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Skip to main content The complete collection consists of fully illustrated volumes, each accompanied by detailed annotations, a comprehensive bibliography, and an index. This monumental work represents 60 years of collaboration among more than 550 historians and specialists, overseen by an International Scientific Committee composed of two-thirds African members. These volumes introduce the innovative concept of Global Africa, which views the continent as a central and interconnected part of world history and culture. It highlights Africa's influence through diasporas, trade, migrations, and cultural exchanges, emphasizing its vital contributions to global societies and portraying it as an active force shaping history, creativity, and development worldwide. This volume explores contemporary challenges in Africa and its diasporas from a Global Africa perspective, highlighting women, youth, creativity, knowledge, and political change. Not to be confused with General History of Africa. Archaic humans emerged out of Africa between 0.5 and 1.8 million years ago. This was followed by the emergence of modern humans (Homo sapiens) in East Africa around 300,000-250,000 years ago. In the 4th millennium BC written history arose in Ancient Egypt,[1] and later in Nubia's Kush, the Horn of Africa's D'mt, and Ifrikiya's Carthage.[2] Between around 3000 BCE and 500 CE, the Bantu expansion swept from north-western Central Africa (modern day Cameroon) across much of Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa, displacing or absorbing groups such as the Khoisan and Pygmies. The oral word is revered in most African societies, and history has generally been recorded via oral tradition. This has led anthropologists to term them "oral civilisations".[a]55:142–143 Traditions were crafted utilising various sources from the community, performed, and passed down through generations. Many kingdoms and empires came and went in all regions of the continent. Most states were created through conquest or the borrowing and assimilation of ideas and institutions, while some were created by colonial historians depicted oral sources, claiming that African oral traditions that of European Africa. Pre-colonial Christian states include Makuria and Nubia. Kingd. Widespread conversion to Christianity occurred under European rule south of the Sahara. The Horn of Africa and Southern Africa due to efficacious missions, as people syncretised Christianity with their local beliefs.[20] The rise of nationalism facilitated struggles for independence in many parts of the continent, and, with a weakened Europe after the Second World War, waves of decolonisation took place. This culminated in the 1960 Year of Africa and the establishment of the Organisation of African Unity in 1963 (the predecessor to the African Union), with countries deciding to keep their colonial borders.[21] Traditional power structures, which had been incorporated into the colonial regimes, remained partly in place in many parts of Africa, and their roles, powers, and influence vary greatly. Political decolonisation was mirrored by a movement to decolonise African historiography by incorporating oral sources into a multidisciplinary approach, culminating in UNESCO publishing the General History of Africa from 1981. Many countries have undergone the triumph and defeat of nationalistic fervour, and continue to face challenges such as internal conflict, neocolonialism, and climate change. In accordance with African cosmology, African historical consciousness viewed historical change and continuity, order and purpose within the framework of human and their environment, the gods, and their ancestors, and they believed themselves part of a holistic spiritual entity.[22] In African societies, the historical process is largely a communal one, with eyewitness accounts, hearsay, reminiscences, and occasionally visions, dreams, and hallucinations crafted into narrative oral traditions which were performed and transmitted through generations.[23] [12]24:48 In oral traditions time is sometimes mythical and social, and ancestors were considered historical actors.[c]124:43–53 Mind and memory shapes traditions, as events are condensed over time and crystallise into clichés.[25]:11 Oral tradition can be exoteric or esoteric. It speaks to people according to their understanding, unveiling itself in accordance with their aptitudes.[26]:168 In African epistemology, the epistemic subject "experiences the epistemic object in a sensuous, emotive, intuitive, abstractive understanding, rather than through abstraction alone, as the case in Western epistemology" to arrive at a "complete knowledge", and as such oral traditions, music, proverbs, and the like were used in the preservation and transmission of knowledge.[27] Main article: Prehistoric Africa Further information: Prehistoric North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa § Prehistory, Prehistoric West Africa, Prehistoric Central Africa, Prehistoric East Africa, Horn of Africa § Prehistory, Prehistoric Southern Africa, and African archaeology Side view of cast of "Lucy" in the Naturmuseum Senckenberg The first known hominids evolved in Africa. According to paleontology, the early hominids' skull anatomy was similar that of the gorilla and the chimpanzee, great apes that also evolved in Africa, but the hominids had adopted a bipedal locomotion which freed their hands. This gave them a crucial advantage, enabling them to live in both forested areas and on the open savanna at a time when Africa was drying up and the savanna was encroaching on forested areas. This would have increased to 5 million years ago, but these claims are controversial because biologists and genetics have humans appearing around the last 70 thousand to 200 thousand years.[28] The fossil record shows Homo sapiens (also known as "modern humans" or "anatomically modern humans") living in Africa by about 350,000–260,000 years ago. The earliest known Homo sapiens fossils include the Jebel Irhoud remains from Morocco (c. 315,000 years ago),[29] the Florisbad Skull from South Africa (c. 259,000 years ago), and the Omo remains from Ethiopia (c. 233,000 years ago).[30][31][32][33] [34] Scientists have suggested that Homo sapiens may have arisen between 350,000 and 260,000 years ago through a merging of populations in East Africa and South Africa.[35][36] Evidence of a variety of behaviors indicative of Behavioral modernity date to the African Middle Stone Age, associated with early Homo sapiens and their emergence. Abstract imagery, widened subsistence strategies, and other "modern" behaviors have been discovered from that period in Africa, especially Soan, North, and East Africa. The Blombos cave site in South Africa, for example, is famous for rectangular slabs of ochre engraved with geometric designs. Using multiple dating techniques, the site was occupied by modern humans independently dated to about 94,000 years BC.[37] [38] [39] [40] [41] [42] [43] [44] [45] [46] [47] [48] [49] [50] [51] [52] [53] [54] [55] [56] [57] [58] [59] [60] [61] [62] [63] [64] [65] [66] [67] [68] [69] [70] [71] [72] [73] [74] [75] [76] [77] [78] [79] [80] [81] [82] [83] [84] [85] [86] [87] [88] [89] [90] [91] [92] [93] [94] [95] [96] [97] [98] [99] [100] [101] [102] [103] [104] [105] [106] [107] [108] [109] [110] [111] [112] [113] [114] [115] [116] [117] [118] [119] [120] [121] [122] [123] [124] [125] [126] [127] [128] [129] [130] [131] [132] [133] [134] [135] [136] [137] [138] [139] [140] [141] [142] [143] [144] [145] [146] [147] [148] [149] [150] [151] [152] [153] [154] [155] [156] [157] [158] [159] [160] [161] [162] [163] [164] [165] [166] [167] [168] [169] [170] [171] [172] [173] [174] [175] [176] [177] [178] [179] [180] [181] [182] [183] [184] [185] [186] [187] [188] [189] [190] [191] [192] [193] 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