

Re: The savannah one is pretty much out the window now.

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- *From:* Gerrit Hanenburg <g.hanenburg@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Sun, 17 Aug 2008 19:27:59 +0200
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nickname <alas_my_loves@xxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Archaic Nilotics such as the Meroe divers of the upper Nile show numerous signs of ear exostosis. They didn't live in areas where cold breezes occur and there is clear evidence they dove for fish in the Nile.

Ref?

I very much doubt it. Anyone diving for fish in Nile waters is either ignorant or pretty suicidal.

Do the Sudan Dinkas traditionally eat fish, shellfish, crustaceans?

They are primarily pastoralists, but fishing is a seasonal option.

If so, how did they get them?

Much the same way as their neighbours, the Nuer, as described in the classic study by

Evans-Pritchard, <http://www.amazon.com/Nuer-Description-Livelihood-Political-Instituti...>, using spear or harpoon in shallow waters, never diving because "the streams are too deep and too infested with crocodiles to encourage fishing" (p. 72). <http://web.inter.nl.net/users/G.Hanenburg/Nuer.jpg>

Gerrit

Thanks for the ref Gerrit. The recent find of Kiffians and Tenerians

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in the 10,000 – 5,000 year old Sahara lake area seems similar to the Nuer use of water resource collection with harpoons and spears, in addition to dairy production. What did they do before they started milking cows on a daily basis?

In recent times the Nuer subsisted on a mixed economy of pastoralism, horticulture, and hunting (including fishing) and gathering, with emphasis on pastoralism. They need a mixed economy because "their herds do not supply them with enough nourishment" and "their millet harvest is often meagre and uncertain" (Evans Pritchard 1940). However, "Nuerland is very rich in game" and "The rivers teem with fish of many edible species which greatly supplement the diet of the Nuer in the dry season and enable them to survive years in which crops fail or there are epidemics among the herds." Gathering constitutes only a minor aspect of Nuer subsistence and "in most years wild fruits, seeds, and roots are not an important item in Nuer diet. Their country is mainly treeless and fruits therefore few". So without the cattle and the millet ancestral Nuer subsistence would have to be based mainly on hunting and fishing.

(Milk provides nutrients not found in meat.) Isn't dairying in Africa relatively recent, less than 10,000 years old?

Yes, probably. As far as subsaharan Africa is concerned domesticated cattle appear at around 5000 BC at Kadero in Sudan and by 2500 BC had spread as far south as Lake Turkana, Kenya. (Bellwood 2005: <http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/book.asp?ref=9780631205661&site=1>)

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