

# African Kingdoms

## THE BIG PICTURE

The early peoples of Africa adapted to many different environments and created a variety of societies. As these societies grew, different forms of government arose to lead them. In time, great trading kingdoms and empires developed in West and East Africa. In addition to trade, strong rulers and religion shaped the accomplishments, characteristics, and culture of African kingdoms and empires.



## North Carolina Standards

### Social Studies Objectives

**2.07** Describe the rise and achievements of African civilizations, including but not limited to Axum, Ghana, Kush, Mali, Nubia, and Songhai.

### Language Arts Objective

**2.01.4** Demonstrate the ability to read, listen to and view a variety of increasingly complex print and non-print information texts appropriate to grade level and course by demonstrating comprehension of main idea and supporting details.



## TIME LINE

### CHAPTER EVENTS

**c. 200s**

The camel has been introduced into North Africa.

**c. 350**

The kingdom of Aksum defeats Kush.

**c. 800**

Empire of Ghana controls trade in West Africa.

**c. 1100**

Kilwa becomes a leading coastal trade center.

### WORLD EVENTS

**320**  
The Gupta Empire begins a Golden Age in India.

**476**  
The Western Roman Empire falls.

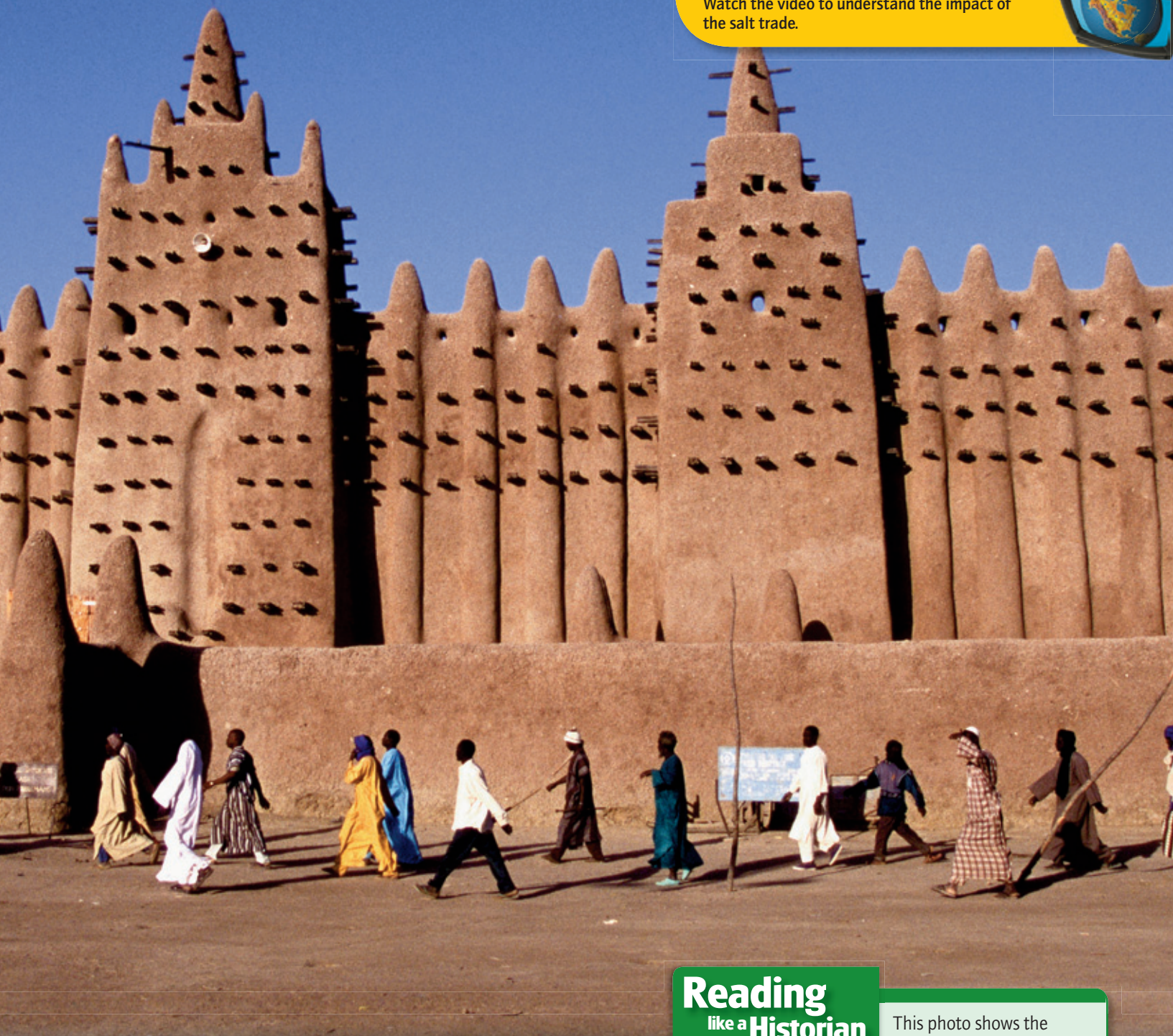
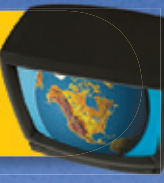
**c. 710**  
Muslim Arabs control almost all of North Africa.

**1096**  
The Crusades begin in Europe.



## History's Impact video program

Watch the video to understand the impact of the salt trade.



## Reading like a Historian

This photo shows the Djenné Mosque, located in the city of Djenné in the West African nation of Mali. Founded in the 1200s, Djenné was a center of trade and Muslim learning. The Djenné Mosque blends imported Muslim styles with mud-building styles native to West Africa.

**Analyzing Visuals** Based on the image, what are some features of West African mud-building?

See **Skills Handbook**, p. H26

**c. 1230s**

Empire of Mali controls trade in West Africa.

**1324**

Mansa Musa begins a hajj to Mecca.

**1464**

Sunni Ali becomes ruler of the Songhai Empire.

**1200**

**1325**

Aztecs found the city of Tenochtitlán.

**1453**

The Ottoman Empire conquers Constantinople.



# GEOGRAPHY Starting Points



**Interactive**

## ENVIRONMENTS OF AFRICA



**Starting Points** Africa, the world's second-largest continent, has a broad range of environments, from barren deserts to lush tropical rain forests. These environments played a role in shaping the many cultures that arose in early Africa. In addition, Africa has a wealth of mineral resources, such as iron ore, which some Africans were forging into iron by 400 BC.

- Analyze** In what vegetation zone was Benin City located? How do you think that location affected life there?
- Predict** Iron working slowly spread from North Africa throughout the rest of the continent. Based on the map, how do you think the knowledge of iron working might have spread throughout Africa?



### Listen to History

Go online to listen to an explanation of the starting points for this chapter.

[go.hrw.com](http://go.hrw.com)

Keyword: SHL AFK

# Early Civilizations in Africa

## BEFORE YOU READ

### MAIN IDEA

Africa's earliest people adapted to a wide range of geographic conditions to establish societies based on family ties, religion, iron technology, and trade.

### READING FOCUS

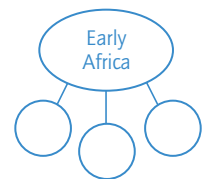
1. How does Africa's diverse geography shape life on the continent?
2. What cultural patterns did Africa's early societies share?
3. What major changes affected societies during Africa's Iron Age?

### KEY TERMS

Sahel  
savanna  
griots  
Nok  
Bantu

### TAKING NOTES

As you read, use a graphic organizer like this one to take notes on the geography, early societies, and Iron Age of Africa.



### THE INSIDE STORY

**Why might a storyteller be highly respected?** "Listen to my word, you who want to know; by my mouth

you will learn the history of Mali." A storyteller named Djeli Mamoudou Kouyaté began to relate the tale of the great warrior and king Sundiata, founder of the Mali Empire. "He was a lad full of strength; his arms had the strength of ten and his biceps inspired fear in his companions. He had already that authoritative way of speaking which belongs to those who are destined to command." Most early African civilizations did not develop a written language. Instead,

history was passed down orally by storytellers. Called griots, these storytellers memorized the tales of heroic kings and deeds and passed the information on from generation to generation. Because of their important role in passing on knowledge, griots were highly respected. The storyteller Kouyaté explained that "without us the names of kings would vanish into oblivion, we are the memory of mankind." Traditions such as storytelling were part of the cultural landscape of early Africa. ■

## Keeper of the MEMORIES

◀ A storyteller called a griot passes a legend on to the next generation in a village in Côte d'Ivoire in West Africa.





## African Cultural Traditions

Early Africans developed varied and rich cultural traditions. *What do the two sculptures on the far right have in common?*

### DANCE

Many African traditions involve dance and masks. These Dogon dancers wear masks decorated with cowrie shells for a harvest ceremony in Mali.

### MUSIC

Traditional African music was performed with a variety of instruments, including stringed and wind instruments as well as drums, such as this one from Guinea.



The Art Archive/Musée des Arts Africains et Océaniques/Dagli Orti

## The Geography of Africa

Africa's location and large size—more than three times the size of the United States—have resulted in a wide variety of climates and vegetation. Each region of the continent has its own terrain and provides different resources for the people who live there. As a result, distinct cultures and ways of life developed.

**Landforms** If you look at a physical map of Africa you will see that the continent has a varied landscape. Low, wide plains run across Africa's northern and western interior. Vast plateaus, or high plains, cover much of Africa's central and southern interior. Farther east is the Great Rift Valley, a region of deep valleys, or rifts, and narrow lakes. Around the outer part of Africa are several mountain ranges, such as the Ethiopian Highlands in the northeast. Near the coastline, however, the land drops off sharply to coastal plains. Some of these coastal plains provide fertile farmland, while others are areas of desert, swamp, or sandy beaches.

**Climate and Vegetation** Africa's climate and vegetation are also quite varied. Northern Africa is dominated by the Sahara, the largest desert in the world. Stretching about 3,000 miles east to west and from 800 to 1,200 miles north to south, the Sahara includes mountains,

rocky plateaus, barren gravel plains, and sand dunes. Temperatures in the desert can climb above 120°F, and rain is rare. However, scattered throughout the desert are oases, or fertile areas, some large enough to support villages.

Just south of the Sahara, mighty rivers flow across plains. These rivers include the Congo, Zambezi, and Niger. This region of Africa is called the **Sahel** (sah-HEL), a strip of land that divides the desert from wetter areas. Although the Sahel is fairly dry, it has enough vegetation to support hardy grazing animals.

Farther south is a band of tropical **savanna**, or open grassland, which extends east from Central Africa before wrapping back toward the south. Tall grasses, shrubs, and a few trees grow there. A variety of wild herd animals live on the savanna, as do the meat-eating animals that prey upon them. The majority of Africa's people live on the savannas as well.

Near the equator and on Madagascar, an island off the southeast coast, are tropical rain forests. The hot and humid climate and year-round rainfall of the rain forests supports a broad range of plant and animal life. Farther south, southern Africa consists mainly of hilly grasslands, deserts, and a high coastal strip of land. This region experiences a mild Mediterranean climate characterized by warm temperatures and both summer and winter rains.



## ART

Early Africans excelled in sculpture. Benin artists made superb bronze sculptures, such as the head below right from the 1700s. Nok artists made terra-cotta figurines, such as the one below from the 500s.



The Art Archive/Musée du Quai  
Branly Paris/Dagli Orti

The Art Archive/Musée des Arts  
Africains et Océaniens/Dagli Orti

**Adapting to Africa's Environment** The first people to live in Africa had to adapt to the continent's varied climates and features. Insufficient water supplies and poor soil in some places made farming difficult. Rainfall—either too much or too little—presented problems that Africa's farmers continue to struggle with in modern times. Heavy rains can erode the soil and wash away nutrients important for growing crops. Insufficient rainfall can lead to drought and poor grazing land. As a result, farmers must decide which crops to grow based on the rainfall they expect to receive in a year. When rainfall is uncertain, such decisions become more difficult.

Another danger is caused by parasites, or small organisms, that thrive in Africa's tropical areas. Insects such as mosquitoes can transmit the parasites to humans or animals, leading to deadly diseases such as malaria. Another insect, the tsetse (TSET-see) fly, lives in some wooded areas and near lakes and streams in sub-Saharan Africa. This fly carries a parasite that can kill livestock and infect humans with sleeping sickness, a potentially fatal illness. The threat of disease makes areas inhabited by the tsetse fly unsuitable for settlement.

### READING CHECK

**Analyze** What challenges can Africa's environment pose to people living there?

## Early African Societies

Based on excavations from Olduvai Gorge and other sites in the Great Rift Valley, anthropologists think that the first humans lived in East Africa. Over thousands of years, people spread out from that region into other parts of the continent to form distinct cultures and societies.

**Early Farming Societies** During the early phase of their history, Africans lived as hunter-gatherers. Around 9,000 years ago, though, some Africans began to farm, growing native crops such as sorghum, cotton, and yams. In some parts of Africa, pastoralism, or the practice of raising herd animals, arose before farming. Archaeological evidence shows that Africa's first farmers were likely pastoralists of the Sahara. About 8,000 years ago the Sahara's climate was much wetter than it is now.

About 5,000 years ago the climate changed, however; and the Sahara became drier. As more land became desert, people left areas where they could no longer survive. Pastoralists from the Sahara migrated to the Mediterranean coast, the Nile Valley, and parts of West Africa. By about 2500 BC many people in these regions practiced herding and mixed farming.

**Social Structures** Despite the diversity of early African societies, many of them shared some common features. For example, many early African societies developed village-based cultures built around clans, or families with common ancestors. Family ties were extremely important, and all family members were expected to be loyal to their clan. Often, extended family members—parents, children, and other close relatives—lived together.

In some areas people took part in another type of group called age-sets. In these groups men who had been born within the same two or three years formed special bonds. Men in the same age-set had a duty to help each other. Women, too, sometimes formed age-sets.

Loyalty to family and age-sets helped village members work together. Everyone had specific duties. The men hunted and farmed. Women cared for children, farmed, collected firewood, ground grain, and carried water. Even the very old and very young had their own tasks. For example, elders often taught traditions to the younger generations.

### ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

**phase** a period or stage within a longer process



## READING SKILLS

### Identifying Supporting Details

What details support the statement that early African societies shared some features?

**Religion and Culture** Many early Africans, shared similar religious beliefs. For example, many Africans believed that the unseen spirits of their ancestors stayed nearby. To honor these spirits, families marked certain places as sacred spaces by putting specially carved statues there. Family members gathered in these places to share news and food with the ancestors. Through these practices they hoped the spirits would protect them.

Many Africans also practiced a form of a religion called animism—the belief that bodies of water, animals, trees, and other natural objects have spirits. Animism reflected Africans' close ties to the natural world.

Many early African societies did not develop systems of writing either. Instead, they maintained their sense of identity and continuity with the past through oral traditions. These oral traditions included stories, songs, poems,

and proverbs. The task of remembering and passing on oral traditions was entrusted to storytellers called **griots** (GREE-ohz). Griots helped keep history alive for each new generation and were highly respected in their communities.

Early Africans shared common features in the arts as well. In many African societies, music and dance were central to celebrations and rituals. In addition, elaborately carved masks were often worn during dances and other rituals.

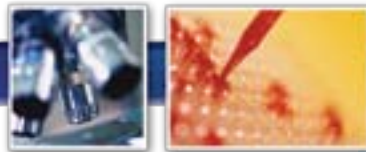
### READING CHECK

**Generalize** What role did family ties play in early African societies?

## Africa's Iron Age

Iron technology spread to parts of sub-Saharan Africa around the 500s BC. The development of Africa's Iron Age changed many aspects of life.

## FORENSICS in History



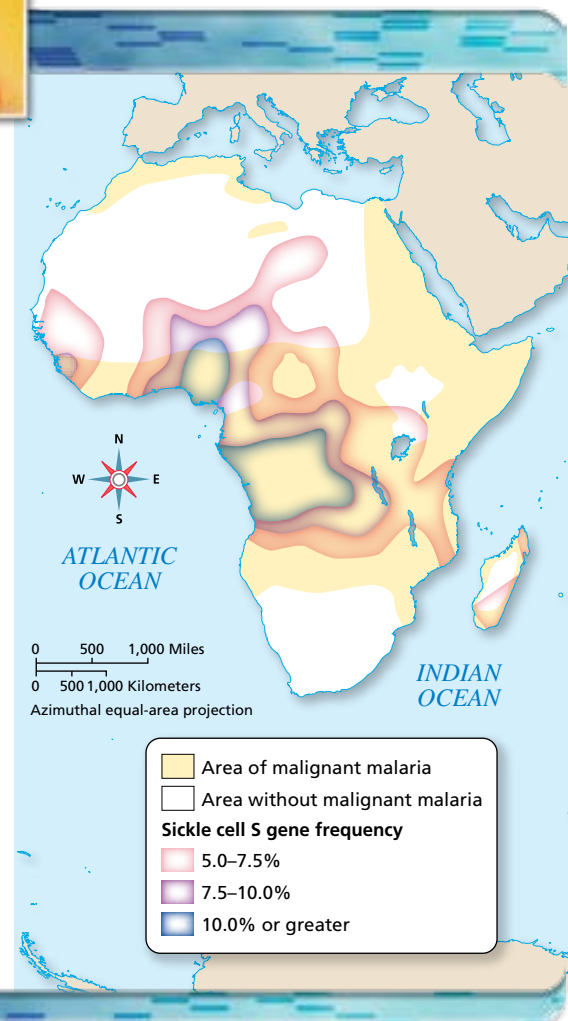
### Can a Mutant Cell Stop a Killer Disease?

The answer to this question is in human blood. Some 4,000 years ago, a genetic mutation that affects red blood cells resulted in a disease called sickle-cell anemia. The mutation has helped protect some Africans from another deadly disease—malaria.

**What facts do we have?** To have sickle-cell anemia, a person must inherit the sickle-cell trait from both parents. Normal red blood cells are smooth, flexible, and shaped like doughnuts. By contrast, sickle cells are hard, sticky, and shaped like quarter moons. Sickle cells die prematurely, resulting in a low red blood cell count, or anemia. They also have difficulty passing through small blood vessels. As a result, the cells form clots that deprive the body of blood and oxygen and cause painful episodes that can be fatal.

The red blood cells of people with the sickle-cell trait do not make good hosts for the malaria parasite transmitted by mosquitoes. Moreover, people who inherit the trait from only one parent have an extra advantage. They do not have sickle-cell anemia, yet they are resistant to malaria. Thus, the trait for sickle-cell anemia is most common in the parts of Africa with high rates of malaria.

**Draw Conclusions** When is the sickle-cell trait an advantage?





**Iron Technology** Changes in technology helped early African communities grow. One change was the spread in sub-Saharan Africa, sometime around the 500s BC, of techniques for refining iron from iron ore. Knowledge of iron working made it possible for Africans to produce tools and weapons that were far superior to those they had made before.

One of the earliest known African societies to practice iron working was the **Nok**, who lived in what is now Nigeria in West Africa. The Nok produced iron tools and weapons, which made them better farmers, hunters, and warriors. As a result, the Nok grew in power. They also became known for producing fine sculptures out of terra-cotta, a type of clay.

With the ability to make iron tools, early Africans could live in places where they could not before. For example, with iron blades, people could cut down trees to clear land for farming. With more places to live and more land for growing food, Africa's population increased.

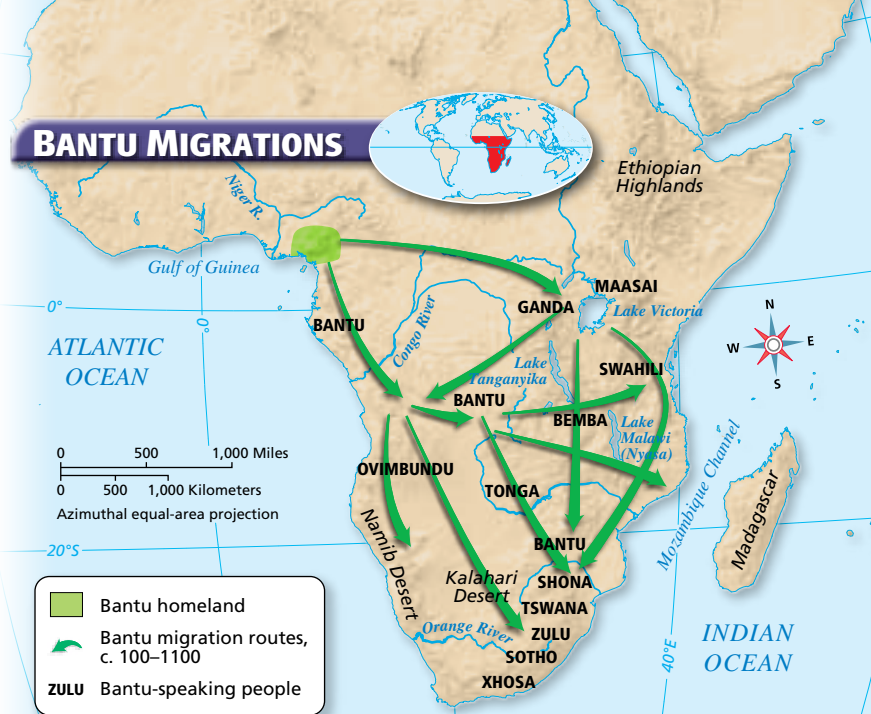
**The Bantu Migrations** Agriculture and iron working technology spread throughout Africa in part because of migration. A number of groups in Africa spoke related languages. These languages all originated from one language called Proto-Bantu, which developed in what is now Cameroon and Nigeria. Over time, hundreds of **Bantu** languages developed.

Beginning in the first century AD Bantu-speaking peoples gradually began to migrate east and south. Experts do not know why these migrations occurred. Perhaps as farming spread and West Africa's population grew, people needed more land. As they traveled, Bantu speakers spread their knowledge of farming. Later Bantu-speakers acquired the skill of iron working and helped spread this technology as well. In southern Africa, Bantu-speaking peoples soon became the dominant groups.

By the AD 900s Bantu-speaking peoples had developed complex social systems. Women farmed, while men mainly tended cattle. In fact, cattle were the most important resource in most Bantu societies. Cattle were an important food source and were used for ritual sacrifices. In addition, status in Bantu societies was often based on the size of one's cattle herds.

#### READING CHECK

**Summarize** How did African societies change with the spread of iron working?



#### GEOGRAPHY SKILLS

#### INTERPRETING MAPS

- 1. Location** Where was the Bantu homeland located?
- 2. Movement** In general, in which directions did the Bantu-speaking people migrate from their homeland?

### SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

go.hrw.com

Online Quiz

Keyword: SHL AFK HP

#### Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Recall** What are three vegetation regions found in Africa?
 **b. Explain** How did geography contribute to the development of many diverse cultures in early Africa?
 **c. Rate** In your opinion, which African region has the most favorable living conditions? Why?
- a. Define** What important societal role did **griots** fulfill in early Africa?
 **b. Summarize** What characteristics and cultural patterns did many early African societies share?
 **c. Elaborate** How did family ties shape life in early Africa?
- a. Identify** Who were the **Nok**, and why are they significant?
 **b. Identify Cause and Effect** What were the main effects of the Bantu migrations?

#### Critical Thinking

- 4. Categorize** Using your notes and a graphic organizer like the one at right, identify the common social and cultural features of early societies in Africa. Add or delete circles as necessary.



#### FOCUS ON WRITING

- 5. Description** You are going to be leading an African tour that will go through two different vegetation regions of Africa. Write a paragraph describing some of the sights people can expect to see on the tour.



# Trading States of East Africa

## BEFORE YOU READ

### MAIN IDEA

The growth of trade led to the development of wealthy kingdoms and city-states in East Africa.

### READING FOCUS

1. How did trade and religion influence the development of Aksum and Ethiopia?
2. How did trade lead to the rise of coastal city-states in East Africa?
3. What do historians know about the African kingdom of Great Zimbabwe?

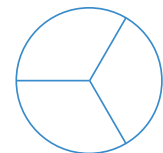
### KEY TERMS AND PEOPLE

Ezana  
Ge'ez  
Lalibela  
Swahili

### TAKING NOTES

As you read,

use a graphic organizer like the one below to take notes on Aksum and Ethiopia, the coastal city-states, and Great Zimbabwe.



## AKSUM AXES KUSH

◀ Aksum's kings often had records of their conquests inscribed on stone monuments, known as stelae.

### THE INSIDE STORY

#### Why did early Ethiopians build stone towers?

By the AD 200s the East African kingdom of Kush, which had once ruled the great civilization of ancient Egypt, had fallen into decline. Meanwhile, to the south, the early Ethiopian kingdom of Aksum was rising in power. As the two kingdoms competed for control of the region's trade, Kush's existence increasingly became a thorn in Aksum's side.

The Aksum king Ezana finally decided to eliminate Kush as a rival once and for all. Around AD 350, Aksum marched on Kush and inflicted a crushing defeat. In keeping with tradition, King Ezana had a record of the conquest inscribed on a stone monument called a stela. "And [the Aksumites] slew and took prisoners and threw them into the water and [the Aksumites] returned safe and sound, after they had terrified their enemies and had conquered through the power of the Lord of the Land." With the defeat of Kush, Aksum became the most powerful kingdom in East Africa. ■

## Aksum and Ethiopia

In East Africa, the kingdom of Aksum (AHK-soom) began to grow in power around the first century AD. Located mainly in what is now Ethiopia and Eritrea, Aksum lay south of Egypt and Kush and alongside the Red Sea. Thus, Aksum was ideally situated to control the Red Sea trade. Because of this trade, at its height Aksum was the most powerful kingdom in East Africa.

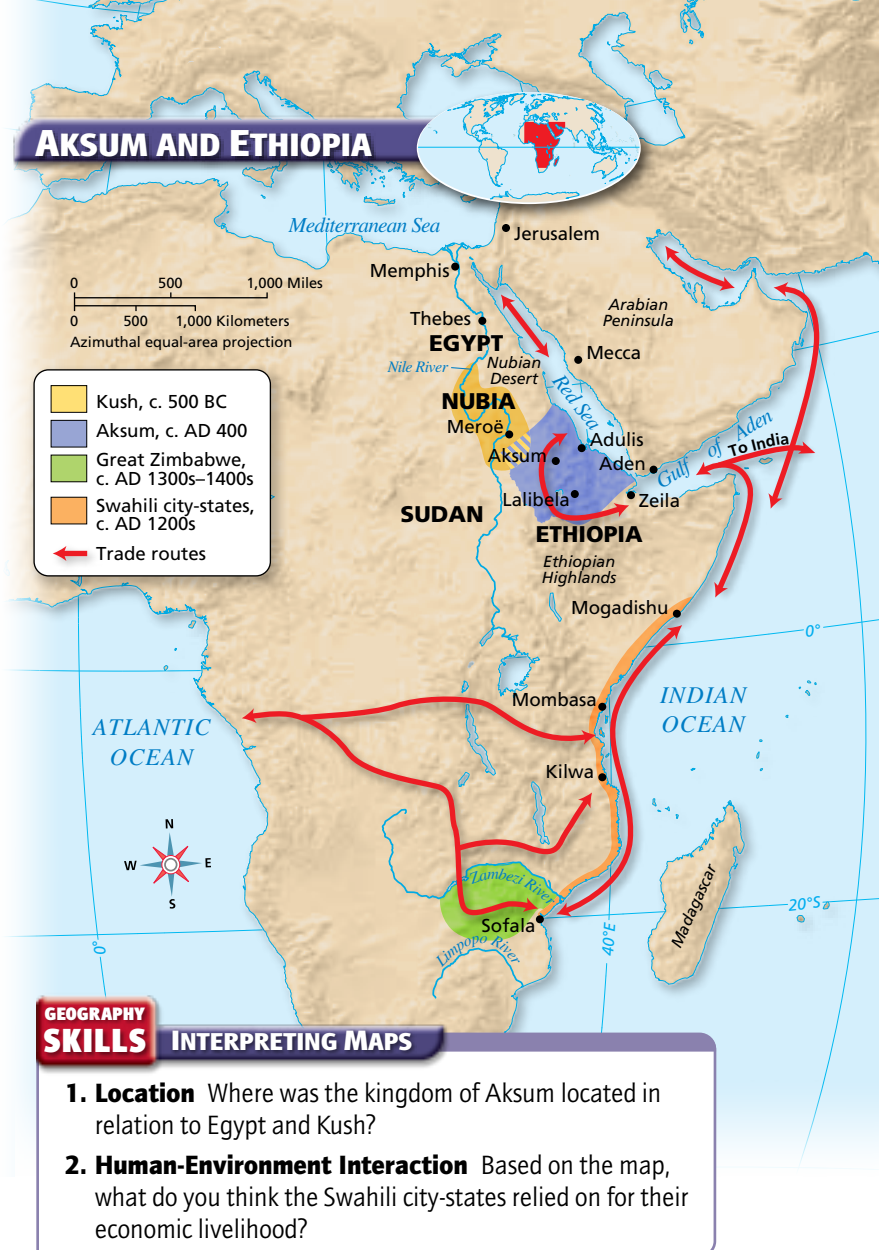
**The Rise of Aksum** The people of Aksum were descended from local African farmers as well as from people who had migrated from Arabia. By AD 100 Aksum had developed into a wealthy trading kingdom. Its two main cities were Aksum, the capital, and Adulis, a thriving port on the Red Sea.

The kingdom of Aksum extended from the Ethiopian Highlands to the coastal plain of the Red Sea. This geographic location provided several advantages. For one, the region was well suited to agriculture. For another, Aksum's proximity to the Red Sea was ideal for trade and gave the kingdom access to the Indian Ocean. Aksum's seaport at Adulis attracted traders from the African interior as well as from India, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, and the Mediterranean region. Traders from Africa's interior brought frankincense, gold dust, and ivory as well as enslaved Africans to Aksum's markets. At these markets, traders from abroad exchanged luxury goods such as cloth and spices for the goods of Africa. By about AD 300, Aksum had amassed great wealth from trade.

**Aksum at Its Height** Over time, Aksum became not only a wealthy trading kingdom but also a strong military power. The kingdom began to reach its height under King **Ezana**, whose reign began about 320. Like other kings of Aksum, Ezana's authority was mainly limited to the capital city. Outside of this city, the king collected tribute from the local rulers of other parts of Aksum but had little authority.

Under Ezana's rule, Aksum attacked and defeated the rival trading kingdom of Kush in about 350. This defeat gave Aksum control of trade in the region, and Aksum soon became the greatest power in East Africa.

**Culture of Aksum** Because of its thriving overseas trade, Aksum developed a diverse culture. The many merchants who came to Aksum from other areas brought new ideas with them as well as goods. Among the new ideas and beliefs brought to Aksum in the 300s was Christianity. King Ezana converted to Christianity and made it the official religion of Aksum. As a Christian ruler, Ezana recorded that he would "rule the people with righteousness and justice and will not oppress them, and may they preserve this Throne which I have set up for the Lord of Heaven."



Historians know about Ezana's statement because it was inscribed on a stone monument called a stela (STEE-lee). Aksum's kings often inscribed these stelae with records of important events. Several of Aksum's stelae still stand.

The stela inscriptions provide examples of **Ge'ez** (GEE-ez), the written and spoken language of Aksum. Ge'ez was one of the first written languages developed in Africa and is the basis of the written language used in Ethiopia today. Although no longer spoken, Ge'ez is still used in Ethiopian religious ceremonies.

In addition to developing a written language, Aksum was the first African kingdom south of the Sahara to mint its own coins. Because of Aksum's thriving trade, merchants found it practical to use coins.



### THE IMPACT TODAY

Christianity remains the main religion in the nation of Ethiopia today.

**The Decline of Aksum** During the 600s Aksum began to decline primarily because of the arrival of Muslim invaders. In the 600s and 700s these invaders conquered parts of East and North Africa, although Aksum itself was never conquered. As nearby areas became Muslim, Christian Aksum was isolated. In time, Muslims destroyed Adulis, Aksum's port city, and took over the Red Sea trade. Cut off from trade, Aksum lost its main source of wealth.

The people of Aksum eventually retreated inland into the mountains and settled in what is now northern Ethiopia. Although Aksum's kingdom ended, its legacy lived on, shaping Ethiopia's later history.

**Ethiopia** The name Ethiopia came to refer to the larger region around the kingdom of Aksum. By the 1100s the descendants of Aksum had established a new kingdom in Ethiopia. This kingdom began to truly develop under the rule of the Zagwe dynasty, which gained power around 1150.

The most famous of the Zagwe kings was King **Lalibela**, who ruled during the 1200s. He is known for building 11 stone Christian churches, many of which still stand. These Lalibela churches are carved out of solid rock and are impressive works of architecture. The churches show the remarkable technical knowledge and skill of Ethiopians at that time.

In addition, the Lalibela churches showed the continuing importance in Ethiopia of Christianity. Because many other peoples in East Africa were Muslim, Christianity provided a unifying identity for the Ethiopian people. Over time, Ethiopian Christianity developed its own unique characteristics, which included elements of local African customs.

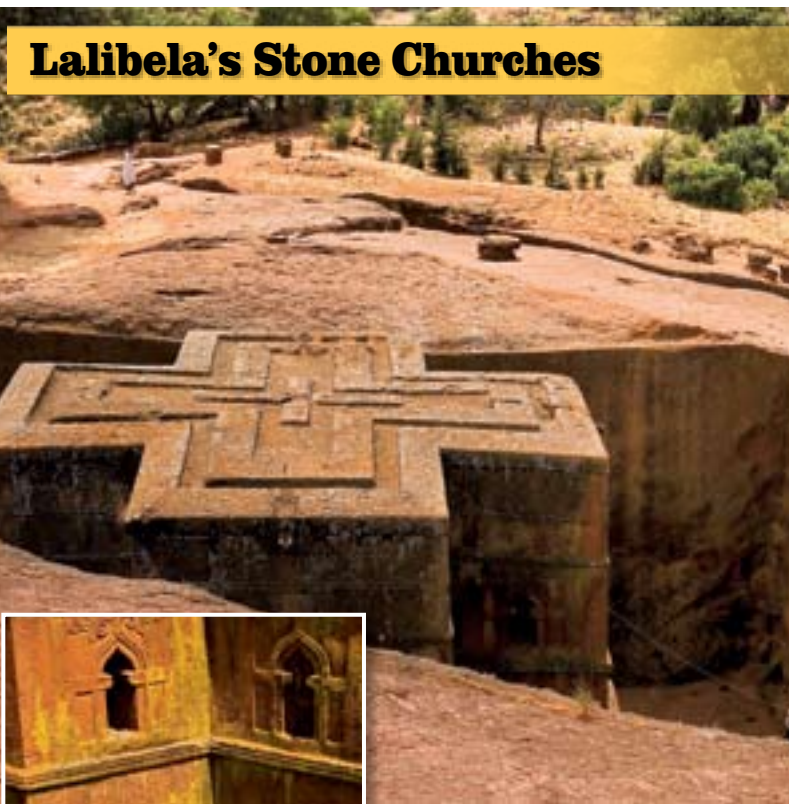
In 1270 a second dynasty of Christian kings came to rule Ethiopia. In a text called "The Glory of Kings," these kings claimed to be descendants of the Hebrew king Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. For this reason, the dynasty is also known as the Solomonid dynasty. This long-lasting dynasty continued to rule Ethiopia for 700 years until 1974.

During the first centuries of Solomonid rule, the kings engaged in various religious wars. Although Ethiopia was Christian, Jews called Beta Israel lived there as well. During the 1400s Ethiopia's Christian kings began to fight the Beta Israel and make them leave. The effort was mostly unsuccessful. Jews remained in Ethiopia but faced continued persecution.

Meanwhile, a rival Muslim kingdom was forming to the east of Ethiopia near the Horn of Africa. This region of Africa juts out into the Indian Ocean south of the Arabian Peninsula. Muslim Arab merchants had settled in this region, which became known as the kingdom of Adal by the 1300s. Muslim Adal and Christian Ethiopia soon came into conflict and fought each other for many years. In the end, however, Muslim forces never conquered Ethiopia, which remained independent.

**READING CHECK Summarize** What religions had an effect upon Ethiopia during this period?

## Lalibela's Stone Churches



In the 1200s highly skilled Ethiopian architects and artisans carved 11 Christian churches out of solid rock in Lalibela. Some of the churches are set into the ground, and stairways provide access. The images here show the Church of St. George. **What Christian symbol does the shape of the church above resemble?**

## Coastal City-States

South of Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, a number of Muslim city-states developed along the East African coast. Like the kingdom of Aksum, these coastal city-states made their wealth from overseas trade.

**Rise of City-States** Africa's East coast had drawn overseas traders from early times. The main reason was the influence of the Indian Ocean and its monsoon winds. Between November and March, the monsoons blew southwest from the coast of India toward Africa. From April to October, the monsoons reversed and blew northeast toward India and the Persian Gulf. Over time, sailors learned to take advantage of these winds to move around the Indian Ocean. A trade network soon developed that linked East Africa with Persia, Arabia, India, and even Southeast Asia. Market towns sprang up along the East African coast to take advantage of that trade.

Arab traders called this East African coastal region the land of Zanj and used the monsoon winds to visit these port towns. By AD 1100 several of these coastal market towns had grown into wealthy and thriving city-states. The main city-states were Mogadishu, Mombasa, Kilwa, and Sofala.

The coastal city-states linked merchants from overseas with traders from Africa's interior. In the city-states' markets, merchants from overseas sold luxury items such as glassware, East Asian porcelain, and silk and cotton from China and India. In exchange for these manufactured luxury items, foreign merchants obtained raw materials from Africa's interior. These goods included coconut oil, copper, leopard skins, and shells. African ivory, which was highly prized in many countries, was another valuable trade item along with gold from southern Africa.

In addition, enslaved Africans captured in the interior were exported through the coastal city-states to slave markets in Arabia, Persia, and India. These enslaved Africans were then sent to regions across Asia, many to work as domestic servants. The trade of enslaved Africans would later increase substantially after Europeans began coming to Africa. Many of the enslaved Africans in this later European slave trade would be exported to the Americas.

## PRIMARY SOURCES

### Ibn Battutah in Kilwa

An Arab named Ibn Battutah became famous for his extensive travels during the 1300s to Africa, China, and much of the Muslim world. From 1330 to 1332 Ibn Battutah sailed with a group along the eastern African coast. Below, he describes the trading city-state of Kilwa.

Then I set off by sea from the town of Mogadishu for the land of the Swahili and the town of Kilwa, . . . the principal town on the coast, the greater part of whose inhabitants are Zanj . . . Kilwa is one of the most beautiful and well-constructed towns in the world. The whole of it is elegantly built. The roofs are built with mangrove poles. There is very much rain. The people are engaged in a holy war, for their country lies beside that of pagan [non-Muslim] Zanj. The chief qualities are devotion and piety [goodness].

—Translated by G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville,  
from *The East African Coast, Select Documents*

**Skills  
FOCUS**

#### READING LIKE A HISTORIAN

- 1. Identify Supporting Details** How did the people of Kilwa differ from some of the people living around them?
- 2. Analyze Primary Sources** What do you think was Ibn Battutah's overall impression of Kilwa?

See **Skills Handbook**, p. H25

Trade along East Africa's coast reached its peak during the 1300s and 1400s. By this time, Kilwa had become the wealthiest and most powerful of the coastal city-states. Kilwa became a prosperous trading center because it was located at the southernmost point on East Africa's coast that a ship could reach in a single monsoon season. All African goods from south of Kilwa, therefore, were exported from Kilwa's market. Kilwa's power increased further in the late 1200s when it gained control of Sofala, through which much gold was exported.

**Swahili** Trade led to a blending of African, Arab, and Asian cultural influences along East Africa's coast. Over time, many Muslim Arabs and Persians settled in Africa's coastal city-states. These groups intermarried with the local African population and gradually influenced the local culture and ways of life.



# Reading like a Historian

## Great Zimbabwe's Walls Speak

**Analyzing Secondary Sources** A secondary source is a historical account produced by people who were not present at the time. For instance, this textbook is a secondary source. Often, secondary sources contain summaries, analyses, and interpretations of historical events, people, and periods.

The passage at right about Great Zimbabwe is from a secondary source. To analyze this passage, think about

- the author or source of the information.
- the facts and summaries provided.
- the objectivity of any interpretations made.

### Skills FOCUS

#### READING LIKE A HISTORIAN

- 1. Author or Source** What is the source of the passage provided above about Great Zimbabwe?
- 2. Interpretations** What interpretation does the passage provide about the purpose of the walls that surrounded the Great Enclosure at Great Zimbabwe? What support does the passage provide for this interpretation?

See **Skills Handbook**, p. H30

The writer gives one interpretation of the purpose of the walls of the Great Enclosure at Great Zimbabwe.

The enormous walls are the best-preserved testaments of Great Zimbabwe's past . . . The function of these stone walls, however, has often been misinterpreted. At first glance, these massive nonsupportive walls appear purely defensive. But scholars doubt they ever served a martial [warlike] purpose . . . The walls are thought to have been a symbolic show of authority, designed to preserve the privacy of royal families and set them apart from and above commoners . . . The remaining stone walls provide only partial evidence of the architecture's original appearance.

—from "Great Zimbabwe (11th–15th Century)," *Time Line of Art History*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art



The source of the text is shown here.

For example, local architecture featured coral stone walls and roofs of mangrove poles as well as Arab influences such as carved doors and decorative niches. In addition, local Africans, who spoke a Bantu language, adopted many Arab words. As the two languages blended, a new language called **Swahili** (swah-HEE-lee) developed. The term *Swahili* has also come to refer to the blended African-Arab culture that developed along East Africa's coast.

Because many foreign traders were Muslim, Islam gained hold along the East African coast as well. Many African rulers who governed the coastal city-states adopted Islam, and mosques appeared in cities and towns. At the same time, many Africans continued to practice local traditional religions such as animism.

**READING CHECK** **Analyze** How did trade shape life in the East African coastal city-states?

## Great Zimbabwe

The growing wealth of Africa's overseas trade stimulated developments in Africa's interior as well. There, ancestors of the Shona people established a kingdom called Great Zimbabwe (zihm-BAH-bway) around the 1100s. This kingdom was located between the Limpopo and Zambezi rivers in southeastern Africa. This area is now part of the nation of Zimbabwe, which was named for Great Zimbabwe.

Scholars think that Great Zimbabwe was part of Africa's thriving trade network because of the kingdom's location. Great Zimbabwe lay along a trade route linking Africa's interior gold mines to the city-states on the coast. In this location, Great Zimbabwe served as a middleman between gold miners and ivory hunters in southern Africa and the traders on the coast.

### READING SKILLS

#### Identifying Supporting Details

What details support the statement that trade shaped life along the East African coast?

A middleman is a person who buys something from one person and sells it to another, making a profit on the sale.

Archaeological discoveries support this role for Great Zimbabwe. For example, archaeologists have found glass beads from India and a coin minted in Kilwa at the site of Great Zimbabwe. The kingdom's rulers likely taxed the trade goods that passed through their territory. Through this control of trade, Great Zimbabwe rose to prosperity between 1200 and 1400.

**The Great Enclosure** The Shona word *zimbabwe* means “stone houses,” and today all that remains of Great Zimbabwe are mainly stone ruins. The largest and most impressive of these ruins is a structure called the Great Enclosure. This structure, which is shown in the image on the left, includes a thick, circular, outer stone wall about 35 feet high. An inner wall runs along part of this outer wall and forms a narrow passage about 180 feet long. The stones used to build the walls were so well fitted together that no mortar was needed in the construction.

Inside the walls of the Great Enclosure is a 33-foot-high stone tower. In addition, archaeologists have discovered soapstone bird figurines within the enclosure. Experts are not certain of the purpose of the Great Enclosure, but think it may have been built to show the rulers' power or as an astronomical observatory.

**The Mutapa Empire** At its height, Great Zimbabwe may have had as many as 18,000 people. Yet, sometime during the 1400s they abandoned the area. Scholars are not certain exactly why this occurred. Because the people of Great Zimbabwe raised cattle, one plausible reason is that the land became overgrazed. The soil may have lost its fertility as well leading to poor harvests. Whatever the reason, by the time the first Europeans saw the site in the 1500s, Great Zimbabwe was already in ruins.

With Great Zimbabwe's abandonment, power in the region shifted to the Mutapa Empire. Based on oral tradition, this empire was founded by a former resident of Great Zimbabwe named Mutota. The oral tradition states that Mutota had gone north, where he founded a new kingdom. In the 1400s he gained control of much of the surrounding territory and built an empire. As a result, Mutota became known as *Mwene Mutapa*, meaning “master pillager” or “conqueror.” His successors took the same title, from which the empire gained its name.

By 1500 the Mutapa Empire controlled much of what is now Zimbabwe. The empire grew wealthy by exporting gold and controlling trade through its territory. Eventually, though, Europeans would take control of the empire.

**READING CHECK Find the Main Idea** How do scholars think Great Zimbabwe participated in trade?

#### ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

**plausible** believ-  
able, reasonable



The bird on the flag of present-day Zimbabwe symbolizes the soapstone birds found at Great Zimbabwe.

## SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT

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Online Quiz

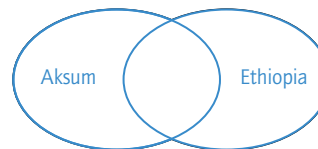
Keyword: SHL AFK HP

### Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- Identify** Who was King Ezana, and how did he contribute to the history of Aksum?
  - Identify Cause and Effect** How did the spread of Islam contribute to the decline of Aksum?
  - Elaborate** How did the legacy of Aksum shape later Ethiopian society?
- Recall** What were four of the trading city-states that arose along the East African coast?
  - Explain** How was the development of Swahili an example of cultural blending?
  - Evaluate** Do you think that the spread of Islam to East Africa affected Aksum or the coastal city-states more? Provide reasons to support your opinion.
- Describe** What remains of Great Zimbabwe?
  - Summarize** What role do scholars think that Great Zimbabwe played in the East Africa trading network?

### Critical Thinking

- Compare and Contrast** Using your notes and a graphic organizer like the one below, compare and contrast the kingdom of Aksum with the later kingdom of Ethiopia.



### FOCUS ON WRITING

- Narration** You are a visitor to East Africa's coastal city-state of Kilwa at its height. Write a short journal entry in which you describe your tour of the city-state. Include information about the source of the city's wealth, some of the activities that are taking place there, and the culture there.



# Focus on Themes

## Economic Systems

Early societies in Africa, as in much of the world, bartered instead of using money to trade. Barter is the direct trade of goods or services for other goods or services without the use of money. In early West Africa, for example, merchants often traded gold for salt. As trade increased in Africa, people began to use items such as gold dust and cowrie shells as money. Rulers began to regulate and tax trade as well. Much trade remained untaxed and informal, though, as people bartered for what they needed to live.

### BARTER AND ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIES THEN

In early West Africa, merchants often used a process called silent barter to trade gold and salt, both of which were highly valuable. In silent barter, people exchange goods without contacting each other directly. This method ensured that trade took place peacefully and kept the exact location of the gold mines a secret.

In the silent barter process, salt traders went to a specified location near the gold mines and left their salt. The traders then beat a drum to tell the gold miners that trading had begun. Afterward, the salt traders moved back several miles.

Next, the gold miners arrived and left what they considered a fair amount of gold in exchange for the salt. Then the gold miners also moved back several miles so that the salt traders could return. If the salt traders were happy with the amount of gold, they beat the drum again and left with the gold. The gold miners then returned and picked up their salt. Trading continued until both sides were happy with the result.



▲ **NOW** A street vendor sells bananas in Harare, Zimbabwe, in southern Africa.

### BARTER AND ALTERNATIVE ECONOMIES NOW

Today all nations use money as currency and have formal economies. In formal economies, the state regulates aspects of the economy and taxes goods and trade. In addition, people work for wages.

Informal, or alternative, economic activity still takes place, however. For example, in parts of Africa, much of the economic activity takes place outside of the control of the state. In other words, this economic activity is not regulated, reported, or taxed. In small villages, people still use barter to exchange crafts and surplus crops. People may work for food or other goods instead of for wages. In informal marketplaces, people sell and trade goods that are not reported or taxed. While most governments try to stop such activity, it enables poorer and less educated people to survive.

#### Skills Focus

#### UNDERSTANDING THEMES

- 1. Find the Main Idea** What role did barter play in early African societies?
- 2. Contrast** How does a formal economy differ from an informal, or alternative, economy?
- 3. Draw Conclusions** Why do you think that governments try to stop alternative economic activity?

◀ **THEN** At left are African cowrie shells and a box and spoon for storing and measuring gold dust.

# Kingdoms of West Africa

## BEFORE YOU READ

### MAIN IDEA

The expansion of trade across the Sahara led to the development of great empires and other states in West Africa.

### READING FOCUS

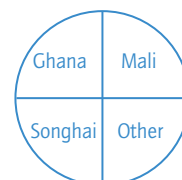
1. How did trade contribute to the rise of Ghana?
2. How did strong rulers build the empire of Mali?
3. What were the greatest achievements of the Songhai Empire?
4. What other states developed in West Africa?

### KEY PEOPLE

Sundiata  
Mansa Musa  
Sunni Ali  
Askia Muhammad

### TAKING NOTES

As you read, use a graphic organizer like this one to take notes on early West Africa.



## The Land of GOLD

### THE INSIDE STORY

**Was there really a kingdom of gold?** In the 1700s stories began to circulate around Europe about a fabulous kingdom of gold in West Africa. One visitor noted that the king wore so much heavy gold jewelry on one hand that he had to support that hand on the head of a small boy. The kingdom thus described was ruled by the Asante people, who did indeed have huge amounts of gold.

The Asante were not the first West African kingdom to be known for their golden treasures, however. Centuries earlier, the rulers of Ghana surrounded themselves with gold as a sign of their power. A Muslim visitor to Ghana at that time described the gold displayed by the king's attendants: golden swords and shields, gold braided into people's hair, even gold and silver collars for the king's dogs. ■

### Empire of Ghana

As in the other kingdoms you have studied, trade was vital to the societies of West Africa. The region of West Africa produced valuable resources—most notably gold—that brought high prices. By the 800s, the rulers of Ghana had used the wealth from these products to create a huge, powerful empire.



▲ The rulers of Ghana gained great wealth by controlling the vast amounts of gold traded in their empire. The West African woman above is wearing gold jewelry and gold dust on her face.



**The Rise of Ghana** Although Ghana had many resources, its location delayed its development as a trading empire. Unlike the kingdoms of East Africa, Ghana had no easy access to the sea. In addition, a major obstacle blocked overland routes to potential trade partners—the Sahara. The largest desert in the world, the Sahara blocked travel between Ghana and other parts of Africa for centuries.

It was not until the first few centuries AD that North African traders learned how to cross the Sahara. Eventually, these traders began to travel in large caravans with camels, which were able to carry supplies over long distances. Because camels did not need much water, they could survive the trip across the harsh desert.

Once traders began to cross the Sahara, Ghana became a key player in African trade. Berber traders from the north went to Ghana in search of gold, for which they traded food, manufactured goods, and copper. The Berber traders also brought salt, which was produced in the desert of what is now Morocco. The people of Ghana then traded this salt to people to the south, where salt was scarce.

**A Trading Empire** By about AD 800, the kingdom of Ghana controlled nearly all trade of salt and gold in sub-Saharan Africa. Because Ghana's capital, Koumbi-Saleh, was located between Ghana's gold mines and the desert trade routes, it was a preferred trading place.

## HISTORY and Economics

### Scarcity, Supply, and Demand

Scarcity, the lack of a particular resource, exists because the world's resources are limited. The scarcity of resources affects everyone, but not always in the same way. For example, scarcity benefits those who can supply a desired limited resource, if those who demand the resource can pay the price.

#### Scarcity, Supply, and Demand in History

Ghana was a kingdom rich in gold—so rich that even the ruler's dogs wore gold-plated collars. This abundance of wealth lured traders from North Africa, where gold was scarce but in high demand. In exchange for the gold, the North Africans offered salt, which the people of West Africa needed in their diets to survive.

Ghana's kings gained wealth and power from the gold-salt trade. Major trade routes ran through the kingdom of Ghana, which enabled Ghana's kings to control and collect taxes on the trade. In addition, all of Ghana's gold was the kings' property. They kept all gold nuggets for themselves but allowed gold dust to be traded. In this way, the kings controlled the supply of gold and its price.

#### SUPPLY AND DEMAND

supply > demand = price falls

demand > supply = price rises

supply = amount available  
demand = amount people want or need

#### Scarcity, Supply, and Demand Today

Consider how scarcity affects the world today. What countries benefit from supplying and controlling a limited resource just as Ghana did in the past? The world's oil-rich countries are a good example. These countries have greatly increased their wealth and global influence over the past 100 years by filling the demand for a single valuable resource that cannot be found in other places. As you study world history, look for ways that scarcity of resources affects supply and demand.

**Explain** How are some people able to benefit economically from scarcity?

► Raw salt is often formed into slabs for ease of transport. Here, a worker in a market in Mopti, Mali, in West Africa stacks slabs of salt to sell.



Ghana's kings built great wealth by taxing the goods that were brought to their empire's markets. The majority of these taxes were charged on salt. The kings charged a fee for each load of salt brought into Ghana from the north and a larger fee for each load exported to the south. The kings did not tax gold in the same way, perhaps fearing that taxes would discourage traders from buying the gold at all.

To ensure that gold prices stayed high and trade remained profitable, Ghana's kings forbade anyone but them from owning gold nuggets. Other people could own only gold dust. The kings enforced this law by keeping the location of gold mines a strictly guarded secret. By keeping the supply of gold scarce, the kings kept the market from being flooded.

With money from trade and taxes, the kings of Ghana could afford a lavish lifestyle. The luxury that surrounded the kings was described by a Muslim writer who visited Ghana:

#### HISTORY'S VOICES

“He sits in a pavilion around which stand ten pages holding shields and gold-mounted swords: and on his right hand are the sons of the princes of the empire, splendidly clad and with gold plaited into their hair.”

—al Bakri, *The Book of Routes and Kingdoms*, c. 1067

To protect their wealth, Ghana's kings worked to keep the trade routes free from bandits. Ghana did not have a permanent army, but the king could raise a large force when needed. Ghana's kings used this power to conquer other peoples in the area. Captives were sold as slaves to Muslim traders.

**Ghana's Decline** By the mid-1000s, the empire of Ghana was rich and powerful. When the king tried to expand the empire to the north, however, Ghana came into conflict with the Almoravids, a Muslim Berber kingdom. This conflict led to a long war.

In 1076 the Almoravids captured Koumbi-Saleh, Ghana's capital. Although Almoravid control of the city did not last long, it left the empire of Ghana weakened. When people in part of the empire later rebelled, Ghana's king was unable to stop them. As Ghana fell into decline, a new empire rose to take its place.

#### READING CHECK

**Summarize** How did the kings of Ghana become wealthy?



## Mali Empire

For about 150 years after Ghana's decline, no one kingdom controlled trans-Saharan trade. Then in the 1230s, a new empire, Mali, rose to power. Built on the same territory Ghana had ruled, Mali expanded to the Atlantic Ocean and became a wealthy and sophisticated empire.

**Rise of Mali** The founders of Mali, the Malinke people, had been active in Ghana's gold trade. Around 1230 the Malinke grew frustrated with the policies of neighboring peoples and rose up to conquer them. As a result, Mali became the leading power in West Africa.

The leader of Mali's rise to power was a king named **Sundiata** (soohn-JAHT-ah). After the conquest, Sundiata ruled for 25 years. The story of his reign and accomplishments is told in a great epic, also called *Sundiata*.



**Mansa Musa** Mali reached its height in the 1300s under the reign of a *mansa*, or king, named Musa. A relative of Sundiata, **Mansa Musa** came to power in 1307. During his reign, Mali's territory expanded, and its population may have reached as many as 40 million.

Also during Mansa Musa's reign, Mali grew wealthier than ever before. Much of this wealth came from taxation of the gold-salt trade. Like Ghana, Mali kept order along the Saharan trade routes by using a large army. This army also kept life in Mali relatively peaceful.

Like many of Mali's rulers after Sundiata, Mansa Musa was a devout Muslim. Islam had actually been introduced into West Africa by Muslim traders in Ghana, but it had never taken hold in the earlier empire. In Mali, however, the situation was different. Islam became a powerful influence there, especially among the ruling class.

In 1324 Mansa Musa set out on a hajj, or pilgrimage, to Mecca. He took along a huge entourage—more than 60,000 people. As they traveled, the pilgrims impressed the people

they met with their lavish clothing and generous gifts. According to one Cairo official, the visitors gave away so much gold that the metal's value was severely reduced:

#### HISTORY'S VOICES

“There was no person, officer of the [Cairo] court or holder of any office of the [Cairo] sultanate who did not receive a sum of gold from him . . . So much gold was current in Cairo that it ruined the value of money.”

—Ibn Fadl Allah al-Omari,  
from *Sight-Seeing Journeys*, c. 1300s

In addition to fulfilling Mansa Musa's religious obligation, the trip to Mecca led to great changes in Mali. When he returned to his empire, Mansa Musa brought along artists and architects who designed beautiful mosques, some of which still stand. He also built schools and libraries where people could study the Qur'an and other Islamic writings. Many of these schools were located in the city of Timbuktu, which became West Africa's chief center of education, religion, and culture.

#### READING SKILLS

##### Identifying Supporting Details

What details support the statement that Mansa Musa was one of Mali's greatest rulers?

 Interactive

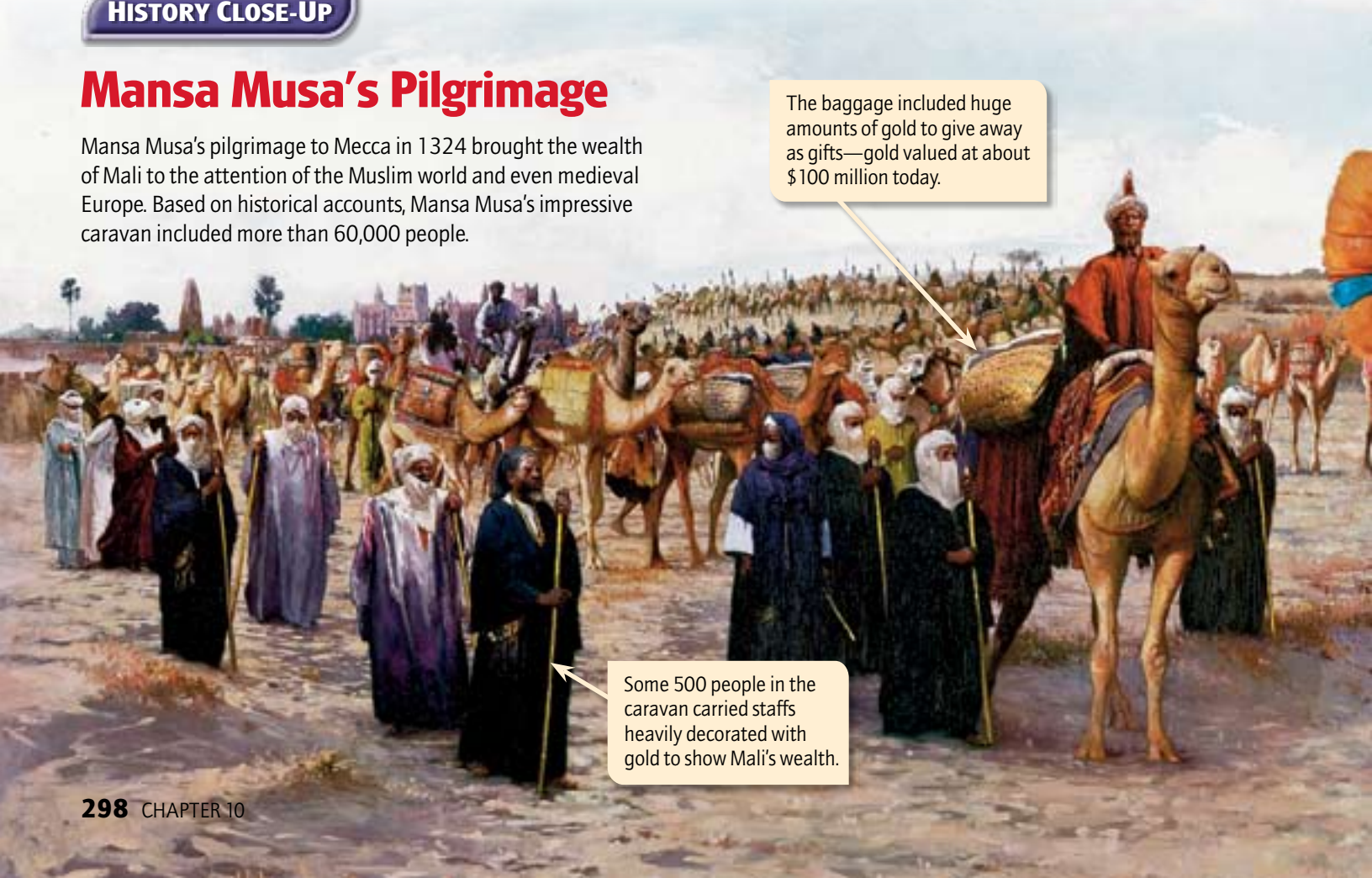
#### HISTORY CLOSE-UP

## Mansa Musa's Pilgrimage

Mansa Musa's pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324 brought the wealth of Mali to the attention of the Muslim world and even medieval Europe. Based on historical accounts, Mansa Musa's impressive caravan included more than 60,000 people.

The baggage included huge amounts of gold to give away as gifts—gold valued at about \$100 million today.

Some 500 people in the caravan carried staffs heavily decorated with gold to show Mali's wealth.





Mansa Musa's hajj also had effects outside of Africa. For example, it brought Mali to the attention of people in Europe, and Mali began to appear on European maps for the first time. Within a century, Europeans began to search West Africa for the source of Mali's riches.

**The Decline of Mali** The rulers who followed Mansa Musa were not as strong as he had been. A series of weak *mansas* left Mali's government in shambles in the 1300s. Without a strong authority in control, several peoples broke away from the empire and set up independent kingdoms. At the same time, peoples from outside of Mali invaded. Among these invaders were the Tuareg of North Africa. In 1433 the Tuareg captured Timbuktu, a blow from which Mali never recovered. The empire slowly slipped into decline.

**READING CHECK Analyze** What effects did Mansa Musa's travels have in Mali and in Europe?

## Empire of Songhai

Songhai had existed as a small kingdom for centuries, paying tribute to the leaders of Ghana and Mali. Located in the eastern part of what had been Mali, Songhai grew wealthy trading goods along the Niger River. During this trade, the people of Songhai came into contact with Muslim traders who had settled in the city of Gao. As a result of this contact, Islam was introduced into Songhai, where it soon became a major influence on culture.

**The Rise of Songhai** By the 1460s the kingdom of Songhai had become strong and wealthy enough to begin to rival the empire of Mali. Songhai's rise took place largely under the leadership of a military leader, or *sunni*, named **Sunni Ali**. Ali's first act as leader was to take Timbuktu from the Tuareg. He then led a number of campaigns against neighboring peoples to build an empire.

Mansa Musa rode near the front. During his journey, he gained fame for his generosity.



### FACES OF HISTORY

#### Mansa Musa

unknown–1332?

Mansa Musa was a descendant of Sundiata, the first emperor to rule a united Mali. Mansa Musa became emperor of Mali in 1307 and earned a reputation as an able administrator. He increased the territory of Mali and was a patron of education and the arts.

**Summarize** Why is Mansa Musa remembered as a great ruler?

Called "ships of the desert," camels could go for long periods without water and could withstand heat better than horses and donkeys.

**Skills Focus**

### INTERPRETING VISUALS

**Draw Conclusions** During his pilgrimage, Mansa Musa had to cross part of the Sahara. How do you think he prepared for this part of his journey?

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**COULD YOU HAVE SURVIVED?**

Go online for a closer look at survival and this event.

Keyword: SHL AFK



## TRADING EMPIRES OF WEST AFRICA



EMPIRE	KEY FACTS
<b>GHANA</b> (800s–1070s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location: Near Niger and Senegal rivers</li> <li>• Key cities: Koumbi Saleh (capital)</li> <li>• Trade: Controlled gold-salt trade routes</li> <li>• Beliefs: Local beliefs; some Muslim influences</li> </ul>
<b>MALI</b> (1230s–1430s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location: Along upper Niger River</li> <li>• Key Cities: Niani (capital), Timbuktu</li> <li>• Key Rulers: Sundiata; Mansa Musa</li> <li>• Trade: Controlled gold-salt trade routes</li> <li>• Beliefs: Islam; local beliefs</li> </ul>
<b>SONGHAI</b> (1460s–1591)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location: Near Niger River</li> <li>• Key Cities: Gao (capital), Timbuktu</li> <li>• Key Rulers: Sunni Ali; Askia Muhammad</li> <li>• Trade: Trans-Saharan trade</li> <li>• Beliefs: Islam; local beliefs</li> </ul>

To secure his control of the trans-Saharan trade, Askia Muhammad extended Songhai's borders north into the desert, the home of the Tuareg. He did not want raiders to interfere with traveling merchants. He also reformed Songhai's government to help keep order in the empire. For example, while he ruled the eastern part of the empire personally, he appointed an official called the *kurmina fari* to manage the western part. He also built offices in the capital city of Gao to oversee trade, agriculture, and the military.

Eventually, however, Askia Muhammad was overthrown by his son, who became king. He and the later kings did not manage the empire as well as Askia Muhammad had, and in 1591 the empire was conquered by Morocco.

### READING CHECK

**Describe** What kind of government did Askia Muhammad create in Songhai?

Ali's military success was due to his army of skilled cavalry and navy of war canoes. According to oral tradition, his forces never lost a battle. As he conquered new territories, Sunni Ali replaced local leaders with his own loyal followers. This made revolts among conquered peoples, which had contributed to the downfall of Ghana and Mali, less likely.

**Askia Muhammad** Songhai reached its cultural height under **Askia Muhammad**, whose reign is considered a golden age. During the 35 years of his rule, Askia Muhammad expanded Songhai and strengthened its government.

Askia Muhammad was Songhai's first Muslim ruler as well. Islam had been introduced into Songhai earlier, but Sunni Ali had never become a Muslim. To show his commitment to Islam, Askia Muhammad decided to make a grand pilgrimage to Mecca. Like Mansa Musa before him, he traveled through Egypt, where he gained the support of the Muslim rulers.

During Askia Muhammad's pilgrimage, he made contact with traders from North Africa. As a result, the trans-Saharan trade that had slowed after the fall of Mali resumed once again. This increased commerce made Songhai a very wealthy kingdom. Askia Muhammad used his new wealth to once again make Timbuktu a center of culture and Islamic scholarship.

## Other West African States

Although the trading empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai were the largest and wealthiest societies in West Africa, they were not the only ones. If you look at the map at the beginning of this chapter, you will see that other societies developed to the east and south of those empires. Though these other societies did not rival the size or power of the trading kingdoms, they made significant advances of their own.

**Hausa City-States** To the east of Songhai lived a people called the Hausa. The Hausa built a society based on independent city-states, which gained regional power between 1000 and 1200. Each city-state included a group of villages surrounded by wooden walls and extensive fields. These city-states never united into an empire, though they cooperated and traded with each other.

The economy of the Hausa city-states was based on farming, manufacturing, and trade. Much of the labor for farming was performed by enslaved people. Slave labor was also used to build new cities, and enslaved people became one of the Hausa's exports. Other important exports included cloth and leather goods. The Hausa were known as skilled weavers and dyers, and cotton cloth dyed in a dark blue color by Hausa artisans was in high demand throughout much of West Africa.

### ACADEMIC VOCABULARY

**commerce** trade, or the exchange of goods or services

**Yoruba Kingdoms** Another complex society developed to the south of Songhai among the Yoruba. The Yoruba were actually several peoples who lived in the same area and spoke related languages. Over time, the Yoruba established a number of strong kingdoms. The most powerful of these kingdoms were Ife and Oyo. Ife reached its height around the 1100s to 1400s, while Oyo rose in power around the 1400s to 1600s and eventually surpassed Ife.

The people of the Yoruba kingdoms were widely admired for their artistic skill. Yoruba artists produced realistic sculptures out of terra-cotta, bronze, brass, and copper. Many of these sculptures depict Yoruba leaders, or *onis*. The Yoruba imported the materials for these statues, especially copper, from Sahara traders, who also brought salt to the region. In return, the Yoruba sent food and ivory north.

**Kingdom of Benin** Southwest of the Yoruba kingdoms was the powerful kingdom of Benin. Located deep in the forests of the Niger delta, Benin grew into a powerful state perhaps as early as the 1000s. At the heart of the kingdom lay the capital city, also called Benin. Several miles wide, this city featured large houses and wide streets that impressed visitors.

In the mid-1400s, an ambitious *oba*, or ruler, named Ewuare came to power in Benin. Wanting to expand his kingdom, Ewuare built a powerful army and went to war. By his death, the kingdom of Benin stretched from the Niger River west into what is now central Nigeria.

Around this period, the people of Benin came into contact with Europeans. Portuguese sailors arrived in the late 1400s. Having been at war for several decades, the people of Benin had many captives whom they sold to the Portuguese as slaves. Trade between Benin and Portugal continued, though trade in slaves ceased for several centuries. Instead, Benin traded pepper, ivory, and cotton for gold.

Like the Yoruba, the people of Benin were known for their arts. Statues of bronze, brass, and copper were created to honor notable leaders, and copper plaques illustrated with scenes from Benin's history were displayed in cities. Brought home by the Portuguese, art from Benin also became popular in Europe.

**READING CHECK** **Identify** What was one result of contact between Benin and Portugal?



### Yoruba Art

Yoruba artists produced beautiful sculptures out of brass and other materials. This brass head of a king was made in Ife during the 1100s to 1200s.

Ife brass sculpture, c. 1100s–1200s, Ancient Art & Architecture/DanitaDelimont.com

## SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT

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Online Quiz

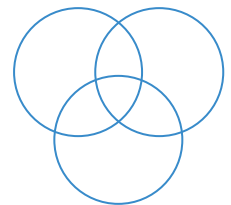
Keyword: SHL AFK HP

### Reviewing Ideas, Terms, and People

- a. Recall** What were the two major trade goods that made Ghana rich? From where did these two trade goods come?
 **b. Explain** Why did Ghana's rulers not want everyone to own gold?
- a. Identify** Who was Sundiata?
 **b. Identify Cause and Effect** How did Mansa Musa's pilgrimage to Mecca affect the empire of Mali?
 **c. Elaborate** How did Muslim influences help turn Mali into a center of learning?
- a. Recall** What did Sunni Ali accomplish as ruler?
 **b. Analyze** How did Askia Muhammad's pilgrimage to Mecca contribute to the power of the Songhai Empire?
 **c. Evaluate** What do you think was Askia Muhammad's greatest accomplishment as a ruler?
- a. Recall** What were three smaller societies located in early West Africa?
 **b. Compare** What was one similarity between the Yoruba kingdoms and the kingdom of Benin?

### Critical Thinking

- Compare and Contrast** Using your notes and a graphic organizer like the one at right, compare and contrast the West African empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai.



### FOCUS ON WRITING

- Persuasion** Choose the West African ruler covered in this section who you think accomplished the most or was the greatest ruler. Write one paragraph in which you identify your choice and provide reasons to persuade others to agree with it.



# The Influence of Trade on African Culture

**Historical Context** The documents in this investigation describe how trade contributed to cultural blending in early and medieval Africa.

**Task** Study the documents and answer the questions that follow. Then, using evidence from these documents and from the chapter, write an essay explaining how trade contributed to cultural blending in early and medieval Africa.

## DOCUMENT 1

### Leo Africanus: City of Timbuktu

A Muslim traveler and scholar named Leo Africanus visited northern and western Africa in the early 1500s. In the book about his travels, titled the *History and Description of Africa*, Leo Africanus describes the city of Timbuktu, at the time part of the Songhai Empire.

The shops of the artisans, the merchants, and especially weavers of cotton cloth are very numerous. Fabrics are also imported from Europe to Timbuktu, borne by Berber merchants.

The women of the city maintain the custom of veiling their faces, except for the slaves . . . There are in Timbuktu numerous judges, teachers and priests, all properly appointed by the king. He greatly honors learning. Many hand-written books imported from Barbary [North Africa] are also sold. There is more profit made from this commerce [trade] than from all other merchandise.

Instead of coined money, pure gold nuggets are used; and for small purchases, cowrie shells which have been carried from Persia.

## DOCUMENT 2

### Kani Kombole Mosque

Muslims conquered parts of North Africa in the 700s, and over time North African traders helped spread Islam to West Africa. By the 1300s, mosques had become a common feature in many West African towns. Early West African mosques combined Muslim styles with West African building techniques, such as the use of dried mud reinforced with wooden poles. The mosque shown here is located in Kani Kombole, a Dogon village in what is now Mali. In addition to general West African characteristics, this mosque has specific Dogon characteristics such as niches along the outer wall.



## DOCUMENT 3

### Ibn Battutah: Travels in Mali

Ibn Battutah, a famous Muslim traveler, visited the Mali Empire in 1352. In the following passage from his book, *Travels in Asia and Africa*, Battutah describes some traditional customs and Muslim practices of the people of the Mali Empire.

On feast-days . . . the poets come in. Each of them is inside a figure resembling a thrush [a type of bird], made of feathers, and provided with a wooden head with a red beak, to look like a thrush's head. They stand in front of the sultan [king] . . . and recite their poems . . . I was told that this practice is a very old custom amongst them, prior to the introduction of Islam, and that they have kept it up . . .

They are careful to observe the hours of prayer . . .

On Fridays, if a man does not go early to the mosque, he cannot find a corner to pray in, on account of the crowd . . . Their prayer-mats are made of the leaves of a tree resembling a date-palm, but without fruit.

Another of their good qualities is their . . . zeal for learning the Koran by heart. They put their children in chains if they show any backwardness in memorizing it, and they are not set free until they have it by heart.

## DOCUMENT 4

### Swahili Culture

In the following passage, writer Robert Caputo describes how trade and cultural blending led to the development of the Swahili culture. The passage is from the article "Swahili Coast," which appeared in *National Geographic* magazine in October 2001.

A string of ports that stretched along the East African coast from Mogadishu to present-day Mozambique . . . evolved into powerful city-states as they grew rich from Indian Ocean trade . . . Arabian sailors arriving in Africa found good harbors, a sea full of fish, fertile land, and opportunities for trade. Many of the Arabian sailors stayed to marry local women, and the melding [blending] is evident in the faces of the people . . . Indeed, the interplay of African and Arabian languages and customs—the mingling of blood and ideas that permeated [spread throughout] every aspect of life created an urban and mercantile [trade-based] culture . . . that is unique to this coast. Even its name, Swahili, is an adaptation of the Arabic word for coast, *sawahil* . . .

Professor [Abdul] Sheriff in Zanzibar . . . said . . . "Swahili history is about adaptation and incorporation. We have always been middlemen—between the land and the sea, the producers and the buyers, the African and the Arabian. That is not a concern; it is our strength."

## Skills FOCUS

## READING LIKE A HISTORIAN

### DOCUMENT 1

- a. Identify** What foreign goods and influences did Leo Africanus note in Timbuktu?
- b. Draw Conclusions** How do you think that foreign trade goods contributed to cultural blending in Timbuktu?

### DOCUMENT 2

- a. Describe** How did trade influence religion and architecture in early West Africa?
- b. Explain** How does the architecture of the West African mosque in the photograph illustrate cultural blending?

### DOCUMENT 3

- a. Recall** What traditional African custom did the people of Mali maintain despite their adoption of Islam?
- b. Analyze** How did the people of the Mali Empire adapt Islam to their own culture and environment?

### DOCUMENT 4

- a. Identify** What two cultures blended together to form the Swahili culture and language?
- b. Summarize** Based on the passage, how do the Swahili people view the ways in which their culture has evolved?

## DOCUMENT-BASED ESSAY QUESTION

Several strong trading kingdoms and empires developed in early and medieval Africa. Using the documents above and information from the chapter, form a thesis about how trade contributed to cultural blending in these kingdoms and empires. Then write an essay providing details to support your thesis.

See **Skills Handbook**, p. H48



## VISUAL STUDY GUIDE

## African Environments

Environment	Description
Desert	Arid wastelands; Sahara
Dry woodland	Wooded areas
Mediterranean	Mild, fertile areas; northern and southern coastal tips
Sahel	Semiarid land south of the Sahara
Savanna	Grasslands with scattered trees; dry and wet seasons; support farming; most populated region
Tropical rain forest	Hot, humid, and dense forests; high rainfall year-round

## African Traditions

Characteristic	Description
Family ties	Extended families; clans; age-sets
Religions	Animism; ancestor worship
Oral traditions	Griots; history, stories, songs, poems, proverbs
Arts	Masks, dance, music

## East African Civilizations

Society or State	Date	Key Rulers/City-States	Key Facts
Aksum	100s–500s (height)	King Ezana	Northeast trading kingdom; Christian
Early Ethiopia	1100s (founded)	King Lalibela	Northeast kingdom; Christian
Coastal trading city-states	1100s–1400s	Kilwa, Mogadishu, Mombasa, Sofala	Swahili; Arab and Muslim influence
Great Zimbabwe	1100s–1400s	—	Southeast inland trading kingdom

## West African Civilizations

Society or State	Date	Key Rulers/City-States	Key Facts
Ghana Empire	800s–1070s	—	Gold-salt trade
Mali Empire	1230s–1430s	Sundiata, Mansa Musa	Gold-salt trade; Muslim
Songhai Empire	1460s–1591	Sunni Ali, Askia Muhammad	Trans-Saharan trade; Muslim
Benin Kingdom	1000s–1800s	—	Trade; bronze artwork

## Review Key Terms and People

Identify the term or person from the chapter that best fits each of the following descriptions.

- Semiarid region in Africa just south of the Sahara that separates the desert from wetter areas
- West African storytellers
- One of the earliest African cultures to practice iron working
- Aksum king who conquered Kush
- The written language developed in Aksum
- Ethiopian king who built 11 Christian churches
- East African language and culture that blends African and Arab influences
- Mali ruler who made a famous hajj to Mecca
- First Muslim ruler of Songhai
- Trade or the exchange of goods



## Comprehension and Critical Thinking

### SECTION 1 (pp. 283–287)

- 11. a. Recall** What are three different environments found in Africa?  
**b. Summarize** What social structures and cultural traditions did many early African societies have in common?  
**c. Evaluate** In your opinion, were the effects of the Bantu migrations positive, negative, or both? Explain your answer.

### SECTION 2 (pp. 288–293)

- 12. a. Define** What is Swahili, and in what area of Africa did it develop?  
**b. Compare and Contrast** What did the kingdom of Aksum have in common with the coastal city-states of East Africa? How did Aksum differ from the coastal city-states?  
**c. Elaborate** How did its location benefit the kingdom of Great Zimbabwe?

### SECTION 3 (pp. 295–301)

- 13. a. Identify Main Ideas** What did the empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai rely on for their economic prosperity?  
**b. Compare** What did Mansa Musa and Askia Muhammad have in common as rulers?  
**c. Elaborate** How did the smaller states of West Africa make use of their environments?

## Reading Skills

**Identifying Supporting Details** Use what you know about identifying supporting details to answer the following questions.

- 14.** What details support the statement that Africa is a large continent with a wide variety of climate and vegetation regions?
- 15.** What details support the statement that the spread of Islam influenced the government, society, and culture of early Africa?
- 16.** What details support the statement that trade contributed to the development, wealth, and power of many of the early kingdoms and empires in Africa?

## Analyzing Secondary Sources

**Reading Like a Historian** In the following passage, historian Basil Davidson describes some ways in which the camel affected the trans-Saharan trade in early Africa.

“For centuries the lucrative [profitable] West African trade routes have depended on the camel caravan. Without the camel the barren expanses of the Sahara would have effectively blocked contact between the fertile northern coast land and the rich forests of the south . . . Though vital to trade, caravans were not a very efficient means of transport, largely because of the camels themselves. Ill-tempered, surly [rude] beasts, they balked at every attempt to bridle or load them, biting or spitting at the cameleers . . . And once on the move the caravan could not stop until evening for the camels would sit, spilling their loads onto the sand.”

—Basil Davidson, *African Kingdoms*

- 17. Analyze** How did the use of camel caravans benefit trade in early Africa?
- 18. Summarize** What were some drawbacks of using camel caravans to cross the Sahara?

## Using the Internet

go.hrw.com

Practice Online

Keyword: SHL AFK

- 19.** More than 800 different languages are spoken in Africa today. Using the keyword above, conduct research to learn about some of these languages. Then write two or three paragraphs about one African language or language group.

## WRITING FOR THE SAT



Think about the following issue:

**All the gold produced in Ghana was officially the property of the king. Only the king could own gold nuggets, although Ghana's people could own and trade gold dust. Ghana's kings controlled the gold supply to regulate prices and keep the market from being flooded.**

- 20. Assignment:** Do you think the economic control that Ghana's kings exercised benefitted the people of Ghana or not? Write a short essay in which you develop your position on this question. Support your point of view with reasons and examples from your reading.