

## Chapter 3 Assignment 3

Background

Sand Roads: linked

North Africa &  
Mediterranean world  
with interior W Africa

Arabian camel:

N Africa & Sahara  
in early common  
Era

connections across the Sahara: The Sand Roads

- enriched West African civilization before

European slave system

- N Africa coastal regions

- cloth, glassware, weapons, beads, metal  
goods

- Sahara

- copper & salt, dates

- Most of pop = pastoral/nomadic

South

- agricultural peoples who grew their own  
crops, produced own textiles & metal products,  
mined gold → 2 zones = Savannah

grasslands (S of Sahara, grain crops  
like millet & sorghum), and forest more

south (lost & tree crops like yam, kola  
nuts → incentive for exchange of goods

- Arabian camel

- 10 days = no water

- long distances

- 300 CE - 400 CE - regular trans-Saharan  
commerce

- Arabs wanted gold

- West Africa ivory, kola nuts, slaves

for desert & Mediterranean basin ↔

horses, cloth, dates, many goods, salt

1. Commerce & state building in West Africa

- Sahara - 1000s of years = major international  
trade route

- SE Asia & E Africa this trans-Saharan

trade provided incentives & resources for

larger pol. structures

## West Africa

Civilization: 600 &

less in Atlantic

coast to Lake Chad

Niger: Farmers for

production of dyed

cotton textiles

Ghana: treasures

& stocks of gold

Mali: monopolized

the import of

strategic goods

Trans-Saharan

slave trade: 1100-

1400 = 5500 slaves

per year to wealthy

Islamic N Africa

Timbuktu: major

trade cities

## West African civilization

- large states/empires of Ghana (700-1200)

Mali (1230-1500), Songhai (1430-1591),

Kanem (1071-1603)

- Kumbi Saleh, Timbuktu & Gao

- Hausa-speaking people

- city states (like Zaria)

11th cen

- cities urban & commercial culture

- middlemen in W African commerce

14th-15th cen

- Hausa (cotton)

- cities got money through taxing  
merchants

- Emerged social hierarchy

- Rulers & merchants = always male

- views women as distraction for men

dangerous, not trusted (views on powerful women)

ordinary women

- central to agricultural production, weaving

- Royal women = important pol. roles

- Oral traditions show complementary relationship  
than hierarchical

- Early - most slaves women

- Male slaves when state officials, porters,  
craftsmen, miners, ag. laborers producing  
for royal or large estates or plantations

- Trans-Saharan slave trade

mid. 14 cen - commodities in N Africa

inside kingdom of Mali

- Growth of long distance trade → due to African avail.

→ wider network of exchange in E Africa

Mansa Musa: most prominent pilgrim, ruler of Mali: 1312

undertook the Hajj accompanied by a huge gold & entourage.

## 2. Islam in West Africa

### - E Africa

- Islam accompanied trade

- big Muslim traders across Sahara not forced by Turkic or Arab armies

- Islam's acceptance was peaceful

- Islam = link to Muslim trading partners

- For monarchs & their courts

- source of literate officials to help in state administration & religious legitimacy

### Ibadism

- W African cities = Islam religious centers & intellectual life.

### Timbuktu

- education center

- Arabic = important but not dominant

- few efforts to impose Islam on W African subjects

Qoo: What other religions dominated West Africa besides Islam?

Summary Sentence: The Silk Roads allowed for incentives of exchange to protect the government and strengthen West Africa's civilization. Islam also expanded peacefully to West Africa through Arabian merchants.