

Daily Lecture and Discussion Notes

Chapter 7, Section 1



Did You Know? Meroitic, the language spoken by the Kush in Meroë, remains largely undeciphered. Only a small number of Meroitic words and a small portion of the grammar are known—and the relationship between Meroitic and other languages is a mystery.

I. The Land of Africa and The Climate of Africa (pages 223–225)

- A. Africa is the second largest continent. (Asia is the largest.) It stretches for almost five thousand miles and is surrounded by two seas and two oceans.
- B. Africa has many geographical zones. Mountainous along the Mediterranean coast, just south lies the **Sahara**, Earth's largest desert. Southwest of this desert, grasslands and then tropical jungle cover the hump of Africa jutting into the Atlantic Ocean.
- C. To the east lie snowcapped mountains, upland plateaus, and lakes. Here also is the **Great Rift Valley**, where mountains rise above deep canyons and wild animals populate grasslands. Farther south lies the dense vegetation of the Congo basin, through which the mighty **Congo River** runs. Farther to the south, the rain forests fade into hills, plateaus, and then deserts.
- D. Africa has four distinct climate zones, each with a different way of life. The mild climate—moderate rainfall and mild temperatures—of the northern coast and southern tip creates fertile land and abundant crops. The Sahara in the continent's north and the **Kalahari**, a desert in the south, cover 40 percent of Africa.
- E. A third climate zone is the rain forest along the equator, about 10 percent of the continent. Heavy rains and heat make for dense forests and disease-carrying insects, such as the tsetse fly, which carries sleeping sickness. To help keep the tsetse fly away, people in the area do not raise animals. Farming and travel is minimal. A final climate zone is the **savannas**. These are broad grasslands dotted with shrubs and small trees. North and south of the rain forests, these cover about 40 percent of Africa. The rain allows for farming and animal herding, though the rain is unreliable.

Discussion Question

How does the geography of Africa compare to the geography of the United States? (Both have a diverse geography. Each has great rivers, and the American prairie is comparable to the African grasslands. Africa, however, has much more coastline, desert, and jungle, though there are rain forests in Hawaii and Washington. The United States is more mountainous.)



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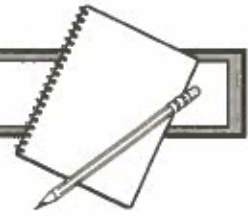


II. Emerging Civilization and the Rise of Islam (pages 225–226)

- A. About seven or eight thousand years ago, the mastery of farming gave rise to the first civilizations in Africa: Egypt, Kush, and Axum.
- B. A busy trade in ivory, ebony, frankincense, and leopard skins between Egypt and Nubia to its south developed by 2000 B.C. Around 1000 B.C. Nubia freed itself from Egyptian control and became the independent state of Kush.
- C. In 750 B.C. the Kushites conquered Egypt, but the Assyrians, whose iron weapons overmatched the bronze and stone of the Kushites, drove them out of Egypt. The Kushites returned to their original lands.
- D. The Kush economy was first based on farming, but soon Kush became a major trading state. Its center was the city of Meroë, located on a new trade route. The city had a large supply of iron, and the Kushites began making iron weapons and tools.
- E. Kush was a major trading empire for several hundred years. It provided iron, ivory, gold, ebony, and slaves to the Roman Empire, Arabia, and India in return for such luxury goods as jewelry and silver lamps.
- F. Kush flourished from 250 B.C. to A.D. 150. Then a new power, Axum, caused its decline. Axum was founded by a colony of Arabs in what is now Ethiopia. It became an independent state that combined Arab and African cultures.
- G. Axum prospered because it was located on the Red Sea and the trading route between India and the Mediterranean. It exported ivory, myrrh, and slaves, and imported textiles, metal goods, wine, and olive oil. For a time Axum and Kush competed for control of the ivory trade. In the fourth century A.D. King Ezana of Axum conquered Kush.
- H. Its religion was Axumite civilization's most distinctive feature. In A.D. 324 King Ezana converted to Christianity and he made it the official religion of Axum. Shipwrecked Syrians had introduced Christianity to Axum. Within a few centuries Islam brought important challenges to the kingdom of Axum.
- I. In 641 Arab forces took control of Egypt. By the early eighth century, the entire coastal region of North Africa to the Strait of Gibraltar was under Arab rule.
- J. By the eighth century, a number of Muslim trading states had been established on the African coast of the Red Sea. For centuries the relations between Christian Axum and the Muslim states were fairly peaceful.
- K. In the twelfth century problems arose. The coastal Muslim states moved inland to wrest control of the slave and ivory trades from Axum. Axum fought back. By the early fifteenth century. Axum and the Muslim state of Adal were in a growing conflict.

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Discussion Question

Within a few hundred years of its beginning, Islam spread through much of the northern half of Africa. In what area of the world did Christianity spread after the fifteenth century? (*Christianity spread through the Americas due to conquest, trade, and colonization.*)

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Did You Know? Mansa Musa, the Islamic ruler of Mali, was accompanied on his pilgrimage to Makkah by a caravan consisting of 60,000 men and a baggage train of 80 camels, each carrying 300 pounds of gold.

I. The Kingdom of Ghana (pages 228–230)

- A. In the eighth century, many trading states emerged in West Africa south of the Sahara. The first of the great trading states was **Ghana**. It emerged in the Niger valley grasslands, between the Sahara and the tropical forest along the coast. Most of the people were farmers who lived in villages that together formed the kingdom of Ghana. Modern Ghana is east of this area.
- B. The kings of Ghana were strong, wealthy rulers who ruled without benefit of law. For public appearances such as holding audiences and hearing grievances, the kings appeared amid great pomp in resplendent robes, gold jewelry, and turbans trimmed with gold.
- C. To protect their kingdom and enforce their dictates, the Ghanaian kings had a well-trained army of thousands of soldiers.
- D. Ghana prospered from its iron and gold supplies. The blacksmiths of Ghana were highly prized because they were skilled at making iron tools and weapons. The center of Ghana was near one of the biggest gold-producing areas in all of Africa. This location made Ghana the hub of a huge trade empire.
- E. In exchange for gold and iron products, Muslim merchants brought textiles, horses, metal goods, and salt. Salt was important for preserving and spicing food. Also, people needed salt to replace the salt their bodies lost in the hot climate. Eventually, Ghana also exported ivory, ostrich feathers, hides, and slaves.
- F. Exchanging goods in Ghana was done by silent trade. At a boundary line no foreigner was permitted to pass, foreign merchants would place their wares and then leave. The Ghanaians would then come and leave a quantity of gold for the goods. If on returning the traders liked the amount of gold, they would take it and leave. If not, they would go away, and the Ghanaians would come back and leave more gold, or not. In this way the parties worked out a mutually agreeable exchange.
- G. **Berbers**, a nomadic people whose camel caravans were called the “fleets of the desert,” carried much of the trade across the desert. Camels needed little food for days and could survive by drinking large quantities of water infrequently. The caravans took 40 to 60 days to reach their destinations. Typically, up to a hundred camels traveled at about three miles an hour.

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- H. The merchants of Ghana traded such tropical items as bananas and palm oil. They often became wealthy, and the kings prospered from this trade by imposing taxes on imports and exports. Muslim merchants often acted as middlemen between the local traders and the Berbers.

Discussion Question

Sometimes salt was used as money in Africa. What English word preserves this connection between salt and money? (*The word is salary. The root of the word, sal, is Latin for salt. At one time salt was part of the pay of Roman soldiers. Salt was valuable in the Roman Empire, and the soldiers needed the salt on long, hot marches.*)

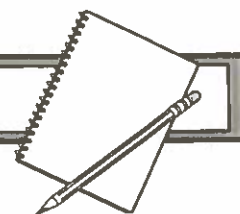
II. The Kingdom of Mali (pages 230–231)

- A. The kingdom of Ghana, weakened by wars, collapsed in 1200. The greatest trading state that arose in its place was **Mali**, which **Sundiata Keita** established in the mid-thirteenth century.
- B. Sundiata (the word means “lion prince”) captured the Ghanaian capital in 1240. He united the people of Mali and created a strong government. Extending from the Atlantic coast to the trading center of **Timbuktu**, Mali built its wealth and power on the gold and salt trade. Most of the people were farmers, however, who grew sorghum, millet, and rice. The farmers lived in villages with local rulers. These religious and administrative leaders sent tax revenues to the king.
- C. One of Mali’s richest and most powerful kings was **Mansa Musa**. He ruled from 1307 to 1337. He doubled Mali’s size. He created a strong government with local governors whom he appointed. His pilgrimage to Makkah is legendary. Everywhere he went he gave gold to his hosts and purchased from merchants with gold. He put so much gold into circulation so quickly that its value fell.
- D. This pilgrimage left an impression of Mansa Musa as a great ruler of a powerful kingdom. He left another legacy: Earlier Malian rulers had converted to Islam, but he ordered that mosques be built and encouraged the study of the Quran. He brought in Islamic architects. The most famous mosque is the Sankore mosque in Timbuktu, which also became a center of learning. He imported scholars and books to spread the word of Allah.
- E. Mansa Musa was Mali’s last powerful leader. By 1359 civil war divided Mali.



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Discussion Question

Why would increasing the gold supply dramatically make its value fall? *(The answer is the workings of supply and demand. The more there is of a product, service, or commodity the more sellers need to clear their inventories. Dropping the price (economic value) of something is the best way to clear the expanded inventory.)*

III. The Kingdom of Songhai (page 231)

- A. Like Egypt's Nile River, West Africa's Niger River floods annually and leaves rich soil for farming and raising cattle. Southeast of Timbuktu, the Songhai people established themselves along the Niger.
- B. In 1009 a ruler named Kossi converted to Islam and established the Dia dynasty. Prosperity ensued with the city of Gao as the chief trade center of Songhai. Songhai expanded under the leadership of **Sunni Ali**, who created the Sunni dynasty in 1464.
- C. Sunni Ali spent most of his time on military campaigns. His conquests of the cities of Timbuktu and Jenne were especially important because they gave Songhai control of the trading empire that had made Ghana and Mali prosper.
- D. The Songhai Empire reached its height under **Muhammad Ture**. A devout Muslim, he overthrew Sunni Ali's son in 1493 and created the Askia ("usurper") dynasty. He created an empire that stretched a thousand miles along the Niger River. He also created a strong central government with local provinces under the leadership of governors he appointed. The Songhai cities prospered as never before.
- E. The Songhai Empire came to an end after Muhammad Ture's death. Near the end of the sixteenth century, forces from **Morocco** occupied much of Songhai. As one observer noted, conditions changed. "Danger took the place of security, poverty of wealth, and distress and violence of peace." Songhai became a remnant of its former self.

Discussion Question

Gold has always been highly prized. Why? *(Answers will vary. Answers should show an understanding of the aesthetic quality of gold, the psychology of wanting status, the psychology of putting monetary value on hard metals, or other relevant considerations. Accept relevant, thoughtful answers.)*

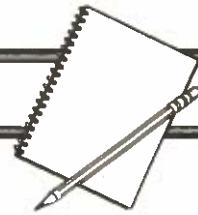
IV. Societies in East Africa (pages 232–234)

- A. Various small states and societies took root in eastern Africa. Islam influenced many of them strongly. They lived by hunting and gathering, and raising livestock.



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- B.** New peoples migrated into eastern Africa from the west beginning in the first millennium B.C. Farming peoples who spoke dialects of the **Bantu** languages moved into East Africa and the Congo River basin, not as conquerors but as communities.
- C.** These people practiced **subsistence farming** using iron and stone tools. Subsistence farming is growing just enough crops for personal use, not for sale. They grew grains, yams, melons, and beans. Women tilled the fields and cared for the children, and men tended the herds, hunted, and traded locally. They traded salt, animal products, copper, and iron ore.
- D.** On the eastern coast, some people began to trade regionally. The growth of Islam in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. brought increased trade to the trading communities along the eastern coast. Arab and Persian traders settled in these ports. **Mogadishu, Mombasa, and Kilwa** were three of the most important ports.
- E.** Kilwa was a magnificent city of its day. In the fourteenth century, two monumental buildings were constructed in Kilwa of coral from the cliffs along the shore: the Great Mosque and the Husuni Kubwa palace. The latter was on top of the cliffs and had over a hundred rooms. The wealthy built houses near these two buildings and adorned them with Chinese porcelain and indoor plumbing. The Arab traveler **Ibn Battuta** (see page 235) called Kilwa “one of the most beautiful towns in the world.” The Portuguese sacked Kilwa in 1505 and destroyed its major buildings.
- F.** A mixed African-Arabian culture eventually known as **Swahili** emerged throughout the coastal area. Members of the ruling groups often intermarried, and Islam and Islamic culture blended with the African cultures. The term *Swahili* (“peoples of the coast”) was also applied to the area’s major language. It is the national language today of **Kenya and Tanzania**.

Discussion Question

What was the chief mechanism of Islam’s spread through eastern Africa? (*The chief mechanism was trading.*)

V. States and Stateless Societies in South Africa (page 234)

- A.** States formed more slowly in the southern half of Africa. There people lived in **stateless societies**—groups of independent villages organized by clans and led by a local ruler or clan head. In the eleventh century A.D. some of these independent villages began to consolidate, forming the first states.



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- B.** From 1300 to 1450 the wealthiest and most powerful state was **Zimbabwe**. It prospered from trading gold with Swahili communities. The ruins of its capital, **Great Zimbabwe**, show the kingdom's power. It overlooks the **Zambezi River**. The **Great Enclosure**, whose exact purpose is not known, dominated the capital. It was an oval space surrounded by a massive wall 17 feet thick, 32 feet high, and 800 feet long.
- C.** Smaller, walled enclosures built with a mudlike cement on stone foundations were nearby, and the royal palace was built in the valley below. A high, stone wall also surrounded the palace.
- D.** The walls of Great Zimbabwe are unusual. People stacked granite blocks to build the walls. They did not use mortar. The city was abandoned by the fifteenth century, however, possibly because the land had been overgrazed or because of a natural disaster.

Discussion Question

What could have been the purpose of the Great Enclosure? (*Answers may vary. Accept any answer that shows an understanding of how such a site must have been used for important cultural purposes. The following are some good answers: religious ceremonies, government business and state ceremonies, or games.*)

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Did You Know ■ Slaves brought African religious practices that still exist to the Americas. In Brazil, for example, a religion called Candomblé thrives. It mixes Yoruba, Bantu, and Fon influences. Brazil has thousands of practicing centers of Candomblé. The guardians and leaders of this religious tradition are usually black women.

I. Aspects of African Society (pages 236–238)

- A. African towns often began as fortified walled villages and grew into larger communities. They became the centers of government and an economic life organized around the marketplace. Artisans skilled in metalworking, woodworking, and pottery making lived in them, as did farmers who worked the neighboring fields.
- B. The relationship between African kings and subjects was beneficial to both. The gulf between ruler and subject was not great. Kings often held audiences to hear the people's complaints. Merchants received favors from the king, and merchants paid the king taxes. To help trade, the kings tried to maintain law and order.
- C. The sense of identity for most people was determined by their membership in an extended family and a lineage group. Extended families lived in small, round dwellings of packed mud topped with a thatched roof.
- D. Extended families were combined into **lineage groups**, the basic building blocks of African society. All members claimed descent from a common ancestor. Elders held much power over members of the group. Members of extended families and lineage groups were expected to care for and support each other.
- E. Women were subordinate to men. They often worked in the fields, but some became merchants. There were important differences between the role of women in Africa and elsewhere. Many African societies were **matrilineal**—descent was traced through the mother, not **patrilineal** (descent traced through the father). Women often could inherit property, and the husband often moved into his wife's house.
- F. African villages typically had a process for educating young people and preparing them for adult participation in the community. For example, by the fifteenth century in the Congo, up to age six boys and girls learned language, family history, and the songs that gave meaning to their lives from their mothers. Then boys were sent to the "house of the men" and girls to the "house of the women."



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- G.** Fathers then taught the boys to hunt and fish, grow plants, and clear the fields. Mothers taught girls learned how to care for a house and tend the fields. They also learned how to be good wives and mothers. Marriage and motherhood were their entrance into the community. At puberty young people entered the community fully. This change was marked by an initiation ceremony. The young people were isolated from the community and underwent a ritual ceremony in which they symbolically died and were reborn.
- H.** Slavery had been practiced in Africa since ancient times. Slaves were used for forced labor or were sold. Slaves were captives, debtors, war prisoners, and some criminals. They were not necessarily seen as inferior. They could be trusted servants and respected for their talents and skills. Even so, life was hard with long hours of hard toil for most slaves. Domestic slaves had the easiest life. Slaves in Muslim societies were able to win their freedom more easily than in other kinds of societies.

Discussion Question

Many cultures have initiations or rites of passage to signal when young people become full, adult participants in the community. Are there such rites for American young people? (*Answers will vary. Accept answers that understand the function of such rituals. Probably the best answer is that American society does not have such official rituals. Marriage and career may serve some of the same function, however.*)

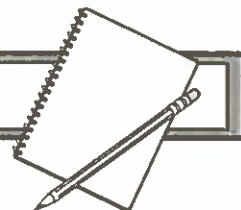
II. Religious Beliefs in Africa (pages 238–240)

- A.** African religions shared a belief in a single creator god. The **Yoruba** peoples in **Nigeria**, for example, believed that their chief god sent his son **Oduduwa** from Heaven in a canoe to create the first humans. Many slaves transported to America practiced the Yoruba religion.
- B.** Sometimes a group of lesser gods joined the creator god. The **Ashanti** people of Ghana believed in a supreme being named **Nyame**, whose sons were the lesser gods. Each son had a different purpose; for example one was the rainmaker and another brought the sun. Ashanti gods could not always be trusted, so people had to appease them to avoid their anger. Some people believed that the creator god originally lived on Earth but left out of disgust at human behavior. The creator god was also merciful and could be pacified by proper behavior.
- C.** Rituals were one way to communicate with the gods. A special class of **diviners** usually performed the rituals. Diviners believe they have the power to tell the future by working with supernatural forces. They were used to protect the interests of the ruler, his subjects, and the community.



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- D. Ancestors were important in African religion. Rituals dedicated to ancestors were important because it was believed ancestors could influence the lives of their descendants for good or evil by being closer to the gods.
- E. Many African religions believed in an afterlife. Human life consisted of two stages: life on Earth and an afterlife in which the soul floated in the atmosphere for eternity. Ancestral souls lived in the afterlife as long as the lineage group performed ceremonies in their names.
- F. Due to trade, Islam influenced African spiritual life. At first only individuals converted, and rulers did not stop the practice. Some rulers then converted, beginning with the royal family of Gao at the end of the tenth century. By the end of the fifteenth century, much of the population in the grasslands south of the Sahara had joined those in North Africa in accepting Islam. Christianity was more successful in making converts in the mountains of Ethiopia. Islam did not win many converts in East Africa until many members of the Swahili upper class converted in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.
- G. Islam and African native religions could conflict. Islam, for example, rejected spirit worship. Islam's strict separation of men and women did not fit with the more informal customs of the African cultures.

Discussion Question

Both Chinese and many African cultures stress ancestor worship. Why? (*Answers may vary. Accept answers that show an understanding of such issues as the human need to be connected to our pasts, the explanatory role of understanding our origins, and the strength of family ties in understanding our identities. Accept other relevant, thoughtful answers.*)

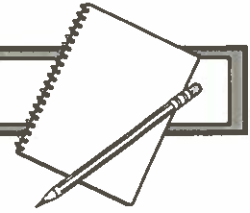
III. African Culture (pages 240–241)

- A. As in most places at the time, early African arts served religion. The earliest African art form was rock painting. The most famous examples, dating back to 4000 B.C., are in the Tassili Mountains of the central Sahara. They show the life of the people as it changed from hunting to herding to trading.
- B. Wood carvers throughout Africa made amazing masks and statues, often representing gods, spirits, or ancestral figures. The objects were believed to embody their subjects' spiritual powers. The Nok culture of Nigeria is the oldest known culture in West Africa to have made sculpture. Their impressive terra-cotta human figures and heads are believed to have had religious significance.



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- C.** In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, metal workers at **Ife**, capital of the Yoruba and now in southern Nigeria, produced bronze and iron statues. These may have influenced artists in **Benin** in West Africa. The Benin bronze sculptures of kings' heads, figures, and animals are rivaled only by the Chinese sculptures of the time.
- D.** African music and dance served a religious purpose. Dancing was a means of communicating with the spirits. Dance movements represented spirits expressing themselves through humans. The strong rhythmic pattern and call and response of African music and dance influenced modern Western music. Spirituals and work songs developed into blues, gospel, jazz, ragtime, and rock and roll.
- E.** African music was used to pass on to the young information about the history of the community, folk legends, and religious traditions. Storytelling, usually by priests or **griots**, served the same purpose. Oral tradition worked in the absence of written language.

Discussion Question

Are cultural information, history, and values passed on orally in the United States?
(Yes, television and movies are in part oral media, though they use visuals more than ancient oral traditions.)
