



WEST AFRICAN EMPIRES

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WEST AFRICAN EMPIRES

- Mani Idea (Objective) :



- West African Empires grew rich from trading salt and gold.

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- **Lecture Focus (Essential Question) :**



- **Would you rather have a pound of Gold or Salt? Both of these goods were important to West Africans and initially helped them build large trading empires.**

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- Stories of golden lands south of the Sahara Desert seemed hard to believe.

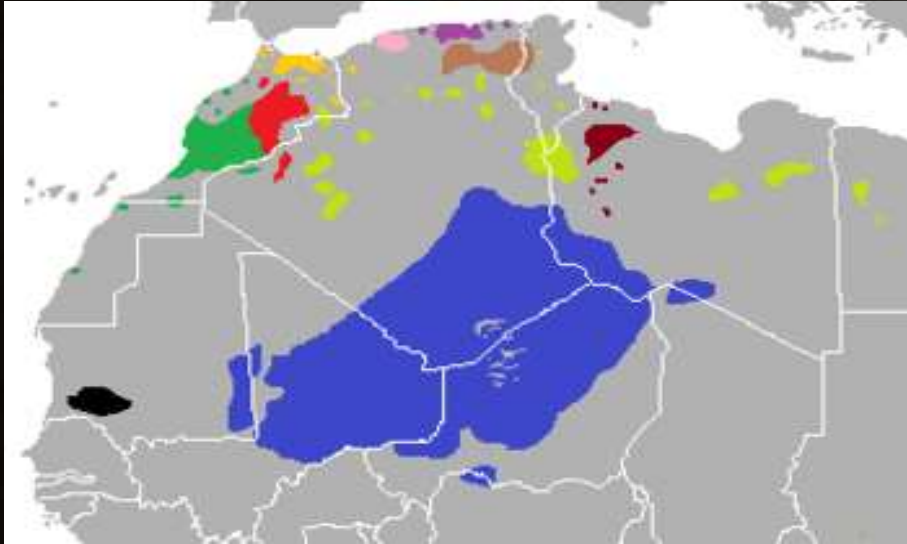


- Legends of a land “where gold grows like plants in the same way as carrots do, and is plucked at sunset by the natives”, were told by travelers all over Africa.

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- The **Berbers** who told similar tales claimed to have seen the gold with their own eyes.



- **The Berbers** - were an ethnic group indigenous to North Africa.

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- The Berbers were the first people to settle in Northern Africa and were also the first settlers to cross the Sahara Desert to trade with people in Western Africa.



- They began making this trading journey on a regular basis in about 400 B.C.E.

WEST AFRICAN EMPIRES



- For hundreds of years, Berber traders carried goods on horses and donkeys, however due to the hot Sahara climate these animals often died.

WEST AFRICAN EMPIRES

- The Romans finally conquered Carthage in the Punic Wars, which lasted from 264 B.C.E. to 146 B.C.E. and they gained control of North Africa...which was where the Berbers lived.



- The Romans saw how the Berbers transported their goods and understood that horses and donkeys were not the right animal to use.

WEST AFRICAN EMPIRES



- The Romans quickly introduced camels from central Asia to the Berbers, which actually revolutionized their trade business.

WEST AFRICAN EMPIRES

- Camels were nicknamed “Ships of the desert”.
- Their broad feet did not sink in the sand and their humps stored fat to be used as a food source.
- In addition, camels could travel many days without water.



WEST AFRICAN EMPIRES

- Traders grouped hundreds, maybe even thousands, of camels together to form large trading **Caravans**.



- **Caravans** - a group of people, especially traders and explorers, traveling together across a large area together.

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- These caravans traded salt and fine cloth from Northern Africa and gold and ivory from Western Africa.



- This trade became incredibly profitable and led to the growth of cities all over Western Africa.

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- Eventually, the rulers of these cities began to build a series of empires.



- During the Middle Ages, these African empires were bigger than most European Kingdoms in wealth and size, the first of which was called Ghana.

WEST AFRICAN EMPIRES

- **Questions:**

- **1)** Who were the Berbers and what did they start in Africa?
- **2)** What were the original animals used by the Berbers for trading and what was wrong with them?
- **3)** What new animals were introduced by the Romans and why were they better suited for the Sahara climate?
- **4)** What was a Caravan and how was it used by the Berbers?

WEST AFRICAN EMPIRES

- **Questions:**
- **1) Who were the Berbers and what did they start in Africa?**
 - **First people to settle in Northern Africa and began a trading network**
- **2) What were the original animals used by the Berbers for trading and what was wrong with them?**
 - **Horses and donkeys, they could not survive the harsh environment of the Sahara**
- **3) What new animals were introduced by the Romans and why were they better suited for the Sahara climate?**
 - **Camels, large feet, humps for storing fat and needed less water**
- **4) What was a Caravan and how was it used by the Berbers?**
 - **People traveling together across a large area together.**

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RISE OF GHANA

- Ghana rose to power in the 400's C.E.



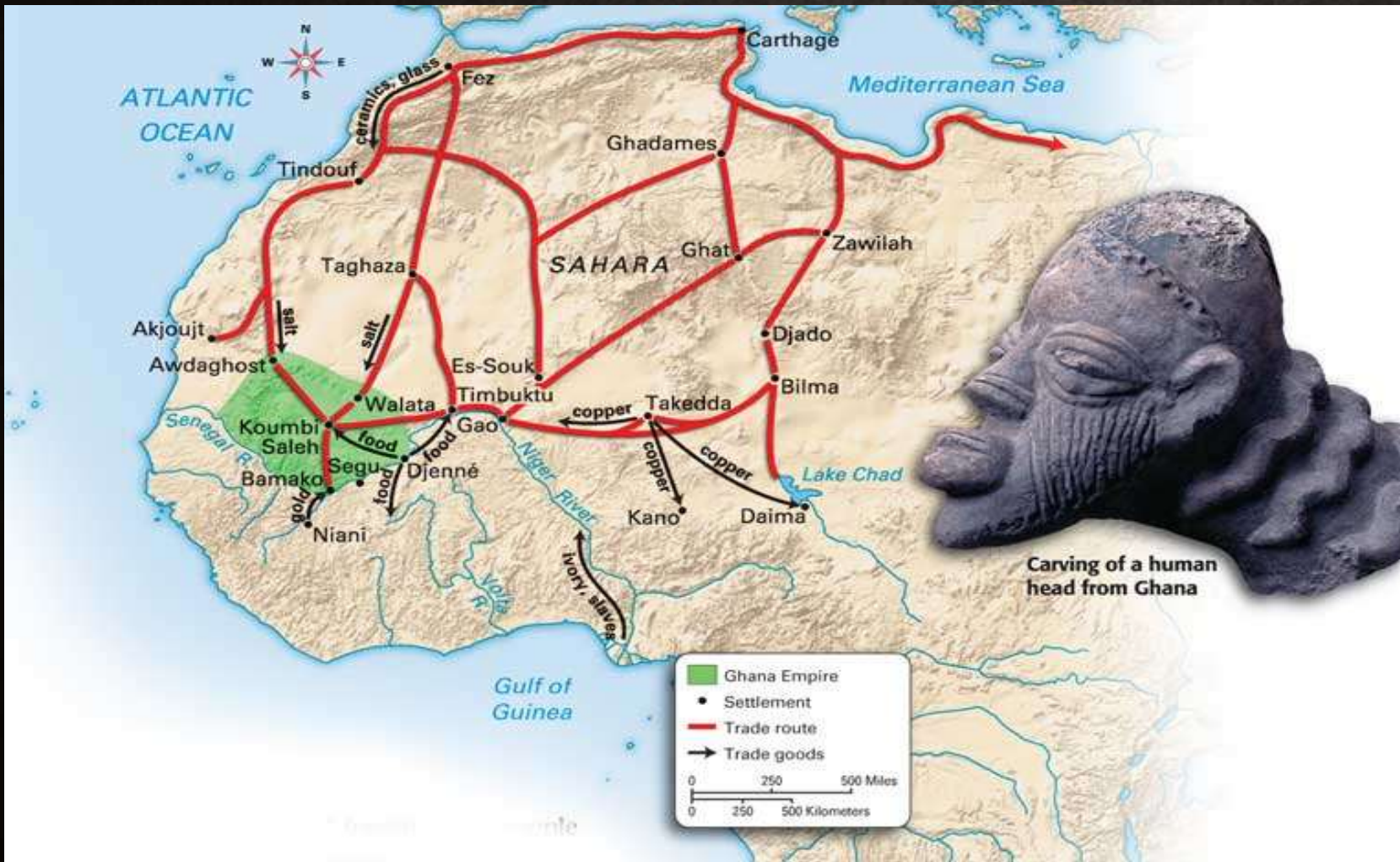
- It was a “crossroads of trade,” a place where many trade routes came together.

RISE OF GHANA



RISE OF GHANA

- Trade routes reached across the Sahara into Northern Africa and down along the Niger river to kingdoms in the rain forest.



- Some of these trade routes even extended all the way to Africa's eastern coast.

RISE OF GHANA

- For traders to meet, they had to pass through Ghana.



- Passage through Ghana had its price though...a tax paid to the rulers of Ghana...these taxes made the empire extremely rich.

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RISE OF GHANA

- Why did the traders pay these taxes?



- First, Ghana knew how to make iron weapons and like many other ancient empires, they used these weapons to conquer their neighbors.

RISE OF GHANA

- Second, Ghana trained a huge army.



- It has been said that during times of conflict the Ghana military could put 200,000 soldiers on the battlefield.

RISE OF GHANA

- Third, people wanted the trade items offered in Ghana, especially salt and gold, and were willing to pay almost any price.



- West Africans needed salt to flavor and preserve their food so it would not spoil.

RISE OF GHANA

- They paid taxes to get salt from Berber pens in the Sahara.



- In turn, the Berbers paid taxes to get gold so they could buy goods from European and Arab traders.

RISE OF GHANA

- **Questions:**

- 1) Why was Ghana known as a “cross roads of trade”?
- 2) What did traders have to pay in order to gain passage and conduct business in Ghana?
- 3) What was significant about the Ghana military?
- 4) What was salt used for during the Middle Ages in Africa?

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RISE OF GHANA

- **Questions:**
- **1) Why was Ghana known as a “cross roads of trade”?**
 - **It was a place where many trade routes came together**
- **2) What did traders have to pay in order to gain passage and conduct business in Ghana?**
 - **Taxes, that made Ghana extremely rich**
- **3) What was significant about the Ghana military?**
 - **It was huge and stood at 200,000 soldiers**
- **4) What was salt used for during the Middle Ages in Africa?**
 - **Flavoring and preserving food**

RISE OF MALI

- Ghana's power eventually declined.



- The discovery of new gold mines outside Ghana's control reduced the taxes that they were able to collect.

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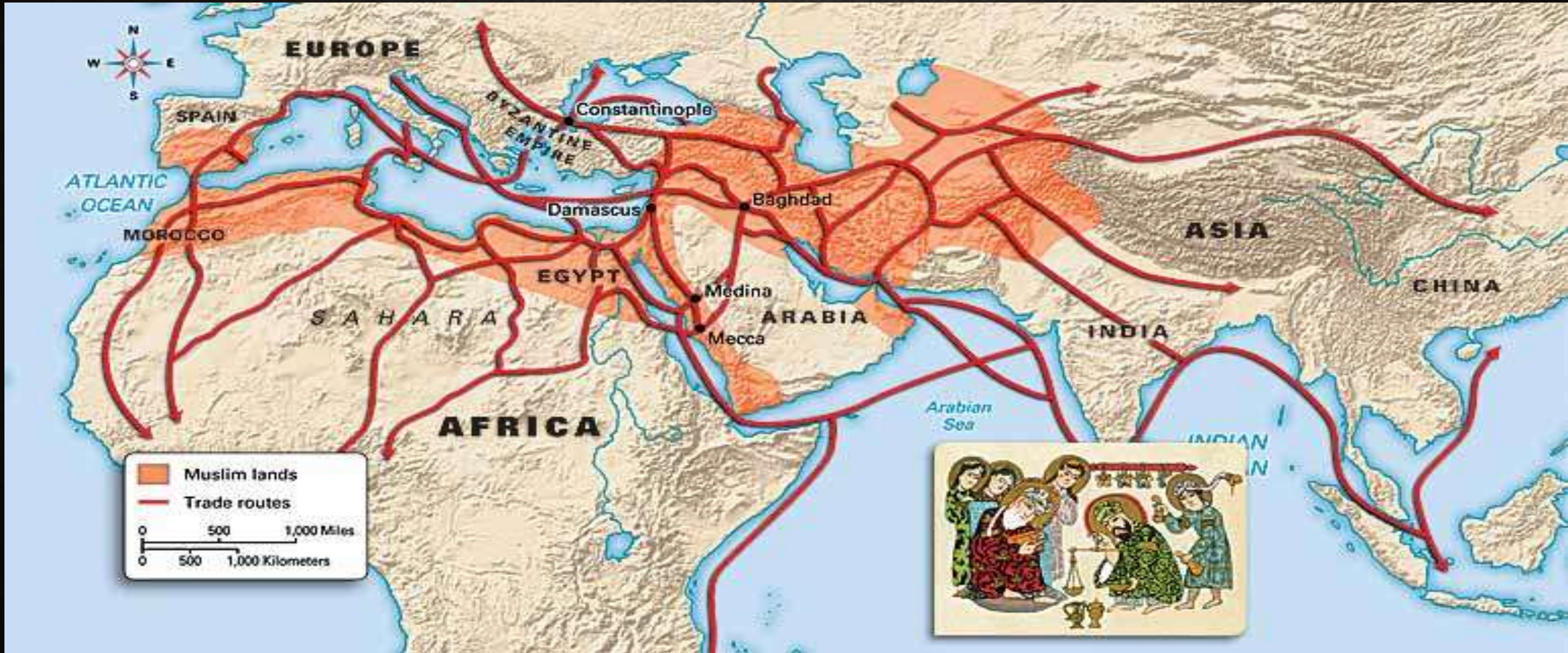
RISE OF MALI



- In addition, heavy farming robbed soil of rich minerals and made it harder to grow enough crops to feed everyone in Ghana.

RISE OF MALI

- Constant fighting also hurt Ghana.



- Ghana's rulers had accepted the religion of Islam, but they often fought with North African Muslims who wanted to build empires of their own.

RISE OF MALI

- In the 1200's C.E., the Kingdom of **Mali** conquered what was left of Ghana.
- West African **Griots** (GREE-Ohz), or story tellers, give credit to a great warrior king named **Sundiata Keita**, the "Lion Prince."



RISE OF MALI

- Sundiata, who ruled from 1230 C.E. to 1255 C.E., seized the capital of Ghana in 1240 C.E.



- He then won control of lands from the Atlantic coast to the trading city of **Timbuktu**.

RISE OF MALI



- **Timbuktu** is a city in the West African nation of Mali just north of the Niger River on the southern edge of the Sahara Desert.

RISE OF MALI



- The town originally started out as a seasonal settlement during Ghana's reign, eventually becoming a permanent settlement early in the 12th century... after a shift in trading routes because of Sundiata Timbuktu flourished from the trade in salt, gold, ivory and slaves.

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RISE OF MALI



- Sundiata's conquest put Mali in control of a vast amount of gold mining areas, allowing him to rebuild the gold and salt trade in Western Africa.

RISE OF MALI

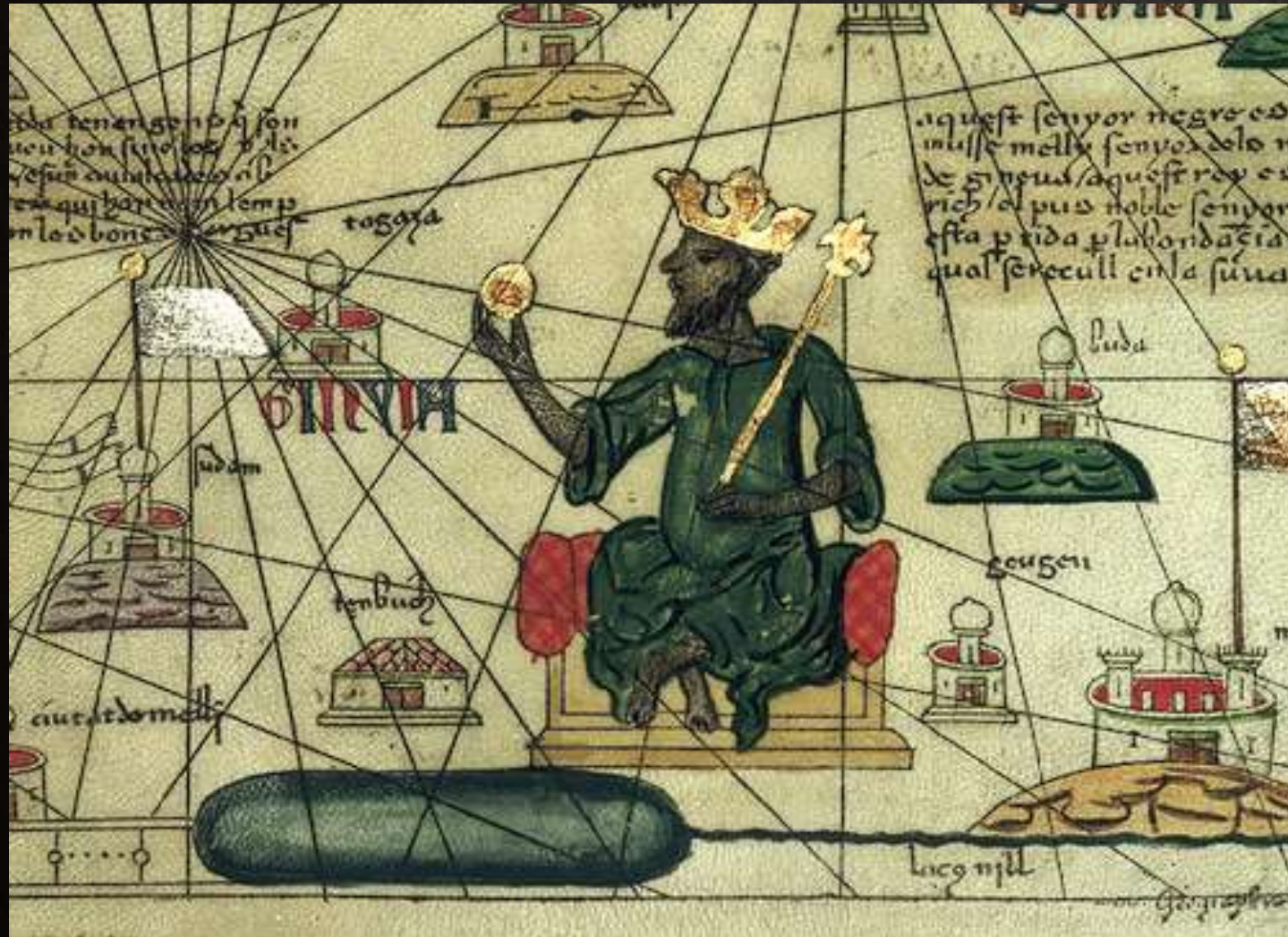
- **Questions:**
- **1)** What started the decline of Ghana's power?
- **2)** What Empire conquered what was left of the Ghana empire?
- **3)** African Griots told stories about a great warrior king, what was his name and what did it mean?
- **4)** What was significant about the trading city of Timbuktu during Ghana's Empire and Mali's Empire?

RISE OF MALI

- **Questions:**
- **1) What started the decline of Ghana's power?**
 - **The discovery of new gold mines outside of the empire**
- **2) What Empire conquered what was left of the Ghana empire?**
 - **The Mali Empire**
- **3) African Griots told stories about a great warrior king, what was his name and what did it mean?**
 - **Sundiata Keita, "The Lion Prince"**
- **4) What was significant about the city of Timbuktu during Ghana's Empire and Mali's Empire?**
 - **Major trading center for surrounding areas**

RISE OF SONGHAI

- Mali began a slow decline after the death of its last strong king, **Mansa Musa**, in 1337 C.E.



- Mansa Musa captured the attention of the Arab world when he left his home in the West African kingdom of Mali to make a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324...unlike his grandfather Sundiata, Mansa Musa was a devout Muslim. (**Above: Mosque**)

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RISE OF SONGHAI

- Mansa Musa was a very wealthy king.
- He was said to have taken more than 500 people with him on the **Hajj**, each carrying a staff of solid gold.
- When Mansa Musa passed through the Egyptian city of Cairo, legends say he gave away so much gold that the price of gold fell, and the economy was affected for more than twenty years.
- The appearance of a wealthy king from a faraway land made a deep impression on the people he encountered, causing Mali to appear on maps throughout the Middle East and Europe.



RISE OF SONGHAI

- The kings who followed Mansa Musa failed to stop the Berber conquerors from invading Mali's lands.



- These Berber invaders even controlled the trading center of Timbuktu for a time.

RISE OF SONGHAI

- In 1448 C.E., **Sunni Ali**, the leader of the **Songhai**, stormed into Timbuktu and drove out the Berbers.



- He then began a campaign of conquest, using Songhai's location along the Niger River to his advantage.

RISE OF SONGHAI

- He ordered a fleet of war canoes to seize control of the river and all of its trade.



- His armies then swept westward into the Sahara, where they took control of all Berber salt mines.

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RISE OF SONGHAI

- By the time of his death in 1492 C.E., Sunni Ali had build the largest empire in Western Africa.



- The Songhai Empire lasted for almost 100 years, however in 1591 C.E., a small army from the Arab Kingdom of **Morocco** crossed the Sahara and prepared for war.

RISE OF SONGHAI

- Morocco soldiers with cannons, guns and gunpowder easily cut down Songhai soldiers that were only armed with swords, spears and bows.



- Within a few short months the Songhai empire was completely gone.

RISE OF SONGHAI

- **Questions:**

- **1)** Who was the last Emperor of Mali and what did the kings who followed fail to stop?
- **2)** What was the name of the leader and his people who stormed into Timbuktu and overthrew the Berbers?
- **3)** What new weapons were used by the Kingdom of Morocco to overthrow the Songhai Empire?

RISE OF SONGHAI

- **Questions:**

- **1) Who was the last Emperor of Mali and what did the kings who followed fail to stop?**

- **Mansa Musa and the kings who followed could not stop the invading Berbers**

- **2) What was the name of the leader and his people who stormed into Timbuktu and overthrew the Berbers?**

- **Sunni Ali and he was the leader of the Songhai**

- **3) What new weapons were used by the Kingdom of Morocco to overthrow the Songhai Empire?**

- **Cannons, guns and gunpowder**

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RISE OF SONGHAI



RISE OF SONGHAI

- **Connecting Across Time Question:**

- While camel caravans were important to Africa, there are many examples of modern day caravans. For example, the many cars in a train are like the many different camels in a caravan. Often times truckers will drive together in clumps to help with wind resistance and make travel easier. Cyclists often race in clumps as well.
 - Answer the following question in a well crafted 3-4 sentence open ended response.
- **What technological advances have allowed people to overcome geographic barriers for trading purposes?**

RISE OF SONGHAI

- **Connecting Across Time Question:**

- While camel caravans were important to Africa, there are many examples of modern day caravans. For example, the many cars in a train are like the many different camels in a caravan. Often times truckers will drive together in clumps to help with wind resistance and make travel easier. Cyclists often race in clumps as well.

- Answer the following question in a well crafted 3-4 sentence open ended response.

- **What technological advances have allowed people to overcome geographic barriers for trading purposes?**

- Answers will vary however, my ideas were air travel, Internet, specially build boats and trucks...ect...

THE WAY IT WAS



- Focus on Everyday Life: **Africa's Salt Mines**

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THE WAY IT WAS

- Salt mining began in the Sahara desert in the Middle Ages.



- Ancient miners worked underground and in sand dunes to extract solid blocks of salt.

THE WAY IT WAS

- The salt trade became a successful business for the African people.



- In ancient times, salt was so desirable that it was traded ounce for ounce against gold.

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THE WAY IT WAS

- There are so many salt deposits in Western Africa because part of the desert was once a shallow sea made up of salt water.



- When the sea dried up, all of the salt was left behind.

THE WAY IT WAS

- People need a small amount of salt to stay healthy.



- Salt is lost when people and animals sweat, so putting salt in food is a great way of making sure our bodies get it.

THE WAY IT WAS

- In ancient times before refrigerators or canned foods were invented, salt was used to keep foods from spoiling.



- Salt is also an important way to add a bit of flavor to bland foods.

THE WAY IT WAS

- **Questions:**

- **1)** How did salt deposits form in Western Africa?

- **2)** What made salt so valuable that it was actually traded for a value equal to gold?

THE WAY IT WAS

- **Questions:**

- **1) How did salt deposits form in Western Africa?**

- **As salty water dries, it leaves behind the salt in salt deposits**

- **2) What made salt so valuable that it was actually traded for a value equal to gold?**

- **It was needed to keep people healthy and to preserve and flavor food**

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HISTORY MYSTERY TIME



- History Mystery Time: Was “The Lion King” story based on the Mali legend of Sundiata?

HISTORY MYSTERY TIME

- Some Historians claim that *The Lion King* story, used in Walt Disney's film was stolen from the Mali people.



- The film's adaptation and later musical seem to be loosely based on Mali's founder, Sundiata Keita and his story is a well known oral tradition in Africa.

HISTORY MYSTERY TIME

- As evidence to support this claim, a research analysis and scholarly paper written in 1994 describes parallels between *The Lion King* and the epic Mali tale of Sundiata.



- Research also shows that the film drew upon William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and the Biblical *Prince of Egypt* tale as well.

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HISTORY MYSTERY TIME



- There are other Historians however, that believe stories of jealousy and conflict over royal succession are common across a number of cultures and that the *Lion King* just happened to have similar themes as Sundiata's tale.

HISTORY MYSTERY TIME