

Ancient African Civilizations

---

**MD 2: End Term Readings Review**

**Introduction:** The purpose of this review is to provide a basis for assessing your reading and review of the works of Welsby (1998) and McKissack and McKissack (1994). As such, your essays are intended to provide a forum within which you can demonstrate your understanding of African art and civilization. In each case, your essays should be sufficiently detailed, albeit brief, and reflective of the information provided in the aforementioned works. So that I can ascertain where you drew your information from, please cite page numbers and authors in the context of your essays (e.g., Welsby, 1998: 175). Please note that the question in Part 1 is required, and for Part 2, you must respond to at least two of the three options available. The question in Part 1 should represent no less than three typewritten (double-spaced) pages of text, while the questions in Part 2 should constitute no less than one page of typewritten text each. Due Date: May 22, 2001.

**Questions****Part 1: Required**

1. Please provide a brief comparative overview (minimum three pages) of the technological and cultural achievements (e.g., iron working or the first Christian state) of at least three sub-Saharan African civilizations. Be prepared to detail specific innovations and provide examples of African “firsts” specific to Black Africa. For the purposes of this exercise Egypt will not be included. Potential sources include Kush, Axum, Zimbabwe, Benin, Mali, Songhay, the Swahili, and related civilizations. Be prepared to cite dates, towns and cities, and other related names in your narrative.

**Part 2: Answer Two of the Following Three Questions**

2. Derek Welsby (1998) documents the achievements of the kingdom of Kush by tracing the origins, development and decline of the Kushite state. Please provide a brief narrative of what you would say if asked about “what accounts for the rise and development of the Kushite state, and by contrast, what serves to explain its decline and fall?”

3. Medieval West Africa, or the Western Sudan as it was known, has produced a treasure-trove of resources for the study of the rise and decline of the royal kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay. Given this fact, please identify at least three of the primary sources (e.g., Islamic scholarship) for the history of West Africa and be prepared to account for the importance of the sources in question. Your response and discussion should include the oral traditions of the *griot* and their significance in African history.

4. Briefly identify and describe each of the following African leaders: (a) Sudiata Keita, (b) Mansa Kankan Musa I, (c) Sunni Ali Ber, and (d) Askia Muhammad Toure. Be prepared to provide mention of relevant dates, significant events, and places in their respective histories.