

CHAPTER

11

Kingdoms and Trading States of Africa

730 B.C.–A.D. 1591



WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

Merchants at the Royal Court of Benin

By the late 1400s, merchants from Europe arrived at the Royal Court of Benin in West Africa in search of slaves, pepper, stone beads, cloth, and ivory. Such trade brought great wealth and power to the medieval kingdoms of Africa.



The intricate detail on this West African saltcellar reveals the value of the salt it held.

“After [the king of Benin] had . . . commanded of them the cause of their coming into the country, they answered . . . that they were merchants, traveling into those parts for the commodities of his country for exchange of wares. . . . The king . . . having . . . a certain storehouse . . . of pepper, willed them to look upon the same, and . . . to bring him a sight of such merchandise as they had brought with them. . . . when they were returned and the wares seen, the king grew to this end with the merchants to provide in 30 days the lading of all their ships with pepper. . . . and thereupon sent the country round about to gather pepper. . . . So that within . . . 30 days, they had gathered fourscore tons of pepper.”

Listen to the Witness History audio to hear more about trade in medieval Africa.

◀ Bronze plaque of Benin warriors in their battle dress



Illustrated Arabic manuscript from the fifteenth century



Content Standards

Chapter Focus Question How did trade influence the development of the kingdoms and the trading states of Africa?

Section 1

Early Civilizations of

Africa I.1.HS.3, II.1.HS.1, II.3.HS.1

Section 2

Kingdoms of West Africa II.4.HS.1, II.4.HS.4, IV.5.HS.2

Section 3

Kingdoms and Trading States of East Africa II.1.HS.1, II.3.HS.1, IV.5.HS.2

Section 4

Societies in Medieval Africa II.4.HS.1, II.4.HS.4, V.1.HS.3



Shields were used for ceremonial as well as defensive purposes.

Note Taking Study Guide Online

For: Note Taking and Concept Connector worksheets
Web Code: nad-1101



A lone traveler traversing the vast Sahara

Twelfth-century illustration of a traveling caravan



WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

Danger in the Desert

In 1325 a young Moroccan named Ibn Battuta began his pilgrimage to Mecca. This expedition led to a journey throughout Asia and Africa that lasted more than 30 years. Here, Battuta describes the dangers of crossing the Sahara.

“That desert . . . make[s] sport of him [the traveler] and disorder[s] his mind, so that he loses his way and perishes. For there is no visible road or track . . . nothing but sand blown hither and thither by the wind. You see hills of sand in one place, and afterwards you will see them moved to quite another place.”

Focus Question How did geography and natural resources affect the development of early societies throughout Africa?

Early Civilizations of Africa



Content Standards

- **I.1.HS.3** Identify and describe major eras in world history
- **II.1.HS.1** Describe effect of world issues/events
- **II.3.HS.1** Economic activity: world patterns

Terms, People, and Places

Sahara	Bantu
savanna	Nubia
cataract	Meroë
desertification	

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Identify Causes and Effects

As you read this section, make an outline like the one below to keep track of the important effects caused by Africa's geography and natural resources.

- | |
|-------------------------------|
| I. The influence of geography |
| A. Geographic patterns |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| B. Resources spur trade |
| 1. |
| 2. |

The vast and perilous **Sahara**, the largest desert in the world, is just one geographic feature in the great variety of African landscapes. For thousands of years, the geographic features of this huge continent have played a major role in its development.

The Influence of Geography

Africa is the second largest continent. Its size and location contribute to its wide range of climates, vegetation, and terrains. This variety has greatly influenced the diversity of culture found in Africa.

Geographic Patterns As shown on this section's map, Africa's vegetation regions create wide bands that stretch across the continent. Along the Equator is a band of tropical rain forest. Moving north and south from this band are the continent's largest and most populated regions, the **savannas**, or grassy plains. Beyond the savannas lie the great African deserts. These vegetation regions affect how people live and how they make a living.

Africa's geographic features also influenced cultural development by acting as barriers or highways to easy movement of people, goods, and ideas. In addition to the deserts and rain forests, Africa's high plateau interior and rivers with **cataracts**, or waterfalls, hindered easy movement. While on the other hand, the Great Rift Valley served as an interior passageway and the Mediterranean and Red seas provided overseas trade routes to regions in southwest Asia and present-day Europe.

Resources Spur Trade Since ancient times, Africa's mineral wealth has spurred trade across the continent. Salt, gold, iron, and copper were particularly valuable items to early trade and brought great wealth and power to African trading cities. Trade also linked Africa to other continents.

Initially hindered by the vast deserts, early trade greatly expanded with the introduction of a new form of transportation from Asia—the camel. By A.D. 200, these “ships of the desert” had revolutionized trade across the Sahara. Although early traders had made the difficult desert crossing in horse-drawn chariots, camel caravans created new trade networks. Camels could carry heavy loads and plod 20 or 30 miles a day, often without water. The caravans brought great profits to merchants on both sides of the Sahara.

✓ **Checkpoint** What geographic features limited movement in Africa and what made them obstacles?

People and Ideas Migrate

Archaeologists have uncovered evidence that Africa was the home of the earliest ancestors of modern people. In spite of geographic barriers, various members of these groups migrated all over Africa and beyond.

The Sahara Dries Out In Africa, as elsewhere, Paleolithic people developed skills as hunters and food gatherers. By 5500 B.C., Neolithic farmers had learned to cultivate the Nile Valley and to domesticate animals. As farming spread across North Africa, Neolithic villages even appeared in the Sahara, which was then a well-watered area. Ancient rock paintings have been found that show a Sahara that was full of forests and rivers.

About 2500 B.C., a climate change slowly dried out the Sahara. As the land became parched, the desert spread. This process of **desertification** devoured thousands of acres of cropland and pastureland. The Sahara's desertification prompted migration, as people were forced to seek new areas to maintain their ways of life.

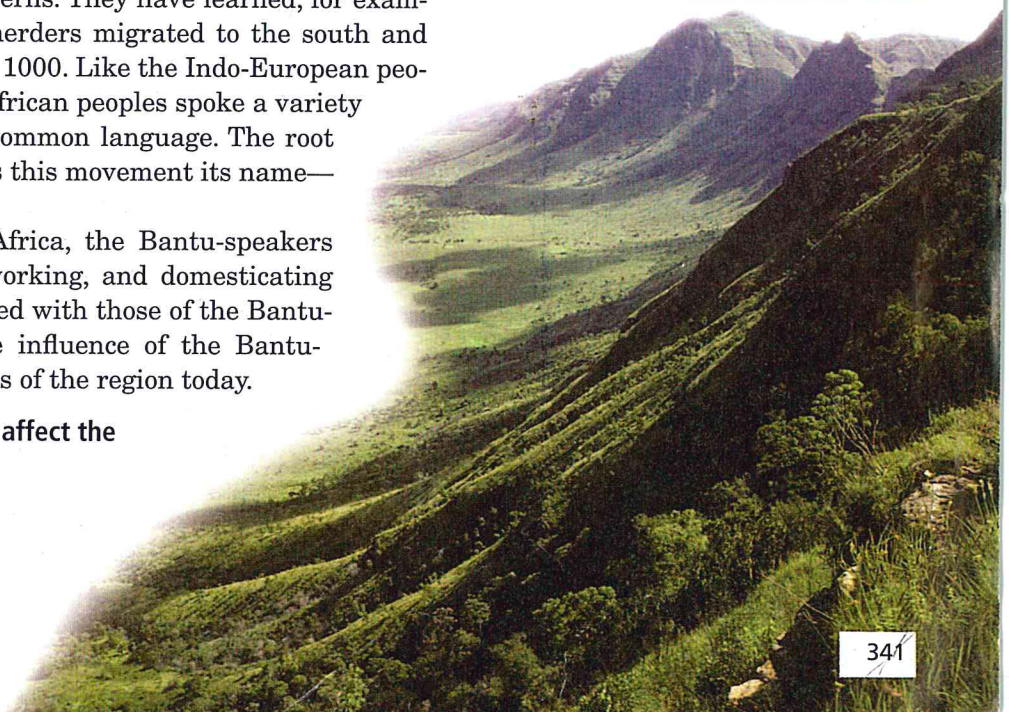
The Bantu Migrations Over thousands of years, migrations contributed to the rich diversity of cultures in Africa. Scholars have traced these migrations by studying language patterns. They have learned, for example, that West African farmers and herders migrated to the south and east between about 1000 B.C. and A.D. 1000. Like the Indo-European peoples of Europe and Asia, these West African peoples spoke a variety of languages deriving from a single common language. The root language is called **Bantu**, which gives this movement its name—the Bantu migrations.

As they migrated into southern Africa, the Bantu-speakers spread their skills in farming, ironworking, and domesticating animals. Some existing cultures merged with those of the Bantu-speakers wherever they settled. The influence of the Bantu-speakers is still found in the languages of the region today.

✓ **Checkpoint** How did migration affect the development of African cultures?

The Great Rift Valley

Extending approximately 4,000 miles from Southwest Asia through East Africa, the Great Rift Valley is the longest rift, or deep trench, on Earth's surface. Although many of Africa's highest mountains border the valley, this relatively low and flat corridor was an important passageway for early migrating groups in Africa. *Why do you think the Great Rift Valley would be ideal to travel through?*



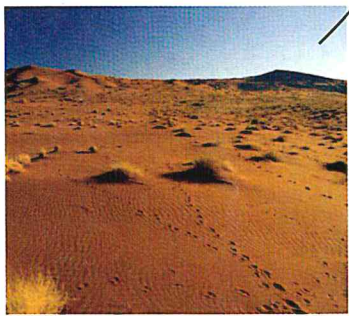
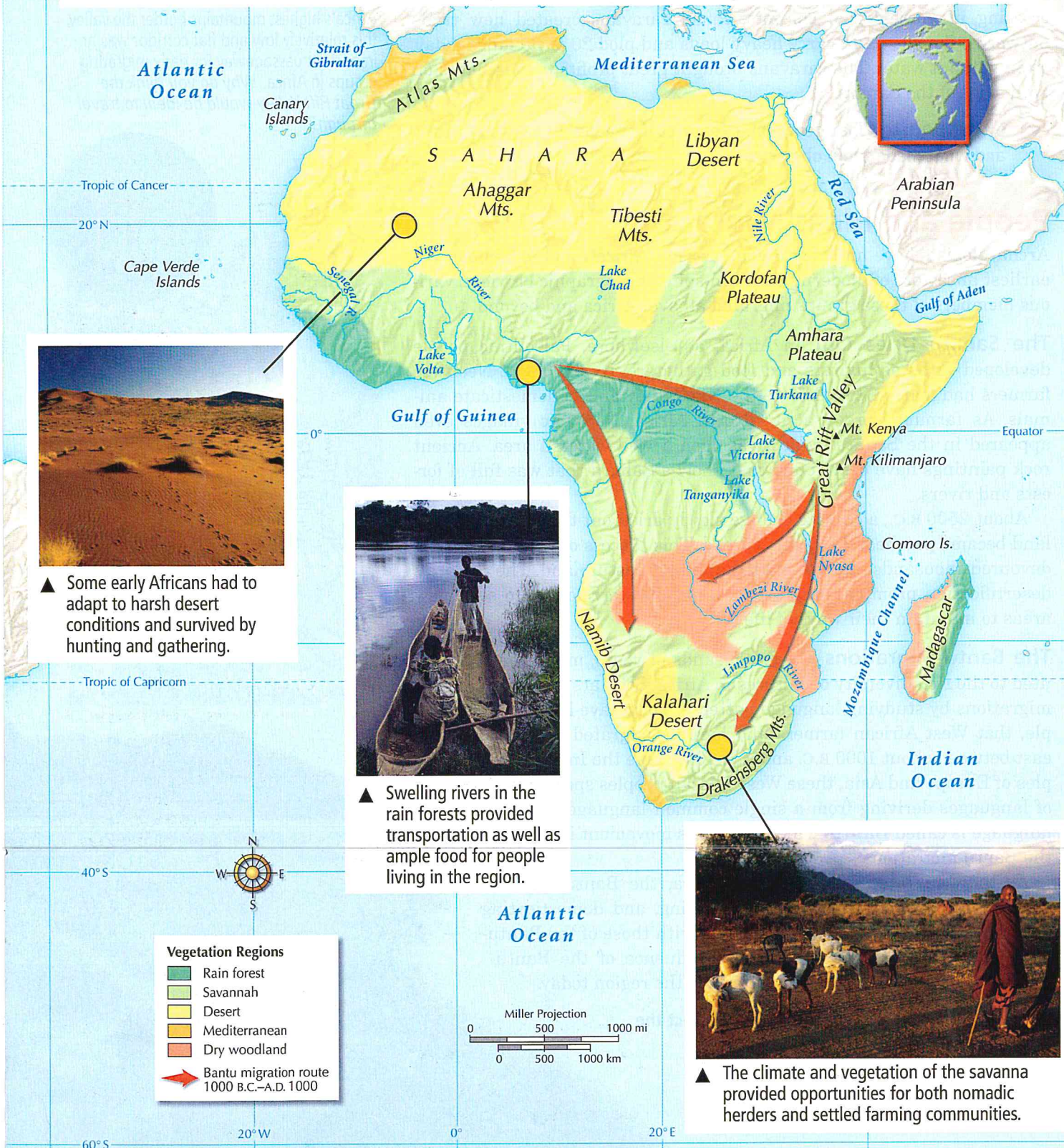
Africa's Vegetation

Map Skills Africa consists of four major vegetation regions. These regions affected where and how people lived.

1. **Locate** (a) the Sahara Desert (b) the Great Rift Valley (c) the Congo River (d) the Mediterranean Sea (e) the Nile River (f) the Red Sea

2. **Movement** Why do you think the Bantu-speakers migrated south in the pattern described instead of north?

3. **Predict Consequences** Using the information provided in the map, predict three areas where you think a trade settlement would most likely develop. Explain your reasoning.



▲ Some early Africans had to adapt to harsh desert conditions and survived by hunting and gathering.



▲ Swelling rivers in the rain forests provided transportation as well as ample food for people living in the region.



▲ The climate and vegetation of the savanna provided opportunities for both nomadic herders and settled farming communities.

Nubia Flourishes Along the Nile

About 2700 B.C. the great civilization of Egypt was growing along the northern banks of the Nile. At the same time, as shown on the map in the next section, another African civilization was taking shape to the south. On a wide band of fertile land on the upper Nile, the ancient kingdom of **Nubia**, also called Kush, was flourishing in present-day Sudan.

Nubia Rivals Egypt Trade led to contact between Nubia and Egypt. It also led to rivalry as both powers desired to control trade in the region. By 1500 B.C., Nubia was under Egyptian control and remained so for almost 500 years. As a result, Nubians adapted many Egyptian traditions. They modeled palaces and pyramids on Egyptian style and worshiped Egyptian deities.

By 1100 B.C., Egyptian control was declining and Nubia gained its independence. In fact, about 730 B.C., the Nubian king Piankhi (PYAHN kee) actually conquered Egypt. In 670 B.C., however, Nubia was invaded by the Assyrians from Southwest Asia. Unable to match the superior iron weapons of these invaders, the Nubian armies were forced to retreat from Egypt and returned to the south.

Meroë Masters Trade and Iron By 500 B.C., Assyrian invaders had forced Nubian rulers to move their capital from Napata to **Meroë** (MEHR oh ay). Meroë eventually commanded both the Nile's north-south trade route and the east-west trade route from the Red Sea to North Africa. Along this wide trade network, Nubia sent gold, ivory, animal skins, perfumes, and enslaved people to the Mediterranean world and Southwest Asia. Meroë's location was a major reason for its development into a successful center of trade.

Equally important, however, was the region's resources. Meroë was rich in iron ore. Fueled by the region's large quantities of timber, the smelting furnaces of Meroë produced the iron tools and weaponry needed to feed, control, and defend the kingdom. Today, giant heaps of iron waste remain as evidence of ancient Meroë's industry.

Splendor and Decline Although Nubia absorbed much from Egypt, Nubian culture later followed its own course. For example, after gaining independence from Egypt, Nubians worshiped their own gods, including Apedemak, a lion-headed warrior god. At Meroë, artistic styles reflected a greater sense of freedom than did Egyptian styles. Nubians also created their own system of writing, using an alphabet instead of hieroglyphics. Unfortunately, the Nubian alphabet has yet to be deciphered and still remains a mystery.

After the joint reign of King Natakamani and Queen Amanitere in the first century A.D., the splendor of Nubia's golden age dimmed. Finally, about A.D. 350, Nubia was overwhelmed by King Ezana's armies from the kingdom of Axum to its south. Axum would then make its own mark on this region along the Nile.



Cultural Exchange

The Nubian bronze of the Egyptian god Amun (top), was worshipped by some Nubians after they conquered Egypt. The rings with seals (bottom) were found among the funerary treasure of the Meroë queen Amanichaheto. *How do these artifacts illustrate the cultural exchange between Egypt and Nubia?*

 **Checkpoint** How did conquest affect the development of Nubia?



Arabic Influences Scholarship

Arabic books with beautifully illustrated title pages such as the one above may have been used by students at early North African universities.

Vocabulary Builder

utilized—(yoot il yzd) *vt.* put to practical use

Outside Influences Affect North Africa

The Nile was not the only waterway that influenced the development of civilizations in Africa. Early African civilizations also had strong ties to the regions across the Mediterranean and Red seas.

Phoenicians Build Carthage As Nubia was thriving along the Nile, Carthage was rising as a great North African power. Founded by Phoenician traders as a port on the Mediterranean coast, Carthage came to dominate western Mediterranean trade. From 800 B.C. to 146 B.C., it forged an empire that stretched from present-day Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco to southern Europe. As you have read, however, territorial and trade rivalries between Rome and Carthage eventually led to a series of conflicts called the Punic Wars. At the end of the Third Punic War, the Romans literally burned Carthage to the ground.

Rome Rules North Africa After defeating Carthage, Rome gained control of the narrow strip of North Africa between the Mediterranean coast and the Sahara. There, they built roads, dams, aqueducts, and cities. The Romans developed and utilized North Africa's farmlands as a granary—a region that produces much grain—to feed the Roman empire. North Africa also provided soldiers for the Roman army, including Septimius Severus who would later become an emperor of Rome.

Under Roman rule, Christianity spread to the cities of North Africa. In fact, St. Augustine, the most influential Christian thinker of the late Roman Empire, was born in present-day Algeria. From A.D. 395 to A.D. 430, Augustine was bishop of Hippo, a city located near the ruins of ancient Carthage.

Islam Spreads Into Africa In the 690s, Muslim Arabs conquered and occupied the cities of North Africa. By the early 700s, they had successfully conquered the Berbers, a largely nomadic North African people. Under Arab rule, Islam eventually replaced Christianity as the dominant religion of North Africa, and Arabic replaced Latin as its language. Muslim civilization blossomed in cities such as Cairo, Fez, and Marrakesh, which became famous for their mosques and universities. Over time, Muslim traders from North Africa carried Islam into West Africa.

 **Checkpoint** How did trade cause change in North Africa?

SECTION

1 Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-1111

Terms, People, and Places

1. For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Identify Causes and Effects** Use your completed outline to answer the Focus Question: How did geography and natural resources affect the development of early societies throughout Africa?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Recognize Cause and Effect** How did its geography affect movement in Africa?
4. **Determine Relevance** How did the Bantu migrations contribute to Africa's cultural diversity?
5. **Draw Conclusions** Why did the kingdom of Nubia prosper?
6. **Identify Central Issues** What factors motivated outsiders to conquer regions of North Africa?

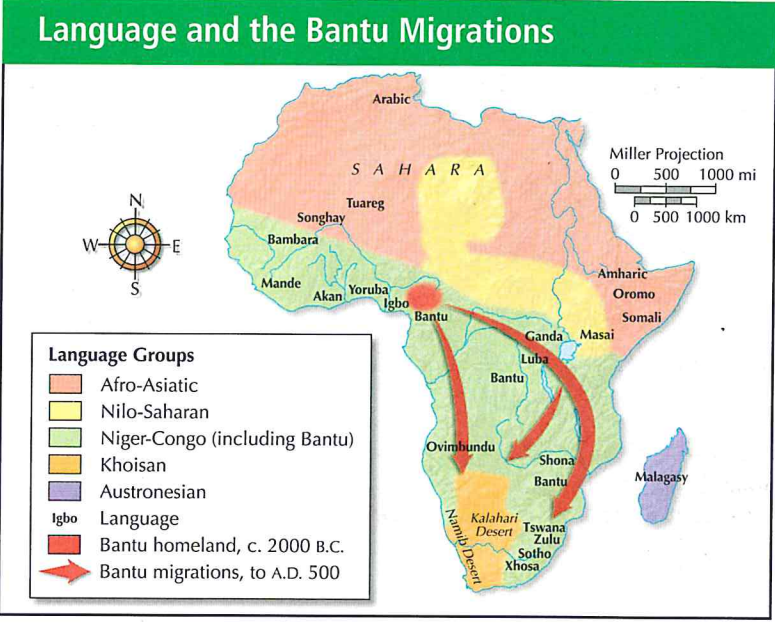
Writing About History

Quick Write: Understanding Chronology Using the information provided in this section, make a timeline of the events described. Make sure that you place each event in chronological order.

In what ways have migration and trade affected cultures?

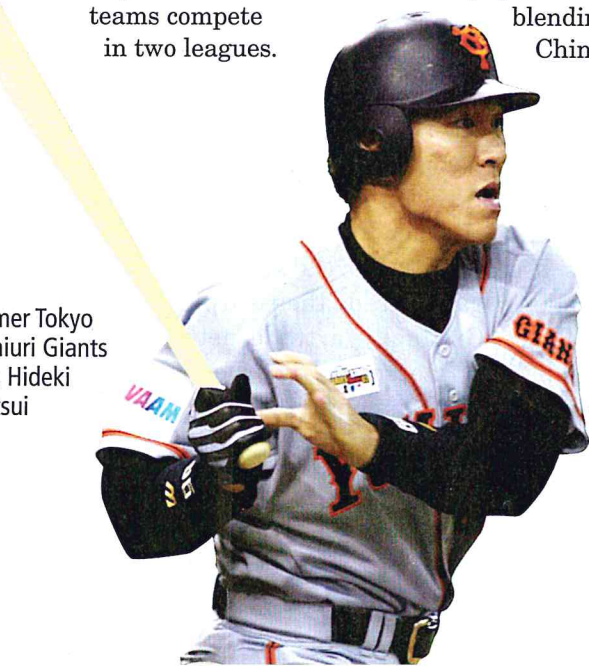
During their migration, Bantu-speaking peoples from West Africa slowly diffused, or spread, their language over much of the African continent. Today, some 85 million Africans speak one of the many Bantu languages. Throughout history, migrants like the Bantu have carried their language, religion, and other cultural traits with them as they traveled. Merchants, too, have introduced their cultures to people along their trade routes. In these ways migration and trade have often influenced existing cultures. Consider the following examples:

 II.4.HS.3, III.2.HS.1



Sports

In the years that followed the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the Japanese looked to Western countries for ideas as they set out to modernize their country. One element of Western culture that they adopted was baseball. A young American transplant, who was teaching history at a Tokyo university, introduced the sport to his students in the early 1870s. Another American professor organized the first official baseball game in Japan. Called *yakkyuu*, or “field ball,” the game’s popularity grew rapidly. In 1936, Japan’s first professional league fielded seven teams, and today its twelve teams compete in two leagues.



mer Tokyo niuri Giants ; Hideki tsui

Religion

Merchants from India carried Buddhism with them as they traveled along the ancient Silk Road. The oasis towns that served as markets and rest stops catered to the needs of those merchants. They allowed merchants to build monasteries, and they welcomed Buddhist monks. Eventually, the oasis dwellers themselves converted to Buddhism. In this way, by A.D. 100, the religion had reached northern China. For more than 500 years, however, Buddhism remained exclusively a religion of merchants and ruling classes. However, it finally gained popular acceptance in part by blending with traditional Chinese beliefs.

Food

The United States has welcomed immigrants from many cultures, which is reflected in the many styles of food that are now considered “American.” Take pizza, for example. Brought to the United States by Italian immigrants, pizza has become a standard American food. So has the hamburger, probably introduced by German immigrants. Bagels, first brought to New York City by Jewish immigrants, can be found in most American supermarkets. Today, the taco, a favorite of Mexican immigrants, is readily available throughout the country.



Mexican meals such as these chicken enchiladas are served throughout the United States.

Thinking Critically

1. Cultural diffusion is not usually a complete replacement of one culture with another, but rather a gradual blending of two cultures in which some new traits are adopted and others are not. Explain why you think this is true.
2. **Connections to Today** Using the map above, compare the modern African language groups with the Bantu migration routes. How do the routes of migration explain the language patterns?



WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

The Value of Salt

In 1526, Hassan ibn Muhammad, also known as Leo Africanus, published an account of his travels through North and West Africa. Here he describes the value of goods traded in Gao, a city in the African kingdom of Mali:

“It is a wonder to see what plenty of merchandise is daily brought hither, and how costly and sumptuous [lavish] all things be. Horses bought in Europe for ten ducats [coins] are here sold again for forty. . . . and spices are sold at a high rate: but of all other commodities salt is most extremely dear [expensive].”

Focus Question How did the kingdoms of West Africa develop and prosper?

SECTION

2



Slabs of salt being readied for market

Kingdoms of West Africa



Content Standards

- **II.4.HS.1** Effect of world processes on world regions
- **II.4.HS.4** Patterns of economic development, political systems
- **IV.5.HS.2** History of international trading

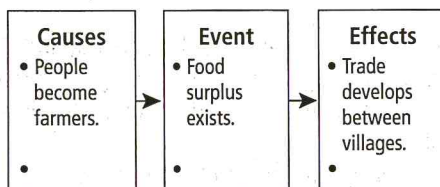
Terms, People, and Places

surplus	Mali
commodity	Mansa Musa
Ghana	Songhai
Sundiata	

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Identify Causes and Effects

As you read this section, look for clues that signal cause and effect. Then use a flowchart like the one below to record your findings.



Trading centers like that of the city of Gao developed over time throughout Africa as trade extended beyond village borders. Some of these medieval cities became wealthy international commercial centers. Between 800 and 1600, several powerful kingdoms won control of these prosperous cities and their trade.

Trade in the Sahara

Salt was rare in many regions of Africa. It was, however, important to human health. This combination made it highly prized as a trade item. The earliest development of trade in the region, however, was tied to another important development—agriculture.

Surplus Leads to Trade As the Sahara dried out, some Neolithic people migrated southward into the savanna, an area of grasslands that was good for farming. By A.D. 100, settled agricultural villages were expanding, especially along the Senegal and Niger rivers and around Lake Chad. This expansion from farming villages to towns was due, in part, to the development of trade.

Farming villages began to produce a **surplus**, that is, more than they needed. They began to trade their surplus food for products from other villages. Gradually, a trade network linked the savanna to forest lands in the south and then funneled goods across the Sahara to civilizations along the Mediterranean and in Southwest Asia. From West Africa, caravans crossed the Sahara carrying leather goods, kola nuts, cotton cloth, and enslaved people. From North Africa, Arab and Berber merchants brought silk, metal, beads, and horses.

Trading Gold for Salt Two products, gold and salt, dominated the Sahara trade. Gold was widely available in the area of present-day Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal. It was found in the soil along rivers in various forms, including gold nuggets and dust. Experts today estimate that between A.D. 500–1600 about eight tons of gold were exported annually from West Africa.

In exchange, West Africans traded for an equally important **commodity**, or valuable product—salt. People need salt in their diet, especially in hot, tropical areas, to replace salt lost in perspiration. Salt was also important for its use in food preservation. The Sahara had an abundance of salt. At Taghaza, in the central Sahara, people even built homes out of blocks of salt. But in the savanna, several hundred miles south, salt was scarce. In fact, when caravans reached the kingdom of Ghana, merchants would pay one pound of gold for one pound of salt.

As farming and trade prospered, cities developed on the northern edges of the savanna. Soon strong monarchs arose, gained control of the most profitable trade routes, and built powerful kingdoms.

✓ **Checkpoint** How did farming lead to the development of cities?

Ghana: The Land of Gold

By A.D. 800, the rulers of the Soninke people were able to unite many farming villages and create the kingdom of **Ghana**. (The present-day country of Ghana is not the same as this ancient kingdom. Modern Ghana chose the name to celebrate Africa’s rich heritage.) The ancient kingdom of Ghana was located in the fertile, broad “V” made by the Niger and Senegal rivers in present-day Mali. From there, the king controlled gold-salt trade routes across West Africa. The two streams of trade met in the marketplaces of Ghana, where the king collected tolls on all goods entering or leaving his land. So great was the flow of gold that Arab writers called Ghana “the land of gold.”

Cities of Splendor The capital of Ghana was Kumbi Saleh, which was made up of two separate walled towns some six miles apart. The first town was dominated by the royal palace, which was surrounded by a complex of domed buildings. Here, in a court noted for its wealth and splendor, the king of Ghana presided over elaborate ceremonies. To his people, he was a godlike figure who administered justice and kept order. In the second town of Kumbi Saleh, prosperous Muslim merchants from north of the Sahara lived in luxurious stone buildings. Lured by the gold wealth of Ghana, these merchants helped make Kumbi Saleh a bustling center of trade.

Vocabulary Builder

administer—(ad MIN is tur) *vt.* to manage or direct



Weights of Gold

In the 1400s, a system of using standardized weights in the form of brass figures, such as the one above, to weigh the gold dust currency was developed in West Africa. The brass figures also served a cultural purpose by representing local proverbs or truisms. The gold dust currency was used to purchase items such as spices similar to those below. *Why do you think having standardized weights was important in trade?*



Equestrian figure from Mali ▶



BIOGRAPHY

Sundiata

Soon after defeating Sumanguru, the ruler who had spared him from execution, Sundiata (?–1255) gained control of Kumbi Saleh, the capital of Ghana. Over the next two decades, Sundiata then proceeded to expand his power and the Mali empire. In addition to his military leadership, he was renowned for his administrative and law-making skills. Even now his leadership is still felt as elements of his legal system still govern the Malinke people today.

Sundiata, whose achievements are legendary, is celebrated as a great hero in West African oral traditions. In fact, West African griots, or storytellers, have passed down the epic of Sundiata from memory for hundreds of years. **Why do you think Sundiata's accomplishments are still celebrated today?**

Vocabulary Builder

tolerance—(TAHL ur uns) *n.* a fair and objective attitude toward opinions and practices which differ from one's own

Influence of Islam Muslim merchants brought their Islamic faith with them to the kingdom of Ghana. The king employed Muslims as counselors and officials, gradually incorporating some of their military technology and ideas about government. Muslims also introduced their written language, coinage, and business methods. Although Islam spread slowly at first, in time, a few city dwellers adopted the religion. However, most of the Soninke people continued to follow their own traditional beliefs.

About 1050, the Almoravids (al muh RAH vuds), pious Muslims of North Africa, launched a campaign to take control of Ghana's trade routes. They eventually overwhelmed Ghana, but were unable to maintain control over their extended empire for long. In time, Ghana was swallowed up by a rising new power, the West African kingdom of Mali.

✔ **Checkpoint** What effect did trade have on the West African kingdom of Ghana?

The Kingdom of Mali

Amid the turmoil of Ghana's collapse, the Mandinka people on the upper Niger suffered a bitter defeat by a rival leader. Their king and all but one of his sons were executed. According to tradition, the survivor was **Sundiata**, a sickly boy regarded as too weak to be a threat. By 1235, however, Sundiata had crushed his enemies, won control of the gold trade routes, and founded the empire of **Mali**.

Mansa Musa Rules Mali *Mali* is an Arab version of the Mandinka word that means "where the king dwells." The *mansas*, or kings of Mali, expanded their influence over the gold-mining regions to the south and the salt supplies of Taghaza. Where caravan routes crossed, towns like Timbuktu mushroomed into great trading cities.

The greatest ruler of the kingdom of Mali was **Mansa Musa** (MAHN sah MOO sah), who came to the throne in about 1312. He expanded Mali's borders westward to the Atlantic Ocean and pushed northward to conquer many cities. During his 25-year reign, Mansa Musa worked to ensure peace and order in his empire. He converted to Islam and based his system of justice on the Quran. However, in order to ensure prosperity and peace in his kingdom, he did not impose Islam on the people, but promoted religious freedom and tolerance.

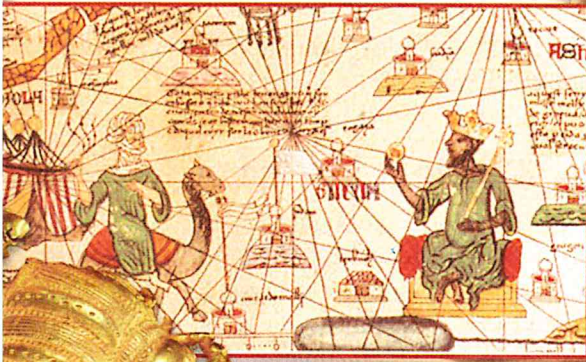
The Hajj of Mansa Musa In 1324, Mansa Musa fulfilled one of the Five Pillars of Islam by making the hajj, or pilgrimage, to Mecca. Through his pilgrimage, Mansa Musa showed his devotion to Islam. He also forged new diplomatic and economic ties with other Muslim states. In addition, he brought back scholars, architects, and teachers who helped promote Islamic education in Mali. In fact, an Islamic university was built in Timbuktu, which attracted students from far and wide. This movement of wealth, people, and ideas increased Mali's renown.

✔ **Checkpoint** What did Mansa Musa accomplish during his reign over the kingdom of Mali?

Trans-Saharan Trade

People of West Africa traded among themselves for many centuries. By about the 400s, this regional trade system had grown into an extensive trans-Saharan trade system connecting much of Africa. Traveling along these desert routes was long as well as dangerous. It could take over three months to cross the desert. To make the investment worth the trip, large caravans with more than 1,000 camels were assembled. Control of these trade routes led to rivalry and conquest, and over the centuries powerful African kingdoms rose and fell.

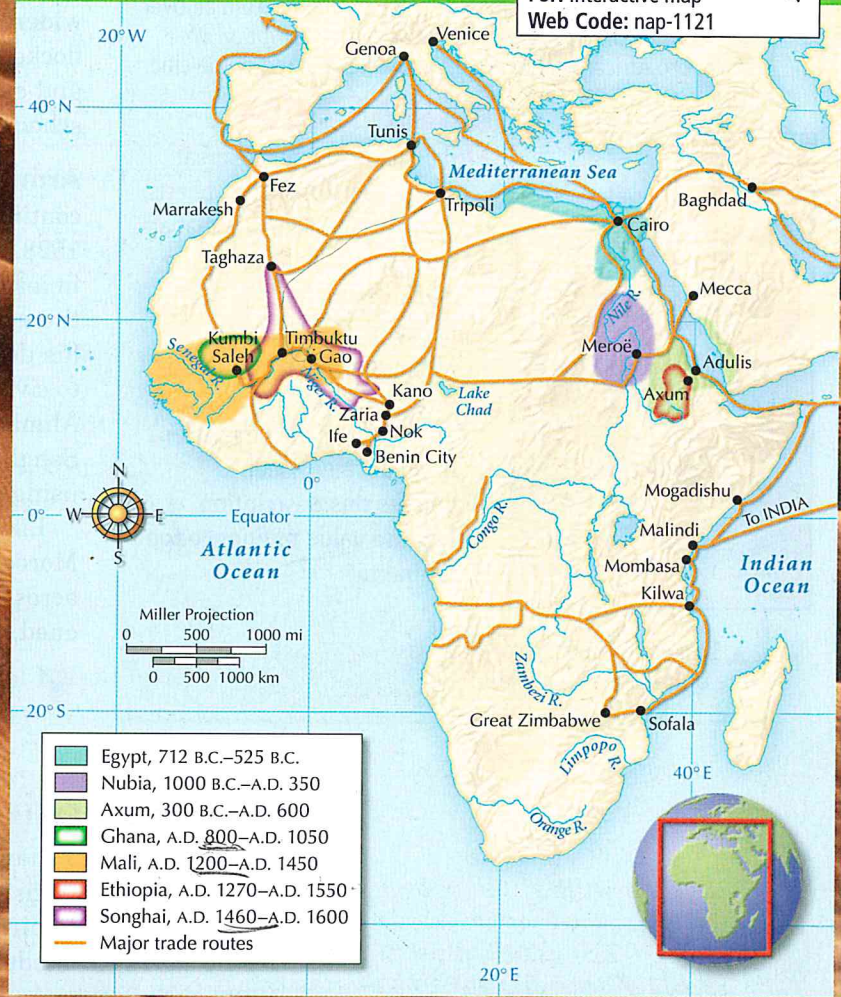
The wealth of the Mali empire was renowned as implied by this detail from a 1325 world map depicting Mansa Musa offering gold to a trader. ▼



◀ A gold scorpion ring

African Kingdoms and Trading States, 1000 B.C. –A.D. 1600

Geography Interactive
For: Interactive map
Web Code: nap-1121



A New Empire in Songhai

In the 1400s, disputes over succession weakened Mali. Subject peoples broke away, and the empire shriveled. By the 1460s, the wealthy trading city of Gao (gow) had become the capital of the emerging West African kingdom of **Songhai** (SAWNG hy).

Extending the Empire Songhai developed on the fertile region at the bend of the Niger River in present-day Mali and Niger. Between 1464 and 1492, the soldier-king Sonni Ali built the largest state that had ever existed in West Africa. Sonni Ali brought trade routes and wealthy cities like Timbuktu under his control. Unlike the rulers of Mali, he did not adopt Islam, but instead followed traditional religious beliefs.

Soon after Sonni Ali's death in 1492, however, the emperor Askia Muhammad set up a Muslim dynasty. He further expanded the territory of Songhai and improved the government. To run the empire more efficiently, he set up a bureaucracy with separate departments for farming, the military, and the treasury. Each was supervised by officials appointed by the emperor.

Thinking Critically

- 1. Draw Conclusions** Why do you think West and East Africa saw a series of kingdoms develop within the same general areas?
- 2. Analyze Information** How was southern Africa connected to the trans-Saharan trade system?

By the 1400s, Timbuktu had become a leading center of learning. The city drew some of the best scholars from all over the Muslim world. In his book, *History and Description of Africa*, Leo Africanus described the intellectual life of the city:

Primary Source

“Here [in Timbuktu] are great store of doctors, judges, priests, and other learned men, that are bountifully maintained at the king’s cost and charges. And hither are brought diverse manuscript or written books out of Barbarie [North Africa], which are sold for more money than any other merchandise.”

How does this description reflect the value of knowledge in Timbuktu?



▲ Sankore Mosque, also known as the University of Timbuktu

Like Mansa Musa, Askia Muhammad made a pilgrimage to Mecca that led to stronger ties with the wider Muslim world. Scholars from Muslim lands flocked to Askia Muhammad’s court at Gao. In towns and cities across Songhai, he built mosques and opened schools for the study of the Quran.

Armies Invade From the North Although Songhai continued to prosper after Askia Muhammad’s death in 1528, disputes over succession led to frequent changes in leadership. In 1549, Askia Daud became emperor, and the empire experienced a period of relative peace. After his death in 1582, succession disputes recurred and led to civil war. At this time of unrest, the sultan of Morocco, Ahmad al-Mansur, sent his armies south to seize the Songhai gold and salt mines. By 1591, these invaders, using gunpowder weapons, conquered the empire.

Like the Almoravids who conquered Ghana, the Moroccans were unable to rule an empire that stretched across the Sahara. Their control over the region weakened, but the glory of Songhai could not be restored.

Checkpoint How did Askia Muhammad help shape the empire of Songhai?

Smaller Societies of West Africa

Although smaller than the great kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, other societies flourished in West Africa in the period from 500 to 1500. The kingdom of Benin (beh NEEN) developed in the rain forest, while the fertile northern lands of modern-day Nigeria were home to the Hausa (HOW suh) people. As in the larger kingdoms, farming and trading were also key to the success and prosperity of these societies.

The Forest Kingdom of Benin South of the savanna, Benin rose in the rain forests of the Guinea coast. The forest peoples built farming villages and traded pepper and ivory—and later, slaves—to their neighbors in the savanna.

The rulers of Benin organized their kingdom in the 1300s. Their *oba*, or king, was a political, judicial, and religious leader. Still, much power was spread among other figures, including the queen mother and a council of hereditary chiefs.

A three-mile-long wall surrounded the capital, Benin City. There, a great palace was decorated with elaborate brass plaques and sculptures. According to tradition, artisans from Ife (EE fay), a neighboring forest society, had taught the people of Benin how to cast bronze and brass. Benin sculptors developed their own unique style for representing the human face and form. Their works depicted warriors, queen mothers, and the oba himself. Later they showed helmeted and bearded Portuguese merchants, who began to arrive in growing numbers in the 1500s.

Walled City-States of the Hausa Conflict and invasion were frequent events in West Africa. For protection, the Hausa built walls around their villages. By the 1300s, the Hausa had built a number of independent clay-walled cities. Over time, these cities expanded into thriving

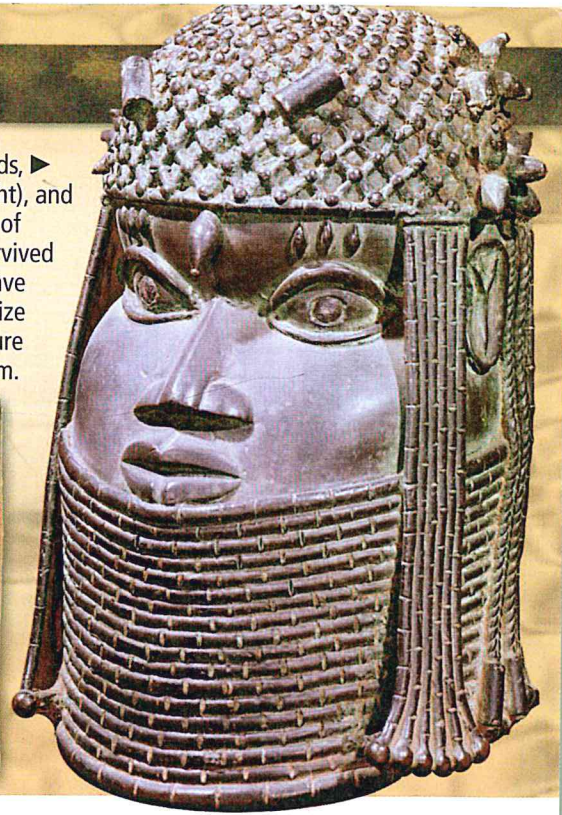
Creating the Bronzes of Benin

The remarkably detailed bronzes of Benin were created using a lost-wax technique. First, an object was sculpted in wax, then covered in clay and baked. The baked mold, now empty of wax, would then be filled with molten metal. After it had cooled, the mold was broken and the final piece was revealed. This technique allowed Benin artisans to create the complicated metal artworks for which they are famous.

Artists depicted warriors ▶ armed for battle (far right) as well as scenes from daily life such as this hunting scene plaque (right).



Since the Benin heads, ▶ such as the oba (right), and plaques were made of metal, they have survived the centuries and have enabled us to visualize the people and culture of the Benin kingdom.



commercial centers where cotton weavers and dyers, leatherworkers, and other artisans produced goods for sale. Merchants traded with Arab and Berber caravans from north of the Sahara. Hausa goods were sold as far away as North Africa and southern Europe.

Kano was the most prosperous Hausa city-state. Its walls, over 12 miles in circumference and up to 50 feet high, protected a population of more than 30,000. Kano's greatest king, Muhammad Rumfa, was a Muslim, as were many of the city's merchants and officials. During his reign, Arabic script influenced the Hausa writing system, and Islamic law greatly influenced government.

Many Hausa rulers were women, such as Amina of the city-state of Zazzau, which is located in present-day Nigeria. In the late 1500s, she conquered Kano and other regions, expanding the boundary of Zaria as far as the Niger River. Under Amina, the Hausa came to dominate many Saharan trade routes.

Checkpoint How did other cultures influence the development of Benin and the Hausa city-states?

SECTION 2 Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-1121

Terms, People, and Places

1. For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Identify Causes and Effects** Use your completed flowchart to answer the Focus Question: How did the kingdoms of West Africa develop and prosper?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Recognize Cause and Effect** How did the gold-salt trade develop between West Africa and North Africa?
4. **Make Comparisons** How was the reign of Mansa Musa similar to that of Askia Muhammad?
5. **Draw Conclusions** Why do you think the walls surrounding Benin City and the Hausa city-states contributed to their success in trade?

Writing About History

Quick Write: Gather Details Choose one of the kingdoms from this section and create a list of details about the kingdom in chronological order. Make sure to include how one event led to or was influenced by the subsequent event.

SECTION
3



Page from a 15th-century Ethiopian illuminated Gospel



Lalibela processional cross

WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

Divine Intervention

Traditionally, the ancient rulers of Ethiopia commemorated their conquests by having a description of their victories inscribed on stone. In the transcription of his conquest of Nubia, King Ezana acknowledged that his success had divine assistance:

“May the Lord of Heaven make my kingdom strong! And as He has this day conquered my enemy for me may He conquer for me wherever I go. . . . I will rule the people with righteousness and justice, and will not oppress them. . . . I have set up this throne by the might of the Lord of Heaven.”

Focus Question What influence did religion and trade have on the development of East Africa?

Kingdoms and Trading States of East Africa



Content Standards

- **II.1.HS.1** Describe effect of world issues/events
- **II.3.HS.1** Economic activity: world patterns
- **IV.5.HS.2** History of international trading

Terms, People, and Places

- Axum King Lalibela
- Adulis Swahili
- Ethiopia Great Zimbabwe

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Understand Effects As you read the section, create a flowchart like the one below to keep track of the effects that trade caused on societies in East Africa.

Effects of Trade on East African Societies			
Axum	Ethiopia	Coastal City-States	Great Zimbabwe
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christianity brought to region • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swahili language developed • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • •

About A.D. 350, King Ezana of Axum conquered and absorbed the ancient Nile kingdom of Nubia. By extending his kingdom into this region, King Ezana increased his control of the Red Sea trade, which led to an extended period of prosperity for the kingdom of Axum.

Axum: Center of Goods and Ideas

Located to the southeast of Nubia, **Axum** extended from the mountains of present-day Ethiopia to the sun-bleached shores of the Red Sea in present-day Eritrea. The peoples of Axum were descended from African farmers and people from the Middle East who brought Jewish traditions through Arabia. This merging of cultures gave rise to a unique written and spoken language, Ge'ez.

Trade Brings Wealth The kingdom of Axum profited from the strategic location of its two main cities, the port of **Adulis** on the Red Sea and the upland capital city of Axum (see the map in the previous section). By A.D. 400, the kingdom commanded a triangular trade network that connected Africa, India, and the Mediterranean world.

A great variety of goods and enslaved people funneled in and out of the markets of these two cities. From the interior of Africa, traders brought ivory, animal hides, and gold to the markets of Axum. Goods from farther south along the African coast came to the harbor of Adulis on the Red Sea. There, the markets offered iron, spices, precious stones, and cotton cloth from India and other lands beyond the Indian Ocean. Ships carried these goods up the Red Sea, where they collected goods from Europe and countries along the Mediterranean.

Axum Converts to Christianity In these great centers of international trade, Greek, Egyptian, Arab, and Jewish merchants mingled with traders from Africa, India, and other regions. As elsewhere, ideas spread along with goods. By the 300s, Christianity had reached the region. After converting to the new religion, King Ezana made Christianity the official religion of Axum. As the religion took hold among the people, older temples were replaced with Christian churches decorated with intricately designed biblical murals and religious images painted on wood panels.

At first, Christianity strengthened the ties between Axum, North Africa, and the Mediterranean world. In the 600s, however, Islam began spreading across North Africa and other regions surrounding Axum. Many African rulers embraced this new faith, creating strong cultural ties across much of the continent. Axum, which remained Christian, was now isolated from its own trade network—by distance from Europe and by religion from many former trading partners. Civil war and economic decline combined to weaken Axum, and the kingdom slowly declined.

 **Checkpoint** How did the spread of religion affect the kingdom of Axum?

Ethiopia: A Christian Outpost

Though Axum's political and economic power faded, its cultural and religious influence did not disappear. This legacy survived among the peoples of the interior uplands, in what is today northern Ethiopia. Although Axum's empire was only a portion of the present-day nation, when referring to their kingdom as a whole, the Axumite kings frequently used **Ethiopia**, which was a term the Greeks used for the region.

An Isolated Ethiopia Medieval Ethiopia was protected by rugged mountains, and the descendants of the Axumites were able to maintain their independence for centuries. Their success was due in part to the unifying power of their Christian faith, which gave them a unique sense of identity and helped establish a culture distinct from that of neighboring peoples.

One example of Ethiopia's distinct culture is the unique churches of Lalibela. In the early 1200s, **King Lalibela** came to power in Ethiopia. During his reign, he directed the building of eleven remarkable churches, which were actually carved from ground level downward into the solid rock of the mountains. These amazing structures still exist today and illustrate the architectural and artistic skill of the craftsmen who created them.

Despite their isolation, Ethiopian Christians kept ties with the Holy Land. In fact, some made pilgrimages to Jerusalem. They also were in touch with Christian communities in Egypt. Over time, Ethiopian Christianity absorbed many local customs. Traditional East African music and dance were adapted, and their influence is still felt in Ethiopian church services today. In addition, the services are still conducted in the ancient language of Geez.



Sculpted Churches

Beta Ghiorgis (House of George) is one of the Lalibela solid rock churches created during the thirteenth century. A trench was dug to create a solid block of rock, which was then sculpted and carved into to create the interior and exterior of this cross-shaped church.

Vocabulary Builder

unify—(YOO nuh.fy) *vt.* to form into a single unit

Ibn Battuta Witnesses a Unique Trading Tradition

Moroccan *qadi*, or judge, Ibn Battuta (1304–c.1368) was born in Tangier to a Berber family of the Muslim faith. After he completed his education at the age of 21, Battuta decided to make the hajj, or Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca. What started as a reasonably challenging trek for the period became one of the great journeys of medieval times. During nearly 30 years of travel, Battuta visited much of Southwest Asia, West Africa, southern Russia, India, and China. Along the way he gained fame and wealth and met kings, sheiks, and holy men—including the Byzantine emperor and the sultan of Delhi—as well as ordinary people. In this excerpt from his book, the *Rihlah*, or *Travels*, Battuta describes the unique trading tradition of Mogadishu.



“On leaving Zayla we sailed for fifteen days and came to Maqdashaw [Mogadishu], which is an enormous town. Its inhabitants are merchants.... When a vessel reaches the port, it is met by *sumbuqs*, which are small boats, in each of which are a number of young men, each carrying a covered dish containing food. He presents this to one of the merchants on the ship saying "This is my guest," and all the others do the same. Each merchant on disembarking goes only to the house of the young man who is his host.... The host then sells his goods for him and buys for him, and if anyone buys anything from him at too low a price, or sells to him in the absence of his host, the sale is regarded by them as invalid.”

—Ibn Battuta from the *Rihlah*

◀ Ibn Battuta in Egypt

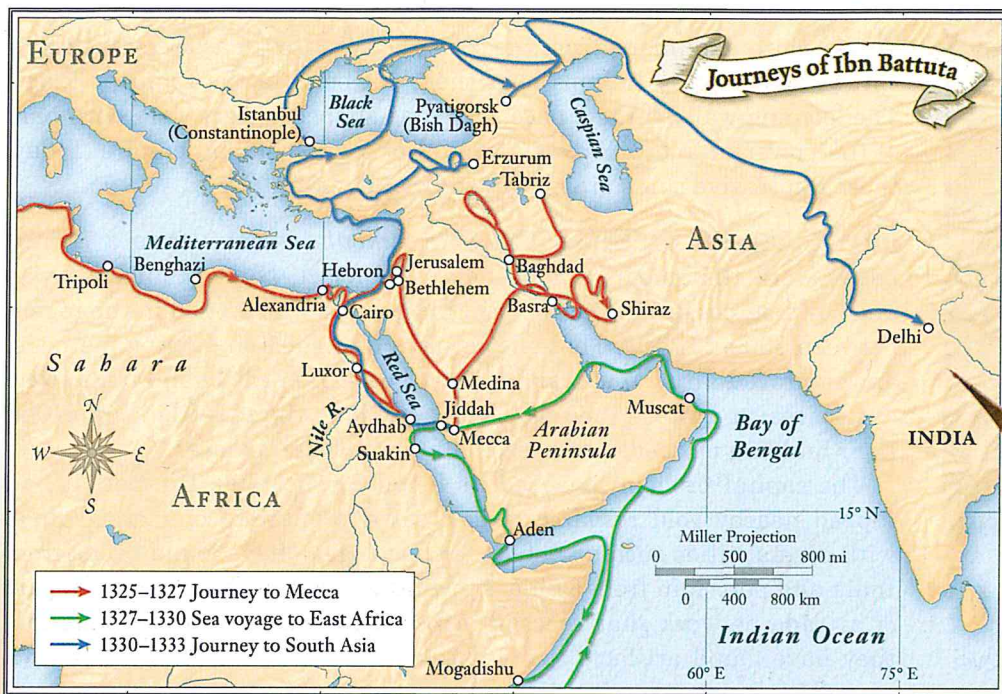
Judaism in Ethiopia The kings of Ethiopia claimed descent from the Israelite king Solomon and the queen of Sheba. This belief was recorded in an ancient Ethiopian book called *The Glory of Kings* and reinforced by the fact that Ethiopians observe some of the Jewish holidays and dietary laws. Some Ethiopians practiced Judaism rather than Christianity. These Ethiopian Jews, the Falasha, lived in the mountains of Ethiopia until the late 1900s, when most evacuated to Israel during a long famine.

✓ **Checkpoint** How did the geographic isolation of medieval Ethiopia shape its culture?

East African City-States

While Axum declined, a string of commercial cities—including Kilwa, Mogadishu, Mombasa, and Sofala—gradually arose along the East African coast. Since ancient times, Phoenician, Greek, Roman, and Indian traders had visited this region. Under the protection of local African rulers, Arab and Persian merchants set up Muslim communities beginning in the 600s. Port cities, as well as offshore islands such as Lamu and Zanzibar were ideally located for trade with Asia. As a result, Asian traders and immigrants from as far away as Indonesia soon added to the rich cultural mix.

Trading Centers Flourish By the 600s, sailors had learned that the annual monsoon winds could carry sailing ships between India and Africa. On the East African coast, rulers took advantage of the opportunities for trade that these winds provided. They welcomed ships from Arabia, Persia, and China. Traders acquired ivory, leopard skins, iron,



Thinking Critically

- 1. Draw Conclusions** Why do you think the merchants of Mogadishu used this method to conduct business?
- 2. Analyze Information** According to Ibn Battuta, regular merchants who traveled to Mogadishu were exempt from this strict trading practice. Why do you think some merchants were allowed this freedom?

Sambuq sailing along the East African coast ▶



copper, and gold from the interior of Africa, as well as from coastal regions. From India, Southeast Asia, and China came cotton cloth, silk, spices, porcelain, glassware, and swords.

Trade was not only beneficial to the merchants; it also helped local rulers build strong, independent city-states. Although they competed for trade, relations between the city-states were generally peaceful. A Muslim visitor described Kilwa, the most successful city-state, as “one of the most beautiful and well-constructed towns in the world.” Its royal palace still stands on cliffs that today overlook the ocean. The complex consists of courtyards, terraces, and nearly 100 rooms. Built of coral and cut stone, the structure is evidence of the old city’s splendor.

Trade Shapes Swahili The successful East African international trade system led to the emergence of a vibrant culture and a new language both known as **Swahili**. By the 1000s, many East African coastal cities had not only grown in wealth but also in size. Traders from the Middle East and Asia began to settle permanently in flourishing trading cities such as Kilwa.

As more settlers arrived, the local East African culture absorbed cultural elements from these new residents. For example, the architecture of private houses and palaces illustrated a blend of East African and Arabic designs that created unique and elegant Swahili buildings and furniture. In addition, over time many Arabic words were absorbed into the local Bantu-based language. In fact, the term *swahili* comes from an Arabic word meaning “of the coast”. The language itself was eventually written in Arabic script.

Vocabulary Builder

complex—(KAHM pleks) *n.* a group of connected buildings that form a single whole

Checkpoint How did trade influence the city-states of East Africa?



Ruins of Great Zimbabwe

The Great Enclosure, a portion of which is shown here, is one of the two major ruins of Great Zimbabwe. Archaeologists believe the enclosures did not serve any military purpose, but were built to display the ruler's power. However, much about Great Zimbabwe is still being debated.

The Stone Houses of Great Zimbabwe

To the south and inland from the coastal city-states, massive stone ruins sprawl across rocky hilltops near the great bend in the Limpopo River. The looming walls, large palace, and cone-shaped towers were once part of the powerful and prosperous capital of a great inland empire. Today, these impressive ruins are known as **Great Zimbabwe**.

Inland Capital of Trade The word *zimbabwe* comes from a Bantu-based word that means “stone houses.” In fact, Great Zimbabwe was built by a succession of Bantu-speaking peoples who settled in the region between 900 and 1500. These newcomers brought iron, mining methods, and improved farming skills. Early settlers raised cattle and built stone enclosures to protect their livestock. In time, these settlers improved their building methods and erected large walls and palaces.

The capital probably reached its height about 1300. By then, it had tapped nearby gold resources and created profitable commercial links with coastal cities such as Sofala. Archaeologists have found beads from India and porcelain from China, showing that Great Zimbabwe was part of a trade network that reached across the Indian Ocean. In addition, they have found artifacts that indicate that Great Zimbabwe had artisans skilled in making jewelry and weaving cotton cloth.

Very little is known about the government in Great Zimbabwe. However, after studying the architecture and artifacts of the ruins, some scholars have suggested that the ruler was a god-king who presided over a large court. Below the king, a central bureaucracy may have ruled an inner ring of provinces, while appointed governors had authority in more distant villages. Although there is much about Great Zimbabwe that remains unknown, as archaeologists continue their research, we are learning more about how the capital and empire developed.

Zimbabwe Falls to Ruins By 1500, Zimbabwe was in decline. Some scholars suggest that the population had grown too great. Civil war and dwindling trade probably contributed as well. By then, Portuguese traders were pushing inland to find the region's source of gold. They failed to discover the gold mines, but their attempts further weakened the small states that formed in the region as Zimbabwe declined.

 **Checkpoint** How do the ruins of Great Zimbabwe reflect the capital's former prosperity?

WITNESS HISTORY VIDEO

Watch *Zimbabwe: Lost City of Africa* on the Witness History Discovery School™ video program to see how archaeology has helped unlock the mysteries of this medieval city.



SECTION 3 Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-1131

Terms, People, and Places

1. For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Understand Effects**
Use your completed flowchart to answer the Focus Question: What influence did religion and trade have on the development of East Africa?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Synthesize Information** Why did Ethiopia become increasingly isolated from its neighbors over the centuries?
4. **Draw Inferences** Why did the language of Swahili emerge in the East African city-states?
5. **Test Conclusions** What evidence suggests that Great Zimbabwe was a center of trade?

Writing About History

Quick Write: Use Sensory Details Choose one of the locations from this section. Suppose you are a merchant or traveler entering the city for the first time. What sights and sounds do you encounter? Write a letter to your family that describes your experiences from the moment you enter the city until you reach your final destination there.



A Mossi woman
from present-day
Burkina Faso

WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

Cultural Variety

Ibn Battuta traveled widely throughout Africa and Asia. His travels included more than visits to the capitals and large trading cities. He also visited small African communities where he learned of the great variety of cultures and societies that had developed on the continent.

“The women [of the Massufa tribe] are shown more respect than the men. The state of affairs amongst these people is indeed extraordinary. . . . no one claims descent from his father, but on the contrary from his mother’s brother. A person’s heirs are his sister’s sons, not his own sons. This is a thing which I have seen nowhere in the world. . . .”

Focus Question What factors influenced the development of societies in Africa?

Societies in Medieval Africa



Content Standards

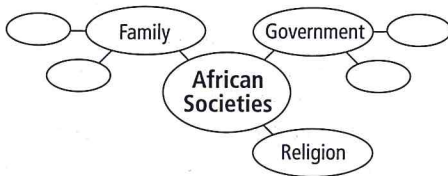
- **II.4.HS.1** Effect of world processes on world regions
- **II.4.HS.4** Patterns of economic development, political systems
- **V.1.HS.3** Generalize about a social science topic

Terms, People, and Places

nuclear family	lineage
patrilineal	consensus
matrilineal	griot

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Recognize Multiple Causes As you read this section, create a concept web like the one below to keep track of the factors that influenced the development of African societies.



Considering Africa’s immense size, it is not surprising that Ibn Battuta came across new cultures. Factors such as Africa’s varied geography, diverse climates, and later migration and trade played major roles in how early societies developed throughout the continent.

As you have read, throughout the world the Neolithic Revolution led to the beginning of settled farming communities located in areas with fertile soil and proximity to water. These farming settlements grew as surpluses increased, enabling artisans to develop specialized skills.

Advancements in transportation, such as the use of the camel, increased a community’s reach beyond its borders, and this exchange allowed villages to grow into towns. Extended trade brought additional wealth, leading to the creation of individual states and kingdoms. Throughout Africa, communities varied in size, environment, and economics. However, each society, including the kingdoms you read about earlier in this chapter, developed around four common elements—family, government, religion, and art.

Family Patterns

In medieval Africa, as elsewhere, the family was the basic unit of society. Patterns of family life varied greatly depending on the culture of the group. In some small societies, for example, the basic family unit was the **nuclear family**, or parents and children living and working together as a unit. In other communities, family units included the extended family—parents, children, and several generations such as grandparents and uncles—who lived and worked close together to ensure the success of the group.

Kinship Family organization varied in other ways. Some families were **patrilineal**. In these families, important kinship ties such as inheritance were passed through the father's side. Other families, such as the one described by Ibn Battuta, were **matrilineal**, with inheritance traced through the mother's side. In some cultures, one spouse would move to the other spouse's village and join his or her parents' family.

Matrilineal cultures forged strong ties between brothers and sisters. Brothers were expected to protect their sisters, and sons were expected to help their mother's brothers whenever needed.

Extended Lineages Each family belonged to a **lineage**, or group of households who claimed a common ancestor. Several lineages formed a clan that traced its descent to an even more remote and often legendary ancestor. Belonging to a particular family, lineage, or clan gave people a sense of community with shared responsibilities to that community.

An individual's place in some medieval African societies was also determined by a system of age grades. An age grade included all girls or boys born in the same year. Each age grade had particular responsibilities and privileges. As they moved up from one age grade to another, children began to take part in village activities, which created social ties beyond the family.

✓ **Checkpoint** How did kinship help identify an individual's place in his or her society?

INFOGRAPHIC

African Culture Expressed in Art

Considering the variety of African cultures, it is understandable that each group developed its own individual artistic tradition. The designs on many objects as well as the materials used to create them reflect the artists' beliefs, culture, and environment. For example, the wooden Mende slit drum (left) from West Africa was both a musical instrument and a symbolic sculpture used in ceremonies and rituals. Even many everyday objects were created with such care for detail that they could be considered works of art.

◀ These two East African shields are made from readily available materials: A Maasai shield made of cattle hide (left), and an Ethiopian shield made from a hippopotamus hide (bottom).

An ivory ornamental mask most likely worn around the neck of the Benin oba. The figures at the top are representations of Portuguese traders and symbolized Benin's alliance with and control over them. ▶

Political Patterns

Most medieval African farming peoples lived in tightknit communities and helped one another in tasks such as clearing the land, planting, and harvesting. As communities grew, the need for a form of government arose. Throughout Africa, political patterns varied, depending in part on the size and culture of the community.

Power Sharing Unlike the large kingdoms, smaller medieval African societies were often organized with power shared among a number of people rather than centralized in the hands of a single leader. In some villages, a chief had a good deal of authority, but in many others, elders made the major decisions. In some places, especially in parts of West Africa, women took the dominant role in the marketplace or acted as official peacemakers in the village.

Villages often made decisions by a process known as **consensus**, or general agreement. In open discussions, people whose opinions were valued voiced their views before a final agreement was reached. Because of the experience and wisdom of older men and women, their opinions usually carried the greatest weight.

In villages that were part of a large kingdom such as Songhai, decisions made at a distant court had to be obeyed. These villagers, therefore, had to pay taxes and provide soldiers to the central, and frequently distant, government.



The gold nugget, shells, and horns on a healer's charm necklace (right) were believed to have magical healing properties.

This West African Dogon dancer is wearing a grass and shell costume and mask created for the dama funerary ceremony. During the dama, a masked dance is performed symbolizing the end of the mourning period.

▼ The elephant at the base of this West African stool identifies that it was used only by the king of the Asante.

Thinking Critically

- 1. Draw Conclusions** How does the Dogon dancer's costume help identify the group's location? Explain.
- 2. Synthesize Information** Why do you think symbolism was important in medieval African societies?

Limited Power Another form of government developed when many villages were grouped into districts and provinces that were governed by officials appointed by a king. The kingdom of Kongo, which flourished around A.D. 1500 in central Africa, is an example. There, each village still had its own chief. Taxes were collected through local governors either in goods or in cowrie shells, a common African currency. Unlike rulers of larger West African states who maintained strong standing armies, the kings of Kongo could only call upon men to fight in times of need. In fact, the king was actually chosen by a group of electors and had to govern according to traditional laws. It might seem as though a king wielded absolute power; however, in some societies like the kingdom of Kongo, the monarch's power was somewhat limited.

 **Checkpoint** How was ruling power shared in some of the smaller African societies?

Religious Beliefs

As you have read, religion played an important role in the development of medieval African societies. Religious beliefs that existed before the arrival of Islam and Christianity were varied and **complex**. Like the Hindus or ancient Greeks and Romans, some Africans worshiped many gods and goddesses. They identified the forces of nature with divine spirits and tried to influence those forces through rituals and ceremonies.

Many African peoples believed that a single, unknowable supreme being stood above all the other gods and goddesses. This supreme being was the creator and ruler of the universe and was helped by the lesser spirits, who were closer to the people. Some African peoples believed, like the Chinese, that the spirits of their ancestors could help, warn, or punish their descendants on Earth. Just as Christians in medieval Europe called on the saints for help, medieval Africans turned to the spirits of their departed ancestors.

By A.D. 1000, both Christianity and Islam had spread to many regions of Africa. Those who adopted these religions often associated the God of the Christians and Muslims with their traditional supreme being. In this way, Christianity and Islam in Africa absorbed many local practices and beliefs.

 **Checkpoint** Describe the religious beliefs in medieval Africa.

Traditions in Art and Literature

African artistic traditions extend far back in time to the ancient rock paintings of the Sahara, which were created by about 1000 B.C., and the over 4,000-year-old pyramids of Egypt and Nubia. More recently, but still about 1,000 years ago, the rock churches of Ethiopia and the palace of Great Zimbabwe were built. These accomplishments bear lasting witness to the creative power of these early and medieval civilizations.

Creative Arts African artists worked in many materials including gold, ivory, wood, bronze, and cloth. They created many decorative items such as woven cloth, inscribed jugs and bowls, or jewelry simply for their beauty. Even so, art usually served social and religious purposes as well.

Art strengthened bonds within the community and linked the makers and the users of the work. Patterns used to decorate textiles, baskets,

Vocabulary Builder

complex—(kahm PLEKS) *adj.* made up of different parts connected in a way that is hard to understand

swords, and other objects had important meanings or special messages that the artisan or owner wanted to convey. Often, they identified an object as the work of a particular clan or the possession of royalty. One example is kente cloth, a traditional West African textile woven of silk and cotton. When it was made in bright gold and blue colors, the symbols of power, only the ruling elite and the wealthy were allowed to wear it.

In medieval Africa, as elsewhere, much art was closely tied to religion. Statues and other objects were used in religious rites and ceremonies. In some rituals, for example, leaders wore elaborately carved masks decorated with cowrie shells or grass. Once the mask was in place, both the wearer and the viewers could feel the presence of the spiritual force it represented.

Literature Early and medieval African societies preserved their histories and values through both written and oral literature. Ancient Egypt, Nubia, and Axum left written records of their past. Later, Arabic provided a common written language in those parts of Africa influenced by Islam. African Muslim scholars gathered in cities such as Timbuktu and Kilwa. Documents in Arabic offer invaluable evidence about the law, religion, and history of the time.

Oral traditions date back many centuries. In West Africa, **griots** (GREE ohz), or professional storytellers recited ancient stories such as the Sundiata epic. The griots preserved both histories and traditional folk tales in the same way that the epics of Homer or Aryan India were passed orally from generation to generation. The histories praised the heroic deeds of famous ancestors or kings. The folk tales, which blended fanciful stories with humor and sophisticated word play, taught important moral lessons. Oral literature, like religion and art, thus encouraged a sense of community and common values within the medieval societies of Africa.



Language of Drums

Not all "oral tradition" is spoken. The talking drums of western and central Africa are used to communicate important information such as messages and announcements as well as traditional texts such as prayers and eulogies for historic individuals. *Why do you think the sound of a drum could be more powerful than the spoken word?*

Checkpoint How did African societies preserve their history?

SECTION 4 Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-1141

Terms, People, and Places

1. For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Recognize Multiple Causes** Use your completed concept web to answer the Focus Question: What factors influenced the development of societies in Africa?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Recognize Cause and Effect** How did an individual's lineage affect his or her life in African societies?
4. **Demonstrate Reasoned Judgment** Do you think consensus is a fair or unfair method of decision making? Explain the reasons for your answer.
5. **Determine Relevance** How was art connected to religion in African cultures?
6. **Identify Central Issues** Why do you think art, literature, and religion inspired a sense of unity within medieval African communities?

Writing About History

Quick Write: Creating Dialogue Select two individuals, such as an elder and a tribal chief or an uncle and nephew, from the topics discussed in this section and create a dialogue between them placing yourself as one of the characters. Make sure that the dialogue generally relates to one of the main subjects of the section such as government or family ties.

Quick Study Guide



I.3.HS.3, II.1.HS.1,
II.2.HS.1–2

Progress Monitoring *Online*

For: Self-test with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-1142

Major African Kingdoms and Trading States

Kingdom or State	Date	Location	Religion	Economic Base
Egypt	2575 B.C.–1075 B.C.	North Africa	Local religion	Trade
Nubia	1100 B.C.–A.D. 350	Northeast Africa	Local religion	Trade and iron ore
Ghana	800–1050	West Africa	Islam	Gold
Mali	1235–1400s	West Africa	Local religion and Islam	Gold and salt
Songhai	1460–1591	West Africa	Local religion and Islam	Trade
Benin	1300s–1500s	West Africa	Local religion	Pepper, ivory, and slaves
Axum	350–600s	East Africa	Christianity	Trade
Great Zimbabwe	1300s–1500s	East Africa	Unknown	Trade

Important Ancient and Medieval African Rulers

Ruler	Kingdom	Accomplishment
Piankhi	Nubia	Conquered Egypt and brought it under Nubian control
Sundiata	Mali	Defeated Sumanguru and founded the empire of Mali
Mansa Musa	Mali	Expanded Mali's borders and based justice system on the Quran
Askia Muhammad	Songhai	Expanded Songhai's territory and improved the government by setting up bureaucracies
Amina	Hausa city-states	Gained control of many Saharan trade routes
King Ezana	Axum	Conquered Nubia and made Christianity the official religion
King Lalibela	Ethiopia	Sponsored the building of the Lalibela churches

Key Events in Ancient and Medieval Africa



730 B.C.
Nubia
conquers
Egypt.

500s B.C.
Meroë becomes
Nubian capital and
controls North African
trade routes.

Chapter Events Global Events

1000 B.C.

500 B.C.

A.D. 1



500s B.C.
In India, the
sacred Hindu
texts are recorded.

460 B.C.
The Age of
Pericles begins
in Athens.

218 B.C.
Hannibal crosses the Alps
to attack Rome during the
Second Punic War.

Concept Connector

Cumulative Review

Record the answers to the questions below on your Concept Connector worksheets.

- Migration** Scholars have studied both the Bantu and Indo-European language families as a means of determining the migration patterns of both groups. Why do you think language is a good indicator of migration patterns? Why do you think tracing migration is important in understanding history? Finally, what other methods might scientists use to understand the movements of populations?
- Geography's Impact** As in Africa, the cultures and early history of Eastern Europe were heavily influenced by the region's geography. Compare and contrast the impact geography had on cultural development in Eastern Europe and Africa. For each region, think about the following:
 - geographic passageways and waterways
 - barriers to easy movement and access to new ideas
 - cultural links to other regions
- Trade** Many coastal peoples became skilled sailors thanks to their proximity to large bodies of water. Greek, Viking, and East African traders all reached distant lands using their nautical skills and gained access to the goods and ideas of distant cultures. How did this extended travel affect trade in each region? Think about the following:
 - the range of territory visited by each group
 - the type and value of goods available locally and from afar
 - the ease and availability of overland trade routes
 - competition with other groups

Connections to Today

- People and the Environment: Desertification** Parts of the Sahara were once well-watered areas with rivers that supported forests and grasslands as well as people. Beginning about 2500 B.C. and continuing today, the desert has been gradually spreading. In fact, during the early 1970s a long drought in the Sahel extended the Sahara as much as 60 miles in some areas, and the resulting famine led to the loss of almost 100,000 lives. Desertification is difficult to reverse and is considered not only a major environmental problem in Africa but a serious social and economic problem as well. However, efforts are being made to address the issue. The following African countries are heavily affected by desertification: Burkina Faso, Chad, Gambia, Ghana, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, and Sudan. Select one of these nations and then conduct research on how desertification is affecting that country and what the country is doing to address the problem.
- Trade: Trade in the 21st Century** As you have read, the extent of medieval African trade was far-reaching. Each region provided commodities to the world that were indigenous and frequently unique to that region. The farther away a trader transported a commodity, the more its value would increase. Considering today's advances in agriculture, manufacturing, and transportation, write a one-page essay on the similarities and differences between medieval trade and trade in the twenty-first century.

History Interactive

For: Interactive timeline
Web Code: nap-1141



A.D. 300s
Axum gains control of an extensive trade network.

A.D. 600s
Islam spreads to North Africa.

A.D. 800s
Kingdom of Ghana controls West African gold-salt trade routes.

A.D. 1200s
Lalibela churches built in Ethiopia.

A.D. 1324
Mansa Musa completes his hajj to Mecca.

A.D. 1500s
The kingdom of Kongo flourishes in central Africa.

500

1000

1500

A.D. 300s
Maya civilization flourishes in Mexico and Central America.

A.D. 668
The Silla dynasty unites Korea.

A.D. 1347
The Black Death begins to ravage Europe.

A.D. 1492
Christopher Columbus sails the Atlantic and reaches the Caribbean.



Chapter Assessment

Terms, People, and Places

Choose the italicized term in parentheses that best completes each sentence.

1. The most populated vegetation region in Africa is the (*Sahara, savanna*).
2. (*Adulis, Axum*) was a prosperous trading port in East Africa.
3. Some medieval African societies made political decisions using a process of (*griot, consensus*).
4. An important (*commodity, surplus*) in medieval African trade was salt.
5. A (*patrilineal, matrilineal*) family passes inheritance through the father's side.
6. (*Bantu, Swahili*) is a root language used by scholars to understand early African migration patterns.
7. (*Mansa Musa, King Lalibela*) based his system of justice on the Quran.
8. The kingdom of (*Ghana, Nubia*) was greatly influenced by its proximity to Egypt.

Main Ideas

Section 1 (pp. 340–345)

9. How did the environment affect the development of societies in Africa?
10. Describe the effects of trade on the cities of North Africa.

Section 2 (pp. 346–351)

11. Summarize how agriculture led to the development of prosperous trading centers.
12. What influence did Islam have on the large kingdoms of West Africa?

Section 3 (pp. 352–356)

13. What factors led to the isolation of Ethiopia from its neighbors?

14. How did trade bring about a blend of cultures in the city-states of East Africa?

Section 4 (pp. 357–361)

15. How did kinship ties influence daily life in medieval Africa?
16. How can artistic traditions identify a community and its environment?

Chapter Focus Question

17. How did trade influence the development of the kingdoms and trading states of Africa?

Critical Thinking

18. **Draw Conclusions** Why do you think the king of Ghana collected tolls on goods entering or leaving his kingdom?
19. **Synthesize Information** What primary factors attracted invaders to the great cities and kingdoms of Africa? Why did these invasions often succeed?
20. **Make Comparisons** Compare and contrast the consequences of adopting a new religion for the kingdoms of Mali and Axum.
21. **Geography and History** How did the geography of Africa affect the value of trade goods?
22. **Make Comparisons** How was the kingdom of Kongo's system of government similar to that of the government of the United States? How was it different?
23. **Distinguish False From Accurate Images** How do trading kingdoms and city-states contradict the misconceptions that many people have of medieval Africa?

● Writing About History

Writing a Narrative Much of African history has been passed down from generation to generation through oral traditions. African oral historians brought the events of the past to life through their engaging and entertaining stories in order to ensure that important people and events were remembered. Write a narrative that could be recounted aloud about a specific event involving one of the following: Saharan trade, Timbuktu, Mansa Musa, King Ezana, Lalibela, Amina. Consult page SH8 of the Writing Handbook for additional help.

Prewriting

- Choose the topic or event that interests you most and take notes about the people and locations involved.

- Collect the facts and details you will need to tell your story, including any historic background your listeners might need to know about the historic event.

Drafting

- Identify the climax of the story and then organize the story in chronological order.
- Make sure to engage your audience with a dramatic opening and include sensory details.
- Write a conclusion that sums up the significance of the event.

Revising

- Use the guidelines for revising your narrative on page SH9 of the Writing Handbook.





Test Preparation

II.3.HS.1, II.4.HS.1,
II.4.HS.4, II.5.HS.1

Mansa Musa, King of Mali

From 1312 until 1337, Mansa Musa ruled the West African kingdom of Mali. During his reign, the gold trade in the kingdom expanded as did the amount of territory under Mali's control. The wealth of the kingdom and Mansa Musa's power and generosity became legendary following his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324. In fact, it is said that he spent so lavishly during his hajj that the value of gold actually fell in Egypt. Mansa Musa's renown spread throughout Africa to Europe and Southwest Asia, as the excerpts and map below demonstrate.

Document A

"We belong to a house which hands on the kinship by inheritance. The king [Abobakar II] who was my predecessor did not believe that it was impossible to discover the furthest limit of the Atlantic Ocean and wished vehemently to do so. . . ."

"Then that Sultan got ready 2,000 ships, 1,000 for himself and the men whom he took with him, and 1,000 for water and provisions. He left me to deputize for him and embarked on the Atlantic Ocean with his men. That was the last we saw of him and all those who were with him, and so, I became king in my own right."

—Mansa Musa, quoted by Ibn Amir Hajib

Document B

"[Mansa Musa] and all those with him . . . were well-dressed, grave, and dignified. He was noble and generous and performed many acts of charity and kindness. He had left his country with 100 loads of gold which he spent during his Pilgrimage on the tribes who lay along his route. . . . As a consequence he needed to borrow money in Egypt and pledged his credit with the merchants at a very high rate of gain so they made 700 dinars profit on 300. Later he paid them back amply. He sent to me 500 mithqals of gold by way of honorarium."

—Ibn Amir Hajib

Document C



Detail of West Africa from a fourteenth-century Spanish world map showing Mansa Musa offering gold to a trader.

Document D

From the beginning of my coming to stay in Egypt I heard talk of the arrival of this sultan Musa on his Pilgrimage. . . . I asked the emir Abu . . . and he told me . . . "When I [the emir] went out to meet him . . . he did me extreme honor and treated me with the greatest courtesy. . . . Then he forwarded to the royal treasury many loads of unworked native gold and other valuables. I tried to persuade him to go up to the Citadel to meet the sultan, but he refused persistently. . . . I realized that the audience was repugnant to him because he would be obliged to kiss the ground and the sultan's hand. . . . so I kept on at him till he agreed."

"[In the sultan's presence Mansa Musa] said 'I make obeisance to God who created me!' then he prostrated himself and went forward to the sultan. The sultan half rose to greet him and sat him by his side."

—Al 'Umari

Analyzing Documents

Read the documents above and use them with what you already know to answer the following questions.

- According to Document A, Mansa Musa became king after his predecessor
 - was killed in a battle.
 - lost favor with religious leaders.
 - left on a sea voyage.
 - was assassinated by an ally of Mansa Musa.
- The Catalan Atlas, Document C, features Mansa Musa so prominently to
 - provide a reference point for the kingdom of Mali.
 - show that Mansa Musa is the region's monarch.
 - enhance the decorative elements of the map.
 - emphasize the wealth, power, and importance of Mansa Musa.
- Which qualities of Mansa Musa does Document D show?
 - cruelty and deceit
 - kindness and compassion
 - compassion and generosity
 - generosity and faith
- Writing Task** Why is Mansa Musa's rule known as "the Golden Age of Mali"? Use documents from this page along with information from the chapter in your response.