

BRIDGING WORLD HISTORY

Episode #10

Connections Across Water

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Produced by Oregon Public Broadcasting for Annenberg/CPB

AUDIO	TIME CODE
ANNENBERG LOGO	01.00.00.00
OPB LOGO	01.00.15.00
WEB TAG	01.00.23.00
<p>NARRATOR: IN THE EARLY 15TH CENTURY THE CHINESE EMPEROR YONGLE HAD AT HIS DISPOSAL AN IMPOSING FLEET OF SOME 3500 SHIPS, MANY FULLY CAPABLE OF CIRCUMNAVIGATING THE GLOBE. HE DISPATCHED HIS CHIEF EUNUCH, ZHENG HE, ON A SERIES OF FAR-REACHING NAVAL EXPEDITIONS TO THE WESTERN SEAS. THE GOAL OF THESE VOYAGES: PROCLAIM AND DEMONSTRATE CHINESE POWER THROUGHOUT THE INDIAN OCEAN BASIN.</p> <p>THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT EVENTUALLY SUSPENDED THESE MASSIVE NAVAL EXPEDITIONS THAT REACHED ALL THE WAY TO AFRICA. BUT, LIKE OTHER PEOPLES AROUND THE WORLD, THE CHINESE CONTINUED TO FOLLOW SEA ROUTES TO SEEK RICHES FROM MARITIME TRADE.</p>	01.00.27.00
<p>HOST: HISTORIANS CAN ONLY SPECULATE ABOUT THE FIRST VOYAGES PEOPLE MADE ON RIVERS, LAKES AND SEAS; THE ORIGINS OF WATER TRAVEL LIE BEYOND THE REACH OF CURRENT ARCHEOLOGY. BUT THE FIRST CANOES AND BOATS WERE PART OF THE LONG STRING OF TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS THAT ALLOWED EARLY PEOPLES TO FURTHER EXPLORE THEIR WORLD.</p> <p>SCHOLARS DO KNOW THAT VARIOUS FORMS OF WATERCRAFT EXISTED BEFORE THE WIDESPREAD USE OF POTTERY MORE THAN 10,000 YEARS AGO; AND THAT EARLY NOMADS WERE USING BOATS TO TRAVEL FROM PLACE TO PLACE LONG BEFORE THEY SETTLED DOWN AND TOOK UP FARMING. TRAVEL OVER WATER, IT SEEMS, HAS QUITE A LENGTHY HISTORY.</p> <p>THE SEA HAS ALWAYS PRESENTED INTIMIDATING DANGERS TO THE</p>	01.01.36.00

<p>WOULD-BE MARINER. BUT IN ALL AGES HAVE LIVED STALWART EXPLORERS, WILLING TO DELIBERATELY RISK JOURNEYING INTO THE UNKNOWN. OF COURSE THERE WERE UNINTENDED ADVENTURERS AS WELL; UNLUCKY COAST-HUGGERS BLOWN BY SUDDEN WINDS, OUT INTO THE OPEN SEA.</p> <p>HOW EVER THE FIRST EXPLORERS WENT TO SEA THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO, THE PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED BY THESE EARLY MARINERS IN THEIR TRAVELS LED TO EVER MORE CREATIVE ADVANCES IN BUILDING VESSELS AND IN NAVIGATION. WITH EACH INNOVATION IN DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND TECHNOLOGY, ANOTHER STEP WAS TAKEN TOWARD THE LINKING OF WIDELY SEPARATED PEOPLES AND CULTURES.</p>	
<p>CANDICE GOUCHER: If we readjust our thinking to consider that water actually links and connects the land masses rather than separates it then the patterns in world history become much more visible connecting up far-flung people and places around the globe.</p>	01.03.04.00
<p>HOST: FROM THE TIME OF THE EARLIEST HUMAN MIGRATIONS, NETWORKS OF WATER-BASED TRADING ZONES EMERGED AROUND THE GLOBE. THEY GREW FIRST ALONG RIVER SYSTEMS, AND LATER ACROSS LARGER BODIES OF WATER. AS WAS THE CASE WITH MERCHANTS TRAVELING ALONG THE LAND ROUTES, THESE VOYAGERS WERE MOTIVATED BY FINANCIAL GAIN AND NATURAL HUMAN CURIOSITY.</p>	01.03.22.00
<p>CANDICE GOUCHER: We tend to think of sea trade as carrying exotic goods, treasures like gold and silver from one part of the world to another. But those sea lanes also carried people and ideas and languages, religions, diseases from one part of the world to another. All of these things were swept along on the early voyages.</p>	01.03.44.00
<p>HOST: THREE ANCIENT ROUTES PROVIDE VARIED EXAMPLES OF WATER-BORNE TRADE, EXPANSION AND MIGRATION:</p> <p>INDIAN OCEAN ROUTES, ACTIVE FROM AROUND 200 B.C.E. ONWARD, THE VAST EXPLORATIONS OF THE VIKINGS IN THE 9TH TO 12TH CENTURIES C.E. AND THE RIVERINE DOMAIN CARVED OUT BY THE MISSISSIPPIAN PEOPLES OF NORTH AMERICA BETWEEN 700 AND 1700.</p> <p>OF COURSE, THESE WATER ROUTES DIDN'T EXIST EXCLUSIVELY OF THE MANY LAND ROUTES; OR OF EACH OTHER, FOR THAT MATTER. OVER CENTURIES, SEA, RIVER AND LAND NETWORKS MERGED INTO A DYNAMIC, CONNECTED SYSTEM, EVENTUALLY LINKING ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD.</p>	01.04.08.00
<p>HOST: AS EARLY PEOPLES BEGAN TO SETTLE INTO STABLE, AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES, THEY BEGAN TO PRODUCE A RANGE OF CRAFTS, CROPS AND MANUFACTURED WARES, ALL OF WHICH IN TIME BECAME SUITABLE GOODS FOR TRADE.</p> <p>MARINERS AND MERCHANTS TRAVELING BETWEEN ANCIENT PORTS SOON RECOGNIZED WHICH GOODS WERE PRIZED BY THE ELITE IN OTHER LANDS. THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE ACROSS THE INDIAN OCEAN OFFERS US AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF THIS ACTIVITY.</p>	01.04.56.00

<p>THE INDIAN OCEAN BECAME A VITAL COMMERCIAL ZONE LONG BEFORE THE 15TH CENTURY VOYAGES THAT LINKED CHINA AND AFRICA. SHIPS WERE NAVIGATING THE PASSAGE BETWEEN MESOPOTAMIA AND INDIA AS EARLY AS THE THIRD MILLENNIUM B.C.E. AND ANCIENT SUMERIAN AND BABYLONIAN TRADERS BOASTED OF SUCCESSFUL MISSIONS ACROSS THE INDIAN OCEAN TO THE LANDS OF THE HARAPPAN CIVILIZATION IN NORTHWESTERN INDIA FROM ABOUT 2300 TO 1750 B.C.E.</p> <p>ACROSS THE LAND MASSES ADJOINING THE INDIAN OCEAN, WEATHER PATTERNS DICTATED BOTH WHAT WAS PRODUCED FOR TRADE AND THE TRADE ROUTES THEMSELVES.</p> <p>FOR INSTANCE, RICE, WITH ITS RELATIVE LIGHTNESS AND RESISTANCE TO SPOILAGE WAS ONE OF THE EARLIEST PROFITABLE TRADE ITEMS IN ASIA. BUT ITS OVERSEAS JOURNEY WAS LIMITED BY CLIMATIC CONDITIONS. MARINERS CARRYING RICE AND OTHER GOODS BETWEEN MARKETS BORDERING THE INDIAN OCEAN SOON DISCOVERED THEY'D HAVE TO SCHEDULE THEIR TRIPS AROUND THE PREDICTABLE MONSOON WINDS.</p>	
<p>CANDICE GOUCHER: During the spring and summer, warm and humid winds carried merchants from East Africa and Arabia towards India and then in the winter and fall cool, dry winds came from the northeast and carried the merchants the other direction. That these merchants could have the wind at their backs was important and it created a predictable monsoon season and helped make a regular trade possible.</p>	01.06.31.00
<p>HOST: AS THE VOLUME OF TRADE INCREASED OVER THE CENTURIES, SO DID THE NUMBER AND SIZE OF INDIAN OCEAN PORT CITIES LIKE SOFALA, ADEN, SIRAF AND PALEMBANG. IN ADDITION TO BEING VIBRANT CENTERS OF CULTURAL DIFFUSION, THESE CITIES BECAME IMPORTANT TO THE POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE COASTAL STATES. TRADE ENRICHED NOT ONLY THE CITIES AND THE REGIONS BEYOND, BUT INDIVIDUAL RULERS, BANKERS AND MERCHANTS AS WELL.</p>	01.07.01.00
<p>JERRY BENTLEY: Successful port cities had convenient locations, they attracted large numbers of merchants, and they had reputations for dealing fairly with the merchants who came and visited them. And if they lost that reputation for fair dealing, then merchants would go to other port cities.</p>	01.07.29.00
<p>HOST: EARLY INDIAN OCEAN VOYAGES, ABOUT 2000 YEARS AGO, TENDED TO BE LONG DISTANCE AFFAIRS.</p> <p>SOME MARINERS TRAVELED FROM CHINESE PORTS TO PLACES AS FAR WEST AS ALEXANDRIA IN NORTH AFRICA, AND TO THE COAST OF SOUTHEASTERN AFRICA.</p> <p>THESE LONG-DISTANCE VOYAGES GRADUALLY DIMINISHED, TO BE REPLACED, BY AROUND THE 11TH CENTURY WITH A WELL-ORGANIZED SYSTEM OF OVERLAPPING TRADE ZONES. THEY CENTERED ON THE ARABIAN SEA IN THE WEST, THE INDIAN OCEAN IN THE MIDDLE, AND IN THE EAST, THE SOUTH CHINA SEA.</p> <p>AS EARLY AS THE 2ND CENTURY BCE, THE CHINESE OPENED SEA ROUTES</p>	01.07.49.00

<p>FROM SOUTHERN CHINA. OVER THE CENTURIES CHINESE MERCHANTS EXPANDED THESE SEA ROUTES TO TRADE THROUGHOUT SOUTHEAST ASIA AND INTO THE INDIAN OCEAN. CHINESE RULERS SENT AMBASSADORS ON VOYAGES BOTH TO EXPLORE DISTANT LANDS AND TO IMPRESS POTENTIAL TRADING PARTNERS WITH THE WEALTH AND POWER OF CHINA. AND BY THE 13TH CENTURY, CHINESE, AND THEN MONGOL NAVAL POWER REIGNED SUPREME IN THE OCEANS SURROUNDING CHINA, JAPAN, AND KOREA.</p> <p>NINETY YEARS BEFORE COLUMBUS MADE HIS FAMOUS VOYAGE, ZHENG HE SERVED THREE EMPERORS AND MADE SEVEN RENOWNED VOYAGES. A STONE INSCRIPTION WAS ERECTED IN 1432, COMMEMORATING HIS VOYAGES IN THESE WORDS.</p>	
<p><i>VOICE OF ZHENG HE:</i> <i>We have received the high favor of a gracious commission of our Sacred Lord, to carry to the distant barbarians the benefits of his auspicious example.... The Emperor has ordered us, Zheng He...to make manifest the transforming power of the Imperial virtue and to treat distant people with kindness.... We have seven times received the commission and have visited altogether more than thirty countries, large and small.</i></p>	01.09.17.00
<p>HOST: THE CHINESE TOOK PAYMENT FOR MANY OF THEIR EXPORTS IN SILVER BULLION, BUT ALSO IMPORTED SPICES AND EXOTIC ITEMS SUCH AS BIRDS AND ANIMAL SKINS FROM TROPICAL REGIONS. CHINESE GOODS LIKE SILK, LACQUER-WARE, TEA AND PORCELAINS - BECAME PRIZED ACROSS THE TRADING NETWORKS LINKED BY THE INDIAN OCEAN ROUTES.</p> <p>EVEN AT ITS HEIGHT IN THE 15TH CENTURY, CHINESE TRADE NEVER DOMINATED ALL OF THE INDIAN OCEAN WATERS. AFRICAN, INDIAN AND PERSIAN TRADERS HAD FIRMLY ESTABLISHED THEMSELVES ON THE CENTRAL AND WESTERN SEAWAYS FROM A VERY EARLY DATE. THESE TRADERS HAD INTEGRATED THE ISLANDS AND SEAS OF THE INDIAN OCEAN WITH THE EAST AFRICAN AND SOUTH INDIAN COASTS BY AROUND 500 B.C.E.</p> <p>THE EARLY INTEREST OF FOREIGN TRADERS IN GOLD AND IVORY INTENSIFIED WITH THE EMERGENCE OF THE SWAHILI PEOPLE ON THE AFRICAN COAST DURING THE 8TH CENTURY CE. THE URBAN-DWELLING SWAHILI WERE DESCENDANTS OF BANTU-SPEAKING PEOPLE. THEIR EMERGENCE AS A DISTINCT GROUP WAS PARTLY DUE TO THEIR FREQUENT CONTACT WITH ARAB MUSLIMS.</p> <p>GRADUALLY AS THE LOCAL SWAHILI RULERS CAME TO CONTROL AND TAX COMMERCE, RICH AND POWERFUL TRADING COMMUNITIES SUCH AS MOGADISHU, MOMBASA, ZANZIBAR, KILWA AND MOZAMBIQUE GREW UP ALONG THE COAST. BY THE 10TH CENTURY THE SWAHILI WERE SUFFICIENTLY ORGANIZED AND PROSPEROUS TO ATTRACT ISLAMIC TRADERS SEEKING GOLD, IVORY, SLAVES AND SPICES.</p> <p>INTERIOR SITES SUCH AS GREAT ZIMBABWE PRODUCED AND CONTROLLED THE TRADE OF KEY COMMODITIES LIKE GOLD AND IVORY. THESE GOODS FLOWED TOWARD THE COAST ALONG THE ZAMBEZI RIVER. THE SWAHILI TRADING CITIES WERE PERFECTLY POSITIONED TO PROFIT FROM THIS VIGOROUS TRADE.</p>	01.09.50.00

<p>JERRY BENTLEY: Rulers of the Swahili city-states supported themselves royally by taxing the trade that passed through their ports. And sometimes they even simplified the transactions by minting coins in the denomination of their Muslim trading partners. In any case, the volume of the trade grew so large that even today, centuries later, it's possible to find shards of Chinese porcelain all along the beaches of East Africa.</p>	01.11.43.00
<p>HOST: ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL INFLUENCES PERMEATED SWAHILI SOCIAL STRUCTURE. THE SWAHILI LANGUAGE READILY ABSORBED ARABIC WORDS AND CONCEPTS. SWAHILI RULERS BECAME MUSLIM, CALLED THEMSELVES 'SULTANS' AND COMMISSIONED THE CONSTRUCTION OF MOSQUES AND OFFICIAL RESIDENCES REFLECTING THE INCORPORATION OF FOREIGN STYLES. THE INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN SWAHILI AND MUSLIM INFLUENCES AND TRADE NETWORKS SEEM SO TIGHTLY KNIT, IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHERE ONE BEGINS AND THE OTHER ENDS.</p> <p>THE INFLUENCE OF LONG-DISTANCE TRADE PASSED WELL BEYOND THE COAST TO THE INTERIOR REGIONS. TRADE, AND THE WEALTH IT BROUGHT, SUPPORTED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF LARGE AND POWERFUL KINGDOMS IN SOUTHERN, EASTERN AND CENTRAL AFRICA. AND TRADE FROM THOSE KINGDOMS, IN TURN, ULTIMATELY FED BACK INTO THE MUSLIM TRADING NETWORKS OF EURASIA.</p>	01.12.13.00
<p>HOST: WITH THE DECLINE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN THE WEST, TRADE DID DETERIORATE SIGNIFICANTLY IN MOST AREAS OF EUROPE. WITHOUT A SINGLE DOMINANT POWER, THE DOOR WAS OPEN FOR AN OPPORTUNISTIC PEOPLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION. DURING THE NINTH CENTURY PEOPLE FROM THE AREAS OF MODERN-DAY DENMARK, SWEDEN AND NORWAY, KNOWN COLLECTIVELY AS NORSEMEN, RUSHED INTO THIS VACUUM. THEY BEGAN TRADING, RAIDING AND MIGRATING TO THE WEST, EAST AND SOUTH. CONTACTS BETWEEN VIKINGS AND MUSLIM TRADE MISSIONS ARE WELL DOCUMENTED. IBN FADLAN, A MEMBER OF AN ISLAMIC MISSION TO A RUSSIAN TRADING POST DESCRIBED THE VIKINGS:</p>	01.13.15.00
<p><i>VOICE OF IBN FADLAN:</i> <i>Never had I seen a people of more perfect physique. They are all tall as date-palms and reddish in color. They wear neither coat nor kaftan, but each man carries a cape which covers one half of his body, leaving one hand free. No one is ever parted from his axe, sword and knife...</i></p>	01.14.00.00
<p>HOST: THE TERM 'VIKING' PROPERLY REFERS ONLY TO THOSE NORSE WHO ACTIVELY TOOK PART IN RAIDS. VIKING RAIDS WERE MOST LIKELY PROMPTED BY ADVERSE CLIMATIC TRENDS, A GROWING POPULATION OR A COMBINATION OF THE TWO. BUT WHAT THEY WERE CALLED OR WHY THEY WERE RAIDING MADE LITTLE DIFFERENCE TO THE UNFORTUNATES IN THEIR PATH.</p> <p>THE VIKINGS SET SAIL IN BEAUTIFUL, NARROW, OPEN BOATS, SOME 70 OR 80 FEET IN LENGTH. PRIMARILY OAR-DRIVEN, THEY COULD ALSO BE PROPELLED BY SAILS WHEN WINDS WERE FAVORABLE.</p>	01.14.22.00

<p>JERRY BENTLEY: The Viking ships were sturdy enough to travel over the open ocean. But they had a very shallow draft, so it was also possible to sail them up rivers. And since they were relatively light, you could even carry them overland, at least for short distances. So these ships were crucial to the rise of the Vikings as a powerful force in Northern Europe and beyond in the era about 800 to 1100 CE.</p>	01.14.56.00
<p>HOST: THE VIKINGS SET OUT TOWARD THE EAST, ACROSS THE BALTIC SEA AND DOWN THE GULF OF FINLAND, CONTINUING ON ALONG THE RIVERS OF RUSSIA. THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE CALLED THESE NORSE SETTLERS "RUS" FROM WHICH CAME THE NAME "RUSSIA". THEY FOLLOWED VARIOUS RIVER ROUTES SOUTH TO PLACES SUCH AS NOVGOROD AND KIEV AND CONTINUED TO FOLLOW WATERWAYS AS FAR SOUTH AS THE BLACK SEA AND CONSTANTINOPLE.</p>	01.15.25.00
<p>JERRY BENTLEY: The Vikings have a fearsome reputation for violence, but that's only a part of the story. They were also tremendously important for moving merchandise from one society to another. They even linked the Carolingian Empire and Abbasid Empire. They brought Persian silver up the Russian rivers and through the North Sea, and exchanged it for local products of the Carolingian Empire. And this was the silver that became the coins used in the Carolingian Empire.</p>	01.15.51.00
<p>HOST: IN WESTERN EUROPE, THE VIKINGS ESTABLISHED SETTLEMENTS FROM WHICH TO LAUNCH RAIDS INVOLVING UPWARDS OF 800 SHIPS, ATTACKING SUCH CITIES AS HAMBURG, PARIS AND LONDON.</p>	01.16.22.00
<p>JERRY BENTLEY: The Vikings had tremendous influence throughout Europe. Early states, such as the realm of King Alfred, grew out of efforts to protect Britain against Viking raiders. Later on, Alfred's successors made themselves kings throughout England. But ultimately Norse influence returned because the Norman conquerors of 1066 were direct descendants of Vikings who established settlements on the west coast of France.</p>	01.16.34.00
<p>HOST: THE NORSE ALSO VENTURED WEST, FOR A SHORT TIME ESTABLISHING COLONIES IN GREENLAND, AND AROUND THE YEAR 1000, BRIEFLY SETTLED IN WHAT IS KNOWN TODAY AS NEWFOUNDLAND.</p> <p>BY THE TIME NORSE EXPLORERS REACHED THIS FAR WEST, THERE HAD LONG BEEN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES MOVING UP AND DOWN THE VAST NORTH AMERICAN WATERWAYS.</p>	01.17.05.00
<p>HOST: IN THE LATE 18TH CENTURY, A NATIVE AMERICAN, MOST LIKELY A CHIEFTAIN KNOWN AS TWO LIVES, MADE CONTACT WITH SOLDIERS UNDER THE COMMAND OF GEORGE ROGERS CLARK. HE TOLD THEM OF A TIME WHEN HIS ANCESTORS HAD "COVERED THE WHOLE" OF THE LAND, "BEING AS NUMEROUS AS TREES IN THE WOODS." HE TOLD OF LARGE CITIES AND PALACES, TRACES OF WHICH STILL EXISTED ALONG THE RIVERS AND STREAMS. THE SOLDIERS WERE DUBIOUS.</p> <p>BUT SCHOLARS NOW KNOW THAT COMPLEX SOCIETIES AROSE IN NORTH AMERICA OVER A PERIOD OF TWO MILLENNIA. ONE ERA, IDENTIFIED BY</p>	01.17.33.00

<p>SCHOLARS AS THE MISSISSIPPIAN, LASTED FROM AROUND 900 TO 1500 CE. CENTERED ON THE RICH BOTTOMLANDS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER AND FOUR OF ITS PRINCIPAL TRIBUTARIES: THE MISSOURI, ARKANSAS, OHIO AND TENNESSEE RIVERS, THE PEOPLES OF THIS TIME MADE USE OF THESE VAST WATERWAYS TO PARTICIPATE IN EXTENSIVE NETWORKS OF EXCHANGE.</p> <p>THE MOST STRIKING EVIDENCE THAT THE MISSISSIPPIAN PEOPLES LEFT BEHIND ARE GIGANTIC EARTHEN MOUNDS, SOME OF WHICH RIVAL THE MASSIVE MESOAMERICAN PYRAMIDS IN SIZE. THE SHEER SCALE OF THESE IMPRESSIVE MOUNDS SPEAKS TO THE COMPLEX SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION THEIR CONSTRUCTION MUST HAVE REQUIRED.</p> <p>THE MODERN APPRECIATION OF THE MISSISSIPPIAN PEOPLE HAS COME PRIMARILY THROUGH ARCHEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION. MUCH OF THAT EVIDENCE HAS NOW SUBSTANTIATED THE STORIES THE NATIVE CHIEF TOLD THE SOLDIERS.</p> <p>IN THE 1920S, ARCHEOLOGIST WARREN K. MOOREHEAD LED SOME OF THE FIRST EXCAVATIONS OF MAJOR MISSISSIPPIAN SITES. HE FILED THIS REPORT:</p>	
<p><i>VOICE OF WARREN K. MOOREHEAD:</i> <i>After three seasons of explorations and considerable study, that which impresses one most is the immensity of Cahokia. That there is no mound group to compare with it north of Mexico is quite obvious... beyond question the population was extensive—how numerous we do not know but certainly many thousands of Indians lived hereabout...</i></p>	01.19.22.00
<p>HOST: THE LAST GREAT MOUND BUILDING EPOCH OF THE MISSISSIPPIANS LASTED FROM AROUND 1000 TO 1300 C.E. IT WAS CENTERED NEAR THE BANKS OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER, JUST OUTSIDE OF EAST ST. LOUIS, ILLINOIS. KNOWN AS CAHOKIA, IT COVERED SIX SQUARE MILES, AND AT ITS HEIGHT, HAD A POPULATION BETWEEN THIRTY AND FORTY THOUSAND.</p>	01.19.46.00
<p>GARY NASH: It's surprising to think of the population of Cahokia before its big decline around 12 to 1300. But the estimates are 30 to 40 thousand people. Now, this is at the center of it, so there are all these subsidiary villages ranging out, widely. but thirty to forty thousand, 1200? That's an awful lot bigger than London or Paris. You know, it makes it one of the larger cities of the world at that time.</p>	01.20.09.00
<p>HOST: CAHOKIA STILL PUZZLES HISTORIANS TRYING TO INTERPRET THE CULTURAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE MATERIAL REMAINS FOUND HERE.</p> <p>THE PEOPLE OF CAHOKIA ERECTED MORE THAN 100 EARTHEN MOUNDS OVER THE CENTURIES—OF VARIOUS SIZES, SHAPES, AND FUNCTIONS. TAKEN TOGETHER, THEY SHOW THE COMPLEX SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE MISSISSIPPIAN CULTURE. THE CENTERPIECE AT CAHOKIA IS THE 100 FOOT CEREMONIAL EDIFICE NOW KNOWN AS "MONK'S MOUND," THE LARGEST NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN STRUCTURE TO BE FOUND NORTH OF MEXICO. COVERING 16 ACRES, IT CONTAINS OVER 21 MILLION CUBIC FEET OF EARTH, ENOUGH TO FILL SIX MODERN OIL TANKERS.</p>	01.20.38.00

<p>GARY NASH: Monk's Mound and then all the subsidiary burial mounds tell us that this was a stratified society, an organized society, a fairly complex society. You can't get that level of artisan and artistic work until you reach a point where a certain class of people are devoted to specialized tasks.</p>	01.21.29.00
<p>HOST: ARCHAEOLOGISTS HAVEN'T YET DETERMINED THE EXTENT OF DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN PEOPLES OF THE AMERICAS. BUT SOME DEGREE OF CONTACT AND CORRESPONDENCE WAS LIKELY.</p> <p>ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE SUGGESTS THAT CAHOKIA WAS A SORT OF TRADE DEPOT FOR RESOURCES FROM THE NORTH, WEST AND SOUTH. ARCHEOLOGISTS HAVE FOUND ABUNDANT EVIDENCE OF LONG-RANGE TRADE.</p>	01.21.58.00
<p>GARY NASH: Archeological digs at Cahokia produced fascinating materials: Obsidian, that very hard, black rock that can be shaped into knife edges, tools; Mica, that can be turned into decorative jewelry; Copper, that can be shaped and embossed. Things of this sort. And what's interesting is that these come from specific areas. You can trace the copper to a certain part of the Lake Superior area. You can find this kind of obsidian only in certain parts of the Rocky Mountains. So now we know that Cahokia was at the center of a huge exchange system that covered really from the Great Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico and from the Rockies all the way toward and past the Mississippi Valley.</p>	01.22.20.00
<p>HOST: RECORDS MADE BY EUROPEAN EXPLORERS IN THE 16TH CENTURY CONCUR WITH THE ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE, DESCRIBING A POWERFUL, WELL-ORGANIZED SOCIETY. SPANISH EXPLORER, HERNANDO DE SOTO DESCRIBED AN INTRICATE ALLIANCE SYSTEM AMONG THE MISSISSIPPIAN PEOPLES. SPANISH RECORDS ALSO REFLECT THE PROMINENCE OF RIVER CONNECTIONS IN THESE PEOPLES' AFFAIRS, DESCRIBING LARGE, FEARSOME FLEETS OF CANOES BEARING WAR PARTIES "LIKE A FAMOUS ARMADA OF GALLEYS."</p> <p>ALTHOUGH THERE IS MUCH THAT HISTORIANS DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE MISSISSIPPIANS, THEY DO KNOW THAT THIS WAS A VERY ADVANCED, STRATIFIED SOCIETY. ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE SHOWS THEY WORSHIPED THEIR ANCESTORS AND SINGLED OUT A FEW ELITES FOR EXTRAORDINARY HONORS AFTER DEATH. IT IS ALSO APPARENT THAT THE INFLUENCE OF THESE PEOPLE EXTENDED FAR BEYOND THEIR IMMEDIATE HOMELANDS, PROPELLED IN PART, BY THEIR MASTERY OF THE GREAT RIVERS OF CENTRAL NORTH AMERICA.</p> <p>WITH THE ADVENT OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY, UNDERWATER EXPLORATION HAS GIVEN EXPERTS A NEW WAY TO STUDY THE PAST, BEYOND THE SHORES AND PORTS OF EARLY PEOPLES.</p>	01.23.21.00

<p>CANDICE GOUCHER: Hordes of silver and gold traveled the seas from antiquity on. Ships were sometimes lost at sea. Even sailors voyaging into well-charted waters could be in danger, owing to storms, wind, and war. Shipwrecks create an unexpectedly rich source of historical evidence for archaeologists to later mine. Entire ships have been preserved in their watery tombs, lifted onto dry ground for analysis and study – in this way providing historians with a valuable snapshot of actual voyages, their technology, details of the sailor’s life onboard, and the trade goods they carried. Without the careful recovery of this submerged history, scholars are left trying to connect the dots from port to port – from the written or archaeological evidence that remains on land.</p> <p>Recently, because of extraordinary advances in the technology of excavation, new frontiers have opened up. But underwater archaeology has become prohibitively expensive. And this has turned historical research into high-ticket speculative endeavors supported by private investors. It’s not usual for profits from the sale of excavated artifacts to reach more than \$100 million. So the focus of some underwater archaeology is much like digging for treasure. We can ask if this isn’t another form of modern-day piracy. Who really owns the past? Should the search for gold and silver motivate the study of water in world history? Or should historical questions generate research directions underwater as they do on land?</p>	01.24.34.00
<p>HOST: DIFFICULT AS IT IS TO COME BY, THE INFORMATION HISTORIANS HAVE GATHERED ABOUT THE WORLD’S WATERWAYS REVEALS A DYNAMIC SYSTEM OF EXPLORATION AND COMMUNICATION.</p> <p>IN ACKNOWLEDGING THE SHEER AMOUNT OF THE PLANET COVERED BY WATER, HISTORIANS HAVE COME TO REALIZE THAT THE TRADE, MIGRATION AND CONQUEST MOVING OVER THOSE WATERS WAS PRODIGIOUS INDEED. AND THAT IT WAS THESE EARLY MARINERS WHO LINKED THE VARIOUS LAND ROUTES, EVENTUALLY CREATING NETWORKS OF TRADE AND TRAVEL THAT WOULD BRING CONTINENTS TOGETHER.</p>	01.26.24.00
WEB TAG	01.26.57.00
PROGRAM CREDITS	01.26.58.00
SPECIAL THANKS	01.27.33.00
OPB LOGO	01.27. 48.00
ANNENBERG LOGO	01.27.55.00
1-800 ORDER TAG	01.28.10.00
END	01.28.25.00