AFRICA BEFORE EUROPEAN ARRIVAL
DBQ

This task is based on the accompanying documents. Some of these documents have been edited for the purpose of this task. This task is designed to test your ability to work with historic documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of the document and the author's point of view

- ***Historical Context***

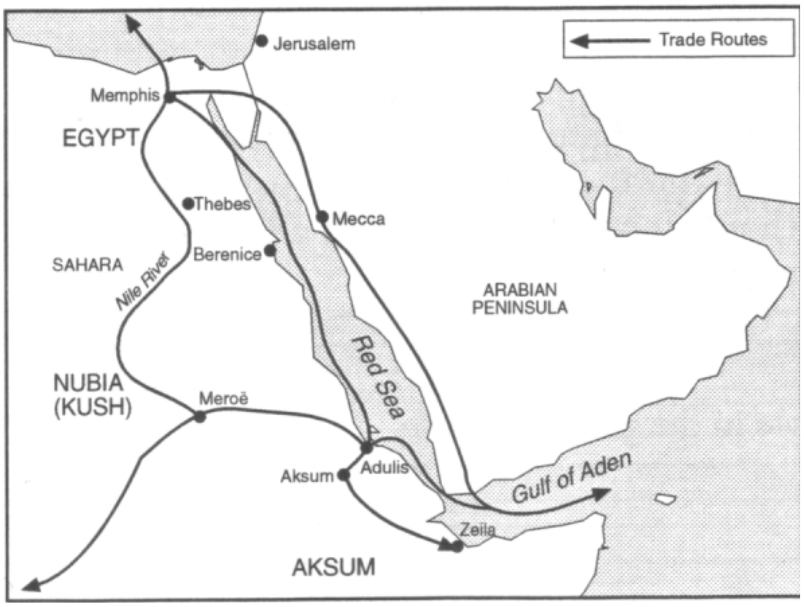
Africans had developed advanced civilizations before the Europeans arrived in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Beginning with Aksum (Ethiopia today) in East Africa in the 300's, the kingdoms, empires, and cities arose and declined. In west Africa, three empires- Ghana, Mali, and Songhai- controlled the gold and salt trade. Between 1000 and 1500, cities on Africa's east coast also gained wealth and power through trade. There were several centers of advanced civilization in Africa between 300 and 1400.

- ***Directions***

The following question is based on the accompanying documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of the document and the author's point of view. Be sure to:

1. Carefully read the document-based question. Consider what you already know about the topic. How would you answer the question if you had no documents to examine?
2. Now, read each document carefully, underlining key phrases and words that address the document-based question. You may also wish to make notes. Answer the questions which follow each document.
3. Based on your own knowledge and on the information found in the documents, formulate a thesis that directly answers the question.
4. Organize supportive and relevant information into a brief outline.
5. Write a well-organized essay proving your thesis. The essay should be logically presented and should include information both form the documents and from your own knowledge outside the documents.

Document 1: Aksum reached its height between 325 and 360. Aksum's location made it an important international trading center. This map shows the trade routes to and from Aksum between 300 and 700.



Q: How did Aksum's location enable it to become a trading center?

Document 2: Between 700 and 1067, the Kingdom of ancient Ghana rose in power and gained control of the trans-Saharan gold and salt trade. This description of the king's court in ancient Ghana was written by the Arab scholar, Al-Bakri.

"The court of appeal is held in a domed pavilion around which stand ten horses with gold embroidered trappings. Behind the king stand ten pages holding shields and swords decorated with gold, and on his right are the sons of the subordinate kings of his country, all wearing splendid garments and with their hair mixed with gold. The governor of the city sits on the ground before the king, and around him are ministers seated likewise. At the door of the pavilion are dogs…[wearing] collars of gold and silver, studded with a number of balls of the same metals."

Q: What evidence of wealth is described? Q: What evidence of an advanced political structure is described?

Document 3: This explanation for the wealth of Ghana is taken from *Through African Eyes.*

"The Arab traders of this region wanted gold as much as the Wangara wanted salt, but both had to pass through Ghana to trade…Ghana controlled land…it had the military forces…to maintain peace in the area, thereby assuring safe trade for the Arabs and the Wangara. Ancient Ghana was an extremely complex empire. It possessed many of the characteristics of powerful nations today: wealth based on trade, sufficient food to feed its people, income derived from taxes, social organization that ensured justice and efficient political control, a strong army equipped with advanced weapons, and a foreign policy that led to the peace and cooperation with other people."

Q: Explain ancient Ghana's role in the gold-salt trade.
Q: What characteristics of an advanced civilization did ancient Ghana possess?

Document 4: Mansa Musa expanded the Mali empire to twice the size of the Ghana empire it replaced. On his hajj to Mecca, Mansa Musa stopped in Cairo, Egypt, and was described by the Egyptian official in this way:

This man Mansa Musa, spread upon Cairo the flood of his generosity: there was no person, officer of the court, or holder of any office of the Sultanate who did not receive a sum of gold from him.

Q: What about Mansa Musa impressed the Egyptian official?

Document 5: In this excerpt, a Moroccan traveler describes the city of Timbuktu.

Here are many doctors, judges, priests, and other learned men that are well maintained at the king's costs. Various manuscripts and written books are brought here…and sold for more money than other merchandise.

Q: What about Timbuktu impressed the writer?

Document 6: Ibn Battuta traveled in Mali in 1352 and wrote this description in *Travels to Kingdom of Mali*.

They are seldom unjust, and have a greater hatred of injustice than any other people. Their sultan shows no mercy to anyone who is guilty of the least act of it. There is complete security in their country. Neither traveler nor inhabitant in it has anything to fear from robbers.

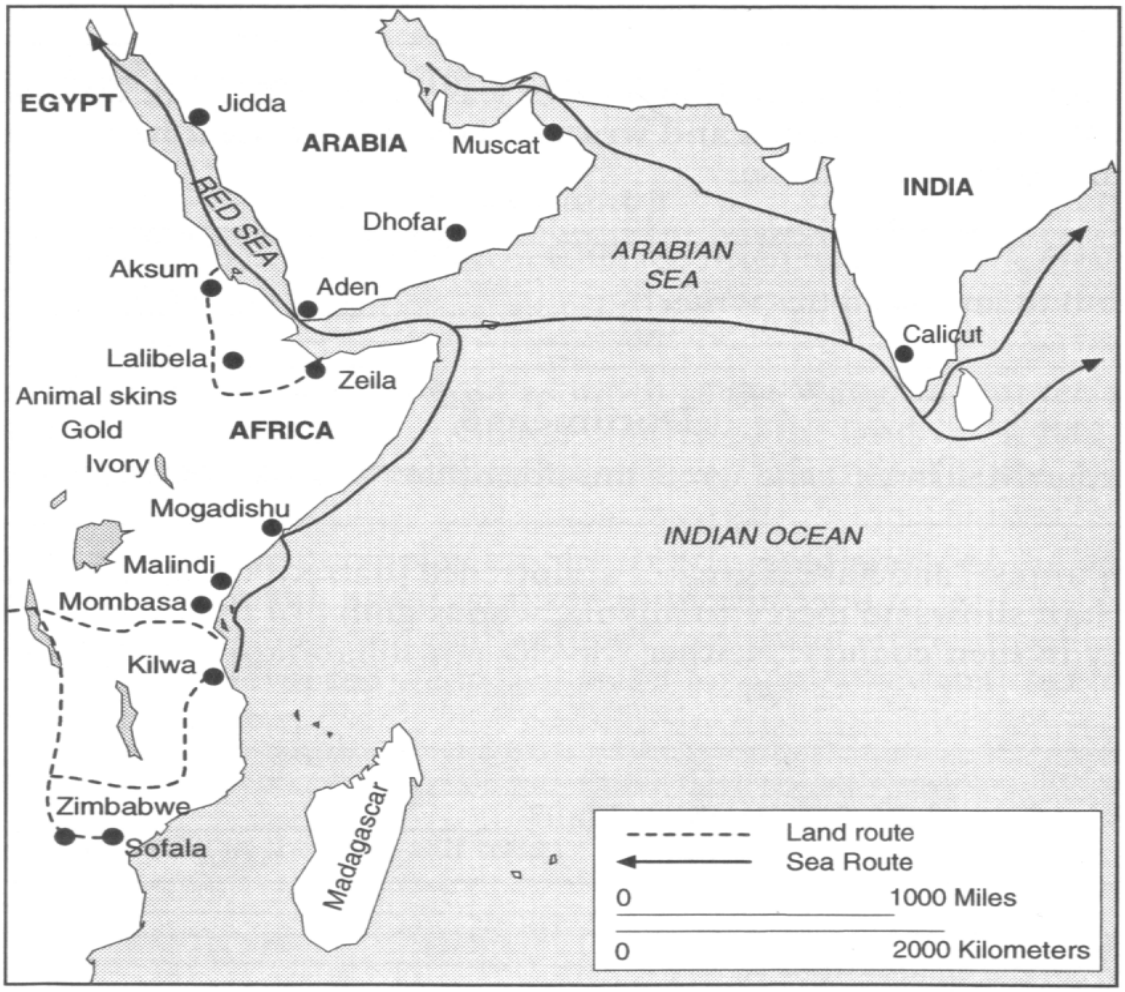
Q: what two things impressed Ibn Battuta about Mali?

Document 7: This description of the lost-wax process of making bronze sculpture comes from an oral account of an artisan.

> ***In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful. This account will show how the [Benin} figures are made. This work is one to cause wonder. Now this kind of work is done with clay, and wax, and red metal [copper], and solder [zinc] and lead, and fire… Next it is set aside to cool, then [the outside covering of clay] is broken off. Then you see a beautiful figure…***

Q: Why is the bronze statue described as a "wonder"?

Document 8: Ibn Battuta also visited Kilwa, an East African coastal city-state, in 1331 and described it as on of the most beautiful cities in the world. He admired the luxury enjoyed by the Muslim rulers and merchants. Kilwa controlled the overseas trade between the interior of Africa and sites around that part of the world. Study this map of East African trade in A.D. 1000.



Q: The sea routes connected what areas (countries and cities)?
Q: What products were brought from the interior of Africa to Kilwa by the land route?

ESSAY – NEXT PAGE

EVALUATE THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE AFRICAN EMPIRES, KINGDOMS, AND CITIES BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE EUROPEANS?

- **Task: Using information from the documents and your knowledge of world history write an essay in which you:**
  - **Discuss and evaluate the achievements of the people of Africa before the arrival of the Europeans.**
  - **Use at least 5 documents in your response**

Be sure to include specific historical details. Your essay must also include additional information from your knowledge of world history.

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