



Ancient Egypt



Geography & Early Settlement of Egypt

Introduction

- The Egyptians settled along the Nile River, in the northeast corner of Africa.
- The Egyptian civilization lasted from 3,100 BCE to 350 CE.



Environmental Factors

- There were three important environmental factors that led to the Egyptian civilization: **water**, **topography**, and **vegetation**.
 - **Topography** means the shape of the land.
 - **Vegetation** means plant life.
- Environmental factors depended on **physical** features. These are things like **rivers**, mountains, **valleys**, deserts, **climate**, and the fertility of the soil.

Water

- Rivers, lakes, and inland seas are all good sources of fresh water.
- Water was important to ancient civilizations for many reasons.
- Water was a good source of food through hunting and through farming.
 - Farmers settled by rivers. The river's natural flooding helped to irrigate crops.



Topography



- Topography refers to the shape of the land, and includes mountains, hills, plains, and deserts.
- Farmers usually settled in **flat**, and **open** areas such as plains and valleys. These large spaces gave their crops room to grow.

Vegetation

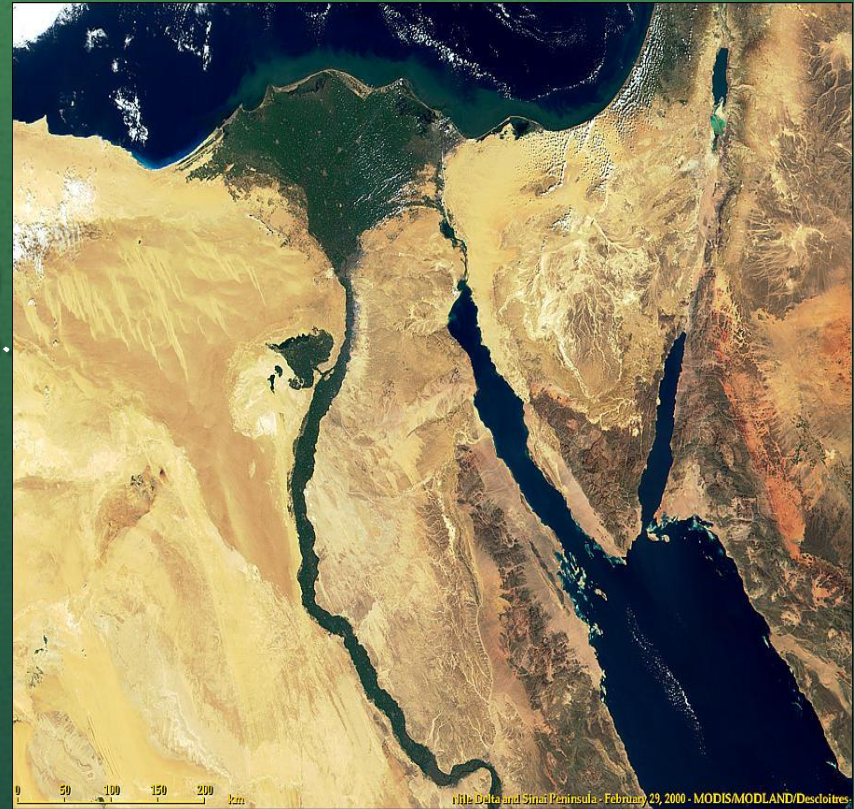
- There are a lot of kinds of vegetation such as: **trees**, bushes, flowers, grass, and **reeds**.
- **Mild** weather, regular rain, and fresh **water** are good for plant life.
- Vegetation influenced human settlement in many ways:
 - People **ate** wild plants and crops.
 - People **made** products out of plants such as: medicine, baskets, **rope**, tools, and **paper**.



Environmental Factors & The Settlement of Egypt

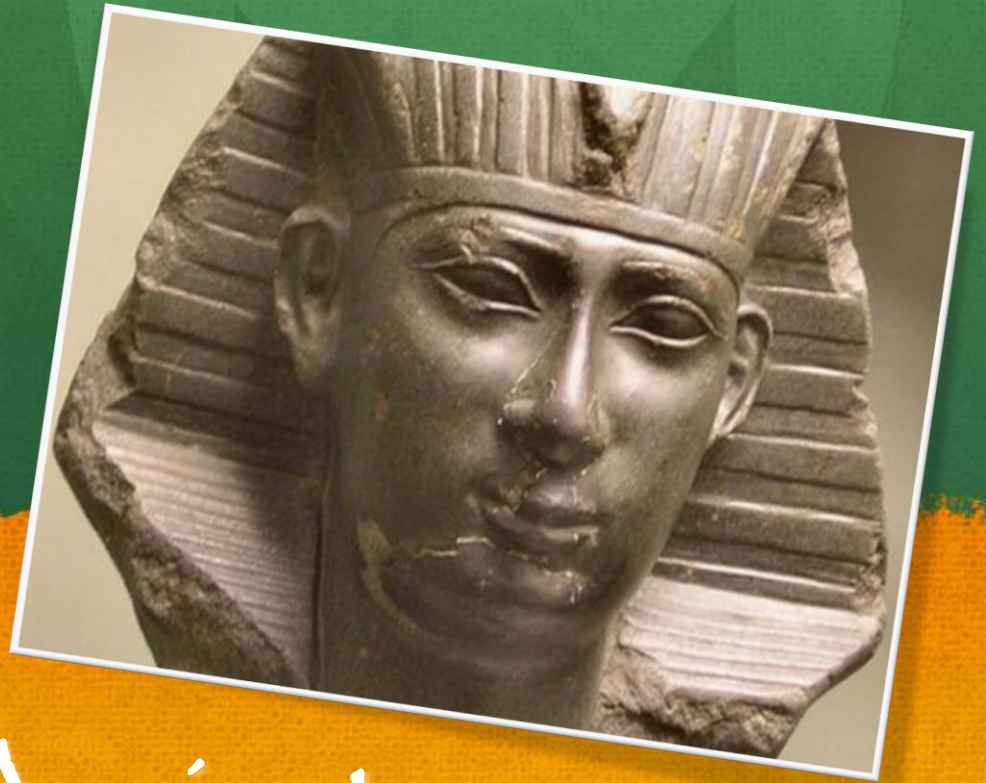
Physical Features

- The Nile River created a long, **fertile** valley that ended in a marshy delta near the Mediterranean Sea.
- Delta: An area of **sediment** deposited at the mouth of a river.
- The deserts created a natural **barrier** that protected people who lived along the Nile.



Environmental Factors

- The Nile was a source of **fresh** water in an area that was mostly **desert**.
- The Nile River provided natural **irrigation** and fertilization.
- Fertilization: The process of adding fertilizer or **plant food** to the soil.
- Plants were very plentiful in the Nile River valley. Some of the useful plants were reeds and **papyrus**.
- Papyrus is a tough water plant. Papyrus was used to make **rope** and **paper**.



Pharaohs of Ancient Egypt

Pharaoh Khufu: The Pyramid Builder

- Pharaoh Khufu ruled from 2551 to 2528 BCE during the Old Kingdom period.
- He built the famous pyramid.
- Khufu helped to establish the pharaoh as a central authority. He declared himself a god.
- Khufu kept strict control over Egypt's food supplies by overseeing the harvest and storing extra grain.
- Pharaoh Khufu built the Great Pyramid of Giza as a tomb for himself and his family.

The Great Pyramid

- The Great Pyramid was built with over 2 million stone blocks.
- It took twenty years for the pyramid to be completed by thousands of workers.



Pharaoh Senusret I: Patron of the Arts



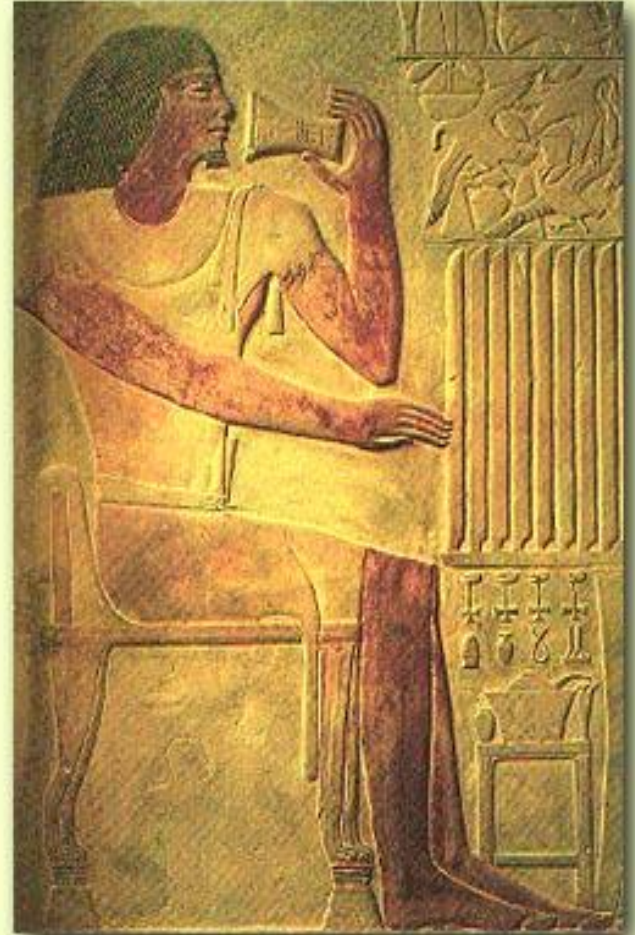
- Senusret I ruled from 1971 to 1926 BCE during the Middle Kingdom.
- Art, literature, and architecture flourished while he was pharaoh.
- Senusret controlled mines filled with gold, copper, and gems.
- Pharaoh Senusret built and improved many temples, shrines, and religious monuments.

Pharaoh Hatshepsut & Egyptian Trade

- Hatshepsut ruled from 1473 to 1458 BCE; she was Egypt's first female pharaoh.
- While she was pharaoh, art and architecture flourished, and trade was encouraged.
- Hatshepsut encouraged trade with other countries. Her biggest trading expedition was to an African kingdom called Punt.
- During Hatshepsut's reign, trade helped spread Egyptian influence along the Nile and in the Middle East.

Government Officials

- The three important officials in the Egyptian government were the **vizier**, the general of the **armies**, and the chief treasurer.
- The vizier was the second in command, after the **pharaoh**. It was the vizier's job to carry out the pharaoh's **commands**, he also **hired** and supervised other government officials.
- The **vizier** was also the chief judge. He was expected to be **fair**.



Government Officials

- The chief treasurer looked after the government's **money**.
- The general of the armies was the top military **commander** in Egypt. He advised the pharaoh about **war** and national **security**. He also helped the pharaoh form **alliances** with other nations.
- Many government officials led lives of **luxury** with great wealth, and **large** homes. They also held **lavish** **banquets**.

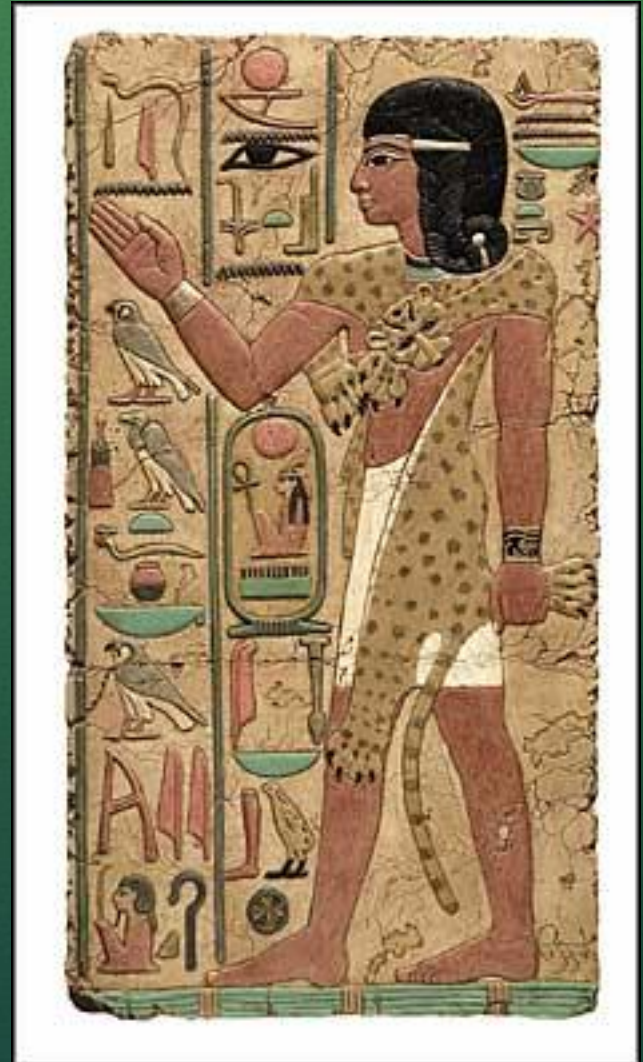
Priests

Priests were powerful and highly respected in Egypt.

The pharaoh was the highest ranked priest of all.

Duties of the Priests

- The **High Priest** advised the pharaoh and oversaw all **religious** ceremonies.
- **Temple** priests were in charge of the **temples** scattered throughout Egypt.



Priests

Duties of Temple Priests

- Every temple in Egypt was home to a **god** or **goddess**. The temple priest's main job was to take **care** of the god.



Burial Practices

- Since Egyptians believed that a person needed their body in the afterlife, burial was very important.
- Priests practiced embalming.
 - **Embalming:** To use preservatives to keep a dead body from decaying.



Embalming Steps

- Embalmers removed the body's **organs**, such as the brain, **lungs**, and liver.
- The **heart** was left in the body.
- The removed organs were kept in **canopic jars**.
- After 70 days, the embalmers washed and **oiled** the body.
- Then, they wrapped the body in **hundreds** of yards of linen.
- They decorated the body with **jewels** and protective **charms**. They would often place a **mask** over the head.
- Finally, the priests spread a black, **gooey** gum over the body and wrapped it again.

Burial Practices

- After all those steps, the dead body was placed in a wooden **box** that was placed in a **sarcophagus**.
- **Sarcophagus**: A large stone coffin.
- The sarcophagus was often filled with items such as food, games, gold, jewelry, and clothes.



Artisans

Artisan: A highly skilled laborer who created beautiful works of art.

What Did Artisans Do?

- Artisans could have been: carpenters, jewelers, leatherworkers, metalworkers, painters, potters, sculptors, and weavers.
- Painters portrayed scenes from everyday life.
- Weavers made fabric and cloth.
- The most skilled artisan was a stone carver. They had to carve statues from stone. They were also very important in tomb building.

Daily Life of an Artisan

- Artisans worked very hard. They would often work for **ten** days before they would take a day off.
- Although artisans were very **skilled** and creative, the upper classes often viewed them as common **laborers**.



Peasants

Peasants made up the **largest** class in the Egyptian social system.

Three Seasons of the Nile

- **Flooding Season:** This is when the Nile overran its banks and fertilized the soil. Since the farmers had to wait to plant, they would work on **royal** projects.
- **Planting Season:** Began in October and was when farmers planted their crops such as wheat and barley. Planting was a **two** person job. One person would **soften** the ground with a plow pulled by **cattle**, while the second person (usually the farmer's **wife**) followed behind and scattered the **seeds**. Farmers had to make sure that their land was carefully **irrigated**.

Peasants

- **Harvest Season:** Men would cut down the plants with sickles and women and children would collect the grain. During this time, everyone worked from dawn until dusk.



Taxes

- At the end of the harvest season, peasants were either **rewarded** or **punished** for their crop production.
- If the peasant worked hard and grew a lot of grain they were **rewarded**. The pharaoh allowed them to gather up as much **leftover** grain as they could. The peasant was able to keep this grain and use it for **food**.
- However, if the peasant did not grow enough food, they were punished, and sometimes brutally **beaten**.
- All of the peasants were required to pay **taxes** to the pharaoh in the form of crops.