



A Mossi woman from present-day Burkina Faso

WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

Cultural Variety

Ibn Battuta traveled widely throughout Africa and Asia. His travels included more than visits to the capitals and large trading cities. He also visited small African communities where he learned of the great variety of cultures and societies that had developed on the continent.

“The women [of the Massufa tribe] are shown more respect than the men. The state of affairs amongst these people is indeed extraordinary. . . . no one claims descent from his father, but on the contrary from his mother’s brother. A person’s heirs are his sister’s sons, not his own sons. This is a thing which I have seen nowhere in the world. . . .”

Focus Question What factors influenced the development of societies in Africa?

Societies in Medieval Africa

Objectives

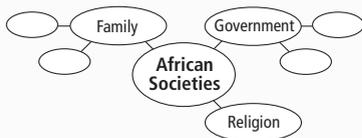
- Identify the different ways that the family influenced medieval African cultures.
- Describe the variety of forms of medieval African governments.
- Understand the role of religion and art in medieval societies.

Terms, People, and Places

nuclear family	lineage
patrilineal	consensus
matrilineal	griot

Note Taking

Reading Skill: Recognize Multiple Causes As you read this section, create a concept web like the one below to keep track of the factors that influenced the development of African societies.



Considering Africa’s immense size, it is not surprising that Ibn Battuta came across new cultures. Factors such as Africa’s varied geography, diverse climates, and later migration and trade played major roles in how early societies developed throughout the continent.

As you have read, throughout the world the Neolithic Revolution led to the beginning of settled farming communities located in areas with fertile soil and proximity to water. These farming settlements grew as surpluses increased, enabling artisans to develop specialized skills.

Advancements in transportation, such as the use of the camel, increased a community’s reach beyond its borders, and this exchange allowed villages to grow into towns. Extended trade brought additional wealth, leading to the creation of individual states and kingdoms. Throughout Africa, communities varied in size, environment, and economics. However, each society, including the kingdoms you read about earlier in this chapter, developed around four common elements—family, government, religion, and art.

Family Patterns

In medieval Africa, as elsewhere, the family was the basic unit of society. Patterns of family life varied greatly depending on the culture of the group. In some small societies, for example, the basic family unit was the **nuclear family**, or parents and children living and working together as a unit. In other communities, family units included the extended family—parents, children, and several generations such as grandparents and uncles—who lived and worked close together to ensure the success of the group.

4

SECTION

Step-by-Step Instruction

Objectives

As you teach this section, keep students focused on the following objectives to help them answer the Section Focus Question and master core content.

- Identify the different ways that the family influenced medieval African cultures.
- Learn about the variety of forms of medieval African government.
- Understand the role of religion and art in medieval African societies.

Prepare to Read

Build Background Knowledge L3

Ask students what distinguishes one society from another. Guide them to see that patterns of family relationships, political organization, religious beliefs and values, and artistic expression are all aspects of society.

Set a Purpose L3

- WITNESS HISTORY** Read the selection aloud or play the audio.

 **WITNESS HISTORY Audio CD,** Cultural Variety

Ask **Do you think someone who saw this relationship pattern today would be as surprised as Battuta? Why or why not?** (Answers will vary; discuss students’ ideas and their reasons.)

- Focus** Point out the Section Focus Question and write it on the board. Tell students to refer to this question as they read. (Answer appears with Section 4 Assessment answers.)
- Preview** Have students preview the Section Objectives and the list of Terms, People, and Places.
- Note Taking** Have students read this section using the Paragraph Shrinking strategy (TE, p. T20). Have students fill in the concept web with influences on African societies.

 **Reading and Note Taking Study Guide,** p. 105

Vocabulary Builder

Use the information below and the following resources to teach the high-use word from this section.

 **Teaching Resources, Unit 2,** p. 86; **Teaching Resources, Skills Handbook** p. 3

High-Use Word
complex, p. 360

Definition and Sample Sentence

adj. made up of different parts connected in a way that is hard to understand
In medieval Africa, people were linked to one another through a **complex** pattern of relationships.

Teach

Family Patterns

L3

Instruct

- **Introduce: Key Terms** Draw students' attention to the key terms *patrilineal*, *matrilineal*, and *lineage* (in blue) in the text. Ask **What root word is found in all three of these terms? (line)** **How is that word related to each term?** (All three terms describe the lines that connect people to others in their families.)
- **Teach** Ask **What is the difference between a nuclear family and an extended family?** (A nuclear family is only the parents and their children; an extended family includes others, such as uncles, aunts, cousins, and grandparents.) **What is the difference between patrilineal and matrilineal?** (tracing inheritance through the father's line or the mother's line) **When a married couple moved to live with one spouse's family, did they live in a nuclear family or an extended family?** (extended) **What practice in American society is similar to the use of age grades in medieval African society?** (grouping children of the same age into grades at school)

Independent Practice

Have students take the role of a person living in a medieval African farming village being visited by Ibn Battuta. Tell them to write a dialogue in which they explain to the traveler the advantages and disadvantages of living in an extended family.

Monitor Progress

As students complete their concept webs, circulate to make sure they understand the factors that influenced African societies. For a completed version of the concept web, see

 Note Taking Transparencies, 95

Answer

- ✓ Kinship defined family patterns, inheritance, where one lived, and one's responsibilities in the family and to society.

Kinship Family organization varied in other ways. Some families were **patrilineal**. In these families, important kinship ties such as inheritance were passed through the father's side. Other families, such as the one described by Ibn Battuta, were **matrilineal**, with inheritance traced through the mother's side. In some cultures, one spouse would move to the other spouse's village and join his or her parents' family.

Matrilineal cultures forged strong ties between brothers and sisters. Brothers were expected to protect their sisters, and sons were expected to help their mother's brothers whenever needed.

Extended Lineages Each family belonged to a **lineage**, or group of households who claimed a common ancestor. Several lineages formed a clan that traced its descent to an even more remote and often legendary ancestor. Belonging to a particular family, lineage, or clan gave people a sense of community with shared responsibilities to that community.

An individual's place in some medieval African societies was also determined by a system of age grades. An age grade included all girls or boys born in the same year. Each age grade had particular responsibilities and privileges. As they moved up from one age grade to another, children began to take part in village activities, which created social ties beyond the family.

- ✓ **Checkpoint** How did kinship help identify an individual's place in his or her society?



Differentiated

Instruction

Solutions for All Learners

L1 Special Needs **L2** Less Proficient Readers

To help students explain how family influenced culture in Africa, have students read this section looking for evidence of this influence. Ask them to create a bulleted list of their findings. Then have them use their

lists to write a one-sentence summary of this subsection. Have students repeat this strategy for each subsection, using the section objectives to guide their research.

Political Patterns

Most medieval African farming peoples lived in tightknit communities and helped one another in tasks such as clearing the land, planting, and harvesting. As communities grew, the need for a form of government arose. Throughout Africa, political patterns varied, depending in part on the size and culture of the community.

Power Sharing Unlike the large kingdoms, smaller medieval African societies were often organized with power shared among a number of people rather than centralized in the hands of a single leader. In some villages, a chief had a good deal of authority, but in many others, elders made the major decisions. In some places, especially in parts of West Africa, women took the dominant role in the marketplace or acted as official peacemakers in the village.

Villages often made decisions by a process known as **consensus**, or general agreement. In open discussions, people whose opinions were valued voiced their views before a final agreement was reached. Because of the experience and wisdom of older men and women, their opinions usually carried the greatest weight.

In villages that were part of a large kingdom such as Songhai, decisions made at a distant court had to be obeyed. These villagers, therefore, had to pay taxes and provide soldiers to the central, and frequently distant, government.

Political Patterns

L3

Instruct

- **Introduce** Ask **What are different ways that people become leaders?** (*election, inheritance, seizing power, appointment*) Explain that in this section, they will learn how different African societies chose leaders and how those leaders exercised power.
- **Teach** Using the Idea Wave strategy (TE, p. T22), ask **What are the benefits of having more than one person share leadership?** (*Sample: Having multiple leaders means having people with different areas of expertise, which can increase their chances of solving problems; no single person can become too powerful.*) **What are the benefits of limiting a leader's power?** (*to prevent that person from abusing his or her power to gain wealth or help friends or family members succeed*)
- **Quick Activity** Organize students into groups and instruct each group to discuss the different ways that power was allocated in medieval Africa. Tell them to use consensus to find the arrangement that they think was best. When all the groups have reached a decision, have the class discuss their experience with deciding things by consensus.

Independent Practice

Have students write one paragraph explaining why the rulers of large medieval kingdoms would not want to use traditional African approaches for allocating power and making decisions. Tell them to include the rulers' desire to maintain authority and efficiency.

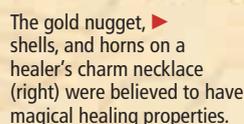
Monitor Progress

Have students write a five-question quiz focused on the key concepts under the heading "Political Patterns." Tell students to exchange questions and write the answer for each question.

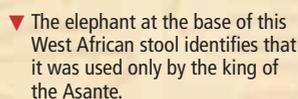
Answers

Thinking Critically

1. He is wearing local shells and grass.
2. It is a way to convey abstract ideas.



The gold nugget, shells, and horns on a healer's charm necklace (right) were believed to have magical healing properties.



▼ The elephant at the base of this West African stool identifies that it was used only by the king of the Asante.



This West African Dogon dancer is wearing a grass and shell costume and mask created for the dama funerary ceremony. During the dama, a masked dance is performed symbolizing the end of the mourning period.

Thinking Critically

1. **Draw Conclusions** How does the Dogon dancer's costume help identify the group's location? Explain.
2. **Synthesize Information** Why do you think symbolism was important in medieval African societies?

History Background

Royal Administration in Africa In several kingdoms of West Africa, rulers brought about a major change in how leaders were chosen. Traditionally, the position of chief was an inherited one, as was the case with the lands and titles of European nobles of the Middle Ages. Rulers of Songhai and some Hausa city-states changed these patterns. They began to name officials, both political and military. By doing so, they

tried to achieve greater control over decision making—and greater loyalty. The people they named, after all, owed their positions to the rulers and could be expected to act in accordance with the rulers' wishes. This change also had a parallel in Europe, as monarchs there used the power of appointment and the creation of bureaucracies to consolidate their own power and weaken that of nobles.

Religious Beliefs/Traditions in Art and Literature

LE

Instruct

■ Introduce: Vocabulary Builder

Have students read the Vocabulary Builder term and definition. Ask **Why is culture so complex a concept to define?** (*because so many factors are involved in its makeup, including family, government, religion, environment, and economics*)

- **Teach** Ask **Why is it difficult to generalize about the religious beliefs in medieval Africa?** (*because those beliefs were varied*) **How did art reinforce social ties and religion?** (*Patterns often identified the work as belonging to a particular clan or as a sign of royalty, and art was often used in religious ceremonies.*) **How did literature help to reinforce social ties?** (*by relating the history of the people and providing moral guidance*)

- **Quick Activity** Display **Color Transparency 68: African Textiles** and **Color Transparency 69: Masks of Africa**. Have students examine the designs and discuss the patterns and colors that are used. Have students create their own textile design or mask. Encourage them to display their finished product and explain the meaning behind the design.

 **Color Transparencies, 68, 69**

Independent Practice

The text says that in medieval Africa, “art strengthened bonds within the community and linked both the makers and users of the work.” Have students write a paragraph explaining this sentence, using examples from the text and from modern-day America.

Monitor Progress

Have students write down the main idea of each of the three subsections and two details that support each main idea.

Answers

- ✓ Power was usually shared by several people; groups of elders made major decisions; decisions were made by consensus.
- ✓ Some believed in many gods. Many believed that a single, supreme being stood above all other gods. Some adopted Christianity or Islam, often linking them with traditional practices.

Limited Power Another form of government developed when many villages were grouped into districts and provinces that were governed by officials appointed by a king. The kingdom of Kongo, which flourished around A.D. 1500 in central Africa, is an example. There, each village still had its own chief. Taxes were collected through local governors either in goods or in cowrie shells, a common African currency. Unlike rulers of larger West African states who maintained strong standing armies, the kings of Kongo could only call upon men to fight in times of need. In fact, the king was actually chosen by a group of electors and had to govern according to traditional laws. It might seem as though a king wielded absolute power; however, in some societies like the kingdom of Kongo, the monarch’s power was somewhat limited.

- ✓ **Checkpoint** How was ruling power shared in some of the smaller African societies?

Religious Beliefs

As you have read, religion played an important role in the development of medieval African societies. Religious beliefs that existed before the arrival of Islam and Christianity were varied and **complex**. Like the Hindus or ancient Greeks and Romans, some Africans worshiped many gods and goddesses. They identified the forces of nature with divine spirits and tried to influence those forces through rituals and ceremonies.

Many African peoples believed that a single, unknowable supreme being stood above all the other gods and goddesses. This supreme being was the creator and ruler of the universe and was helped by the lesser spirits, who were closer to the people. Some African peoples believed, like the Chinese, that the spirits of their ancestors could help, warn, or punish their descendants on Earth. Just as Christians in medieval Europe called on the saints for help, medieval Africans turned to the spirits of their departed ancestors.

By A.D. 1000, both Christianity and Islam had spread to many regions of Africa. Those who adopted these religions often associated the God of the Christians and Muslims with their traditional supreme being. In this way, Christianity and Islam in Africa absorbed many local practices and beliefs.

- ✓ **Checkpoint** Describe the religious beliefs in medieval Africa.

Traditions in Art and Literature

African artistic traditions extend far back in time to the ancient rock paintings of the Sahara, which were created by about 1000 B.C., and the over 4,000-year-old pyramids of Egypt and Nubia. More recently, but still about 1,000 years ago, the rock churches of Ethiopia and the palace of Great Zimbabwe were built. These accomplishments bear lasting witness to the creative power of these early and medieval civilizations.

Creative Arts African artists worked in many materials including gold, ivory, wood, bronze, and cloth. They created many decorative items such as woven cloth, inscribed jugs and bowls, or jewelry simply for their beauty. Even so, art usually served social and religious purposes as well.

Art strengthened bonds within the community and linked the makers and the users of the work. Patterns used to decorate textiles, baskets,

Vocabulary Builder

complex—(kahm PLEKS) *adj.* made up of different parts connected in a way that is hard to understand

Link to Literature

African American Traditions The influence of griots extended beyond the African continent. African slaves brought their folk tales to the Americas, where they enriched the American folk tradition. The Uncle Remus stories about Brer Rabbit and Brer Fox were brought to the United States by the Mandinkas.

Modern-day American writer Alex Haley, author of the enormously popular book *Roots*, took advantage of Africa’s oral tradition to confirm family traditions that had been handed down for generations about the first member of the family to come to America from Africa.

swords, and other objects had important meanings or special messages that the artisan or owner wanted to convey. Often, they identified an object as the work of a particular clan or the possession of royalty. One example is kente cloth, a traditional West African textile woven of silk and cotton. When it was made in bright gold and blue colors, the symbols of power, only the ruling elite and the wealthy were allowed to wear it.

In medieval Africa, as elsewhere, much art was closely tied to religion. Statues and other objects were used in religious rites and ceremonies. In some rituals, for example, leaders wore elaborately carved masks decorated with cowrie shells or grass. Once the mask was in place, both the wearer and the viewers could feel the presence of the spiritual force it represented.

Literature Early and medieval African societies preserved their histories and values through both written and oral literature. Ancient Egypt, Nubia, and Axum left written records of their past. Later, Arabic provided a common written language in those parts of Africa influenced by Islam. African Muslim scholars gathered in cities such as Timbuktu and Kilwa. Documents in Arabic offer invaluable evidence about the law, religion, and history of the time.

Oral traditions date back many centuries. In West Africa, **griots** (GREE ohz), or professional storytellers recited ancient stories such as the Sundiata epic. The griots preserved both histories and traditional folk tales in the same way that the epics of Homer or Aryan India were passed orally from generation to generation. The histories praised the heroic deeds of famous ancestors or kings. The folk tales, which blended fanciful stories with humor and sophisticated word play, taught important moral lessons. Oral literature, like religion and art, thus encouraged a sense of community and common values within the medieval societies of Africa.

 **Checkpoint** How did African societies preserve their history?



Language of Drums

Not all “oral tradition” is spoken. The talking drums of western and central Africa are used to communicate important information such as messages and announcements as well as traditional texts such as prayers and eulogies for historic individuals. *Why do you think the sound of a drum could be more powerful than the spoken word?*

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-quiz with vocabulary practice
Web Code: naa-1141

Assess and Reteach

Assess Progress

L3

- Have students complete the Section Assessment.
- Administer the Section Quiz.

 **Teaching Resources, Unit 2, p. 85**

- To further assess student understanding, use  **Progress Monitoring Transparencies, 47**

Reteach

If students need more instruction, have them read the section summary.

-  **Reading and Note Taking Study Guide, p. 106** L3
-  **Adapted Reading and Note Taking Study Guide, p. 106** L1 L2
-  **Spanish Reading and Note Taking Study Guide, p. 106** L2

Extend

L4

Have students read two or three African folk tales from the same society and write a short essay explaining what the stories tell about the society from which they came. Students might discuss such issues as the themes of the stories, the lessons they communicate, or the relationships between people that they portray.

Answers

Caption It appeals to humans’ visceral sense of rhythm.

-  with both written records and oral histories

4 Assessment

Terms, People, and Places

1. For each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section, write a sentence explaining its significance.

Note Taking

2. **Reading Skill: Recognize Multiple Causes** Use your completed concept web to answer the Focus Question: What factors influenced the development of societies in Africa?

Comprehension and Critical Thinking

3. **Recognize Cause and Effect** How did an individual’s lineage affect his or her life in African societies?
4. **Demonstrate Reasoned Judgment** Do you think consensus is a fair or unfair method of decision making? Explain the reasons for your answer.
5. **Determine Relevance** How was art connected to religion in African cultures?
6. **Identify Central Issues** Why do you think art, literature, and religion inspired a sense of unity within medieval African communities?

Writing About History

Quick Write: Creating Dialogue Select two individuals, such as an elder and a tribal chief or an uncle and nephew, from the topics discussed in this section and create a dialogue between them placing yourself as one of the characters. Make sure that the dialogue generally relates to one of the main subjects of the section such as government or family ties.

Section 4 Assessment

1. Sentences should reflect an understanding of each term, person, or place listed at the beginning of the section.
2. family organization and kinship patterns; how power was shared and limited; religious beliefs; and artistic traditions
3. Belonging to a particular family, lineage, or clan gave people a sense of community; age grades gave people certain responsi-

- bilities and created social ties beyond the family.
4. Answers should be supported by sound reasons.
5. Statues and other objects were used in religious rites and ceremonies.
6. Sample: Strong religious beliefs helped bind the members of society together. Artwork was sometimes identified as belonging to a particular clan and was often tied to religion. Oral literature preserved the

history of the group, which enhanced their unity.

Writing About History

Dialogues should show an understanding of the concepts in the section and of the social relationship of the two individuals chosen.

For additional assessment, have students access **Progress Monitoring Online** at **Web Code naa-1141**.