

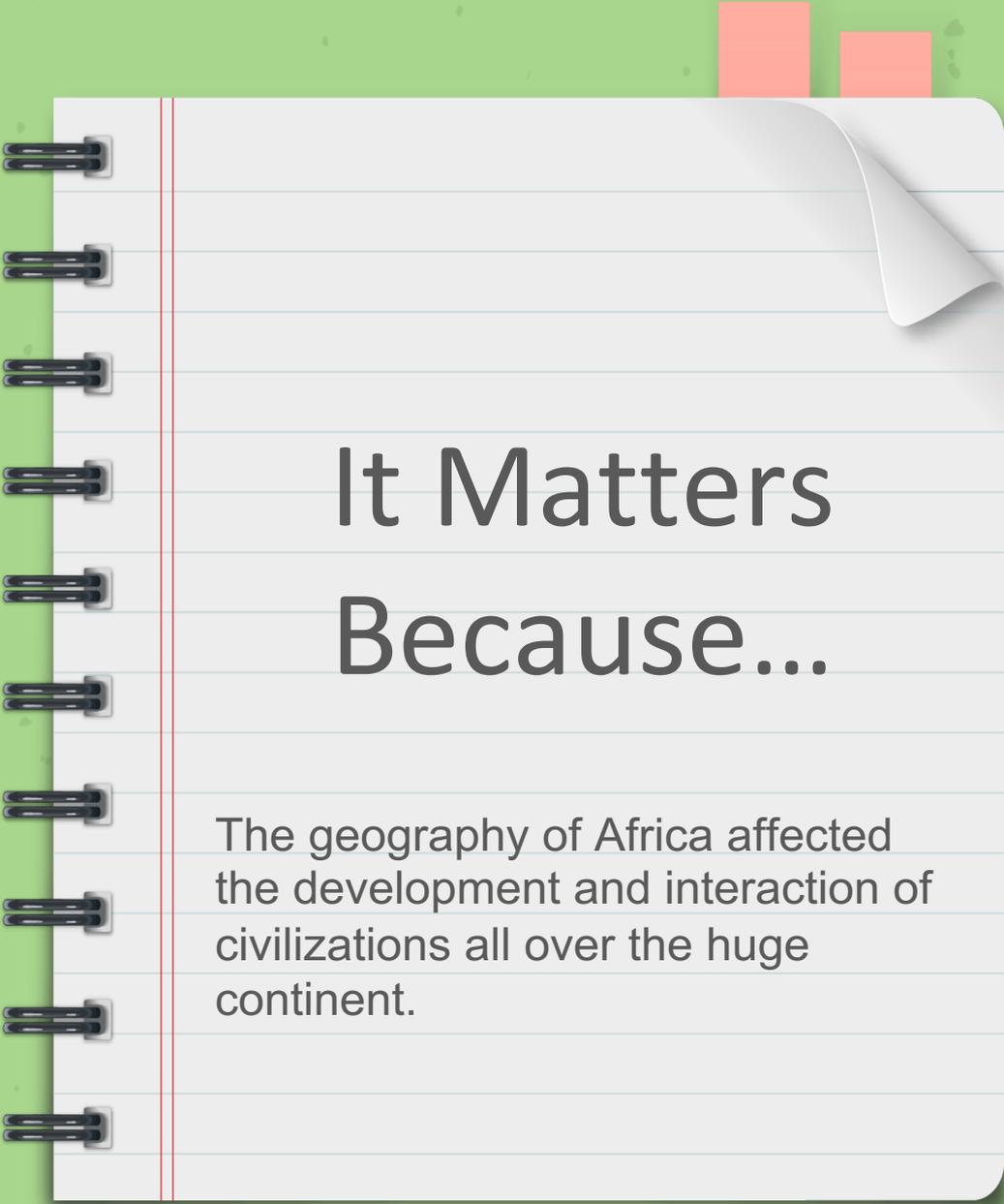


Lesson 15.1

The Rise of African Civilizations

Discover Our
Past

World History



It Matters Because...

The geography of Africa affected the development and interaction of civilizations all over the huge continent.

African Beginnings

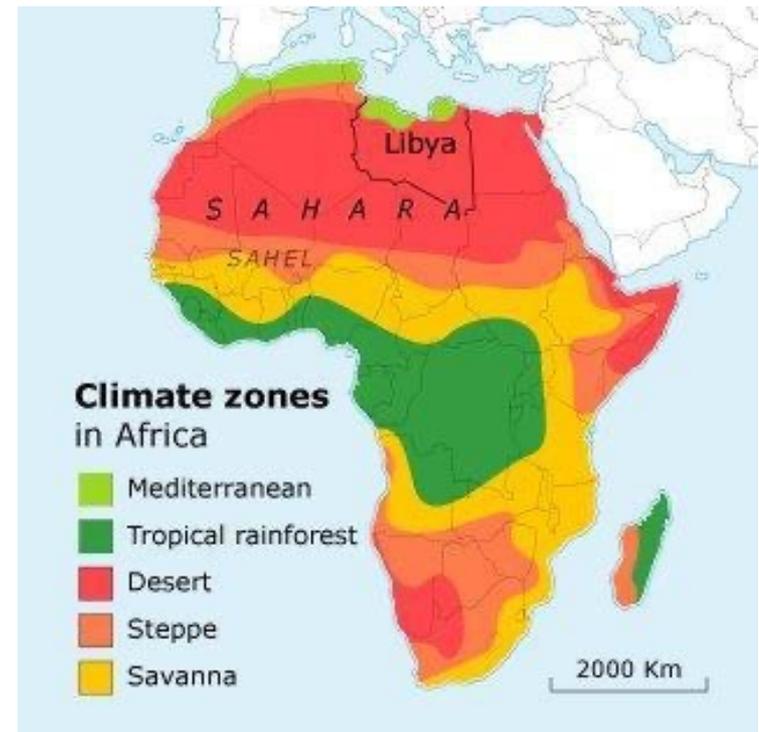
- People have lived in Africa for a very long time.
- Scientists believe that the first humans appeared in eastern and southern Africa between 150,000 and 200,000 years ago.
- Early human groups in Africa lived as hunters and gatherers.
- These early peoples moved from place to place to hunt and gather food.
- About seven or eight thousand years ago, hunters and gatherers in Africa began to settle in villages.



- They learned to tame animals and grow crops.
- Around 3000 B.C., as farming villages became more widespread and organized, Africa's first civilizations developed.
- These early civilizations were Egypt and Kush.

A Vast and Varied Landscape

- The people of Africa found opportunities and challenges in the geography of the continent.
- First, Africa is very large in size.
- After Asia, Africa is the world's largest continent.
- Most of Africa lies in the tropics.
- However, this enormous continent is made up of four distinct geographic zones.
- Rain forests stretch along the Equator, which slices through the middle of the continent.
- These forests make up about 10 percent of Africa's land area.



A Vast and Varied Landscape

- The rain forest zone gets heavy rainfall, and it is warm there all year long.
- The dense growth of trees and plants in the rain forest can make farming difficult.
- Farmers, however, clear some of the forestland to grow root crops, such as yams.



Grasslands and Deserts

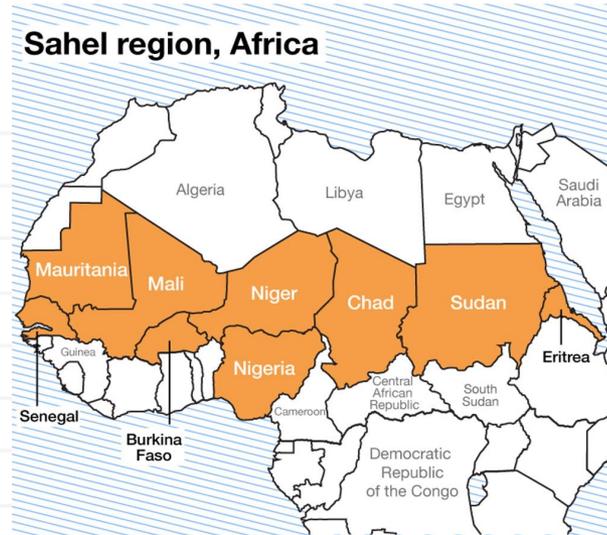
- Vast grasslands make up the second zone.
- The stretch north and south of the rain forest.
- **Savannas** are tropical grasslands dotted with small trees and shrubs.
- These flat or rolling plains cover about 40% of Africa's land area.
- The savannas have high temperatures and uneven rains.
- However, they get enough rainfall for farming and herding.
- Herders raise cattle and other animals.



savannas: tropical grasslands dotted with small trees and shrubs

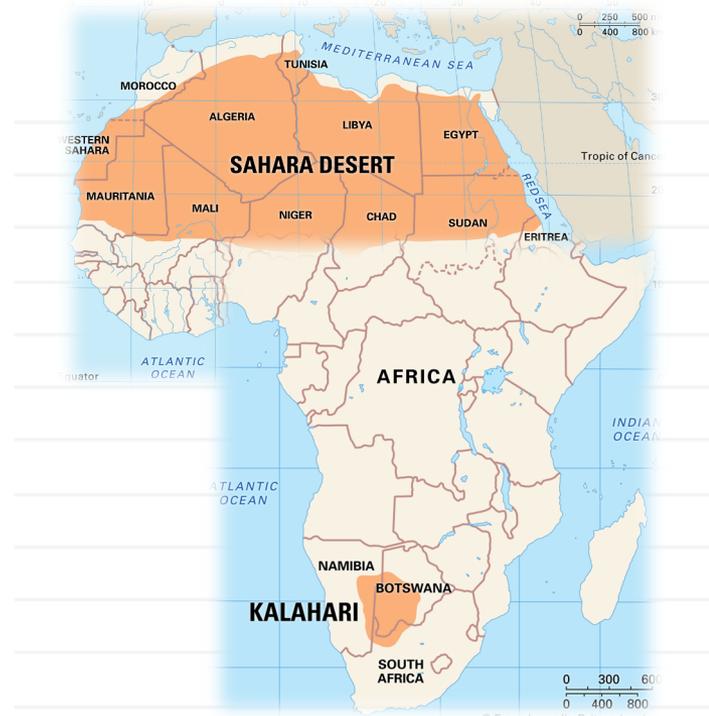
Grasslands and Deserts

- In northern Africa, the savannas connect with an area of even drier grasslands known as the Sahel.
- Plants that grow there provide barely enough food for people and animals.
- The people of Sahel were traditionally hunters and herders.



Grasslands and Deserts

- Deserts are Africa's third zone.
- They are found north and south of the grasslands.
- About 40% of the land in Africa is desert.
- The world's largest desert – the Sahara – stretches across much of North Africa.
- The Kalahari, another desert region, lies in southwestern Africa.
- For many years, the deserts limited travel and trade.
- People had to move along the coastline to avoid these vast seas of sand.



Grasslands and Deserts

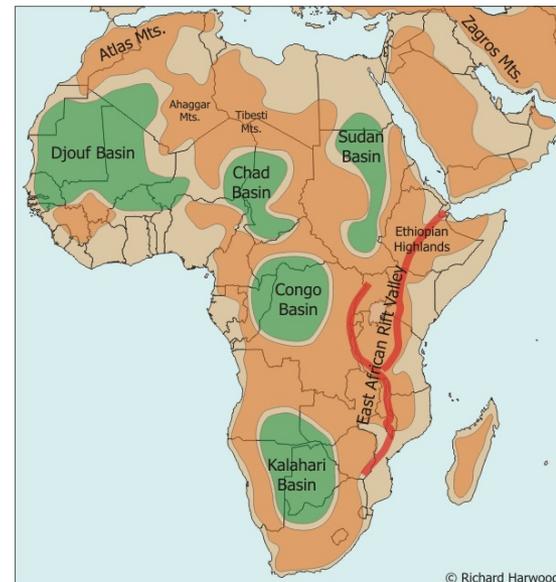
- Small areas of mild climate– the Mediterranean – make up the fourth zone.
- These areas are found along the northern coast and southern tip of Africa.
- In these areas, adequate rainfall, warm temperatures, and fertile land produces abundant crops.
- This food surplus can support large populations.



Africa's Landforms and Rivers

- Most of Africa is covered by a series of plateaus.
- A **plateau** is an area of high and mostly flat land.
- In east Africa, mountains, valleys, and lakes cross the plateau.
- Millions of years ago, movements of the Earth's crust created deep cuts in the surface of the plateau.
- This activity created the Great Rift Valley.

plateau: an area of high and mostly flat land



Africa's Landforms and Rivers

- Many large rivers systems are found in Africa.
- The civilizations of Egypt and Kush flourished along the banks of the Nile River in North Africa.
- The major river system in West Africa is found along the Niger River.
- Trade and farming led to the growth of villages and towns throughout the Niger River area.
- People living south of the Sahara also learned to make iron.



- This skill spread from East and Central Africa to West Africa.
- By 250 B.C. Djenne-jeno (jhn-NAY-JEH-noh) emerged as the largest trading center in West Africa.
- Its artisans produced iron tools, gold jewelry, copper goods, and pottery.

Comparing Africa to the U.S.



Size

Africa – 11,667,159 square miles

United States – 3,794,085 square miles

Population Today

Africa – about 1.03 billion

United States – 309 million

Longest River

Africa – Nile River 4,160 miles

United States – Missouri River 2,565 mi

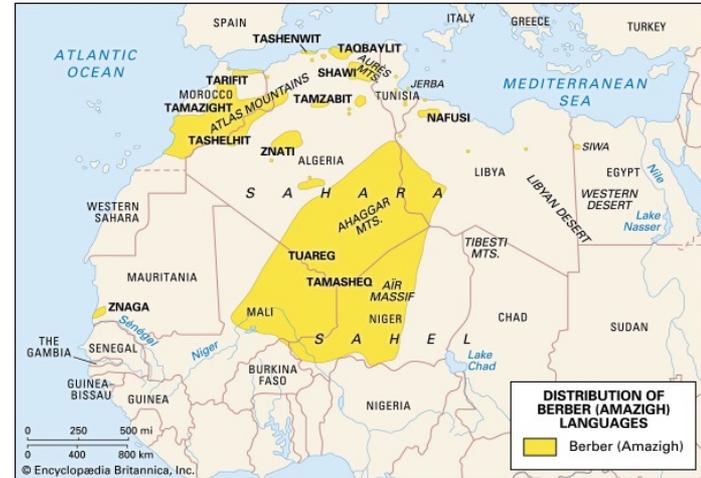
Largest Desert

Africa – Sahara 3,500,000 sq mi

United States – Mojave 15,000 sq mi

Trading Empires in Africa

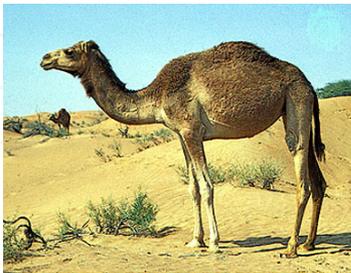
- For thousands of years, the hot, dry Sahara isolated North Africa from the rest of the continent.
- Then, about 400 B.C., the Berber people of North Africa found ways to cross the Sahara to West Africa.
- Trade soon opened between the two regions.



Trading in Africa

How Did the Sahara Trade Develop?

- For hundreds of years, the Berbers carried goods across the Sahara on donkeys and horses.
- The animals often did not survive the desert heat.
- The Romans introduced the central Asian camel in A.D. 200.
- The use of camels greatly changed trade in Africa.



- Camels are well suited for the desert.
- Their humps store fat for food, and they can travel for many days without water.
- The Berbers quickly adopted camels, both as a source of food and to travel.

Trading in Africa

How Did the Sahara Trade Develop?

- Berber traders formed caravans of many camels.
- These caravans crossed the Sahara between North Africa and West Africa.
- West African merchants sent gold mined in their region to towns boarding the Sahara.
- From there, caravans carried the gold northward.
- Some of this African gold reached Europe and Asia.
- Christian and Muslim rulers in these areas valued African gold.



- Caravans from West Africa also carried ivory, spices, leather, and ostrich feathers.
- In addition, they transported enslaved people captured in wars.
- Merchants sent these captives to the Mediterranean area and Southwest Asia to serve as soldiers or servants.

West African Kingdoms

- Caravans also headed from North Africa to West Africa.
- They transported cloth, weapons, horses, paper, and books.
- Once in West Africa, they traded for salt from mines in the Sahara.
- During the A.D. 700s, Berber and Arab traders brought Islam to West Africa.
- They established ties with West African merchants, many of whom became Muslims.
- The Saharan trade brought prosperity to West Africa.



- As a result of trade, the populations grew, and powerful city-states emerged in the region.
- Eventually, rulers of these city-states began to build empires.
- From the A.D. 500s to the A.D. 1300s, these African empires were bigger than most European kingdoms in wealth and size.

West African Kingdoms

How did Ghana Begin?

- Ghana was the first great trading empire in West Africa.
- It rose to power during the A.D. 400s. The kingdom of Ghana was in the Sudan.
- This area mostly grassland, stretching across north central Africa.
- Fertile soil and iron tools helped the farmers of Ghana produce enough food.
- Ghana was located between the Sahara salt mines and gold mines near the West African coastal rain forests.



- As a result, Ghana became an important crossroads of trade.
- From Ghana, trade routes extended into North Africa and down the Niger River.
- They also linked to kingdoms in the Central African rain forest.
- Some routes reached all the way to Africa's eastern coast.

West African Kingdoms

How did Ghana Begin?

- Traders interested in salt or gold had to pass through Ghana, which came at a price.
- Traders had no choice but to pay taxes to Ghana's kings.
- First Ghana had iron ore and knew how to make iron weapons.

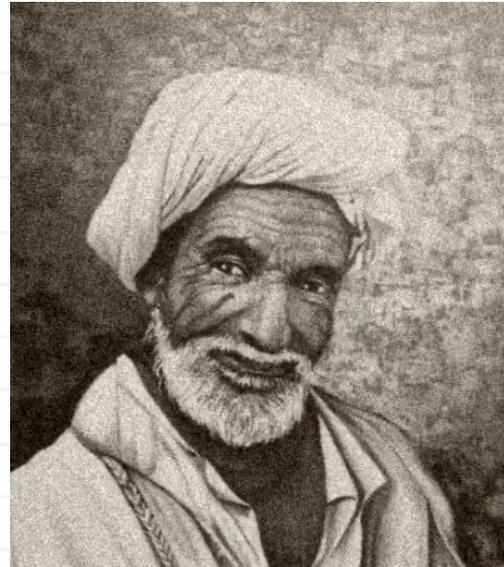


- Although Ghana owned no gold mines, it controlled the West Africans who did.
- Second, Ghana's kings had a well-trained army to enforce their wishes.
- Third, people were willing to pay any price for salt, a highly desired item used to flavor and preserve food.
- Berber traders wanted gold so they could buy goods from Arab countries and from Europe.

West African Kingdoms

How did Ghana Begin?

- Abdullah Abu-Ubayd Al-Bakri (elh-BEHK-ree), an Arab travelling writer in about A.D. 1067, described the way Ghana taxed merchants:
 - "The king [of Ghana] exacts the right of one dinar [of gold] on each donkey-load of salt that enters his country, and two dinars of gold on each load of salt that goes out." – from Ghana in 1067



- Ghana reached the height of its trading power in the A.D. 800s and 900s.
- Muslim Arabs and Berbers involved in the salt and gold trade brought Islam to Ghana.

West African Kingdoms

Rise of Mali

- During the A.D. 1100s, invaders from North Africa disrupted Ghana's trade, and the empire fell.
- As Ghana weakened, local groups separated to form new trading states in West Africa.
- In the A.D. 1200s, a small state named Mali (MAH-lee) conquered Ghana.
- Mali created a new empire.
- West African griots (GREE-ohz), or storytellers, credit a great king for Mali's rise.

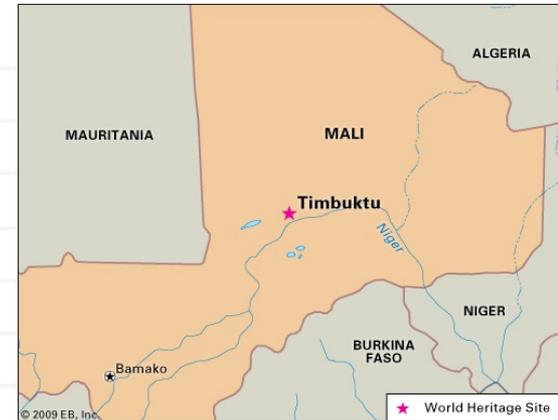


- His name was Sundiata Keita (sun-dee-AH-tuh KY-tuh) – the “Lion Prince”.
- Sundiata ruled from 1230 to 1255.
- He united the people of Mali.

West African Kingdoms

Rise of Mali

- Sundiata conquered territory extending from the Atlantic coast inland to the trading city of Timbuktu (TIHM-BUHK-TOO).
- His conquests put Mali in control of the gold mines in West Africa.
- As a result, Mali built its wealth and power on the gold and salt trade.



West African Kingdoms

How did Songhai Begin?

- Mali weakened after the death of king Mansa Musa (MAHN-sah moo-SAH) in 1337.
- One of the states that eventually broke away from Mali's control was Songhai (SAWNG-eye).
- In 1464, Sunni Ali (sun-EE ah-LEE) became the ruler of Songhai. He seized control of Timbuktu.
- Sunni Ali used Songhai's location along the Niger River to extend his territory.
- He took control of the river and seized the salt mines.



- Songhai soon controlled the trade in salt from the Sahara and gold.
- By 1492, Songhai was the largest empire in West Africa.
- Invaders from North Africa ended the empire by A.D. 1600.

West African Kingdoms

How did Songhai Begin?

- The West African kingdoms ruled the savannas.
- The rain forest, near the Equator, also had its own kingdoms.
- The included Benin, which arose in the Niger delta, and Kongo, which formed in the Congo River basin.



A 16th-century brass sculpture from the court of Benin, in what is now Nigeria, shows the head of an *oba*, or king.

A brass plaque from the court of Benin depicts a warrior and his attendants. It dates from the 16th or 17th century.



East African Kingdoms

- In ancient times, powerful kingdoms also arose in East Africa.
- The kingdom of Kush thrived on the Nile River for hundreds of years. One of Kush's neighbors was the kingdom of Axum (AHK-SOOM) on the Red Sea.
- Axum benefited from its location on the Red Sea.
- It was an important stop on the trade route linking Africa, the Mediterranean, and India.
- Axum exported ivory, incense, and enslaved people.

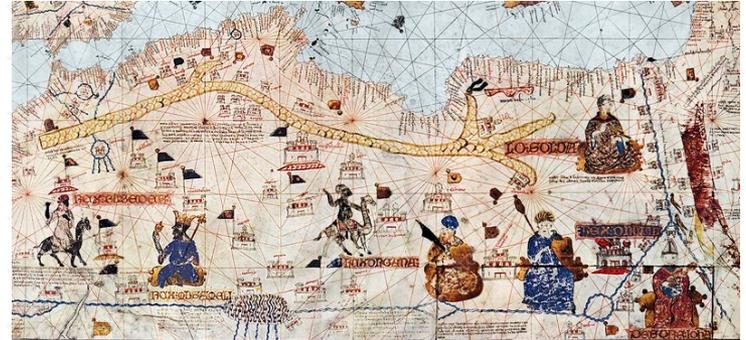


- It imported cloth, metal goods, and olive oil.
- Axum fought Kush for control of trade routes to inland Africa.
- Around A.D. 300, King Ezana (ay-ZAHN-uh) conquered Kush.
- In A.D. 334, Ezana made Christianity the official religion of Axum.
- Islam was introduced to Axum later.
- Both religions had a major impact on Axum and other trading states.

East African Kingdoms

Coastal States

- In the early A.D. 600s, Arab traders from the Arabian Peninsula had reached East Africa.
- They sailed to Africa in boats called dhows (dowz).
- In the A.D. 700s, many Arab Muslim traders settled along the Indian Ocean in East Africa.
- They shared good and ideas with Africans living there.

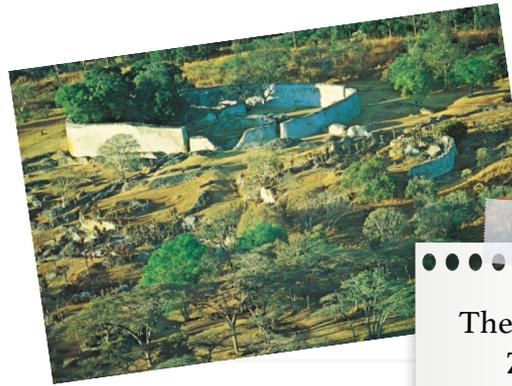


- By the 1300s, a string of key trading ports extended down the East African coast.
- They included Mogadishu (MAH-guh-DIH-shoo), Kilwa, Mombasa (mahm-BAH-suh), and Zanzibar (ZAN-zuh-BAHR).

East African Kingdoms

The Rise of Zimbabwe

- The Indian Ocean trade reached far inland and led to the rise of wealthy states in Central and Southern Africa.
- These inland territories mined rich deposits of copper and gold.
- During the A.D. 900s, traders from the coastal cities of Africa began to trade with the inland states.
- The coastal traders brought silk, glass, beads, carpets, and pottery.
- They traded for minerals, ivory, and coconut oil.



The ruins of Great Zimbabwe.

- They also obtained enslaved Africans for export to countries overseas.
- An important trading state known as Zimbabwe arose in southeastern Africa.
- During the 1400s, this large empire reached from south of the Zambezi River to the Indian Ocean.

African Trading Empires A.D. 100 - 1600



Time Period
A.D. 100 - 1400

Location
East Africa

Goods Traded
ivory, frankincense, myrrh,
enslaved people

Key Facts
King Ezana converted to Christianity;
made it the official religion

African Trading Empires A.D. 100 - 1600



Time Period

A.D. 400 – 1200

Location

West Africa

Goods Traded

iron products, animal products, salt, gold

Key Facts

Taxes from traders passing through made Ghana rich

African Trading Empires A.D. 100 - 1600



Time Period

A.D. 1200 – 1450

Location

West Africa

Goods Traded

salt, gold

Key Facts

King Mansa Musa built mosques and libraries

African Trading Empires A.D. 100 - 1600



Time Period

A.D. 1000 – 1600

Location

West Africa

Goods Traded

salt, gold

Key Facts

Songhai gained control of West African trade by conquering Timbuktu

African Trading Empires A.D. 100 - 1600



Time Period

A.D. 700 – 1450

Location

Southeast Africa

Goods Traded

gold, copper, ivory

Key Facts

King Mutota and Matope built huge empires

Review This Lesson

Vocabulary

- savanna
- griot
- plateau
- dhow

People / Places / Empires

- | | |
|----------------|------------|
| • Sahel | • Axum |
| • Sahara | • Ghana |
| • Kalahari | • Mali |
| • Dejenne-jeno | • Songhai |
| • Berbers | • Zimbabwe |

Key Ideas

- how early peoples settled Africa
- major climate and geography zones in Africa
- how trade developed in Africa
- why camels were essential for the Sahara trade
- why West African trading empires rose and fell
- two valuable products traded through Ghana
- how trade affected the development of East African kingdoms
- how Axum became a prosperous trading center