



The Exploitation of Plant Resources in Ancient Africa

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This volume presents a completely new and very substantial body of information about the origin of agriculture and plant use in Africa. All the evidence is very recent and for the first time all this archaeobotanical evidence is brought together in one volume (at present the information is unpublished or published in many disparate journals, conference reports, monographs, site reports, etc.). Early publications concerned with the origins of African plant domestication relied almost exclusively on inferences made from the modern distribution of the wild progenitors of African cultivars; there existed virtually no archaeobotanical data at that time. Even as recently as the early 1990s direct evidence for the transition to farming and the relative roles of indigenous versus Near Eastern crops was lacking for most of Africa. This volume changes that and presents a wide range of exciting new evidence, including case studies from Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Uganda, Egypt, and Sudan, which range in date from 8000 BP to the present day. The volume addresses topics such as the role of wild plant resources in hunter-gatherer and farming communities, the origins of agriculture, the agricultural foundation of complex societies, long-distance trade, the exchange of foods and crops, and the human impact on local vegetation—all key issues of current research in archaeology, anthropology, agronomy, ecology, and economic history.

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