

◀ City of Timbuktu in West Africa

Trade Networks of Asia and Africa

The Wealth of Timbuktu

“The inhabitants are very rich. . . . Grain and animals are abundant, so that the consumption of milk and butter is considerable. But salt is in very short supply because it is carried here from Tegaza, some 500 miles from Timbuktu. . . . The royal court is magnificent and very well organized. . . . This king makes war only upon neighboring enemies and upon those who do not want to pay him tribute.”

—Hassan ibn Muhammad, *The Description of Africa*, 1526

Objectives

- Learn about the role played by Muslims in world trade.
- Discover how great trading states rose in East Africa and West Africa.
- Find out how China dominated an important trade route across Asia.

🕒 Reading Skill

Ask Questions Asking questions when you read will help you organize your reading plan and get involved with the text. You can use your questions, for example, to set a reading purpose—answering the questions. Two ways to generate questions are to restate headings and to study the review questions at the end of the section.

Key Terms and People

Muhammad	navigation
Mansa Musa	Zheng He

Why It Matters While Native Americans were developing diverse cultures and civilizations, other civilizations thrived in Europe, Africa, and Asia.

🎯 **Section Focus Question: How did trade link Europe, Africa, and Asia?**

The Muslim Link in Trade

From earliest times, trade linked groups who lived at great distances from one another. As trade developed, merchants established regular trade routes. These merchants carried their culture with them as they traveled.

By the 1500s, a complex trade network linked Europe, Africa, and Asia. Much of this trade passed through the Arabian Peninsula in the Middle East. Ships from China and India brought their cargoes of spices, silks, and gems to ports on the Red Sea. The precious cargoes were then taken overland to markets throughout the Middle East.

Rise of Islam The growth in trade was also linked to the rise of Islam. This religion emerged on the Arabian Peninsula in the 600s. Its founder was Muhammad. His followers believed him to be a prophet. He taught that there is one true God. Followers of Islam, called Muslims, believed that the Quran (ku RAHN), the sacred book of Islam, contained the exact word of God as revealed to Muhammad.

Islam was transmitted rapidly through conquest and trade. Arab armies swept across North Africa and into Spain. Muslim merchants also spread their religion far into Africa, and from Persia to India. Millions of people across three continents became Muslims.

Advances in Learning Arab scholars made remarkable contributions to mathematics, medicine, and astronomy. They helped develop algebra and later passed it along to Europe. Arab astronomers measured the size of Earth, supporting the Greek belief that Earth was a sphere. Arabs also made important advances in technology. They built ships with large, triangular sails that allowed captains to use the wind even if it changed direction.

Checkpoint How did Islam spread?

The African Link in Trade

Africa has a long history of trade, going back as far as 3100 B.C., when the great civilization of Egypt arose. Egyptian traders sailed throughout the eastern Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea to bring home cedar logs, silver, and horses. Following routes south from Egypt, they traded for ivory, spices, copper, and cattle.

East African Trade Centers About A.D. 1000, trade centers began to appear in eastern Africa. The most powerful was Zimbabwe (zim BAH bway), which became the center of a flourishing empire in the 1400s. Zimbabwe lay on the trade route between the east coast and the interior of Africa. Traders passing through Zimbabwe had to pay taxes on their goods.

Trade brought prosperity to a number of cities along the east coast of Africa. Kilwa, the chief trading center, attracted merchant ships from as far away as China. Kilwa traders did a brisk trade with the African interior, exchanging cloth, pottery, and manufactured goods for gold, ivory, and furs. An active slave trade also developed between East Africa and Asia across the Indian Ocean.

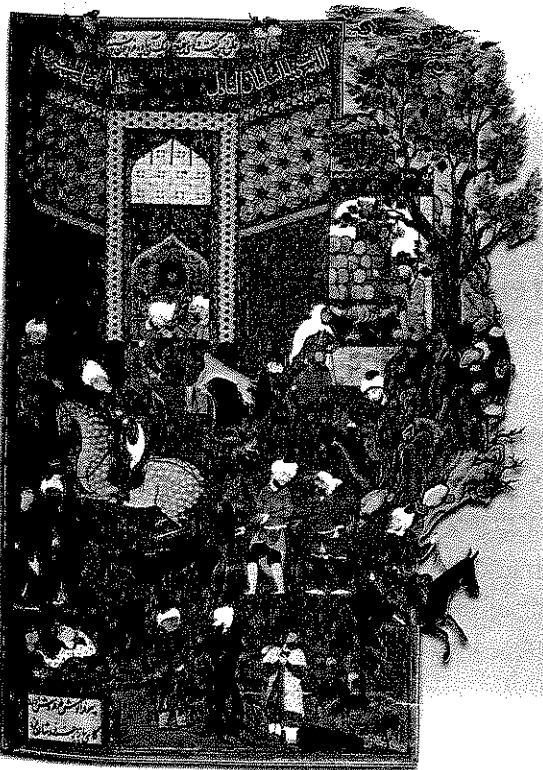
Vocabulary Builder

sphere (sfeer) *n.* rounded shape



Ask Questions

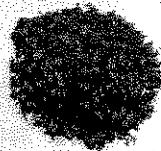
Preview the headings on the next two pages. Turn them into questions that you would expect to find the answers to as you read.



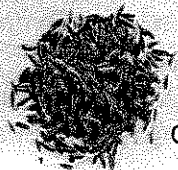
Cardamom



Curry



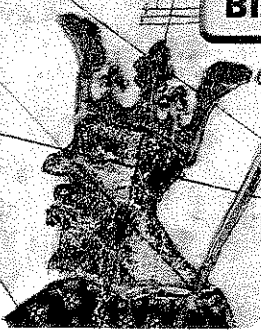
Cumin



Merchants in the Middle East

At outdoor bazaars, Muslim merchants bought and sold goods from around the world. Probably the most valuable goods sold at this Persian bazaar were spices from Southeast Asia, such as the ones shown here. **Critical Thinking: Link Past and Present** How is this bazaar similar to a modern shopping area? How is it different?

Biography Quest



Mansa Musa 1280?–1337

Every Muslim must make a *hajj*, or pilgrimage, to the holy city of Mecca. Mansa Musa's *hajj* became famous. His escort included 80 camels, each carrying 300 pounds of gold. Thousands of servants and officials accompanied the emperor across the Sahara.

Word of the emperor's *hajj* reached Europe. A Portuguese mapmaker described Mansa Musa as "the richest and most noble king in all the land."

Biography Quest online

How did Mansa Musa's *hajj* affect the Egyptian economy?

For: The answer to the question about Mansa Musa

Visit: PHSchool.com

Web Code: mvd-1013

West African Trade Centers Trade networks also linked the Middle East and West Africa. Desert nomads guided caravans, or groups of camels and their cargo, across the vast Sahara, the largest desert in the world.

Ghana was the first major center of trade in West Africa. The kingdom was located between the sources of salt in the desert and the gold fields farther south. By the ninth century, the demand for gold had grown in the Middle East. On the other hand, people in West Africa needed salt in their diet to prevent dehydration in the hot tropical climate. As the trade in gold and salt increased, the rulers of Ghana became rich.

Shifting trade routes and disruptions caused by war gradually led Ghana to weaken. In the 1200s, the kingdom was absorbed into the empire of Mali. Mali reached its height under the Muslim ruler Mansa Musa. As Mali prospered, its great city of Timbuktu became a center of learning. Merchants from Mali traded throughout the region for kola nuts, food, and, of course, gold.

In the 1400s, Mali had a number of weak rulers. When nomads captured Timbuktu in 1433, the empire had been in decline for some time. It would soon be replaced by Songhai.

The rulers of Songhai captured Timbuktu in 1468. Songhai rulers restored the city as a center of Islamic learning. Trade across the Sahara expanded,

which brought wealth to the Songhai Empire. Salt, gold, and captives for sale as slaves passed through Songhai on the way to Muslim markets in the north.

Checkpoint What trading kingdoms arose in West Africa?

The East Asian Link in Trade

As early as 221 B.C., a strong ruler had unified China into a single empire. Later rulers added to the empire until it covered a large part of the continent of Asia. Highways, canals, and a postal system linked China together.

As China's empire expanded, so did its trade. China established trade links with India, Korea, Japan, the Middle East, and Africa. China's trade centers grew into cities. By the 1200s, Hangzhou (HAN JOW) was one of the world's largest cities.

World Traders China had a higher level of technology than any other civilization of the time. Around 1050, the Chinese invented printing with movable type. This was about 400 years before this technology was developed in Europe.

The Chinese made great advances in navigation. Navigation is the science of locating the position and plotting the course of ships. The Chinese invented the magnetic compass, which made it possible for ships to sail out of sight of land and still find their way home.

By the 1300s Chinese ships were sailing trade routes that stretched from Japan to East Africa. The Chinese explorer Zheng He made several voyages with a fleet of more than 300 giant ships. The fleet visited 30 nations throughout Asia and Africa, trading silks and pottery for spices, gems, medicinal herbs, and ivory.

Spice Trade and the Silk Road Chinese silks, bronze goods, pottery, and spices flowed west from China along a route known as the Silk Road. The Silk Road was one of the great trade routes of ancient times. It was not really a single road but a series of routes that stretched about 5,000 miles from Xi'an (SHE AHN) in China to Persia.

Merchants on the Silk Road brought silk and other goods from China across Asia for sale in Middle Eastern and European markets. Along the way they traded in the Middle East for products like cloves, nutmeg, and peppercorns from the Spice Islands in Southeast Asia. The Silk Road declined in importance when alternative sea routes were discovered.

Checkpoint What was the Silk Road?

★ Looking Back and Ahead The trade links between Asia and Africa developed at a time when much of Europe was isolated. In the next section, you will learn about the development of Europe. You will also see how Europe began to look toward the riches of Asia.



This Chinese figurine is made of jade, a precious trade item.

Vocabulary Builder

alternative (awl TUR nuh tiv) *adj.*
providing a choice between two or among more than two things

Section 3 | Check Your Progress

Progress Monitoring **online**

For: Self-test with instant help
Visit: PHSchool.com
Web Code: mva-1013

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

- (a) Recall** What role did the Muslim world play in trade?
(b) Interpret Maps Locate the Arabian Peninsula on a world map. Why was its location ideal for a trading center?
- (a) Recall** Why were gold and salt important in West African trade?
(b) Contrast How did trade in East Africa differ from trade in West Africa?

Reading Skill

- 3. Ask Questions** Look at the questions you asked, and look at the section review questions. Did the reading answer those questions? How did previewing help you set purposes and increase your understanding?

Key Terms

- 4.** Write two definitions for the key term *navigation*—one a formal definition for a teacher, the other an informal definition for a younger child.

Writing

- 5.** Consider the following thesis statement: The trading network between Asia, Africa, and Europe began a useful exchange of ideas and products. Write one or two paragraphs to develop that thesis.