



**Mzuzu University**  
**Centre for Open and Distance Learning**

# **Early African History**

**Module**

Published by Mzuzu University  
Centre for Open and Distance Learning (CODL)  
P/Bag 201  
Luwinga  
Mzuzu 2  
Malawi

Editor:

Typesetters: Centre for Open and Distance Learning

Designers: Centre for Open and Distance Learning

First Edition: 2020



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## **Acknowledgements**

Mzuzu University wishes to thank Dr Harvey Chidoba Banda and Mr Dennis Mwiba for compiling this practical module.

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## Module Introduction

Early African History is a course that exposes learners to the key developments that characterized the African continent from the eve of hominid evolution up to around the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. This is a period in which the continent experienced massive integration into world affairs and economies. The module has a total of twelve units reasonably organized to allow you understand the history of Africa from the earliest times to around the later part of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century when the continent began experiencing in-flows of other races.

Unit 1 exposes you to an understanding of the meaning of the discipline, types, sources and important study skills to help you easily grasp the content in history. This topic is important because it exposes you not only to concepts and skills in dealing with Early African History, but also to various other skills that will also help you handle other courses in history at a higher level. Unit 2 introduces you to the beginnings of human life on the continent and the stages through which this process took place. You will also be exposed to an understanding of the significance of studying Hominid Evolution. This unit is important because it lays solid foundations for your understanding of the origins of humans who at a later stage became very instrumental in shaping the nature of the African continent within the social, economic and political realms. Apparently, this is what you will go through in units 4 – 9 which essentially provide a descriptive account to the rise of organized community life, migrations and expansions and state formation processes. You will specifically be exposed to a sample of the rise of civilizations, kingdoms and empires as it happened in North, West, East and Central Africa. You will notice that unit 5 provides a highlight of early population movements and expansions in Africa. Some of the groups that migrated and peopled the continent also became quite instrumental in aiding the processes of state formation in East and Central Africa as has been discussed in units 8 and 9. Unit 10 exposes you to the rise of European explorations in Africa and the effects this had on the continent. You will specifically be exposed to a highlight of the social, economic and political developments that were taking place in Europe prior to the 17<sup>th</sup> Century such as the growth of industrialization and the intellectual revolution which eventually had a bearing on migrations and explorations into Africa by the Europeans. More specifically, you will be exposed to a discussion of the Portuguese and the Dutch as they settled in Southern and Eastern Africa and the effects this had on the regions. Units 11 and 12 highlight the rise and growth of pre-colonial long-distance trade in ivory and slaves, respectively. Essentially, you will be exposed to an understanding of the factors that contributed to the rise of such economic developments, organization of the trades, the effects these had on the continent and decline of these economic activities. As you can see, the topics have been arranged in such a way that you are able to appreciate the various engagements that the continent has been into, in the process covering varied dimensions. This in a way reveals to you an important element that the African continent has historically been on the move relative to the various social, economic and political developments, just like other continents across the world.

**Key Words**

This is a list of important new terms and phrases used in the unit. Ensure that you understand their meaning in the context that they are used.

**Learning outcomes**

These are unit objectives. They identify what you are expected to know and understand by the end of the unit. Use them to test your understanding at the end of each unit.

**Activity**

This is a practice activity at the end of each reading text. You have to work out this activity either on the space(s) provided or in a separate notebook. After that, check your response(s) with the answers suggested at the end of each unit.

**Unit Review Questions**

This is a test at the end of each unit. Work out the answers and compare them with the suggested answers at the end of each unit. Do not turn it in for marking.

**Unit summary**

This is a brief account of the main ideas you have read and learnt in the unit. Make sure you understand the unit very well before you move to the next.

**References**

This is a list of books pertaining to information in the unit. This is a useful guide on choosing appropriate reading materials. Make all possible efforts to supplement information in the unit by additional reading from this list. This will enrich your content of the course.

**Module Examination**

This is a sample of the end of module examination. Make sure you are familiar with the format of the examination.

# Unit 1: Nature of History

## Introduction

This unit introduces you to history as a discipline of study. As a history student, it is important that you familiarize yourself with the meaning of history, its uses, types and sources and the study skills with which you should employ in order to get the most from this discipline. In this unit therefore, you will learn about the meaning of history, its uses, types, sources to use when writing history and the skills to use in order to study the discipline. These skills are important in the sense that they help you to organize and write essays in history with relative ease and success.

## Key words

- Archaeology, autobiography, biography, anthropology

## Prerequisite knowledge

By now, you already have knowledge of what history is, its types and sources used from your learning experiences at Junior Level in Secondary School.

## Time allowed

4 hours

## Unit objectives

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

discuss the meaning of history

examine the uses of history

explain the types of history

assess the different sources of history

discuss the study skills in History

### 1.1 The meaning of history

History is one of a series of discourses about the world – meaning that it is one of the subjects that helps us to understand the physical stuff on which we live (the world). These discourses give meaning to what this world is all about. That is why we have such subjects like Geography, Biology and Agriculture because they all help us to understand the world we live in. So, like other subjects, this discourse (History) also assists us to understand the world we live in. In several occasions, humans have raised series of questions about this world such as where did it start from? Who were the first humans? How did they survive at the beginning? etc. History therefore helps us to identify answers regarding such questions that humans have relative to the world. It can therefore be concluded that history is a discourse whose object is the past. We should understand at this moment that History as a discourse is from what it endeavors to explain – in this case the past. In other words, the past and history are different things. History therefore should not be considered as the past. This is because the same object of enquiry can be read differently

and interpreted differently by various discursive groups e.g. geographers, sociologists, historians etc. All these groups look at the past with a difference.

History is a discourse about the past. We should understand it from this perspective: history and the past are two different items. The past occurs and it goes. When this happens, it can only be brought back by historians in different forms of media such as books, articles, documentaries etc. not as actual events. It is this work when you study history that you will be concerned with – i.e. interacting with different sources in order for you to establish what the past was all about.

If you start a course in Early African History for instance, we are not saying you will go to that period regarding the early times of Africa or you will go to Africa if you are not within the continent but you will be tasked to go to the library and many other sources with which you can build a description and analysis of the past. In this regard therefore, the past becomes an important aspect/object for a historian. It is from this past that a historian constructs the knowledge. Just like scientists use chemicals and other materials to come up with the results, historians use the past in order to come up with history. So in this case, the past is simply used as an object of study and this is why we define history as a discourse or study whose object of enquiry is the past.

In defining Early African History therefore using the above model, it can be explained that it is a discourse whose object of enquiry is Africa's early past beginning from the period of human evolution to the eighteenth century when Europe began to make increased contacts with the continent. What is important to note is that this discourse/study is obtained from different sources which ought to be acknowledged as one writes and presents his/her materials. Any historical writing involves the use of different sources which if properly used will enable a scholar to come up with the best writing.

Now, since human experiences are just too varied to be understood fully, historians have divided history into four main periods. These are:

From time immemorial to about 4000BC. This is called *Pre-history*

4000BC-500AD. This is called *Ancient history*

500AD-about 1500AD. This is called *Medieval history*

1500AD-present times. This is called *Modern history*

### **Learner Activity 1**

In pairs, you need to discuss what is meant by the term history

## **1.2 Types of History**

### **1. Political History**

It is a discipline that studies specific sets of power relations from within the context of social policy issues, classes and how this contributed towards social order in particular



territories. This type of history endeavors to understand the organizational aspects of societies and how this affected their social, economic and political development

## **2. Social History**

This is a branch of history that began around the 1970s in order to respond to the shortfalls that had been noted in mainstream history whose major concentration was on studying the achievements and contributions of great people – men and women in history. Mainstream history was being criticized during this particular period for ignoring the role of other people towards the making of history more particularly men and women whose voices were not as much considered influential. Social History therefore is a branch of history that aims at understanding the contributions of ordinary people towards particular historical events. These ordinary people include: women, the youths and children, workers, peasants etc. Social history therefore endeavors to understand relations between and amongst the different social classes towards particular historical events.

## **3. Economic History**

Economic History is a sub discipline of history that studies world economies by particularly reflecting on the social, economic and political forces that have periodically influenced the status of these. It is a discipline that draws its content from material foundations of a given society. This particularly relates to how people in a particular society made their living, produced and distributed different resources such as food and other goods.

## **4. Environmental History**

Environmental History is a sub discipline of history whose focus is meant at examining ways in which the environment has been affected by forces in the communities and ways in which it has affected these communities. The discipline particularly seeks to examine ways in which the environment affected society and how societies have affected environmental resources.

### **Learner Activity3**

Read through the content on types of History in this module as well as other sources. After reading, discuss the different types of History.

### **1.3 Sources in History**

Basically, historical sources fall into two categories as follows:

#### **1. Primary Sources**

These are materials produced by people or groups who were directly involved in the events or topic under consideration either as participants or witnesses.

## **Types of Primary Sources**

### **i) Primary Written Sources**

These are sources produced by people or groups who were directly involved in the events or topic under consideration and decided to put the memories about this event into writing. Examples of such sources would include: eye witness accounts like letters, diaries, newspapers, magazine accounts/articles, speeches, autobiographies, census data, birth and death registers. One area which has greatly benefited from such sources is West Africa due to the interactions it had with the Muslim world thereby exposing it to high literacy levels. The historians of the ancient Mediterranean world, of the medieval Islamic civilization, took time to write a lot about this world, and for them this extended across the Sahara to 'Ethiopia' or the Bilad al-Sudan, down the Red Sea to the Horn of Africa, and down the Indian Ocean coast to the limits of monsoon navigation. That to them constituted the world. The ancient authors' information was scanty and fitful, especially in relation to West Africa. Herodotus and some others tell us little more than the occasional journeys or raids across the Sahara, or of maritime tentative down the Atlantic coast, and the authenticity of some of these accounts is often the subject of lively dispute among modern scholars. The Arabic authors have equally been very helpful in the reconstruction of the history of West Africa particularly in relation to the history of the adoption of the camel by the Saharan peoples and how this facilitated the establishment of regular commerce with West Africa and the settlement of North African traders in the major towns of the Western Sudan. Thus the writing of men like al Masudi (d. c. A. D. 950), al-Bakri (1029-94), al-Idrisi (1154), Yacut (c. 1200), Abu al-Fida (1273-1331), al-Umari (1301-49), Ibn Battuta (1304-69) and al Hassan ibn Muhammad (known to the west as Leo Africanus, c. 1494-1552), are of major importance for the reconstruction of African history of the period between about the ninth and the fifteenth centuries, especially the history of the western and central Sudan. Some of these writings were preserved in diaries and this is why we categorize them within the primary sources. Such writings have taken the form of diaries, memos, letters etc. For other parts of Africa where literacy came relatively at a later stage in history, there is greater reliance on usage of primary non-written sources and oral sources

### **ii) Primary non-written accounts**

These are sources that have been preserved in form of coins, works of art, films, recordings and archaeological remains. Archaeological sources mainly refer to the remains of the past that scientists use to determine the history of a particular society. In most societies of the world, there were no written records for the earliest period of the past known as Pre-historic. In order for us to find out about this period in the past, we rely on archaeology. Archaeology therefore is the study of ancient remains. These could be bone fragments, broken pottery, tools and implements. These remains are called artifacts. Archaeologists dig and study these artifacts to come up with a picture or idea of how people might have looked like and what kind of activities they might have been engaged in. These archeologists use the carbon 14 dating method to determine the age of past remains.

### **Advantages of archeological sources**

- Archaeological sources provide firsthand information about the past.
- They provide dates of some of the events

### **Disadvantages of archeological sources**

- Archaeology requires expert labour hence it is quite expensive.
- No information can be obtained about the non-material culture of people such as language, dances, folklore and systems of government.

### **iii) Oral Sources**

These are accounts provided by a person or people who directly experienced a particular historical event through word of mouth. These usually take the form of stories, narratives, folk tales, songs and poems. By recording and checking the words of informants, historians can reconstruct the past. The collection and use of oral sources in Africa by professional historians began in the 1950s. Roland Oliver who was Professor of African History at London University had embarked on a study of European missions in East Africa with an examination of dynastic traditions in Uganda. It was out of this fund of information that he produced some remarkable accounts about the history of East Africa using oral sources. Likewise, John Fage who once was Professor of African History at Birmingham also began work on oral traditions in northern Ghana, in the former state of Dagomba. He too produced some remarkable accounts about African history using oral tradition. Jan Vansina is one scholar well known for his contributions in African oral history. He was a Belgian scholar with degrees in both medieval history and social anthropology. He had been in the Belgian Congo, recording the oral traditions of the Kuba people. In 1957 he moved to Rwanda, where he also embarked on another large-scale project for collecting oral tradition. In 1961, Vansina published a methodological treatise which argues that oral tradition is susceptible to criticism by exactly the same canons of judgment which the historian should apply to any historical source. This book, *Oral Tradition*, did a great deal to boost the self-confidence of historians of Africa and provided motivation for African scholars to use oral tradition. It provided a moral charter for the use of oral sources, and in that sense, it helped to foster much research on African history using oral sources. What this means is that Africa is rich in oral sources and we are called upon to utilize this form of data in order to reconstruct Africa's early past.

### **Advantages of oral tradition**

It is a rich source of information where other sources are not available.

### **Disadvantages oral tradition**

1. Some events which took place in the remotest past cannot be remembered. The person who knows the event well may die before sharing the memory to others.
2. Most historians working on African history using oral sources face the problem of culture. This gives challenges in terms of interpretations of the sources on the basis of culture and language. The oral historian in Africa really needs some grounding

in the theory of anthropology, and, especially, social anthropology so as to be well grounded in effective data collection using oral sources.

3. Then there is the problem of language. Few historians have been able to dispense entirely with interpreters. The tape-recorder has certainly been a great asset to historians with limited language skills, since it provides a full and accurate record of an interview which can be transcribed and translated at leisure. But it cannot eliminate the dangers of dependence on interpreters, and the historian should at least be able to follow the main drift of an interview.
4. Finally, we must consider the social scope of oral evidence in Africa. The historian must reckon with the irony that in Africa oral traditions are mostly the histories of top people: they are, as it were, the official archives. The fullest oral records are most likely to be kept by the large-scale kingdoms, with special councilors and courtiers to preserve the histories of different political offices and leading families. So, the main emphasis among historians using traditions has been on the history of kings and kingdoms. This was also encouraged by the political incentive of showing that Africans were capable of large-scale government long before the colonial powers arrived. But to concentrate on the royal traditions of the leading kingdoms clearly leads to all kinds of distortions considering that history is not just about the notable people.

#### **iv) Ethnographic Sources**

Ethnographic sources are materials that have been produced through studying people's lives within their communities using a cultural lens. The materials are produced through a focused study of social and cultural aspects of small communities over a considerable amount of time. Usually, the researchers live among the inhabitants with the purpose of understanding their historical roots and culture. It takes many years for these people to get into the culture of the community that they are studying considering that they have to learn their language necessary for socializing with the inhabitants and understanding their daily habits, rituals, norms and actions. Once they are done with their research, they present their findings in form of written or non-written materials such as books, articles, documentaries or recordings. For example, Ian Dicks an Australian man, has lived for over 20 years in Malawi particularly in the Mangochi District of the Eastern region studying the Yao communities in terms of their history, culture and world view. Through his interactions with the communities there he has produced works related to Yao Cultural Practices, language, religion and history. Amongst the notable works he has produced include: *Wisdom of the Yao people published in 2006* and *'An African World View, The Muslim Amacinga Yawo of Southern Malawi published in 2012*. Such sources therefore can be presented either in written form or through oral transmission.

#### **v) Secondary Sources**

These are sources which are produced based on primary sources. Examples of these would include; books, book articles, journal articles etc.

## **Advantages and disadvantages of written sources**

### **Advantages**

- It is easy to trace their origin and locate the time and place of events.
- The information is generally reliable.
- They provide substantial amount of information.
- They can be kept for a longer period.
- They are readily available and can be accessed in many places

### **Disadvantages**

- Some documents could easily be fabricated.
- Some information may be biased. In other words, some discussions lack objectivity due to too much orientation towards particular interests of the authors.
- Language in some documents which are very ancient may be difficult to understand.
- Some sources may be faded due to age and therefore difficult to read.

### **1.4 Significance of studying History**

You have learnt about the meaning of history, types and sources. It is very important at this time to consider the significance of studying history. History like many other disciplines plays an important role in human life. In particular, the study of history can help in the following ways:

- i. It satisfies our curiosity about the past – museum aspect in which we are able to learn about beginnings and developments of the past.
- ii. Allows us to learn about past human experiences from which modern humans are able to draw comparable solutions. In a way therefore, history helps to implant moral values in people. It must be appreciated that history by its nature is about the deeds and misdeeds; courage and wisdom of men and women who lived in the past. These men and women provide a model of what one should be or should not be in society.
- iii. It helps to instill the spirit of patriotism in citizens of a particular country. Through the study of history which is put in the curriculum of schools, people realize their historical roots and how their society has progressed over time. This helps them develop and maintain pride and love for their society thereby enhancing a spirit of ownership for their land.
- iv. History also helps in providing a sense of identity: Through the study of history people come to know who they are. They realise that they are a distinct group of people, different from others. In other words, through the study of history people develop a sense of belonging and feel secure. For example, we know that we are Malawians while others are Zambians or Zimbabweans. Within Malawi, we know that some people are Sena while others are Yao, Tumbuka, Chewa, Ndali, etc. You

will appreciate therefore that indeed a person who does not know his/her past is a person in a drift.

- v. At the level of political organization and structures, much of what the modern world cherishes and values politically has its basis in early African history e.g. kingship based political organizations and systems.
- vi. At the level of religion, most of the religious ideals and concepts were developed and expanded during early African times such as the belief in the afterlife and the supernatural. It will be noticed that ancient people relied so much in such religious beliefs which have been carried over to the modern times.

Having learnt what history is about, its sources and significance it is now time to introduce you to some basic skills of how to compile historical information in essay form.

#### **Learner Activity 4**

Examine the significance of studying early African history in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century AD.

#### **1.5 History essay writing skills**

University studentship is a golden opportunity that exposes you to various skills and general understanding of the world. You will be given a number of courses, practical and theoretical assignments and tasks not to punish you but to ensure that you get out of the system a fully-fledged individual with the capacity to transform the world which you will be serving. You will therefore realize that the process of teaching and learning at university level is solely based on the premise that the sky is the limit when it comes to the exploration of any given subject including history. This section has been designed to equip you with skills which you can use in order to get the most out of your reading in history. You will discover that like other disciplines in the university, history demands you to read extensively if you are to understand the various issues featured in the curriculum. For this reason, the library should be considered as a laboratory for any history student pursuing a particular topic of study. Let us all remember that history is a discourse whose object is the 'past'. You are therefore required to delve into various sources some of which are in the library if indeed you are to come up with such a discourse. It is therefore important that you should be familiar with the collection that is in the library. Once you have located and checked out the book or article, tackle the reading bearing in mind the following:

1. Always keep focused in terms of the topic or theme which you want to understand
2. Before reading anything from a particular source, it is important that you take note of the particulars of that book or source e.g., author details, title, place of publication, publisher and year of publication etc.
3. Proceed to read according to the sub themes as highlighted or as noted. Ensure that you take one theme at a time. For example, if the piece you are reading is on the 'Rise of the Ancient Egyptian Civilization, it may well be that the work concerned is organized around four sub themes i.e., the rise of the ancient kingdom,

- organization of the kingdom, growth and expansion and its impact on neighboring groups. Read through the passages without pausing from beginning to the end
4. Summarize the key points noted in the course of your reading and put these down in your note pad.
  5. You should then harmonize your notes with those obtained during the course of the lecture. In this way, you will have a rich reading material.

### **1.5.1 Practical notes on writing history essays**

These notes are basically provided to you as general guidelines on how Essay Assignments in History should be tackled and handled. The guidelines under consideration therefore need to be mastered and internalized. It is by acting on these suggestions on a regular basis that you will be able to come up with an academic piece of writing that is up to academic standards. You should therefore follow this, so that in the final analysis the guidelines become part of your academic experiences. In approaching any essay assignment, the following steps should be observed:

1. Always begin by reading the essay question that has been set carefully, to make sure you understand it and are able to interpret its demands accurately and comprehensively. You should pay particular attention to key or operational terms such as 'examine', 'assess', 'evaluate', 'discuss', etc. You should ask yourself what particularly the words in question mean or connote. If necessary, you should consult a dictionary to help you understand and determine the exact meaning of such words. You should gauge through the scope of the question so that you are able to determine its parameters (i.e. how far you are supposed to go), taking into consideration how many parts there are to the question, the depth or extent of each part etc.
2. You should note that an Essay should ideally be made up of three parts, viz: an Introduction, a Main Body, and a Conclusion.

#### **a. Introduction:**

This is the opening paragraph which should state as clearly as possible what is being aimed at in the exercise and the steps through which it is to be accomplished. In other words, the argument should reflect a clear argument of the position you as an author seeks to undertake and in brief how that is to be undertaken and accomplished. You should avoid the use of personal expressions such as pronouns like 'I', 'We', etc. Doing so would be personalizing the issues which in academics is a betrayal of other people's contributions. Yes, in as much as that is your personal effort and contribution, you should always bear in mind that you have also relied on a great deal of other people's works. It is therefore important that instead of you saying 'I argue', you should say 'the essay argues or explains etc.'. This is a more honorable approach to historical writing. In the same vein, you should at all cost not use future tenses such as 'this essay will discuss or this essay will provide etc. This is rather a vague form of presentation because in writing you don't project for the future but you are arguing, explaining, discussing etc at the point of writing

and it remains so even in the times to come, your paper will still be presenting the issues in present form and not in the past or future. Even if the author dies! At the same time you should endeavor to put some kind of framework on how the work is to be accomplished in the actual presentation of the discussion. At this point you should provide a simple outline or structure in the introduction on how you intend to write the overall essay in a bid to meet the argument/objective of the essay.

**b. Main Body:**

This is the central part (the trunk) of the essay, in which the main issues covered are taken up one by one, consecutively or sequentially, and discussed in a more comprehensive and connected way. It is in this area that you shade more light on the argument that you put forward in the introduction. You should ensure that each paragraph that you reflect in the main body addresses the argument as provided for in the introduction. It is always important that issues that you discuss in the main body have a context which should set the basis of understanding. You should therefore avoid picking short statements from books and incorporate them in the main body which in a way are confusing and fail to address the question. This is why it is important that every issue that you explain should demonstrate first and foremost your personal understanding of issues and reflection. Always aim at communicating when discussing issues in the main body. This therefore calls you to use the language that should make your readers understand what you intend to communicate. Avoid the use of bombastic words and terminologies, high sounding words or phrases whose meaning might be obscure or long, convoluted sentences whose flow might be problematic and confusing to the readers. You should always remember that you are writing a History Essay and not a literary piece. You should ensure that every discussion that you raise has been supported by relevant examples and evidence through use of citations or referencing.

**c. Conclusion:**

This is the closing part of the essay where the main findings or revelations in the essay are highlighted. Attention should be drawn to the gaps that could not be filled or problems that could not be resolved. In simple expressions, the introduction should feature the 'take home message'. It should reflect what you deem to be very important points worth noting by the readers that has come out of your essay. You should always remember that some people might be too busy to go through your entire work due to commitments or others might find it difficult to follow the key issues and so they may decide to check what you have reflected in the conclusion as key issues. This is where the conclusion becomes an important part in academic writing. You should ensure that the key issues have been reflected in as clear terms as possible. You should avoid waffling in the conclusion but rather be straight to the point. You should at all costs avoid bringing in new concepts or discussions in the conclusion as this will confuse the readers. You should also avoid citations in the conclusion because much of what is written in the conclusion is as a result of your personal examination, assessment and reflection.



Other than the above, you should also appreciate that there are other general hints which need to be taken into consideration whenever preparing for an academic essay in history. These include but are not limited to the following:

- a. Ensure that before you engage in a final write-up of the essay, you should first make the drafts of the work. During this time, you should constantly ask yourself in what way each paragraph raised contributes to your overall response to the question given to you in the assignment.
- b. When in difficulty at any stage of preparing the essay, do not hesitate to ask for help or advice. After all, this is what your lecturers are there for. They are paid to mentor you and to see to it that you improve in your work and effort. You should therefore not be afraid of asking them at any level.
- c. You should endeavor to present your work in a nicely packaged document. The truth is that a neat and carefully packaged essay will always be more favorably treated than that which is untidy. If you are typing using modern computers and type writers, you should ensure that the formatting of the overall essay has been skillfully done.
- d. You should always be consistent in your spelling of words and phrases. You cannot for instance change from 'Moderniser of Egypt' to 'Modernizer of Egypt' or 'recognize' to 'recognise' within the same essay. This shows that you are not familiar of what you are presenting.
- e. You are free to consult other members of the class about how to tackle the assignment but PLEASE do not copy from what they have established. It is your own effort that counts! You should always read through your essay before submitting it for grading. This affords you an opportunity to correct errors of facts and language that invariably creep in at the writing stage. You can as well give your work to some students who are doing language studies at a higher level to have them check the work for you!

Another important aspect to note in historical writing is the need to cite and reference the sources that you have used. Any historical writing involves the use of different sources which if properly used will enable any scholar to come up with the best writing. You have already gone through some of the important sources that you can use to come up with a history essay or indeed material.

At this level, it is important that you should familiarize yourselves with the value of acknowledging every source that you will use in your essay writing.

### **Learner Activity 5**

Suggest the key reasons why referencing is important in historical research and writing?

#### **1.5.2 Why should you cite/reference the sources used?**

The following are the main reasons why historians and students of history must properly cite their sources:

- i. Firstly, referencing upholds the value of Intellectual property which ought to be safeguarded at all costs. It should be realized that when one cites other people's works, he/she gives credit to the historians who compiled, analyzed and documented the information. This exercise also demonstrates an understanding that history is not "just the facts" but is about particular historians' interpretations of the past. Failure to do so, will lead one to commit an academic offense usually known as plagiarism.
- ii. Secondly, citation and referencing leads to accuracy. When one cites, he/she shows the readers that he/she consulted the experts in the field and have represented their findings properly. The information in a citation allows readers to look at the sources and judge how well one has used them. In a lay person's language, referencing gives confidence to the readers that what they read is not simply a cooked-up document but rather one that has been brought forward as a result of meticulous research and analysis of the sources.
- iii. Referencing also helps the readers to follow up and read more on the cited author's arguments. This therefore is important because it assists the readers to deepen their understanding on the issues that one is raising in the paper.

### **1.5.3 Citation and Referencing come in different formats as follows:**

#### **a. Footnotes**

Footnotes by definition are notes placed at the bottom of the page. They are presented to show the reader where one found the arguments and evidence that shaped one's analysis and presentation in an essay, book or chapter in a book. In this case, footnotes bare citations themselves and they are a key part of one's argumentation. Write-ups without footnotes or inadequate footnotes do not meet the basic requirements of scholarship and will not receive a passing grade. Footnotes place references at the bottom of the page and a footnote number is inserted in the text at the end of the sentence that needs a source citation.

### **1.6 What should be footnoted?**

- i. Facts that are not widely known; For example, you do not need to cite a statement that says 'Malawi gained her independence in 1964'. Such a statement is widely known and it is not important to cite it. However., you can cite the specific factors that contributed towards the gaining of independence in Malawi because these are not widely known.
- ii. Statistics should always be footnoted e.g. percentages, population figures etc.
- iii. Ideas or argument that are not your own
- iv. Direct quotations from books or other sources

### **1.7 Tips to remember when footnoting**

- i. Footnotes are always placed at the bottom of each page
- ii. Footnote number normally goes at the end of the sentence

- iii. There should be not more than one footnote for any given sentence but you can put references for more than one piece of information into the same footnote
- iv. Footnotes are numbered consecutively from the beginning to the end of the essay
- v. Footnotes are single spaced and separated from each other by a single line 6.
- vi. Each footnote is a new sentence and therefore begins with a capital letter
- vii. Each footnote ends with a full stop

### **1.7.1 Order of presentation of footnotes**

Enter the details of your source in the following order: Author details (First Name, Surname), Title of the work (underlined or italicized), in brackets – Place of publication, publishing company and year of publication; page number. This arrangement is applicable to published books.

#### **Example**

John Illife, Africans, *The History of a Continent*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 18-36

If a source appears for the second or more times, simply include; the author details, title of the work and page number. You may even decide to present a shortened version of the title.

### **1.7.2 Footnoting a Journal**

Follow the same steps like for the book but for the details include: The Author details, full title of the article in single quotation marks. You should avoid putting it in italics or underlining; Title of the Journal (this should be underlined or italicized), volume and issue number, month/year in parenthesis, relevant page numbers

#### **Example:**

Judith Keene, 'The Word Makes Man', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, Vol. 47, No. 3, September, 2001, pp. 16-19

### **1.7.3 Footnoting an Edited Book**

An Edited Book is a collection of chapters bound in a single published document. When citing, you should not begin with the details of the editor of that book but rather the details of the author of the article or book chapter. The rest of the information is arranged in the same way as an ordinary book as indicated above.

#### **Example:**

Robertson, C., Invisible Workers: African Women and the Problem of the Self Employed in Labor History', in Gutkind, P., (ed), *Third World Workers: Comparative International Labour Studies*, (New York: E.J. Brill, 1988), pp. 125-140

### **1.7.4 Writing a Bibliography**

A bibliography is a list of references that one has used in a particular write up such as an essay, an article published in a book or indeed a book. Bibliographies should generally appear as a list at the end of a book or article or essay. They may show what works the author used in writing the article or book, or they may list works that a reader might find useful. The bibliography is generally organized around the following considerations.

- i. Arrangement is usually in alphabetical order through using surnames of the authors
- ii. No numbering is allowed in the presentation of the bibliography
- iii. The list should always appear at the end of one's work

It is a must that you present a list of references at the end of your essay or indeed an article or book.

### **Unit summary**

In conclusion, you have learnt a number of issues pertaining to the discipline of history which have included the definition of the discipline, types, sources and writing skills. History as observed should be understood as one of the subjects that discourses about the world in which we live in. Specifically, it has been revealed through this unit that history is a discourse whose object is the past. The role of any historian therefore is to create history by using the past as an object of study. You have noted that there are different types of history which in essence tackle varied sectors such as politics, the economy, and the environment. It should be appreciated therefore that history deals with all sectors of human life and should therefore be understood as a discipline which does provide solutions to various dimensions of human life. Through this unit, you have also been exposed to the different sources of history and the skills with which you can use in order to understand and write history. As you have rightly experienced, history does not therefore only offer you with high level content on historical issues but you also benefit enormously from the skills of writing, public speaking, debates and analytical skills.

### **Unit Review Test**

1. Examine the significance of studying History in Malawian schools?
2. Assess the different sources that can be used towards the construction of the early history of Africa.
3. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of primary written sources in the reconstruction of Africa's early past.
4. Discuss the importance of referencing in historical writing.
5. What steps should be followed when referencing?

### **Answers to learner activities**

#### **Learner Activity 1**

**In pairs, you need to discuss what is meant by the term history**

This task demands that you should be familiar with the meaning of the term history. In order for you to successfully conceptualize the definition of history, you need to understand that history like other disciplines assists humans to understand the world in which they live in. In this regard therefore, it uses certain elements in order to provide an understanding of the world. In this case therefore, history should be defined as a discourse whose object of study is the past. In essence therefore, historians use the past in order to provide an understanding of the world in the past.

### **Learner Activity 2**

**Read through the content on types of History in this module as well as other sources. After reading, discuss the different types of History.**

This task demands you to be familiar with the different types of history. Your responses therefore should be aligned to the following types and discussions.

#### **Political History**

It is a type of history that studies specific sets of power relations from within the context of social policy issues, classes and how this contributed towards social order in particular territories.

#### **Social History**

Social History is a branch of history that aims at understanding the social relations and contributions of people belonging to different social levels towards particular historical events.

#### **Economic History**

Economic History is a sub discipline of history that studies world economies by focussing on the social, economic and political forces that have periodically influenced the status of these.

#### **Environmental History**

Environmental History is a sub discipline of history whose focus is meant at examining ways in which the environment has been affected by forces in the communities and ways in which it has affected these communities.

### **Learner Activity 3**

**Examine the significance of studying early African history in this 21<sup>st</sup> Century AD.**

1. It satisfies our curiosity about the past History helps to implant moral values in people.
2. It helps to instill the spirit of patriotism in citizens
3. History also helps in providing a sense of identity
4. At the level of political organization and structures, much of what the modern world cherishes and values politically has its basis in early African history
5. At the level of religion, most of the religious ideals and concepts were developed and expanded during early African times

#### **Learner Activity 4**

**Suggest the key reasons why referencing is important in historical research and writing?**

1. referencing upholds the value of Intellectual property
2. leads to accuracy
3. helps the readers to follow up and read more on the cited author's arguments.

#### **References**

Bean, J.C., *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking and Active Learning in the Classroom*, (San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons, 2014)

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Rampolla, M.L., *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*, (New York: Bedford, 2004)

Turabian, Kate, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

## Unit 2: Hominid Evolution in Africa

### Introduction

In unit 1, you learnt, among other things, about the meaning of history, types, sources, significance it has to society and the study skills that you can use in order to study effectively the discipline. You are now able to appreciate that history is an important discipline that helps human societies to advance on the basis of the lessons they draw from the past. This unit introduces you to yet another important topic in history. You will specifically be introduced to the debates surrounding the origins of human beings in Africa and how they spread to other parts of the world. Essentially, it is a unit that will assist you address questions that people often ask regarding the origins of human beings in the world. In a way therefore, this unit exposes you to two perspectives regarding the origins of human beings. These are the religious explanation and the scientific perspective. You will be excited to learn about what each of the two perspectives says about the origins of humans. Specifically, the unit will pay particular attention on the idea of hominid evolution and how these developed to assume human characteristics that eventually peopled the entire world to create historic societies. Hominids (humanlike creatures) are known to have lived on earth millions of years ago. They evolved from the order of animals called primates. You will realise that the hominid evolution occurred during the Pre-historic period. Therefore, historians mainly rely on archaeological evidence to know what happened at that time. It is hoped that after working through this unit, you will appreciate the origins of human beings in Africa and how they spread into other parts of the world. The unit ends with a discussion on the significance of studying hominid evolution in Africa.

### Key words

You will find the following key words or phrases. Make sure that you know their meanings and how they have been used in this unit.

- Artifacts, evolution, hominid, primate

### Prerequisite knowledge

By now, you already have knowledge on versions that explain the origins of humans in the world through bible study and history

### Time allowed

4 Hours

### Unit Objectives

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- assess the debates surrounding the issue of human origins in the world
- explain the term hominid evolution
- identify the stages of the hominid evolution and characteristic features of each stage
- identify some archaeological sites and their findings about the evolution of man
- discuss the significance of studying hominid evolution

## **2.1 Debates on Human Origins**

Modern Human beings as are known today trace their history way back in time. Their origins have been at the centre of debate by both scholars from different fields. Others use religion to explain and understand the origins of humans in the world and yet others employ the scientific perspective. It is with such views that we ought to examine and these should perhaps assist us in piecing together the issues to come up with a comprehensive understanding of human origins in Africa. Ideas about origins of humans and their societies basically fall within two broad categories of 'religious explanations' and the scientific theory of evolution. It is important at this level that we examine each of these theories.

### **2.1.1 The religious perspective**

The religious explanation is basically founded on the concept of belief in the supernatural (God, Allah). It is explained through various religious circles that this world and its creatures were created by the supernatural being including the first humans. The Bible for instance in Genesis 1:1ff states clearly that in the beginning God created the heavens and earth, the various creatures and man and woman (1:26ff). Through this explanation, it becomes clear that God first created the creatures including people before subjecting them to reproduce themselves through the natural reproductive activities. Various other religious beliefs local and international attribute the whole process of creation to the supernatural. In the local creation story of the Chewa for instance, it becomes clear that traditionally the first people were created through the actions of the supernatural at Kapirintiwa in the Central region from whence forth they were able to spread into different parts. Actually, the story states that in the beginning there was *Chiuta* who lived in the sky and below him was the rugged and bare earth. The earth was completely parched and void of life. One day clouds began to gather until they destroyed the heavens. Then suddenly lightening sparked and blazed across the dark sky. Then the sky ripped open and rains began and *Chauta* came in form of a spider. He descended on top of Kapirintiwa Mountain on a silk thread with the first human pair and all the animals ever created. Trees and plants flourished providing food for man and animals who lived together in peace. *Chauta* had told man not to play with sticks for they might create fire but man disobeyed one day and played with the sticks and so created fire which caused a lot of chaos. Wild animals ran away from man and God returned to the sky driven from man's disobedience and recklessness. It is told that as he ascended he instructed that from that time man will die and return to the sky. So that's how the first humans were created and eventually separated themselves from God. There are a lot more similar creation stories across various African traditions and religious. It is therefore important to note that religion has been used to explain the origins of humans on earth.

### **2.1.1 The scientific perspective**

Historians rely primarily on documents and other pieces of evidence to create their pictures of the past. No written records exist for the prehistory of humankind however. In the absence of this, the story of early humanity depends on archaeological and, more recently, biological information, which anthropologists and archaeologists use to



formulate theories about our early past. It is this information which has been so helpful to piece together information and come up with some explanations on the evolution of human beings in Africa. This is what laid the basis of the evolution theory. This perspective was put forward by a distinguished English natural scientist, Charles Darwin. He came up with the theory of Evolution. According to this theory, human beings evolved from the order of primates called hominids, that is, human like creatures which had enlarged brains. The theory of evolution rose out on the basis of Charles Darwin's observations of fossils and various species of plants and animals, as well as his understanding of the gradual and evolutionary change of the planet itself.

## **2.2 Theoretical premises of Darwinian Theory of Evolution**

- a. Darwin first concluded that all species are mutable, that is, they can and do change over time.
- b. All species develop through small changes from those species that went before in a slow process of organic evolution.
- c. The changes occur through the process of natural selection, meaning that those organisms with the most useful characteristics tend to survive and pass those characteristics on to succeeding generations. For instance, in a situation where the resources are becoming scarce such as grass or fruits, animals would have to travel longer distances to access these.
- d. Darwin saw a competition for survival within each species, such that within a local population, an individual with favorable characteristics for that environment—say a sharper beak or a brighter color—has a better chance of reproducing than others. As these traits are passed on from one generation to the next, they become predominant in that population. Those individuals possessing these advantageous characteristics survive and reproduce; those that do not possess them are more likely to perish and eventually to disappear from the population altogether.

His theories actually challenged both contemporary science and religion. Although other biologists had pointed to competition and struggle between different species, Darwin focused on the struggle for survival and competition within a single species. It was this, of course, that accounted for the changing nature of the species. And, although the idea of organic evolution itself was not new, Darwin produced both evidence for such species changes and also the mechanism by which such changes occurred the process of natural selection. In this way of thinking, the human being is not in a position of superiority within the animal world; humans have simply evolved in a different way than others. These were radically new ways of thinking about life (of all kinds) and constituted a genuine scientific revolution in the natural sciences.

### **Learner Activity 1**

Examine the theoretical premises of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and their relation to the concept of human evolution.

### 2.3 Stages in the hominid evolution

This theory therefore as was developed by Charles Darwin and expanded by several other scholars, attributes that humans evolved from ape-like creatures which were quite abundant in Africa and with the passage of time, these creatures eventually assumed the nature of human beings and concentrated themselves in societies. The theory focuses on the following stages of hominid evolution and the development of human societies. Much of the information about human beings in the remotest past has come to us through archaeological work that has been extensively carried out in the eastern part of Africa as well as Southern Africa. These regions of Africa have yielded quite a lot in terms of prehistoric artifacts because the geological conditions have been particularly good for the preservation of ancient remains (fossils). This being the case, much of archaeological work has been done there and evidence has been unearthed which helps us understand early hominids and the ways in which they interacted with the environment. Based on this evidence, the following stages in the evolution of human beings have been put forward:

#### *The age of Dryopithecus (Proconsul)*

This stage developed about 30 million years ago. The *dryopithecus* was an ape-like creature that had four feet and it walked.

#### *Characteristic features*

- i. It had a smaller brain than creatures that followed later.
- ii. Its body was hairy and essentially it behaved like other wild animals.
- iii. Main activities of this creature included hunting and gathering fruits and grains.

Remains about the existence of this creature have been found in many places in Africa such as the Kavirondo gulf area on Rusinga Island around Lake Victoria; Homa Mountain, Napak Mountain, Moroto Mountain all of them in Karamoja in Uganda

#### *The age of Ramapithecus (Kenyapithecus)*

This hominid developed about 12 to 30 million years ago. The primate seldom walked. It had two feet and its main activities included hunting and gathering fruits and grain.

Much evidence about its existence has been found at Orimo, Fort Ternan in Kenya. Other remains have also been found at Tang, Sterkfontein in South Africa.

#### *The Age of Australopithecines*

It has been established through this theory that the earliest hominids existed in Africa as early as three to four million years ago. These creatures were known as Australopithecines and they lived much in East and Southern Africa (Kenya and surrounding regions) and were the first hominids to make simple stone tools. Recent archaeological finds have pushed the origins of these hominids back to between 4 and 6 million years ago, when *Ardepithecus ramidus* and later *Australopithecus africanus* descended from the trees to spend their days walking upright on the ground, which enabled them to exploit an emerging ecology of mixed forest and grassland. The first humanoids appeared in South and East Africa nearly 4 million years ago with *australopithecus afarensis*. From them descended four

other types of australopithecines: *africanus*, *aethiopicus*, *robustus*, and *boisei*. A skull of a six-year-old was discovered by Raymond Dart in 1925 demonstrating the existence of this hominid in this part of Africa.

Amongst these primates, daily life was probably similar to that of modern day chimpanzees, which is organized around foraging, scavenging, and the occasional hunting of small prey. There is no evidence that the early Australopithecines manufactured permanent tools—hence their society is labeled *prehabiline*. Prehabiline society and its episodic culture dominated human life for 3.5 million years.

Hominid life during this time was mainly confined to Africa and yielded a population that numbered only in the thousands or tens of thousands of beings dispersed into small roaming groups. Like modern chimps, they probably modified perishable materials to use as tools (such as sticks to fish termites or leaves to soak up water), and they may have wielded unworked stones for a variety of purposes which has not been established objectively.

### **Characteristics of these hominids**

- a. Their teeth were large and their jaws were adapted for crushing hard food stuffs.
- b. Their guts were large (voluminous), suggesting a diet centered on vegetable matter. Some have argued that the Australopithecines descended from the trees precisely to exploit new, ground-based food sources (protein-rich roots and tubers) that were becoming available on the expanding savannahs.

### *The Age of Homo Habilis*

Australopithecines later became extinct, leaving only one line of their descendants, whom paleoanthropologists designate as *homo habilis* (human and maker of tools). First appearing about 2.5 million years ago, *homo habilis* increased brain capacity to about 650 to 750 cubic centimeters, more than australopithecines at about 530 cubic centimeters (cm<sup>3</sup>) but considerably less than modern humans, which average 1,400 to 1,500 cm<sup>3</sup>. Their legs developed for erect walking and running, freeing their hands for tools.

Their greater intelligence made them more effective at finding a greater variety of and more nutritious foods than had the australopithecines. These foods included tubers, fruit, nuts, bud ends, tender leaves of certain bushes and trees, grass seeds, and a variety of insects, such as grubs, grasshoppers, ants. They relished reptiles, birds, eggs, and small animals. They also scavenged carcasses of large animals killed by the big carnivores.

*Homo habilis* made crude stone artifacts that most of us would not even recognize as tools. Named for the East African Oduvai gorge where they were first discovered, Oldawan tools are pieces of rock that have been sharpened on one side by flaking to create crude choppers and scrapers. These simple tools are associated with the first evidence of patterned human living in the form of centralized butchering sites and indicate a growing

reliance on hunting over gathering. Other remains of this hominid have been found at Nsongezi, Sangabay and Ceilgil River valley in East Africa.

### **Characteristics of *Homo habilis***

- a. Although the height of *Homo habilis* did not differ dramatically from *Australopithecus africanus*, body weight was larger.
- b. their skeletons were more robust
- c. Cranial (brain) capacity averaged about 550 cc suggesting increased mental functioning and organizational ability at the level of cultural and social aspects.

The total population at the time still numbered only in the tens of thousands, all lived in Africa, and there is no evidence of any use of language or symbolic culture.

#### *The Age of Pithecanthropus (Homo Erectus) and the Paleolithic Society*

About 1.5 million years ago there was the appearance of another species and a new technology which signaled the emergence of a new kind of society. The species was *Homo erectus* and the technology was the *Acheulean* tool culture (named after the French village, *Saint Acheul*, where the tools were first found). The progression from *habilis* to *erectus* marked an abrupt and very important shift in human evolution. Although the upper heights of the two species differed relatively little, the size of *Homo erectus* became considerably more uniform (1.3 to 1.5 meters).

### **Characteristics of *Homo Erectus***

- a. Both teeth and guts grew smaller, suggesting the increased nutritional importance of meat.
- b. *Homo erectus* also developed the ability to use fire and the creation of seasonal base camps suggesting the emergence of a nomadic life and society.
- c. There was also an increase in the size of females which was necessary to accommodate the birth of these new creatures with large heads and fat brains, as the progression from *Homo habilis* to *Homo erectus* was accompanied by a doubling of cranial capacity—from about 550 cc to 1,000 cc to 1,100 cc.
- d. Rather than the crude stone choppers of the Oldowan culture, Acheulian Tools now consisted of symmetrically shaped, carefully worked hand axes, cleavers, and knives with sharper and more effective cutting surfaces. This made these tools more efficient for different activities.

A related skull of this hominid was discovered east of Lake Turkana in Kenya in East Africa in 1975. Evidence suggests that the intelligence of *Homo erectus* was still pre-linguistic i.e., could not effectively communicate through the use of organized language. Around 1 million years ago, *Homo erectus* moved out of Africa and occupied the southern portions of Asia and Europe, a move which brought about the first significant growth of the human population. This is evidenced from the remains that have been found across different parts of this hominid such as Africa, South Europe, Asia and China.

### *The Age of Homo sapiens and the Neolithic Society*

Fully modern human beings emerged in Africa somewhere around 150,000 years ago and rapidly migrated outward to occupy all corners of the globe. These have been called *Homo sapiens* (*Wise Human Beings*). reached Europe and Asia around 50,000 years before present (B.P.), Australia by 40,000 B.P., the Arctic by 20,000 B.P., the Americas by 10,000 B.P., etc.

*Homo sapiens* fully populated the entire earth within the space of just 50,000 years. Nonetheless, the appearance of anatomically modern human beings was not initially accompanied by dramatic cultural changes. The crucial period of cultural change seems to have been around 50,000 years ago, in an era that has variously been called “the great leap forward” (Diamond 1992), “the creative revolution” (Tattersall 1998) etc. meaning that there were drastic changes that had happened within a space of a short period. It has been observed that within a short while from this point, human technology underwent rapid changes which had a profound impact on the environment as well.

*Homo sapiens* was by this time able to fashion a host of new and more delicate tools such as: bone and antler, creating hooks, needles, awls, and harpoons. They wove fibers into ropes and clothing; tanned hides for clothing and coverings; created jewelry and other forms of personal adornment; built permanent shelters that not only included hearths, but lamps and kilns as well. They also invented spear throwers, bows, and arrows to allow effective hunting from a distance, thus minimizing risks to personal safety.

### *The Age of Homo sapiens sapiens*

The final stage of human evolution to this period is what is known as modern humans, scientifically termed as *Homo sapiens sapiens* (“wise, wise human being”). They appeared in Africa between 200,000 and 150,000 years ago. Recent evidence indicates that they began to spread outside Africa around 70,000 years ago. By 30,000 B.C., *Homo sapiens sapiens* had replaced the Neanderthals (*Homo sapiens*) who had largely become extinct, and by 10,000 B.C., members of the *Homo sapiens sapiens* species could be found throughout the world. By that time, it was the only human species left.

Products of *Homo sapiens sapiens* in Africa were the Bushmanoid and Negroid races who settled in Eastern and Southern Africa as well as Western, Central and Southern Africa respectively. The Khoikhoi and San people of Central and Southern Africa stand out as good examples of representatives of the *sapiens sapiens*

It can therefore be said with certainty if we are to go by this theory or indeed the theological explanation that all humans today, be they Europeans, Australian Aborigines, Americans or Africans, belong to the same subspecies.

### **Learner activity 2**

Identify and explain the different stages of human evolution.

## **2.4 Key challenges associated with the scientific theory of hominid evolution**

You should be aware that although this theory makes a lot of sense about the evolution of man, it still has gaps or weaknesses that are difficult to comprehend:

- If indeed human beings evolved in this manner, one would expect that their relatives, like chimpanzees, would also have become people by now but they have not.
- This explanation does not reveal the existence of the mystical forces that may have guided the laws of nature.
- The explanation defeats heredity theories that state that people would be born of people and the same goes with the rest of the living organisms.

### **Learner Activity 3**

Assess the major weaknesses of the scientific theory of Evolution.

### **Unit summary**

In this unit, you have learnt about the origins of human beings. You have particularly been exposed to two theoretical attempts that have been advanced to explain the origins of humans in Africa and these are the religious and the scientific theory. As has been observed, the religious theories place much emphasis on the belief in the supernatural forces to have been at the centre of the creation of human beings. You now can appreciate that such attempts to explain the origins of humans cannot be questioned on the basis of belief. You have noted that in several societies there are creation stories that reflect the beginnings of human life and that all of them point to the power of the supernatural. Again, you have been exposed to the scientific theory of evolution which places much emphasis on the evolution of hominids. You have gone through the main stages in the evolution of hominids from the age of Proconsul to that of *homo sapiens sapiens* which represent modern human beings. It is important that you pay particular attention to the key characteristic features that are associated with such hominids at each stage so as to appreciate the level of transformation and changes that humans have gone through. This information will therefore help you understand fully the technological and economic developments of the early people which forms a crucial component of the discussion of the next unit. The unit has ended with a discussion of the challenges that scholars face in their attempts to understand the theoretical frameworks of evolution and the significance this has.

### **Key answers to learner activities**

## **Unit 2: Hominid Evolution in Africa**

### **Learner Activity 1**

**Examine the theoretical premises of Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and their relation to the concept of human evolution.**

This question demands you to be familiar with the specific contents within the theory of evolution as expounded by Charles Darwin in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. You should specifically be familiar with the meaning of evolution and the actual premises that have been highlighted to reach the conclusion that all humans came from hominids. It is expected therefore that you will highlight the following:

1. That all species are mutable, that is, they can and do change over time.
2. That all species develop through small changes from those species that went before in a slow process of organic evolution.
3. That the changes occur through the process of natural selection

### **Learner activity 2**

**Identify and explain the different stages of human evolution.**

This task demands you to be aware that the process of evolution went through different stages and that creatures at each stage were characterized by different features. In your responses therefore, it is expected that you would provide a comprehensive discussion on the following stages along with their characteristic features as they existed.

1. Stage of Dryopithecus (Proconsul)
2. The age of Ramapithecus (Kenya-pithecus)
3. The stage of Australopithecines
4. The stage of Homo Habilis
5. The stage of Pithecanthropus (Homo Erectus)
6. The stage of Homo sapiens
7. The Age of Homo sapiens sapiens

### **Learner Activity 3**

**Assess the major weaknesses of the scientific theory of Evolution.**

This task requires you to be acquainted with a proper understanding of the theory of Human evolution in terms of its shortfalls and weaknesses. It is expected that in your responses, the following should feature:

1. The theory fails to explain the unchanging nature of related species of creatures to which humans are believed to have evolved.
2. The theory fails to reveal the existence of the mystical forces that may have guided the laws of nature.
3. The explanation defeats heredity theories that place birth within creatures of the same species.

### **Unit Review questions**

1. Using the key phases as outlined in the theory of evolution of human beings, is it proper to conclude that modern racial and ethnic demarcations as experienced in different parts of the world are baseless and unjustifiable.
2. Examine the key weaknesses of the theory of Human Evolution.

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# **Unit 3: Technological and Economic Developments of Early People**

## **Introduction**

In the last unit, you saw how human beings evolved, focusing on the biological changes they underwent. These biological changes were accompanied by intellectual changes or improvement in the thinking capacity. This, in turn, stimulated man to develop different technological innovations. In this unit, you will be introduced to the technological and economic developments of the early human beings. You will examine the developments during the Stone Age, the Neolithic Revolution and the Metal Age.

With the increase in population and in the face of receding game and inadequate supply of fruits and vegetables, early man required abundant supply of food. This prompted man to domesticate wild animals and cultivate crops. The resulting industrial complex is historically referred to as the Neolithic Revolution. With time, humans needed superior tools in order to better exploit the environment. This was realized with the discovery and spread of metal working technology.

## **Key words**

You will find the following words or phrases. Make sure that you know their meanings and how they have been used in this unit.

- Oldowan industrial complex, Archeulian industrial complex, Neolithic Revolution, Fertile Crescent, Proponent, School of thought

## **Prerequisite knowledge**

You should have knowledge of secondary school History

## **Time allowed**

6 hours

## **Unit objectives**

By the end of this unit, students should be able to:

- identify the technological changes that took place in the Early, Middle and Late Stone Ages
- explain the socio-economic changes that accompanied each stage.
- describe the origins of the Neolithic Revolution
- explain the impact of the Neolithic Revolution on early societies
- trace the background and development of iron working technology
- explain the impact of the discovery and use of iron working technology on early societies

## **3.1 Stone Age**

The period before the discovery and use of metals is historically referred to as the Stone Age. This is so as stone tools are the dominant technological artifacts that have been

discovered for this period. There may have been other equally important implements. However, because stones are harder, they are the ones that may have survived better and in abundance.

For the sake of historical convenience, historians have divided this period into Early, Middle and Late Stone Ages. Each age is characterised by significant and distinct developments that set it apart from others. However; we have to note that as this was evolutionary, the stages are not clear-cut as regards periodisation. Technology belonging to a subsequent age started to develop while that of a preceding one was still in use. Furthermore, there were some societies that were developing slowly and were using earlier technologies way after others had progressed to other stages.

### **3.2 Early Stone Age**

The Early Stone Age is divided into two parts according to period and level of precision in tool fabrication. These are the Oldowan and the Archeulian industrial complexes.

#### **a) The Oldowan Industrial Complex**

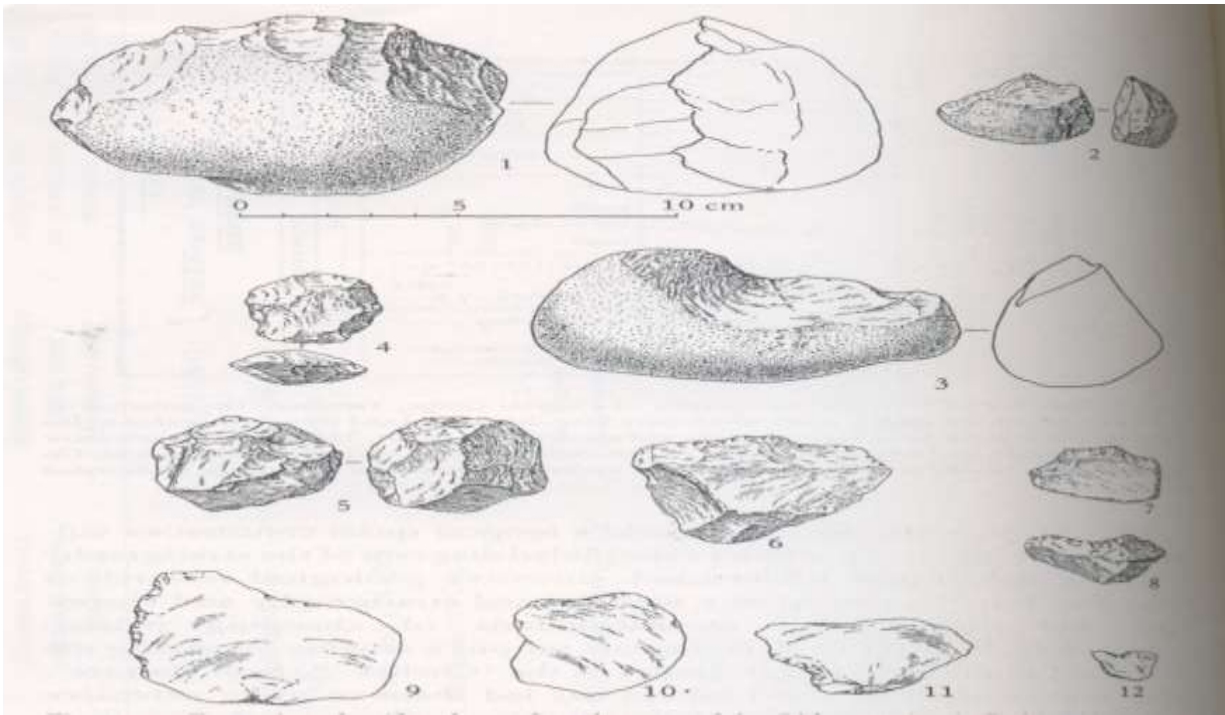
The Oldowan Industrial Complex is the first of the two. It started around 3 to 2 million years B.P (Before Present). The name Oldowan was coined from Olduvai Gorge where artifacts of this tradition were first found. Take note that this Stone Age technology is closely associated with *Homo habilis*.

Characteristically, the Oldowan stone tools were basically simple cutting and chopping tools, made by chipping flakes off a volcanic pebble to form a sharp edge (see fig. 3.1). These tools were smaller than the Archeulian tools (to be seen later). Furthermore, it seems these tools were a result of “opportunistic fabrication” whereby the people did not have a predetermined shape in mind, with the actual outcome being influenced much by the structure of the stones.

These tools were among others used for cutting or scraping of skins, cutting fruits and vegetables, but also whittling sticks which could have been used for digging roots and tubers.

Economically, hominids of the time were hunter-gatherers, surviving on gathering fruits, vegetables and insects, but also hunting both small and large game. But as suggested by some scholars such as Shillington, these depended much on scavenging for their meat supply, as they do not seem to have had weapons suitable for regular hunting.

The Oldowan Industrial Complex was confined to Africa and underwent very minimal changes for about one million years.



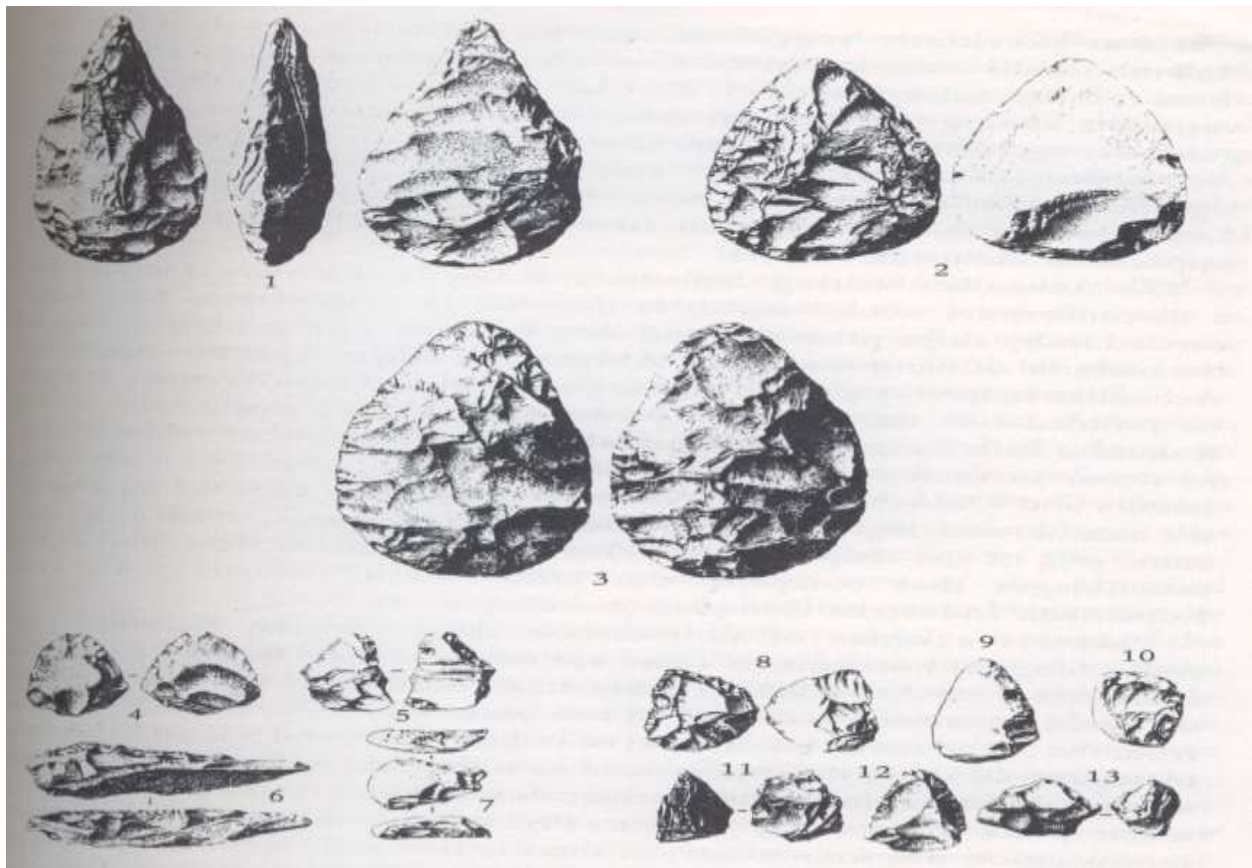
*Oldowan tools*

### **b) Archeulian Industrial Complex**

The Archeulian Industrial Complex followed the Oldowan and has been dated from around 1.5 million years B.P. The name Archeulian comes from a place in France called St. Archeul where a characteristic tool of this period, a “hand axe” was first discovered. However; the oldest of the artifacts of this period have been discovered in Africa and dated between 1.5 to 1 million years ago. As can be observed, unlike the Oldowan, this industrial complex spread to Europe and Asia. Importantly, there is a higher degree of similarity in shape and construction of the Archeulian tools wherever they are found. It has to be noted also that the Archeulian Industrial Complex is associated with *Homo erectus*.

Notable tools for this period include the hand axes and cleavers. Unlike the Oldowan tools, the Archeulian tools are characterised by “purposive fabrication” thus they were shaped to a predetermined shape. They also showed much precision in their fabrication unlike the crude nature of the Oldowan hand axes.

The hand axes were heavy, bigger, sharp and shaped to a deliberate point. One notable characteristic is that they were ‘bifaced,’ thus they were sharp on both sides. (See fig. 3.2 and compare with the Oldowan).



*The Archeulian tools*

The hand axes were used for digging, chopping and slicing wood, meat and other things while the cleavers were used for cutting and skinning things more like knives. Socially, during this period, the people were organised into regular seasonal camps that shifted following the progression of vegetables, fruits and animals. Furthermore, there seemed to have been cooperative hunting as opposed to earlier simple scavenging. Another notable technological innovation during this period was the discovery of making and using fire. This was crucial as it helped early man in providing warmth, cooking/ roasting food, keeping away predators and in hunting.

### **3.3 The Middle Stone Age**

The Middle Stone Age lasted between 40,000-100,000 years ago. It is associated with *Homo Sapiens*. During this period, there was extensive precision in tools produced. Notably, the tools became smaller, thinner and purposively fashioned to a desired shape. Furthermore, there was a diversity or variety of tools as they were produced for a specific purpose that was to be executed.

During this period, regional differences and specialisation in tool fabrication became apparent. People started to produce tools and engaged in activities that suited their particular environment. For example, people in forest areas started to use nets, snares and pit traps to hunt big game. Those in Savanna areas concentrated on gathering of

vegetables and hunting small game; while fishing became dominant amongst those who lived close to water bodies.

Socially, the camps became more organised, larger and long term in nature. These included shelters built of branches, grass and stones; while, in some areas, settlements were a series of caves.

### **3.4 Later Stone Age**

This is traced back to between 40,000-10,000 years ago. This tradition is associated with *Homo Sapiens*. The main distinctive technological feature of this period is the 'microlith', which literally means 'tiny stone'. These microliths were trimmed and shaped into tiny, precise points and blades. They were glued and bound to wooden shafts to make spears, arrows and knives with handles.

Furthermore, during this period, human beings developed and started using bows and arrows, which became one of the most important hunting tools. The arrowheads, made of stone or bone, were treated with carefully prepared vegetable poison. This greatly improved hunting efficiency as individuals or small groups of people could hunt large game. Apart from spears, bows and arrows, man also used snares, traps, pits and nets for hunting. This improved meat and protein supply.

In addition to the provision of meat, animals were also a source of skins and bones. The skins were used for clothing, shelter, leather thongs, bags and slings for carrying babies among others. Some of the bones were made into fine tools such as awls, needles fishhooks and barbs for arrows or harpoons.

Though fishing has been practised since the Middle Stone Age times, in Later Stone Age times, it became more advanced through the use of nets, bone tipped harpoons, tidal traps and vegetable poison. In some societies, fishing and gathering of shellfish became the dominant source of food. It has to be noted that even though hunting and fishing became more pronounced, gathering was still extremely important.

The Late Stone Age people also underwent considerable artistic development. They developed art and craft that included great works of rock paintings and engravings often found in caves and shelters. The paints were often made from animal fats coloured with vegetable dyes and ochre among others. These paintings portray activities such as hunting, fishing and dancing. Notably, man showed advanced conceptual thought, as some of these paintings and engravings are abstract and metaphysical in nature. These seem to have been inspired by religious beliefs about life and death, but also the spiritual world.

During this period, human beings also started to make fired/baked pottery. Pottery was used for storing, carrying and cooking different things including food and water. Pottery

is bulky, heavy and difficult to be carried around by mobile people; as a result, it suggests existence of long-term settled communities.

Socially, these people were organised into settled communities whose numbers were determined by the environment. In drier regions, the groups were small, often not more than twenty individuals; while in wetter regions where food was abundant, these communities may have swelled up to a hundred individuals. Although the communities were large, these people seemed to have been loosely organised on family basis.

It has to be noted that the Later Stone Age, though shorter as compared to the earlier ages, showed extensive regional variations in technological development and lifestyles practised. This was much influenced by the climate, environment and available resources, which determined the economic activities pursued.

### **Learner Activity 1**

Make a diagram as below: list any innovations developed under each age and write how these may have helped the early human beings on increased chances for survival.

### **3.5 Neolithic Revolution**

Neolithic Revolution was basically an agricultural revolution when man moved from predominantly food gathering economy to a food producing economy. Even though humans had advanced technologically, they still remained predominantly hunter-gatherers until about 10,000 years ago. However; things started changing as humans shifted from simply depending on the environment to supply their food needs, to controlling it, by domesticating plants and animals. Thus, they started growing their own food and keeping their own animals.

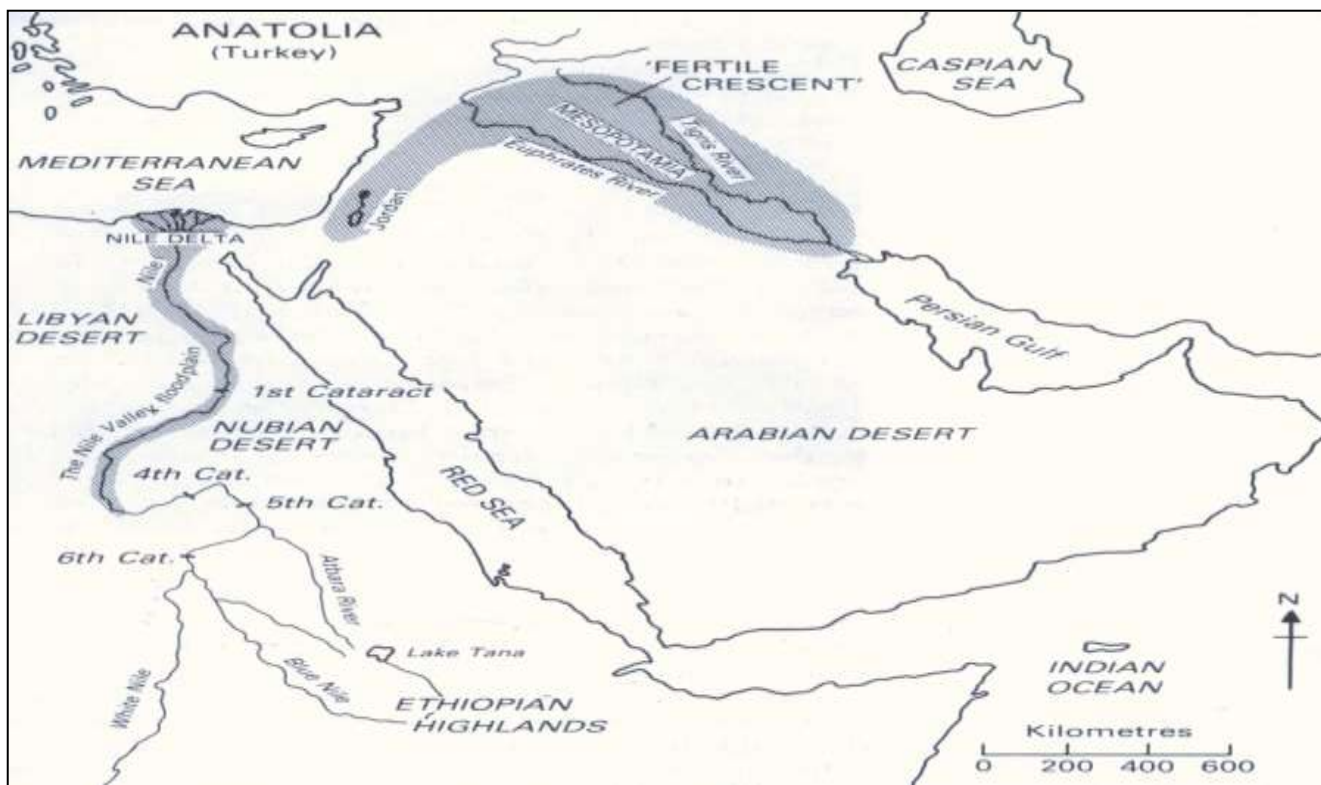
Neolithic literary means “New Stone”. This was not only because it was a technological development of the Later Stone Age, but also because of the new tools that started to appear contemporary to the agricultural revolution of the time.

### **3.6 Origins of farming**

The actual way in which man started to domesticate both plants and animals still remains a speculation. Scholars have suggested that plant cultivation may have started as humans observed some plants that grew better than others or had preferred characteristics; hence their seeds were set aside for replanting. With animals, it is suggested that people began to control the movement of particular wild animals and protecting them from other predators. Furthermore, it is suggested that people started to control their breeding so as to produce the type of animal most useful to the community. However, it has to be noted that this process was gradual and people still supplemented the agricultural economy with hunting and gathering.

Historically, it has been believed and accepted that the origin of the ancient world’s earliest farming communities was the Middle East, also referred to as the “Fertile

Crescent". This included Mesopotamia and surrounding environments, which constitute present day Lebanon, Libya, Syria, South Eastern Turkey, Iraq and Iran. Earliest domestication of cattle, sheep and the cultivation of wild barley and wheat there has been dated back to about 8000 B.C.



### *The Fertile Crescent*

However, it is now believed that farming may have been independently developed in a number of regions e.g. Hwang Ho Valley of China 5000 B.C., Mexico 3000 B.C. Even though for Africa it is on the whole accepted that much of the major plants that were first cultivated in Ancient Egypt came from Mesopotamia, there is now archeological evidence to suggest that some had African origins, e.g. sorghum and millet of possibly African origin were being harvested in the Khartoum region of the Upper Nile by 6000 B.C. However, the influence of the "Fertile Crescent" cannot completely be dismissed as regards the origins of African agriculture.

Some of the major crops to be domesticated included cereals, wheat, burley, sorghum, millet, teff (tiny grain), moog (oil plant) and enserte (banana like staple of Ethiopia) among others. Some of the important animals included cattle, sheep and goats.

It is difficult to trace the origins of different plants and animals and when they began to be domesticated. This is so because different scholars use different models. Furthermore, artifacts such as bones, plants materials, art works and utensils such as grinding stones, storage pits and sickles have been questioned by others, that they may not necessarily mean that the plants and animals were by then domesticated. Some bones and plant materials may have been from wild species that were simply foraged upon. Furthermore,



the tools may have been used by foraging societies. What is more important to our present study is to appreciate that at one point in time, humans started to domesticate plants and animals and this led to a number of changes in African societies.

### **Learner Activity 2**

From different sources, identify some of the early plants and animals to be domesticated.

### **3.7 Impact of the Neolithic Revolution**

The Neolithic Revolution had a tremendous impact on African societies. But it has to be noted that the impact being discussed here is general and may not have applied to all societies.

- (a) The first impact was increase in population. Among others, this was so due to the following factors:
- There was improved diet, which improved the people's nutritional status and in turn increased life expectancy.
  - Food availability and supply became more predictable, regular and abundant.
  - There was also an increase in fertility rate as women were able to bear children more frequently. This was possible as settled life made child rearing less arduous.
  - Increase in population, meant increase in labour units available, which in turn meant increased food output and by extension, ability to support an even larger population.
- (b) The second impact was the establishment of large and permanent settlements.
- Firstly, this was out of necessity as people had to be in one area in order to tend to their crops.
  - Secondly, the arduous work of forest clearing made it unfeasible to be moving around much as before.
  - Thirdly, it became no longer necessary to move much as food was readily available.
  - Large populations and settled life provided relative security as compared to hunter-gathering communities. The large communities could easily fend off predators and adversaries.
- (c) Another impact was an emergence of a judicial system. Living in large communities meant increased interaction beyond the immediate family. Thus, immediate family members could not easily settle differences. This necessitated the emergence of a judicial system of some sort. Furthermore, this became necessary to deter others from disrupting social order.
- (d) Political organisation also changed. This change became necessary for the provision of a common front against adversaries but also in managing production and calamities. This led to emergence of a leadership and political system, which became more pronounced and elaborate with the passage of time.



- (e) Social organisation also changed. Initially hunter-gatherers would have been egalitarian and classless. However, due to the advent of food production there started to emerge different classes. One reason for this is that some people started to control means of production, such as labour. This was due to accumulation of personal possessions, all of which led to the emergence of states being rich or poor to different degrees.
- (f) Emergence of specialisation was also another impact. Due to the surplus food produced, some people could not afford to produce food for themselves, but rather engage in other activities. This was so as they could be maintained by the food producing classes. Thus, there started to emerge, rulers, priests, craftsmen, etc.
- (g) Another impact was industrial development. In order to improve production, there was need to develop specialised tools. Furthermore, the desire to effectively process, carry and keep produce, led to fabrication of specialised wares such as baked pottery, baskets, hoes, etc. On top of this, due to the demand available, some people became specialised craftsmen who were able to produce different products beyond those necessitated by the basic needs of their families.

### **3.8 Working technology**

#### **3.8.1 Origins of metal working**

The first metal to be mined and worked on was copper. However, copper is very soft hence had limited usage. Later, the early craftsmen discovered that smelting copper and tin produced a harder metal called bronze. Because bronze is harder, it widened the variety and effectiveness of the tools and weapons produced. But the metal with the greatest impact was iron.

#### **3.8.2 Origins of iron working technology**

Basically, we have two schools of thought that try to explain the origins and spread of iron working technology. These are the External Origin and Indigenous Development theories.

### **3.9 Development theories**

#### **(i) External origins theory**

This School maintains that because of the specialised nature of iron smelting, this technique could not have been invented in more than one place in the ancient world. Basing on this assumption, this School argues that iron-working technology was imported into Africa from Anatolia in modern day Turkey, which is one of the earliest iron working centres. Here, the technology dates from about 1500 B.C.

Even though proponents of this school agree on the external origins of the industry, they differ on how the iron working technology spread to the rest of Africa. Some say the technology first spread among North African countries such as Egypt, Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania among others. From here, the technology started to spread to western

Africa across the Sahara. This spread is attributed to the Phoenician traders who had settled in North Africa or the Berbers who had contact with these Phoenicians. The Phoenicians had been using these chariots. From West Africa, this technology is thought to have filtered to central and southern parts of the continent.

Some scholars say that from Asia, the technology first spread along the Nile corridor to Meroe. From Meroe, it spread west and south. Thus, Meroe is assumed to be the core from which iron working dispersed to both western and southern Africa. However, some scholars have reservations about this Meroitic theory of iron working dispersal based on the available evidence. They argue, for example, that iron-working centres in the Great Lakes (Inter-lacustrine) region of East Africa are contemporary to that of Meroe, and that the earliest site in Nigeria, Jos, is older than sites around Lake Chad, which is closer to Meroe. Thus, the technology could not have moved from Meroe to Jos, bypassing Lake Chad, as it is assumed to have spread through diffusion.

#### **(ii) Indigenous development theory**

This school, whose main proponent is C.A. Diop, argues that iron working in Africa did not originate from Anatolia or anywhere outside Africa. This school suggests that iron-working technology developed in different places in Sub-Saharan Africa. The basis of this argument is that surface lateritic ores in Africa are widely spread and easy to work on than the rock ores in western Asia. Diop further argues that this could have originated from firing pots, which was common in Africa. In the course of pot firing, it could have been easier to discover surface lateritic ore and to convert it to iron.

### **3.10 Impact of iron working technology**

Even though scholars differ on the way iron-working technology originated and spread, one undeniable fact is that it had a tremendous impact on African societies. As was the case with the Neolithic Revolution earlier in the unit, the impact of iron working being discussed here is in general terms. As such, not everything would have been applicable to all societies. Let us now discuss these impacts.

1. Firstly, it led to improvement in production. Iron is a far much superior raw material than stone and others that were used in the earlier ages. Furthermore, it has an advantage that it can be fabricated into a variety of implements. All these led to increased efficiency in both hunting and crop production.
2. Iron working technology also facilitated the establishment and consolidation of political units such as kingdoms in a number of ways: Firstly, iron weapons helped societies to easily conquer others. Secondly, it helped societies to defend themselves from attacks by adversaries. Thirdly, as we have seen above, iron-working technology led to improvement in production. This meant a good supply of food, which is crucial for the survival of any polity.

3. Iron working technology also led to population movements. Firstly, it helped people clear new lands for settlement and for production. Secondly, it helped people conquer other societies they could come into contact with. Thirdly, possession of iron working technology helped them to be accepted among the societies they came into contact with as they were seen to possess a superior culture.
  
4. Development of iron working technology also facilitated the development of trade in such things as iron implements and ornaments. In addition to this, there started to emerge other industries due to the influence of iron working technology and these items were traded among and within societies.

### Learner Activity 3

What impact did iron working technology have on early societies in Africa?

### End of Unit Test

1. Discuss the main developments during the Oldowan and Archelium Industrial Complexes.
2. Discuss the impact of the Neolithic Revolution.
3. Critically examine the two main theories about the origins of iron working technology in Africa.

### Answers to Learners' Activities

#### Answers to learner's activity 1

Age	Technological innovation	Impact
Early Stone Age	Oldwan stone tools Archeulin tools	Simplified food cutting Simplified digging, chopping and slicing
Middle stone age		Specialised tools Specialised activities

#### Answers to learner activity 2

- 1 Plants: wheat, barley, sorghum and millet
- 2 Animals: cattle, sheep and goats

#### Answers to learner activity 3

- 1 Improvement in production
- 2 Establishment and consolidation of political units

- 3 Population movements
- 4 Development of trade

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# Unit 4: The Ancient Egyptian Civilization

## Introduction

In the previous units, you have seen the way humans started to change the way they organised themselves both socially and politically. In the present unit, we will look at one of the early centres of such social and political organizations in North Africa. Specifically, we shall examine the rise of the Egyptian civilization from the context of the environmental, technological and political influences the region experienced between 3500 – 322 BC. You will specifically be exposed to the key factors that contributed to the origins and expansions of the civilization, the phases of development for the civilization, their political and economic organization and the decline and fall of the kingdom. At the very heart of this discussion, you will appreciate the significant role that the environment played towards the rise, expansion and decline of the kingdom.

## Key words

- Divine kingship, divine being, Polytheism, afterlife, mummification

## Prerequisite knowledge

By now you already know the technological advancements of early people in terms of the tools and systems of production that some communities developed.

## Time allowed

4 hours

**Unit objectives** By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify the origins of the Egyptian civilisation
- explain factors that contributed to its growth
- describe the phases of the Egyptian civilisation
- describe the major features organizational aspects of the Egyptian civilisation
- outline factors that led to the decline of Egypt.

## 4.1 Origins of Ancient Egypt

The Egyptian Civilisation evolved over a period of 3000 years stretching from ca 3500 – 322 BC. It specifically developed along what is called the Nile Valley in present day Egypt. Initially, the area had a wet climate. However, with the passage of time, it became dry. These circumstances compelled the people to exploit the Nile River more, for their survival. Between 5000 and 4000 B.C. Permanent settlements of full time farmers became established in the Nile valley. These settlements were dependent on the river's annual flooding. With passage of time, these states grew into a number of regional states. By 3500B.C these became amalgamated into two kingdoms of Upper and Lower Egypt. By 3100 B.C these were joined by the king of Upper Egypt called Menes, after conquering Lower Egypt. This unification is generally recognised as the beginning of the Egyptian civilisation.

## **4.2 Factors for the growth of Egyptian civilisation**

There were a number of factors, which created a favourable atmosphere for the growth of the Egyptian civilisation. Let us now discuss some of them.

### **a) Environmental factor**

The focus here is on the role played by the Nile River and its resources. The Egyptian civilisation has been termed the “gift of the Nile” but also a hydraulic civilisation, because it was made possible by, and was much dependent on, the endowments provided by the Nile. The river became important in two main aspects

Firstly, the Nile provided water for irrigation farming. The river could sustain a year-round system of flooding which essentially made irrigation farming carried with relative ease. Due to the dry nature of the area, the people learnt how to utilise the Nile more efficiently for their survival. This involved the development of advanced irrigation system that took advantage of the river’s annual flooding, caused by summer rains in the Nubian mountains. Other than provision of water, the Nile’s annual flooding also replenished soil fertility by depositing fertile silt eroded from the uplands. Thirdly, the Nile served as a communication conduit for commerce and administration among others.

Secondly, the river facilitated an effective means of transportation for the movement of people and goods from one area to the other.

### **b) The Racial Factor**

The Egyptian civilisation developed at the crossroads (meeting point) of two great races, the Semitic and Negroid races. The Negroid race was indigenous to the area while the semitic race was predominant in the East and its from there that some migrated into Egypt and settled there. This led to cross fertilisation and complementalization of ideas. It is felt that mixing of such ideas and attributes contributed towards emergence of the Egyptian civilization because each of the two races brought with it a number of ideas that were fused up to create a magnificent civilization as has been recorded in history. For instance, some brought ideas on how to organize societies, produce crops, construction and building. In other words, these races contributed enormously towards the generation of ideas.

### **c) The Geographical and Security factor**

Egypt was positioned in such away that it was naturally secured. Firstly, it was bordered by the Sahara Desert to the west, the Nubian mountains to the south, the Mediterranean sea to the north and the Red sea to the east. These natural barriers enhanced the security of the area as they made it less prone to attacks. Secondly the Nile valley was very narrow, just a few kilometres wide. This made it easy to monitor and ensure the security of the area than could have been the case if it was wide. Thirdly, the Nile was the main communication conduit, which could possibly be used by any external adversaries. That

enhanced more security than could have been the case if it had so many conduits, which could have made it more porous and difficult to monitor.

#### **d) Religious factor**

Egypt relied so much on religion as a rallying point of political support and a stimulus for intellectual and infrastructure development. It must be noted that in Ancient Egypt, there was the evolution of the concept of divine kingship in which the people had a strong belief that their rulers were semi-divine. This means that they had a strong belief that their rulers had attributes of both man and god. This view was reinforced by the idea that Menes the first King was the son of the god Arnon-Re. He was considered to have enormous powers over the resources of the land including the Nile River. This is what made the people therefore to give him a lot of allegiance. This enhanced the position of the kings, as they were held in awe, hence building their support base. Furthermore, much of the intellectual and infrastructure developments such as mathematics, calendars, astronomy, writing, temples and pyramids had their basis in religion.

#### **Learner Activity 1**

Examine how race and geography contributed towards the rise and expansion of ancient Egyptian civilization.

#### **4.3 Phases of the Egyptian civilisation**

As noted from the earlier discussion, the Egyptian civilization evolved for well over 3000 years. Its history therefore cannot be explained in one account but rather through the marked phases in which the civilization evolved and expanded. The civilization in essence developed and expanded in four main phases which are; Early Egypt phase, the Old Kingdom phase, The Middle Kingdom Phase and The New kingdom Phase. In between the phases were intermediary periods.

##### **(i) Early Egypt Phase**

This stands out as a period of formation and therefore should also be referred to as the formative period. It stretched from the Paleolithic period (the Old Stone Age) to ca 3500 BC. During this particular period, people from different areas notably Asia and surrounding parts of Africa moved *enmasse* and settled along the Nile River. They were strongly attracted by the availability of the fertile soils along the Nile Valley and the potential the area had in terms of farming and general domestication of animals. With the passage of time, these people got concentrated into two main communities – Lower and Upper Egypt. Lower Egypt was to the Northern part and Upper Egypt was actually to the Southern part. During this particular period, the area was still not politically organized.

##### **(ii) The Old Kingdom (ca 3200 – 2445 BC).**

This is usually considered as the most important period in the ancient history of Egypt in the sense that a number of achievements were made during this particular phase starting with political unification to the more sophisticated advances.

## **Notable Achievements**

This period per se witnessed the political unification of ancient Egypt whose historical greatness is associated with this period. During this particular period, Menes united the independent principalities that had earlier on composed of the Upper and Lower kingdoms to form one unified state. This phase survived up to around 2200 B.C when the kingdom fell and a period of anarchy was ushered in. This was the greatest period in the Egyptian history. This was when a lot of things that characterise Egyptian civilisation were developed or refined. These among others, did not only include the system of government and religion but also intellectual and architectural developments such as writing, medicine, astronomy, applied mathematics, literature, irrigation, and buildings.

### **a. Political Achievements**

#### **1. Political unification**

Politically, the kingdom witnessed the unification process achieved. King Menes Narmer managed during this particular period to bring together the two communities of Lower and Upper Egypt as one political entity under one ruler. He conquered the Northern part and combined it with the Southern part to create the first Egyptian Nation state. He is credited to have founded the first dynasty and its capital was established at Memphis. He became the first Pharaoh in ancient Egyptian Civilization.

The success of this initial unification of the Egypt during this period was through military campaigns but its political consolidation and sustenance was largely dependent on the Pharaoh's power. The major factor that contributed to this was the concept of divine kingship. The basic tenet of this concept was that the Pharaoh was considered as a divine being with attributes of both god and man. He was believed to be the god of sunshine, Re and as a reincarnation of the god of creation, Ptah. Upon death, he was believed to be united with the god of death, Osiris. Furthermore, due to his divine nature, he was believed to be responsible for the rise and fall of the Nile. These beliefs contributed enormously to increased allegiance of his subjects to the king as being in control everything.

Next to the Pharaoh, were the priests who also became very influential because they were considered equally as powerful individuals who like the Pharaohs has power to control the Nile and had a say on famines. People trusted in these priests to get their powers directly from the gods. So, the Pharaoh and priests worked together in bringing unity in the kingdom.

#### **2. System of Government**

This period further witnessed the evolution of a complex and elaborate system of government which was a centralized one with the King considered to have absolute authority. In order to effectively govern the kingdom that had now become vast due to the unification, Egyptian rulers developed an elaborate system of government. Initially, the Pharaoh exercised direct authority in all civil and military affairs. However, the vastness



of the kingdom may have rendered this impractical. The whole country during the beginnings was divided into *nomes* or districts which was placed under the authority of some officials as we shall see below. These along with others were all under the control of the central government at Memphis. Hence in order to improve efficiency, he instituted a bureaucracy that assisted him in governing the big polity. The pharaoh was practically assisted by the following officials:

- i. the Vizier: This was an official who was more like a Prime Minister
- ii. Nomarchs: These were governors of provinces or Normes or districts as highlighted above. These nomarchs were responsible for various tasks including checking on the operations and efficiency of the canals for agriculture and collection of taxes.
- iii. Aristocrats: These were officials who controlled thousands of estates distributed to them by the Pharaoh.
- iv. Priests: These were officials who were mainly entrusted with the responsibility for religious affairs even though they also took an active part in government as advisors to the king.
- v. Scribes: These were officials who were responsible for doing general administrative duties.
- vi. Tax collectors: These were officials who collected taxes on behalf of the pharaoh from the various provinces.
- vii. Civil servants: These were officers who carried out different duties for efficient governing of the state.

### **3. Religious achievements**

As with all early societies, religion took a central role in early Egyptian life. The Egyptians were polytheistic. They believed in many gods, with each believed to be responsible for a different facet of their lives. Some of their gods included: Re for sunshine, Ptah for creation, Amon for moon, Osiris for death, Min for fertility, Horus for dawn or sky and Thoth for wisdom.

Secondly, the Egyptians perceived their gods in anthropomorphic terms. Thus, they gave their gods both human and godly attributes. Furthermore, some of their gods were associated with animals believed to hold particular powers such as the jackal, the hawk, the snake and the crocodile among others.

Another notable characteristic of Egyptian religion was that it was tolerant and accommodating. Gods from all areas of the kingdom were regarded as constituting a single galaxy or pantheon. Furthermore, shrines of regional gods were allowed to flourish. This helped them ensure unity amongst the people as a lot of them felt a sense of belonging.

Another aspect of Egyptian life was the concept of afterlife. They believed people continued to live after death. This belief was reflected in the way they buried their dead. They took great care including embalming dead bodies. They also included possessions

that might be needed in the next life when burying their dead. However, most notable, they built tombs called pyramids for their rulers.

#### **4. Science**

The Egyptians were knowledgeable in sciences. Much of their scientific works were practical in nature and therefore were aimed at addressing practical challenges they faced amongst themselves. In order to address particular everyday challenges, the ancient Egyptians developed mathematical principles meant at assisting them to address measurement of sizes for their fields and depth of water for irrigation agriculture. This could also help them in terms of tax collection and calculation but also the projection of the Nile's annual flooding among others. Ancient Egyptians are also reputed to have developed an annual calendar during this particular period which was based on the flow and flooding of the Nile River. Furthermore, Egyptians had knowledge of medical sciences such as anatomy, surgery and mummification among others.

#### **5. Irrigation**

As the climate of Egypt became drier, it became imperative to come up with an alternative system to ensure productivity and food supply. As such they developed an efficient system of irrigation. Using their knowledge of applied mathematics, they were able to assess the depth of the Nile, volume of the fields, gradient of the flow of water, all of which helped them develop an efficient network of canals. Furthermore, they developed a simple mechanical device called a Shaduf, which used water from the canals into the fields (See fig. below).



*Shaduf*

#### **6. Architecture**

At the level of architecture or infrastructural development, ancient Egyptian used applied mathematics in to achieve this. They built magnificent structures such as temples, palaces and pyramids for burying their dead Pharaohs. Pyramids were tombs that were constructed for their kings based on their belief in the concept of life after death. The

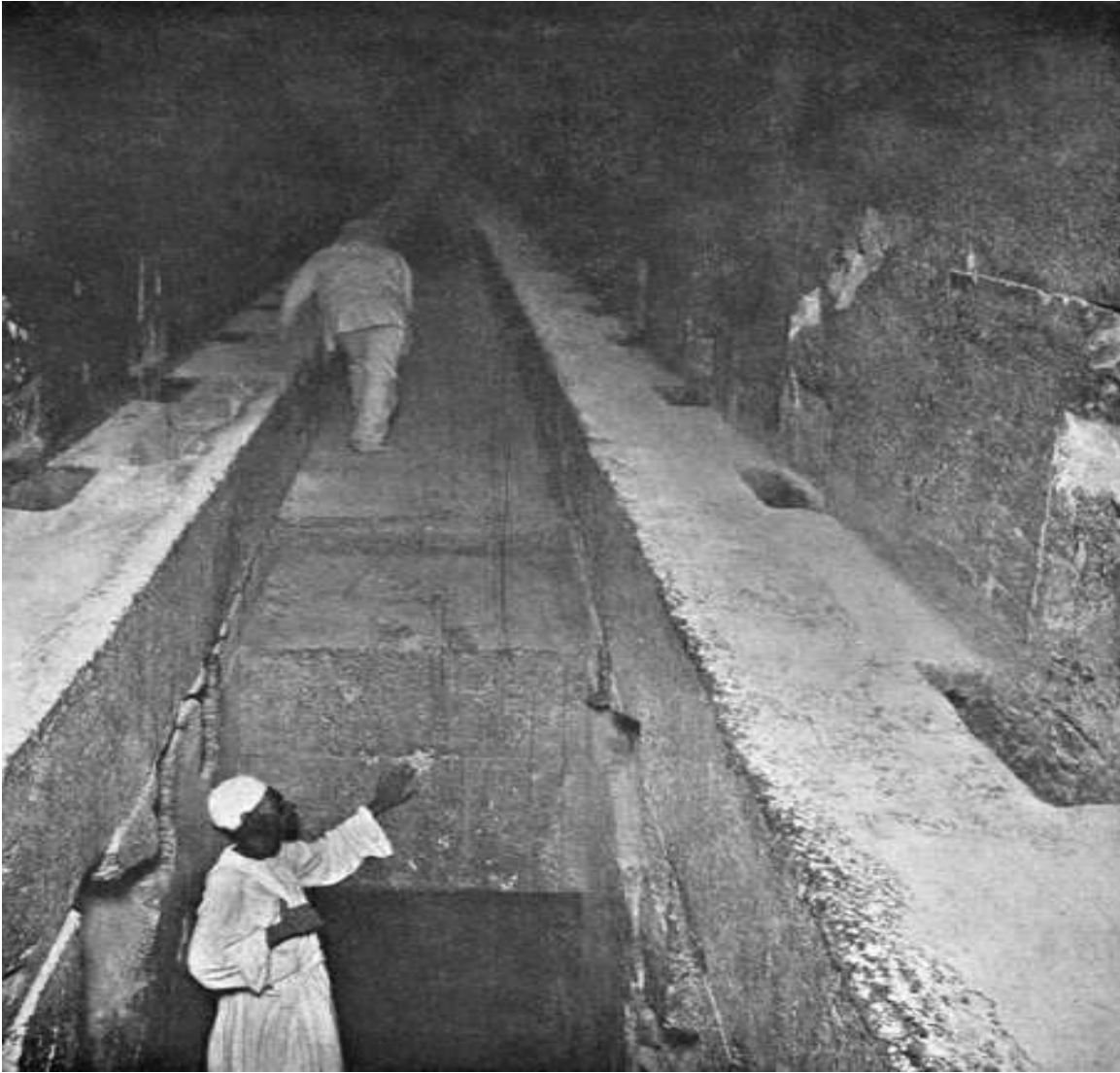
construction of pyramids is generally considered as the most outstanding achievement during this particular phase. This is why this phase is sometimes known as the pyramid phase. By 2500 BC, Egypt had achieved a lot in terms of pyramid construction. It has to be pointed out that some of the pyramids that they constructed are still outstanding today, after thousands of years and they feature as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world due to their magnificence. For example, a look at the Great Pyramid of Giza also known as the Pyramid of Khufu or the pyramid of Cheops which was constructed around 2500 BC shows amazing features as follows:

- i. In terms of coverage, it occupied 30 acres of land
- ii. It was 146 meters high
- iii. It was built with over 2,500,000 blocks of limestone and granite each weighing 20 Kilograms or thereabout
- iv. It took 20 years for them to complete constructing it

These pyramids served utilitarian, religious and political purpose. Religiously, they represented the manifestation of the concept of afterlife. In terms of usage, they served as burial places of their dead Pharaohs. Politically, they kept people busy in the four months break in the agricultural cycle, thus minimising the possibility of political unrest. Secondly, they provided physical manifestation of the Pharaoh's ability to demand and control the labour of his subjects, but also the extent of their wealth, influence and awe. All these increased the people's allegiance to him.



*Entrance to the Great Pyramid of Giza*



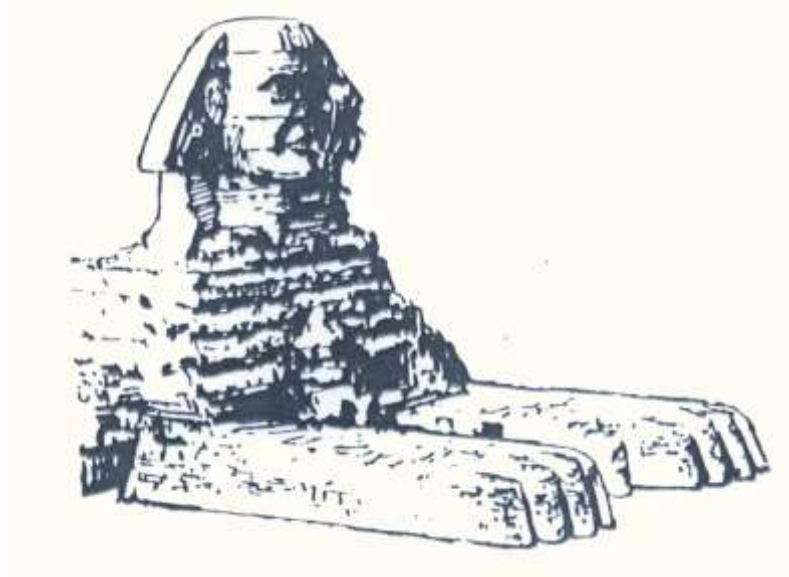
*The inside of the Great Pyramid of Giza*

## **7. Art**

One aspect that characterises a civilised society is the extent of its imagination and creativity as represented in its arts. This includes designing of its utilitarian objects in more than basic form, but also development of artistic representations that do not serve any utilitarian purpose. On the point of utilitarian products, Egyptians developed ornate furniture, vases, glassware, board games, jewellery and other luxurious goods. These were made from wood, stone, ivory and copper among others.

They also developed paintings and sculpture. Their paintings and sculptures represented different aspects of Egyptian life. These served both decorative and religious purposes. Their paintings and sculptures were represented in a realistic manner with some traces of romanticism. Furthermore, their paintings and sculptures were represented in a static pose. Some historians speculate that this reflected eternal security influenced by views of afterlife.





An example of Egyptian art (The Sphinx at Giza)

### **8. Writing**

The Old Kingdom also saw the invention and refinement of writing. Their system of writing was called *hieroglyphics*. It was composed of pictures that were deciphered into sounds and ideas. Each small picture could stand for one word or for one idea. These were either carved into monuments or written onto paper made from papyrus reeds using ink made from soot. This writing was pioneered by priests. The scribes or professional writers or clerks used to record the major events in the kingdom using this form of writing. Initially, it was used in religious affairs, but later it was used for general purposes including commerce and administration. At a later stage, they used a combination of pictures to represent sounds and or ideas.

### **9. Literature**

Ancient Egyptians also developed literary works. This included both secular and religious literature. These literary works included travellers' tales, adventures, proverbs; those tackling social issues and manuals of advice on getting on in life.

### **10. Education**

In order to improve efficiency in different areas including commerce and administration, education is essential. As such, ancient Egyptians developed a system of education. Initially, this was targeted at training priests. However, they later provided a more general education including reading, writing, ethics, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and medicine among others.

## **Learner Activity 2**

In a group of 10, you should assign to each other one of the 10 achievements of the Old Kingdom phase of Ancient Egypt. Allow yourselves to read and understand the achievements for 2 hours from this module and other sources. You should then discuss as a group the key achievements of the Old Kingdom phase of ancient Egypt.

### **Decline of the old kingdom**

The Old Kingdom though long and glorious came to an end around 2200 B.C after the fall of the 6<sup>th</sup> Dynasty. This was so due to a number of interrelated factors.

- Firstly, the bureaucracy grew so much so that it became oppressive and difficult to monitor and manage. Some of the peripheral rulers diverted tax making themselves rich and powerful while at the same time making the Pharaoh poor. As a result of this, the kingdom became negatively affected in terms of the economy thereby substantially contributing towards its decline. On the other hand, the extensive building projects and the bloated bureaucracy were very expensive to maintain and became a big drain on government coffers. Many people in Egypt were concerned about this extravagance and some resorted to nonpayment of taxes which further weakened to the decline of the state particularly during the reign of Pepi II between 2150-2040
- It has also been noted that the influence of climatic changes affected the kingdom negatively more particularly that it contributed towards decline in production due to decreased levels of water in the Nile. This made irrigation difficult to carry out thereby contributed to food shortages. This affected the operations of the Pharaoh because they could not ably provide for their subjects. In a way, other provincial rulers took advantage of this situation to proclaim themselves kings in their own right as they gained more popularity from their subjects when they provided local solutions to provide food for the people.
- Lastly, while the earlier kings had been very powerful, the later kings were weak that they failed to command the respect enjoyed by the earlier kings and control they exercised. The 5th and 6th dynasties faced great pressure due to revolutions.

### **The First Intermediate Period**

After the fall of the sixth dynasty in 2200 B.C, there emerged what is termed the First Intermediate Period. This lasted up to 2040 B.C. As seen already; the Normarchs had divided the kingdom into independent principalities. Taxes were not paid to the Pharaoh's government. Trade declined and much of the development that had characterised the old Kingdom such as pyramid building came to a halt. However, order was restored in around 2040, ushering in the Middle Kingdom.

### **(iii) The Middle Kingdom**

The Middle Kingdom was started by a Pharaoh called Amenhet who was from the south. He brought unity and restored order in Ancient Egypt. Politically, the affairs were controlled from Thebes. The Pharaoh did not try to destroy the Normarchs but rather

incorporated them into the system. This was so in order to avoid resistance and maintain order. It was as a result of this that pharaonic rule during this particular period appealed to many people.

Even though there had been extensive destruction, during the first intermediate period was revival of Egyptian civilisation and prosperity during the Middle Kingdom.

### **Notable achievements during this particular period**

- i. Taxes started to be collected and paid to the Central government.
- ii. Again, industry and commerce were revived and expanded. There was development of foreign trade with Syria, Crete, Cyprus and Nubia among others. These improved the revenue base of the Central government. Egypt produced goods out of bronze, iron and papyrus which could be sold out to Eastern Mediterranean, Coast of the Red Sea and other areas as above. In exchange, they got spices, silver and ivory. In short Egypt's economy during this period was well diversified.
- iii. The changing fortunes of the Middle Kingdom led to revival of infrastructure developments such as pyramid building and expansion of irrigation. The area under irrigation was expanded as far as the Fayum depression in Nubia. Furthermore, this period also witnessed the development of several urban centres. These became centres of administration, production and religion.
- iv. This period also witnessed a great literary age. There were great literary works such as the *The Prophecies of Neferty*, and *The Story of Simuhe*. These literary works have been termed court-based literature because they generally concentrated on celebrating the greatness of different Pharaohs.
- v. At the religious level, the Egyptians started to absorb into their own pantheon, gods and beliefs and rituals from other lands such as those of Babylon. This was a result of commercial interaction the Egyptians had with other lands.

### **Decline of the Middle Kingdom**

The Middle Kingdom started to decline because of two significant factors:

- The leadership factor - Whilst the initial Pharaohs had been strong, the succeeding ones were weak. This led to internal strife and eventual conflicts between and amongst them which affected the status of the kingdom.
- The Conquest factor – During this particular period, Egypt was attacked by the Hyskos from western Asia in 1670 B.C. These Hyskos had an advantage over Egyptians because they used horse drawn chariots and bronze weapons which Egyptians did not have. They eventually ruled over Egypt for a period of 200 years.

### **The Second Intermediate Period**

After the Hyskos had overrun Egypt, they ushered in what has been termed the Second Intermediate Period. Due to a weak system instituted, the Kingdom reverted back to independent principalities which had characterized ancient Egypt after the decline of the



Old Kingdom. However, from 1600 B.C, there was growing nationalism in Thebes. The Thebians were later joined by other principalities in a revolt until the Hyskos were driven out of Egypt in 1570 B.C.

#### **iv. The New Kingdom (Empire phase), 1580 – 322 BC**

The dominant theme during this particular phase was imperial expansion hence the phase is sometimes termed as the empire phase. The New Kingdom was started by Ahmose I around 1570 B.C. By 1580 BC, Ahmose I had managed to drive away the Hyksos and established a new kingdom which like the previous regimes was a centralized one.

#### **Major Achievements during this particular phase**

This period had remarkable artistic and architectural developments. Amongst the notable achievements during this particular period included:

##### **i. Infrastructural Developments**

The Pharaohs such as Amenhotep are reputed to have created an enabling environment for the development of the arts. There was building of massive statues and temples along the Nile valley. The most remarkable being the temple in the town of Karnak. Trade was expanded in ivory, gold, incense and hardwoods among others.

##### **ii. Religious reforms**

During his reign, Amenhotep, made radical changes to the Egyptian religion. He changed the Egyptian religion from polytheism to monotheism. He raised Aton to be the state and only god. He even changed his name to Akhnaton in order to be closely identified with this god. These reforms are believed to have been influenced by the following reasons:

- He is thought to have been influenced by the people he interacted with through trade and military campaigns.
- It was for economic reasons. Monotheism meant that all offerings would be made to Aton. As this was elevated to be the state god and as he was closely associated with him, he was better placed to benefit economically and improve his revenue base.
- He did this for political reasons. Prior to this reform, the most popular god was Amon Re. Hence the priests of Amon Re had become very wealthy, popular and powerful. Thus, by elevating Aton to be the only god, it meant that it will weaken the priests of Amon Re, while at the same time making himself and the priests of Aton very powerful.

These reforms became very unpopular and led to a lot of resistance from the people, because they were used to polytheism. This forced his successors to return to polytheism and to raise Amon Re to his former position.

##### **iii. Political developments**

The most notable political development of this time was pursuing of an imperialist foreign policy. This was much influenced by the military skills learnt from the Hyskos. The Egyptians established a standing army composed of Egyptians and mercenaries who were given land as an incentive for military service. Through the military campaigns, they conquered and extended their influence to Lybia, Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia and

Nubia among others. These territories were sources of important raw materials. They also paid tribute, which helped to boost the economy and provide the means for materialistic development.

The foreign policy was later reverted to imperialism by Thutmose II. However, a later Pharaoh, Amenhotep is said to have combined both imperialism and concentration on internal development. Under his reign, Egypt became extremely prosperous economically and culturally developed on top of consolidating her external conquests

### **Learner Activity 3**

Using relevant examples, explain why the New Kingdom is sometimes referred to as the Empire phase?

### **Unit summary**

This unit has discussed the rise and expansion of ancient Egypt between the periods 3500 – 322 BC. It has been discussed in this unit that Ancient Egypt rose and expanded largely due to the environmental, geographic, racial and political factor. Such factors as has been observed were at the centre in attracting and bringing together the different groups into the Nile Valley to create a magnificent civilization that has been recorded in history. There has also been a discussion on the phases in which the civilization rose and expanded plus associated achievements that were registered during each phase. It has become apparent that phase two of the Egyptian Civilization is what greatly registered a number of achievements which became the foundation stone for later phases to rely on. In between there has also been highlights of the specific factors that contributed towards the decline of particular phases of the Egyptian civilization. The unit has also provided a discussion on the major aspects and contributions of Ancient Egypt has registered including government, religion, science, irrigation, architecture, art, writing, literature and education.

Key answers to learner activities

### **Unit Review Questions**

1. Identify the key factors that contributed towards the rise of the Ancient Egyptian Civilization?
2. Explain the legacy of the Egyptian civilization.
3. Examine the key factors that contributed towards decline of the New Kingdom phase and eventual collapse of the whole civilization in ancient Egypt.

### **Answers to Learner Activities**

## **Unit 4: The Ancient Egyptian Civilization**

### **Answers to Learner Activities**

#### **Learner Activity 1**

## **Examine how race and geography contributed towards the rise and expansion of ancient Egyptian civilization.**

This task essentially demands you to have a deeper understanding of the factors that contributed towards the rise and expansion of Ancient Egypt as a civilization. You will appreciate in this unit that Egypt benefited from various factors that aided its rise and expansion. Key amongst these factors were the geographical factor and the racial factor.

You should therefore be able to explain how both the geographical and racial factors contributed towards the rise and expansion of Egypt during the ancient times.

Geographically, we note that ancient Egypt was strategically located relative to important features that provided a well-defined security system but also provided it with important resources. For instance, to the north was the Mediterranean Sea, to the south was the Red Sea and the east had the Nubian mountains. These collectively gave Egypt a vantage point in terms of being accessible by other outside forces. Equally to note is that Egypt had the Nile at the heart of its civilization which provided it with various resources and benefits including agriculture.

In terms of the racial factor, it is important to highlight that Egypt stood at the cross roads which made it a meeting point of different races ie those from the East and those from within the continent. This assisted in terms of ideas for the rise and expansion of the civilization.

### **Learner Activity 2**

**In a group of 10, you should assign to each other one of the 10 achievements of the Old Kingdom phase of Ancient Egypt. Allow yourselves to read and understand the achievements for 2 hrs. from this module and other sources. You should then discuss as a group the key achievements of the Old Kingdom phase of ancient Egypt.**

This task demands that each of you within the group of 10 should be assigned one achievement recorded within ancient Egyptian history of the old kingdom and understand it comprehensively. After going through it, you should then share this to your colleagues and in this way, you will also benefit from what others will contribute on the same. The following points should therefore be highlighted and discussed; Political unification; System of Government; Religious achievements; Science; Irrigation; Architecture; Art; Writing; Literature; Education

### **Leaner Activity 3**

**Using relevant examples, explain why the New Kingdom is sometimes referred to as the Empire phase?**

This task requires you to understand the mission and objective of the New Kingdom phase and this mainly had to do with the expansionist agenda. Their most notable political development of the time was pursuance of an imperialist foreign policy. This was much influenced by the military skills learnt from the Hyskos. Through their military campaigns

against other regions, they managed to conquer and extend their influence to Lybia, Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia and Nubia among others.

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# Unit 5: Early Mass Population Movements: The Nilotes and the Bantu

## Introduction

In this unit, you will learn about the mass migrations of the Nilotes and the Bantu. You will learn about their origins, migrations and settlement of these two groups of people. You will also examine the impact that these people had on the indigenous peoples in the areas they settled. The knowledge gained in this unit will help you to understand the developments that later took place in Africa such as the growth of states and empires.

## Key words

- Nilotes
- Masaai
- Bantu; Proto-Bantu
- Linguistics; linguistic classification

## Prerequisite knowledge

In secondary school, you learnt about the history of particular peoples. In this unit, you will trace the origin, migration and settlement of the Nilotes in east Africa.

## Time required

6 hours

**Unit objectives** By the end of this unit, you are supposed to:

- explain the origins of the Nilotes and the Bantu
- compare the migration and settlement of the main streams/ groups of the Nilotic-speaking peoples
- describe the migration and settlement of the Bantu
- analyse the impact of the Nilotes and the Bantu on the indigenous people

## 5.1 Origins of the Nilotes

It has generally been indicated in the literature that the Nilotes were speakers of Nilo-Saharan group of languages. It is for this reason that they are generally referred to as the Nilotes. Notice that the Nilotes, like the other larger groups of people in Africa, are a linguistic classification referring to people speaking closely related languages.

The Nilotes are said to have originated from parts of Southern Sudan and Western Ethiopia. According to Shillington, between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries a number of Later Iron Age people from the Southern Sudan and South West Ethiopia migrated southwards into the grassland regions of the East African interior. You will notice in the subsequent sections that some of the Nilotic groups migrated out of their homelands much earlier than others. For instance, the migration of some of the Nilotes is traced to as far back as the last millennium B.C.

It is worth noting that the Nilotes entered parts of the East African interior as separate and distinct clans. They were pastoralists and cereal cultivators originally. Consequently, most historians have concluded that their migrations may have been connected with their occupations. It is accordingly argued that the rapid expansion of the Western and Eastern Nilotes southwards and eastwards may be linked with the spread of intensive cattle keeping combined with cereal agriculture. According to Shillington, there may have been drought and pressure of increasing herds. Other reasons for their migration may have included the need for settlement land as a result of population pressure, political oppression and external attacks.

It has also been indicated in the literature that the initial migrations of the Nilotes did not involve large numbers, but, instead, they were small-scale seasonal movements in search of new pastures. You may wish to know that there was the likelihood of moving back and forth in search of the pastures in question. It is important to note that of the two groups, the pastoralists moved/migrated faster and farther than their counter-parts, the cereal cultivators. The latter usually stayed longer in an area before moving farther afield.

### **Learner activity 1**

Explain the plausible reasons for migration of the Nilotes.

## **5.2 Settlement of the Nilotes**

As already indicated in the introduction, the Nilotes migrated into the East African interior in three streams/groups, viz; the Highland or Southern Nilotes; the Western or River-Lake Nilotes; and the Eastern or Plains Nilotes. You will now examine the migration and settlement of each of these groups in turn.

### **a) The Highland or Southern Nilotes**

The Southern Nilotes are sometimes referred to as Para-Nilotes. You may wish to know that the Southern Nilotes came from slightly further east in the southern Sudan. They were mainly pastoralists and their origins can be traced to the dry grassland region to the northwest of Lake Turkana. The Southern Nilotes migrated into the East African interior much earlier than either the Western or Eastern Nilotes. Their initial southward movement into East Africa had occurred between about 200 BC and 1000 AD. Their migrations are said to have coincided with the arrival (into roughly the same region) of Early Iron Age Bantu speakers from the southwest.

Notice that these early Southern Nilotes had moved into the highlands to the east of Lake Victoria. They came as iron-working cereal farmers and herdsmen and they absorbed, as it were, the earlier stone-using southern Kushites of the region. From the intermarriages, between these two groups, there emerged the early Kalenjin peoples of the Western Kenyan highlands. Furthermore, the Dadog of Central Tanzania were similarly the result of a further extension of Southern Nilotes and their intermarriages with the Southern Kushites.

The settlement areas, for instance the fertile valleys and upland pastures of the Western Kenyan highlands, were conducive for cereal farming and cattle-herding of the Nilotes. Such areas became centres for further expansion in the period after 1000 AD. As they expanded their settlements, the Southern Nilotes came into contact with other Later Iron Age groups. From the intermarriages that ensued, there developed a number of district groups whose earlier origins can be traced to the Southern Nilotes. Examples of such groups are the **Elgeyo**, the **Pokot** and the **Nandi**.

#### **b) The Western or River-Lake Nilotes**

The Western Nilotes were cultivators and pastoralists. They originated in the Southern Sudan region of the Sudd. This is the area where the Bahr el Ghazal River meets the White Nile River to form a seasonal floodplain. Because of the nature of their origin, the Western Nilotes were more of agriculturalist/cultivators than pastoralists. In addition, they carried out a bit of fishing.

The expansion of the Western Nilotes from Southern Sudan began early in the second millennium AD. This migration began with their seasonal or temporary movements to and from the pastures of the Sudd. According to Iliffe, there were two migrant groups of the Western Nilotes of the Sudd: one group moved northwards to create the Shilluk Kingdom south of Khartoum (Sudan) while the bulk expanded southwards into the Great Lakes region.

It is worth noting that the migration of the Western Nilotes into the Great Lakes region was done in phases. By 1450, a number of Luo-speaking clans had gathered at **Pubungo** near the northern border of modern Uganda. It is indicated that the Luo carried out their hunting and raiding activities there for at least a generation. From there, they dispersed in small clan groups through the inter-lake region and northeast of Lake Victoria.

The history of the Western Nilotes reveals the political involvement of most of their clans. For instance, unlike the **Padhola** of Uganda, who had settled in an unoccupied area and who had no political authorities, the **Luo** (of Kenya) had to counter earlier Bantu and Nilotic populations and in the process created several chiefdoms. For example, one of the Luo-speaking Nilotes, the **Jo-Bito clan** ousted the **Chwezi** from Kitara. It is from the remnants of the Kitara state that the Bito dynasty funded the Kingdom of Bunyoro. Shillington maintains that similar **Luo** origins are traced in the Oral Traditions of other Ugandan states, such as Ankore.

Although these Luo-speaking immigrants usually established themselves as a ruling clan, they intermingled with the local Bantu-speaking population and adopted their language. It is important to note that these Western Nilotes included highly specialised pastoralists such as the **Hima** of Nkore and the **Tutsi** of Rwanda and Burundi.

### c) The Plains or Eastern Nilotes

Like the Highland or Southern Nilotes, the Eastern Nilotes are sometimes referred to as Para-Nilotes. They also came from the same grassland zone, northwest of Lake Turkana. The Eastern Nilotic pastoralists expanded slowly behind the Southern Nilotes, perhaps reaching as far south as Kilimanjaro by the end of the first millennium AD. However, notice that their most powerful group, the Masaai, came to dominate the Rift Valley only during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In addition to the Maasai of Central Kenyan and Northern Tanzanian plains, the Eastern Nilotes also included the Karamojong and Teso of Northeastern Uganda, the Turkana and Samburu of Northwestern Kenya.

Notice that the earlier pastoralists, especially the Highland Nilotes, found the Kenyan highlands largely unoccupied. Consequently, they easily and peacefully mixed with the local farming and hunting populations. On the contrary, the Eastern Nilotes found the region already occupied. You might be aware that the Western Kenyan highlands were occupied by the **Kalenjin**. Hence the later immigrants, for instance the Maasai, resorted to the use of force in order to get established in this area. In this connection, the Maasai used to raid the local people for grazing land and cattle. It is indicated that the Maasai justified acts of violence against the local people for grazing land and cattle. It is also indicated that the Massai justified acts of violence against the local people by their belief that all cattle rightfully belonged to them.

Unlike the Western and Southern Nilotes, who blended with the local populations largely through intermarriages, the Eastern Nilotes retained their cultural traditions and distinctive language.

#### Learner activity 2

Compare the migration and settlement of the Highland and the Eastern Nilotes.

### 5.3 Impact of the Nilotes

You may have noted from the preceding sections that during their migration and actual settlement, the Nilotes mixed peacefully with the local peoples. This was largely through intermarriages and assimilation. According to Shillington, in many cases, the Nilotes mingled and intermarried with their Bantu-speaking predecessors and with them developed new dialects. You have also learnt, especially under the Southern Nilotes that many clans arose out of intermarriages between the Nilotes and the local people.

However, there were other Nilotic groups, for instance, the Maasai, who were less tolerant and consequently ended up establishing their dominance over the local people through the use of force. It is such Nilotes who retained their distinct cultural characteristics since they did not mix readily with the local people. Consequently, as overlords they had a much stronger influence on the local people in question. It is important to note that in both cases the Nilotes had profound impact on the indigenous people they found.



Politically, some of the Eastern Nilotes (e.g. the Maasai) and the Western Nilotes (e.g. the Luo) had great influence on the political life of their respective areas. They established their military and political dominance over huge areas covering parts of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The local people learnt a lot from their political leadership.

The Maasai society was organised on a system of age-sets which were developed along military lines. They had three main age-sets: children, young adults and elders. Children underwent through initiation ceremonies which included military training. Young adults were regarded as full-time soldiers. They carried out duties of protecting herds and grazing areas and also raiding for both. With time, the Maasai intermarried with the Kikuyu of Central Kenyan highlands, and the Kikuyu, in turn developed their own age-sets and initiation ceremonies based on those of the Maasai.

Generally, the different streams of the Nilotes brought with them a number of practices characteristic of the people of Southern Sudan. These included initiation ceremonies involving circumcision and the pastoralist practices of bleeding and milking cattle and making greater use of cow's milk as a form of food.

The Nilotes also brought with them skills in pottery from Southern Sudan. During the Seventh and Eighth Centuries AD in Rwanda and somewhat later elsewhere, the early Iron Age pottery, associated with Bantu settlement, gave way to a cruder 'rouletted' style decorated with designs made in the soft clay with twisted vegetable fibre. You may wish to learn that such pottery was already made by the Nilotes in both Southern Sudan and East of Lake Victoria. It is not a surprise; therefore, that archaeological evidence suggests that Nilotes brought the pottery to Rwanda, from where it spread to the rest of the Great Lakes region.

On the other hand, it is worth considering the influence that the local people had on the immigrant people. As the Nilotes settled down among the indigenous peoples, they benefited greatly from the local languages and cultural practices. For instance, the Highland Nilotes intermarried with the stone-using Kushites and the resultant Kalenjin group had a culture which was not purely Nilotic. You may wish to know that even the intolerant Maasai benefited in one way or another from the subject peoples in the areas they settled.

### **Learner Activity 3**

In what way did the local people influence the life of the Nilotic peoples, for example, the Maasai?

## **5.4 The Bantu**

### **Background information**

The Bantu are presently found in Southern Africa. However, you should note that the term "Bantu" is purely a linguistic classification. The people are called Bantu because all speak languages that are genetically related. That is, there is linguistic affinity among them. All

the languages are mutually intelligible. That is, one is able to make sense of what is being said even if that person is coming into contact with the speaker for the first time.

Language experts known as linguists have identified the word stem “-ntu”, to be common to all the languages of this family. These linguists have also picked up the prefix “ba” common again to most of the languages. This prefix “ba’ denotes plural. Now the combination of “ba” and “-ntu” produces “Bantu” which means people.

You should also take note that “Bantu” is not a name of any single language but refers to people who speak closely related languages.

### **Examples to show that Bantu languages are mutually intelligible**

- The Kongo on the Atlantic Ocean call a person *muntu*; plural: *Bantu*
- The Swahili call a person *mtu*; plural: *watu*
- The Xhosa call a person *umuntu*; plural: *abantu*
- The Chewa/Nyanja call a person *munthu*; plural: *anthu*

You can appreciate from the above examples that indeed the Bantu speak languages that are mutually intelligible or similar. Hence, they are called Bantu speakers.

### **5.5 Origins**

It should be mentioned that the question of the origins of the Bantu-speaking peoples has generated a hot debate among scholars of different disciplines. Historians, ethnographers, ethnobotanists, archaeologists have all attempted to grapple with the problem of the origins and expansion of the Bantu speakers.

It is believed that the original ancestors of the Bantu, otherwise known as the Pro-Bantu developed in the region that surrounds Central Cameroon and East-central Nigeria. These people practiced very simple farming. They grew crops such as yams and plantains. They also fished and gathered fruits and nuts.

After some five hundred years, knowledge of iron working is believed to have reached the Proto-Bantu in their original area of settlement. This was at the beginning of the Christian Era. These early Bantu people apparently got the knowledge of iron working from Meroe. You will realise that with the introduction of the iron working skills, the early Bantu were able to make iron hoes, which were used for farming, producing more food for themselves. One effect of this was increase in population which in turn triggered a wave of migrations.

However, you may probably have noticed that the above explanation does not tell us the exact origins of the Bantu in Africa. This prompted some scholars to conduct more research in order to establish the exact origins of the Bantu. These scholars used two types of evidence: the **Linguistic Evidence** and the **Archaeological Evidence**. Now, let us look at each type of evidence in some detail.

## 5.6 The linguistic evidence

As early as 1963, scholars started coming up with theories about the origins of the Bantu and their dispersal by using the Linguistic Evidence. However, the two most notable contributors to date are Joseph Greenberg and Malcolm Guthrie. Both of them were linguists and therefore they put forward linguistic theories about the origins and expansion of the Bantu. You should now be introduced to each one of the linguistic theories. First, Greenberg's theory.

### i) Greenberg's linguistic theory

Joseph Greenberg studied 50 common words of some Western Sudanic and Bantu languages and was able to tell how near one language was to the other or how far it was from the other. On this basis, he was able to construct a family tree. Now, from this study, Greenberg came up with an explanation that the ultimate origins of the Bantu-speaking people lay in Central Cameroon and the East-Central Nigerian area along the Benue River. He said this was so because this area is an area of the greatest internal language divergence. This divergence explains the earliest differentiation of language at the start of their migration.

### ii) Guthrie's linguistic theory

You have learnt that Joseph Greenberg states that the origins of the Bantu speakers are to be traced to the Central Cameroon/East-Central Nigeria area. However, Malcolm Guthrie has a contrary view. Guthrie also studied some 200 Bantu languages. He compared 22,000 related words from the 200 languages and from these he came up with a series of common word roots.

Out of these, only 500 were general roots which suggested that they might have belonged to the original Proto-Bantu language. According to Guthrie, where these, general roots form a nucleus is where the Bantu originated and the peripheral zones were a result of geographical dispersal (migration) from the centre. Now, the area where these general roots form a nucleus is the area of Katanga in the southeastern part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is from here that the Bantu expanded outwards.

### Learner Activity 4

According to Joseph Greenberg and Malcolm Guthrie, what are the ultimate origins of the Bantu?

## 5.7 Archaeological evidence

You have learnt about the origins of the Bantu using the Linguistic Evidence. However, the use of Linguistic Evidence alone is not adequate to explain the origins of the Bantu speakers. There are still some knowledge gaps that need to be filled up. For example, we need to know the general routes these Bantu took and when they settled in the different parts of Africa. We must therefore go beyond Greenberg's and Guthrie's explanations and we will realise that Archaeological Evidence has helped historians fill some of the knowledge gaps.

Using the carbon 14 methods of dating, archaeologists have identified some earliest sites which may have been inhabited by the early Bantu speakers. And because most of the organic implements used by people have a limited life span in the soil, historians and archaeologists have mainly relied on pottery remains. By closely studying styles of pottery decorations and furnace construction, these scholars have been able to classify the early Bantu settlements and they have concluded that there appear to have been two streams of Bantu expansion. These are the Eastern stream and the Western stream. Now, you will learn more about each of the two streams.

#### **i) The Eastern stream**

You should note that historians and archaeologists have traced the Eastern Stream to Urewe pottery which has been firmly dated in the Lakeland region to between the second and fifth centuries AD. However, its origins can probably be dated to as far back as the BC period. The pottery is named after a place near Lake Victoria in Uganda. The Urewe Pottery is distinctly marked by a depression at the base of pots and bowls. Hence, it is sometimes referred to as “Dimple – Based pottery’.

Urewe tradition represents the spread of the early Iron Age Bantu southwards from the Great Lakes region through Tanzania into Malawi and Eastern Zambia. In Malawi, pottery related to Urewe pottery was found at Nkope in Mangochi and it is called Nkope Ware. Nkope site is situated 40km north of Mangochi Boma near Cape Maclear.

#### **ii) The Western stream**

This stream is represented by pottery found at Kapwirimbe near Lusaka, Kalundu on the Batoka plateau and Dambwa near Livingstone in the Zambezi Valley. This stream suggests the spread of the Bantu from Angola and Zaire-Congo basin westwards to Western Zambia. However, not much archaeological work has been done in this area so far. Hence very little is known about this so-called Western Stream.

### **5.8 Migration and settlement of the Bantu**

You have so far learnt about the origins of the Bantu-speaking people. Now, you will learn about their migration and expansion into Southern Africa.

One notable scholar who has tried to grapple with this problem is historian Roland Oliver. He has come up with a four-stage theory of Bantu migration and expansion using the Linguistic, Cultural and Archaeological Evidence. However, he begins by stating that the two theories offered by Greenberg and Guthrie are not contradictory but complement each other. Now, let us look at the four-stage theory in some detail.

#### **a) Stage 1**

Using the linguistic evidence provided by Greenburg and Guthrie, Oliver argues that the initial push of Bantu migration started from the Northern woodlands through the

Equatorial forest to the Southern woodland. This was a very rapid process following the Congo waterways. This was before the beginning of Christian Era.

#### **b) Stage 2**

The second stage involved the occupation of the Southern woodland belt as they moved from coast to coast, that is, from east to west. Thus, the present-day countries of Angola, Namibia and Tanzania were settled by the Bantu during this stage. This was the period of consolidation and settlement of the first Bantu migrants and major achievements included population increase and iron working technology. It was also during this period that the parent Bantu language developed its final character. Here, Oliver used Archaeological Evidence and the Linguistic Evidence as provided by Guthrie and Greenberg.

#### **c) Stage 3**

The third stage involved the colonisation of the Southern Somali coastline and the northern sector of the inter-lacustrine region, that is, Rwanda and Burundi. Oliver suggests that perhaps it was during this stage that the Banana Revolution of south East Asia may have played some role as the banana became the staple food of the people and there was rapid population growth due to food self-sufficiency. Here, he used archaeological evidence.

#### **d) Stage 4**

The fourth and last stage, according to Oliver, involved the colonisation southwards, north westwards and north eastwards. In other words, it was during this stage that the Bantu occupied the drier regions of East Africa, Central Africa, and South Africa. Here Oliver relied on oral sources.

### **Learner Activity 5**

**Briefly explain Oliver's theory of Bantu migration and expansion.**

### **5.9 Impact of the Bantu**

Just like the Nilotes, the Bantu too influenced the lives of the people with whom they intermingled. These Bantu found scattered populations of Stone Age dwellers such as the pygmies, Hottentots and Bushmen. These people lived by hunting wild game and gathering wild grains and fruits. Most of them were absorbed into Bantu society and adapted themselves to Bantu life styles. One can therefore cite a number of ways in which the Bantu influenced the lives of these local people. Some of these ways are as follows:

- Adoption of the cultural practices. The indigenous people adopted the cultural practices of the Bantu-speaking people. These included religious beliefs and practices, inheritance systems and traditional dances.
- Acquisition of agricultural skills. You will appreciate that agriculture was the main economic activity of the Bantu. Archaeological evidence gathered from Iron Age sites indicates that the Bantu were agriculturalists who grew crops such as millet, sorghum and pulses. The indigenous people also adopted and practised farming.

Along with agriculture, these indigenous people also learnt different ways of storing their foodstuffs. For example, they learnt to keep their grain crops in granaries.

- Living in permanent shelters. Prior to the arrival of the Bantu, indigenous people were living in temporary shelters. Now, they learnt how to construct huts with walls made of poles, plastered with daga and thatched with grass. This was a great improvement indeed from the Stone Age way of life.
- Acquisition of metal working skills. You will appreciate that it was the Bantu who introduced iron working techniques in Southern Africa.
- They also introduced pottery making skills in the region. The indigenous people acquired these skills due to their intermingling with the Bantu and these skills revolutionised their way of living. Their lives became easier as they engaged in more and more economic activities.
- Establishment of fairly stable communities in which population was relatively stable. It was in these communities that a rudimentary form of political organisation emerged out of which prominent state systems later developed.

### **Unit summary**

In this unit, you have learnt about the origins, migration and settlements of the Nilotes. It had been noted that all the Nilotes originated roughly from the same region-Southern Sudan and Western Ethiopia. However, they had different reasons for migration, took different migratory routes, and settled in different regions of the East African interior. You have also learnt about their impact on the local people in their settlement areas. And that the local people too had considerable influence on the immigrant Nilotic peoples.

You have also learnt about to another linguistic group of people, the Bantu, who spread over a much wider area in the south, central and eastern parts of Africa as compared to the Nilotes. You have learnt that through the use of linguistic and archaeological evidence, the origins of the Bantu speakers can be traced to the Central Cameroon – East/ Central Nigeria border or around the Lake Chad area. You have also learnt that there were two main streams of Bantu expansion: the Eastern Stream and the Western stream, and that their arrival had significant effect on the lives of the people of the area. One such effect was the establishment of state system in Southern and Central Africa. In the next units, you will learn about these state systems.

### **Key answers to learner activity**

#### **Unit Review Test**

Discuss the impact which the Nilotes had on the peoples of East Africa.

What lessons do we learn about Bantu migration and settlement in Southern Africa from the Iron Age sites in the region?

## Unit 5: Early Mass Population Movements: The Nilotes and the Bantu

### Answers to learner's activity 1

- 1 Search for pasture and settlement land.
- 2 Fleeing attacks from rival groups.

### Answers to learner's activity 2

- 1 Highland Nilotes migrated earlier than Eastern Nilotes.
- 2 Highland Nilotes were tolerant of the local peoples while the Eastern Nilotes especially the Maasai were intolerant.

### Answers to learner's activity 3

The Nilotes adopted the language and cultural practices of the local people. For example they intermarried with the Kushites, the result of which was the emergence of the Kalenjin people.

### Answers to learner's activity 4

According to Greenberg, the Bantu came from the Central Cameroon and the East-Central Nigeria area along the Benue River while Guthrie maintains that the Bantu came from the Lake Chad area.

### Answers to learner's activity 5

The Bantu migrated in four stages as follows:

- 1 Movement from the Northern woodland to the Southern woodland.
- 2 Occupation of the Southern woodland belt from coast to coast.
- 3 Colonisation of the Southern Somali coastline and the interlacustrine region.
- 4 Colonisation of East, Central and Southern Africa.

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# **Unit 6: Early African Kingdoms and Empires in North Africa:**

## **Egypt, Kush and Aksum**

### **Introduction**

In this unit, you will learn about the histories of Egypt, Kush and Aksum. Since the history of Egypt has been examined in unit 4, in this unit the coverage will be very brief. The history of Kush is closely associated with the histories of Egypt, on the one hand and Aksum on the other. The Kushites initially were under the Egyptian rule before they rebelled and became independent. The Kingdom of Kush began to decline from as early as the first century AD after it was attacked by their subjects, the people of Aksum. It was King Ezana of Aksum who through invasion brought about the eventual collapse of Kush.

### **Key words**

- Divine kingship; divine being
- Polytheism
- Meroitic script; Meroitic civilisation
- Judaism
- Regent

### **Prerequisite knowledge**

In the previous unit, you learnt about the origins and migrations of the Nilotes and the Bantu. The knowledge you gained will help you understand the establishment of later kingdoms in Africa including the kingdoms of Egypt, Kush, and Aksum.

### **Time required**

4 hours

### **Unit objectives**

- explain the origins and rise of Egypt, Kush and Aksum
- compare and contrast the administration of these three kingdoms
- discuss the mutual influence among the Egyptians, Kushites and Aksumites
- examine the factors for the decline of Egypt, Kush and Aksum.

### **6.1 Brief History of Egyptian Kingdom**

The knowledge of the history of the Egyptian Civilisation which you learnt in chapter four will help you to easily understand the developments regarding the histories of Kush and Aksum. In fact, the histories of Kush and Aksum are incomplete without Egyptian civilization. The Egyptian civilization arose as a result of favourable factors associated with the Nile River Valley. Flooding along the Nile brought fertile silt which enhanced soil fertility. The Egyptians also took advantage of flooding to irrigate crop fields during drier periods. This enabled bumper harvests which were a precondition for increased population.

With time, as was the case with most kingdoms, there was need for efficient political administration. As you are aware, Egypt organised into three kingdoms: the old kingdom, the middle kingdom and the new kingdom. The general political leadership led to the decline and, in turn, to the rise of a new kingdom in its stead. You may wish to know that the Kushites were under the Egyptian rule during the new kingdom. During this period, the Kushites learnt and mastered the Egyptian culture including military organisation. No wonder it became easy for these Kushites to rebel against their masters once they noticed military weakness in their masters.

## **6.2 Background: Egyptian administration**

Kush lies to the South of Egypt (what is now called Northern Sudan) between the third and fifth cataracts of the Nile River (See Fig. 6.1). It developed from about 800Bc. The History of Kush is known in connection with the History of Egypt. The name Kush (the native name) was given by Egypt around 1500 BC when Egypt colonised this area. It is indicated that the Egyptians under their King Thutmose III imposed their rule and culture on the Kushites.

It should be known that the Egyptians formed an effective structure of Egyptian administration in the area. Two Egyptian officials were appointed to represent Egypt. These officials made certain that the Kushites paid tax to Egypt annually. They built their capital at Napata. The Egyptians also built other towns and temples. It is worth noting that at Jebel Barkal, they built a temple to their god Amon-Re. As a result, Kush copied most aspects of Egyptian civilisation. According to P. Shinnie, there seems little doubt that chiefly families were much influenced and it is likely that many rich Kushites moved into the towns and adopted many Egyptian customs and ways of life.

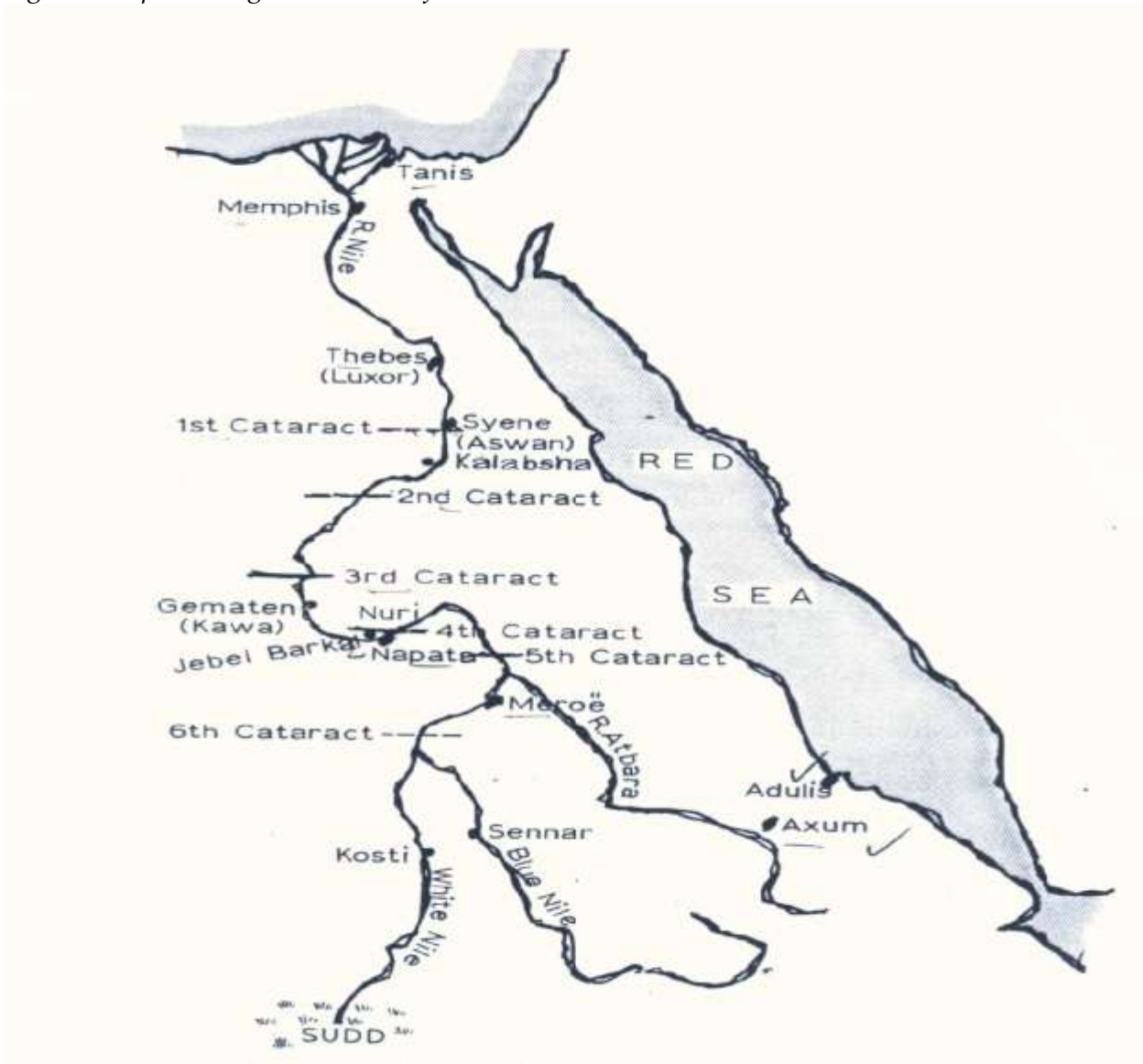
## **6.3 The rise of Kush**

It is generally indicated in the literature that the nature of the end of Egyptian rule in Kush is extremely obscure. However, it is generally agreed that by about 750 B.C., Egyptian troops and administrators were gone and the beginnings of an independent Kushite state could be seen.

It has usually been assumed that the first independent Kushite rulers lived at Napata. Originally, an Egyptian foundation, Napata, became the religious and perhaps the political centre of an important indigenous state which owing much of its culture to Egypt, developed independently of Egypt.

It should be noted that when Egypt started to decline, around 1100 BC, the Kushites under Kashita organised themselves and attacked Egypt in 750 B.C. Kashita conquered Egypt as far as Thebes and then he died. His son Pianky took over and completed the conquest up to the delta. After this conquest, the Kushite Kings became the Pharaohs of both Egypt and Kush.

Fig. 6.1 Map showing the location of Kush



The period of Kushite rule in Egypt ended in 650BC when the Kushites withdrew from Egypt in face of military invasion by the Assyrians. In this connection, it has been argued that the withdrawal of the Kushites from Egypt was important for the History of Kush because from this date onwards, the resources of the royal and religious power were concentrated in their own country.

It is possible to see, though dimly, a line of development which became increasingly indigenous as separation from Egypt was prolonged.

However, Egyptian cultural influence remained important for several hundred years until the end of Meroitic times. In spite of this strong Egyptian influence, there are also indications of a quite different and presumably indigenous element, particularly in social matters. The un-Egyptian succession system in which the crown was passed, not as in Egypt from father to son but to brothers of the late ruler, is a good example here. Another example is the indication that maternal descent was important to claimants of the throne.

## **Learner Activity 1**

Explain how the Kushites rose to power over their previous masters.

### **6.4 Transfer of capital: Napata to Meroe**

At this point, it is important to discuss the shift from Napata to Meroe as centres of Kushite administration and culture. This has been argued and a number of different dates have been suggested for the transfer of the royal residence from Napata to the Southern Centre, Meroe. Here the state, already ancient was to survive for almost another thousand years but in a changing form.

It is probable that the move from Napata to Meroe was not as sudden as most writers have suggested. There is some truth in the view that in the time of King Pianky a branch of the royal family had gone south to hold Southern Kush. And it has also been indicated that a number of early Kushite Kings built temples at Meroe.

Notice that in 593 BC, the Egyptians invaded Kush and reached as far as Napata. The military success of this Egyptian invasion would certainly be a compelling reason for shifting the main centre of the state to somewhere further south.

Whatever the date of the change or move it might be, it had very important results for the development of Kushite civilisation and it was only after the move to Meroe and some time after the initial move, if the date of around 590BC is correct, that indigenous elements in the culture began to emerge, so that one could begin to speak of a specifically Meroitic civilisation.

#### **Advantages of Meroe over Napata**

The site of Meroe was well chosen and had many advantages over Napata in addition to military security. Meroe is said to have been more fertile than Napata. This is partly because Meroe received a double flood from the Nile and Atbara rivers. Rainfall was also slightly heavier than Napata. Meroe therefore had good soils for agriculture and pasture for grazing.

It is also worth noting that Meroe had an abundance of iron-ore deposits. After learning the skill of smelting from the Assyrians, the Egyptians and the Kushites themselves started making iron tools and weapons. Consequently, Meroe became a centre of iron works like axe heads, swords and razors. These were used in exchange for salt, cloths, guns, spices, jewels and precious stones. Apart from iron, Kush also had gold deposits which were used for making ornaments. Through trade with the Kushites, people carried the iron smelting skills from Meroe to other parts of the world.

Meroe was well placed for trading activities. It lay along the east-west trade route. As a result of this, it became a great trading centre. It was a source of valuable trade items like

ivory, skins (especially of the leopards), Ostrich feathers, ebony and gold. These were exported to other parts of the world.

You should also know that trade as far as trade was concerned, Meroe controlled routes eastwards towards the Red sea and northwards to Egypt. The routes that led to the Red sea and across eventually led to the merchant centres of Syria. Meroe, though further away from Egyptian markets was in easier contact with them (i.e. these markets) than Napata had been especially after the introduction of the camel, because of these routes.

### **Learner Activity 2**

In your own words, what advantages did Meroe have over Napata as centres of administration and culture?

### **Egyptian influence on the Kushites**

As has already been pointed out, the Egyptian cultural influence on the Kushites remained for quite a long time. It has been argued that the Kushites, especially after Meroe became an important cultural centre, helped to spread the Egyptian civilisation to other parts of the world. In this section, therefore, you will be exposed to some of the Egyptian ideas and aspects of culture that the Kushites adopted.

Under religion, the Kushites worshipped the same gods as the Egyptians did, for example god Amon –Re whose temple was built at Jebel Barkal. However, apart from these gods, the Kushites had their own local gods. They also believed in life after death and consequently, they too buried the dead together with their possessions thinking that they will come back to life later.

Notice also that the Kushites adopted the Egyptian style of building. It is indicated in the literature that they also built pyramids, although Kushite pyramids were smaller and sharply pointed at the top. They also copied the Egyptian system of building temples for gods.

The Kushites also greatly benefited from the Egyptians in the areas of dressing, farming and writing. In agriculture, the Kushites adopted the Egyptian irrigation farming, for example through the use of the Shaduf. You should know that at first the Kushites were using Egyptian writing (Hieroglyphics) but later on they developed their own type of writing called Meroitic script.

The local language (Meroitic language) seems to have influenced this kind of writing. It may be that the development of a feeling of cultural independence caused the Meroites to wish to write in their own language. Whatever the reason, notice that by the early part of the second century BC, a system of (local) writing had been developed.

## **6.5 The decline of Kush**

It has usually been argued that there was a decline in the power and wealth of Meroe after the First Century AD. In short, the Kingdom declined because of two notable factors: loss of control over trade and loss of political and military power.

It has been argued that the kingdom itself disappeared from Meroe in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD having perhaps been weakened by a shift of trade from the Nile to the Red sea during Rome's occupation of Egypt. This view is supported by P.L. Shinnie who maintains that if there was an absolute impoverishment of the Meroitic Kingdom, an important part may have been played by declining Meroitic participation in the Red sea trade. In this connection, the use of the port of Adulis during the early centuries A.D may have drawn trade away from further north and have helped to enrich Aksum at the expense of Meroe.

Under the loss of power, the conventional view is that Kush was destroyed by Aksum, a Kingdom rising to the south in 350 AD under King Ezana. It is indicated that following this invasion by Ezana (350 A.D) most Kushites fled from Meroe thereby spreading the iron-working knowledge.

## **6.6 The origins and History of Aksum**

Aksum lied to the South-east of Kush in what is today called Ethiopia. The origins of the Aksumite Kingdom go back well into the First Millennium B.C., when settlers from South Arabia and the Yemen introduced Semitic languages, building in stone and literacy. These immigrants intermarried with the original inhabitants of the area, the Negroes. You should also know that with time, the Aksumites developed their own language known as Geez. Their kind of writing was also called Geez. The King was given the title of 'King of Kings'. Notice that the period from the 5<sup>th</sup> Century B.C., (which is about as early a date as can be established with confidence) to the end of Aksumite times in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century A.D., can conveniently be divided into three periods. You will now learn about each of the three periods. However, it is important to note that of the three periods, the most important is the third period, the Aksumite Period.

### **a) The First Period**

The First Period, which can be called 'South Arabian' dates from the 5<sup>th</sup> Century B.C., or perhaps earlier. From archaeological point of view, the material remains show very clearly their South Arabian origin. There is little information on domestic dwellings, but they seem mostly to have been rectangular in shape and built of stone with mud mortar.

### **b) The Second Period**

The Second Period, lasting from about the beginning of the Third Century B.C., to the First Century A.D, shows the earlier South Arabian cultural influences being assimilated to local conditions and the development of the first distinctively Ethiopian styles. Notice that the writing system was modified. The changes are to be seen in the pottery and metal work. It is worth noting that no historical events can be identified with either of these first two periods.

### **c) The Third Period**

By the 1st Century A.D, the development of the town of Aksum began the Third Period, known as 'Aksumite' which continued until the 10<sup>th</sup> Century. Evidence suggests that many of the earlier sites were abandoned and new towns founded. You have to know that of these, Aksum, perhaps by reason of its sheltered situation; plentiful water supply and adequacy of agricultural land, became the most important and the seat of a long line of rulers.

During this period, Aksum became a town of some size and contained numerous temples and palaces. This view is supported by John Illife and he writes: "During the first century AD a Kingdom emerged at Aksum inheriting much South Arabian culture and beautifying its capital with palatial stone buildings, tall stone stelae marking royal graves, and a surrounding belt of rural villas. However, this Aksumite Period is marked by a number of important changes in the styles of architecture as well as pottery. It is also indicated that there was an increase in prosperity, largely as a result of trading activities.

### **Learner Activity 6.3**

With close reference to the Third Period, explain the origins of the Kingdom of Aksum.

## **6.7 Administration**

### **Trade**

The town of Adulis on the Coast became the port through which trade flowed. It seems to predate Aksum, and may have been in existence as early as the time of Ptolemy III ( 246 - 221 B.C) By 100 A.D, it was certainly the main port on the south –western coast of the Red sea and was an important centre for the trade in ivory from the interior.

You may wish to know that the strength of the Kingdom was based on trade. The Aksumites traded with the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Arabs and later with the Romans. The Greeks had great influence in Aksum so that Greek became the language of commerce. In addition to ivory, the Aksumites supplied coffee. These were exchanged for cloth, salt, spirits and guns.

It is worth noting that a coinage was developed by the 3rd Century A.D. Certainly contacts with Hellenistic Egypt were close and Greek influence was significant. It is probable that it was Hellenistic Greek influence that led to the development of the coinage in question.

### **King Ezana**

King Ezana (Aezanes in Greek) was the greatest King of Aksum. He was the son of King Ella Amida. As you will notice in the succeeding section, Christianity was introduced into Aksum during the reign of Ezana's father, Ella Amida. However, it became popular after Ezana came to the throne. It is also indicated that trade increased noticeably during his reign.

Ezana is popular partly because of an invasion he led against the Kingdom of Kush around 350 AD. From the previous unit, it has been indicated that it was this military attack which partly led to the decline of Kush Kingdom. Consequently, the Aksumite Kingdom expanded towards the North West, covering part of the area previously under Kush.

Notice that evidence for this military expedition is to be found in an inscription at Aksum written in Geez language. During the reign of Ezana, tall stone monuments called Obelisks were built to commemorate his military victory against Kush. Ezana was given the royal title of 'King of Kings' and "The Unconquered".

#### **Learner Activity 6.4**

Why is King Ezana very popular in the History of Aksum?

#### **Christianity in Aksum**

By the middle of the 4th Century, Aksum had become a considerable power and the court of the King had been Christianised. The introduction of Christianity to Aksum is traditionally attributed to Frumentius, a young Christian trader from Syria, who was kidnapped on the Coast by agents of the King of Aksum.

It is generally argued that by reason of his ability and education, Frumentius rose to the position of importance at the court of the King (King Ella Amida). You have already learnt that Ella Amida was Ezana's father. Also note that following the death of King Amida Frumentius became virtual ruler of the country (that is, he assumed the position of a regent) during the minority of Ezana. And it is this power which enabled Frumentius to strengthen the position of Christianity. Furthermore, he became tutor to the future King Ezana, who officially adopted Christianity in about 333 A.D after Frumentius had been consecrated in Alexandria as Aksum's first Bishop.

However, it is also indicated in the literature that this view oversimplifies a complex process, for Christianity was only one of several religions (including Judaism) at Ezana's court. And that Ezana had probably sought to patronise all religions, including Christianity, whose prominence on his coins suggests that he displayed it especially, but not exclusively, to foreigners. And because Christianity first influenced the court, it became a state religion.

#### **6.8 The decline of Aksum**

From 700 -1000 A.D Aksum declined in wealth and power. This was partly because the warfare between Byzantium and Persia dislocated trade. On the other hand, this was due to Muslim expansion which destroyed Adulis.

It is indicated that the Muslim Arabs took control of the trade that had been in the hands of Askum. Therefore, the importance of Aksum in trade declined. It is further argued that



Aksum declined because its increasing reliance on agriculture coincided with declining rainfall. Aksum therefore became weaker and weaker and finally declined by 1000 A.D.

### **Unit summary**

You have just finished looking at the history of Egypt, Kush and Aksum. Do you now see the connection between the Histories of Egypt, Kush and Aksum? You might be aware that the Egyptians were masters over the Kushites before the latter actually became independent politically. In fact, you noted in unit 8 that these Kushites briefly ruled over their previous masters, the Egyptians. You also noted in units 8 and 9 that the Aksumites played a significant role in the decline of Kush.

### **Unit Review Test**

1. Explain the legacy of the Egyptian civilization.
2. To what extent would one argue that the Egyptian cultural influence on the Kushites remained for quite a long time?
3. To what extent can it be argued that the strength of Aksum was based on trade?

### **Answers to Learner Activities**

#### **Answers to learner's activity 1**

Kush arose as Egypt entered a period of general decline around 1100 B.C. They were led by Kashita. He conquered Egypt as far as Thebes in 750 B.C., after which he died. He was succeeded by his son Pianky, who completed the conquest of Egypt up to the Delta. From then onwards, Kushite Kings became the Pharaohs of both Egypt and Kush.

#### **Answers to learner activity 2**

- 1 Meroe was more fertile than Napata.
- 2 Meroe received heavier rains than Napata.
- 3 Meroe had abundant iron ore deposits.
- 4 Meroe was well placed for trade activities.

#### **Answers to learner activity 3**

- 1 The Third Period of the rise of the Kingdom is known as the Aksumite period.
- 2 The Kingdom developed around the town of Aksum between the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 10<sup>th</sup> Centuries A.D.
- 3 Advantages of Aksum over other towns included plentiful water supply and adequate agricultural land.

#### **Answers to learner activity 4**

- 1 He conquered Kush around 350 A.D which led to the expansion of Aksum towards the North west
- 2 He presided over the construction of tall stone monuments called obelisks.

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# Unit 7: Early Kingdoms and Empires in West Africa

## Introduction

This unit presents a discussion of three states and empires that evolved and expanded in West Africa in historically known as the Western Sudanic region. This is a rich grassland region of that is bordered by the Sahara Desert, to the south by the Equatorial Forest whereas to the east it is bordered by Lake Chad and to the West by the Atlantic Ocean. The name "Sudan" is derived from the Arabic term "Bilad al-Sudan" which means "the land of Black Peoples". It was in this region that three great kingdoms emerged as early as the third century BC. These kingdoms were ancient Ghana, Mali and Songhai. These kingdoms grew as powerful states in succession of each other. You will be therefore be introduced to the factors that contributed to the rise of these kingdoms, their social and economic organization, their achievements and the factors that contributed towards their decline.

## Areas of Emphasis

- Origins of the kingdoms
- System of government
- Social and Economic organization
- decline and fall of the kingdoms

## Key words

You will find the following words and phrases. Make sure that you know their meanings and how they have been used in this unit:

- Divine monarchy, Silent trade, Paganism, Pilgrimage

## Prerequisite knowledge

By now you already have knowledge of how some ancient kingdoms evolved in Africa such as those in North Africa particularly Egypt.

## Time Allowed

4 Hours

## Unit Objectives

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- explain the origins of ancient kingdoms of West Africa
- describe the social, economic and political organization of the kingdoms
- analyse the factors that led to the decline and fall of the kingdoms.

## Background

The ancient Western Sudanic region witnessed the emergence of great kingdoms and empires as early as the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The most important ones were the ancient kingdoms of Ghana, Mali and Songhai which grew as powerful state systems in succession. The states in question emerged, grew, flourished and declined between the years 600 and 1600 AD. Geographically, the kingdoms of were located on the edge, south

of the Sahara Desert. You should bear in mind that ancient Ghana and the modern state of Ghana are not the same. The states in question were very much influenced by similar factors in terms of their evolution, growth and expansion. In addition, these states were largely characterized by similar features, systems of government but also factors that contributed towards their decline and fall.

### **7.1 Factors for their rise**

You may be interested to learn that there were several factors that contributed to the rise of these states but the most important ones were the following:

#### **i. The agricultural factor**

The area around the Niger bend which was largely inhabited by the Mande speaking peoples was one of the first areas to witness the Neolithic revolution. This revolution was the one that drove them into a more settled life with agriculture being the principal way of livelihood. The area in question became quite ideal for the production of cereaeral crops such as Sorghum, millet and rice. Consequently, the area attracted a number of people such as the Tuaregs from the north and the desert pastoralist to settle and establish themselves in the area. Such a development caused increased competition over the available resources in the area leading to the growth of state systems. For instance, if one examines the rise of ancient Ghana kingdom, it is easy to notice that agriculture was one of the contributing factors for its rise. The Soninke were agriculturalists who produced food items such as sorghum and millet. Besides this, they also embraced iron working technology which enabled them to effectively produce. You will also appreciate that as the Sahara grew drier towards the end of the BC era there was need to improve farming techniques. The Soninke took advantage of this situation as they took the lead in developing new farming techniques using their iron working technology. Apart from this, they also used their superior iron weaponry such as swords and spears to seize more farming land from the weaker and less well-organised neighbouring peoples of the savannah in order to create for themselves a powerful state system.

#### **ii. The trade factor**

This area also witnessed the rise and growth in international trade. It must be appreciated that since the Roman times, there developed trade links between the Berbers of North Africa and the indigenous people of West Africa. Consequently, such a wider trading Network needed some system of control and coordination hence the rise of such powerful State systems. For instance, the rise of the ancient Ghana was greatly driven into motion as a result of trade. The area in question was strategically located relative to the development of the trans-Saharan trade. The inhabitants especially the Soninke acted as middlemen in this form of trade. The main commodities that they traded in were gold and salt. The Soninke were well placed geographically as they were located midway between the salt-producing area of Taghaza in the desert and the gold producing country of Wangara in the Bambuk region on the upper Senegal River. Trade was perhaps the most important factor in the growth and expansion of this kingdom. Similarly, both Mali and Songhay were very much influenced by the trade factor. Mali like ancient Ghana was strategically

located relative to the trans-Saharan trade. The area linked the major centres such as Siljimsa in the North, Boure in the South, Bambuk and Wangara. These were important trading places. Like Ghana, the main trading commodities were gold and salt. Like their predecessors in ancient Ghana, the people of Mali were not miners of gold but simply acted as middlemen and the state also benefited enormously from the taxes that were levied on trade transactions. Trade in Mali grew exceedingly during the 14<sup>th</sup> Century AD.

### **iii. The Religious factor**

This area which witnessed the rise and expansion of state systems and empires in West Africa also witnessed the rise and expansion of Islam. Islam appears to have played a vital role in the growth and consolidation of these states. Once Islam began to be adopted in these states from the 8<sup>th</sup> Century AD, it modernized a number of sectors including the administration of the kingdom but also foreign relations.

### **iv. The Political or Kingship factor**

Most of these states managed to thrive successfully due to their nature of political organization. The states in question devised an elaborate political system which was centralized on the power of the King assisted by a horde of officials. Such a system provided strong mechanisms with which the state was able to grow socially, economically and politically. In the Kingdom of Ghana for instance, the state was built on the concept of divine monarchy in which the king was regarded as a divine being and that he had absolute power to administer the state. Because of this, many people respected him quite a lot and was assisted by different officials. Similarly, Mali's political organization was similar to that of Ghana. It had a centralized political system with the King on top and assisted by different other officials and so was the same with Songhai Kingdom.

## **Learner Activity 1**

Discuss the key factors that contributed to the rise and expansion of early Western Sudanic States

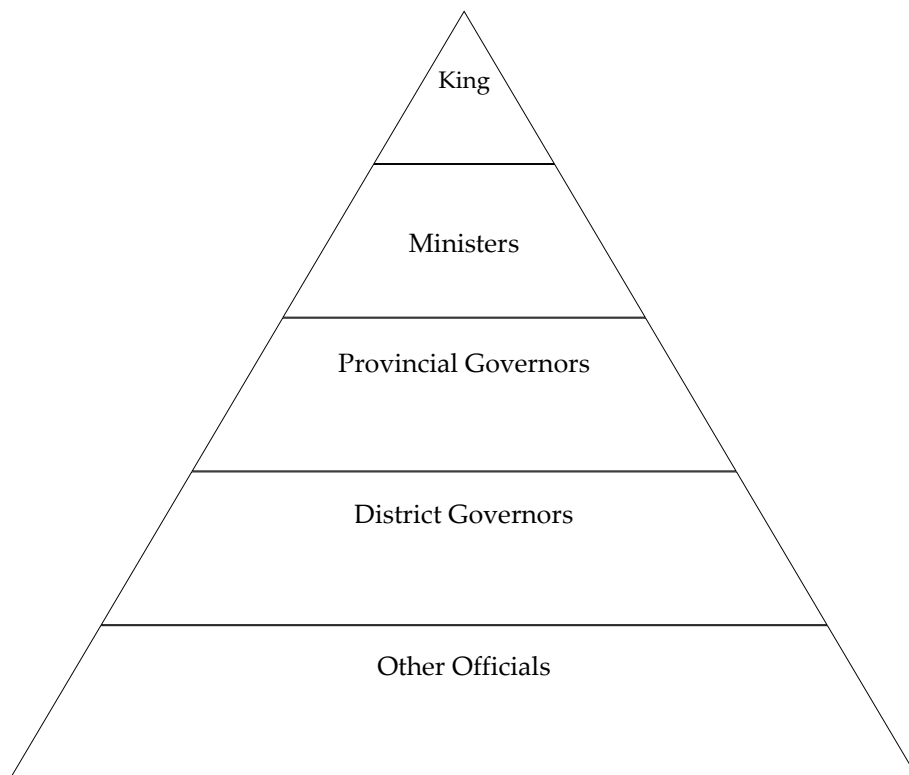
## **7.2 Organization of the kingdoms**

You should note that once these states were established, they were able to develop a system of government which was highly centralized as observed. This is to say that the king was regarded as the top most influential person who had all the powers to administer the states and was regarded as a divine being in some instances. Now, because the king was regarded as a divine being, he acted as a religious leader, a supreme judge and head of the armed forces. He had powers to appoint government officials who assisted him in various capacities. In this case therefore, most of the state systems in ancient Western Sudan were characterized by the following organizational structures

- On top of government was the king who had overall authority over the empire.
- He was assisted by a horde of officials most of whom were Muslims for easy administration of the state. Such officials included: the provincial governors, District Officials, the chiefs, the army commander

- The kingdoms were also divided into provinces, which were headed by governors. The provinces were further subdivided into districts with their own officials.
- The provincial governors were equally assisted in their duties by other officials such as judicial officers, a linguist, a treasury officer and other officials.
- By virtue of being governors and officials, these people had to pay tax and owed loyalty to the central government based at the respective headquarters.
- The king ruled the kingdom usually from his headquarters: Kumbi Saleh for instance was the headquarters for the ancient kingdom of Ghana. The capital was divided into two sections, set about six miles from one another. The king stayed in one section while the other was reserved for Muslim traders who frequented his empire. He carried out all his religious and political duties in his residential town. Similarly, Mali and Songhai also had their administrative capital centres.

### **The Pyramid of power in Ancient Western Sudanic States**



### **Learner Activity 2**

You should engage in library research on the organization of Ancient Western Sudanic States. Discuss the organizational structure of ancient Western Sudanic States.

### **7.3 Trade in ancient Western Sudanic States.**

Trade played a major role towards the rise and expansion of ancient Western Sudanic States. All of the three states that evolved and expanded in the Western Sudanic zone were strategically located relative to the trans-Saharan trade. This was the kind of trade that was carried out between and amongst the people of West Africa and those from the north. This trade mainly involved the exchange of trading items of gold, salt and other commodities. The people of West Africa traded in gold with the Arabs and North African Berbers. It must be noted that the local people in West Africa were not gold miners. They were simply middlemen between Arabs and gold producers - the Wangara from Bambuk. They obtained gold from the Wangara country and sold it to the Arabs from North Africa in exchange for salt which was produced by the Berbers of the Sahara Desert in Taghaza. This salt was then sent to Wangara where it was in great demand. Other commodities such as copper, cloth, dried fruit and cowrie shells, were also used in exchange for gold but the people of Wangara mainly needed salt.

It should also this form of trade was done devoid of verbal communication due to language differences. Now, because they traded in silence, their trade was called Silent trade. Usually, the people of West Africa left their gold on the frontier and departed. The Berbers then came and put their commodity, salt, beside the gold. The people of West Africa could come again to collect the salt. But if they were not satisfied, they left it there until some more was added. The same applied to the Berbers.

This gold trade made the ancient kingdoms of West Africa very powerful. Its Intermediary position in the gold trade allowed it to control the trade and became strong and prosperous. The kings became very rich because all gold belonged to them. This helped them control the price and administer their states without challenges.

The states could also levy taxes going out and coming into the empire. For example, one dimar of gold was levied on each donkey load of salt that came into the country and two dimar on each load that went out.

### **7.4 Religion in ancient kingdoms of West Africa**

Religion as has been observed played an influential role towards the rise and expansion of these ancient western Sudanic states. It must be observed that during the formative period of these kingdoms, the people practiced paganism. What this means is that many people did not have any belief in any god. Later on paganism evolved into African Traditional Religion (ATR) as people became more and more convinced that the spirits of their dead fathers or parents could be worshipped and asked to intervene. The kings became so influential in such traditional religions. At a later period, mainly as a result of involvement in trade links with the people of the North such as the Berbers and the Arabs, Islam began to penetrate and make influence in the region. During this initial period, Islam existed side by side with ATR. During the period of Ancient Mali kingdom, Islam made greater influences than had been in ancient Ghana. Unlike in Ghana, Islam in Mali became a state religion and all the rulers were Muslims. Such rulers even made pilgrimages to Mecca

highly considered to be the holy city in Islam. The importance of this religion towards the rise and consolidation of these kingdoms cannot be underestimated.

### **The significance of Islam in Ancient Western Sudanic States**

1. Firstly, Islam served as a modernizing factor in all of these states. Many Muslims from the Ulama (Learned Class) in North Africa were recruited and encouraged to work in these states in different capacities as clerks, interpreters, teachers and book keepers among others.
2. Secondly, Islam acted as a force of cohesion (unity) in the states considering that by nature, Islam encouraged a spirit of brotherhood and togetherness which unified the state systems despite their diversity in terms of clans or territories the people belonged to. In other words, it can be said that Islam did consolidate the Kingdoms as they rose and expanded in West Africa.
3. Economically, Islam contributed to the intensification of trade as Muslim traders moved back and forth within West Africa doing their trade with the local people.
4. Ideationally (at the level of ideas), Islam gave rise to new ideas with which the states were able to build on and expand. Through Islam for instance, ideas crisscrossed a number of these states in West Africa. There was a flow of ideas from the north into West Africa. For instance, during the reign of Mansa Musa of Mali Kingdom, he encouraged the coming in of Muslims in the empire so that they could contribute effectively to the growth of the state. On his return from Mecca for instance, he brought some influential Muslims such as Isaqah Sahili who was a Spanish scholar, poet and architect who introduced ideas on the use of baked bricks in Western Sudan.

### **7.5 Notable Leaders in Ancient Western Sudanic states**

#### **Learner activity 3**

Read through the various sources on the history of western Sudanic states particularly on the political administration of the kingdoms. You will notice that in all the three states, there rose notable rulers who made significant contributions towards the rise and expansion of the states in question.

Discuss in groups the unique contributions that each of the notable rulers of Ghana, Mali and Songhay made towards the success of the kingdoms.

It is expected that you will pay particular attention to the following leaders

1. Sundiata Keita and Mansa Musa of Mali
2. Sunni Ali and Askia Muhammad of Songhay Kingdom



## 7.6 Decline and fall of ancient Western Sudanic States

As highlighted earlier on, these states rose and expanded in succession to each other beginning with Ghana, followed by Mali and finally Songhai. In essence therefore, these states rose, expanded and declined at different time but it is important to note that they all shared similar forces that weakened them and eventually led to their decline. Ancient Ghana for instance began to show signs of decline towards the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century AD whilst Mali experienced an era of fall and decline around the mid-14<sup>th</sup> Century AD. As for the Kingdom of Songhai it was during the 16<sup>th</sup> Century that this was coming to an end. It is important to note that despite their differences in terms of their periods of decline and fall, they were driven towards their downfall by similar forces of attacks from outsiders and leadership factors.

### a. External Conquest factor –

It must be mentioned that all of the three states suffered constant threats and attacks from outsiders during their existence. The decline and fall of Ghana for instance was witnessed just at a time the kingdom had reached its golden era in the sense that around this period of the 11<sup>th</sup> Century AD, the kingdom registered enormous political and economic achievements. Towards the end of this century, Ghana experienced a series of attacks from the Almoravids, a movement that was comprised of Berber warriors from the Mauritania Sahara. These waged religious wars against them thereby disturbing the prosperity of the state in the course. Between 1020 and 1076 for instance, the Almoravids launched a series of attacks against Ghana which had adverse impacts on their society in the sense that

- i. Many people died
- ii. Former provinces of Ghana rose up and declared their independence against them. These included; the states of Tekrur, Diara and Kaniaga
- iii. The Trans-Saharan trade was disturbed in the sense that the major trading routes which passed through ancient Ghana were shifted eastwards to safer zones

Like Ghana, Mali too experienced a wave of political instabilities due to external attacks that the state witnessed during the 14<sup>th</sup> Century AD when the kingdom was in its period of prosperity. During this particular period, the Mossi and the Tuaregs conquered them at different intervals leading to the decline of the state. Similarly, Songhai was attacked by the Moroccans around 1591 during their existence as a kingdom.

### b. The Leadership factor –

These states were also affected by the problem of leadership more particularly after the fall of the initial great leaders who had made stronger influences towards the rise of such states. After the death of Mansa Musa for instance in Mali in 1332, the kingdom witnessed an era of weak regimes who failed to effectively administer the states as the previous leaders had done. For example, Maghan the successor to Mansa Musa and Muhmould II the successor to Maghan have been noted to have lacked leadership skills to drive the kingdom in the manner previous leaders had done. The result of all this was that the kingdom experienced civil wars mainly aimed at getting power from them. Similarly, around 14<sup>th</sup> Century, Songhai Kingdom also experienced similar challenges after the reign of Askia Muhammad. In his old age, he was deposed from the throne by his sons who latter quarreled over leadership of the empire leading the country into a political turmoil

as successive regimes were dethroned without recourse to proper administrative considerations.

### **Unit summary**

In this unit, you have learnt that Ghana was the earliest of the ancient kingdoms that emerged in West Africa in what came to be known as the Western Sudanic region. You also paid attention to the factors that gave rise to the kingdoms in Western Sudanic States where you noted that the salt and gold trade was the most important of them all. Also important to note is that religion and the agrarian factors also played an important role towards the rise and expansion of these kingdoms. You have also learnt that, once founded, these kingdoms devised a system of government which was centred on divine kingship whereby the king performed religious as well as political duties, of course, with the assistance of several officials. In concluding the unit, you have looked at the factors for the decline and fall of these kingdoms. Here you have learnt that these kingdoms declined and fell due to a series of events and the most important of which was the attacks by foreign forces such as the Almoravids. This was combined by the leadership factor which paralyzed the operations of succeeding regimes.

### **Answers to Learner Activities**

#### **Learner Activity 1**

#### **Discuss the key factors that contributed to the rise and expansion of early Western Sudanic States**

The question ideally seeks you to identify and discuss the key factors that influenced the rise and expansion of early Western Sudanic States. It is expected therefore that the focus should be on the following:

1. the role of the agrarian factor;
2. the trade factor
3. the religious factor.

Each of these points should be comprehensively discussed in order to establish the actual linkages to the establishment and expansion of these kingdoms.

#### **Activity 2**

#### **You should engage in library research on the organization of Ancient Western Sudanic States. Discuss the organizational structure of ancient Western Sudanic States.**

The expectation in this task is that you establish the organization structure that characterized the administration of Western Sudanic states. It is expected that you will highlight that these states in question were centralized politically in the sense that key decisions for the states rotated around the influence of the king. You should also explain that the kings were assisted by other officials in order to effectively administer their states.

Some of these officials included: ministers, provincial governors, district governors and other officials.

### **Learner activity 3**

**Read through the various sources on the history of western Sudanic states particularly on the political administration of the kingdoms. You will notice that in all the three states, there rose notable rulers who made significant contributions towards the rise and expansion of the states in question.**

Discuss in groups the unique contributions that each of the notable rulers of Mali and Songhay made towards the success of the kingdoms.

It is expected that you will pay particular attention to the following rulers

3. Sundiata Keita and Mansa Musa of Mali
4. Sunni Ali and Askia Muhammad of Songhay Kingdom

This task demands you to be well familiar with some notable leaders who have made a significant mark in the history of Western Sudanic states. Amongst these are: Sundiata Keita and Mansa Musa of Mali Kingdom and Sunni Ali and Askia Muhammad of Songhay kingdom. It must be stated that Mali was part of ancient Ghana Kingdom before it came into existence. However, at a time Ghana was in a state of decline, the province along with several others took advantage of the situation and declared their independence and later on defeated Ghana. The one credited to have led this movement towards independence was Sundiata Keita who in 1240 AD led the people and defeated ancient Ghana. He is credited to have led the foundations of the kingdom and later on after his death, he was followed by a series of rulers and later on Mansa Musa. Mansa Musa has been credited to have initiated a number of achievements socially, economically and politically.

Like in Mali Kingdom, Songhay Kingdom also registered important leaders such as Sunni Ali and Askia Muhammad. Sunni Ali is said to have led the independence movement from Mali and established the Songhay kingdom. He became king and assumed the title of Sunni meaning 'liberator'. During his reign, he managed to clear the region from immediate danger of outsiders and further expanded the kingdom into other territories, trade also flourished during his reign and he also paved way for the establishment of Islam in the kingdom. At a later stage, Askia Muhammad rose to power after overthrowing Sunni Ali's son from power. He too achieved a lot at the political level, economy as well as socially.

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# **Unit 8: Early Kingdoms and Empires in East Africa: Buganda and Land of Zanj**

## **Introduction**

In this unit, you will learn about the rise, growth and decline of the kingdoms of Buganda and Land of Zanj. While Buganda Kingdom got established in the Great Lakes Region, the Land of Zanj flourished along the east African coast. Other kingdoms in this region were Bunyoro, Burundi and Rwanda. You will notice that Buganda rose to prominence after the decline of older states, especially Bunyoro. You will learn about the origins, political organisation and decline of Buganda and the Land of Zanj.

## **Key words**

- Baganda, Confederacy, Suzerainty

## **Prerequisite knowledge**

In the previous units, you have learnt about the Kingdoms which got established in parts of West Africa. The knowledge gained will help you understand the developments in the Great Lakes Region and along the east African coast.

## **Time required**

4 hours

## **Unit Objectives**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- describe the origins of Buganda and the Land of Zanj
- explain the political organisation of these two kingdoms
- examine the importance of trade to the people of Buganda and Land of Zanj
- account for the decline of Buganda Kingdom and the Land of Zanj.

## **Background**

In this section, you will be introduced to the main kingdoms in the Great Lakes Regions namely Buganda, Bunyoro, Rwanda and Burundi. Before the imposition of Colonial Rule, these states shared some common features in terms of their history, migration of peoples, and social and political structures.

You may wish to learn that these states were of varying sizes and strength. Obviously, each state had a king who came from a royal lineage. In the service of the state were also a court of advisers, councillors, other state officials hierarchically placed, and artisans.

Notice that conflict, both within and outside a state, remained an important element of local politics. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD, the political situation in the region was affected by two related developments. The first had to do with the rise and growing power of some states. This was facilitated, among other things, by the accumulation of labour and trade goods. The second development was the remarkable expansion of some of the older states

in the region, namely Buganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Bunyoro. Each of these states was able to expand by strengthening the control of its administration, removing opposition to political leadership, diverting conflicts outside through wars of expansion and conquest of new areas which consequently enlarged the states and brought them greater stability within their borders.

For the most part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD, Buganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Bunyoro remained the largest states in the Great Lakes Region. Developments in each of these states continued to affect the other smaller states, many of which lost their autonomy, becoming subordinate entities in other words, the major kingdoms developed as centres of attraction to people from the smaller states, thus contributing to their weakness.

From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD, the major states became stronger by embracing new resources from outside such as trade goods, foreign merchants and Christian and Muslim missionaries. You will learn more here when looking at the influence of Europeans and Arab-Swahili traders in the Buganda Kingdom later in this unit. However, it has been argued that while these new forces brought increasing strength to these major states, they allowed them to heighten the sense of insecurity in the area.

### **Learner Activity 1**

What was the basis of power of the states in the Great Lakes Region?

### **8.1 The Rise of Buganda**

In the previous section, you learnt that Buganda was one of the notable kingdoms that developed in the Great Lakes Region. You may wish to note that the Kingdom of Buganda developed on the north-western part of Lake Victoria in the present-day Uganda. Although we are more concerned with the history of Buganda in the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD, it is important to consider the background of the Kingdom to as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> century AD.

It is indicated in the literature that Bunyoro's traditions claimed that their first king's younger brother founded Buganda, but some Buganda traditions and linguistic evidence suggest that the kingdom was an essentially Bantu creation.

During the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, Buganda was a little more than a confederacy (larger political grouping) of large patrilineal clans led by a king who had no royal clan but relied on his mother's kinsmen and his loose suzerainty over all clans. In fact, the Kingdom started as a small state at Kyadondo, which expanded to include Busiro and Busijo around the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries AD Bunyoro's raids expanded south through Nkore to Rwanda and eastwards into Buganda. According to Kelvin Shillington (1995), the need to defend themselves from Bunyoro attacks may have been a contributing factor in the desire by the clans of Buganda to organise themselves into a centralised community in the 17<sup>th</sup> century AD. Buganda's subsequent history was dominated by territorial expansion mainly

at Bunyoro's expense. In short, the Kingdom considerably grew in size after 1650 AD following the decline of Bunyoro Kingdom. Taking advantage of this development, the Buganda captured the areas that formerly belonged to Bunyoro, for instance, the provinces of Buddu, Buvera and Buwekula. It is worth noting that the Buganda Kingdom expanded greatly during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

It is also important to examine other factors that made conditions favourable for the rise of Buganda Kingdom up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD. Some of these were the small size of the Kingdom; food availability; the centralised system of government; and regional trade.

Buganda developed as a small compact state under intensive control of a centralised government. The main agricultural crop in Buganda was the banana, their staple food. The area on the northwest shores of Lake Victoria was suited to the growth of the banana. For instance, it had rich, fertile soil and a high level of regular rainfall. Once the banana plantation was established, it yielded heavy crops with minimum amount of labour. What was more, the harvested and rotting vegetation returned fertility to the soil.

It has also been indicated that the growth of bananas did not require the constant shifting onto new or fallow land unlike the cereal farming practiced over so much of Tropical Africa at this time. Consequently, Buganda's banana plantains allowed the growth of dense population within a relatively small area. This, together with the need to defend the territory from outside attack, promoted the development of centralised government.

### **Learner Activity 2**

Examine the factors that led to the rise of Buganda.

### **8.2 Political organisation**

You have learnt in the previous section that Buganda developed a strong centralised system of government. As you are already aware, the Kings of Buganda took the title of **Kabaka**. This centralised system strengthened the power of the King at the expense of traditional clan chiefs. In fact, it has also been indicated in the literature that the Kabaka was semi-divine. The Kabakas ensured that ultimate control of wealth and power remained within their own hands.

There was a pyramid of power in the centralised system of government. At the top of this pyramid was the Kabaka, who was all-powerful. He was surrounded by a hierarchy of court officials, all of whom were appointed by the Kabaka. These officials performed various duties.

The political system was open, competitive and focused on the throne. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century AD, the throne ceased to pass from brother to brother, generally by succession war. Instead it was inherited by a young prince chosen by his father and the leading chiefs. You may wish to know that at the same time rival princes were being killed.

In order to prevent the development of alternative power bases which would threaten his authority, the Kabaka, deliberately weakened the hereditary clan heads called Batoka, by preferring Provincial Chiefs in their stead. The Kabaka granted land to Regional Chiefs who were dependent for their position on loyalty to the King rather than any hereditary claim. They in turn granted smaller chiefs control over smaller parts of that land. This process started during the reign of Kabaka Mawanda in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century AD, who put Buganda firmly on the road to strong, centralised kingship. At the same time, the settlement of Ganda clansmen in conquered lands broke up the clans' territorial solidarity and created an increasingly individualised society.

In order to further maintain his authority and loyalty over the people, the Kabaka also did the following: marrying from each of the principal clans; promoting court officials through military or civil service to the Kabaka; encouraging leading families from each clan to send their sons to the court as pages where they could benefit by becoming educated and obtaining an office; and awarding important posts at court to specific clans.

### **Learner Activity 3**

Comment on the political organisation of Buganda.

### **8.3 Trade in Buganda**

Control over trade was another reason for Ganda royal strength. The Kingdom became very rich deriving its wealth from Slave trade. The Ganda traded with the Arabs in exchange for guns, cloth, beads and glassware. They traded with the Arabs at the east coast through the long-distance traders, the Nyamwezi. It is interesting to note that Kabaka Mutesa kept an army of 6,000 soldiers for hunting slaves. It would, therefore, be concluded that Buganda rose because of trading with the East African Coast in ivory and slaves.

### **8.4 Decline**

From 1850 AD, Buganda Kingdom came under the Arab influence. This weakened the authority of the King. Finally, Buganda came under the Europeans during the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD. You will learn about imperialism and colonisation in the subsequent modules. In addition, it is also indicated that the political system changed with time, for instance, the kings became increasingly despotic.

### **8.5 Origins of the Land of Zanj**

The Land of Zanj or Zenj, meaning the 'country of the blacks' was situated along the east African coast and was inhabited by the Bantu-speaking peoples called the Zanj. This coastal area was inhabited by the Swahili. The Swahili is the name given to the coastal people who historically could be found as far north as Mogadishu (Somalia) and as far south as the Rovuma River (Mozambique). The Swahili share a common language called Kiswahili and enjoy a city-based fusion of African and Arab culture.

During the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> centuries, peoples from the Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf began to settle at ports along the coast and on the small islands offshore. Then, according to legend, in the middle of the 10<sup>th</sup> century, a Persian from the city of Shiraz sailed to the area with his sons. As his small fleet stopped along the coast, each son disembarked on one of the coastal islands and founded a small community. These settlements eventually grew into important commercial centres such as Mombasa, Pemba, Zanzibar (literally meaning 'the coast of Zanj') and Kilwa. Although the legend underestimates the degree to which the area had already become a major participant in local commerce as well as the role of the local inhabitants in the process, it does reflect the importance of Arab and Persian immigrants in the formation of a string of trading ports stretching from Mogadishu (in Somalia) to north of Kilwa (south of Dar es Salaam).

### **8.6 Political Organisation**

By the late medieval period, the Land of Zanj included at least thirty-seven substantial Swahili trading towns and many of them were quite wealthy. However, these settlements never consolidated into a single political entity. In other words, Land of Zanj was loosely organised into autonomous and semi-autonomous political units, each of which was under the control of a local ruler. Government revenue came mainly from taxes imposed on local and long-distance trade with the interior.

#### **Learner Activity 4**

Describe the political organisation in the Land of Zanj.

### **8.7 Trade**

The coast of east Africa has had a long history of trade, involving constant exchanges of ideas, style and commodities for well over two thousand years. Marriage between women of Africa and men of the Middle East created and cemented a rich Swahili culture, fusing urban and agricultural communities, rich in architecture, textiles and food, as well as purchasing power.

The Zanj traded with Arabs, Turks and Indians. However, according to some sources, this trade was conducted only locally since they did not possess ocean-going ships. However, other sources indicate that the Bantu-Swahili people already had seafaring vessels with sailors and merchants trading with Arabia and Persia and also as far as India and China. Goods such as ivory and gold were exported across the Indian ocean to countries as far as China, while imports included iron goods, glassware, Indian textiles and Chinese porcelain. Merchants in these cities amassed considerable profit, as evidenced by their luxury stone palaces.

Some trade went on between coastal city-states and the peoples of the interior, who provided gold, iron, ivory and various agricultural goods and animal products in return for textiles, manufactured goods and weapons. Relations between these two sides were not always friendly. Sometimes, the coastal merchants resorted to the use of force to obtain goods from the inland peoples.



## 8.8 Architecture

Though now in ruins, Kilwa was one of the most magnificent cities of its day. The 14<sup>th</sup> century Arab traveler Ibn Battuta described it as “amongst the most beautiful of cities and most elegantly built”. The buildings were mainly made of wood and the ceilings of its houses were made from reeds. Kilwa had a palace with vaulted roofs capped with domes and elaborate stone carvings surrounded an inner courtyard. Ordinary towns-people and the residents in smaller towns did not live in such luxurious conditions, but even so, affluent urban residents lived in spacious stone buildings.

## 8.9 Factors for the Decline

The self-governing coastal peoples’ main source of authority was control of local trade and long-distance trade with inland peoples. Rulers of these coastal towns became strong through the collection of taxes and tribute from merchants conducting trade within their political zones. This wealth and political control were gradually lost with the interference of foreigners such as the Portuguese. With time, the Portuguese and Arabs controlled ivory and slave trade not only inland, but also in these coastal towns.

### Learner Activity 5

In what way did trade lead to the decline of the Land of Zanj?

### Self-assessment

Write a summary of the factors for the rise of Buganda kingdom.

### Unit summary

In this unit, you have learnt about the rise, organisation and decline of the Land of Zanj and Buganda Kingdom. These were some of the notable kingdoms that developed in the Great Lakes Region and along the east African coast. The other kingdoms were Rwanda, Burundi and Bunyoro. You have noted that both kingdoms grew and declined due to political centralisation and Long-Distance Trade, among other factors.

### Answers to Learner Activities

#### Activity 1

#### Basis of power of the states in the Great Lakes Region:

- a) Sound administration.
- b) Removing opposition to political leadership.
- c) Diverting conflicts outside through wars of expansion.
- d) Acquisition of new resources and tribute through trade.

#### Activity 2

#### Factors that led to the rise of Buganda Kingdom

Existence of rival states e.g. Bunyoro. Hence need to defend itself from outside attacks. In the process it became stronger/powerful.

- a) Decline of neighbouring states. Buganda took advantage of this development by annexing territories formerly belonging to other states.
- b) Food security in the area e.g., through the cultivation of bananas. This was possible because of fertile soils and good rains.
- c) It was a small, compact and centralised state. It was, therefore, easy to rule.
- d) The Kings benefited from the Regional or Long-Distance Trade.

### **Activity 3**

#### **Political organisation of Buganda kingdom**

- a) It was a strong, centralised system of government. The Kabaka was at the top of the hierarchy with other government officials under him.
- b) As a way of securing his position, the Kabaka deliberately weakened the hereditary clan heads called Batoka. He preferred using the provincial chiefs at their expense.
- c) He also devised other measures to further maintain his authority e.g., marrying from each of the principal clans. This was a means of cementing relations.

### **Activity 4**

#### **Political organisation of Land of Zanj**

Land of Zanj was a collection of loosely-organised political units. These settlements were under the control of local rulers. However, just like most kingdoms, these rulers drew authority from the control of trade in their areas.

### **Activity 5**

#### **Role of trade in the decline of Land of Zanj**

Loss of control of trade, for example, failure to get taxes and tribute eventually led to loss of political power by these local political overlords.

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# **Unit 9: Early African Kingdoms and Empires in Central Africa: Luba-Lunda, Maravi and Mwenemutapa Kingdoms**

## **Introduction**

The coming of the Bantu into Central Africa is associated, among other things, with the formation of political states. You may wish to know that Great Zimbabwe is one of the earliest political states to have been established in Central Africa. In this unit, you will learn about the actual beginnings of the Luba-Lunda, Maravi and Great Zimbabwe states. You will appreciate the crucial roles that trade and religion played in the growth of these states. It is interesting to note that trade was also one of the factors behind the decline of Great Zimbabwe. You will note that the Luba State directly or indirectly led to the establishment of the Lunda State. These states, together, eventually led to the creation of important states in parts of present-day Zambia. Examples in question are the Bemba State and the Mwata Kazembe State.

## **Key words**

- Metallurgy, Mwari, Hegemony, Mulopwe

## **Prerequisite knowledge**

You already learnt about the Bantu, especially their origins, migration and settlement. The Bantu were skilled in metal working and also in organising political states. This information will help you understand the establishment of the three states in this unit.

## **Time required**

6 hours

## **Unit Objectives**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- examine the origins of the Luba-Lunda, Maravi and Mwenemutapa state
- assess the role played by trade in the growth of the states
- analyse the role of religion behind the establishment and organisation of the states
- describe how the kingdoms were governed
- explain the factors that led to the decline of these states.

## **Origins of the Great Zimbabwe State**

The Great Zimbabwe state appears to have been established between 1150 AD and 1250 AD where the Zimbabwe Stone Ruins stand in southern Zimbabwe district of Masvingo. You may wish to know that this evidence is supported by the archaeological findings in the area.

In unit 5 you learnt about the origins, migration and settlement of the Bantu. You may recall that the Bantu were skilled in farming and domestication of animals. In this

connection, it is indicated that the early Bantu needed fertile land and found the Zimbabwe area to be ideal because of its good pasture and water. These early Bantu settled peacefully amongst the original people of the area, the Bushmen.

It is important to know that the first settlers were the Bantu people from the North West called the Sotho. They settled in Zimbabwe around 900 AD. The Sotho people were farmers and were looking for fertile soils and good pastures for their cattle. The Karanga people later conquered the Sotho around 1400 AD. The Karanga were Shona speakers. The Karanga established their Mwenemutapa Kingdom under Monomotapa (master plunderer). The king was identified by the royal fire that kept on burning in his kingdom.

It has been argued in literature that the establishment of the Kingdom was facilitated by a favourable environment. The Sotho and later the Karanga are associated with stone buildings. In fact, this Kingdom is referred to as the Great Zimbabwe State because of such stone buildings. There were many stone walls at Great Zimbabwe, built without mortar and up to nine meters high. The stone walls enclosed the homesteads and cattle kraals of rich families. It is also possible that these stone enclosures emphasised the mystery, power and prestige of the king. The Great Zimbabwe State was marked by architectural achievement, trade, religion and a sophisticated socio-economic life. You will learn about this in the sections that follow.

### **Learner Activity 1**

Briefly examine the origins of Great Zimbabwe.

### **9.1 Trade in the Great Zimbabwe State**

You may wish to know that the location of Great Zimbabwe had an advantage because it was rich in elephants and gold dust. These items were used in Long Distance Trade. Archaeological evidence suggests that the earlier settlers, the Sotho, exploited gold, although on a small scale, before the coming of the Shona. In fact, the Sotho sold their gold to the Arabs on the East Coast of Africa in exchange for Chinese pottery, cloth and beads.

However, it was under the Shona, with their wider hegemony and state system, that trade with the coast became organised on a large scale. The Shona traded with Arab Swahili Muslims on the East Coast. The Shona mainly exported ivory and gold in exchange for glass and shell beads, Indian cloth and Chinese porcelain. You may wish to know that gold was on high demand for currency in Arabia. Later on, the Shona sold gold to the Portuguese who by then had taken over the Arabs' trade.

It is important to note that the Shona rulers controlled the long-distance trade in the kingdom. By controlling both the sources of wealth and coastal trade in their kingdom, the Shona rulers became rich and powerful.

This long-distance trade was well organised. Much of the long-distance trade passed through Great Zimbabwe's capital. Sofala on the east coast was used as a main port for

this ivory and gold trade. The Arabs generally remained at the coast and used the Swahili as middlemen. It is the Swahili who came inland to trade in gold dust and ivory with the Shona. As noted earlier, the Portuguese later displaced the Arabs in this long-distance trade. You may also wish to learn that the gold and ivory trade from the Zimbabwe plateau to the east coast probably reached its peak between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

## **9.2 Religion in the Great Zimbabwe State**

Religion was another key integrative factor in the Shona political system. Oral Tradition suggests that early Luba migrants from the Congo brought with them new ideas about the kingship being both sacred and priest-like. Zimbabwe was a great ritual centre. This suggests that the Shona commanded new and powerful religious concepts and mystic abilities.

You may be aware that the Monomotapa was believed to be a god. He kept royal fire burning at his court. The lesser chiefs came to lit the fire and also kept it burning in their locations as a symbol of loyalty. When the king died, the fire was also put out.

The Shona also believed in the existence of their god called Mwari who was worshipped on a tribal level. The Mwari was associated with rain making. The Mwari could only be approached through tribal spirits called Mhondoro who expressed themselves through mediums called Svikiro. Evidence indicates that the power of the Shona chiefs was based on their control of this religious system. You will appreciate that the Shona chiefs' possession of these intermediary powers was the key to the political and social integration of their state.

### **Learner Activity 2**

How did religion contribute to the growth of the state?

## **9.3 Organization of the Great Zimbabwe State**

The head of the government was the Monomotapa. He was assisted by a team of officials in running the state. The Kingdom was divided into provinces under sub-chiefs. These paid tribute to the Monomotapa.

The administration and ritual centre of the kingdom was the Great Zimbabwe, that is, the Large Stone House. It is estimated that the population at the capital was 3000 at the peak of its influence. The wealth and greatness of the rulers were displayed through the construction of stone buildings in the capital and in the provincial towns.

You will recall that the Svikiro were spirit mediums representing Mwari. These mediums had an important voice in the King's Council. You will also remember that the Shona traded with Muslims from the east coast. These Muslim traders were also occasionally used as advisors.

As already indicated, the king received tribute from his subjects. Much of the tribute was paid to the state in form of gold, cattle and labour (under public works). You have also learnt that the King monopolised trade in the kingdom. The king maintained the loyalty of his subjects through the redistribution of imported cloth, beads and other items.

The capital was also a focus of craft manufacture. The rulers of the city employed skilled craftsmen and large numbers of workers. There was also evidence of cloth weaving.

### **Learner Activity 3**

How did the Monomotapa ensure continued rule of the kingdom?

### **9.4 Decline of the Great Zimbabwe State**

There were many reasons for the decline of the Great Zimbabwe State. The following are some of these reasons:

#### **1. Overpopulation of the area**

It is likely that the area was overpopulated. You may appreciate that overpopulation led to the depletion of essential resources such as pastures and fuel wood.

#### **2. Internal disputes**

Disputes among provincial rulers (sub-chiefs) might have weakened the administration at the centre. Internal revolts might have started over the control of scarce resources. For instance, competition for grazing land and gold deposits may have enhanced rivalry among the ruling groups.

#### **3. Presence of Muslim Traders**

You may recall that Muslim traders were also used as advisors of the king. Since these people were mainly interested in trade, they might have undermined the authority of the central government.

#### **4. Conquest by the Rozwi**

Around 1700 AD, the Rozwi conquered the Karanga (the Shona). Rozwi Kings were titled Mambo. The control of the gold trade was now in the hands of the Rozwi. However, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD, the Rozwi were themselves overrun by the Ndebele and the Ngoni who were running away from the cruel rule of Shaka Zulu, the Zulu King.

### **Self-assessment**

Critically examine the decline of the Great Zimbabwe.

### **9.5 The Luba-Lunda State**

#### **9.5.1 Background**

The Luba and Lunda States, sometimes jointly referred to as the Luba-Lunda States, emerged in the eastern part of the Congo area. Most Pre-colonial States in Central Africa originated from these states. The area which was generally dominated by the Lunda and

Luba States is sometimes referred to as the Luba-Lunda Complex. In this connection, the Luba-Lunda area is at times described as the 'dispersal area' of the founders of most pre-colonial states in Central Africa. You may also wish to note that the Lunda State is particularly known as the Mwata Yamvo State after the title that was given to the rulers of this State. The Mwata Yamvo (Parent Lunda State) gave rise to the Mwata Kazembe State.

The Congo area has many rivers. This area, including the Shaba or Katanga area, had been occupied by food-producing communities for a long time. Some historians think that the Congo grasslands were the earliest homes of many Bantu speaking people of central Africa. It is generally believed that the idea of chiefs ruling other people began here, possibly as early as the 8<sup>th</sup> century AD. By 13<sup>th</sup> century AD, the political states had become larger. Archaeological evidence shows that the chiefs in these states were involved in local trade in copper and ivory. Eventually, it is indicated, they got involved in long-distance trade. This is supported by the discovery of copper and iron objects, among other items, in some archaeological sites.

You may also wish to know that by 1300 AD, there were established chieftainships in the Congo area. Following the increase in population, chiefs started fighting for farming land and pastures. This encouraged the establishment of strong and large military states. The most important of these states were the Luba and the Lunda.

#### **Learner Activity 4**

Comment on the origins of the Luba and Lunda States.

### **9.6 The Luba Kingdom**

You may wish to know that the actual origins of the Luba are not clear because of the lack of written records. Consequently, historians rely on Oral Traditions to learn more about the Luba. According to Oral Tradition, the Songye are associated with the origins of the Luba. They came from the North and settled near the Lubilasha River. They were led by a man whose title was the Kongolo. At first, the state was called Kalundwe. However, with time the name changed to Luba following the incorporation of conquered areas.

In the Luba State, the king or Kongolo was in charge over warfare and he also controlled Regional or long-distance trade. The Kongolo was assisted by several officials in running the affairs of the State.

The Songye rulers governed the Luba until the 15<sup>th</sup> century AD when they lost their power to a more powerful group, the Kunda. This group also came from the North and settled in the area, especially East of Lake Kisale. It is indicated in the literature that the Kunda ruled the Luba until the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD.

### **9.7 Luba under the Kunda**

The Luba State continued to expand under the Kunda and conquered people were incorporated. With time, the Kunda rulers became more powerful than their predecessors,

the Kalundwe and Songye. The Kunda were better trade organisers and effectively collected tribute from the people. Despite the expansion in question, the Kunda made efforts to maintain a kingdom, avoiding the creation of an empire.

You may be interested to learn that the Kunda rulers tried to maintain a centralised administration in Luba. Eventually the Kunda ruler was called the Mulopwe, that is, he assumed a new traditional title, replacing that of Kongolo. Just like the Kongolo, the Mulopwe too controlled warfare and trade. In addition, he was also a religious figure and was, for instance, associated with special religious ceremonies. He too was also assisted by many officials in running the state. These officials were officially called Balopwe (the plural of Mulopwe).

When the king (Mulopwe) died, all the Balopwe or chiefs serving under the deceased king were expected to resign their positions to allow the new king to appoint his own Balopwe and other chiefs. This arrangement frustrated the ambitious young men who had hoped to become kings themselves. Some of these ambitious people left the kingdom with their supporters in order to establish their political authority elsewhere. This is how the Lunda State was established.

### **9.8 The Lunda Kingdom**

You may wish to know that as the Luba Kingdom was expanding westwards, it led to the establishment of the Lunda Kingdom. This happened around the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century AD. According to Oral Tradition, Kibinda Ilunga left the Luba State westwards with a band of fighters until they settled on the banks of the Kasai River among the Lunda people. He was frustrated after failing to become king among the Luba people. You may wish to learn that at the time of their arrival, the Lunda were only subsistence farmers living in small communities. They were good fishermen and were also skilled in making iron tools and pots.

Although there was no political centralisation at the time, later rulers created a larger kingdom with a centralised government. With time the Lunda rulers came to be known as Mwata Yamvo, meaning 'master of wealth'. Naweji is remembered as Mwata Yamvo I and is said to have laid foundations of the Lunda Empire. By 1600 the Lunda state had brought many chiefdoms under its rule. You may recall that the Luba, in sharp contrast, made efforts to avoid creating an empire. The Mwata Yamvos had the tendency to expand the Lunda Empire in order to control large areas for the increasing population.

### **Learner Activity 5**

Explain how the Luba Kingdom led to the establishment of the Lunda Kingdom.

### **9.9 Trade in the Lunda Kingdom**

Trade was also behind the expansion of the Lunda Kingdom. The Mwata Yamvo wanted to control a larger area because this meant more profits from trade. The Mwata Yamvo controlled trade in their sphere of influence. All conquered chiefs paid tribute in the form



of ivory, copper, salt, labour and later slaves. These were exchanged with beads, spirits, clothes and firearms either with the Portuguese on the west African coast or the Swahili Arabs on the east African coast.

From the capital, Musumba, the Mwata Yamvo used the tribute to redistribute as gifts to his supporters and local chiefs. As long-distance trade developed, ivory and slaves were the main items exported to the west coast. These were exchanged with woollen cloth and guns. As expected, these guns assisted the Mwata Yamvo to further extend his control over trade in the region. It is clear, therefore, that the Lunda Kings greatly benefited from such control of trade as a source of wealth and power. The Mwata Kazembe Kingdom, which is an offshoot of the Lunda Kingdom, was modelled on it.

### **9.10 Decline of the Luba-Lunda States**

It is important to consider what happened to these Luba-Lunda States after a period of growth and expansion. Most of the Luba and Lunda people were disgruntled for one reason or another and opted to migrate to new areas for settlement. Most of these Luba and Lunda people migrated into parts of Zambia. The Luba migrants eventually led to the formation of the Bemba Kingdom, while the Lunda migrants created the East Lunda Kingdom, that of Mwata Kazembe. Some of the Lunda people migrated westwards and settled in Angola. Here they became known as the Imbangala. These migrations took place around the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

The factors behind the Luba and Lunda migration were largely political, economic and social. Due to increases in population, there were critical shortages of arable and pasture land. There was also need for more land for settlement. Politically, some chiefs migrated in order to create their own independent political units (kingdoms). These migrations were also at times a result of witchcraft accusations. What is more, the Slave Trade also forced many people to run away from their original homes in the Congo area.

### **9.11 The Maravi State**

#### **9.11.1 Background**

The Maravi or Phiri occupied the country around the 15<sup>th</sup> Century A.D (1400s). They are believed to have originally come from Uluba in eastern Zaire. This conclusion is drawn because there is some linguistic and ethnographic evidence to support the view that they originated in Luba country. For example,

- a. words such as Mwari (wife of chief or of the Kalonga in the Chewa case) and Leza (God), bear similar meanings in the Luba and Chewa languages;
- b. the use of ceremonial masks and organisation of secret societies (Nyau among the Chewa and Bambudye among the Luba) were once common to both peoples.

However, it is not clear within oral tradition and other sources as to the actual circumstances that drove the Maravi to emigrate from Uluba towards the Lake Malawi region. What is clear is that during their migration, they were led by a military leader or

chieftain called Chinkhole Phiri and his mother, Nyangu. They moved south-eastwards as a group until they reached and stopped at a place called Choma in Zambia. It is, therefore, possible that they might have been fleeing some kind of danger or war from the place where they originated. From Choma, they migrated across the great plateau of north-eastern Zambia until they reached either the Zambezi River above Zumbo or the lower part of the Luangwa River. Again, this is not very clear in oral tradition. Thereafter, they turned eastwards until they entered central Malawi from the west.

### **9.12 How did they establish themselves within Malawi?**

Some attempts have been made to theorize their entry and establishment as follows:

#### **1. The Invader Theory (Carl Wiese – a Germany Adventurer in British Central Africa)**

This theory maintains that the Maravi or the Kalonga and his followers entered the Lake Malawi region fully equipped with the ideology of dominance with the help of which they were able to establish control over the indigenous inhabitants (the Bandas/ Kalimanjiras).

Though plausible and seemingly straight-forward, this theory has been challenged on at least two grounds.

- a. It does not tell us what that ideology of dominance was that the Maravi may have brought with them into the country.
- b. Secondly, there is very little reference in oral traditions to wars between the Maravi immigrants and the proto-Chewa inhabitants they found and at the expense of whom they constructed their political hegemony.

#### **2. The Trade Theory (Edward Alpers)**

This theory argues that the growth of long-distance trade in ivory between the southern end of Lake Malawi and the east African coast facilitated the Maravi state. When the Kalonga gained control of this trade, he was able to establish his authority over other people. However, the weakness is that the theory is based on the assumption of the existence of a considerable volume of trade between the southern end of Lake Malawi and the east African coast.

#### **3. The Conflict Theory (Kings M. Phiri)**

The theory maintains that the Maravi kingdom had its origins in the interaction between the Maravi and the Proto-Chewa. The theory further states that this interaction was marked by tension and conflict. This called for arbitration and the establishment of authority in order to preserve law and order. The Maravi emerged as rulers.

Unfortunately, the theory does not explain why it was the Maravi immigrants and not the Proto-Chewa who emerged as the victors in this conflict.

### **9.13 Social and Political Organization**

Mankhamba was established as a religious centre (ritual capital) while Manthimba was its headquarters (secular capital). At Manthimba, the Kalonga was assisted by a number of officials known as *ankhoswe* to run the kingdom. These officials included Nyangu (the king's mother); *khombe* (the director of military services); *mkomba* (the public executioner of criminals); and *mfiti za milandu* (the legal specialist). The kingdom was governed through a political hierarchy or a hierarchichal society. Authority was delegated from the Kalonga to the lower local rulers.

### **9.14 Expansion and Decentralisation**

The centralised authority of the Kalonga ended between 1550 and 1600 when various groups left Kalonga's headquarters and settled in different parts of Malawi and Zambia. This led to expansion and the decentralized authority. Several chiefdoms were established in distant lands, for example, those of Lundu in the Lower Shire and Undi in Zambia and Mozambique. Other small chiefdoms include those of Mwase and Chulu in Kasungu, Mkanda in Mchinji, Mwale in Dowa, and Kanyenda in Nkhotakota. It is not a surprise that Kalonga remained a leader even after expansion because in some cases these chiefs were actually sent out by himself, for instance, on trade missions.

The process of expansion and decentralization began during the reign of Kalonga Chidzonzi, but reached its peak during the reign of Kalonga Mazula. Mazula created a vast empire and also attempted to centralise the kingdom. In fact, his reign during the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century is regarded as the Golden Age of the Maravi Empire. By the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there was a confederation of the Maravi states with Maravi state (proper) at Mankhamba-Manthimba, Lundu state in the Lower Shire and Undi in Tete District as the most important of them all. These states largely co-existed and were inter-related. For instance, they had a similar power structure and the people spoke the same language.

### **Learner Activity 6**

Suggest some reasons that led to the dispersal of the Maravi people.

### **9.15 Decline of the Maravi Political State**

The Maravi states and in particular the kingdom of the Kalongas appear to have entered a period of decline from the beginnings of the 18th century onwards. The following factors contributed towards the decline:

1. Even though the kingdom covered a vast area, the population was thinly spaced and communication was inadequate making it hard for the Kalonga to hold the people together. Consequently, the kingdom suffered from insubordination, especially at the periphery.
2. The control of trade by the lower or local rulers made it possible for reduced dependency on the Kalonga.
3. The negative effects of decentralization also weakened Kalonga's authority at Mankhamba-Manthimba area. The Kalonga eventually lost his political control over his subordinates and his monopoly over trade.
4. Internal rivalries which included disputes over succession also weakened the Maravi states.
5. Weak rulers after the death of Kalonga Mazula in 1640. For example, Kalonga Mkhwima (8<sup>th</sup> Kalonga) and Khute (9<sup>th</sup> Kalonga) are said to have been very weak.
6. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century parts of the Maravi Empire are said to have been raided by militaristic immigrants. These included the Ngoni, the Yao and the Kololo.

### **Self-assessment**

Why did the Luba and Lunda States enter a period of decline in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries? Discuss.

### **Unit summary**

In this unit, you have learnt about the Great Zimbabwe State and the Luba-Lunda kingdoms. You have learnt that the Great Zimbabwe State was established by a group of people called the Bantu. The earlier Bantu settlers were the Sotho people who were later displaced by the Karanga (the Shona). You have also examined the importance of trade and religion behind the growth of the state. Lastly, you have noted that the decline of Great Zimbabwe was a result of several factors. You have also learnt about the Luba and Lunda Kingdoms. These were the main Kingdoms that got established in the Congo-Katanga area. You started looking at the Luba State which eventually led to the formation of the Lunda State through expansion. Lastly, you examined the nature and decline of the Maravi State.

### **Answers to Learner Activities**

#### **Activity 1**

#### **Origins of Great Zimbabwe**

- a) It was established between 1150 AD and 1250 AD in Southern Zimbabwe.
- b) It was established by the Bantu (Sotho and Karanga) who were looking for fertile soils and good pasture.
- c) It is called Great Zimbabwe because of the stone buildings built without using mortar.
- d) The stone buildings were built around the compounds and cattle kraal of rich people.

## Activity 2

### Religion and the growth of Great Zimbabwe

- a) The Monomotapa was regarded as a god (ie semi-divine). Hence, he was highly respected and obeyed.
- b) The King also ruled through the use of a Council which was made up of several trusted officials (including the spirit mediums).
- c) He ruled the vast kingdom through the Provincial rulers or Sub-chiefs.
- d) He maintained the loyalty of his subordinates through the redistribution of tribute.

## Activity 3

- a) Monopoly of trade by the King.
- b) Payment of tribute by the subjects.
- c) Use of Spirit mediums through the King's Council.
- d) Loyalty of the subjects through the redistribution of the trade items.

## Activity 4

### Origins of the Luba and Lunda States

- a) The Luba and Lunda States emerged in the Congo area by 1300 AD.
- b) The Congo area was naturally favourable for the rise of political states e.g., good supply of water for transport and farming, natural resources e.g., mineral deposits which promoted local and regional trade, etc.
- c) The increase in population led to scramble for the limited resources and this situation was healthy for the growth of large political states.

## Activity 5

### Establishment of the Lunda kingdom

- a) The expansion of the Luba Kingdom led to the formation of the Lunda State
- b) Some of the Luba people left westwards and settled among the Lunda people. Eventually, they organised themselves into a Kingdom.

## Activity 6

### Reasons for the dispersal of the Maravi

- a) Succession disputes and witchcraft accusations
- b) Desire to colonise other suitable agricultural and trade areas
- c) Some chiefs were sent out to provide protection to the Maravi kingdom

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# **Unit 10: European Explorations and growth in Africa and its effects up to the 17th Century AD**

## **Introduction**

Between 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Century in Africa witnessed the coming in of different groups from Europe for different objectives. There were some who came into contact with the continent as a result of explorations, others for commercial motives and yet others for missionary entrepreneurship. In this unit, we will examine the origins of European explorations on the continent by among others establishing the drivers towards such activities by Europeans and their eventual settlements and expansions in some territories in Africa. Specifically, we shall examine the rise of the Portuguese and Dutch arrival on the continent and related activities they engaged in. You will particularly learn about the coming of the Portuguese into Africa and how they influenced trade in the region through economic integration with other regions. It will be observed that the arrival of the Portuguese on the continent not only impacted on the growth of trade but it also contributed to the growth of European arrival and presence in Africa. The unit will in particular expose you to an understanding of their trading activities in the area, the motives for coming to Africa, the organization of the trade and the impact of their arrival in Africa. The unit will also provide a discussion relating to Dutch arrival at the Cape and the influence their coming had on the region. At the very heart of this discussion, you will appreciate that the significant drivers towards the exploratory activities by the Europeans were largely rooted within the developments that were taking place in Europe as a result of industrialization and the rise of merchant capital.

## **Key words**

Exploration, Merchant Capital

## **Prerequisite knowledge**

By now you already have knowledge on early population movements and expansions in Africa.

## **Time allowed**

4 hours

## **Unit Objectives**

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the rise of European explorations around the world
- explain factors that contributed towards the origins of European explorations of Africa
- describe the coming of the Portuguese within Africa
- examine Dutch settlement and expansion at the Cape in South Africa

## **10.0 Portuguese Contact with East Africa**

### **10.1 The Idea of exploration and conquest**

It must be appreciated that contacts between and amongst the different continents have a long history. It is clear from the records that as early as the 14<sup>th</sup> Century AD, Portugal had vested interest on the African continent. Henry, the prince of Portugal around the 14<sup>th</sup> Century AD had great interests in exploration and conquest of other territories around the world in order to circumvent Muslim control over trade. This was the case that in many areas such as North Africa, the Muslims were in control and so Portugal wanted to get hold of some of these opportunities. This is what led the drive for Portugal to embark on explorations. Thus the opening up of Central Africa and the East Coast of Africa for instance was first influenced by Western Europe towards the end of the fifteenth century A.D. (end of the 1400s). This was the period when the Portuguese visited the East Coast of Africa as they attempted to find a trade route to India. Around the 1480s, Bartholomew Diaz had managed to reach the Cape of Good Hope which therefore meant that the Portuguese were closer to territories of Central and Southern African territories in general such as Malawi, Tanzania, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Zambia.

Portuguese penetration and influence in Africa can be understood within the following phases:

#### **a. The era of voyages of discovery, 1490s – 1500s**

This period witnessed greater explorations on the part of the Europeans as they made attempts to establish new commercial investments elsewhere around the world. The Portuguese in particular were interested in establishing new commercial enterprises around the world; identify a stable route to reach the wealthy markets of India and the far East and check on the spread of Islam and enhance the spread of Christianity. It was out of such intentions that around the 1490s the led one of the expeditions led by Vasco Da Gama who rounded the continent sailing through the eastern coast of Southern and Central Africa. During the course of this expedition, the Portuguese managed to visit some of the centers on the African coast and gathered a lot of information regarding the interior of Central and Southern Africa and the trading activities with the coast. It was during such voyages that they heard of abundant gold and other resources from the continent. During this period, the Portuguese expanded their movements to take control of certain territories. For instance, around the second half of the fifteenth century, they had managed to take control of the Atlantic coast of Morocco in North Africa and they used this region's economic and strategic advantages to move further into other parts of Africa. Through this achievement, the Portuguese were able to move further southwards to the Cape of Good Hope towards the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> Century AD.

#### **b. Era of conquest and establishment, 1500s – 1510**

During this particular period, the Portuguese embarked on physical conquest and establishment of their commercial interests in some areas within Africa. Particularly, their main target was to remove the influence of certain groups within the continent who were

making tremendous progress in various commercial enterprises such as the Swahili Arabs on the Coast of East Africa. The Portuguese tried with utmost attempts to replace the Arabs as the merchants who connected East Africa with India and the rest of Asia. It was during this particular period that the Portuguese were able to conquer and take over some towns such as Sofala around 1505, Mozambique Island around 1507 and military fortresses were built around each of these places.

**c. Era of penetration into the interior**

During their establishment at the coast, they learnt about the presence of gold from the interior of Central Africa especially the Mwenemutapa region in what is Zimbabwe today. Because of these stories, the Portuguese were more interested in establishing official trading relations with the interior of Central Africa. In 1513 for instance, Antonio Fernandez was sent to identify the place and provide a report on the existence of such precious resources. Through such approaches, the Portuguese were able to come into contact with the interior of Central Africa.

**d. The Era of conflicts between the Portuguese and some African groups such as the Shona and the Swahili Arabs**

Around the mid-16<sup>th</sup> Century, relations between the Portuguese and some other African groups due to misunderstandings which had emerged over trading issues and other social challenges. This made the Portuguese to directly interfere with the affairs of the states so as to ensure continued security. In fact, it was during this particular period that Portuguese interference contributed to the weakening of the Mwenemutapa state and worsening relations between the Portuguese and the people of Mutapa in Zimbabwe.

**Learner Activity 1**

With relevant examples, review the main stages of Portuguese establishment within the African continent.

**10.2 What motivated the Portuguese to penetrate Central and Southern African Interior?**

The penetration of the Portuguese into the interior of Southern Africa should be understood from within the context of their economic motives. During their exploratory trips, the Portuguese were overwhelmed by reports about the economic successes of East Africa particularly the towns of Zanj which were quite prosperous in trade. Such reports made the King of Portugal to begin sending ships to the East Coast of Africa directly for the same purpose of taking control of the region. For example, during the first twenty five years after da Gama's pioneering voyage of 1497, not less than 247 ships were dispatched under the King's directive to travel to East Africa. The Portuguese captains of these ships were particularly tasked to: get hold of any portable wealth they could find in this region; conquer the region and subject the area under Portuguese jurisdiction and influence; take control of the Indian Ocean trade which stretched from East Africa to India and Southern China and make it under Portuguese control; take total control over the gold trade in East and Central Africa



### **10.3 Decline of Portuguese influence in Central Africa**

By the 17<sup>th</sup> Century, Portuguese influence was declining in Central Africa. This was as a result of different factors that were both economic and political. The factors that contributed to the decline of Portuguese influence in Central Africa were:

#### **a. Competition from the Dutch and English traders**

The Dutch and the British were the first rivals to follow the Portuguese around the Cape of Good Hope. We shall examine the coming of the Dutch and their influences in the follow up section. The Dutch came in the 1580s to exploit the wealth of the East Coast of Africa as the Portuguese had done before them. These people had an advantage because they were the most powerful trading country in all Europe during this time. The Portuguese failed to withstand the competition brought about by these Dutch people who had more ships, sailors, money and the trading skills. Such a development increasingly compromised Portuguese influence in trade in the area.

#### **b. Unfriendly nature of the Portuguese**

It has been noted that the Portuguese were generally unfriendly to the coastal and people of the interior for reasons that have not been fully established. This kind of relation made them fail to win allies and establish themselves effectively in the area. They managed though to successfully establish themselves in Mombasa and Mozambique. As such, they were not trusted by many in the region. The Portuguese were therefore feared by the people at the coast and Islands between 1600 and 1700. It has to be noted that even in Central Africa, the Portuguese were not trusted by the Africans. For example, in the Maravi Kingdom, the Portuguese started trading directly with the local people beating the traditional system in which initially they could go through the Kings. Such an aspect weakened the position of the kings and contributed to the eventual decline of the kingdom. This was the same situation in the Mwenemutapa Kingdom where the Portuguese could equally bypass the position of kings in order to transact in the gold trade. Such a position compromised the relations that existed between the local people and the Portuguese in the area and eventually reduced the influence these Portuguese had in the area.

#### **c. Internal divisions amongst the Portuguese of Central Africa**

There were also serious internal divisions amongst the Portuguese of both East and Central Africa. Not only did these Portuguese oppress the blacks in the region but they could also oppress each other. For example, many people in Portugal were as much oppressed by their lords and land owners as were the Africans. Their political system both in Portugal and Africa was dominated by the few privileged and greedy elite class. It has to be noted that most of the Portuguese who came to Central Africa are believed to have been sent as one way of getting rid of them in their societies in Portugal because they were morally challenged. These people thus could not positively interact with the local people and fellow country people who came to settle in the region. Amongst the people who settled in the region included the clergy such as the Jesuit Priest Father Goncalo da Silveira in the Mwenemutapa kingdom. It's been observed that therefore that with such

differences current in the population of both the Portuguese and the Africans, it was difficult for them to live as a unified system.

#### **d. The Environmental Factor**

Portuguese influence in the area was also disturbed by the tropical climate which was conducive for tropical insects such as the tsetse that aids the spread of sleeping sickness. Unfavourable tropical climate weighed them down when they wanted to take the Shona country for instance. The Portuguese sent an expedition of about 1000 soldiers in 1569 under Francisco Barreto to drive the Swahili out of Central Africa. The army arrived on the Zambezi in November 1571 during the onset of the rainy season. Many of the soldiers died from fever and most of their horses were killed by sleeping sickness. Even Barreto himself died from fever in 1573. Out of the original army of 1000 only less than 200 returned to the coast.

#### **e. The Resistance Factor**

Some tribes in the region prevented the Portuguese from advancing their interest in Central Africa. Some tribes in Central Africa could not easily subdue to Portuguese influence but instead they fought them and resisted their influence. In 1574 for instance, an attempt was made by Vasco Fernandez Homem to reach the gold mines of Manyika and the Silver mines of Chicoa but in the process he lost 200 of his men due to the fighting that ensued between his men and the local people. In addition, some Portuguese settlements on the Zambezi were destroyed by the Zimba in 1585 and 1592 thereby rendering their settlement in the area a challenge.

#### **f. The Slave trade Factor**

Slave trade was also another factor that made Portuguese work in Central Africa difficult. The rise of the Arab slave trade in East Africa displaced the Portuguese monopoly of trade in Central Africa. At the centre of this trade in slaves were the Arabs led by Sultan Sayyid Said of Zanzibar and Sultan Majid at a later stage. This development therefore compromised greatly on Portuguese influence in the area and greatly weakened their monopoly in trade.

### **Learner Activity 2**

Discuss the factors that contributed towards the decline of Portuguese influence in Central and Southern Africa.

## **10.4 Impacts of the Portuguese in the region**

Their arrival had both positive and negative impacts.

### **Positive impacts**

#### **a. Spread of Christianity**

The Portuguese engagement in gold trade in central Africa contributed to the coming in of the missionaries. The first known missionary to reach the area was the Jesuit Priest Father Goncalo da Silveira who travelled up the Zambezi and reached the Mwenemutapa Kingdom around 1560. This priest managed to convert Mwenemutapa himself and 300 of

his relatives and other tribesmen. It is said that Muslim traders became jealous of Silveira's success and accused him of being a sorcerer as well as one who wanted to overthrow the kingdom. He was thus secretly killed and his body was thrown into the Msengezi River on 15<sup>th</sup> March 1561. It has to be noted that even after his death, Christianity continued to spread rapidly into adjacent parts of Central Africa.

**b. Introduction of new crops**

The Portuguese influenced the coming in of new crops and fruits in Central Africa. Such crops included maize, cassava, pineapples, pawpaws and the avocado pear. African farmers from countries that were largely agrarian in nature benefited a lot from such crops and have continued to do so in contemporary times.

**c. Influenced Long distance trade in Africa**

Gold trade also facilitated the development of long-distance trade which came to connect Central Africa with the East Coast and other areas. This incorporation of Central Africa into the international economy therefore made the region benefit in terms of acquiring foreign goods and items such as clothing.

**d. Improved security in the region**

During this period of gold trade in Central Africa, the security of the region was also strengthened due to the exchange of gold with security items such as guns and ammunition. The kingdom of Mwenemutapa for instance obtained guns through the gold trade that they engaged in with other groups. Consequentially, they used these guns to scare away their rivals. Kingdoms that were far in the interior such as the Maravi also benefited in this type of exchange thereby contributing to the security of the areas in question.

**Negative impacts**

**a. Introduction of guns**

Even though the gold trade facilitated the coming in of guns in Central Africa which were used for security of some kingdoms, guns could also be used by the Arabs and Portuguese to destabilize African communities.

**b. Foreign interference with African political systems**

The Portuguese could sometimes directly interfere in the political systems of the indigenous people. In 1596 for instance, the Portuguese helped a puppet Gatsi Rusere to get the throne after Mwenemutapa Negomo had died. They even committed themselves to assist Rusere in any rebellion that threatened his rule. After the death of Gatsi Rusere in 1624, these Portuguese put another puppet Mwenemutapa Mavura to the throne. They did this by overthrowing the sitting Mwenemutapa Kapararaidze. In this way, the Portuguese contributed to the rapid decline of the Mwenemutapa Empire and other kingdoms as well.

### **10.5 Dutch arrival and expansion at the Cape**

Historically, it is established that the first batch of Europeans to arrive in the area were the Dutch in 1652 and they established themselves along the Cape Coast in South Africa. There are other pieces of evidence that indicate that some English had already established their interactions within the area even before the Dutch. This area was important for the Dutch largely because of naval and commercial activities. They wanted to make sure that they had a regular supply of fresh foods and water for their ships that were passing through *enroute* to India which was an important trading point for them but also the Spice Islands in Eastern Indonesia also known as the Maluku Islands. They were known as Spice Islands because of the availability of nutmeg, mace and cloves that were exclusively found there and these are what attracted European interest in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century AD. All those are spices.

After roughly about 50 years, other European groups arrived in the area. These included; the arrival of the French and Germans. Most of these were the Protestants of the Catholic Church and they were called French Huguenots (French Protestant Refugees). Their arrival led to the production of wheat, grapes and vines within the region. This contributed towards the expansion of agriculture in the area but these Protestants were also interested in the colonization of the area ie beyond the Cape Province. Apart from crop cultivation, they were also good cattle keepers.

#### **Learner Activity 3**

Assess whether or not Portuguese penetration within East, Central and Southern Africa should be celebrated or mourned.

### **10.6 Dutch Expansion from the Cape**

In the process of all Dutch expansion, relations began to sour with the *KhoiKhoi* and the Dutch. The Dutch could not provide Africans with required social services eg around 1775 there was a rebellion by some Africans against the Dutch. Fortunately, they began to be supported by the British who were also interested in the region. The company simply wanted to make profits and not to give incentives. This resultantly contributed towards the Great Trek.

The year 1795 therefore marked a turning point in the History of Southern Africa because the British Intervened and had to take over the territory from the Dutch. In 1815, the Cape colony became a permanent colony of the British after a series of wars. Their point of interest was largely in the area of trade and strategic positioning as they thought of expanding to other areas within Southern Africa.

#### **With British arrival in the area, a number of things changed**

- i. Creation of an economy that was largely British in nature
- ii. Legal reforms were made and use of English language was encouraged in the territory

The result of all this was that many Afrikaners (Dutch) began to resent British control and they began to trek northwards and to other regions. In essence these migrants established two republics

- a. The Transvaal region between the Vaal and the Limpopo Rivers
- b. The Orange Free State between the Orange River and the Vaal. Their independence was eventually recognized by Britain in 1852 and 1854

Our primary interest at this level is to appreciate that Southern Africa was now faced by the growing numbers of Europeans particularly in South Africa where a number of them got settled in addition to the Dutch. By 1870, it is clear that South Africa was divided between the British and the Dutch.

### **Unit Summary**

This unit has in general described the advance of two European groups into Africa following the forces of explorations that characterized world interest around the 15<sup>th</sup> Century AD. It has been observed through this unit that there were a number of factors that set into motion exploratory activities on the part of Europeans but key of which were those that were economic in nature. It has been established that both the Portuguese and the Dutch first came to know the Africa through the activities of explorers towards the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Through explorations for instance, the Portuguese gained a firm interest in the area which eventually brought them into direct contact with the region. There has also been a discussion on Dutch arrival and expansion at the Cape in South Africa. Like the Portuguese, it has been observed that their arrival at the Cape was also motivated by their desire to find a sea route to India. In their attempt to get access to India, they spotted the Cape as an ideal place where they could refresh as they proceeded on their journey. It has been noted that their arrival was also met by growing arrivals of other European groups such as the British and, due to conflicts that emerged, it made the Dutch to move further into other areas within South Africa.

### **Unit review exercise**

1. Explain how the Portuguese came into contact with Africa and the Interior of the continent.
2. Account for the main reasons that motivated the Portuguese into Central Africa.
3. Describe the historical context through which the Dutch were able to expand beyond the Cape colony in South Africa.

### **Answers to Learner Activities**

#### **Learner Activity 1**

With relevant examples, review the main stages of Portuguese establishment within the African continent.

1. The era of voyages of discovery, 1490s – 1500s – mainly championed by Portuguese explorers such as Vasco Da Gama

2. Era of conquest and establishment, 1500s – 1510 – this era witnessed physical conquest and establishment of Portuguese commercial interests in some areas within Africa more especially east, central and southern africa.
3. Era of penetration into the interior – this saw the actual penetration of Portuguese influence into the interior of Africa such as Zimbabwe and other parts of Central Africa
4. The Era of conflicts between the Portuguese and some African groups such as the Shona and the Swahili Arabs – this era witnessed increased conflicts between the Portuguese and other groups

### **Learner Activity 2**

Discuss the factors that contributed towards the decline of Portuguese influence in Central and Southern Africa.

1. Competition from the Dutch and English traders
2. Unfriendly nature of the Portuguese
3. Internal divisions amongst the Portuguese of Central Africa
4. The Environmental Factor - Portuguese influence in the area was also disturbed by the tropical climate which was conducive for tropical insects such as the tsetse that aided the spread of sleeping sickness.
5. The Resistance Factor
6. The Slave trade Factor – ie the rise of the Arab slave trade in East Africa displaced the Portuguese monopoly of trade in Central Africa.

### **Learner Activity 3**

Assess whether or not Portuguese penetration within East, Central and Southern Africa should be celebrated or mourned.

Their coming to Africa brought both positive and negative impacts therefore Portuguese penetration within East, Central and Southern Africa should be celebrated and mourned at the same time.

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# Unit 11: The Growth of Pre-colonial Long-distance Trade in Ivory

## Introduction

This unit discusses the evolution and expansion of pre-colonial long-distance trade in ivory in Africa. You will realize through this unit that Central and Southern Africa possessed abundant elephants that made the region to be the hub of ivory, a commodity that was in greater demand in the Far East and other regions as a raw material towards the making of varied materials. In particular, the unit presents a highlight of the origins of the trade, its organization and the impact this had on the regions within the continent.

## Key words

Ivory, robber-predatory economy,

## Prerequisite knowledge

By now you already have knowledge on early European explorations and migrations in Africa.

## Time allowed

4 hours

## Unit Objectives

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- discuss the context through which trade in ivory evolved and expanded in Africa
- explain factors that contributed towards the origins of ivory trade in precolonial Africa
- describe the organization of the ivory trade in pre-colonial Africa
- examine impact of the ivory trade on the African continent

## Background to the Ivory Trade

Trade in ivory in Africa should be understood from the Prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, a number of territories in East, Central and Southern Africa had plentiful elephants which became important sources for ivory in the region. These places included such areas as the Congo region, Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique. These areas in question became important centres where ivory was obtained and exported into other parts of the world such as Europe and America. The specific places included the Lilongwe plains, the Tumbuka-Nkhamanga area in the northern region of Malawi, Tete region in Mozambique, Luangwa areas, Bangweulu and Tanganyika. Trade in ivory became quite significant during the 18<sup>th</sup> Century mainly because markets in Europe, America and Asia were in greater demand for this commodity. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD for instance, the Portuguese carried most of the East African Ivory which was marketed in India and other areas in the Middle East. Some of this ivory originated from the interior of Central Africa including the Nkhamanga area in North Malawi and parts of Zambia. In exchange, Indian cloth, guns, gun powder and beads were sold in East Africa by the Portuguese including

other European groups such as the Dutch, English and the French who carried their businesses even in other areas of Africa. In many European areas, Asia and America as well, ivory was used as a raw material towards the making of billiard balls, ornaments and piano keys.

### **Activity 1:**

Examine the Historical context through which pre-colonial trade in ivory evolved and expanded in pre-colonial Africa?

#### **11.1 Organization of the trade in ivory**

One of the reasons which attracted a greater number of foreigners into the interior of Africa was basically an abundance of precious materials such as ivory and gold. This is the more reason why a number of Portuguese and Arabs opted to get into much of the interior of Africa to interact with the Africans at the level of trade. Many of these groups initially stayed at coast of Africa and instead used the middlemen to obtain them the required ivory and in other instances gold. The Arabs for instance could use the Swahilis and Nyamwezi merchants whilst the Portuguese used the Yaos and the Chikunda people. These are the people who could directly go into the interior to deal with the African people in obtaining gold.

### **Activity 2**

In groups, describe the organization of the ivory trade in pre-colonial Africa.

#### **11.2 Impact of the ivory trade in pre-colonial Africa**

Ivory trade like many other forms of trade in pre-colonial Africa, brought with it lasting impacts towards African communities.

- a) In the first place, this form of trade brought the continent into a web of international economy. In other words, the African continent was integrated into a network of trade relations and connections with other territories in the world. This in essence had an impact because it enhanced the coming in of new items into the region. By the 17th and 18th centuries for instance, the Portuguese carried most of the East African ivory which was marketed in India; while Indian cloth and beads were sold in East and West Africa by these Portuguese, Dutch, English and French.
- b) Politically, ivory trade in pre-colonial Africa contributed towards the rise, expansion and consolidation of particular pre-colonial kingdoms. It must be stated that certain pre-colonial states rose and expanded because of their ability to control the ivory trade. For instance, in Northern Malawi, the rise of the Nkhamanga state has been greatly credited to have been as a result of the control that the rulers had over the ivory trade in the region. With the proceeds they realized from this trade, they were able to distribute them to their subjects thereby consolidating their political systems in the region.
- c) This form of trade also enhanced a robber-predatory economy which was dependent on appropriation of important resources from the continent. Most often



the region received consumable goods that had little bearing towards the economy in exchange for precious resources. It must be appreciated the extraction of ivory in the region caused serious damage to the economies and environments of Africa through particular loss of elephants in the region.

### **Unit summary**

In conclusion, the rise of pre-colonial ivory trade in Africa ought to be understood from within the contexts of European explorations and the strategic positioning of the continent. It has been established through this unit that the era of European explorations of the world brought with it increased contacts with African territories. This was in their bid to expand their influence over commercial centers of the East. In the course of such explorations, some Europeans came into contact with some African territories especially those at the coast. Their interactions with these places gave them the realization of the existence of precious resources from within the continent such as ivory. It has been observed that most territories in Africa were had abundant elephants which made them important hubs for obtaining ivory from the region. The result of this was that Africa was placed in a position of a supplier for ivory which became an attraction point for the Portuguese and other groups to trade in. Consequentially, this trade integrated Africa within world economies which saw the continent receiving goods from the East and other European states in return. An important element to appreciate in this unit is that trade in ivory in pre-colonial Africa brought with it multiple effects both positive and negative.

### **Unit Review Questions**

- i. Discuss the historical context through which trade in ivory evolved and expanded in pre-colonial Africa.
- ii. Assess the view that the rise and expansion of the ivory trade in pre-colonial Africa was both a blessing and a tragedy.

### **Answers to Learner Activities**

#### **Activity 1:**

**Examine the Historical context through which pre-colonial trade in ivory evolved and expanded in pre-colonial Africa?**

This task demands you to establish the context in which the ivory trade evolved and expanded in pre-colonial Africa. You should therefore mention that the trade rose from the context of the availability of elephants in most parts of Africa such as the Luangwa region, Central and Northern Malawi and Tete in Mozambique.

You should also highlight that the influence of explorations brought Europeans the knowledge of the presence of ivory in the region which eventually they were able to export and exchange with other goods from the East and Europe.

#### **Activity 2**

**In groups, describe the organization of the ivory trade in pre-colonial Africa.**

This task demands you to be familiar with the way the ivory trade was organized and carried out in pre-colonial Africa. You should therefore emphasize on highlighting the following:

- i. It involved various groups such as the Portuguese, the Arabs and the Africans.
- ii. You should also highlight the roles that the various players in the trade did. For instance, you should highlight that many of foreign groups such as the Portuguese and the Arabs initially stayed at coast of Africa and instead used the middlemen to obtain them the required ivory and in other instances gold from the interior. The Arabs for instance could use the Swahilis and Nyamwezi merchants whilst the Portuguese used the Yaos and the Chikunda people. These are the people who could directly go into the interior to deal with the African people in obtaining gold.

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# Unit 12: Slave Trade in Africa

## Introduction

One of the major historical occurrences that had a great impact on the course of African history was slave trade. This influenced not only the history of Africa, but also of other lands such as America and Asia. In this unit, we will see how all this started; the difference between slavery in Africa and in the lands these people were taken to; means of acquiring such slaves, but also the effects that slavery had.

With the passage of time, slavery, like other historical occurrences, had to end. Agitation for the abolition of Slave Trade became so noticeable in the late 1700s. However, the actual abolition took place in the early 1800s. There was interplay of factors which contributed towards such abolition. These can be categorised as economic, political and humanitarian. Thus, in this unit, we will also look at the different factors which contributed towards the abolition of Slave Trade. We will also look at the effects and aftermaths of such abolition.

## Key words

Caliphate, Abolition

## Prerequisite knowledge

During your secondary school years, you looked at Slave Trade and slavery. This unit tries to build on that by looking at the issues at an advanced level.

## Time required

4 hours

## Unit Objectives

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain the factors for emergence and growth of both west and East African Slave Trade.
- discuss the means of getting slaves.
- analyse the impact of slave trade on African societies.
- discuss factors for abolition of Slave Trade
- analyse the effects of abolition of Slave Trade.

### 12.1 Differences between African and External Slavery

Slavery was not a new institution which was introduced by outsiders. It had been in existence for a long period prior to the coming of outsiders. However, the institution of slavery in Africa operated differently from the way it did in America and Arabia. In Africa, slavery was more of a social than economic institution. The slaves were not simply seen as property, but part of the society. Furthermore, slaves were free to have parallel independent production (produce their own food independent of their masters) and run independent families. It was not uncommon for slaves to marry in the families of their masters. Furthermore, a lot of these slaves had an opportunity to climb the social ladder

(get into positions of influence). However, the coming of Europeans and Arabs changed this setup by regarding slaves as expendable commodities. This perception was compounded by the fact that slaves were cheap to get as compared to their contribution in capitalist production. Thus, even though slavery and Slave Trade were not brought by Europeans, they changed its structure and nature.

## **12.2 Slave Trade in Africa**

### **12.2.1 Trans-Atlantic (West African) Slave Trade**

The prelude to Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade was confined to the Iberian Peninsula (Portugal and Spain) and the Mediterranean Islands. This started to appear in Europe in the 14<sup>th</sup> century AD. Initially, these Europeans used to get slaves from among the Slavs of the Black Sea, hence the word slave. However, after the fall of the Constantine Empire, it was difficult for them to access the Slavs. As such they turned to Africa for slaves.

In the early stages, their source was mainly Gambia and Senegal. In 1480 AD the Portuguese acquired the colonies of Principe and Sao-Tome where they established plantations. Their main source of slave labour was Congo and Angola. However, you have to note that during this time the number of slaves taken was minimal. The major transformation came with the Spanish discovery of the New World or America. Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492 AD. The Spanish established plantations, but also gold and silver mines. As such, they needed an abundant supply of labour. Initially they were using the indigenous Americans. However, this proved to be problematic because of the following:

- a) They were hunters as such they were not used to the kind of labour demanded.
- b) They were overworked in very harsh conditions which led to high mortality rate.
- c) They also died from what has been termed the "Columbian Exchange". Thus, they were exposed to new diseases brought by the new-comers for which they had not developed the necessary immunity.

You may wish to note that the 'Indian' population in Mexico dropped from 20 million in 1519 to about a million by 1600. As an alternative, the Europeans turned to Africa as a source of labour. This was influenced by the following:

- a) The success of Sao Tome and Principe plantations.
- b) Africans had developed resistance to lots of tropical diseases so they could as well work in the Tropics without problems. Furthermore, they had also developed some immunity to European diseases as they had been interacting with the Europeans for a long time.
- c) Europeans already had trade contacts with Africans including trade in slaves.
- d) There was willingness amongst Africans to sell slaves, hence it was easier to acquire such slaves.

The first batch of Africans to be taken to America was in 1532. During this period the slaves were coming mainly from the region between modern Ghana and Cameroon, hence the area was dubbed the Slave Coast. However, at this time, the number was still small. But it started to grow with the steady colonisation of both North and South America and eventual establishment of more mines and plantations in Brazil by the Portuguese. From 1630 there was a marked increase when the French and the Dutch got involved. From an average of 13000 slaves a year between 1530 and 1600, the number rose to about 27 500 a year in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, 70 000 in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and by 1830 the number had reached 135 000 per annum.

### **12.2.2 East African Slave Trade**

Even though the East African Slave Trade started a long time ago, it was relatively small and less developed as compared to the West African or Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. It started in the 8<sup>th</sup> century when the Abbasid Caliphate decided to import labour from Africa to work in the lowlands of Iraq along the lower ridges of Euphrates and Tigris. This became easier because some Moslem families had already established themselves in the East African Coastal. Other than working in the plantations, these were also used as domestic workers and concubines. From the 8<sup>th</sup> century onwards, small but steadily growing numbers of slaves were being exported to various destinations within the Abbasid Caliphate in Arabia and Persian Gulf. With passage of time, some slaves were taken as far as Turkey and Gujarat (India) and later Canton, China. An important chapter opened in 1735 when there was a marked increase in the number of slaves exported.

### **12.3 Means of Getting Slaves**

You have to know that the enslavement of Africans was possible through the agency of fellow Africans. Very few Europeans were involved in actual capture of slaves. However, the Europeans did influence the capture or enslavement of Africans in one way or another.

- a) Firstly, Europeans deliberately provoked wars amongst Africans. As a result, those caught during the wars were then sold to Europeans as slaves.
- b) There were raids which were deliberately started in order to capture slaves. It has been observed that in many instances appearance of slave ships often led to such raids.
- c) There was also "black birding", which was laying siege in order to kidnap people who were later sold as slaves.
- d) Some slaves were by-products of wars fought for other reasons other than acquisition of slaves. However, these prisoners of war were later sold as slaves.
- e) Sometimes domestic slaves were sold.
- f) Debtors as well as criminals were also sold. Historians have, however, noted that even though selling of criminals was an old practice, it became abused. According to Boahen, many rulers formed a habit of punishing any and every offence by selling the accused. He further observed that often in sea coast towns where slavers dropped anchor, there were lots of cases of alleged conspiracy against the government which invariably led to selling the accused. The abuse can be noted in that even the accused's wife, children and other relations such as siblings were also sold "to eliminate possible danger".

These slaves were battered with European products such as guns, clothes, alcoholic spirits such as rum, beads, tobacco, iron and copper bars, pots and plates, among others.

### **Learner Activity 1**

What were the problems which came about in a bid to acquire slaves?

#### **12.4 Factors for Increase in Number of Slaves Exported**

- a) The French had established sugar plantations in their island colonies of Mauritius and Reunion. Rapid expansion in acreage in the 1770s coupled with high death rates due to brutality, overwork and harsh conditions led to an increase in demand for such slaves.
- b) South American producers, mainly those from Brazil were not getting enough slaves from the Atlantic Coast; hence they turned to the East African Coast as a source of slaves.
- c) There was also a rapid demand for slaves by the Arabs who had established clove plantations in their colonies of Pemba and Zanzibar.

#### **12.5 Volume of Slaves**

There is extensive debate on the volume of slaves taken out of Africa. According to statistics from West African Slave Trade, some scholars have put the number to have been between 10 to 15 million. These statistics were mainly based on tax returns. However, others have disputed this saying the number could have been well over 100 million. The basis of their argument is that the statistical sources available leave a lot to be desired due to the following reasons:

- a) A lot of slaves were smuggled in order to avoid paying tax.
- b) Some slavers lowered the number of slaves on the ship. However, the captains never bothered to inspect. As such, even ship schedules were deficient as sources.
- c) Children of a certain age and height even those suckling were neither counted nor recorded.
- d) The number of slaves who died on the high seas was neither counted nor recorded.

#### **12.6 Effects of Slave Trade**

There are three schools of thought which have explained the effects of Slave Trade: the Apologetic, Mixed Blessing and Critical Schools.

##### **1. Apologetic School of Thought**

This maintains that Slave Trade was not entirely bad, but that it had some positive effects. One major proponent of this School is J.D Fage. He argues that the number of slaves taken from West Africa was relatively small compared with the whole population. Thus departure of such numbers would never have had such a profound demographic impact. Furthermore, he argues that Slave Trade did actually lead to strengthening of African Societies in that the most dynamic societies politically, economically and materially are those that were active in Slave Trade. In East Africa, George Campbell says that the slave

caravan routes worked as corridors through which new crops were introduced to the interior such as rice, cassava and maize.

However, some scholars have reservations about the above arguments. For example, Boahen argues that Slave Trade was in no way responsible for emergence of dynamic societies. He cites the example of the Kingdoms of the forest and coastal areas of West Africa such as Songhai, Mali, Ghana among others which rose way before emergence of such Atlantic Slave Trade.

Countering the role of Slave Trade in spread of new food crops, Walter Rodney used the analogy of pasta. He argued that pasta which is a staple of Italy is originally Chinese. However, it did spread through trade and explorations and not slavery. So there were other means these could have spread. As such the infiltration of such crops and their attendant benefits cannot be used as justification for the suffering which accompanied Slave Trade.

## **Learner Activity 2**

What are the reservations against the Apologetic School of Thought?

### **2. Mixed Blessing School of Thought**

This maintains that the effects cannot be generalised as different societies were affected differently. Albert Dantzing argued that societies which were weak militarily, politically and were loosely organised suffered a lot and experienced considerable degree of political, economic and demographic dislocation. On the other hand, politically centralised societies, due to their organisation, had abilities to raid their neighbours, hence benefiting because they used the wealth got from slave trading to develop materially, politically, militarily and economically. These included societies which served as middlemen.

### **3. Critical School of Thought**

This maintains that Slave Trade did not in any way confer benefits of any kind into Africans. Rather it was destructive.

- a) Firstly, it led to destruction of African population. Many Africans died through raids and 'slave' wars. Secondly, majority of Africans were taken away. Thirdly, they took, the youth who were fertile and active thus could have contributed to population growth, leaving the old and weak. Furthermore, they took more males than females thus disturbing the balance of reproduction.
- b) Slave trade also led to economic stagnation in Africa due to loss of productive potential people, as those taken were the ones in the active and productive age bracket, leaving the old and weak whose contribution was minimal. The amount these people were sold for was just a fraction of what they might produce in their lifetime. Furthermore, their productive contribution was outside Africa. The importation of cheap European goods competed with African industries, which led to destruction of the same, hence contributing towards such economic stagnation.

- c) It also led to extensive human suffering and loss of dignity. During raids rapes were rampant. People were chained as animals or yoked with heavy logs; marched for long distances and put in stockades while naked without regard to gender. They were chained during the voyage hence unable to relieve themselves in a dignified manner.
- d) Slave Trade also stimulated extensive warfare which further led to suffering and misery. The rising prices of slaves invariably led to increase in raids. Furthermore, Europeans deliberately incited wars in Africa which provided ample numbers of slaves for sale. Worse still, the wars were demoralising as they were motivated by commercial greed and not self-preservation nor imperial ambitions. Furthermore, the use of guns made them more fatal and bloodier.
- e) There also emerged a gun-slave cycle. Guns made slave acquisition easy. For a society to be strong and protect itself even from raids, it needed to have guns. Hence in a bid to be strong they acquired a lot of slaves in order to access guns which in turn made it easy for them to acquire more slaves.
- f) It also led to the destruction of good governance among African Societies as leaders could sell their own people instead of protecting them. Furthermore, criminals were sold instead of being reformed. It has also been observed already that many of the accusations which were levelled against the accused were baseless and motivated by desire for wealth, so were the punishments meted.
- g) It also affected political unification as Africans looked at each other as possible slaves (trade goods) other than partners. The raids also created suspicions which affected unification. Africans started to serve the interests of Europeans other than fellow Africans.
- h) It created the basis for racism and racist sentiments as Africans were looked upon as mere property, hence inferior.
- i) It also affected political development as some polities disintegrated since they were raided and slaves were taken from them.

### **12.7 Factors for the Abolition of Slave Trade**

Slave Trade was abolished in Britain in 1807, Holland in 1814 and France in 1817. The institution of slavery was abolished in 1833. Once Britain had abolished the trade and institution of slavery, she became determined to force other European powers to follow suit. They used different means including financial 'bribery', bullying, diplomacy, but also creating a moral climate which saw Slave Trade as object of moral detestation. The British government also established an anti-slavery squadron to patrol West African waters and to use force to stop the trade.

Secondly, they signed treaties with other European Governments to grant them rights to search their ships. They also did set a Court of Mixed Commission in Freetown to try offenders. They also concluded anti-slavery treaties with African rulers. As observed already, Britain abolished the institution of slavery in 1833 and by 1834 she had also abolished it in all her African dominions. In 1845, it was abolished in French Colonies. In 1860 Cuba, 1865 United States of America, 1888 Brazil. But what actually led to such



abolition? In summary, it can be said that it was a combination of political, economic and humanitarian factors:

1. There was political agitation and active resistance of Africans in slavery.
2. Secondly, there were campaigns by a section of society called Abolitionists who were fired by moral and humanitarian considerations.
3. Thirdly, there were economic factors including realization that slavery was becoming uneconomical owing to hanging economic terrain.

#### **(a) Political agitation and active resistance by Africans**

The struggle of Africans to end Slave Trade was very influential in the abolition. Africans were very active in ensuring the end of an institution that they felt oppressed them. These used both overt and covert means.

Firstly, there were campaigns which included publications by freed African slaves. Notable were the ex- slaves Alaudah Equino and Ottobah Cagoano. These were very active in the anti-slavery campaign. They produced books showing the evils of Slave Trade and slavery, but also condemning the whole system. These also toured England making speeches to beef up their course. These were not the only ones as different Africans, at different times, using different approaches contributed towards such campaigns.

Secondly, there were active resistances to their enslavement. These included revolts in slave ships. Africans also resisted within the system by using such means as sabotage, arson, go slows and such like means in order to cripple the institution. Furthermore, Africans took any available opportunity to escape from slavery. In Brazil these runaway slaves established a Republic called Palmares which survived for 100 years. In Jamaica, these escaped slaves called Maroons set up colonies in the central Highlands and resisted Government attempts to oust them. These actions provided the impetus for others to follow suit. The most landmark resistance was in the French Highlands of St Dominic. In 1791 slaves on this island rose and killed their masters leading to abolition of slavery in 1794 and eventually establishing their own Republic in 1804 called Haiti which has survived to date.

Through this active agency by Africans themselves, the institution of slavery became dangerous, politically challenging and expensive, thus laying ground for its eventual abandonment and collapse.

#### **(a) Moral and humanitarian factors**

Driven by moral and humanitarian considerations, attacks against Slave Trade and slavery started in Europe in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. This was the time when much emphasis in literature, philosophy and religion was being placed on the equality, brotherhood and liberty of man. The Slave Trade and slavery was being condemned by philosophers such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, economists such as Adam Smith, literary figures such as Samuel Johnson and Daniel Defoe and evangelists such as John Wesley. Other notable abolitionists included

William Wilberforce, Granville Sharp, Fowell Buxton and James Stephen. These formed the Society for the Abolition of Slave Trade in May 1787 and the British Anti-Slavery Society in 1823. These campaigned in order to arouse public opinion against the trade by showing that the sale of Africans was both inhuman and evil. Furthermore, from 1788, they persistently tabled motions in parliament until eventually abolished Slave Trade in 1807 and slavery in 1833.

### **Learner Activity 3**

How did moral and humanitarian factors contribute towards ending slavery?

#### **(b) Economic factors**

Firstly, there was competition from Brazil, Cuba and other non-British, French and Portuguese Colonies. These were producing sugar in great quantities and their sugar was cheap such that sugar from British Territories could not be sold on the continental markets leading to accumulation. As such abolition was meant to limit supply of slaves to their competitors so as to lower their production and inhibit expansion due to labour shortage, thus removing the threat posed. However, the British Territories could afford this because their supply of slaves was already saturated. As such, a curtailment would not in any way be ruinous to them.

Secondly, as Brazilian and Cuban producers were churning out cheap sugar in large quantities, British production became less profitable due to competition. This, as observed already, led to accumulation of British sugar which could not be sold. As a result, these producers failed to repay loans to their financiers. This forced the financiers to direct their funds to rising new industries back home. This weakened the plantation system further. As this system was no longer important as it used to be, Britain was able to abolish Slave Trade and slavery as it was not ruinous to its economy.

During this time, there was also the industrial revolution in Britain. This led to extensive demand for raw materials than could be supplied by the Americas. As such it was felt that it was economically viable to encourage African production in Africa to supply such raw materials. More so, it was seen to be more economical as this African produce could be bought far much cheaply than that from America. On the other hand, it was felt that such African producers could provide a market for European producers as they would have the means to acquire such European products.

### **Learner Activity 4**

Economic factors necessitated the abolition and abandonment of slavery. How far true is this assertion?

## **12.8 Effects of abolition of Slave Trade**

The abolition of Slave Trade had social, economic and political impacts.

### **(a) Social effects**

The abolitionists were convinced that Slave Trade was a crime against humanity and a sin before God, and therefore that it should not merely be abolished but also atoned for by bringing Western Civilisation to Africa, whose major agents were seen to be Christianity and education. This culminated in the formation of missionary societies which sent missionaries to different parts of Africa.

Missionary activities and Western Civilisation led to emergence of a new class of Africans who adopted European tastes in food, clothing, and music. They also adopted European names. This was due to exposure to influences from abroad.

However, these attempts at civilising the people were a mixed blessing in that, on the other hand, it led to inhibition of the development of African Culture. This was so as the European Missionaries detested and looked down on everything associated with Africans which included African art, music, dancing and systems of marriage, even names. Converts were compelled to adopt European names and renounce all African related things.

One of the greatest contributions of the Missionaries was establishment of an education system. They did set up schools and colleges. This also extended to linguistic studies which led to rendering of African Languages in writable form, but also making the Bible accessible to many as it was translated in local languages.

Missionaries also introduced and laid the ground for modern health system, thus contributing towards lowering mortality rate and in the process improving life expectancy.

Another effect was emergence of new classes within African Society. This was a result of education, but also introduction of legitimate trade and commercial agricultural production among Africans. There emerged a middle class composed of private traders and businessmen and a working class employed by different European Trading Companies.

Another social effect that was related to independent production was that it led to changes in European perception of Africans. Instead of being perceived as a commodity, the Europeans started looking at Africans as people with both spiritual and material needs to be satisfied and with commodities to sell.

### **(b) Economic effects**

The first major economic effect was the development of agriculture and legitimate trade as a substitute to slave trading. They introduced new crops, established experimental farms

for research, taught new methods of farming and preparing commodities. Thus instead of just extracting African labour for agricultural production in America, it was now applied in their own independent production.

In order to provide a conduit for African produce to reach European markets where it was needed to feed the growing industries, the missionaries and other investors established trading companies. These on top of buying African produce also supplied manufactured goods from Europe.

### **(c) Political effects**

Politically, the abolition led to establishment of colonies for freed slaves. These were Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Secondly, it led to annexation of some parts of Africa in response to appeals from the Missionaries in trying to curb remaining pockets of colonisation, but also to provide protection to such Missionaries. This led to establishment of protectorates which was a prelude to colonisation. Thus, it culminated into the scramble for and colonisation of Africa.

Notable also is that the Europeans were instrumental in curtailing inter-tribal warfare as many people came under their influence and control. However, it has also been observed that in some instances the Europeans created divisions by raising some societies at the expense of others. This was a result of either biased perception or in other instances petty political machinations of divide and rule, thus trying to avoid the emergence of a unified front amongst Africans.

### **Unit Summary**

In this unit, we have seen that though slavery was not new to Africa, there was a change from being a social to a purely economic institution with coming of Slave Trade. We have also seen that the discovery of America and eventual establishment of mines and plantations, but also the establishment of plantations in Arabia and East African islands, fueled the demand for slaves. Furthermore, we have seen that slaves were got through different means such as kidnapping, selling of domestic slaves, but also through military and judicial means. The volume and effects of slave trade remain debatable. We have seen that there are three schools with differing positions. These are Critical, Apologetic and Mixed Blessing. We have also seen that Slave Trade and slavery were abolished through a combination of factors such as African agitation, role of moral campaigners, but also because it was deemed no longer economical. Furthermore, we have seen that the aftermath of abolition came with both positive and negative effects and laid the ground for modern Africa.

### **Self-assessment**

Slave Trade negatively affected Africans. Discuss.

Discuss both negative and positive results of abolition of Slave Trade and slavery.

## Answers to learner's activities

### Activity 1

- 1 Proliferation of wars and violence and its resulting suffering.
- 2 Abuse of judicial processes in order to enslave people.

### Activity 2

- 1 Slave Trade was in no way responsible for emergence of dynamic societies. Great Kingdoms such as Songhai, Mali, Ghana among others rose way before emergence of
- 2 New crops and ideas could infiltrate African interior through other peaceful and less destructive means other than Slave Trade.

### Activity 3

By engaging in campaigns, sabotage, revolts even establishing their own republics.

### Activity 4

- 1 Establishment of anti-slavery societies.
- 2 Building on the prevailing liberal sentiments of liberty, equality and brotherhood, campaigns
- 3 Tabling motions in parliament.

### Self-assessment 1

- 1 It led to destruction of African population. Through deaths, exporting of Africans and disturbance of reproductive balance.
- 2 Economic stagnation in Africa due to loss of productive potential and destruction of African industries.
- 3 It also led to extensive human suffering and loss of dignity.
- 4 It also led to destruction of good.
- 5 It also affected Africa's political systems.
- 6 It created the basis for racism and racist sentiments.

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## Sample Examination Paper

**Mzuzu University**  
**Centre for Open and Distance Learning (CODL)**  
**HIST 1101: Early African History**  
**End of Module Examination**

**Date:** 16<sup>th</sup> June, 2020

**Time Allowed:** 3 hours

### **Instructions:**

1. There are **five** questions in this paper.
2. Answer **any three** of your choice.
3. Each question carries **20 marks**.
4. Ensure that all answers should be in an **essay format**.

### **Questions**

1. Jenkins (1991) defines history as a discourse whose object is the 'past'. Examine the key sources that can be used if one is to come up with such a discourse.
2. Discuss the impacts of the Nilotic migrations over Eastern Africa.
3. In what specific ways did geography, racial mingling and the environment contribute to the rise and expansion of ancient Egypt between c3500-322 BC?
4. Examine how the Almoravid attacks on Ancient Ghana contributed to the decline and fall of the kingdom between 1020 and 1076 AD.
5. Examine the key factors that contributed towards the abolition of slave trade during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century AD

**END OF QUESTION PAPER**

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