

Chapter 3: Early African Societies and the Bantu Migrations

Section 1: Early Agriculture in Africa

- Egypt was the most prominent of early African societies
 - City-based society of ancient Africa
- Climate Change and the Development of Agriculture in Africa
 - African agriculture emerged in the context of gradual but momentous changes in climatic conditions.
 - 1000 BCE after ice age, desert became habitable
 - Many human inhabitants of the region lived by hunting wild cattle, grains, and fish.
- After 7500 BCE : Established permanent settlements.
- Sudanic agriculture became increasingly diverse over the following centuries:
 - Sheep & Goats arrived from southwest Asia (After 7000 BCE)
 - Gourds, watermelons, and cotton cultivated (After 6500 BCE)
- Agriculture productivity enabled Sudanic people to organized small-scale states
 - Formed small monarchies ruled by kings.
 - Buried their deceased kings ; routinely executed a group of royal servants and entombed them along w/ the king to meet their masters in another life.
- Religious beliefs reflected Agriculture society

Egypt and Nubis: Gift of the Nile

- Agriculture transformed the Nile river valley
 - because of large flood plain, Egypt had an advantage over Nubians when it came to agriculture
- Early Agriculture In the Nile Valley
 - 10,000 B.C.E, migrants from Northern Ethiopia Nile to Egypt and Nubia and introduced wild grain collecting, enhancing the lands agriculture even more.
 - Coasts of the Nile largely inhabited with agricultural societies
- Political Organization
- Dense population brought need for public affairs organization
- Egypt and Nubia created states and recognize official authority. They were small Kingdoms, which organized public life.
- Many villages down the Nile copied this way of life.
- By 4000 B.C.E, societies along the Nile traded with one another often, and worked together to build irrigation systems.
- The Unification of Egypt
 - Menes
 - 3000 BCE:
 - Focused on agriculture and demographic advantages

- Forged the territory between the Nile delta and the river's first cataract into a unified kingdom larger and more powerful than other Nile State
- 3100 BCE :
 - Egypt came to rule.
 - Menes :
 - An ambitious minor official from southern Egypt
 - Rose to power and extended his authority north and into the delta.
 - Founded the City of Memphis
 - Served as Capital, political and cultural center for Menes
 - Build a centralized state ruled by the pharaoh
 - Pharaoh's known to be living gods, owners and absolute rulers of the land
 - 2600 BCE:
 - Pharaohs took royal servants with them to the grave much like Sudan people.
 - Horus:
 - The sky God.
 - Represented with a Hawk or Falcon
 - The Archaic Period and the Old Kingdom
 - Pharaoh power at its greatest during first millennium of Egyptian history-
 - Archaic Period (3100-2660 B.C.E), Old Kingdom (2660-2160 B.C.E)
 - Massive pyramids constructed during Old Kingdom as royal tombs.
 - Hundreds of painters, architects, engineers, craftsmen and artists contributed to the building of the pyramids.
 - Relations Between Nubia and Egypt
 - Fortunes of Egypt and Nubia remained close
 - Egyptians had strong interest in Nubia for commercial and political reasons.
 - Nubia wanted to protect themselves against powerful Egypt

Section 2: The Formation Of Complex Societies And Sophisticated Cultural Traditions

- Because of the dense populations, cities began to develop specialized labor in the early agricultural societies of Africa.
- This was mostly prominent in the productive economy of Egypt, but also noticeable in other societies around the Nile River Valley.
- The Nile river valley was a place of advanced cultural development.
- Writing system appeared in both Egypt and Nubia, writing became a medium of expression, preserving governmental record and commercing informations.

The Emergence of Cities and Stratified Societies:

Chapter 3

- Nile river valley clustered mostly agricultural villages that trade with other populations along the river.
- Conqueror Menes founded Memphis around 3100 B.C.E.
- Heliopolis means “City of the Sun.”
- Heliopolis was the headquarters of a sun cult near Memphis, and a principal cultural center of Egypt.

Cities of the Nile Valley: Nubia

- Although not as well known as Egypt, evidence proves they were just as powerful and prosperous.
- Most prominent cities include Kerma, Napata, and Meroe.
- Kerma, the capital of Kush, ruled both river overland routes between Egypt to the north and Sudanic regions in the south.
- In approximately the 10th century B.C.E., Napata emerged as the new political center of Nubia after Egypt and Kush contended with each other for power in Nubia.
- Meroe presided over the prosperous kingdom of Kush because of its participation in the Nile trade networks.

Social Classes:

- Peasants and slaves hard work made the complex agricultural society possible.
- Unlike in Mesopotamia, in Egypt people who are born in lower social class can climb up the ladder through government service.
- In Nubia, the upper class would often have fancier tombs, they would have golds, jewelries, and even servant who would serve them in the after life.
- Commoners will still have tomb but would be much simpler, with personal goods.

Patriarchal Society:

- Egypt and Nubia both contained patriarchal societies that secured authority in their men.
- Lower class women routinely performed domestic work including growing vegetables, baking, spinning thread, etc while lower class men worked as agricultural laborers, potters, carpenters, etc
- Women of the elite class oversaw domestic work of household servants elite men enjoyed comfortable positions as scribes or government officials

Women's Influence in Egypt and Nubia:

- In Egypt, women are often served as regents for young rulers.
- Queen Hatshepsut was a woman who took power as pharaoh herself, reigned from 1473-1458 B.C.E.
- In Nubia, there are evident of many women rulers in the kingdom of Kush, some ruled in their own right, others reigned with male kings.
- Some women gained power as priestesses in religious cults.

- Small amount of women obtained formal education and work as scribe who prepare documents for the government and private parties.

Economic Specialization and Trade:

- Bronze metallurgy spread to both Egypt and Nubia.
- Development of transportation and technologies expanded trade networks and linked the Nile valley to other parts of the world.

Bronze Metallurgy:

- Production of bronze flourished in Mesopotamia in 3000 B.C.E.
- Hyksos relied on bronze weapons, Egyptians later take over the skill.

Transportation:

- The Nile River greatly provided transportation as the Egyptians often traveled up and down the river as the river flows north, making it easy for boats to ride the current from Upper and Lower Egypt by raising a sail.
- Soon after 3000 BCE Egyptians sailed beyond the Nile into the Mediterranean.
- By 2000 BCE they had roughly explored the waters of the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the western portion of the Arabian Sea.
- Egyptians also relied on Mesopotamian style wheeled vehicles and caravans for transport

Iron Metallurgy:

- Hittites developed techniques for forging iron around 1300 B.C.E.
- Trace of Iron production date from about 900 B.C.E.
- Meroe became a site of large-scale iron production.

Trade Networks:

- Exchange of goods between the Egyptians and the Nubians started around 4000 B.C.E.
- Egyptians would exchange things like gemstones, golds and slaves for pottery, wine and honey.
- They would also import cedar logs because Egypt has few trees and the Pharaohs would prize aromatic cedar for their tomb.

Maritime Trade: Egypt and Punt:

- After the establishment of the New Kingdom, Egyptians also traded with the East African land of Punt, (modern day Somalia and Ethiopia) located through the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden
- They imported gold, ebony, ivory, slaves, and cattle
- The specialization of labor and efficient technologies of transportation quickened the economies of complex societies in Egypt

Early Writing in the Nile Valley

Hieroglyphic Writing:

- Early writing appeared in Egypt by 3200 BCE by hieroglyphs, pictographic symbols representing sounds and ideas

- Hieroglyphic writing survives on sheets of papyrus, a paper-like material
- The hot dry climate of Egypt has preserved papyrus texts bearing commercial and administrative records as well as literary and religious texts
- Were quite cumbersome that for everyday affairs they relied on hieratic script, a simplified cursive form of hieroglyphs

Education:

- Education brings handsome rewards in Egypt because being a scribe is easier than any other job.
- Nubians speak their own language but they are highly influenced by the Egyptians.
- Egyptian priests often travel to Nubia to influence them with their culture, their beliefs and their god.

Aten and Monotheism:

- Pharaoh Amenhotep IV who ruled from 1353-1335 B.C.E. changed his name to Akhenaten in order to honor his deity, Aten.
- Akhenaten built a new capital city called Akhetaten, and encouraged the other citizens to worship Aten.
- After Akhenaten's death, the priests restored the cult of Amon-Re.

Mummification:

- Egyptians believed that death was a transition to a new dimension of existence
- Mummification helps explain the Egyptian belief of immortality.
- As it never became a general practice in Egypt, most cults promised to lead individuals of all classes to immortality.

Cult of Osiris:

- According to myths, Osiris' evil brother Seth killed him and scattered his parts throughout the land, but Isis, his wife, found them to give him a proper burial.
- Impressed by her devotion, the gods restored Osiris' life as an immortal and god of the underworld and associated Osiris with the Nile, their growing and dying crops, as well as immortality.
- Egyptians honored him with a cult that held out hope of an eternal award for those who behaved with their high moral standards.
- They believed that following their death, Osiris would weigh their hearts with a feather symbolizing justice, meaning that those with a pure heart would gain immortality while those with a heavy heart did not.

Nubian Religious Beliefs:

- The most prominent Nubian deity was the lion-god Apedemak often depicted with a bow and arrow.
- Sebiumeker, another deity, was the creator god and divine guardian of his human devotees
- Egyptian cults were quite prominent in Nubia, and Egyptian gods, like Amon and Osiris, gathered a sizeable following.
- Nubians often identified Egyptian gods with their own deities, but did not mummify their deceased.

Bantu Migrations and Early Agricultural Societies of Sub-Saharan Africa

- Egyptian and Nubian societies participated in interaction and exchange from which they developed from in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Chapter 3

- The most prominent process unfolding in the sub-Saharan Africa during ancient times was the migration of Bantu speaking peoples and the establishment of agricultural societies in regions where Bantu speakers settled.

The Dynamics of Bantu Expansion:

The Bantu:

- The most influential people in sub-Saharan Africa in the ancient time will be those who speak Bantu language.
- The earliest Bantu speakers settled mostly along the banks of rivers.
- Lived in clan-based villages, with a leader who conducted rituals and represent their community in dealing with neighboring villages.
- Regularly traded with a group of hunter gatherers called the forest people.

Bantu Migrations:

- Slowly spreading south by 3000 B.C.E. after 2000 B.C.E. expanded rapidly toward south and east, adapt hunting, gathering, and fishing skills.
- Bantu migrants placed pressures on the forest people because of the fight over land resource.
- Bantu people used canoes effectively in traveling, the agricultural surpluses made the population of Bantu people increase dramatically.

Iron and Migration:

- After 1000 B.C.E. the pace of Bantu migration accelerated.
- Iron tools helped the Bantu people to expand the land they need quicker.
- The iron weapons gave Bantu people advantage over the fight of land and resource.

Early Agricultural Societies of Sub-Saharan Africa:

- Between 3500 BCE and 1000 BCE southern Kushite herders pushed into parts of East Africa while Sudanese herders moved upper reaches of the Nile River.
- Mande speaking people s who cultivated African rice established communities along the Atlantic estuaries of West Africa while people speaking Niger-Congo languages cultivated from the forest regions of West Africa.

Spread of Agriculture:

- The most significant effect of migration was the establishment of agricultural societies throughout the sub-Saharan Africa.
- 1000 through 500 B.C.E. more vegetables were being cultivated, herding got introduced to the region with sheeps and cattles.
- By late centuries B.C.E. agriculture had reached almost all of sub-Saharan Africa.

Religious Beliefs:

- Both Sudanic and Niger-Congo people held monotheistic beliefs by 5000 BCE
- The Sudanic people held one deity responsible for good and evil while Congo people recognized a single god called Nyamba who created the world and then stepped back and let it function on its own.
- They sent prayers to ancestor spirits to give them good fortune as neglect would bring punishment.
- Individual communities adopted beliefs from their surrounding communities to suit their own which resulted in a lot of cultural mixing.