Civilizations of Africa Notes – Part 1

The Historical Development of Africa

Social Studies 8 – Ms. McDade

November 4, 2016

Fill in the blanks in your notes about North Africa (The Historical Development of Africa – pages 380-386 in your text book). Hint – read the notes and then refer to your text book for the correct responses to fill in the blanks.

**Trans-Saharan Trade and Life in the Sudan**

* In present-day Sahara, people farmed and fished for a living \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ years ago
* We know this information because people left \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Describe Figure 12-11: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* By 4000 BCE the Sahara dried out and most of the surface water gave way to a “sea of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”
  + Most people migrated to the margins of the desert, only a few survived in the tiny \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Economy of the Sahel and Sudan was dominated by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + Sahel – crop farming by 2000 BCE but mostly \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ herding
  + South Sudan – farming (more \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ than the North)
  + Main crops – \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (types of grain that were high in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)
* People ate porridge with added vegetables and herb; not much \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Fields were cleared by fire and remaining \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ was fertilizer
* Division of labour
  + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ cleared fields and prepared the land for planting
  + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ weeded and cared for the developing crops; responsible for separating husks from grains (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) and preparing meals
* Everyone participated in the harvest
* The driving force behind the organization and development of West African civilization was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + Traded to North Africa and Europe
  + Traded gold, salt and eventually \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + Largest obstacle to trade was the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ desert (first crossing in 1000 BCE and involved \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ which were unsuitable; \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ were introduced in the fourth century and made the desert crossing more feasible)
  + 2 main trade routes through the desert both went through \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (source of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)
* “The Maghreb” translates as the land of the setting sun (i.e. the west) and refers to the western area of North Africa
* 4 types of caravans were regularly crossing the Sahara by 600 CE
  + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (village raiding)
  + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Muslims going to Mecca)
  + Small commercial (5-100 camels; 32-36km/ day)
  + Large commercial (500-2000 camels; 26km/ day; increased size = increased \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)
* Took ~\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ days to cross the Sahara
* All About the Camel
  + Camels not suited to work with humans – bad tempered, difficult to train, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when angry
  + Camel perks: carry large quantities of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for a long time, carry heavy loads for long distances, travel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ than horses or donkeys, source of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, built-in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + Two types: small white used for higher speed crossings with smaller loads, larger brown used for slower crossings with heavier, bulkier loads
  + Wounded camel could delay a caravan for days and could lead to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Danger in the desert
  + Large temperature range (45°C daytime highs, -5°C nighttime lows)
  + Sandstorms
  + Thirst (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ litres of water/ person/ day; water carried in goat-skin bags refilled at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)
  + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ people (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ of the desert; could help or hinder progress)
  + The Tuareg nomad in Figure 12-14 is wearing \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ coloured clothing.
* Important commodities (definition: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Arabs of the Mediterranean and Europeans wanted them)
  + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (rulers of Sudanic kingdoms wanted them)
  + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (used to preserve meat and fish; worth its weight in gold)
  + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (highly secretive – silent trade; river banks were dug up and panned; small pieces stored in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; Sudan kings traded two thirds and kept the rest – legendary displays of wealth)
* Eleventh century
  + Most people still herding animals and growing food
  + Some people converted to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + Great trading cities: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* Timbuktu
  + Founded in 1100
  + Largest of the trading cities by 1500s – population 25 000
  + North of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ River
  + Surrounded by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + City contained Sankore Mosque (also a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_); library, public baths, shops, merchant offices
  + Night life – public singing and dancing
  + Declined with the fall of the Sudanic kingdoms in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ century
  + Describe the remains of Timbuktu as you see them in Figure 12-15: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Ghana, Mali and Songhai**

* Ghana
  + Earliest known kingdom of Sudan
  + Most powerful in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ centuries
  + Wealth and power based on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ deposits
  + Controlled trading town of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ after conquering Sanhaja Berbers of the western Sahara
  + Almoravids (Muslim group) conquered Ghana (and Morocco) in 11th century and Ghana lost its power
* Mali
  + Mandinka peoples living farther south along the Niger gained more power and in the 13th Century conquered the remnants of Ghana – beginning of the kingdom of Mali
  + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (1312-1337) was an important Mali ruler; went to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in 1318 with salves, camel and gold; attracted Muslim scholars to his cities creating a sophisticated urban culture
  + War eventually broke out over \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and the kingdom weakened
* Songhai
  + Developed along the Niger River in the 14th century and took control of the trading centre of Gao
  + Sunni Ali (1464-1492) conquered former lands of Mali and Ghana
  + \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (leader following Ali) created a professional \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ army
  + Civil war broke out over succession issues after Muhammad lost the throne in 1528
  + A Moroccan army (equipped with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) defeated the Songhai army in 1591; eventually lost control due to vastness of desert
  + Widespread \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ devastated the Sudan around the same time
  + European merchants became active along the Guinea Coast – new route for gold and slave trade
* Explain the changing boundaries of the kingdoms of Ghana, Mali and Songhai as shown in Figure 12-17: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Civilizations of Africa Notes – Part 2

West Africa and the Guinea Coast

Social Studies 8 – Ms. McDade

November 4, 2016

In each set of empty square brackets, [\_\_\_\_\_\_], indicate which characteristic of civilization the point in your notes falls under. (OR – organized religion, CG – centralized government, SS – social structure, AC – arts and culture, OC – organized commerce, TOK – transfer of knowledge, PW – public works, TI – technological innovation)

**Introduction**

* West Africa stretches from the mouth of the Senegal River to the modern nation of Cameroun
* The natural environment is varied – rain-forest belt along the coast and a savanna dominated hinterland which gives way to the Sahel

**Village Life**

* For thousands of years, life centred around small agricultural villages within the forest [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* Village fields were cleared during the dry season using a technique called “slash and burn” in which trees were cut down and debris was burned [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* Ash from the “slash and burn” technique provided soil nutrients but the fields could only be cultivated for a few years.
* The primary crop was yams; they were soaked and pounded into a paste that was mixed with water and boiled (dough was known as fufu); it was sometimes combined with vegetables and meat and served as stew [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* Meals were communal affairs [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* Farmers also produced palm oil (used for cooking, as a fuel and as cosmetic) which was heavily traded with peoples of the Sudan [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* Palm trees were private property of individual families [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* The more trees a family owned, the higher their social status [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* Like palm, kola nuts (yes, your brain is on the right track - they are related to cola – they contain the stimulant caffeine) were an important crop in terms of their trade value [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* Growers of kola trees were also granted high social status [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* Kola nuts were given to travelers and guests to show hospitality [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* In addition to palm oil and kola nuts, the peoples of the forest traded salt produced along the sea coast for leather, iron and gold produced farther inland [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* Some larger societies developed in the eastern part of the the region (present-day Nigeria and Cameroun)
* A Muslim leader named Oduduwa arrived from Mecca and established several kingdoms including Oyo, Ife and Benin [\_\_\_\_\_\_]

**The Kingdoms of the Guinea Coast**

* Most kingdoms along the Guinea Coast were small city-states scattered throughout the region [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* The city of Ife has always been considered one of the most sacred of the Yoruba peoples [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* By 1200, bronze sculpture was a popular art form in Ife [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* By 1400 Benin was the first kingdom to grow beyond the status of city-state [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* Ewuare the Great (1440-1473) was the most important Benin ruler – he was a wise man, a warrior a great magician and he ruled 201 towns and villages [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* Information about Ewuare the Great is according to oral tradition [\_\_\_\_\_\_]

**Contact with the Portuguese**

* The Portuguese became allies and trading partners of kingdoms and city states of the West Coast of Africa in the late 1400’s (Benin was important) [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* Sons of the king were taught Portuguese so they could deal easily with newcomers [\_\_\_\_\_\_][\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* African traders were shrewd bargainers and negotiations about the price and quantity of goods could go on for days or weeks [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* Africans insisted on fairness and honesty [\_\_\_\_\_\_]

Using Sculpture as a Primary Source

* The earliest sculptures in West Africa were created by the Nok (900 BCE – 200 CE) and they worked in terra cotta and bronze [\_\_\_\_\_\_][\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* The Nok paid much attention to the head because they believed that the head was the origin of a person’s life force [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* The Ife began to create their works around 1000 CE and their sculptures were used to enhance the power and prestige of Ife rulers [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* The Benin rulers became very wealthy and powerful through trade and their sculpture developed between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* The purpose of Benin Sculpture was two-fold
  + Religious and spiritual reasons [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
  + Decorations for the royal palace of the Benin kings (depict great events of the ruler’s life and his or her actions) [\_\_\_\_\_\_][\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* The Ife and Benin peoples created bronze art – the copper for the bronzes came from the Air region of the Sahara and was acquired through trade with the peoples of the Sudan [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* The Ife and Benin peoples used the lost wax process for sculpture (make a mould of wax of the figure and pour the molten bronze into the mould) [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* The Benin peoples also created bas-relief sculptures (figures are carved on a flat surface and are raised only slightly) [\_\_\_\_\_\_]

**The Slave Trade in West Africa**

* African slaves before the arrival of the Portuguese
  + African slaves were usually prisoners of war or criminals [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
  + Considered to be unpaid labourers who could be bought and sold but were not the property of their purchasers [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
  + A slave became a low status member of the purchaser’s tribe or clan group [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
  + Slaves could purchase their freedom with proceeds from their own garden [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
  + Slaves could marry into his or her new clan which would result in freedom [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
  + Slaves could rise to positions of power and wealth [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* African slaves purchased by Europeans
  + Were possessions to be bought and sold [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
  + Could not buy their freedom [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
  + Could not marry relatives of their purchasers [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
  + Most were shipped to the Americas to work as agricultural labourers [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* In the 1600s, the demand by Europeans for slaves was greater than the number being supplied by the Africans [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* Traditional relationships among African states and groups broke down between the 16th and 19th as a result of the continual conflict caused by raids and wars to capture slaves [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* The Oyo kingdom cam to power in the 17th and 18th centuries; power was seized through military conquest and income from trade [\_\_\_\_\_\_][\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* The military strength of the Oyo lay in their cavalry [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* The Oyo got horses by first trading slaves for European goods on the coastal areas they dominated then trading this food an additional slaves with the peoples of the Sudan [\_\_\_\_\_\_]
* When the slave trade ended in the 1830s the Oyo rulers raised taxes to make up for lost revenues which led to civil unrest and the collapse of the Oyo kingdom in the mid-nineteenth century [\_\_\_\_\_\_]

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| --- | --- |
| ART AND CULTURE | ORGANIZED RELIGION |
| SOCIAL STRUCTURE | ORGANIZED COMMERCE |
| CENTRALIZED GOVERNMENT | TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE |
| PUBLIC WORKS | TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION |

Trans-Saharan Trade and life in the Sudan

* In present-day Sahara, people farmed and fished for a living 8000 years ago
* We know this information because people left rock paintings
* By 4000 BCE the Sahara dried out and most of the surface water gave way to a “sea of sand”
  + Most people migrated to the margins of the desert, only a few survived in the tiny oases
* Economy of the Sahel and Sudan – agriculture
  + Sahel – crop farming by 2000 BCE but mostly cattle herding
  + South Sudan – farming (more rain than the North)
  + Main crops – sorghum and millet (types of grain that were high in protein and vitamins)
* People ate porridge with added vegetables and herb; not much meat
* Fields were cleared by fire and remaining ash was fertilizer
* Division of labour
  + Men cleared fields and prepared the land for planting
  + Women weeded and cared for the developing crops; responsible for separating husks from grains (winnowing) and preparing meals
* Everyone participated in the harvest
* The driving force behind the organization and development of West African civilization was trade
  + Traded to North Africa and Europe
  + Traded gold, salt and eventually slaves
  + Largest obstacle to trade was the Sahara desert (first crossing in 1000 BCE and involved horses which were unsuitable; camels were introduced in the fourth century and made the desert crossing more feasible)
  + 2 main trade routes through the desert both went through Taghaza (source of salt)
* “The Maghreb” translates as the land of the setting sun (i.e. the west) and refers to the western area of North Africa
* 4 types of caravans were regularly crossing the Sahara by 600 CE
  + Military (village raiding)
  + Religious (Muslims going to Mecca)
  + Small commercial (5-100 camels; 32-36km/ day)
  + Large commercial (500-2000 camels; 26km/ day; increased size = increased protection)
* Took ~80 days to cross the Sahara
* All About the Camel
  + Camels not suited to work with humans – bad tempered, difficult to train, spits when angry
  + Camel perks: carry large quantities of fluid for a long time, carry heavy loads for long distances, travel faster than horses or donkeys, source of milk, built-in sunglasses
  + Two types: small white used for higher speed crossings with smaller loads, larger brown used for slower crossings with heavier, bulkier loads
  + Wounded camel could delay a caravan for days and could lead to death for the entire caravan
* Danger in the desert
  + Large temperature range (45°C daytime highs, -5°C nighttime lows)
  + Sandstorms
  + Thirst (4L of water/ person/ day; water carried in goat-skin bags refilled at springs/ oases)
  + Tuareg people (nomads of the desert; could help or hinder progress)
* Important commodities
  + Slaves (Arabs of the Mediterranean and Europeans wanted them)
  + Horses (rulers of Sudanic kingdoms wanted them)
  + Salt (used to preserve meat and fish; worth its weight in gold)
  + Gold (highly secretive – silent trade; river banks were dug up and panned; small pieces stored in feather quills; Sudan kings traded two thirds and kept the rest – legendary displays of wealth)
* Eleventh century
  + Most people still herding animals and growing food
  + Some people converted to Islam
  + Great trading cities: Gao and Timbuktu
* Timbuktu
  + Founded in 1100
  + Larges of the trading cities by 1500s – population 25 000
  + North of the Niger River
  + Surrounded by farms
  + City contained Sankore Mosque (also a university); library, public baths, shops, merchant offices
  + Night life – public singing and dancing
  + Declined with the fall of the Sudanic kingdoms in the 16th century

Ghana, Mali and Songhai

* Ghana
  + Earliest known kingdom of Sudan
  + Most powerful in 9th and 10th centuries
  + Wealth and power based on gold deposits
  + Controlled trading town of Awdaghost after conquering Sanhaja Berbers of the western Sahara
  + Almoravids (Muslim group) conquered Ghana (and Morocco) in 11th century and Ghana lost its power
* Mali
  + Mandinka peoples living farther south along the Niger gained more power and in the 13th Century conquered the remnants of Ghana – beginning of the kingdom of Mali
  + Mansa Musa (1312-1337) was an important Mali ruler; went to Mecca in 1318 with salves, camel and gold; attracted Muslim scholars to his cities creating a sophisticated urban culture
  + War eventually broke out over rules for succession and the kingdom weakened
* Songhai
  + Developed along the Niger River in the 14th century and took control of the trading centre of Gao
  + Sunni Ali (1464-1492) conquered former lands of Mali and Gahana
  + Askid Muhammad (leader following Ali) created a professional slave army
  + Civil war broke out over succession issues after Muhammad lost the throne in 1528
  + A Moroccan army (equipped with muskets) defeated the Songhai army in 1591; eventually lost control due to vastness of desert
  + Widespread famine devastated the Sudan around the same time
  + European merchants became active along the Guinea Coast – new route for gold and slave trade