

- Long distance trade routes such as the Appian Way, the Silk Road and the Frankincense Route involved not only commercial activity, but played a large role in the cultural, religious and artistic exchanges that occurred between East and West. Ask groups of students to research and map an ancient trade route and to write detailed reports that include information such as how the route came to be, what was traded on the route, what ideas were spread and what cultural exchanges happened as a result of trade. Information on ancient trade routes may be found at this web site:

www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/history/trade/variousroutes2.htm

- The British tried for years to get Sultan Barghash of Zanzibar to stop the slave trade. Finally, in 1873, the British forced the Zanzibar slave market to close, although illicit slave trading continued. Ask students to create a detailed time line of the slave trade, from the time the first enslaved Africans were brought from Mauritania to Portugal in 1444, to 1936, when slavery was made illegal in northern Nigeria.

- *A Thousand and One Nights* is considered a classic of world literature and has become a staple of popular culture. Included in these tales are the seven voyages of Sinbad the Sailor, adventures that may be based on tales of Zanzibar by Arab merchants. Break students into groups and ask each group to read one of the stories of Sinbad the Sailor from the Richard Burton translation of *A Thousand and One Nights*. Ask each group to analyze the language, themes and imagery associated with these tales, speculate about their origin and discuss what they tell us about the cultures and societies they reflect. Groups may reconvene and share their thoughts with the class. Students may find *A Thousand and One Nights* at the following web site:

lib1.library.cornell.edu/coldev/mideast/arabnit.htm

- Omani commercial activity was first mentioned in about 200 CE by Arabian geographers who described the town as a major market in the "Empty Quarter" and as lying at a critical junction on the frankincense trade route. Ubar, a fabled ancient city on the Frankincense Route in southern Oman, had mysteriously disappeared and had become known as "the Atlantis of the Sands." Ask students to research the project to discover ancient Ubar undertaken by archaeologist Nicholas Clapp, who through the use of ancient manuscripts and satellite imagery was able to locate the city which had been buried under dirt, rock and sand for centuries. Students may write newspaper articles summarizing the personalities and events that helped uncover ancient Ubar. As a follow-up, ask students to develop a detailed profile of the lives of the ancient Ubarites and how their civilization came to an end. A wealth of information on the Ubar expedition may be found at this web site:

observe.arc.nasa.gov/nasa/exhibits/ubar/ubar_0.html

Suggested Internet Resources

Periodically, Internet Resources are updated on our web site at www.LibraryVideo.com

- www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/trade/hd_trade.htm
The Metropolitan Museum of Art offers "Ancient Trade Routes between Europe and Asia," a valuable resource containing a detailed map of the eastern part of the ancient world and links to a variety of ancient trade routes.
- whc.unesco.org/exhibits/afr_rev/africa-k.htm
UNESCO provides a number of images associated with Swahili culture.
- www.hf.uib.no/institutter/smi/paj/Masonen.html
The University of Tampere in Finland offers a detailed analysis of trans-Saharan trade and the West African discovery of the Mediterranean world from the third Nordic conference on Middle Eastern Studies.

Suggested Print Resources

- Clapp, Nicholas. *Sbeba: Through the Desert in Search of the Legendary Queen*. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, MA; 2001.
- Gates, Henry Louis. *Wonders of the African World*. Knopf, New York, NY; 1999.
- Hoyland, Robert G. *Arabia and the Arabs: From the Bronze Age to the Coming of Islam*. Routledge, New York, NY; 2001.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

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TITLES IN THIS SERIES

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ANCIENT TRADE ROUTES OF THE ARAB WORLD

Grades 7 & up

This guide is a supplement designed for teachers to use when presenting programs in the series, *The Arab World*.

Before Viewing: Give students an introduction to the topic by relaying aspects of the show overview to them. Select vocabulary to provide a focus for students when they view the program.

After Viewing: Review the program and vocabulary, and use the follow-up activities to inspire continued discussion. Encourage students to research the topic further with the Internet and print resources provided.



Program Overview

Zanzibar, Ghadames and Dhofar are all important cities that thrived as strategic locations on ancient trade routes, where international exchanges of goods, ideas and cultures took place. Some experts have reflected on these routes as the communication superhighways of the ancient world. Even today thoughts of the trade in exotic goods along the Swahili coast, the vast demand for gold in the Mediterranean world and camel caravans carrying aromatic resin from the frankincense tree all arouse feelings of adventure and longing for distant places.

Episode 1: Zanzibar

The island of Zanzibar, because of its location directly on the Indian Ocean trade routes, was accessible to Arabian, Asian and African traders and colonists. Over the years, Arabs, especially Omani Arabs, came to have the deepest influence on Zanzibar and the Swahili coast, where they mounted slave expeditions into Africa and traded exotic goods such as ivory and spices for Asian, European and American rice, cloth and gunpowder. Portuguese merchants briefly conquered this strategic commercial location, only to be expelled by the Arabs. The sultan of Oman made Zanzibar his capital in 1832. Not until 1961, decades after European nations had carved up Africa at the Berlin Conference, did Zanzibar become independent, as it became part of the east African nation of Tanzania.

Vocabulary

sultan — A title of honor used for rulers of Muslim countries.

dhow — A small sailboat used for centuries to trade goods in Africa and Asia.

Swahili — An ancient culture of coast dwellers and a language of East Africa that developed from trade.

stupa — A monument that contains Buddhist relics or expresses significant symbols related to Buddhism or Jainism.

caravanseraï — An important public facility where Middle Eastern merchants rested and stored their animals and goods while traveling on the trans-Saharan and frankincense trade routes.

Episode 2: Ghadames

Ghadames, Libya was an important oasis on the trans-Saharan trade route, which flourished from the seventh to the fourteenth century, facilitating the gold-salt trade from sub-Saharan Africa to the Mediterranean. Weary travelers traveling by camel caravan came to Ghadames from Tunis or Timbuktu, after spending weeks in the searing heat of the Sahara desert. Ghadames offered travelers shady palm trees, spacious gardens and cool water from a local oasis spring. Although the colonial era put an end to the trans-Saharan caravans and residents of Ghadames have moved out of ancient city, many still return to the ancient subterranean structures of the old town to escape the summer heat.

Vocabulary

mosque — Also known as a *masjid*, a Muslim place of worship.

Sufi — A Muslim mystic.

Allah — A word that means “the God” in Arabic.

Berber — A North African, primarily Muslim, nomadic culture.

Kufic — A term used to describe a form of Arabic writing which is derived from the name of the Islamic city of Kufah founded in Mesopotamia in the 7th century CE.

Byzantine — A term used to describe the eastern half of the Roman Empire, which broke from the Roman Catholic Church in 1054 and fell to the Ottoman Turks in 1453.

Islam — A religion practiced by more than one billion Muslims, “Islam” comes from the Arabic word for surrender.

Episode 3: Dhofar

The history of Dhofar, Oman is steeped in the history of the frankincense trade, which flourished for centuries and made merchants of the ancient city of Ubar fabulously wealthy. Frankincense trees originated in the Dhofar valley and produced a sticky sap that was in great demand all over the world. Frankincense was burned in the Stone Age and was used in ancient Egypt under the Pharaohs, in the temples of ancient Greece and in religious ceremonies in ancient Rome. Recent evidence also suggests that frankincense was sent to China during the Ming Dynasty. The Frankincense Route lasted for approximately 1,500 years, and while the trade declined due to climate changes, decreased demand and heavy taxes, the fragrant resin is still exported to Asia and Europe.

Vocabulary

Koran — The holy writings of Islam.

Hellenistic — Of, or related to, Greek language or culture.

pharaoh — A ruler of ancient Egypt worshipped as a god.

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Frankincense Route — A trade route that connected Europe with the Arab world, which featured Arab merchants trading goods such as frankincense and myrrh.

Occident — A geographical term referring to the “West” as opposed to the Orient, or “East.”

wadi — A dried out riverbed in northern Africa or southwest Asia that fills with water during the rainy season; an oasis.

bedouin — A member of a nomadic Arab group living in Arabia, North Africa or the Sahara region.

Mohammed — According to Muslims, a prophet who received the word of God.

souk — A word that means “marketplace” in Arabic.

Follow-up Discussion Questions

- Describe images people have when they hear the name “Zanzibar.” Brainstorm a list of other places in the world that evoke similar feelings.
- Why was Omani Sultan Said attracted to Zanzibar? Explain why Zanzibar was considered a strategic location and recount the stages of its economic development.
- What traditions does the art of the Saharan region combine? Discuss other artistic traditions that blend different cultural influences.
- Why were dates considered “the currency of the Sahara”? Speculate about the nature of trans-Saharan travel conditions.
- Discuss the process of producing frankincense. Relate the significance of frankincense to people in the ancient world and how it is used today.
- When did the Frankincense Route begin to decline? Analyze the causes of its demise.

Follow-up Activities

- Modern Tanzania is the result of the 1974 unification of Tanganyika and the island of Zanzibar. As a result of the Berlin Conference, an 1884-1885 meeting of Western countries in which rules and procedures were developed to prevent imperial conflicts during the colonization of Africa, Tanganyika became a German colony, and remained so from 1885 until 1919, when it fell under British rule. Ask students to investigate the effects of the Berlin Conference on African peoples and debate the degree to which colonial relationships continue to exist. As a follow-up, students may research, summarize and evaluate the policy of Ujamaa, the program Tanzanian Prime Minister Julius Nyerere advocated after the country finally achieved its independence in 1961. Primary source material on the Berlin Conference may be found at this web site: web.jjay.cuny.edu/~jobrien/reference/ob45.html

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