

# African Geography and Early History

(Page 497) Africa: center part of “Pangaea”

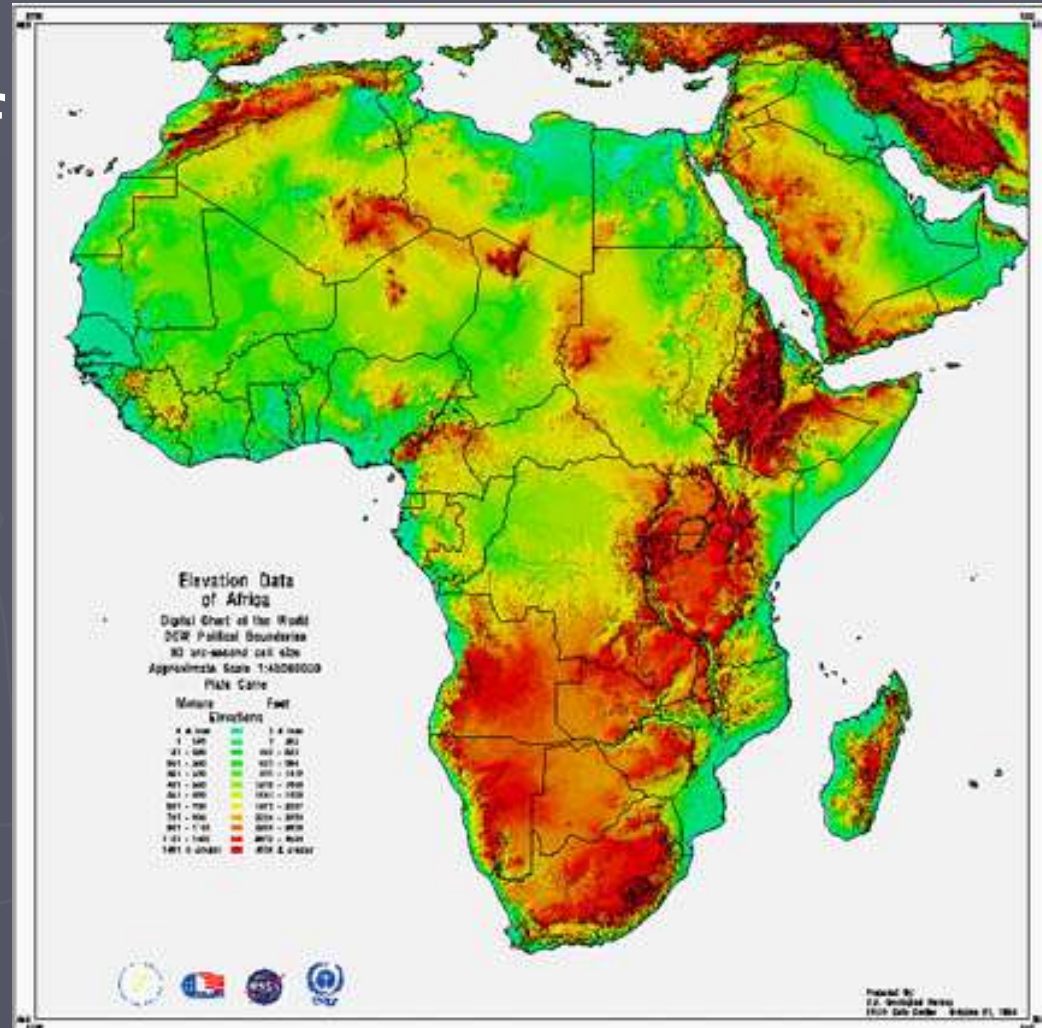
Landforms: Lowlands in the north and west,  
Highlands in the south and east.

Mt. Kilimanjaro: Highest Mt. in Africa



# Plateau: raised area of level land

- ▶ West Africa (source of Niger River)
- ▶ East Africa: Most of Eastern coastline of Africa. Escarpments (steep cliffs to the oceans)
- ▶ Great Rift Valley



# Waterways

- Parts of the Great Rift Valley have filled with water to form lakes. Lakes provide fresh water and fish. Hard to navigate (sail) due to waterfalls and rapids.



Wet Season

Victoria  
Falls



Dry Season

# Climates: Deserts

## ► Sahara Desert



- Sahel:  
semiarid  
region,  
desertification
- and drought
- Show videos



# Rainforest

- ▶ Located in Central and West Africa. It's created by the combination of being in the tropics (between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn), warm ocean currents, evaporation from the ocean, and wind currents blowing in the rain from the Atlantic.
- ▶ The canopy keeps moisture from evaporating, thus creates a greenhouse effect.
- ▶ The fallen leaves creates very fertile soil.
- ▶ There are more types of trees and animals in rainforests than in any other part of the world.



- ▶ Rainforests are being cut down for both firewood to make charcoal and to clear for farmland. "Slash and burn" clears away the land for farming, but the land quickly loses fertility without the canopy holding in the moisture and re-fertilization from fallen leaves. The trees have a hard time growing back due to temperatures from direct sun shining. The rainforests are quickly shrinking!



# Savannas: flat grasslands with scattered trees and shrubs

## ► Serengeti Plains



Will's  
PPT

# Africa's Diverse Cultures



# Swahili



# Arab



# Ashanti



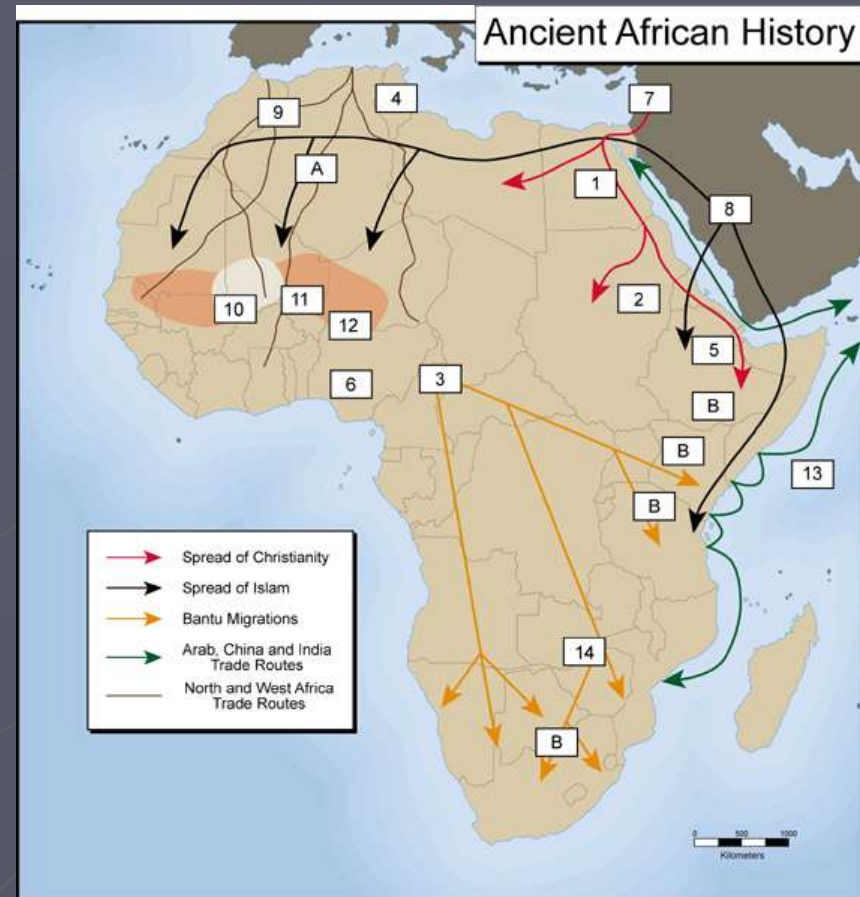
# Bantu



SS7G4: Students will describe the diverse cultures of the people who live in Africa.

SS7G4A: Explain the difference between an ethnic group and a religious group

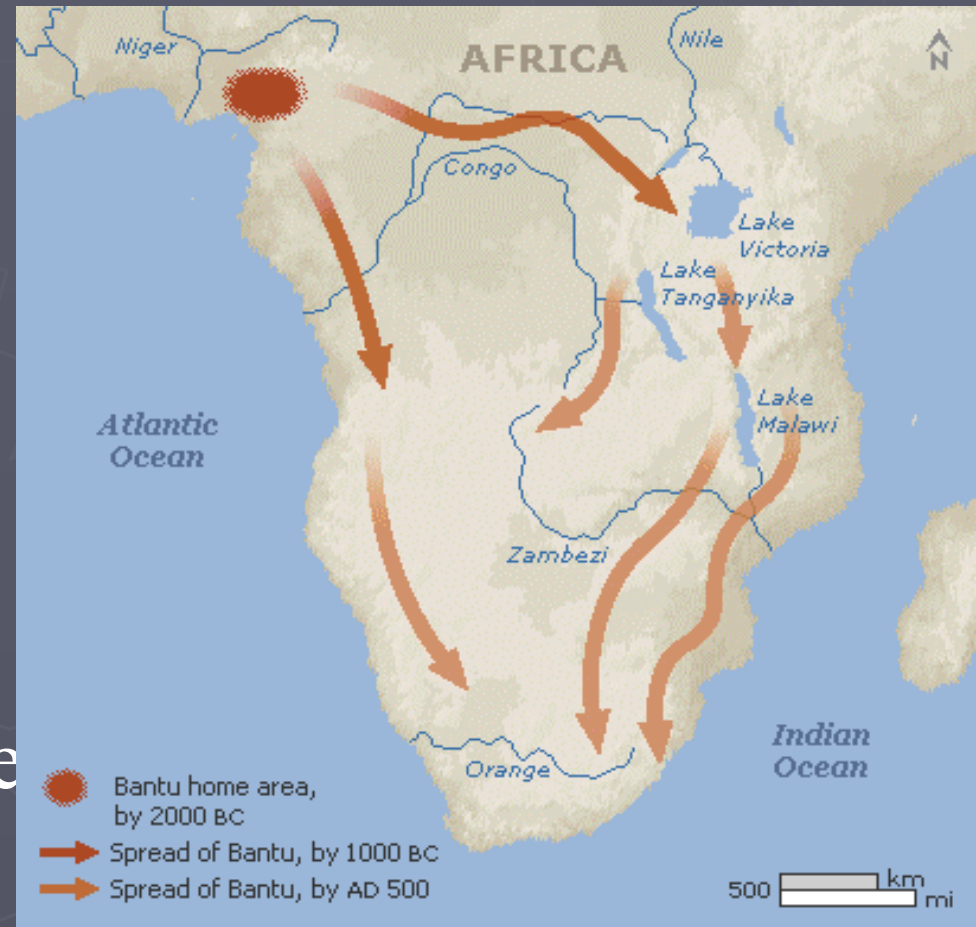
SS7G4B: Explain the diversity of religions within the Arab, Ashanti, Bantu and Swahili Ethnic Groups



➤ The Bantu were part of the greatest migration in human history over 2500 years ago. The Bantu migrated mostly to east, central, and southern Africa from modern day Nigeria.

➤ Much of the ancestry of West Africans can be traced through their lineage and clans from the early Bantu tribe.

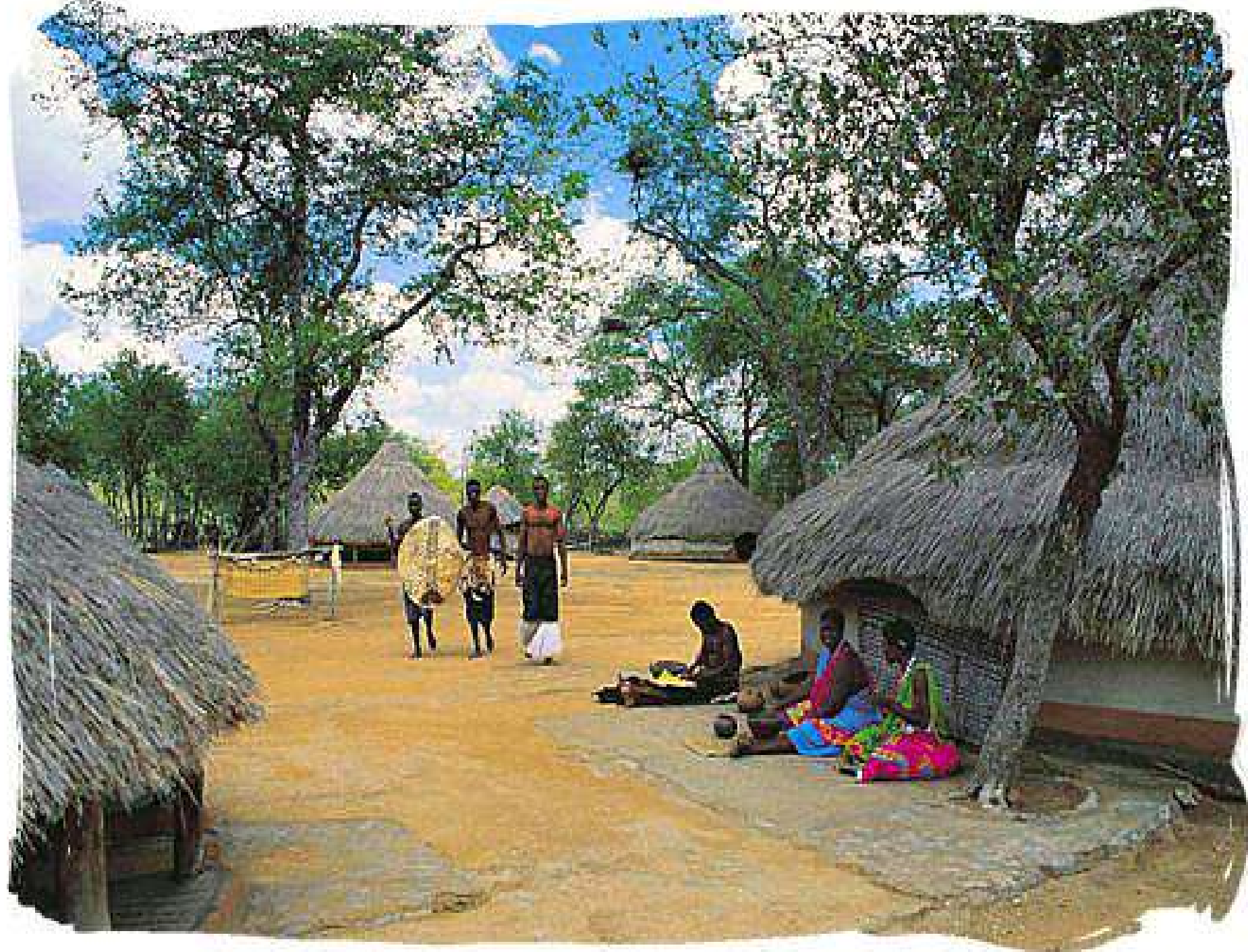
**(Pg 502)**  
**c. 1000 B.C.**



**Cultural Diffusion!!!**

# Bantu Culture

- ▶ Wherever the Bantu went, they took their culture with them.
- ▶ They spread skills such as pottery making, mining, and iron working.
- ▶ They spread their language, religious beliefs, family values and home life to other groups living in Africa.
- ▶ Their migration east led them to interaction with many Arab speaking people through trade. This is another example of what?
- ▶ Cultural Diffusion!



# Language

- ▶ Today, the Bantu are known more as a language group than as a distinct ethnic group.
- ▶ The Bantu migrations spread language all across Africa.
- ▶ Today, there are many ethnic groups and more than 10 million peoples across Africa speak hundreds of forms of “Bantu Language”.
- ▶ Over time, the language of Swahili developed from a mixture of Bantu and Arab languages and cultures.

# Bantu Languages

- **Bantu** is the name of a large category of African languages.
- It also is used as a general label for over 400 different ethnic groups
- These peoples share a common language family, (the Bantu Languages).
- There are more Bantu languages than there are European languages.

Bantu languages are spoken east and south of the present day Nigeria; in the regions known as central Africa, east Africa, and southern Africa

## **Location of Bantu People**



# Religious Beliefs

- Most Bantu peoples practice a traditional African religion.
- They believe in one supreme creator and a spirit world.
- The Bantu religions place a lot of importance in the power of ancestors in everyday life.
- They pray to ancestors.
- Many Bantu believe that an ancestor might even be reborn in a child.

# Bantu Religion

- Some Bantu practice traditional religions combined with Christianity Judaism or Islam.



# Bantu Daily Life

- The Bantu spread many other ideas across Africa.
- Extended Families: Families made up of several generations often live together in compounds or walled group of homes.
- Many Bantu people are matrilineal and trace their family descent through mothers rather than fathers.
- Children are considered very important and are often raised by the whole community.
- Give out worksheet on Bantu (Homework)

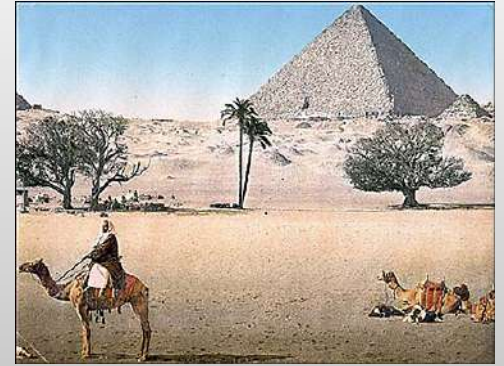
# Arabs

- Any member of the Arabic-speaking peoples native to the Middle East and North Africa.
- Before the spread of Islam in the 630s, the term referred to the nomads of the Arabian Peninsula.
- It came to apply to Arabic-speaking people from Africa's Mauritanian and Moroccan coasts east to Iraq and the Arabian Peninsula.

Ethnically, the Bedouins are identical to other Arabs. Bedouins traditionally have made their living through livestock and herding, and social rank among them is determined by the animals that they herd: camel nomads enjoy the greatest status, followed by sheep and goat herders and, finally, cattle nomads.

Traditionally, Bedouin would migrate into the desert during the rainy season and return to cultivated areas during the dry season, but since World War II (1939–45) the governments of many countries have nationalized their range lands, and conflicts over land use have arisen.

## Bedouins



Many Bedouins have since adopted sedentary ways of life; most, however, retain pride in their nomadic heritage.

# Trade Networks: Due to Scarcity

- Salt Trade: Precious as gold. Uses: preserve food. Most of Africa: salt scarce. Closest was Sahara desert/ salt mine. Trade developed between salt mines and tropical areas.
- Salt was traded for gold, slaves, ivory, cola nuts, other food items.
- The kingdoms of Ghana, Mali and Songhai made fortunes on taxation of trade.
- Caravans were created to travel in large numbers for protection.
- Traders also spread Islam. Islam becomes the predominate religion among all Arabs.

# Ibo or Igbo

pg 537



This large and grotesque mask, displaying obvious aggressive attributes, fits within the category of masks referred to as *Mgbedike*. Masks such as this express concepts of strength, violence, and bravery.

- People of southeastern Nigeria.
- Before European colonization the Igbo lived in self-governed communities, but by the mid 20th century they had developed a strong sense of ethnic identity.
- During conflicts in 1966 many Igbo in northern Nigeria were killed or forced into their traditional homelands in the east. In 1967 the Eastern region tried to secede from Nigeria as the independent nation of Biafra; hundreds of thousands of Igbo were killed or died of starvation.
- Today many are farmers, but trading, crafts, and wage labor are also important, and many have become civil servants and business entrepreneurs.
- One of three main ethnic groups in Nigeria along with the Yoruba and the Hausa-Fulani.

# Ashanti Culture

- Major Ethnic group of southern Ghana, Togo and Côte d'Ivoire.
- The nation, Ghana, was once known as the Gold Coast and was a British colony until 1957. It's now separated into 4 political parts.
- Though some **Asante** now live and work in urban centers, most live in villages and engage in agriculture.



# Ashanti as an Ethnic Group

- The family and the mother's clan are most important and family lives with the extended family in various homes and huts.
- The leader of the family is the eldest brother.
- Each tribal council has a member of each family.

# Ashanti as a Religion

- Mixture of spiritual and supernatural powers. They believe that plants, animals, and trees have souls.
- They believe in fairies, witches, and forest monsters.
- Ancestor worship!
- The symbol of Asante unity is the Golden Stool, held to be so sacred that not even kings were allowed to sit on it. It's a religious symbol!



# Ashanti



An Asante chief wearing silk cloth and gold jewelry.

Give out Ashanti  
worksheet for  
Homework

There is an elaborate legend surrounding it that is told by the old men of Ashanti.

The golden stool is very carefully protected. No one has ever sat on it since it's arrival and it's never touched the ground.

Each tribal chief has a replica that has gold on it.

The stool represents the worship of ancestors, well-being, and the Ashanti nation.

(Cultures of Africa worksheet)



# African Music

- All sub-Saharan traditions emphasize singing, because song is used as an avenue of communication.
- With urbanization and the impact of Western culture, traditional music and dance, although still practiced, have decreased. New types have emerged, however, that combine African and Western elements; they include West African highlife (showing certain Caribbean traits), Congolese popular music (reflecting Latin American influence), and in southern Africa, sabasaba and kwella (both akin to U.S. swing and jive music).
- Traditional music and dance face serious threat of decline. Because of their political and cultural importance, however, their preservation is given special attention in many countries.
- Drums and string instruments play an important role in African music, culture, and daily life.

# African Music



# A link between music and history



- **Griots, or jalis**, preserve West African traditions and history through the spoken word. They pass on these oral traditions from one generation to the next.
- Traditionally, griots had many responsibilities. They were responsible for the maintenance of traditions and history through speech and song. They chronicled events and mentally recorded the deeds of every person. Traditionally, the status and occupation was inherited and griots could only marry other griots.
- Ancient West African kings had their own personal griot to account for and pass on the feats of his reign.

# African Art and Festivals



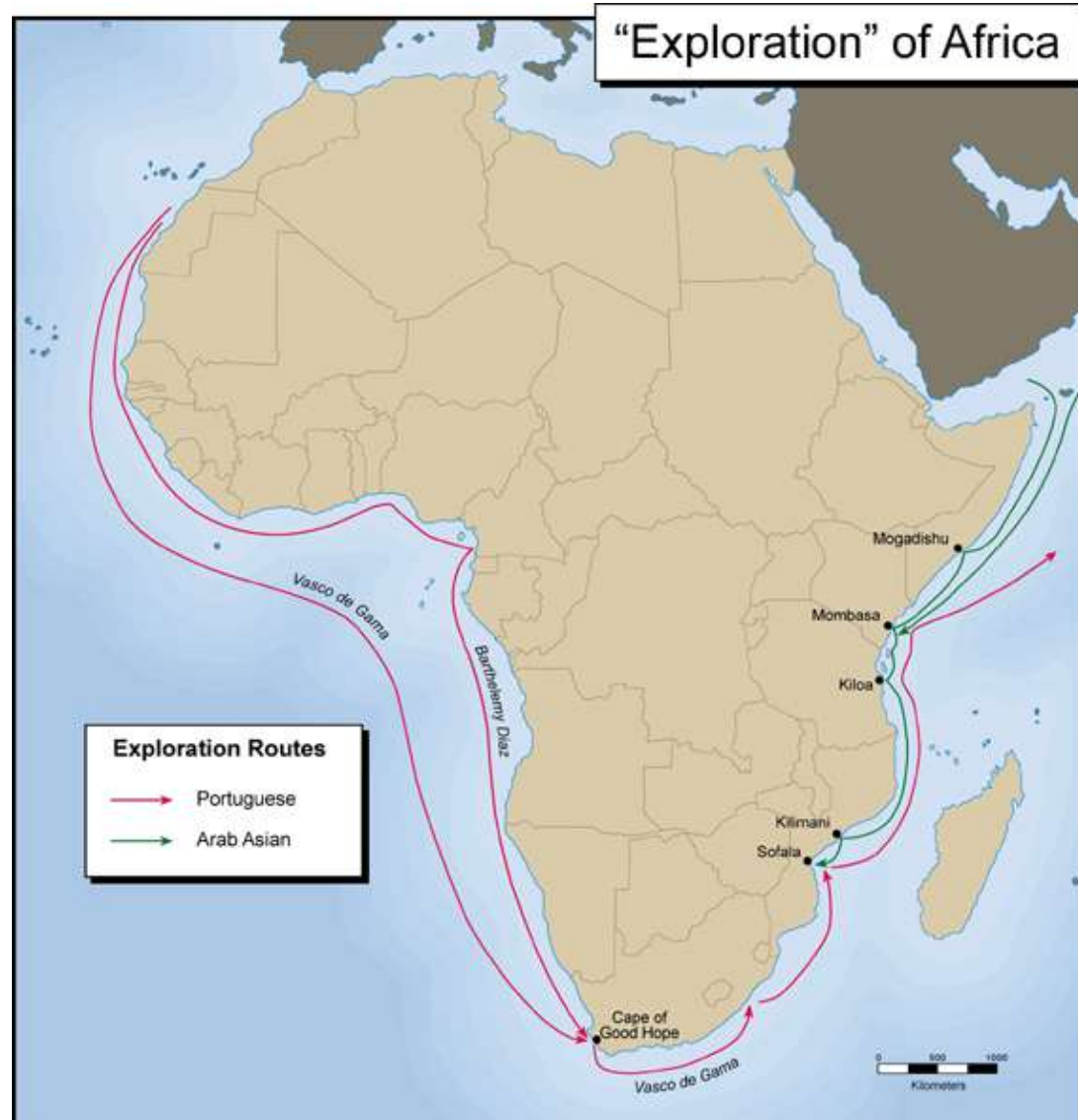
Composite masks represent supernatural creatures with fantastic abilities.

In a general sense, the word "mask" refers to a physical object that conceals the identity of the wearer. In Africa, masks represent spirits, ancestors, and historical and mythological characters.

- In parts of Africa where masking traditions exist, masks appear or dance in a masquerade. A masquerade is a community event that is composed of musicians, dancers and an audience that interacts with the mask through dance, and call and response.
- Other celebrations include rites of passage and annual festivals celebrating events such as a harvest. (pg 534)
- In the United States, **Kwanzaa** is an African American holiday celebrated from December 26 through January 1 and patterned after African harvest festivals.
- Animal wood carvings are another form of popular African art.

# 1400s

- Portuguese exploration of the west coast of Africa looking for a water route to India/Asia instead of going over land via the Silk Road was led by the initiative and funding of Henry the Navigator.



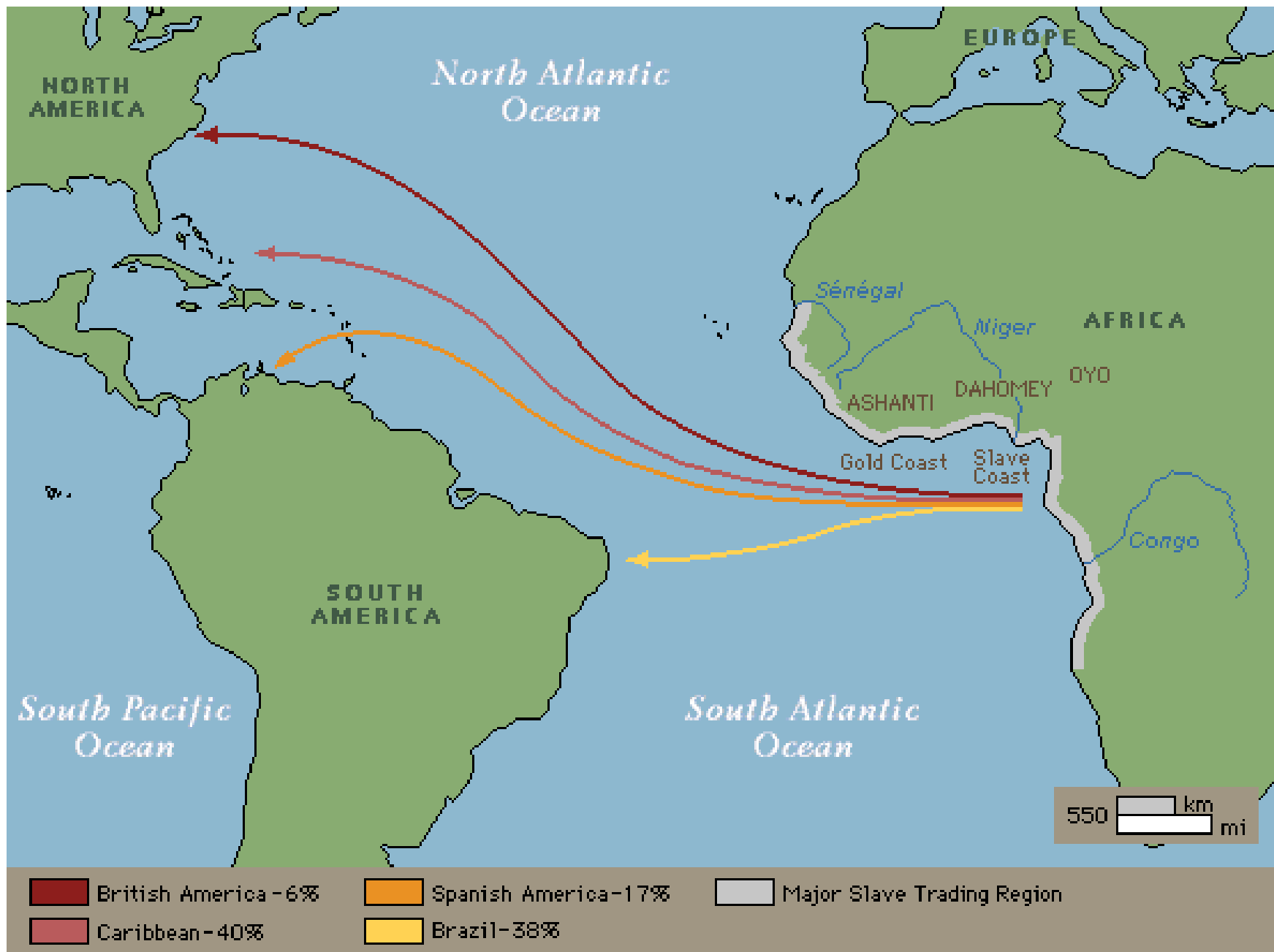
# 1450s to 1800s

- The Atlantic slave trade took place and formed what is known as the Triangle of Trade.
- The “triangle” included goods from Europe such as old guns, ammunition, clothing, and food to be traded to African tribal chiefs so they could protect themselves from rival tribes in exchange for slaves.



The slaves were then shipped over the Atlantic Ocean under horrible conditions to the Americas where they were auctioned as property to work on plantations.

The final route of the triangle of trade included gold and food from the Americas to be shipped back to Europe.



# **The Effects of Slavery on Africa**

- West Africa was decimated.
- They lost more than a large number of its population to slavery. It lost many of its youngest, healthiest, and most capable people.
- Robbed of their families and their skilled workers, many African societies were torn apart.

# 1884

- The Berlin Conference was conducted, and European powers (Great Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Belgium, and Italy) agreed to divide the continent into European governed colonies.
- This division was disastrous as the new boundary lines divided ethnic groups and in most cases forced rival ethnic groups to live together.
- The Europeans wanted the natural resources to fuel the Industrial Revolution. As they made products, they then forced African colonies to buy them for much more than they received for their resources.

[Video](#)

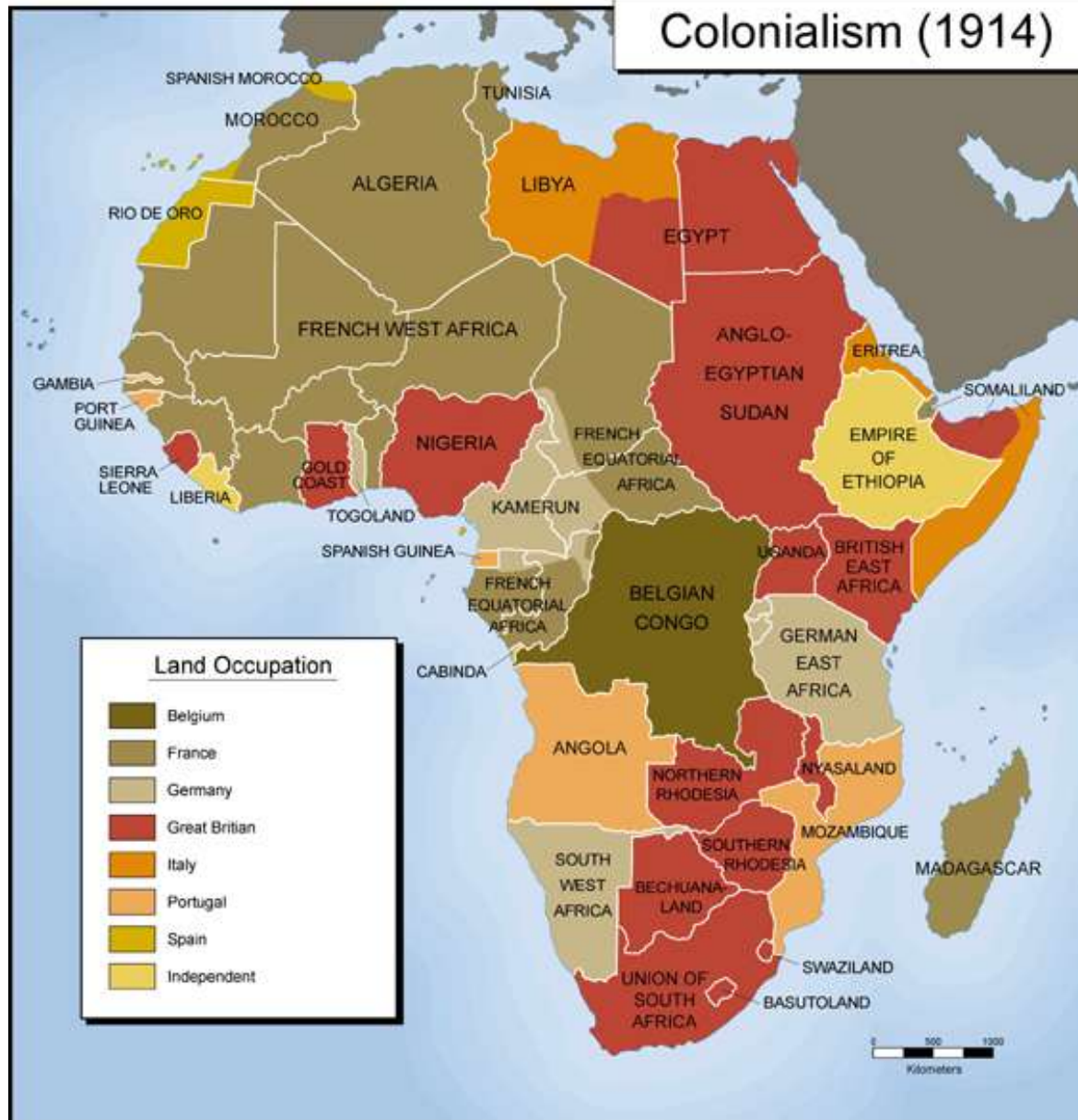
# Colonialism

- Not all countries were conquered. King Menelik II of Ethiopia was able to fend off the Italians and make his country one of only two that remained independent.

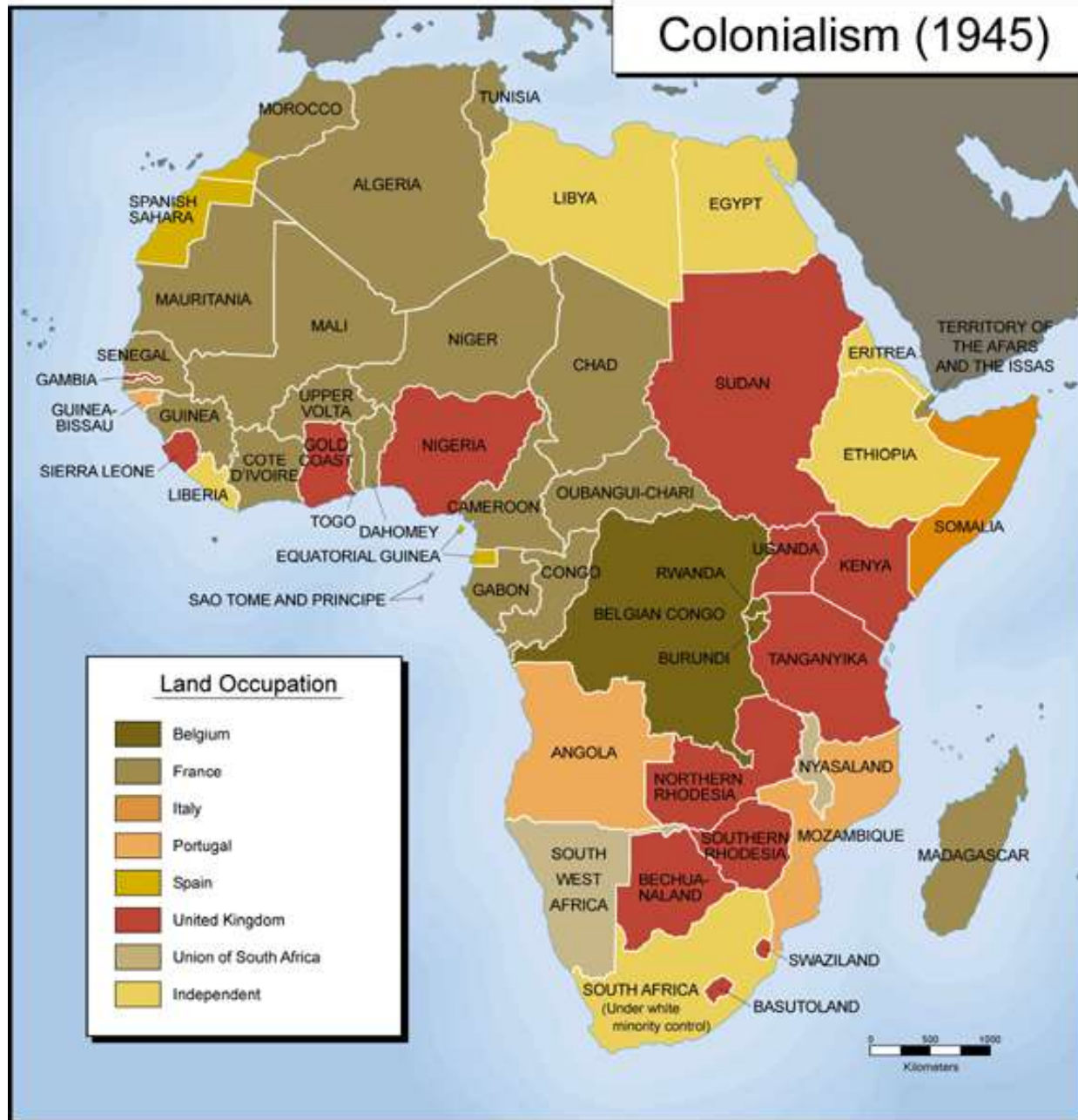


**Emperor Menelik II, 1889-1913**

## Colonialism (1914)



## Colonialism (1945)



# The Negatives of Colonialism

- Rival ethnic groups forced to live together causing conflicts and wars.
- Lost many resources without equal return.
- Lost their freedom to govern themselves.
- Africans were forced to work on plantations and in mines for very little money.



**Children as young as 10 are recruited for civil wars in Africa**

# Positives of Colonialism

- Improved roads
- Improved medical centers
- Improved schools
- Stable government
- Jobs
- Christianity was also spread which can be considered a positive or negative depending on your viewpoint.



**Hospitals in South Africa are heavily burdened by HIV- infected children—a leading health issue in Africa.**

# Information and photos courtesy of:

- [http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/magazine/0103/drumming\\_in\\_west\\_africa.shtml](http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/magazine/0103/drumming_in_west_africa.shtml)
- <http://www.satalla.com/images/satalla-gallery/pages/West%20Africa-%20Kusun%20Ensemble.htm>
- <http://www.britannica.com/ebc/article-9355647?query=Arabs&ct=>
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