

8. ANCIENT LIBYA, ALGERIA AND MORROCCO

After the time of the Green Sahara, not much is known about the early history of northern Africa west of Egypt, and what we do know is found largely through the writings of later Greek and Roman historians as well as through archaeological digs and investigation of ancient ruins.

It is clear that the family was the basis of social organization, frequently being *polygamous* in nature, especially in the case of chiefs, who commonly had as many as ten wives. Larger units of this early period consisted of villages and pastoral tribes. Hunting and later agriculture seems to have formed the basis of life. Some nomadic groups became traders between the Mediterranean-Egyptian world and the blacks to the South., developing *caravans* of camels that transported goods through the desert.

Religiously, the people were animists, worshipping spirits of earth and celestial beings much like all their contemporaries. *Baal*-worship was also practiced early in North Africa. 69

As the Sahara dried out, Egypt and Ethiopia had developed to the east, the Bantu to the south, and Libyans and other North African people groups to the north following the Mediterranean coast.

Libya-Ludim-Berbers

Numerous but brief Bible passages mention these peoples as warlike groups who sometimes allied themselves with Egypt against Israel and other enemies. Jeremiah 46:9 MENTIONS Libya (Ludim) as associated with bows and arrows. They were apparently at first a nomadic hunting people who had learned to use their bows and arrows as weapons in war. Berber peoples thus became the basic population of North Africa. They called themselves *imazzaghen*, "free men," and warfare has characterized them as far back as history goes. They were a white people who spoke Hamito-Semitic languages with three major dialects—Rif, Atlas, and Shleuh. Their languages were rarely written. Later they settled down somewhat as agricultural-pastoral people living in tribal units and sometimes in federations of several tribes. Their society was socialistic in structure because of strong family ties and the scarcity of arable land. Therefore, grazing, irrigating, etc. were usually done collectively. The Berbers were in constant intertribal strife, due at least in part to shortage of land. This led to the extermination of some tribes.

Phoenician-Carthaginian Invasion

From 1200 to 200 B.C. the Phoenicians and Carthaginians invaded North Africa, bringing with them the Punic language which was developed from Phoenician and related to Hebrew. In structure it was much like Arabic, which later helped to make Arab culture seem more compatible.