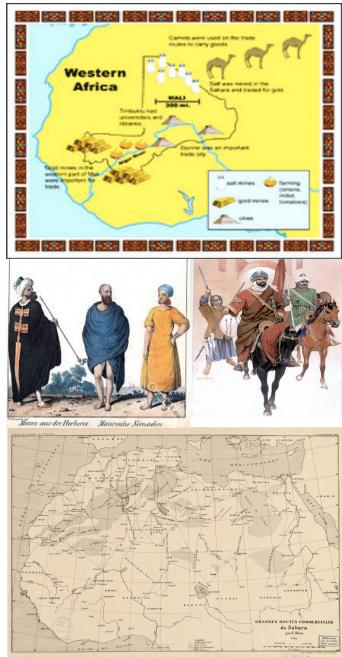
SSWH6 Describe the diverse characteristics of early African societies before 1500 CE/AD.



Element B: Describe the trading networks and distribution of resources by examining trans-Saharan trade in gold, salt, slaves; include the Swahili trading cities.

Trans-Saharan Gold Salt Trade

- Trade between the Mediterranean and sub-Saharan Africa was quite limited until the camel came into regular use in the third century CE.
 - As a beast of burden, the camel was and continues to be ideal for merchants in the Sahara.
 - Able to travel up to 60 miles a day with 500 lbs. of cargo, a camel can go up to ten days without water.
- North African Berbers improved upon earlier advances by the Arabs to develop highly effective war saddles for camels.
 - These technological developments made regular caravans safe and profitable in the Sahara Desert. This regular exchange of goods led to the slow diffusion of Islam into the region.



Trans-Saharan Gold Salt Trade

- □ Trade across the Sahara had three basic production and consumption centers.
 - 1. The forest regions between the Niger and Senegal Rivers exported gold, slaves, kola nuts and palm oil to the north.
 - 2. In return they purchased salt which was essential for life in the tropic climate. This salt was mined in the Sahara desert near Taghaza.
 - 3. Metal ware, pottery and glass manufactured along the Mediterranean coast was purchased with gold from the Niger River region and flowed south to the communities in and below the desert.
 - Much of this exchange was handled by middlemen in the Sahel region which led to the growth of major trading cities like Timbuktu.







<u>Swahili Coast</u>

- □ The east coast of Africa was also an import area for international trade.
- Highly predictable seasonal monsoon winds combined with the maritime technology of the dhow and lateen sail developed by Arabs made open ocean navigation safe and profitable.
- Arab merchants of the Indian Ocean maritime system visited ports in Mogadishu, Mombasa, and Zanzibar among others.
 - While visiting East African ports, merchants purchased ivory, gold, ebony, slaves, and exotic animal products and sold silk, cotton cloth, porcelain, metal ware, glass, and spices.
- Because the merchants of the Indian Ocean depended on seasonal winds, they generally spent several months in each port of call.
 - These extended stays led many merchants to marry local women creating a unique culture in the region that blends West African and Arab customs.
 - The Swahili language is an excellent example of this as it is a blend indigenous Bantu languages and Arabic.

