

THINK AS A HISTORIAN: PRACTICE HISTORICAL ARGUMENTATION

A historical argument includes an analysis that is carefully written and supported by facts and evidence. It is not simply a statement of fact, such as “Baghdad was the largest city in the Abbasid Empire.” Nor is it a personal preference or unsupported opinion such as “I like the Abbasids more than the Umayyads.” Which TWO of the following statements are the best examples of a historical argument?

1. Islamic rule was relatively tolerant because it did not punish people who did not convert to Islam.
2. The core principles of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism are more similar than different. All consider Abraham an important figure.
3. In the century following Muhammad’s death, Islam spread through the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia.
4. Of all of the invaders who attacked Baghdad, the Mongols were the most interesting.

WRITE AS A HISTORIAN: USE TOPIC SENTENCES

Add clarity to an essay by starting each body paragraph with a clear and concise topic sentence that introduces the main point of the paragraph. For each item, select the best topic sentence for an essay about Islam.

1. First body paragraph
 - a. Islamic nations differed from other religious states since they had different beliefs regarding social structure.
 - b. Compared to women of Judaism and Christianity, Islamic women enjoyed more privileges such as inheriting land and the right to independent thinking.
2. Second body paragraph
 - a. A class of merchants arose in some Islamic states due to the growth of trade.
 - b. The economy grew in the Muslim world through many different factors.
3. Third body paragraph
 - a. Shariah law governed over the people of Islam, and served as the basis for moral code in Muslim states.
 - b. Islam directly affected the legal system of the state.

Expansion of African Trade

After that the chief of the poets mounts the steps of the pempi [a raised platform on which the ruler sits] and lays his head on the sultan’s lap, then climbs to the top of the pempi and lays his head first on the sultan’s right shoulder and then on his left, speaking all the while in their tongue, and finally he comes down again. 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.

—Ibn Battuta, c. 1352

Ibn Battuta’s commentary on Mali society sheds light on the cultural forces at work in Sub-Saharan Africa during the fourteenth century. A scholar from Morocco on the northwest coast of Africa, he was well versed in Islamic law, also known as shariah. Islamic governments in Mogadishu and Delhi sought his advice and welcomed him to their lands. Ibn Battuta’s travelogue has made him a legend among historians, who point to his life as an example of how Islam’s phenomenal growth increased connections among cultures of Asia, Africa, and southern Europe. Islam’s arrival in Africa did not produce massive conversions among Africans. Nevertheless, the Islamic Empire’s presence in Africa profoundly affected politics, economics, and culture within many African societies. As Ibn Battuta’s account makes clear, in those African societies that had adopted Islam, many of their long-standing traditions remained. Sub-Saharan Africa’s history between the spread of Islam and the period of European colonization is one of both cultural continuity and tremendous change.

The Migrations of Bantu-Speakers

Historians and linguists have long studied the spread of people of the Bantu language group from its beginning in modern-day Nigeria and Cameroon to the east and south, eventually covering about one-third of the continent of Africa. They propose that the spread of this language group was the result of the migration of the Bantu-speaking peoples and their interactions with local groups along the way. Most historians believe that rather than arriving en masse like a conquering horde, the migrations involved small groups of people who spoke Bantu moving from one point to another.

When the Bantu-speakers started to migrate from West Africa around 3000 B.C.E., they brought an agricultural economy with them. They cultivated

yams and oil palms, skills that they may have picked up from peoples living along the Nile. Because of the success with these crops as well as with two grains, millet and sorghum, they produced a surplus of food. This enabled the population of the Bantu-speaking peoples to increase, prompting part of the population to move to new areas. Perhaps the fertility of the land decreased from overuse, providing another incentive to move on. The Bantu-speakers spread their knowledge of agriculture to the forest peoples they encountered, who were hunter-foragers.

One of the most important crops for the Bantu-speakers came long after the migration had begun. Between 300 and 500 B.C.E., Indonesian seafarers, traveling across the Indian Ocean, introduced bananas to Sub-Saharan Africa. The nutrition-rich food led to a spike in population. Many Indonesians settled on the island of Madagascar, whose spoken language even today is part of the Austronesian family of languages. Bananas allowed the Bantu-speaking peoples to migrate to places where yams did not easily grow. To grow bananas, farmers increased land for cultivation, which enriched diets and inspired more population growth.

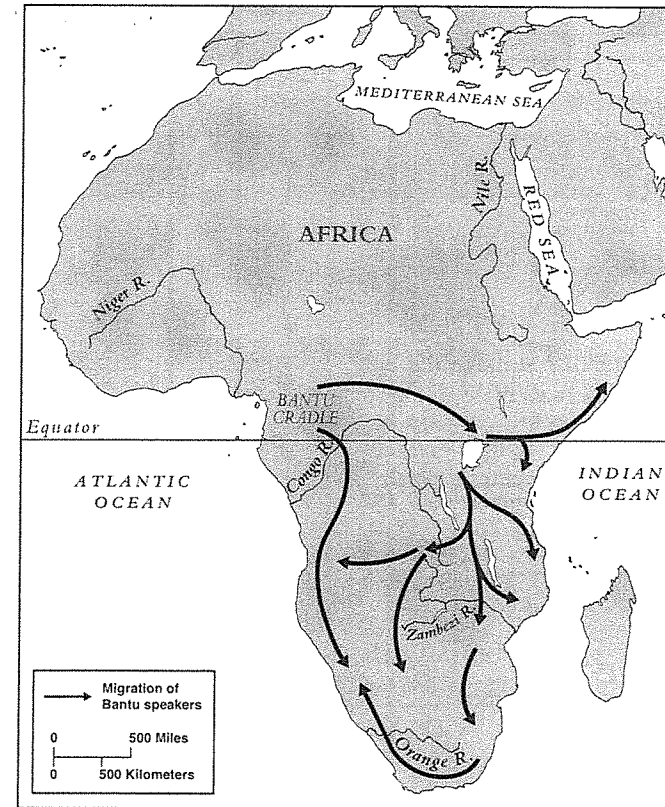
The Bantu-speakers' migration was possible because of their technology skills. They built canoes and traveled up and down West Africa's and Central Africa's rivers. In addition, by 500 B.C.E., they had iron-making technology, which enabled them to make more efficient tools for clearing land and weapons for warfare. This technology gave them an edge over other peoples they encountered, including the Batwa of the Congo Basin, people formerly known as pygmies. The Bantu-speaking peoples defeated many tribes in battle, absorbing many of the defeated into their own population. Thus, there was considerable assimilation and displacement of other African peoples.

The Bantu-speaking peoples brought their infectious and parasitic diseases with them as they moved. For example, malaria was common in West Africa, where the Bantu-speakers had some immunity to it from long exposure. The people they met in the forests, however, had no such immunity. (Test Prep: Write a paragraph comparing the spread of disease by the Bantu-speaking peoples to the spread of disease by Europeans in the Americas. See page 303.)

By 2000 B.C.E., the Bantu-speakers had reached Lake Victoria and the other Great Lakes of East Africa. There they met nomadic pastoral peoples and adopted the practice of raising sheep and cattle. From the Great Lakes, they began moving south. By 400 C.E., people who spoke Bantu had reached South Africa, where the migration ended.

Societies Because the migration of people who spoke Bantu covered such vast distances and took place over such a long period of time, there came to be much variety among various Bantu-speaking groups. Generally, they formed close-knit communities that settled in small villages. Their societies were matrilineal, which means that villagers would trace their ancestry through their mothers, not their fathers. Some Bantu-speakers dropped the agricultural economy because the geography of some places better supported nomadic pastoralism or hunting-foraging.

MIGRATION OF BANTU-SPEAKERS



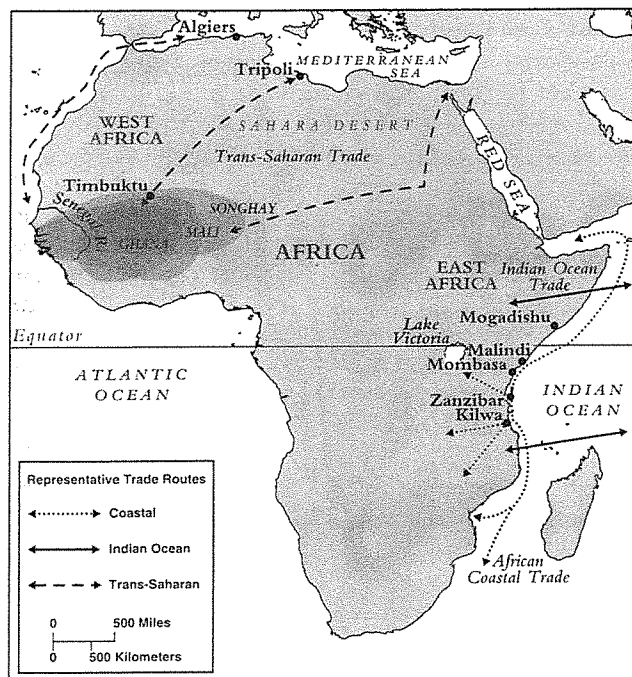
Religion Bantu-speakers generally believed that a single god had created the world, and that many spirits inhabited it. People did not worship the god directly but sent messages to him through spirits. Many Bantu-speaking peoples practiced a type of ancestor worship, in that they believed that after death, spirits remained on Earth to guide the living. (Test Prep: Write a paragraph comparing the ancestor worship of the Bantu-speakers and the Chinese. See page 35.)

Arts Belief in the spirit world inspired the Bantu-speaking peoples to create masks and sculpted figures to represent dead ancestors. Music was also an important part of worship and ceremony. Bantu-speakers used instruments such as drums, flutes, and horns to create not only religious music but also secular music to accompany work. The Bantu-speakers also had an impressive tradition of story-telling—a spoken literature that was passed down the generations.

Political Structures in Inland Africa

By 1000 C.E. agriculture had emerged through most of Sub-Saharan Africa. Because of the sedentary nature of agriculture, communities had to form increasingly complex political relationships in order to govern themselves.

CENTERS OF TRADE IN AFRICA



In contrast to most Asian or European societies, states in Sub-Saharan Africa did not centralize power under one dominant figure or a strong central government. Instead, communities formed kin-based networks, where families governed themselves. A male head of the network, a chief, mediated conflicts and dealt with neighboring groups. Groups of villages became districts, and a group of chiefs decided among themselves how to solve the district's problems.

As populations grew, kin-based networks became more difficult to govern. Competition among neighbors increased, which in turn increased fighting among villages and districts. Survival for small kin-based communities became more challenging. Though many such communities continued to exist in Sub-Saharan Africa until the nineteenth century, larger kingdoms grew in prominence, particularly after 1000 C.E. For example, hierarchical political structures emerged in the Congo River basin. (Test Prep: Write a paragraph contrasting the decentralized political systems of the Bantu-speaking peoples with more centralized systems. See page 320.)

Islam's Impact on Trade

Because of their small scale, the traditional kin-based societies of Sub-Saharan Africa did not trade on a global level. As in South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa increasingly traded with other parts of the world and learned of Islam at the

same time. Merchants and Islam arrived via two routes: across the Sahara and over the Indian Ocean.

Trans-Saharan Trade While the East African Coast had been fairly well populated for many centuries before the arrival of Islam, few societies had inhabited the Sahara Desert because its arid climate made it nearly impossible to farm. Though nomadic communities did conduct some trade across the Sahara, the volume of trade increased exponentially with the arrival of Islamic merchants in the seventh and eighth centuries.

Camels and Trade Merchants from Southwest Asia traveled across the Sahara on camels. Native to the Islamic heartland (Arabia), camels began to appear in North Africa in the third century B.C.E. Camels, accustomed to the harsh, dry climate of the Arabian Desert, adapted well to living in the Sahara. Compared to horses, camels can consume a large quantity of water at one time (over 50 gallons in three minutes) and not need additional water for a long stretch of time. They began to replace horses and donkeys after 300 C.E.

As use of the camel spread, people developed as many as 15 types of camel saddles for different purposes.

- South Arabians developed a saddle in which the rider sits in back of the hump, which makes riding easier because the rider can hold onto the hair of the hump.
- Northern Arabians developed a saddle for sitting on top of the hump, putting them high in the air, which gave them greater visibility in battles.
- Northern Africans developed a saddle that allowed them to sit in front of the hump. Being near the head gave the rider the best possible control over the camel.
- Somalis in Eastern Africa, who were semi-nomadic and needed to carry their possessions with them, designed a saddle for carrying loads.

By the end of the eighth century C.E., the trans-Sahara trade had become famous throughout Europe and Asia. Gold was the most precious commodity traded. West African merchants acquired the metal from the waters of the Senegal River, near modern-day Senegal and Mauritania. Foreign traders came to West Africa seeking not only gold, but also ivory and slaves. In exchange, they brought salt, textiles, and horses. For more than 700 years, trans-Saharan trade brought considerable wealth to the societies of West Africa, particularly the kingdoms of Ghana and Mali.

Indian Ocean Trade Trade has a long history on the East Coast of Africa. Coastal cities such as Kilwa (in modern Tanzania), Malindi (in modern Kenya), and Mogadishu (in modern Somalia) traded among themselves from the time the Bantu-speaking peoples brought agriculture to the region about 2000 B.C.E. International trade also had existed there for centuries, before the founding of Islam: merchants from India, Southeast Asia, and Persia all made contact with coastal cities of Africa via the Indian Ocean. Greek and Roman mariners as well had traveled down the Red Sea to trade with the region.

By the eighth century C.E., Islamic merchants had rejuvenated maritime trade, which had declined in the centuries after the fall of the Han, Gupta, and Roman civilizations. The Indian Ocean trade created thriving city-states, sometimes known as the Swahili city-states. “Swahili,” which literally means “coasters,” referred to the inhabitants of bustling commercial centers, such as Kilwa, Mombasa (in modern Kenya), and Zanzibar (in modern Tanzania). The traders of the Zanj Coast, as it was known in Arabic, sold ivory, gold, and slaves to their Arab trading partners, as well as more exotic goods such as tortoise shells, peacock feathers, and rhinoceros horns. In exchange, the “Zanj” cities acquired Chinese porcelain, Indian cotton, and manufactured ironwork. Trade was so vigorous with East Asia that Chinese porcelain remains a common find among the ruins of Swahili cities.

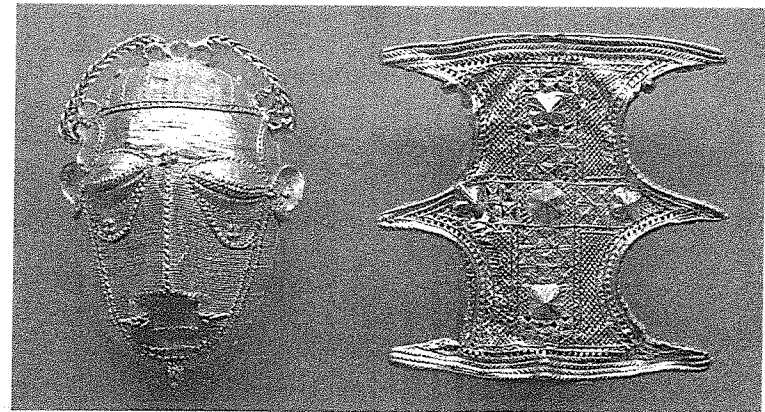
Trade brought considerable wealth to the cities on the East African coast. Architectural ruins in Kilwa suggest the wealth and grandeur that once existed there. For example, most buildings had traditionally been constructed of mud and clay. However, at the Indian Ocean trade’s height, many mosques and wealthy merchants’ homes were made of stone or coral.

| Comparing Pack Animals | | | |
|------------------------|---|--|---|
| Animal | Location | Benefits | Drawbacks |
| Camel | Northern Africa and Sub-Saharan West Africa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to travel long distances • Can eat thorny plants and drink salty water found in deserts • Has long eyelashes that protect against desert winds • Only animal that can cross deserts • Does not spook easily | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires high level of salt to stay healthy • Can be very aggressive and even vengeful • Cannot be controlled with a bit • Cannot be boarded in a stall |
| Ox | Eurasia and the Americas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has high level of stamina • Can pull heaviest loads • Unlikely to stray or be stolen • Can survive on local grazing • Tolerates various climates and diets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moves slowly compared to other pack animals • Requires more water and food than other pack animals |
| Horse | Worldwide | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can run at high speeds • Can be controlled with a bit • Can be used in battle • Can adapt to most climates and terrains | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires grain to keep fit • Spooks easily • Can be stolen easily • Strays easily • Less sure-footed than other pack animals • Cannot tolerate high heat |
| Llama | Americas | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains traction in mountains • Has calm disposition • Requires little water • Adapts well to cold and mountainous climates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot pull heavy loads • Can carry less than other pack animals • Cannot tolerate high heat |

Political Structures of West and East Africa

Several kingdoms benefited from the increased wealth that the trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean trades brought to Africa. In West Africa, the kingdoms of *Ghana* and *Mali* emerged. In East Africa, the Swahili Coast’s prosperity produced the powerful kingdom of Zimbabwe.

Ghana Nestled between the Sahara and the tropical rain forests of the West African coast, the kingdom of Ghana was not in the same location as the modern nation of Ghana. Historians believe that the kingdom had been founded during the fifth century, at least two centuries before the time of Muhammad, but Ghana reached its peak of influence from the eighth to the eleventh centuries. Ghana’s rulers sold gold and ivory to Muslim traders in exchange for salt, copper, cloth, and tools. From Ghana’s capital city, *Kumbai Saleh*, the king ruled a centralized government aided by nobles and an army equipped with iron weapons.



Source: Daderot / Wikimedia Commons



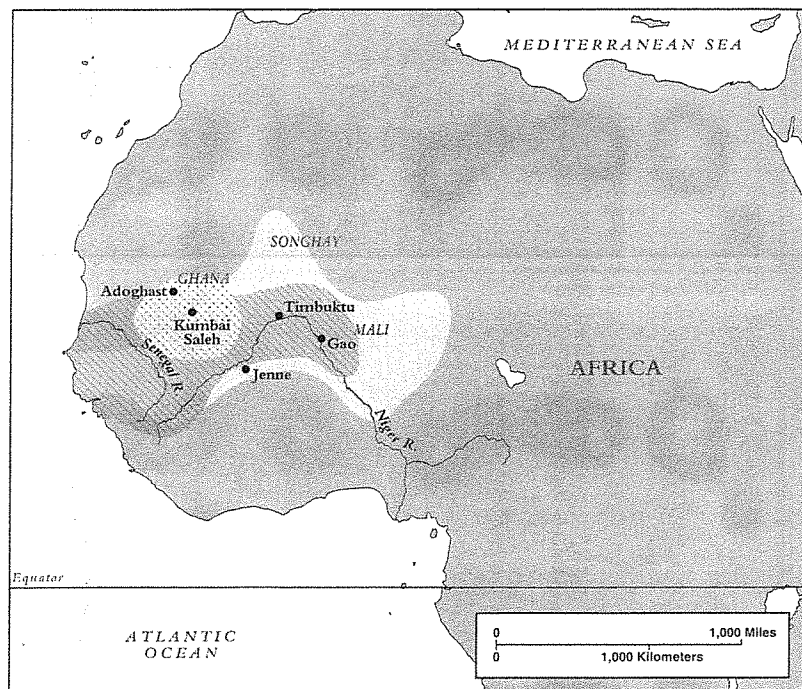
Source: Thinkstock

The gold artifacts (upper) were part of the valuable trans-Saharan trade in West Africa. The modern photo of foods and spices (lower) shows the types of goods that have been popular in the Indian Ocean trade in East Africa since the eighth century C.E.

Mali By the twelfth century, wars with neighboring societies had permanently weakened the Ghanaian state. In its place arose several new trading societies, the most powerful of which was Mali. The government of Mali profited from the gold trade, but it also taxed nearly all other trade entering West Africa; and, therefore, became even more prosperous than Ghana had been. Most of Mali's residents were farmers, who cultivated sorghum and rice. However, the great cities of *Timbuktu* and *Gao* accumulated the most wealth and developed into centers of Islamic life in the region. Timbuktu in particular became a world-renowned center of Islamic learning. By the 1500s, books created and sold in Timbuktu brought prices higher than most other goods.

Mali's founding ruler, Sundiata, became the subject of legend. His father had ruled over a small society in West Africa in what today is Guinea. When his father died, rival groups invaded, killing most of the royal family and capturing the throne. They did not bother to kill Sundiata because the young prince was crippled and was not considered a threat. In spite of his injury, he learned to fight and became so feared as a warrior that his enemies forced him into exile. His time in exile only strengthened him and his allies. In 1235, Sundiata, "the Lion Prince," returned to the kingdom of his birth, defeated his enemies, and reclaimed the throne for himself.

WEST AFRICAN KINGDOMS



Sundiata's story made him beloved within his kingdom, but he was also an astute and capable ruler. Most scholars believe he was a Muslim and used his connections with others of his faith to establish trade relationships with North African and Arab merchants. Sundiata cultivated a thriving gold trade in Mali. Under his steady leadership, Mali's wealth grew tremendously.

Mansa Musa In the fourteenth century, Sundiata's grand-nephew, *Mansa Musa*, brought more fame to the region. However, Mansa Musa was better known for his religious leadership than for his political or economic acumen. A devout Muslim, Mansa Musa began a pilgrimage in 1324 to Mecca, Islam's holiest city. His journey, however, was unlike that of any ordinary pilgrim. Mali's prosperity allowed him to take an extraordinarily extravagant caravan to Arabia, consisting of 100 camels, thousands of slaves and soldiers, and gold to distribute to all of the people who hosted him along his journey. His pilgrimage displayed Mali's wealth to the outside world.

Mansa Musa's visit to Mecca deepened his devotion to Islam. Upon his return, he established religious schools in Timbuktu, built mosques in Muslim trading cities, and sponsored those who wanted to continue their religious studies elsewhere. Though most West Africans continued to hold onto their traditional beliefs, Mansa Musa's reign deepened the support for Islam in Mali. However, in less than 100 years after Mansa Musa's death, the Mali kingdom was declining. By the late 1400s, the Songhay Kingdom had taken its place as the powerhouse in West Africa. In spite of Mali's fall, Mansa Musa's efforts to strengthen Islam in West Africa succeeded: the religion has a prominent place in the region today.

Zimbabwe Zimbabwe was the most powerful of all the East African kingdoms between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries. It was situated between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers in modern-day Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Zimbabwe built its prosperity on a mixture of agriculture, grazing, trade, and, above all, gold. Zimbabwe had rich gold fields, and it traded with the Swahili city-states as well as with Persia, India, and China. Just as in Ghana, the kings taxed any gold that traveled through the land.

As in the Swahili cities, a testament to the kingdom's wealth can be seen through its architecture. Though most houses in the region had traditionally been constructed from wood, by the ninth century chiefs had begun to construct their "zimbabwes", the Bantu word for "dwellings", with stone.

By the end of the thirteenth century, a massive wall of stone, 30 feet tall by 15 feet thick, surrounded the capital city, which became known as the *Great Zimbabwe*. The stone wall was the first large one on the continent to be built without mortar. Inside the wall, most of the royal city's buildings were made of stone. In the late fifteenth century, nearly 20,000 people resided within the Great Zimbabwe. However, overgrazing so damaged the surrounding environment that residents of the bustling capital city abandoned it by the end of the 1400s. The wall still stands in the modern country of Zimbabwe.

Social Structures of Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa's small communities, instead of having strong central governments ruling over large territories, were organized around several structures: kinship, age, and gender. As described earlier in this chapter, kinship connections allowed people to identify first as members of a clan or family. Age was another significant social marker. An 18-year-old could do more hard labor than a 60-year-old, but younger people often relied on the advice of their elders. Thus, communities divided work according to age, creating age grades or age sets. Finally, gender had an influential role in social organization. Men dominated most activities that required a specialized skill; for example, leather tanners and blacksmiths were typically men. Women generally engaged in agriculture or gathering food. They also took the primary responsibilities for carrying out domestic chores and raising their family's children.

Women's Roles in Sub-Saharan Africa As mentioned before, some societies were matrilineal, in which kinship passed from the mother to her children. This did not necessarily mean that these societies were matriarchal, with women holding power over men. Indeed, most Sub-Saharan communities were patriarchal. Even so, some examples of female empowerment did exist. For example, Ibn Battuta observed that in West Africa, a man did not pass on his inheritance to his sons. Instead, he willed it to his sister to pass onto her sons.

Though many Africans had converted to Islam, they did not adopt all of its norms concerning gender. Women and men who were not married mixed freely and openly, and women often did not veil themselves. Several reasons could account for the different customs between Africa and Southwest Asia. Wearing the hijab (a veil that covered the head and chest) was a practice in Southwest Asia before the time of Muhammad, so it may have been considered a cultural tradition, not a religious requirement. Sub-Saharan societies had their own gender norms that predated the new ones that arrived with Islam, and such traditions did not change quickly.

Slavery in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southwest Asia Slavery had been a long-standing tradition in Africa before Europeans arrived. Prisoners of war, debtors, and criminals all became slaves. Private property did not exist in many kin-based societies, so some people instead accumulated slaves in order to increase their wealth and social status.

The arrival of Islam and global trade increased the volume of slaves in Africa. Slaves were precious commodities along the trans-Saharan and the Indian Ocean trading routes. Arab and Southwest-Asian merchants imported millions of Africans from the Swahili trading cities. These slaves were uprooted from their lives and brought to entirely different lands with unfamiliar languages and traditions. Arab traders preferred women over men and put them to work as servants, as opposed to agricultural workers. Female slaves often became concubines. Male slaves were used in the military or, sometimes, became high-ranking eunuchs (castrated men) in royal courts.

Comparing Three Types of Slavery

| | Chattel | Domestic | Debt Bondage |
|--|---|---|--|
| Description | Slaves were the legal property of the owner. | Slaves served as cooks, cleaners, or other household workers. | People became slaves, sometimes through mutual agreement, to repay a debt. |
| Examples | Common in the Americas, sixteenth century to nineteenth century | Common in Classical Greece and Rome; the Middle East | East Africa before the fifteenth century; European colonies in the Americas |
| Was enslavement permanent? | Yes | Often | Not in theory, although many slaves never regained freedom |
| Were the children of slaves automatically slaves? | Yes | Often | Children often inherited the debts of their parents |
| Did slaves have any rights? | No | Some: laws or customs might prevent a master from selling a slave | Some: laws or customs might limit how severely a master could punish a slave |

Slaves and others from the East Coast of Africa were known in Arabic as Zanj. Between 869 C.E. and 883 C.E., slaves working on sugar plantations in Mesopotamia mounted a series of revolts. One of these, led by Ali bin Muhammad, became known as the Zanj Rebellion. Ali bin Muhammad, along with the 15,000 slaves he organized, captured the city of Basra, in modern Iraq, and established a splinter government. Ten years after the original revolt, Mesopotamian forces quashed the rebel forces and killed Ali bin Muhammad. The size and length of time before it was defeated make the Zanj Rebellion one of the most successful slave revolts in history.

The Indian Ocean slave trade between Africa and Southwest Asia continued well into the nineteenth century, somewhat longer than the Atlantic Ocean slave trade between Africa and the Americas. You will read more about the Atlantic Ocean trade in Chapter 17.

Cultural Life in Sub-Saharan Africa

Playing music, creating visual arts, and storytelling were important aspects of African cultural life, as they were in many other cultures around the world, because they provided enjoyment and helped marked rituals such as weddings and funerals. In Africa, these activities carried additional significance. Because traditional African religions included ancestor worship, song lyrics provided a means of communicating with the spirit world. African music usually had a distinctive rhythmic pattern, and vocals were interspersed with percussive elements such as handclaps, bells, pots, or gourds.

Visual arts also commonly served a religious purpose. For example, metalworkers created busts of past rulers so that ruling royalty could look to them for guidance. Artists in Benin, West Africa, were famous for their intricate sculptures in iron and bronze.

The Griot Literature, as it existed in Sub-Saharan Africa, was oral. *Griots*, or storytellers, were the conduits of history for a community. Griots possessed encyclopedic knowledge of family lineages and the lives and deeds of great leaders. The griots were also adept at music, singing their stories and accompanying themselves on instruments such as the kora—a 12-string harp.

The griots were both venerated and feared as they held both the power of language and of story. It was said that a griot could sing your success or sing your downfall. By telling and retelling their stories and histories, the griots preserved a people's history and passed that history on from generation to generation. Kings often sought their counsel regarding political matters. It has been said that when a griot died, it was as though a library had burned.

Until recently, it was thought that the position of griot was held exclusively by men. But in many parts of Africa, women were also trained as griottes. They would sing at ceremonies and special occasions, such as before a wedding. For example, the griotte would counsel the bride to not talk back if her mother-in-law abused her or reassure the bride that if things got too bad, she could always come back home. It is thought that the griotte provided women with a sense of empowerment in a male-dominated society.

Swahili: A Syncretic Language The arrival of Islam brought with it cultural changes. Apart from spreading the new faith, the presence of Islamic merchants on the Indian Ocean coast influenced the developing language of Swahili, a Bantu language melded with Arabic vocabulary. Today, Swahili is spoken by various groups in the African Great Lakes region as well as other parts of Southeast Africa. It is the official language of four countries in central and east Africa: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. In addition, it is one of the official languages of the African Union.

Religion Christianity had first entered Egypt and Ethiopia during the first century C.E., but the spread of Islam had weakened its influence in the region of Ethiopia known as Axum. In the twelfth century, however, a new ruling kingdom there enthusiastically embraced Christianity and ordered the building of 11 massive churches made entirely of rock.

From the twelfth through the sixteenth centuries, Ethiopia was a virtual island of Christianity on the continent of Africa. Because of its isolation from both the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church, Ethiopian Christianity developed independently. People combined their traditional faith traditions, such as ancestor worship and beliefs in spirits, with Christianity to create a distinct form of faith. This religious syncretism was apparent in the construction in the 11 rock churches noted above, which are still used today. Carved rock structures had been a feature of Ethiopian religious architecture since the second millennium B.C.E.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: DOES AFRICA HAVE HISTORY?

Attitudes among non-Africans toward African history have gone through a revolution in past century and a half. For most societies during most of African history, people did not keep written records. History was oral: it consisted of the long, detailed accounts of the past as told by griots. As contact with Europe, Southwest Asia, and South Asia increased, writing spread through the continent, and with it the idea that history was a story based on written records. Since Africans did not have written records, they became, in the eyes of Europeans, people without a past. This idea persisted among Europeans well into the 1900s. For example, in 1965, one of England's most prominent historians, Hugh Trevor-Roper, declared that Africa's past was nothing more than "barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant quarters of the globe."

By the time of Trevor-Roper's comment, the dismissive attitudes toward African history had already begun changing. In the late nineteenth century, one pioneer in the effort to validate African history was Edward Wilmot Blyden. He was born to free black parents in the West Indies in 1832. Unable to gain admission to universities in the United States, Blyden migrated to Liberia and became involved in its development. He eventually became a diplomat and Liberia's Secretary of State. Though a Christian all his life, Blyden argued that Islam was an important unifying force among Africans because it was not the religion of colonizers. Blyden became an leading advocate of the Pan-African movement, an effort to build a common African identity among the diverse peoples of the continent.

Another African political leader, Leopold Senghor of Senegal, became the leading advocate for the study of African history and culture in the mid-twentieth century. Senghor, who served as president of Senegal for 21 years, argued that Africans not only had a history, but also a distinctive heritage that they should preserve and take pride in.

More recently, as globalization has made historians more aware of how interconnected people have been throughout history, historians have treated Africa as a full participant in history. Among the leaders in this shift in perspective has been Ross Dunn, a historian in the United States associated with the San Diego State University. His 1986 book *The Adventures of Ibn Battuta, a Muslim Traveller of the Fourteenth Century* revealed to many scholars the diversity in Africa as well as the links among communities in Africa, Asia, and Europe as early as the 1300s.

KEY TERMS BY THEME**ENVIRONMENT**

malaria
bananas
Congo River

CULTURE

Ibn Battuta
camel saddle
hijab
eunuchs
Ali bin Muhammad
Zanj Rebellion
griots
rock churches
San

ECONOMICS

Indian Ocean trade
trans-Saharan trade
Kumbai Saleh
Timbuktu
Gao
Kilwa
Swahili city-states
Mombasa
Zanj Coast

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

matrilineal descent
kin-based networks
age grades (or age sets)

STATE-BUILDING

chief
Kongo Kingdom
Ghana
Mali
Sundiata
Mansa Musa
Mecca
Songhay
Zimbabwe
Great Zimbabwe

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. As Bantu-speakers migrated throughout Sub-Saharan Africa, they spread the use of
 - (A) gold and silver
 - (B) slash-and-burn agriculture
 - (C) a uniform language
 - (D) the Islamic faith
2. One parallel between the importation of bananas to Africa and the spread of rice cultivation in East Asia was that both resulted in
 - (A) increased trade with other countries
 - (B) a higher death rate from the introduction of new diseases
 - (C) higher migration from rural areas to cities
 - (D) rapid population growth
3. One similarity between the increase of trade across the Sahara and trade along the eastern coast of Africa was that both
 - (A) developed new technologies that used iron
 - (B) depended primarily on networks among Bantu-speaking peoples
 - (C) resulted in the spread of Islam
 - (D) led to a rapid increase in a new form of labor, slavery
4. The most important global impact of Islam coming to Sub-Saharan Africa was that
 - (A) the region participated more in interregional trade than before.
 - (B) the Islamic faith became more militant
 - (C) religious wars erupted in the region
 - (D) diseases indigenous to the African continent spread throughout Eurasia
5. Trans-Saharan trade shows the importance people in northern Africa placed on
 - (A) trading for luxury items for the wealthy
 - (B) obtaining iron for making weapons.
 - (C) purchasing horses for use by farmers.
 - (D) obtaining salt for preserving and flavoring food.

6. Unlike the empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay, the empire of Zimbabwe was
- (A) directly involved in the Indian Ocean trade
 - (B) linked to the Middle East by trade
 - (C) heavily influenced by Islam
 - (D) based on trade in gold
7. Which of the following situations would reflect the highest status in a Sub-Saharan culture during the time period 600–1450?
- (A) A young man who owned many cows
 - (B) An elderly man who served on a council of elders
 - (C) A young woman who became the fourth wife of a tribal chief
 - (D) An elderly woman whose son was the best hunter in the village
8. Which best explains why veiling never became universally accepted by Sub-Saharan Africans who converted to Islam?
- (A) Veiling was a custom in Southwest Asia, not a religious requirement.
 - (B) Religious customs usually weaken as a faith spreads to new areas.
 - (C) Sub-Saharan Africa's climate was too hot for women to wear veils.
 - (D) Religion was less significant to Bantu-speakers than to Arabs.

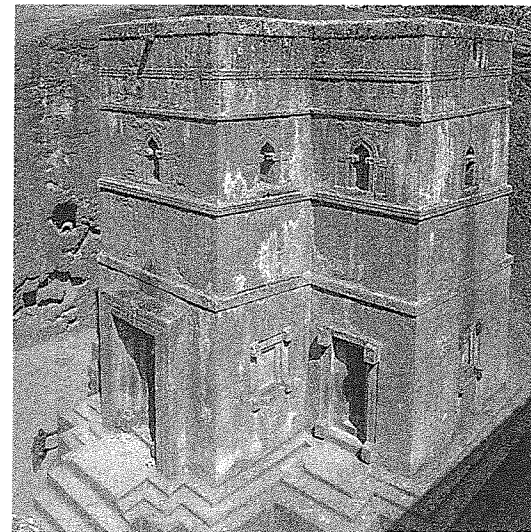
Question 9 refers to the excerpt below.

Gold was at a high price in Egypt until they came in that year. The mithqal did not go below 25 dirhams and was generally above, but from that time its value fell and it cheapened in price and has remained cheap till now. The mithqal does not exceed 22 dirhams or less. This has been the state of affairs for about 12 years until this day by reason of the large amount of gold which they brought into Egypt and spent there

—Al-Umari, 1324

9. The excerpt describes one of the results of a trip by
- (A) a traveler from Morocco to Southwest Asia
 - (B) an explorer from Spain to Mesopotamia
 - (C) a king from Mali to Mecca
 - (D) a prophet from Mecca to Medina

Question 10 refers to the image below.



Source: Thinkstock

10. The above image shows a Christian church in East Africa carved out of rock. The building demonstrates how people
- (A) adapt new ideas to local conditions
 - (B) modify old structures for new uses
 - (C) blend new and old religious beliefs
 - (D) combine new technology with old traditions

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE-OVER-TIME ESSAY QUESTIONS

Directions: You are to answer the following question. You should spend 5 minutes organizing or outlining your essay. Write an essay that:

- Has a relevant thesis and supports that thesis with appropriate historical evidence.
 - Addresses all parts of the question.
 - Uses world historical context to show continuities and changes over time.
 - Analyzes the process of continuity and change over time.
1. Analyze the changes and continuities in African culture before and after the arrival of Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries.

Questions for Additional Practice

2. Analyze the changes and continuities in political and cultural life in West Africa from 600 to 1450.
3. Analyze the continuities and changes in trade in East African kingdoms from 600 to 1450.

COMPARATIVE ESSAY QUESTIONS

Directions: You are to answer the following question. You should spend 5 minutes organizing or outlining your essay. Write an essay that:

- Has a relevant thesis and supports that thesis with appropriate historical evidence.
 - Addresses all parts of the question.
 - Makes direct, relevant comparisons.
 - Analyzes relevant reasons for similarities and differences.
1. Discuss the similarities and differences in the interaction between Islam and African religions and between Christianity and African religions from 600 to 1450.

Questions for Additional Practice

2. Compare and contrast women's status in Sub-Saharan Africa with women's status in ONE of the following Post-Classical civilizations from 600 to 1450.
 - Southwest Asia
 - China
 - India
3. Discuss the differences and similarities in economics and politics between the Swahili city-states and the cities of the Mali Kingdom.

THINK AS A HISTORIAN: PRACTICE USING HISTORICAL EVIDENCE

Historical evidence comes from many sources, from ruins to eyewitness accounts in diaries and letters. To use historical evidence requires asking questions of the source. For example, Who created this evidence? Why did he or she make it? Whom was it created for? How did people use it at the time? *Describe the kind of evidence that might be used to answer or explain the following questions or statements:*

1. What cultural forces were at work in Sub-Saharan Africa during the 14th century?
2. How important was belief in the spirit world to the Bantu-speaking peoples?
3. Explain how wealth from the Indian Ocean trade was displayed in the Swahili city-states.
4. How and why did griots, or storytellers, become the keepers of history in their communities?
5. In what ways did visual arts serve a religious purpose in the Sub-Saharan world?

WRITE AS A HISTORIAN: SUPPORT A TOPIC SENTENCE

The topic sentence of a body paragraph in an essay should be supported with facts and informed judgments. You can achieve this support through using specific names, dates, and examples that relate to the focus of your topic sentence. *Select the TWO sentences that most clearly support a paragraph that begins with this topic sentence: Foreign influences on religion were strong in the kingdoms of Mali and Zimbabwe.*

1. The strong influence of Islam in East Africa can be seen in the large amount of Arabic in the language of Swahili.
2. Weddings and funerals often included musical rituals that consisted of communicating with the spiritual world.
3. Although most African communities lacked a written language, elders passed on important knowledge through song lyrics.
4. The people of Ethiopia combined Christianity with traditional beliefs in spirits and ancestor worship.
5. In present-day Africa, Islam dominates many countries as a major religion.