

TEXTBOOK NOTES ON EGYPT

The Course of the Nile

- The Nile is the world's largest river
- It flows North from Central Africa to the Mediterranean Sea
- 4,000 miles
- The Nile has two main sources- the Blue Nile from Ethiopia and the White Nile from deep in Central Africa
- These two sources meet in the present country Sudan (Khartoum).

The Nile through Ancient Nubia

- The Nubian section of the Nile contains six rock filled rapids called cataracts
- Between the first and second cataracts was Lower Nubia- poor farm land
- Between the second and sixth cataracts was known as Upper Nubia- good farm land for planting summer and fall
- This farmland was no more than two miles wide

The Nile through ancient Egypt

- The ancient Egyptian section of the Nile was from the first cataract at Aswan to the Mediterranean
- This section of the Nile passes through a narrow region called Upper Egypt
- The Nile spreads out to form a fertile area called lower Egypt
- At the end of the Nile, the river splits into several streams. These streams form a triangle shape called the delta- good farm land

The Gifts of the Nile

- Every spring the Nile rushes down from the highlands
- This water brings rich fertile soil called silt
- Silt is deposited on both sides of the Nile ideal for farming
- The Egyptians praised "Hapi" the god of the Nile for this good farmland

Black Land and Red Land

- The Egyptians called their land Kemet- the Black Land
- Floods varied from year to year
- Flash Floods were rare not like in Mesopotamia
- Dry years were rare, and could cause famine
- The Red land or vast desert were not good for human life- poor farming
- The desert protected Egypt from invasion, not like Mesopotamia

Civilizations along the Nile

- Communities appeared in the Nile delta in Lower Egypt around 4,000 B.C.
- The people built homes of straw or bricks made from a mix of mud and straw
- In the south in Upper Egypt the people had scattered farming villages along the Nile
- The first Nubian communities emerged around 3800 B.C.

The Growth of Trade

- The Nile was a "Highway for trade"
- Ships could float down river because the Nile flowed North
- They could also sail upriver because the winds blew to the south
- Trade also was linked across the desert and the Red Sea to Mesopotamia

In Egyptian Life

- The way people explained the workings of nature
- Each part of Egypt had its own gods and goddesses who had their own temple
- The gods of Upper Egypt were different from those of Lower Egypt
- Osiris- The god of living and death
- The chief god of the ancient Egyptians was Amon-Re
- He protected the rich and the poor
- Believed that Amon-Re was born each morning in the east and died each evening in the west
- Egyptians preferred not to be on the west bank of the Nile after nightfall because they believed the spirits of the dead lived there
- Egyptian belief Osiris, the god of the afterlife, had a family
- Isis, one of the most powerful of all Egyptian goddesses was his wife
- The god of the sky, Horus, was his son
- Isis as the great mother who protected the health of her children
- In Egyptian art Isis and Osiris were shown together

Life Ever After

- Egyptians believed the spirits of the dead made their way to the afterlife in heavenly boats
- Once there, if lived right lived with Osiris and lived a life of ease and pleasure
- Spent their days meeting and eating and drinking with their friends and family who had died
- Should of the dead could not survive without food, clothing, and other items from this life
- Egyptians took care of this by burying the dead with the possessions they had enjoyed in life
- A pharaoh's tomb contain anything from sandals to his favorite horse
- Egyptians believed that if bodies were preserved, or made into mummies, the spirit would exist in the afterlife
- Bodies of important people, usually royalty were mummified
- The process took two or three months
- Carefully workers removed the organs
- The body was then filled with natural salt and stored for at least 42 days
- The body completely dried out
- When dry the body was cleaned and bathed in spices
- Then it was wrapped with long linen bandages
- Arms and legs were bandaged tightly to the body
- A well-wrapped mummy had up to 20 layers of bandages
- While workers were preparing the mummy, artisans were busy carving the coffin

- There were more than one of these wooden coffins
- A pharaoh had 3 or 4 coffins
- Coffins fitted inside each other like a nest of boxes

Egypt's Rival and Friend

- Taharka's home land of Nubia was crowned king of Nubia and Egypt 690 B.C.
- An advanced culture appeared in Nubia about 8,000 years ago.
- Nubian civilizations gave birth to many kingdoms.
- Nubia and Egypt were often peaceful friendly neighbors
- The Egyptians called Nubia Ta Sety the Land Of The Bow
- Egypt often benefited from goods, from lower Egypt
- Later, Nubian kingdoms began to rival Egypt for power
- Nubian kingdoms grew up in the cities of Kerma, Napata, Meroë

The Kingdom of Kerma

- The Kerma kingdom rose in power when Egypt was weakening
- It expanded from Kerma into parts of Southern Egypt 1600 B.C.
- Kerma had power and wealth and was known for its artisans
- The people buried the Kerma kings in tombs under mounds of earth
- Kings were buried on golden beds with jewelry and ivory
- In 1400 B.C. Egypt became stronger and Thutmose III invaded Nubia
- The war lasted 50 years and Egypt ruled Nubia for the next 700 years
- The Nubians adopted Egyptian ways and worshiped Egyptian gods with their own

The Kingdom of Napata

- In the late 700 B.C. Egypt was weak and the kingdom of Napata expanded into Egypt
- The Napatan Kings slowly took control of Egypt
- Their capital was Thebes and later Memphis
- The Napatan kings admired Egyptian culture, building pyramids and adopting Egyptian ways
- About 600 B.C. the Egyptians forced back the Nubians

The Kingdom of Meroe

- Moving south of Egypt's reach the Nubians founded a court in the city of Meroe
This kingdom included much of Nubia and stretched south of central Africa
- The desert east of Meroe had iron ore the Nubians became the first Africans to specialize in iron (Plows and Weapons)
- Meroë traded goods from central Africa for goods from India the Arabian Peninsula and Rome
- The people of Meroë had their own system of hieroglyphics
- Computers still can not figure out the hieroglyphics of Meroë
- What we know today comes slowly from objects (artifacts) that the people of Meroë left behind
- The kingdom of Meroë began to weaken in 200 A.D.
- Meroë now located by present day Sudan-where hair styles and clothing still exist from Meroë

Everyday Life of the Ancient Egyptians

- Egyptian painting in tombs and temples are responsible for most of what we know of everyday life
- These paintings show royalty and ordinary people involved in all aspects of life
- Written records also tell us about Egyptian life
- Egyptians were busy and hard working people-that also had a sense of fun and love of beauty

Social Classes

- Egyptian Society resembled a pyramid
- At the top of the pyramid was the pharaoh
- The next level was a small upper class such as priests and nobles
- The third class were middle class people such as merchants and skilled workers
- At the base of the pyramid we find the peasants-building roads and temples and farming
- Prisoners captured in wars were made slaves
- Slaves formed a separate class but had rights-they could own personal items and inherit land
- Slaves could be set free

Lives of the peasants

- Peasants could own land but mostly work the land of the wealthy
- During the flood, they worked on roads temples and buildings
- When the water left the land, they plowed the earth and scattered seeds
- The harvest was the busiest season for peasants
- They worked from sunrise to sunset-men, women and children in the fields gathering crops of wheat and barley

Egyptian Women: An Active Role

- They were supposed to be a living model of Isis-The wife of Osiris
- They had the same rights of men
- They traveled freely, could own property, run businesses and enter into legal contracts
- They also supervised farm work and hunting
- They had many occupations-from priestess to dancer
- Women often acted as regents for their sons who were too young to be pharaoh

Achievements of the Egyptians

- Made important advances in writing, astronomy, and medicine
- The people of the ancient world acknowledged Egypt as a land of great learning

A new system of Writing

- The Egyptians as in Mesopotamia, had picture-like symbols called hieroglyphs
- Pictures were used for ideas or things
- Other pictures were used for sounds
- They wrote on clay and stone, but later used papyrus
- Papyrus is from a reed like plant that was made into paper

Unlocking a Mystery

- After 400 A.D. scholars couldn't read or understand hieroglyphs
- In 1799 the Rosetta Stone was found near the city of Rosetta by the Nile with 3 different types of writing on it
- The stone had 3 languages-hieroglyphs, a different form of hieroglyphs and Greek
- Jean Francois Champollion deciphered the stones writing
- This opened a new insight into the world of Ancient Egypt

Keeping Track of Time

- Agriculture made it necessary for the Egyptians to be able to predict when the Nile will flood
- Egyptian astronomers noticed that the Nile appeared to rise rapidly about the same time they could see Sirius-The Dog Star
- They worked out the average time between the appearance of Siris, the time was 365 days becoming the length of their year

Medicine

- Their work on mummies helped the Egyptians to know about the human body
- They learned to perform surgery
- They practiced herbalism to cure everyday ills-using herbs
- They wrote their medical knowledge down on papyrus which was later used by the Greeks and Romans in their medicine