

ANCIENT EGYPT

CH 4: Section 1: pp. 86 – 89 in *World History* textbook

THE GEOGRAPHY OF ANCIENT EGYPT

THE BIG IDEA: The water, fertile soils, and protected setting of the Nile Valley allowed a great civilization to arise in Egypt around 3200 BCE.

THE MAIN IDEAS:

1. Egypt was called the gift of the Nile because the Nile River gave life to the desert.
2. Civilizations developed along the Nile after people began farming in this region.
3. Strong kings unified all of Egypt.

VOCABULARY:

1. **cataracts [p. 87]:** strong rapids; waterfalls
2. **delta [p. 87]:** a triangle-shaped areas of land made from rich soil deposits
3. **Menes [p. 89]:** Egyptian king who unified Upper and Lower Egypt
4. **pharaoh [p. 89]:** title used by the rulers of Egypt
5. **dynasty [p. 89]:** a series of rulers from the same family

I. The Gift of the Nile

a. Location and Physical Features

- i. **Nile:** spans 4,000 miles from central Africa to the Mediterranean Sea
 1. Longest river in the world
 2. Civilization developed along 750 mile stretch
- ii. **Regions:**
 1. Southern Region: Upper Egypt (upriver)
 2. Northern Region: Lower Egypt (downriver)
- iii. **Physical Features:**
 1. **Cataracts:** made sailing the Nile difficult
 2. **Delta:** 2/3 of farmland located here
 3. Swamps and marshes

b. The Floods of the Nile

- i. **Flooding:** most of Egypt was made up of desert due to little rainfall
 1. Every year, rainfall in southern highlands would cause Nile to flood
 2. Nile was easier to predict than Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia
- ii. **Silt:** made soil in Nile River Valley ideal for farming
 1. Because silt was black, Egyptians called their land “black land” vs. the land of the dry desert called “red land”
 2. Egyptians considered the floods to be miraculous and life-giving

II. Civilization Develops Along the Nile

a. Hunter-gatherers:

- i. Lived in Nile River Valley over 12,000 years ago
- ii. Found plants, wild animals, and fish to eat (diet)
- iii. Learned how to farm and established small villages

b. Mesopotamia:

- i. Developed irrigation systems and basins to collect water
- ii. Built canals to direct water flow to water fields

c. Diet:

- i. Farmers grew wheat, barley, fruits, and vegetables
- ii. Raised cattle and sheep
- iii. River provided fish, geese, and ducks
- iv. Diet was, therefore, varied and healthy

d. Natural Barriers:

- i. Made Egypt difficult to invade
 1. Desert to the west
 2. Mediterranean Sea to north and Red Sea to east
 3. Cataracts on the Nile to the south
- ii. Protected from invaders, Egypt grew. Wealthy farmers held power over multiple villages.
- iii. 2 Kingdoms formed: Lower Egypt and Upper Egypt

III. Kings Unify Egypt

a. 3100 BCE:

- i. Menes rose to power in Upper Egypt
- ii. Menes sought to finish unification started by the Scorpion King

b. Invasion of Menes:

- i. Menes united both Upper and Lower kingdoms and married Lower Egyptian princess to strengthen control over the region
- ii. Menes wore both kingdom crowns (white “bowling pin” crown and red cobra crown) in combination to show unity.

c. Memphis:

- i. Menes built capital city of Memphis at the southern tip of the Nile River Delta
- ii. Memphis became the political and culture center of the First Dynasty.

d. First Dynasty:

- i. Lasted 200 years

