

Development of classical states and empires

[History](#), [Empires](#)



Differences of Africa's civilizations: a. Small regions of Mediterranean culture in N. and S. extremes, large deserts (Sahara, Kalahari), larger regions of savanna grasslands, tropical rain forest in continent's center, highlands + mountains in E. Africa iii. One distinctive environmental feature: bisected by equator = most tropical of the world's three supercontinents a. Persistent warm temp. = rapid decomposition of vegetable matter (humus) = poorer and less fertile soils and less productive agriculture than in more temperate Eurasia + spawned disease-carrying insects/parasites v. Feature: proximity to Eurasia a. Allowed parts of Africa to interact w/Eurasian civilizations b. N.

Africa incorporated into Roman Empire, produced wheat/olives w/slave labor, Christianity spread widely famous martyrs c. Saint Augustine: theologian d. Christian faith found more permanent foothold in present-day Ethiopia v. Arabia " another point of contact w/larger world v'. Domesticated camel = nomadic pastoral way of life; later, made trans-Saharan commerce possible (linked W. Africa 0 Med. Civilizations) vii. Over centuries, E. African coast = port of call for Egyptian, Roman, Arab merchants = became integral part of Indian Ocean trading networks viii. External connections + internal development of African societies generated patterns of change during classical era A.

Geez: language used @court, in towns, for commerce; written in script derived from S. Arabia c. Measure of ctrl over mostly Agaw-speaking ppl of country thru loose administrative structure - tribute payments d. Romans P Axum " third major empire after own and Persian v. Introduced to Christianity thru connections to Red Sea trade + Roman world (Egypt) v.

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King Ezana: monarch of fourth century (when Christianity was introduced), adopted Christianity (same time as Constantine in Roman) v'. Mounted campaign of imperial expansion across Red Sea 0 Yemen in S. Arabia vii.

Decline: environmental changes (soil exhaustion, erosion, deforestation brought about intensive farming) viii.

Rise of Islam 0 altered trade routes, diminished revenue available to Axumite state, emerged Christian church (present-day Ethiopia) 'x. Meroe + Axum paralleled on smaller scale major features of classical civ. Of Eurasia: long-distance trading connections, urban centers, centralized states, complex societies, monumental architecture, written language, imperial ambitions, direct contact w/Med. civilizations II. Along the Niger River: Cities without States Urbanization in middle stretches of Niger R. in W. Africa Growing #s of ppl from S. Sahara into fertile floodplain of middle Niger in search of access to water w/domesticated cattle, sheep, goats, agricultural skills, ironworking tech.

Ppl created distinctive city-based civilization (Jenne-Jero) No imperial system No centralized political structure " cities w/o citadels" Emerged as clusters of economically specialized settlements surrounding a larger central town Earliest + most prestigious specialized occupation = iron smithing Roderick McIntosh: archeologist, leading figure in excavation of Jenne-Jero Villages of cotton weavers, potters, leather workers, griots grew around cent. Towns Occupational castes (passed jobs/skills to children, could only marry within own group) Farmers tilled soil, raised animals, specialization in farming - fishing, rice cultivation Growing network of indigenous W.

African commerce Middle Niger flood-plain supported rich agriculture and had clay for pottery, lacked stone, iron, ore, salt, fuel Ghana, Mali, Songhai - W. Africa III. South of the Equator: The World of Bantu Africa i. Most significant development involved accelerating movement of Bantu-speaking ppl into enormous subcontinent i'. Bean from homeland region (present-day SE. Nigeria + Cameroons) iii. Bantu expansion - slow movement of peoples brought to Africa south of equator measure of cultural and linguistic commonality, marking it as a distinct region of the continent A. Cultural Encounters 'v. Advantages: a. as agriculture generated more productive economy 0 larger #s to live in smaller area b.

Farmers brought both parasitic and infectious diseases (to which foraging people had little immunity) c. Iron, tools/weapons v. Kalahari regions of SW. Africa and few places in E. Africa, gathering and hunting survived (such as San) vi. In rain forest region of Central Africa, foraging Batwa (Pygmy) = "forest specialists" 0 honey, wild game, elephant products, animal skins, medicinal barks and plants vii. Adopted Bantu languages viii. In drier env