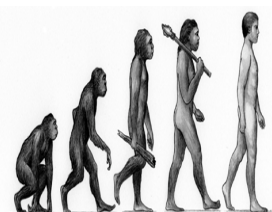


Unit

1



THE DISCIPLINE OF HISTORY AND HUMAN EVOLUTION

Unit Introduction

This unit intends to familiarize you with the elementary methodology of history which helps you to learn the subsequent units more successfully. Accordingly, the lessons in this unit cover meaning of pre-history and history, the discipline of history, evolution human beings, theories on the origin of human beings, Africa and human evolution, Stone Age

and the emergence of states. In order to facilitate your learning and to make it interesting to you, major points and arguments are illustrated with examples and images. The unit closes with a summary of the main points of each lesson, followed by review questions that enable you to measure your achievements all through the unit.

Unit learning outcomes

At the end of this unit, learners will be able to:

- discuss the main objectives of studying history.
- evaluate the place of Africa and Ethiopia in human evolution.
- summarise the theories on the origin of state and its major features.



Key Terms

- Prehistory
- History
- Chronology
- Human Evolution
- State

1.1 Meaning of Prehistory and History

Lesson learning outcomes

At the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- define the discipline of History.
- explain the difference between prehistory and history

Brainstorming

- Discuss in group prehistory and history.

The term history, derived from the Greek word *Istoria*, means “inquiry” or “an account of one’s inquiries.” History is the story of humans in the past. It tells what they did and what happened to them. Historians are people who study and write about the human past. They tell us that history began about 5,500 years ago when people first began to write. However, the story of people begins in prehistory. Prehistory is the study of the distant past. Prehistory was the time before people developed the art of writing. Archaeologists and Anthropologists have worked to find clues about early human life.

Only a small part is studied of these events and deeds of the past. This small part, which is studied, is also called history. Unlike prehistory, however, the subject of history mainly deals with the past, beginning from when writing and recording started. Therefore, historians are people who study and write about the human past.

However, the other disciplines do it in the present. Man interacts with the natural environment to produce his primary needs, such as food, shelter, and cloth. In the production process, human beings improved the production tools and the quality and quantity of the produce.

Activity 1.1



1. How do you differentiate prehistory from history?
2. Explain the term 'Istoria'.
3. Referring to different history books or exploring the internet, write a half-page essay describing the relationship between man and the natural environment and present it to your class.

History as a body of knowledge is an account of the past based on historical facts and evidence. Historical fact refers to information or statement about the past that is known or proven to be true. History is all about providing an interpretation of what happened, why it happened, and how it happened based on sources. Therefore, history is both the facts of the past and inquiry made into the past facts. Thus, history is not an opinion or novel writing.

Identifying historical facts from opinion requires critical thinking. Distinguishing between fact and opinion is one of the most important skills you can learn from studying history. A fact is a statement that can be proved with supporting information. On the other hand, an opinion is what a writer believes based on his or her viewpoint. History writers can keep their opinions with facts, but an opinion is something that cannot be proved.

Activity 1.2



1. How can you distinguish facts from opinion? Explain it by giving an example.

1.2 The Discipline of History

Lesson learning outcomes

At the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- describe the importance of learning history.
- identify different sources of history.
- examine pieces of historical sources closely.
- appreciate the role of history in understanding societal development.
- discuss the level of accuracy of data obtained from other sources.

Brainstorming

- How can we study history?

As a body of knowledge, History is a branch of social science that deals with what human beings did in the past. It studies changes in the development of past societies' political, economic, social, and cultural life.

1.2.1 The importance of History

History helps us know about the past, understand the present, and foresee future developments. It also allows us to understand national and international issues, including democratic principles and nationalism. History can also help us develop the necessary skill for collecting and analysing information to reach conclusions. So, it helps us live our lives as conscious citizens actively participating in shaping our future.

History teaches us critical skills. Studying History helps students to develop essential research skills. History helps us understand the present better and provides a sense of identity.

1.2.2 Historiography and Historical Interpretations

A. Historiography

Historiography is studying how knowledge of the past is attained and transmitted. The world's oldest written History comes from China. Archaeologists have discovered records of Chinese History written before 1000BC. Ancient Greek historians, notably Herodotus and Thucydides, introduced the organized study and narration of the past. The term's first use is attributed to Herodotus (c. 484-425BC), who is often the "father of history." Thucydides wrote critically and accurately.

History emerged as an academic discipline in the second half of the 19th century, first in Europe and then other parts of the world. Leopold Von Ranke (1795-1886), the German historian, established History as an independent discipline. Ranke is considered the "father of modern historiography" for his effort to the scientific study of the past.

Ethiopia had an indigenous tradition of history writing. It made some changes from the chronicle tradition in the early 20th century. History emerged as an academic discipline in the 1960s. This decade is vital in the growth of Ethiopian historiography.

B. Historical Interpretation

What happened in the past is endless. Thus, historians select topics or problems they desire to study. History is a systematic and objective study of the past as a field of

discipline. It is a systematic study because historical study follows established rules, procedures, and standards. Historians use specific basic methods in writing History. The study of History also refers to the objective pursuit of truth. In principle, historians are expected to avoid bias though it is difficult in practice. Historical interpretation is the process by which we describe, analyse, evaluate, and create an explanation of past events. We base our interpretation on primary or secondary, or both sources.

1.2.3 Sources of History

History is the study of the past supported by evidence arising from sources. Where there are no sources, there is no history. Sources are, therefore, key to the study and writing of History. Most commonly, historians divide sources into two broad groups. These are primary and secondary.

Primary sources are those that are contemporary with the events under study. They are original materials that have direct relations to the events they describe. Examples of primary sources are Monuments, tools, ornaments, artefacts (coins, fossils, inscriptions, weapons, utensils, and ruins of buildings), written materials (manuscripts or handwritten materials, chronicles, diaries, letters, minutes, codes of laws, court records and administrative files, travel documents), photographs, maps, video and audiovisual materials.



a)



b)

Figure 1.1 a) Silver Coins of Enudybis, b) Archives

Secondary sources are sources that contain information that is derived from primary sources. In addition, they provide us with second-hand or indirect information. Examples of secondary sources are articles, books, textbooks, biographies, oral traditions and published stories or movies about historical events. Oral traditions are historical sources transmitted by word of mouth from one generation to the next. Oral data can qualify the position of primary or secondary sources based on the nature of informants.

History can only be written based on data collected from the abovementioned sources. However, whatever the source of information, it should be subjected to critical evaluation before being used as evidence. Primary sources have to be verified for originality and authenticity to avoid forgery. Secondary sources have to be examined for the reliability of their reconstructions. Oral data should be cross-checked with other sources such as written documents to determine its truth; because it may lose its authenticity due to distortion through time.

Activity 1.3



1. Explain why we bother about the past while living in the present and anticipate what is yet to come.
2. In a group, search the importance of learning history from the internet and present it to the class.
3. Answer the following question based on the below case study.

A case study on car accident

Assume yourself as a judge entitled to administer a traffic accident in which a teenager was a victim and died 13 months ago. You were provided with information about it from the following sources. The first is the driver of the car and a passenger who was in the vehicle during the car accident. The second is parents of whom a victim had talked to them just before death and a police report with possible details.

- A. Which ones do you believe are primary, and which is secondary sources?

1.2.4 Dating in History

In recording the past, historians try to determine the exact time when events occurred. That is what we call it dating. Dating is figures or numerical statements that express the time of historical events or processes. The duration in time could be short or long. Therefore, historians describe the period of events by using certain subdivisions or units of time. Hence, the figurative expression expresses the exact dates on which events occurred.

For example:

- the battle of Adwa took place on March 1, 1896
- Ethiopian Renaissance Dam was initiated on April 2 2011

Dating in history is expressed in numerical statements such as a decade, century, and millennium. A decade refers to a period of ten years. A century is one hundred years, whereas a millennium refers to a thousand years.

For example:

- The years from 1900 to 1909 is the first decade of the twentieth century
- The years from 1900 to 1999 is the twentieth century
- The years from 1000 to 1999 the is the second millennium

The primary purpose of dating in history is to organise past events according to their sequence of occurrence by using calendars. This is what we call chronology. The two widely used calendars worldwide are the Gregorian and Islamic. According to the Gregorian calendar, time is counted forward and backwards from the time of the birth of Jesus Christ.

The time before the birth of Christ is referred to as BC. (Before Christ), whereas the time after the birth of Jesus Christ is expressed in AD (anno Domini), a Latin term meaning “The Year of the Lord”.

Ethiopia uses its calendar, which began on September 11, of the Gregorian calendar. The Ethiopian Calendar is seven to eight years behind the Gregorian calendar. The Islamic Calendar follows the event called the Hijra to count time forwards and backwards. The Hijra was the flight of the prophet Mohammed and his early followers from the town of Mecca to Medina in 622AD. Hence, BH stands for the years before the Hijra, and AH refers to the years after the Hijra.

Acitvitiy 1.4



1. Discuss in pairs and explain the difference between decade, century and millennium.
2. Referring to a primary or secondary sources, write a paragraph about the arrival of Christianity and Islam in Ethiopia and present it to your class.

Historians sometimes use a timeline. A timeline is a graphic representation of events in chronological order or periods of history. It is a horizontal or a vertical lineup of historical events. Historical timeline enables quick visualisation and forms a clear idea of the passage of time about events.

In addition, the timeline shows you when and where events happened during the discussion period. See the timeline below.

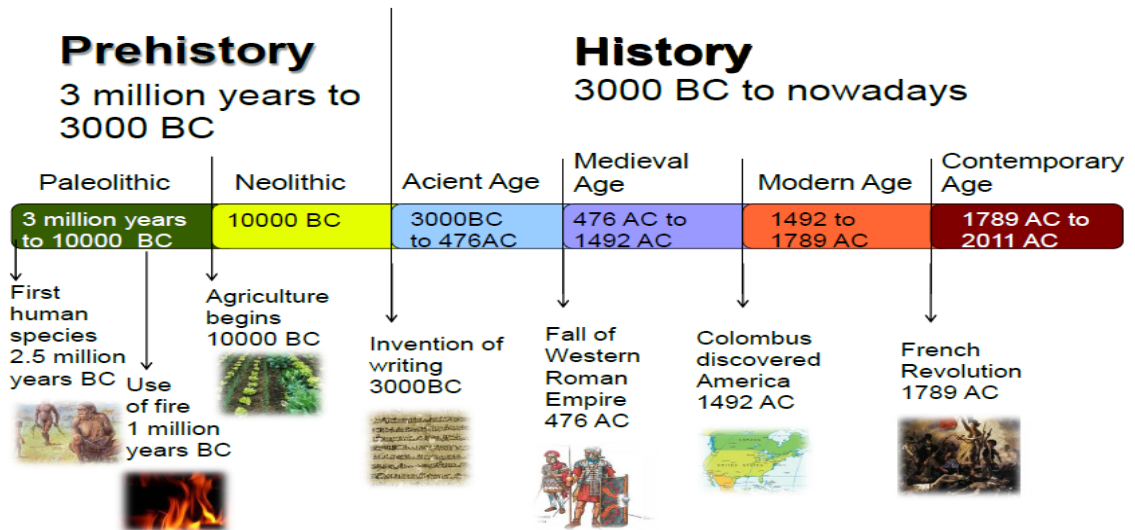


Figure 1.2 Historical timeline

Because of the length of time, historians organise the human past into separate periods after identifying significant developments and giving a label to each period. This is what we call periodisation in history. Accordingly, history is conventionally divided into ancient, medieval and modern history.

Acitvitiy 1.5



- Working in pairs or small groups, read the following events. Then put them in chronological order and show it on a historical timeline.
 - Cities built on Indus valley
 - Democracy evolved
 - Pyramid Age begins
 - Rise of Chinesee Civilisation
 - Romans set up a Republic
 - Sumerians developed cuneiform
- Explain why the Ethiopian calendar lags 7 or 8 years behind the Gregorian calendar.

1.3 The Evolution of Human Beings

Lesson learning outcomes

At the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- appraise the major theories of human evolution.
- draw a chart showing major stages of human evolution.
- debate on the theories of the origin of mankind.

Brainstorming

- What do you know about human evolution?

According to evolutionist theory, all human beings now living in the world belong to the species *Homo sapiens*, which descended from a common ancestor or a genus known as *Homo*. That is why it is said that humans belong to the Hominid family. Hominids are humans and other creatures that walk upright. Although hominids family no longer exist, we know that their representatives lived in the past. We know this from the discovery of many fossils that represent them. All hominids are characterised by what is known as bipedalism, i.e., walking on two feet with an upright position.

The earliest hominid to be found in Ethiopia is named *Ardipithecus ramidus*. It was discovered at Aramis in the Middle Awash of the Afar Regional State. It is described by a team of Paleontologists led by Tim White, and it is dated to around 4.4 million years ago. This species was followed by another fossil called *Australopithecus afarensis*. Finally, in 1974, Donald Johanson found the oldest complete human skeleton in Ethiopia. He named his find 'Lucy' after a Beatles' song.

The second stage in early human development occurred with the appearance of *Homo erectus* ("upright human being"), a species that emerged around 2 million years ago. *Homo erectus* made use of larger and more varied tools. These hominids were the first to leave Africa and move into Europe and Asia. They could do so because they learned to use fire to keep warm in colder areas.

The three different species that belong to the genus *Homo* are:

- *Homo habilis*,
- *Homo erectus* and
- *Homo sapiens*.

Homo habilis is a handy human being and is considered the oldest human being. Fossils of *Homo habilis* were found in the Omo valley in Ethiopia. *Homo erectus* is an upright

walking human who appeared about 1 million years ago. Fossils of this species were found in the Omo Basin, Melka-Kunture, Konso – Gardula, and Middle Awash in Ethiopia.

Homo sapiens were wise human beings and very similar to modern human beings. Fossils of this species were found in the Awash and Omo valleys and the areas near Dire Dawa. Therefore, Ethiopia is proved to be the land where these species were discovered.

Modern Human beings (*Homo sapiens sapiens*) appeared about 40,000 years ago. They are different in many ways from their ancestors. They have large brains, are bipedal and walk upright. They think and execute complicated ideas. They use language, develop culture, invent tools and use them effectively. They transmit knowledge from generation to generation.

It is noteworthy that the region of Ethiopia and the Horn has sites illustrating all the three sub-species of the Homo family that appeared in succession: *Homo habilis*, *Homo erectus* and *Homo sapiens*. These successive stages marked the progressive refinement in making tools and the mastery of the technology of making a fire that *Homo erectus* accomplished.

Time and again, the hominids that have been found so far were found in Ethiopia. Thus, these areas have continued to attract archaeologists.

Key: - Hominid sites

□ **Aramis:**

Ardipithecus ramidus
(4.4 million years)

□ **Maka:**

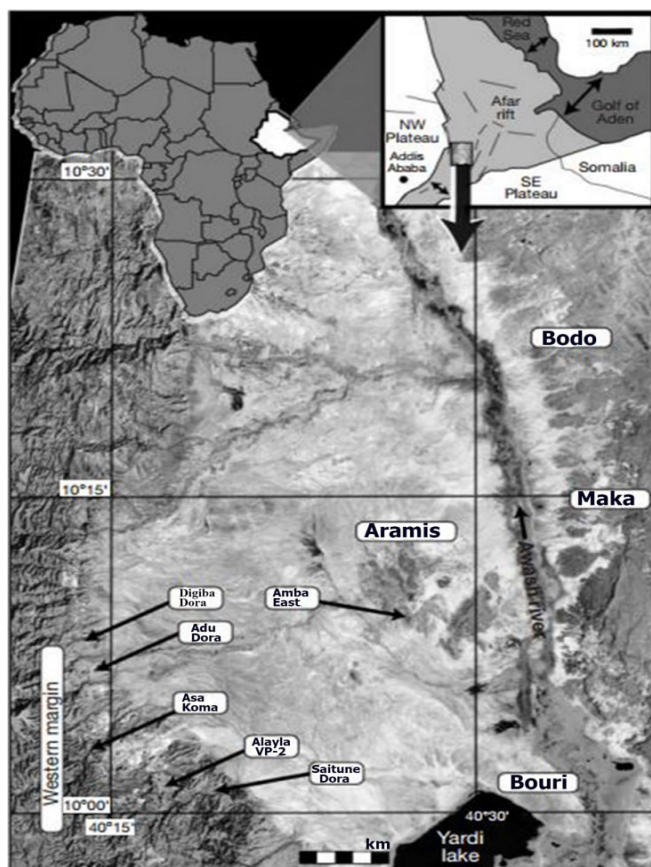
Australopithecus afarensis
(3.4 million years)

□ **Bouri:**

Australopithecus garhi
(2.5 million years)

□ **Bodo:**

Homo (0.64 million years)



Source: Yohannes Haile-Selassie (Cleveland Museum of Natural History) and others;
Geology and Paleontology of the Late Miocene Middle Awash Valley, Afar Rift, Ethiopia;
[Obtained from ResearchGate]

Map 1.1 Hominids' sites in Ethiopia Afar region

1.4 Theories of Human Evolution

There are two major opposing theories on the origin of human beings. These are the creationist and the evolutionist (scientific) theories. The creationist view advocates the notion that man, including all living things, was created by GOD or a supernatural being.

The scientific theory explains that all living things, including humans, result from a gradual succession process and variation from earlier forms. This slow and natural process is called **evolution**. Thus this theory is called **evolutionist**. This theory was formulated by the English scientist Charles Darwin (1809 - 1882). Eventually, it was widely accepted by the scientific communities.

Currently, though this theory dominates thinking about human origins in the scientific world, a large number of people across the globe believe in the creationist view.

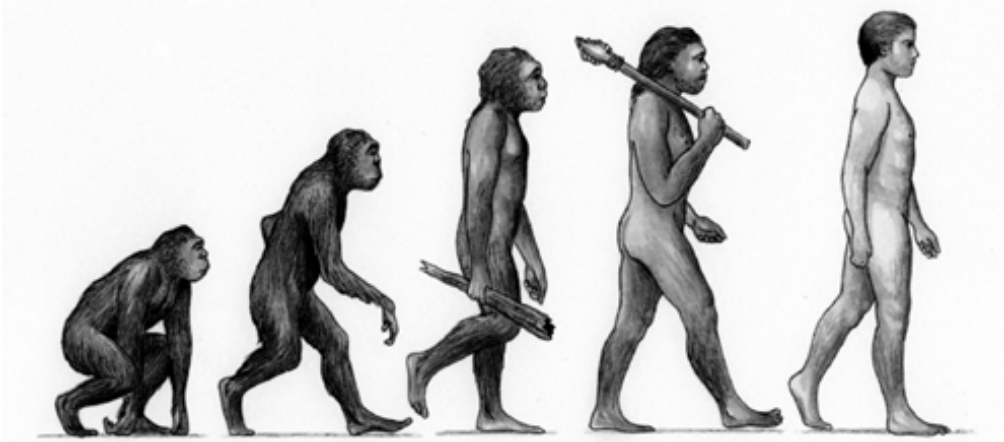


Figure 1.3 Stages of Human Evolution

Activity 1.6



1. What are the three sub-species of the Homo family that appeared in succession in the Horn of Africa?
2. Explain the differences between the creationist and evolutionist theories of Human Evolution.
3. Draw a map of Ethiopia and show the major archaeological sites.

1.5 Africa and Human Evolution

Lesson learning outcomes

At the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- draw a chart showing major stages of human evolution.
- show the different archaeological sites of Africa, including Ethiopia, using a map.

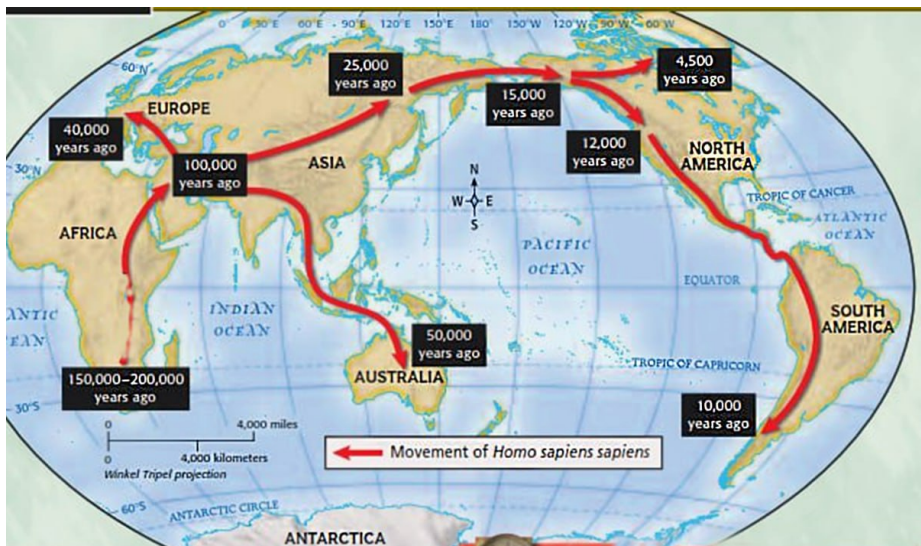
The oldest Australopithecines, discovered in northern Chad in 2001, is Sahelian chadensis. It is estimated to be between 7 and 6 million years old. Fossils of Australopithecus ramidus, aged 4.4 million years, were discovered in the Afar region in Ethiopia in 1994. The fossil remains of Australopithecus afarensis, also known as Lucy (Dinkinesh), was found at Hadar in the Afar region in 1974. It is estimated to be 3.18 million years

old. They were first described by an American scientist Donald Johanson and his colleagues. Lucy's fossils are the most complete so far found. *Australopithecus afarensis* was bipedal and appeared to have been the ancestor of human beings from among the *Australopithecines*.



Figure 1.4 Picture of Lucy (Dinkinesh), (adopted from World history)

Remains of *Australopithecus africanus*, aged 2.5 million years, were discovered in 1924 at Taung, South Africa. The East African Rift Valley seems to have been the home of human evolution due to its rich archaeological evidence. For instance, Fossils of *Homo habilis* were found at Olduvai Gorge in Tanzania and Lake Turkana in Kenya.



Map 1.2 Emergence of humans in East Africa and migration to other parts of the world,(source:Glencoe-World-History)

Activity 1.7

1. Explore the internet or refer to historical sources and write a half-page report explaining why East Africa is important for studying human origin.
2. Draw a map of Africa and show the major archaeological sites.

1.6 The Stone Age**Lesson learning outcomes**

At the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- analyse stages of the Stone Age.
- discuss the achievements during the Stone Age.

Brainstorming

- What is the Stone Age?

One of the basic distinguishing features of the human species is the ability to make tools. The earliest tools were made of stone. In the transition from hunting and gathering to the period of civilisation, human beings passed through several stages of development.

These stages include the time when tools were made of stone. This period took a long time. The Stone Age is divided into three periods: the Paleolithic Age, the Mesolithic Age, and the Neolithic Age.

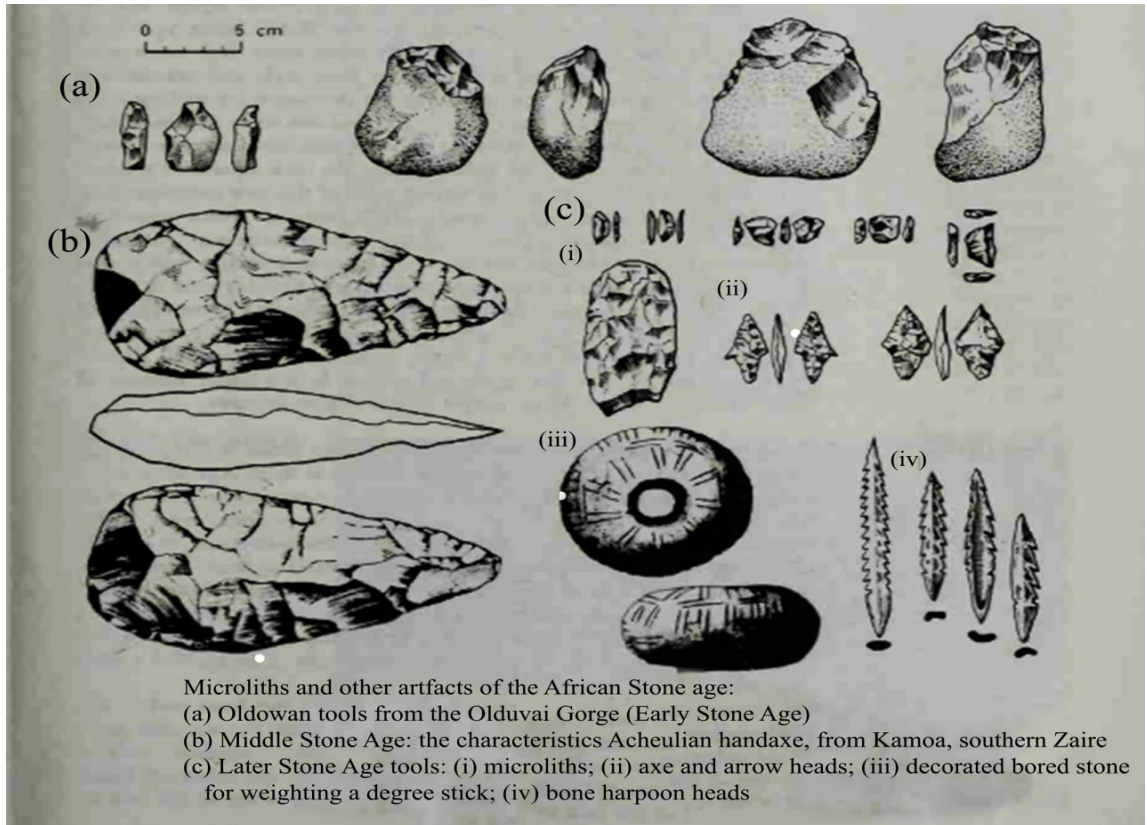


Figure 1.5 Stone tools, (adopted from Kevin Shillington 1995:7)

Paleolithic is Greek for “old stone,” The Paleolithic Age is also called the Old Stone Age. The Paleolithic Age was the longest of the stone ages that began sometime around 2.6 million and lasted until about 300,000 years ago. During this period, early human beings made the first crude stone tools known as hand – axes lived in caves and discovered fire. They also began to use language.

The Mesolithic age (Middle Stone Age) was a transitional period between the Paleolithic and Neolithic Ages. It lasted from 300,000 to around 45,000 years ago. Stone tools were slightly improved and more adaptable to different uses during this age.

Acitvitiy 1.8



1. How did the making of simple tools change human life?

The Neolithic Age (New Stone Age) started around 8,000BC and lasted until about 4,000BC. A great revolution took place during this age. The Neolithic Age has brought about the so-called Neolithic Revolution or Agricultural revolution. The real change in the Neolithic Revolution was the shift from the hunting of animals and gathering food to keeping animals and growing crops regularly, which we call systematic agriculture.

The Neolithic agricultural revolution had far-reaching consequences. The prerequisites for civilisation were laid during this age. Agriculture was introduced and transformed the lives of Neolithic people. As a result, human beings began to produce food. This was followed by a sedentary way of life and a complex social organisation. Stone houses were built. Religious places and granaries were constructed. New and better tools like the hoe, the yoke, and the wheel appeared, and the use of animals in farming helped human beings produce more food. The change had such dramatic effects that historians call it the Neolithic Agricultural revolution. In short, the Neolithic Revolution made human beings food producers and community dwellers.

The Neolithic revolution occurred at different times in various places. The earliest evidence of the Neolithic comes from the Middle East some 11,000 years ago. The major archaeological sites are found in Palestine, Mesopotamia, the Nile valley in Egypt, Tropical Africa, the Yangtze Kiang valley in China, the Indus valley in India, and parts of the Americas.



Map 1.3 Principal archaeological sites in Ethiopia, (source: ResearchGate.net)

It is believed that the Neolithic age took place in parts of Ethiopia about 7000 years ago. Then, agriculture began and among the domesticated plants were teff, dagussa, nug and enset.

People also started making and using pottery. There are several archaeological sites in Ethiopia that are representative of the Neolithic age. These archaeological sites are found in Aksum, Lalibela, and near Chercher in Hararghe and Metehara.

Activity 1.9



1. Briefly describe the Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic stone Ages.
2. Draw a map and show the major archaeological sites of the Neolithic Age in Ethiopia.
3. Explain the major changes that resulted from the development of systematic agriculture.

1.7 The Emergence of States

Lesson learning outcomes

At the end of this lesson, learners will be able to:

- identify features of the state.
- explain possible factors for the emergence of states.
- identify the major theories on the origin of the state.

Brainstorming

- Could you guess how early states emerged?

As discussed above, the Neolithic age led to sedentary ways of life among human communities. Through time, these communities would become enormous. However, human societies did exist in some simple forms of organisation before the emergence of complex societies, i.e. state. So, a state may be defined as a politically organised body of people occupying a defined territory with an organised legitimate government and free from all forms of external control to exercise its sovereignty within its area of rule. It must be noted that a state differs from a kingdom and an empire. For a state to exist, it must have the following features: population, territory, government, sovereignty and recognition.

Regarding the emergence of states, scholars put forward different theories. One of these theories is related to religion. As religion developed, priests appeared in early societies. They began to play central roles in administrative spheres of society. Such early states were known as theocratic states. They were ruled by priests.

Others say that agriculture was the major reason for the emergence of the state. As early society was divided economically into higher and lower classes, those who produced surplus became elites. Elites are rich people who had attained higher status in society due to their wealth. As a result, they would have control over others, thus leading to the emergence of the state.

Others insist that control over trade and trade routes were the principal reason for the emergence of the state. As a result, village chiefs who controlled the trade gradually replaced priests with the emergence of markets. In addition, these chiefs had the power of collecting tributes and keeping the security of villages and the needs around them. This development marked the appearance of states. War or conflict might also have occurred when small villages combined to establish states under powerful local chiefs by force.

Activity 1.9



1. List the differences between state and society.
2. Write and explain the major theories of the origin of the state.

Unit Summary

Prehistory refers to the long period before people invented the system of writing. History refers to all the things that happened in the human past after the beginning of the art of writing. History helps us know about the past, understand the present, and foresee future developments.

Historiography is studying how knowledge of the past is attained and transmitted. The past signifies events that have taken place and the facts of the past, which are kept in writing. Sources are critical to the study and writing of history. Most commonly, historians divide sources into two broad groups. These are primary and secondary sources.

There are two major opposing theories on the origin of human beings. These are the creationist and the evolutionist theories.

One of the basic distinguishing features of the human species is the ability to make tools. The earliest tools were made of stone. Before the technology of devices, human beings got their food by hunting wild animals and gathering wild fruits.

Human beings pass through several stages of development. These stages include the time when tools were made of stone. The Stone Age is further divided into three periods. These are the Paleolithic Age, the Mesolithic Age and the Neolithic Age.

Unit Review Questionns

Part I: Write true if the statement is correct and write false if the statement is incorrect.

1. Prehistory refers to the long period before people invented the system of writing.
2. History is about everything that will happen in the human future.
3. Primary sources include original materials like manuscripts and artefacts.
4. Oral traditions are historical sources transmitted by written materials.
5. The scientific theory of human evolution argues that human being created by God.

Part II: Choose the correct answer from the given alternatives.

1. The invention of _____ is considered to be the period when human prehistory ends.
 - A. Stone tools
 - B. Art of writing
 - C. Bronze wheels
 - D. Iron Plough
2. During which period did human beings domesticate plants and animals?
 - A. Mesolithic stone age
 - B. Middle stone age
 - C. Neolithic stone age
 - D. Palaeolithic stone age
3. In human evolution, which species appeared first?
 - A. Homo sapiens
 - B. Homo erectus
 - C. Homo habilis
 - D. Modern human
4. All of the following included under Primary sources of artefacts, except
 - A. chronicles
 - B. inscriptions
 - C. utensils
 - D. ruins of buildings
5. Which one is not a characteristic of modern human beings?
 - A. bi-pedal
 - B. large brain
 - C. large jaws
 - D. use language

6. Which one of the following is a specific feature of state?
- A. Population
 - B. Government
 - C. Definite territory
 - D. All of the above

Part III: Give brief answers to the following.

- 1. Write the main objectives of studying history.
- 2. Explain the place of Africa and Ethiopia in human evolution shortly.
- 3. Discuss the major theories of the origin of the state.

Part IV: Further Activities

- 1. Skim the unit and list the main key terms and concepts you have learnt. Write your answers in your exercise book.
- 2. Explain the difference between facts and opinions. Give examples.