Major Trades Routes

- Six Major Routes on or crossing three continents.
  - Africa
  - Asia
  - Europe

- Trade routes connected most major civilizations.
Major Trades Routes

- All of these routes would connect with others at certain points.

- This meant the world was connected by trade, even if most people never knew it.

- These trade routes are one of the biggest reasons cultural diffusion took place.

- These routes helped ideas, technologies, etc spread across the entire world.
Indian Ocean

Routes from India to the Arabian Peninsula and Africa
The Indian Ocean Maritime System

- The Indian Ocean maritime system linked the lands bordering the Indian Ocean basin and the South China Sea.
- Trade took place in three distinct regions:
  1. the South China Sea, dominated by Chinese and Malays.
  2. Southeast Asia to the east coast of India, dominated by Malays and Indians.
  3. The west coast of India to the Persian Gulf and East Africa, dominated by Persians and Arabs.
Trade in the Indian Ocean was made possible by and followed the patterns of the seasonal changes in the monsoon winds.

Sailing technology unique to the Indian Ocean system included the *lateen sail* and a shipbuilding technique that involved piercing the planks, tying them together, and caulking them.
Mastery of the Monsoon Winds
Chinese junk

First used in the fourth century B.C., the junk employed as many as five masts to support its square lugsails. Each sail, stiffened by bamboo battens, could be spread or closed like a Venetian blind. The junk had no keel, but its deep and sturdy rudder helped keep the ship stable in strong winds.

Sails made of cloth or reed mats

Hull planked with teak

Graphic by Stephen Rountree; Doug Stern, and Robert Kemp
References by Margaret Loftua and Philippe Moulis
Arab dhow

Made of teak and coconut-palm wood, the one- or two-mast dhow was built without nails; instead, timbers were sewn together with ropes of coconut fiber and caulked with whale or shark oil. The ship’s triangular lateen sails made it more maneuverable than ships equipped with square-rigged sails.

Sails made of woven palm leaves, coconut fiber, or cotton

Hull planked with teak or palm

Graphic by Stephen Rountree; Doug Stern; and Robert Kemp. Research by Margaret Loftus and Philippe Moullet.
Climate Regions of South Asia
Because the distances traveled were longer than in the Mediterranean, traders in the Indian Ocean system seldom retained political ties to their homelands, and war between the various lands participating in the trade was rare.
Origins of Contact and Trade

- There is evidence of early trade between ancient Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley.
- This trade appears to have broken off as Mesopotamia turned more toward trade with East Africa.
- Two thousand years ago, Malay sailors from Southeast Asia migrated to the islands of Madagascar.
These migrants, however, did not retain communications or trade with their homeland.
The Impact of Indian Ocean Trade

- What little we know about trade in the Indian Ocean system before Islam is gleaned largely from a single first century C.E. Greco-Egyptian text, *The Periplus (list of stops during a sea route or voyage) of the Erythrean Sea*.

- This account describes a trading system that must have been well-established and flourishing when the account was written.
Periplus of the Erythraean Sea

The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea is a 1st-century CE Roman account of the eastern Mediterranean and the Red Sea. The map illustrates the trade routes and locations mentioned in the text. The book describes the journey from Alexandria to India, including stops in various ports and countries. The text and map together provide insights into the trade, commerce, and cultural exchanges of the time.

Key points from the text:
- "The very warlike nation of the Bactrians" (Chap. 57)
- "Under the very mouth, the sea outside ending in a land called Thys, there is a very great island city called Thinae, from which raw silk yarn and silk cloth are brought on foot through Bactria to Bactra" (Chap. 56)
- "The people of Scece now hold it under his authority and send thither many large ships" (Chap. 46)
- "Beyond these places, the unexplored ocean curves around towards the west and mingleth with the western sea" (Chap. 14)
The goods traded included a wide variety of spices, aromatic resins, pearls, Chinese pottery, and other luxury goods.

The volume of trade was probably not as high as in the Mediterranean.

The culture of the Indian Ocean ports was often isolated from that of their hinterlands.

Traders and sailors in the Indian Ocean system often married local women in the ports that they frequented. These women thus became mediators between cultures.
Cross-Cultural Exchanges on the Silk Roads
Long-Distance Travel in the Ancient World

- Lack of security / police enforcement outside of established settlements
- Changed in classical period
  - Improvement of infrastructure
  - Development of empires
Trade Networks Develop

- Dramatic increase in trade due to Greek colonization
- Maintenance of roads, bridges
- Discovery of Monsoon wind patterns
- Increased tariff revenues used to maintain open routes
Trade in the Hellenistic World

- **Bactria/India**
  - Spices, pepper, cosmetics, gems, pearls
- **Persia, Egypt**
  - Grain
- **Mediterranean**
  - Wine, oil, jewelry, art
- Development of professional merchant class
- Development of infrastructure to support trade
The Silk Roads

- Named for principal commodity from China
- Dependent on imperial stability
  - Stable empires allowed merchants, missionaries, and soldiers to travel and increase cross-cultural exchange
- Overland trade routes from China to Roman Empire
- Sea Lanes and Maritime trade as well
The Silk Road was an overland route that linked China to the Mediterranean world via Mesopotamia, Iran, and Central Asia.

There were two periods of heavy use of the Silk Road:

- (1) 150 B.C.E.–907 C.E.
- (2) The 13th through 17th centuries C.E.
Geography of the Silk Road

- Silk Road stretched from Xi’an, China to Rome
- It covers a vast area of different climates and geographies
- Taklimakan Desert
  - Occupies much of the routes
  - Temperatures range from 104°F to 122°F in the summer, but can dip to -5°F in the winter
- Travelers also had to contend with mountain ranges, deep ravines, and sandstorms
Trade Route

- **DANGER....CAUTION!**
  - Harsh weather conditions
    - Floods, sandstorms, and winter snows could throw you off the trade routes
  - Robbers, thieves, and bandits!
    - Stole your money, animals, goods
Organization of Long-Distance Trade

- Divided into small segments
- Tariffs and tolls finance local supervision
- Tax income incentives to maintain safety, maintenance of passage
The Trade Route

- **There was no one trade route**
- **The routes resembled a chain linked together by Chinese, Asian, and European merchants**
- **Trade transacted in short segments**
The Silk Roads, 200 BCE-300 CE
The origins of the Silk Road trade may be located in the occasional trading of Central Asian nomads.

Regular, large-scale trade was fostered by the Chinese demand for western products (particularly horses).

Trade was also increased by the Parthian state in northeastern Iran and its control of the markets in Mesopotamia.
In addition to horses, China imported alfalfa, grapes, and a variety of other new crops as well as medicinal products, metals, and precious stones.

China exported peaches and apricots, spices, and manufactured goods including silk, pottery, and paper.
The Impact of the Silk Road Trade

- Turkic nomads, who became the dominant pastoralist group in Central Asia, benefited from the trade.
- Their elites constructed houses, lived settled lives, and became interested in foreign religions including Christianity, Buddhism, and (eventually) Islam.
Cultural Trade: Buddhism and Hinduism

- Merchants carry religious ideas along silk routes
- India through central Asia to east Asia
- Cosmopolitan centers promote development of monasteries to shelter traveling merchants
- Buddhism becomes dominant faith of silk roads, 200 BCE-700 CE
The Spread of Epidemic Disease

- Role of trade routes in spread of pathogens
- Limited data, but trends in demographics reasonably clear
- Smallpox, measles, bubonic plague
- Effect: Economic slowdown, move to regional self-sufficiency
Importance of the Silk Road

- Empires expand their wealth
  - Han Dynasty prospers by controlling silk trade
  - All kingdoms require merchants to pay a tax to trade in their lands
- Improved transportation
  - Building of new roads, bridges, ports, canals
- Leads to the development of sea routes
  - Avoid the “middleman” $\Rightarrow$ lower prices for buyers
  - Safer than land routes as you can avoid bandits
- CULTURAL DIFFUSION
  - People exposed to new ideas, cultures, beliefs, and people
Trans-Saharan Routes spread goods such as Gold and Salt across the great desert.
Indian Ocean

Routes from India to the Arabian Peninsula and Africa
Trans-Saharan Trade Routes: Ancient trade routes connected sub-Saharan West Africa to the Mediterranean coast. Among the commodities carried southward were silk, cotton, horses, and salt. Among those carried northward were gold, ivory, pepper, and slaves.
It is
What am
I am the tip of a camel’s nose and mouth! I am very important to the camel, because my nostrils can close up completely to keep out the sand. My mouth helps the camel get the most protein and energy out of poor-quality food in the desert. By swallowing and regurgitating all day, chewing and chewing and chewing with sideways grinding motions, my special mouth pulverizes food and sucks out every last bit of nutrition.
Economic Exchange: Camels

- Camels came to north Africa from Arabia, by way of Egypt and the Sudan, around the 7th Century B.C.

- A caravan took 70 to 90 days to cross the Sahara, so the camel’s ability to travel long distances without water made it very useful.

- After about 300 A.D., camels had replaced horses and donkeys as the preferred means of transportation across the Sahara.
People have been using camels for over 4,000 years mostly as pack animals and for transportation. They use their hair for felt, and they are used for their meat and milk as well. Their dried manure can even be used as fuel.
Camels have adapted to their environment. The secret is in its blood cells (erythrocytes), which can absorb water and expand up to 240% their original size! Camels can drink 40 gallons of water at once and store it in their blood. The humps store 80 lbs. of fat which nourishes the camel in times of scarce food. When the camel uses the fat, the humps shrink. When it eats again, the humps swell up.
Camels have a third eyelid that goes over the eye like swimming goggles to protect its eyes from the sand!

The camel's feet are huge and they allow them to walk on the sand like snow shoes.

Camels live about 40 years and have 1 baby every 12-15 months.
Ghana

- OLD AND POWERFUL
- CONTROLLED THE GOLD AND SALT TRADE
- ADOPTED ISLAM: 985 A.D.
  - GENERATED FURTHER CONVERSION TO THE WEST
- PROSPEROUS
- CONQUERED BY BERBERS AND TUAREGS
Economic Exchange: Gold

- The Kingdom of Ghana became the most important commercial site in west Africa because it was the center for trade in gold.
- Ghana itself did not produce gold but the kings obtained gold from lands to the south and became wealthy by controlling and taxing the trade.
- Muslim merchants were especially eager to procure gold for customers in the Mediterranean basin and the Islamic world.
- Ghana also provided ivory and slaves:
  - In exchange they received horses, cloth, small manufactured wares, and salt.
Mali

- SUCCESSOR STATE
- FELL HEIR TO MOST OF THE TERRITORY AND COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES OF GHANA
Mali benefited from trans-Saharan trade even more than did Ghana.

From 13th until the late 15th Century Mali controlled and taxed almost all the trade passing through West Africa.

The most prominent period was under the reign of Mansa Musa from 1312 to 1337.
Influence of Trade on Religion

- Contact with Muslim merchants encouraged sub-Saharan west Africans and coastal east Africans to adopt Islam.
- It served as a cultural foundation for business relationships.
  - Yet African ruling elites and merchants did not convert for purely mercenary reasons; they took their new faith seriously.
Trans-Saharan Slave Trade

- Between North Africa and Black Africa
- 7th C CE – introduction of the camel and the caravan trade routes
- Trans-Saharan route mutually beneficial for Islamic world and savanna states of Africa
- 9.4 million traded between 650-900 AD (many died en route)