Nīl** or **Nahr Al-Nīl**
- ❑ Flows nearly straight S → N
- ❑ longest river in the world: 4,132 miles (6,650 kilometres)
 - rises south of the Equator, flows through Africa (Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, Ethiopia, Egypt) into Mediterranean Sea
- ❑ formed by three streams
 - Blue Nile (Arabic: Al-Baḥr Al-Azraq; Amharic: Abay)
 - Atbara (Arabic: Nahr ‘Aṭbarah), which flow from the highlands of Ethiopia,
 - White Nile (Arabic: Al-Baḥr Al-Abyad), the headstreams of which flow into Lakes Victoria and Albert.

Nile flood

- ❑ *"A land won by the Egyptians and given them by the Nile." -Greek historian Herodotus (circa 500 B.C.)*
- ❑ Rain in the highlands of Ethiopia leads to annual Nile flood
- ❑ Flood brings fertile Nile silt which enables 2-3 harvests each year



Nile flood

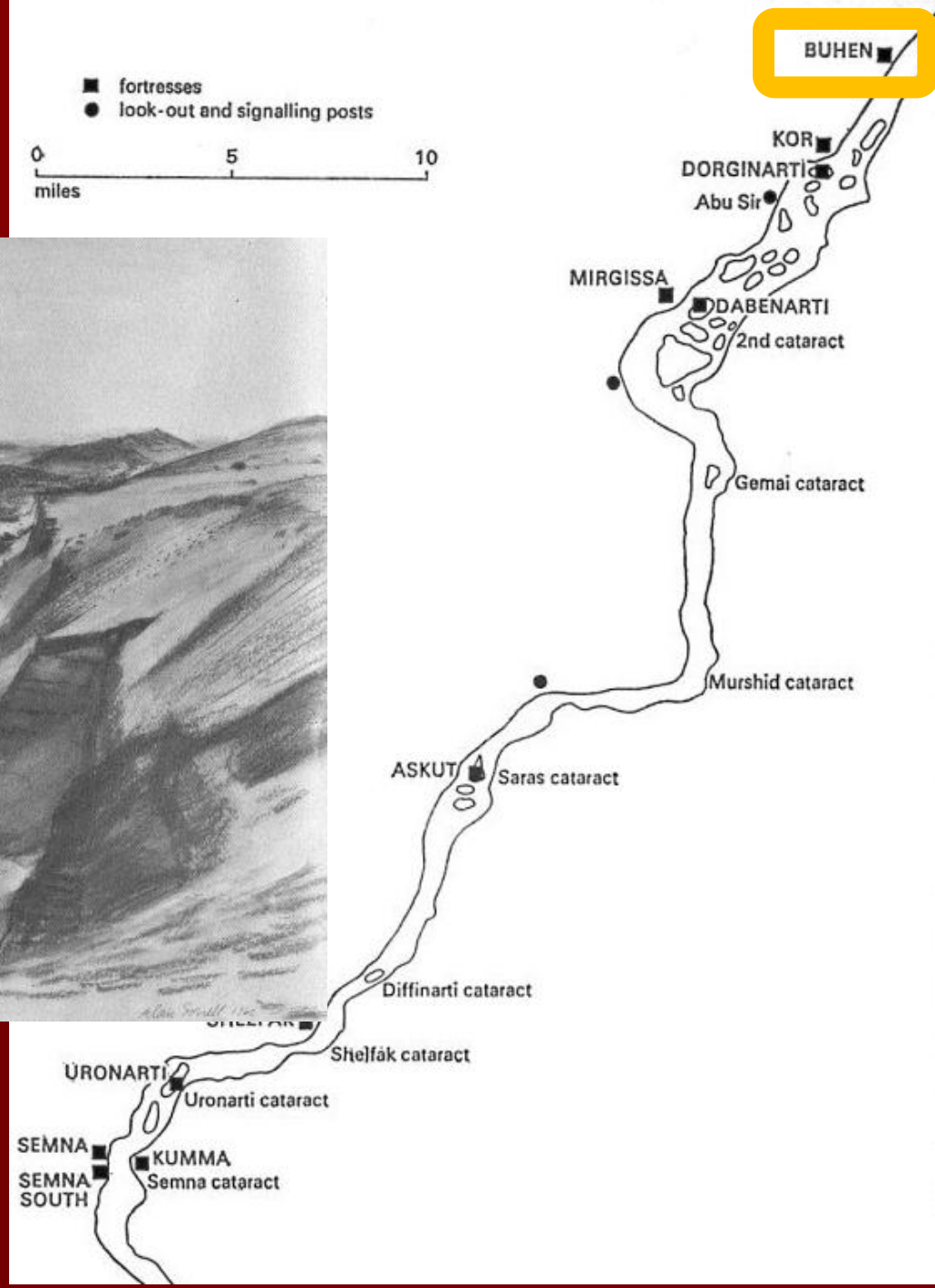
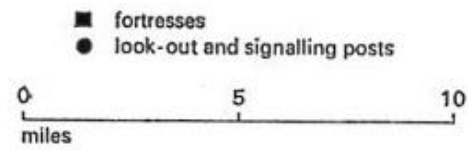
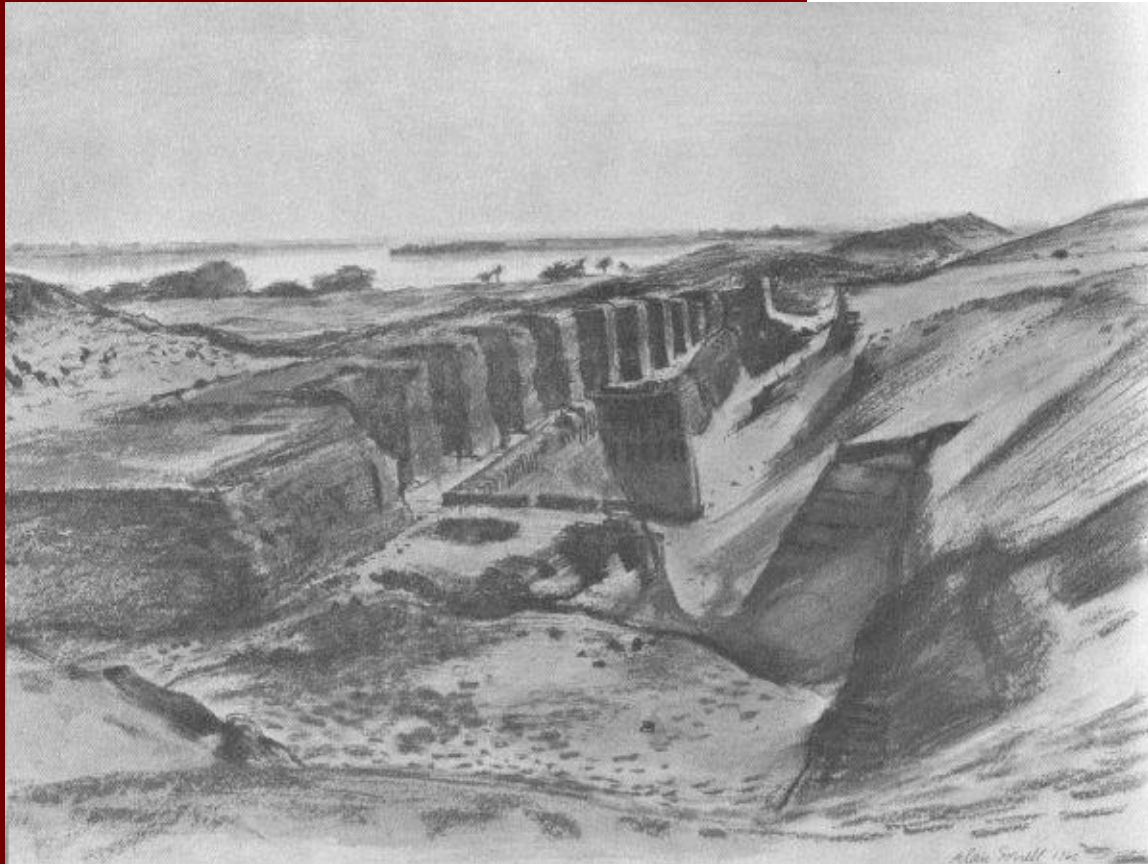
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- ❑ Rain in the highlands of Ethiopia leads to annual Nile flood
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- ❑ Water kept back in channels for irrigation throughout the year → shaduf

Channels and shaduf

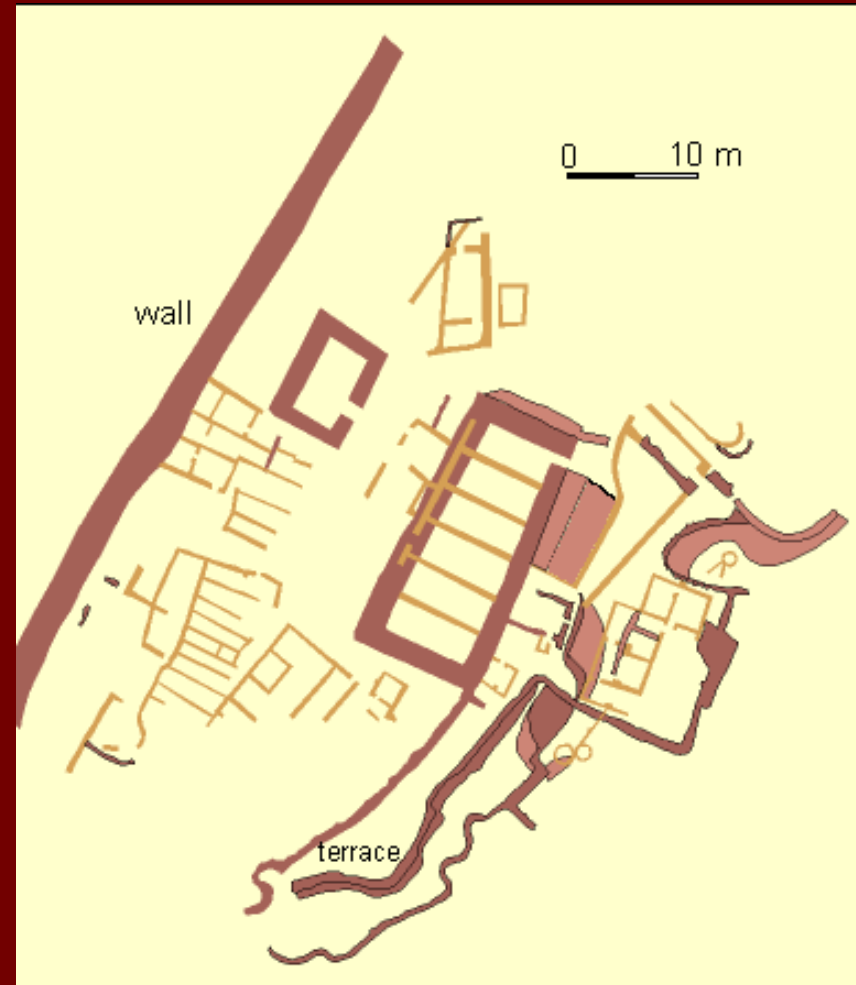


Middle Kingdom Fortresses – the Nile as strategic point

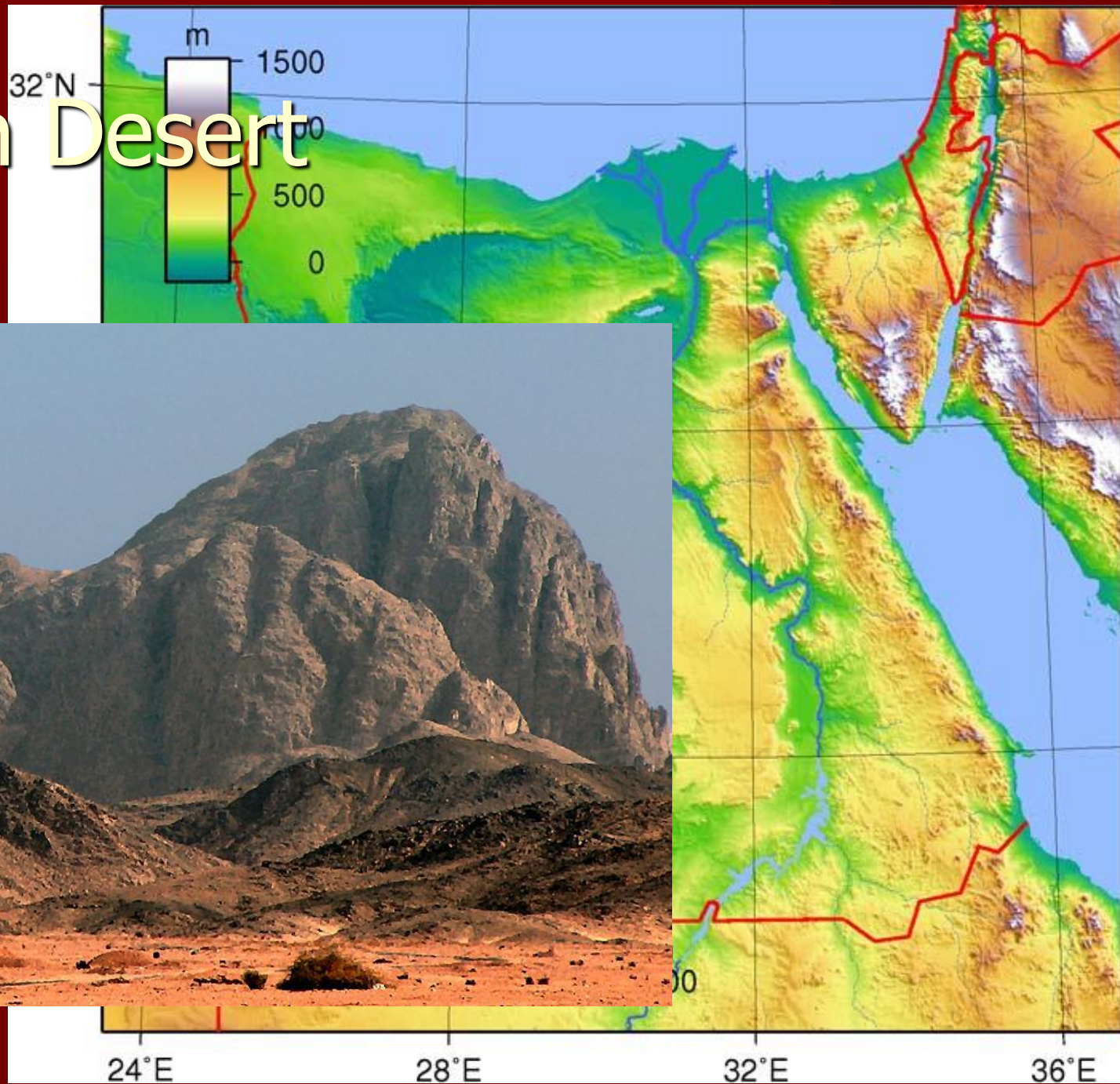
- ❑ near the Second Cataract, built at Buhen, Kor, Dorginarti, Mirgissa, Dabenarti, Askut, Shelfak, Uronarti, Semna, Semna South and Kumma
- ❑ mainly sited on West Bank of the Nile or on islands by cataracts.
- ❑ Fortresses founded by Senusret I and Senusret II, but majority built by Senusret III
- ❑ Papyrus dispatches: report slightest movements within the area, one lists 13 fortresses between Elephantine (Aswan) and Semna
- ❑ 7 located along the Second Cataract in strategic positions, all were built with thick mud-brick walls
- ❑ big enough to be self-sufficient and to house all the necessary personnel

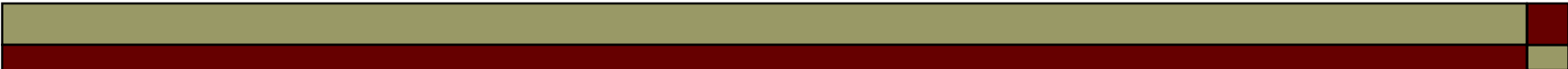


Buhen : plan, crucibles (metal work), seal impressions



Eastern Desert



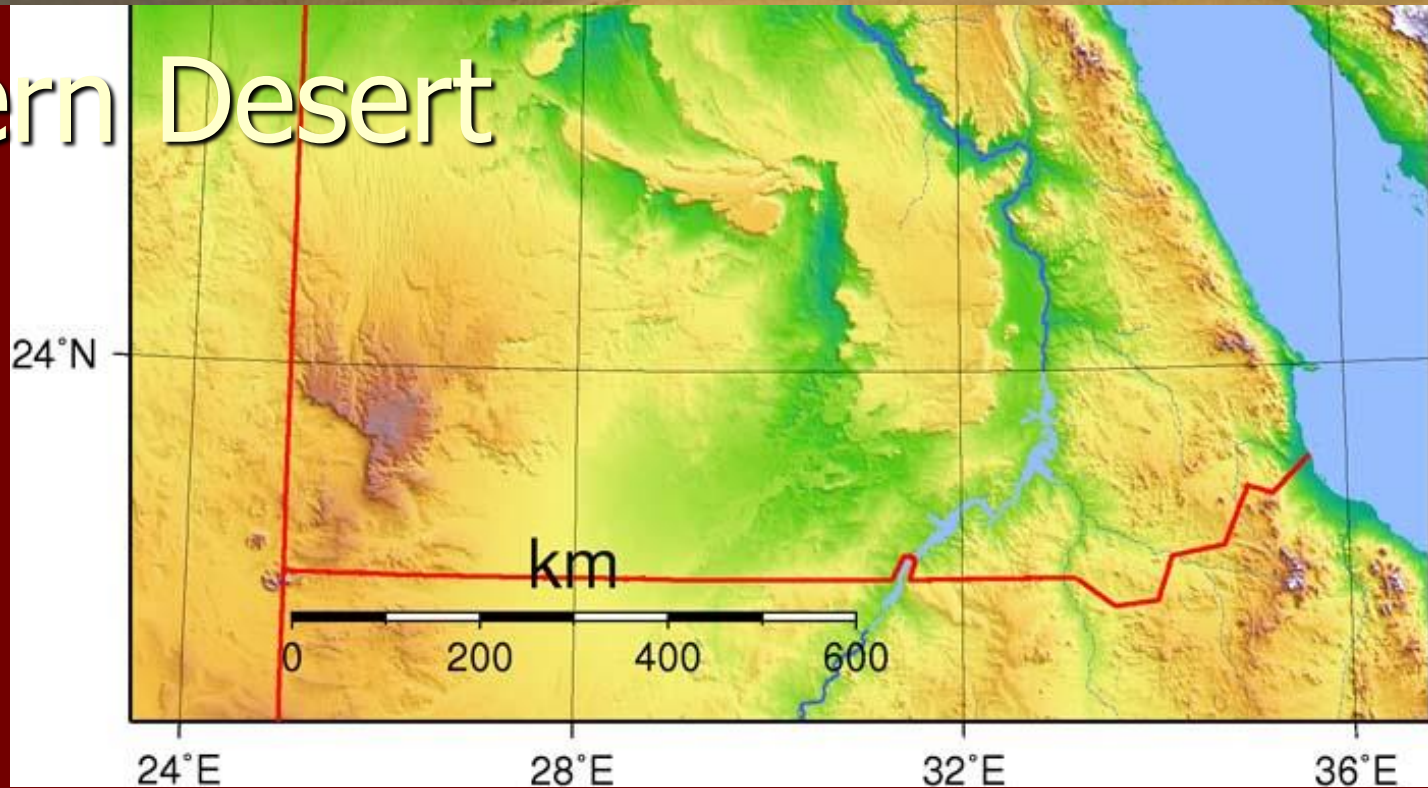


Eastern Desert (Arabian Desert)

- ❑ Eastern Desert, Arabic Al-Saḥrā' Al-Sharqiyyah
- ❑ covers an area of about 85,690 square miles (221,940 square km)
- ❑ consists of a rolling sandy highland that rises abruptly from the Nile valley and merges some 50 to 85 miles (80 to 137 km) east of the Nile into the Red Sea Hills
- ❑ desert receives occasional rainfall and is extensively dissected by wadis (dry beds of seasonal streams)
- ❑ Nomadic desert dwellers live by herding and trading. The Eastern Desert, relatively isolated from the rest of Egypt
- ❑ rich in natural resources including Egypt's major oil fields (located both onshore and offshore in the Gulf of Suez) and deposits of phosphate, asbestos, manganese, uranium, and gold.



Western Desert



Western Desert Oasis

