GUIDED READING North and Central African Societies

A. Drawing Conclusions As you read this section, take notes to answer questions about three types of societies that developed in the various topographical regions of Africa.

Hunting-gathering societies formed close-knit family groups.

1. What are some characteristics of a hunting-gathering society?  
2. Why are written laws not necessary in these societies?

Stateless societies, which existed near the coast, were based on extended family ties.

3. What are some characteristics of a stateless society?  
4. What are some advantages of an age-set system?

Muslim societies developed in North Africa.

5. What are some characteristics of a Muslim theocracy?  
6. How did Muslim law affect individual Islamic states?

B. Determining Main Ideas Explain how the terms Maghrib, Almoravids, and Almohads relate to African societies.
It should be known that people who are temperate in their humanity cannot avoid giving some thought to keeping warm, as they do to shelter. One manages to keep warm by using woven material as protective cover against both heat and cold. This requires the interlacing of yarn, until it turns out to be a complete garment. This is spinning and weaving. Desert people restrict themselves to this. But people who are inclined toward sedentary culture cut the woven material into pieces of the right size to cover the form of the body and all of its numerous limbs in their various locations. They then put the different pieces together with thread, until they turn out to be a complete garment that fits the body and can be worn by people. The craft that makes things fit is tailoring. These two crafts are necessary in civilization, because human beings must keep warm. The purpose of weaving is to weave wool and cotton yarn in warp and woof and do it well, so that the texture will be strong. Pieces of cloth of certain measurements are thus produced. Some are garments of cotton and linen for wear. The purpose of tailoring is to give the woven material a certain form in accordance with the many different shapes and customs [that may occur in this connection]. The material is first cut with scissors into pieces that fit the limbs of the body. The pieces are then joined together with the help of skillful tailoring according to the rules, either by the use of thread, or with bands, or [one] quilts [them], or cuts openings. This [craft] is restricted to sedentary culture, since the inhabitants of the desert can dispense with it. They merely cover themselves with cloth. The tailoring of clothes, the cutting, fitting, and sewing of the material, is one of the various methods and aspects of sedentary culture. This should be understood, in order to understand the reason why the wearing of sewn garments is forbidden on the pilgrimage. According to the religious law, the pilgrimage requires, among other things, the discarding of all worldly attachments and the return to God as He created us in the beginning. Man should not set his heart upon any of his luxury customs, such as perfume, women, sewn garments, or boots. He should not go hunting or expose himself to any other of the customs with which his soul and character have become colored. When he dies, he will necessarily lose them [anyhow]. He should come [to the pilgrimage] as if he were going to the Last Judgment, humble in his heart, sincerely devoted to his Lord. If he is completely sincere in this respect, his reward will be that he will shed his sins [and be] like he was on the day when his mother gave birth to him. Praised be You! How kind have You been with Your servants and how compassionate have You been with them in their search for guidance toward You!


Discussion Questions

Determining Main Ideas

1. According to this passage, why are the crafts of weaving and tailoring necessary?
2. Why was it forbidden to wear sewn garments on the pilgrimage to Mecca?
3. Making Inferences What Islamic values does this excerpt reflect?
RETEACHING ACTIVITY

North and Central African Societies

Clarifying Write T in the blank if the statement is true. If the statement is false, write F in the blank and then write the corrected statement on the line below it.

____ 1. In a patrilineal society, members trace their ancestors through their mothers.
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____ 2. Descendants of a common ancestor are called members of a lineage.
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____ 3. The Almohads, a group of Christian reformers, took power from the Almoravids in the 1100s.
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____ 4. In African stateless societies, the rulers were members of a lineage group.
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____ 5. A strict Islamic religious brotherhood called the Almoravids was founded by Abd Allah Ibn Yasin.
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____ 6. The Almoravids lived in fortified monasteries called maghribis.
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____ 7. Men usually held positions of authority, even in patrilineal societies where ancestors were traced through mothers.
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____ 8. Maghrib was part of North Africa that today is Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Libya.
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