



Before Reading:

What does this picture tell you about life in the kingdom of Mali?

<http://www.ruf.rice.edu/~anth/arch/mali-interactive/pictures/empires.jpg>

Readings about Ibn Battuta visiting the Kingdom of Mali

Source A:

Ibn Battuta worried about running out of water, about his guides losing their way, and about falling prey to the "demons which haunted those wastes." In the end of April, they arrived in Walata, a sweltering little town with mud brick houses next to barren hills and with a few palm trees. Ibn Battuta regretted coming at all to this town because he had been treated so much better in other parts of the Islamic world. He resented the governor who offered the visitors a bowl of millet with a little honey and yogurt as a welcoming meal.

"I said to them: 'Was it to this that the black man invited us?' They said: 'Yes, for them this is a great banquet.' Then I knew for certain that no good was to be expected from them and I wished to depart."

He stayed in Walata for several weeks, however, but he was offended on more occasions by the local customs. After all, he must have thought, he was a special visitor that should be pampered. And even more offensive were some different customs which Ibn Battuta thought were not appropriate for good Muslims. For example, he was used to the sexes being separated. On one occasion he entered in a qadi's (judge's) house to find a young and beautiful woman to greet him. She was the judge's friend! On another occasion Ibn Battuta called on a scholar and found the man's wife chatting with a strange man in the courtyard. Ibn Battuta expressed his disapproval and the man answered, "the association of women with men is agreeable to us and a part of good manners, to which no suspicion attaches. They are not like the women of your country."

The travelers went southward along the Niger River to the king's palaces. Along the way he offered glass beads and pieces of salt in return for millet, rice, chickens, and other local foods. After two or more weeks on the road, he arrived at the seat of government, a town with several palaces for Mansa Sulayman, younger brother of Mansa Musa who had died. (Sulayman ruled from 1341 to 1360.) The main palace was built by a Muslim architect from Andalusia (Muslim Spain) and was covered with plaster painted with colorful patterns, a "most elegant" building. Surrounding the palaces and mosques were the residences of the citizens: mud-walled houses roofed with domes of timber and reed.

Ibn Battuta ended his eight-month stay in Mali with mixed feelings. On the one hand he respected the parents' strict teaching of the Koran to their children:

"They place fetters [ropes or chains] on their children if there appears ... a failure to memorize the Koran, and they are not undone until they memorize it." He also admired the safety of the empire. "Neither traveler there nor dweller has anything to fear from thief or usurper."

On the other hand he criticized the traditional practices: "Female slaves and servants who went stark naked into the court for all to see; subjects who groveled before the sultan, beating the ground with their elbows and throwing dust and ashes over their heads; royal poets who romped about in feathers and bird masks." He also complained about the small gift of bread, meat and yogurt given to him by the king. "When I saw it I laughed, and was long astonished at their feeble intellect and their respect for mean things." Later he complained directly to the king: "I have journeyed to the countries of the world and met their kings. I have been four months in your country without your giving me a reception gift or anything else. What shall I say of you in the presence of other sultans?" [Dunn, p. 300, 303] That evidently made a difference. "Then the sultan ordered a house for me in which I stayed and he fixed an allowance for me... He was gracious to me at my departure, to the extent of giving me one hundred mithqals of gold." [Hamdun and King, p. 46]

http://www.sfusd.k12.ca.us/schwww/sch618/Ibn_Battuta/Ibn_Battuta_Rihla.htm

Source B:

When the ceremony was over I went forward and saluted Mansa Sulayman. The qadi, the preacher, and Ibn al-Faqih told him who I was, and he answered them in their tongue. They said to me, "The sultan says to you 'Give thanks to God,'" so I said, "Praise be to God and thanks under all circumstances." When I withdrew the [sultan's] hospitality gift was sent to me. It was taken first to the qadi's house, and the qadi sent it on with his men to Ibn al-Faqih's house. Ibn al-Faqih came hurrying out of his house barefooted, and entered my room saying, "Stand up; here comes the sultan's stuff and gift to you." So I stood up thinking--since he had called it "stuff"--that it consisted of robes of honour and money, and lo!, it was three cakes of bread, and a piece of beef fried in native oil, and a calabash of sour curds. When I saw this I burst out laughing, and thought it a most amazing thing that they could be so foolish and make so much of such a paltry matter.

<http://www.nipissingu.ca/department/history/MUHLBERGER/2805/battuta.htm>

Source C:

The negroes possess some admirable qualities. They are seldom unjust, and have a greater abhorrence 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 traveller nor inhabitant in it has anything to fear from robbers or men of violence. They do not confiscate the property of any white man who dies in their country, even if it be uncounted wealth. On the contrary, they give it into the charge of some trustworthy person among the whites, until the rightful heir takes possession of it. They are careful to observe the hours of prayer, and assiduous in attending them in congregations, and in bringing up their children to them.

On Fridays, if a man does not go early to the mosque, he cannot find a corner to pray in, on account of the crowd. It is a custom of theirs to send each man his boy [to the mosque] with his prayer-mat; the boy spreads it out for his master in a place befitting him [and remains on it] until he comes to the mosque. Their prayer-mats are made of the leaves of a tree resembling a date-palm, but without fruit.

Another of their good qualities is their habit of wearing clean white garments on Fridays. Even if a man has nothing but an old worn shirt, he washes it and cleans it, and wears it to the Friday service. Yet another is their zeal for learning the Koran by heart. They put their children in chains if they show any backwardness in memorizing it, and they are not set free until they have it by heart. I visited the qadi in his house on the day of the festival. His children were chained up, so I said to him, "Will you not let them loose?" He replied, "I shall not do so until they learn the Koran by heart."

Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354*, tr. and ed. H. A. R. Gibb (London: Broadway House, 1929)

Excerpts from Sundiata, An Epic of Old Mali

By D.T. Niane

1. "Listen then, sons of Mali, children of the black people, listen to my word, for I am going to tell you of Sundiata, the father of the Bright Country, of the savanna land, the ancestor of those who draw the bow, the master of a hundred vanquished kings.

I am going to talk of Sundiata, Manding Diara, Lion of Mali, Sogolon Djata, son of Sogolon, Nare Maghan Djata, son of Nare Maghan, Sogo Sogo Simbon Salaba, hero of many names.

I am going to tell you of Sundiata, he whose exploits will astonish men for a long time yet. He was great among kings, he was peerless among men, he was beloved of God because he was the last of the great conquerors."

2. "Other peoples use writing to record the past, but this invention has killed the faculty of memory among them. They do not feel the past anymore, for writing lacks the warmth of the human voice. ... The prophets did not write and their words have been all the more vivid as a result. What paltry learning is that which is congealed in dumb books!"

3. "Furious, Sundiata snatched up his spear and with his head bent charged at Soumaoro, but as he raised his arm to strike his enemy he noticed that Soumaoro had disappeared. Manding Bory riding at his side pointed to the hill and said, 'Look, brother.'

Sundiata saw Soumaoro on the hill, sitting on his black-coated horse. How could he have done it, he who was only two paces from Sundiata? By what power has he spirited himself away on to the hill? The son of Sogolon stopped fighting to watch the king of Sosso. The sun was already very low and Soumaoro's smiths gave way but Sundiata did not give the order to pursue the enemy. Suddenly, Soumaoro disappeared!

How can I vanquish a man capable of disappearing and reappearing where and when he likes? How can I affect a man invulnerable to iron? Such were the questions which Sogolon's son asked himself. He had been told many things about Sosso-Soumaoro but he had given little credence to so much gossip. Didn't people say that Soumaoro could assume sixty-nine different shapes to escape his enemies? According to some, he could transform himself into a fly in the middle of the battle and come and torment his opponent; he could melt into the wind when his enemies encircled him too closely- and many other things."



Equestrian figure

Inland Niger Delta Style

Inland Niger Delta region, Mali

13th-15th century

Ceramic

H x W x D: 70.5 x 14.9 x 19.7 cm (27 3/4 x 5 7/8 x 7 3/4 in.)

Museum purchase

86-12-2

Since the 1940s, low-fired ceramic figures and fragments such as this have been unearthed at various sites throughout the Inland Niger Delta region, an area that once had highly developed urban centers. These works are among the earliest known surviving art forms in sub-Saharan Africa. The makers were from the various peoples in the region, but it is not known whether they were men or women. Using a mixture of coarse clay and added grog (crushed pot sherds), the potters modeled the figures by hand. Some were modeled in separate parts and fitted together. Most surviving examples are solid, but a few are hollow and built with clay coils. Surfaces are polished and covered with a red slip (clay wash). These massive works are among the largest known terracotta figures created by sub-Saharan African potters. By the 15th or 16th century, environmental and political events caused the urban centers of the Delta region to be abandoned, and the art tradition did not survive. Research, including local oral traditions, indicates that all ethnic groups in the Delta region used these figures. The earliest known written reference to them occurs in a letter of 1447. In it, a visiting Italian merchant remarked that the figures were kept in sanctuaries and venerated as representing the deified ancestors of famous founding rulers of the region. The elaborate dress of the figures suggests ceremonial military attire, and they may represent warriors who were once allies of the Malian emperor Sundjata Keita (c. 1210-c. 1260). Based on stylistic comparisons with similar figures, these works can be tentatively dated to between the 13th and 15th centuries.

<http://africa.si.edu/collections/rsdadvnNav.asp?BrowseMode=3&offset=51>



Archer figure

Inland Niger Delta Style

Inland Niger Delta region, Mali

13th-15th century

Ceramic

H x W x D: 61.9 x 16.5 x 16.5 cm (24 3/8 x 6 1/2 x 6 1/2 in.)

Museum purchase

86-12-1

Since the 1940s, low-fired ceramic figures and fragments such as this have been unearthed at various sites throughout the Inland Niger Delta region, an area that once had highly developed urban centers. These works are among the earliest known surviving art forms in sub-Saharan Africa. The makers were from the various peoples in the region, but it is not known whether they were men or women. Using a mixture of coarse clay and added grog (crushed pot sherds), the potters modeled the figures by hand. Some were modeled in separate parts and fitted together. Most surviving examples are solid, but a few are hollow and built with clay coils. Surfaces are polished and covered with a red slip (clay wash). These massive works are among the largest known terracotta figures created by sub-Saharan African potters. By the 15th or 16th century, environmental and political events caused the urban centers of the Delta region to be abandoned, and the art tradition did not survive. Research, including local oral traditions, indicates that all ethnic groups in the Delta region used these figures. The earliest known written reference to them occurs in a letter of 1447. In it, a visiting Italian merchant remarked that the figures were kept in sanctuaries and venerated as representing the deified ancestors of famous founding rulers of the region. The elaborate dress of the figures suggests ceremonial military attire, and they may represent warriors who were once allies of the Malian emperor Sundjata Keita (c. 1210-c. 1260). Based on stylistic comparisons with similar figures, these works can be tentatively dated to between the 13th and 15th centuries.

<http://africa.si.edu/collections/rsdadvnNav.asp?BrowseMode=3&offset=52>



Friday night prayer

http://www.burkinabymatt.com/index.php?subject=culture&photo=tabaski_prayer



Mosque at Djenne

<http://www.andygilham.com/mali.htm>



Street scene

<http://www.andygilham.com/mali.htm>



Roof top

<http://www.andygilham.com/mali.htm>



Window

<http://www.andygilham.com/mali.htm>



Village in the countryside

<http://www.andygilham.com/mali.htm>



Young man with facial scarifications,
Boni Village area, Burkina Faso, West Africa.

Facial scarification indicates not only a form of beauty but is, as well, a sign of which village, clan and family he is from, and is a form of black magic.

<http://www.rangefindermag.com/magazine/archives/June05/rainier.tml>

Name: _____ Date: _____

Period: _____

Pre-Writing Graphic Organizer

Source: Notes/What this tells me about ancient Mali . . . Type of Source:

Source A:

Source B:

Source C:

Excerpts from Sundiata:

Source: _____ Notes/What this tells me about ancient Mali . . . Type of Source:
Equestrian figure:

Archer figure:

Friday night prayer:

Mosque at Djenne:

Street scene:

Roof top:

Window:

Village in the countryside:

Facial scarification:

Rubric for Letter

Level 4

The response demonstrates an understanding of the question.

- Addresses the demands of the question
- Ideas are accurate and well supported.
- There are no misconceptions.
- The response shows powerful evidence of higher order thinking skills.
- Uses correct letter format.

Level 3

The response demonstrates an understanding of the question.

- Addresses the demands of the question, although it may not develop all parts equally
- Ideas are accurate and well supported.
- There are no interfering misconceptions.
- Uses correct letter format.

Level 2

The response demonstrates a partial understanding of the question.

- Includes some basic ideas
- Ideas have little or no support
- There are minimal misconceptions.
- May not use correct letter format.

Level 1

The response shows minimal understanding of the question.

- Includes incomplete or fragmented knowledge
- There are significant misconceptions.
- May not use correct letter format.

Level 0

The response is completely incorrect or irrelevant.

No response is given.

Quote from Ibn Battuta: My entry into Malli was on the fourteenth of the first month of Jumada in the year '53 (i.e., 753 A.H., 28th June A.D. 1352), and my going out from there was on the twenty-second of Muharram in the year '54 (i.e. 754 AH., 27 February A.D. 1353). I was accompanied by a merchant known as Abu Bakr ibn Yacqub.

Proper Friendly Letter Format:

Date: _____

Dear _____,

(Body of the letter, indent paragraphs)

Love,

Signature