

Medieval Africa – Section Three: African Society and Culture

I. Life in Medieval Africa

A. Bantu

1. “The People”
2. 3000 B.C.
3. Benue River
 - a. Present Day Nigeria
 - b. Packed Canoes
 - c. Traveled South and West
4. Congo River
 - a. Twisting Waterway
 - b. 2,700 Miles
 - 1) Through Rain Forest
5. Many Settled in Grasslands
 - a. Central Africa
 - b. Moved South of the Sahara
6. 400 A.D.
 - a. Settled Much of Africa
7. Unsure Why They Left Homeland
 - a. Possible Reasons
 - 1) Overcrowding
 - 2) Over Farming
 - 3) Just Drifted
8. Took Culture With Them
 - a. Skills
 - 1) Pottery
 - 2) Mining
 - 3) Ironworking
 - b. Language
 - 1) More Than 120 Million Speak a Form of It
 - 2) Includes Swahili
 - c. Ideas
 - d. Traditions
 - e. Religion
 - 1) One Supreme Creator
 - 2) Spirit World Where Ancestors Live

B. Importance of Family

1. Basis of African Society
 - a. Extended Family
 - 1) Several Generations
 - 2) From Ten to Hundreds of Members
 - b. Matrilineal
 - 1) Many Villages
 - 2) Traced Ancestry Through Mother
 - 3) Women Joined Husband’s Family
 - i. Wife’s Family Received Gifts

Medieval Africa – Section Three: African Society and Culture

- 1) Cloth
- 2) Metal
- 3) Tools
- 4) Cattle
- 5) Goats

- 4) Valued Children
 - i. Link Between Past and Future
 - ii. Believed in Reincarnation
 - 1) Ancestor Born as Child
 - iii. Guaranteed Family to Live On
 - iv. Yoruba
 - 1) Example
 - 2) Modern Day Nigeria

C. Education and Community

1. Education

- a. Carried Out By Family
- b. Carried Out By Villagers
- c. History of Their People
- d. Skills Needed as Adults
- e. West Africa
 - 1) Griots
 - i. Storytellers
 - ii. Helped in Schooling
 - iii. Oral History
 - 1) Stories Passed Down
 - 2) Lessons About Living
 - a) Also Through Short Proverbs
 - 3) Kept Alive
 - a) Through Grandparents
 - b) Through Older People

D. Role of Women

1. Mainly Wives and Mothers
2. Men Had More Rights
3. Men Controlled Much of Women's Lives
4. Served As Soldiers
5. Famous Rulers
 - a. Queen Dahia al-Kahina
 - 1) 600's A.D.
 - 2) Led Fight Against Muslim Invasion
 - 3) Present Day Mauritania
 - b. Queen Nzinga
 - 1) Present Day Angola and Congo
 - 2) 40 Years Battling Portuguese Slavers

II. Slavery

A. Slavery Within Africa

Medieval Africa – Section Three: African Society and Culture

1. Not Invented in Europe
 - a. Had Existed Throughout the World
2. Bantu Chiefs
 - 1) Raided Nearby Villages
 - i. Captives
 - 1) Labors
 - 2) Freed for Payment
3. Criminals and Enemies
4. In Africa
 - a. Possibility of Escape
 - b. Win Freedom
 - 1) Marriage
 - 2) Hard Work
5. Muslims
 - a. Quran Forbade Muslims to Enslave Muslims
 - b. Could Enslave Non-Muslim Africans
 - c. Trade in Humans Increased
 - d. Traded For
 - 1) Horses
 - 2) Cotton
 - 3) Other Goods
6. Europeans
 - a. West Africa
 - b. New Slavery Market
 - 1) Africans Raided Villages
 - i. Using European Guns
 - ii. Seized Captives to Sell

B. European Slave Trade

1. Portuguese
 - a. Began in 1441 A.D.
 - b. Separated Families
 - c. Stayed in Portugal at First
 - 1) Common Laborers
 - d. Later Moved to the Atlantic Islands
 - 1) Madeira, Azores, Cape Verde
 - i. Plantations
 - 1) Cotton
 - 2) Sugarcane
 - a) Very Hard Work
 - b) 1500 A.D.
 - i.) Portugal was Leading Supplier
 - 3) Grapes

III. African Culture

A. Igbo

1. Skills

Medieval Africa – Section Three: African Society and Culture

- a. Dancers
 - b. Poets
 - c. Artists
 - d. Musicians
 - e. Woodcarvers
 - f. Metal Workers
2. African Diaspora
- a. Spreading of African People
 - b. Spreading of African Culture
3. Still Visible Today
- B. African Art
1. Cave Paintings
- a. Earliest Known Form of African Art
 - 1) Hunters
 - 2) Dancers
 - 3) Chores
 - b. Art and Religion Developed Together
 - 1) Art had Religious Meaning
 - 2) Woodcarvers
 - i. Made Masks
 - ii. Made Statues
 - iii. Carved Pieces
 - 1) Captured part of the Spiritual Word
 - 3) Stories
 - i. Served a Practical Purpose
 - 4) Artists
 - i. Wood
 - ii. Bronze
 - iii. Ivory
 - iv. Carved Faces
 - 1) Important Leaders
 - 2) European Explorers
 - 3) Traders
 - 5) Weavers
 - i. Kente Cloth
 - 1) Means "Basket"
 - 2) Woven
 - 3) Brightly Colored
 - 4) First Weavers Male
 - 5) Still Seen Today
 - 6) Music and Dance
 - i. Almost All Aspects of Life
 - 1) Expressed Religious Feelings
 - 2) Get Through Everyday Tasks
 - ii. Singer Calls Out Line

Medieval Africa – Section Three: African Society and Culture

- 1) Other Singers Repeat
- iii. Instruments
 - 1) Drums
 - 2) Whistles
 - 3) Horns
 - 4) Flutes
 - 5) Banjos
 - 6) Kept the Beat
- iv. Allowed Spirits to Express Themselves
 - 1) Celebrated Births
 - 2) Celebrated Deaths
 - 3) Majority Danced
 - 4) Lines Swaying and Clapping Hands
 - 5) Individuals Leaping and Twirling
 - 6) Drummers Sounded Rhythm
- v. Enslaved Africans
 - 1) Music
 - a) Reminded of Homeland
 - b) Hardships
 - i.) Origin of the Blues
 - c) Religious Faith
 - d) Hopes of Freedom
 - e) Other Forms Later
 - i.) Jazz
 - ii.) Ragtime
 - iii.) Rock and Roll
 - iv.) Rap
- 7) Storytelling
 - i. Escapees Recorded Them
 - ii. Passed Orally
 - iii. Taught by Griots in Homeland
 - iv. Popular Stories
 - 1) Smaller Animals Outsmarting Bigger Ones.
- 8) Renewed
 - i. Naming Babies