

Bridging World History

EPISODE: #12

Transmission of Traditions

Producer: Sean Hutchinson

Writer: Beth Harrington

Editor: Pamela Chipman

Host: Sidney Louie

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TIME CODE	AUDIO
1:00:00	ANNENBERG/CPB LOGO
1:00:15	OPB LOGO
1:00:22	WEB TAG
1:00:28	<p>CANDICE GOUCHER: Tradition...isn't just a product, it's also process, a living process, that reflects the memory of individuals as well as communities. It is shaped, really, by the audience, by who's listening, as much as the context in which the teller of the story is living...And for historians, tradition reaches across continents and across generations linking up a global past.</p>
1:01:03	THEME MUSIC
1:01:28	<p>HOST: PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD HAVE DEVISED COUNTLESS WAYS TO TRANSMIT TRADITIONS—THROUGH LANGUAGE, RELIGION, ARCHITECTURE, DANCE, MUSIC—NOT ONLY ACROSS GENERATIONS, BUT ALSO ACROSS GEOGRAPHIC FRONTIERS, AND FROM ONE CULTURE TO ANOTHER.</p> <p>A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THIS CROSS-CULTURAL, CROSS-GENERATIONAL TRANSMISSION CAN BE FOUND IN THE EUROPEAN RENAISSANCE.</p> <p>DURING THE 14TH THROUGH THE 16TH CENTURIES, EUROPEAN ARTISTS AND SCHOLARS LOOKED TO THE GREEK AND ROMAN PAST FOR MODELS AND INSPIRATION. THE REBIRTH OF SECULAR CLASSICAL TRADITIONS PROVIDED THE PREDOMINANTLY RELIGIOUS CULTURE OF MEDIEVAL EUROPE WITH FRESH PERSPECTIVES.</p> <p>THIS TRANSMITTING OF TRADITIONS OVER TIME AND ACROSS CULTURES CAN BE SEEN IN MANY DIFFERENT SETTINGS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.</p>
1:02:16	<p>HOST: THREE EXAMPLES SERVE TO ILLUSTRATE THE DIVERSE METHODS OF TRANSMISSION AND CONTENT OF TRADITIONS IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN ABOUT 500 AND 1500:</p>

	<p>ISLAMIC INFLUENCE IN SPAIN, THE INFUSION OF CHINESE CULTURE ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA, AND TRADITIONALISTS LINKING THE PAST TO THE PRESENT IN WEST AFRICA.</p>
1:02:40	<p>HOST: BY THE EIGHTH CENTURY, AN ISLAMIC EMPIRE STRETCHED FROM CENTRAL ASIA TO THE WESTERN END OF THE MEDITERRANEAN.</p> <p>THROUGH THE CONQUESTS OF ARAB AND BERBER ARMIES THE ISLAMIC EXPANSION STRETCHED AS FAR AS THE IBERIAN PENINSULA; AN AREA KNOWN AS AL-ANDALUS.</p> <p>FOR NEARLY 800 YEARS, THE MUSLIM RULERS TRANSMITTED ISLAMIC TRADITIONS INTO AL-ANDALUS, AS WELL AS THE PHILOSOPHY, MEDICINE, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE OF THE GREEKS AND CHINESE.</p> <p>ISLAMIC SCHOLARS SPREAD NEW LEARNING THROUGHOUT THE IBERIAN PENINSULA AND BEYOND, SOWING THE SEEDS OF THE EUROPEAN RENAISSANCE.</p>
1:03:27	<p>RICHARD BULLIET: At the time of the conquest, the Iberian Peninsula had people of Roman cultural background, people of, uh, Germanic cultural background, and people of Celt-Iberian cultural background who were really there before the Romans came, and perhaps a few other bits and pieces of cultural influence. There's a question as to how many of them are Christians...I think you have to assume that for the first century or two, you really had a very fluid and pluralistic, uh, atmosphere in Spain, and that Islam emerged only gradually as the dominant cultural outlook as well as the political, uh, force that formed the government.</p>
1:04:03	<p>HOST: HOW DID THE MUSLIMS BUILD AND MAINTAIN THEIR POLITICAL AND CULTURAL DOMINANCE? HISTORIANS AGREE THAT THEY DID THIS IN PART THROUGH MILITARY MIGHT, BUT ALSO BY INTERMARRIAGE AND CONVERSION, AND THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF IMMIGRANT MUSLIMS. THESE IMMIGRANTS TRANSFORMED THE FACE OF THE IBERIAN PENINSULA BY BRINGING THEIR NATIVE TRADITIONS WITH THEM. IN THIS WAY MUSLIMS ALTERED THE LANDSCAPE – FIGURATIVELY AND SOMETIMES QUITE LITERALLY.</p> <p>ONE OF THE MOST NOTABLE ARRIVALS TO AL-ANDALUS WAS ITS FIRST RULER, ABD AL-RAHMAN. A NATIVE OF SYRIA, HIS SEAT OF POWER DURING THE LATE 8TH CENTURY WAS THE CITY OF CORDOBA.</p>
1:04:41	<p>HOST: MOVED BY LONGING FOR A FAMILIAR ENVIRONMENT, ABD AL-RAHMAN IMPORTED PLANTS AND BUILT ELABORATE GARDENS THAT REMINDED HIM OF HOME.</p> <p>HE ALSO CONSTRUCTED THE GREAT MOSQUE, A PLACE OF WORSHIP FOR THE ARAB RULERS, AND A BEAUTIFUL ARCHITECTURAL ACHIEVEMENT.</p>
1:05:02	<p>UNDER THE RULE OF ABD AL-RAHMAN'S DESCENDENTS, CORDOBA CONTINUED TO FLOURISH AS A CENTER OF ISLAMIC CULTURE—REACHING ITS HEIGHT IN THE 9TH AND 10TH CENTURIES.</p> <p>IN FACT, THE COURT AT CORDOBA CAME TO BE CONSIDERED AMONG THE MOST REFINED AND OPULENT OF ITS DAY.</p>

1:05:20	BY THE TENTH CENTURY, THE LEGACY OF ABD AL-RAHMAN WAS IN FULL FLOWER—LITERALLY. MANY NEW PLANTS HAD BEEN INTRODUCED: CITRUS FRUIT, RICE, SUGAR CANE, COTTON, POMEGRANATE. AND MANY GARDENS BLOOMED WITH EXOTIC NEW SIGHTS AND SMELLS—ROSES, LILIES, AND SWEET-SMELLING HERBS. THIS TRADITION OF GARDENING AND AGRICULTURE, SO VALUED BY ABD AL-RAHMAN, MOVED ACROSS VAST GEOGRAPHIC DISTANCES AND HAS PREVAILED IN SPAIN OVER HUNDREDS OF YEARS.
1:05:50	HOST: TRAVEL TO THE EAST WAS MOTIVATED BY PILGRIMAGE TO MECCA, BURGEONING TRADE, OR BY AN OVERALL THIRST FOR KNOWLEDGE—ALL OF WHICH STRENGTHENED THE ONGOING TRANSMISSION OF ISLAMIC CULTURAL TRADITIONS TO AL-ANDALUS.
1:06:04	HOST: AS HISTORIANS HAVE DOCUMENTED, MUSLIMS FROM SPAIN ALSO TRAVELED TO GREAT CENTERS OF LEARNING LIKE CAIRO, BASRA AND BAGHDAD, AND STUDIED WITH THE MOST RENOWNED SCHOLARS OF THE DAY. THEY RETURNED WITH BOOKS AND BUILT LIBRARIES. THE LIBRARY OF CORDOBA HOUSED SOME 400,000 VOLUMES. THIS AT A TIME WHEN THE TYPICAL EUROPEAN LIBRARY CONTAINED LITTLE MORE THAN 500 BOOKS; AND WHEN LEADERS OF MOST NORTHERN EUROPEAN KINGDOMS WERE BARELY LITERATE.
1:06:35	HOST: THE TRANSMISSION OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE MUSLIM WORLD WAS AIDED BY THE INTRODUCTION OF PAPER MANUFACTURING, A PROCESS THE ARABS HAD LEARNED FROM THE CHINESE IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY. MUSLIMS ESTABLISHED THE FIRST EUROPEAN PAPER FACTORIES IN SPAIN AND SICILY, PROMOTING LITERACY AND TOUCHING NEW AUDIENCES THROUGH LEARNING.
1:06:54	HOST: POETIC RHYME AND METER IN ARABIC—AND SUBSEQUENTLY ARABIC MUSIC—BECAME INCREASINGLY POPULAR BY THE NINTH CENTURY. SO POPULAR THAT IN THE CENTURIES TO COME, TROUBADOURS WOULD SPREAD THIS MUSIC THROUGHOUT NORTHERN SPAIN AND SOUTHERN FRANCE. IN FACT, THE WORD TROUBADOUR ITSELF MAY HAVE COME FROM THE ARABIC <i>TARRAB</i> WHICH MEANS MINSTREL.
1:07:20	HOST: THIS VIBRANT INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL ATMOSPHERE STIMULATED MANY SCHOLARS IN ISLAMIC SPAIN—MUSLIM AND NON-MUSLIM ALIKE—SPURRING THEM ON TO GREAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY. AMONG THEM WAS THE FAMED 12TH-CENTURY JEWISH PHYSICIAN AND PHILOSOPHER MOSES MAIMONIDES, WHO WAS BORN IN CORDOBA.
1:08:41	BULLIET: The Jews in Spain shared many of the philosophical views of the Muslim intellectuals and they translated works from Arabic, they also wrote works in Arabic, and they played a role as mediator to some degree with Christian translators and Christian thinkers in making works that were available in Arabic, uh, available to the Christian community in Latin.
1:08:08	HOST: IN THE LATE 11TH CENTURY, SMALL CHRISTIAN ENCLAVES ON THE IBERIAN PENINSULA THAT HAD RESISTED THE MUSLIM CONQUEST BEGAN TO REASSERT THEMSELVES—THIS WAS WHILE THE CRUSADES WERE TAKING PLACE AT THE

	<p>OTHER END OF THE MEDITERRANEAN.</p> <p>THEY INITIATED THE <i>RECONQUISTA</i> OR RECONQUEST OF MUSLIM SPAIN BY CHRISTIANS—A PROCESS THAT WOULD LAST ALMOST 500 YEARS.</p> <p>IN 1085, THE CITY OF TOLEDO, WHICH HAD BECOME ONE OF THE GREATEST CENTERS OF MUSLIM LEARNING IN THE WEST, FELL TO CHRISTIAN FORCES.</p> <p>THE CHRISTIAN ARCHBISHOP, RAIMUNDO, WHO TOOK OFFICE IN 1125, SAW AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSMIT THE SCHOLARLY RICHES OF THIS GREAT CENTER OF LEARNING. HE ASSEMBLED A SCHOOL OF TRANSLATORS TO RE-WRITE ARABIC WORKS INTO LATIN SO THAT THEY COULD BE READ BY EDUCATED PEOPLE THROUGHOUT EUROPE.</p> <p>THESE WORKS INCLUDED SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT SCIENTIFIC TEXTS OF THE DAY, SUCH AS THE WRITINGS OF THE 11TH-CENTURY MUSLIM PHILOSOPHER AND PHYSICIAN, IBN SINA. A PERSIAN, IBN SINA BECAME KNOWN IN THE WEST AS AVICENNA. THE LATIN TRANSLATION OF AVICENNA'S <i>CANON OF MEDICINE</i> IS REGARDED BY MANY SCHOLARS AS THE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE OF MEDICAL KNOWLEDGE IN EUROPE UNTIL THE 16TH CENTURY.</p>
1:09:30	<p>HOST:</p> <p>IN 1248, MUSLIM SEVILLE FELL TO FERDINAND III OF CASTILLE. BY THAT TIME, MANY OTHER CITIES – VALENCIA, MURCIA, JAEN AND CORDOBA AMONG THEM - HAD BEEN CAPTURED.</p> <p>THE MUSLIM POET AR-RUNDI CAPTURED THE MOOD OF THE TIMES:</p>
1:09:49	<p>AR-RUNDI:</p> <p><i>Everything declines after reaching perfection...</i></p> <p><i>The tap of the white ablution fount weeps in despair, like a passionate lover weeping at the departure of the beloved.</i></p> <p><i>Over dwellings emptied of Islam, Vacated, whose inhabitants now live in unbelief...</i></p>
1:10:13	<p>HOST:</p> <p>AS CITIES FELL, MUSLIM HOMES WERE DESTROYED, MOSQUES WERE TRANSFORMED INTO CHURCHES, FAMILIES WERE DIVIDED AND PEOPLE WERE STRIPPED OF THEIR POSSESSIONS.</p>
1:10:25	<p>HOST:</p> <p>BUT IT WASN'T UNTIL 1492 THAT THE LAST REMAINING MUSLIM KINGDOM OF GRANADA SURRENDERED TO FERDINAND V AND ISABELLA. MUSLIMS, ALONG WITH JEWS, WERE SOON EXPELLED FROM THE IBERIAN PENINSULA.</p> <p>AND YET, IN LANGUAGE, ARCHITECTURE, AND OTHER ASPECTS OF TRADITION, ISLAMIC CULTURAL INFLUENCE CONTINUES TO BE FELT THROUGH SPAIN TODAY</p>
1:10:46	<p>GRAPHIC TRANSITION</p>
1:10:50	<p>HOST:</p> <p>AT THE OPPOSITE END OF EURASIA, THE KOREAN PENINSULA WAS UNDERGOING SIGNIFICANT CHANGES AS CHINESE CULTURE WAS INTRODUCED.</p>

1:11:01	<p>CHINESE INFLUENCE ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA BEGAN AS EARLY AS THE 2ND CENTURY BCE, WHEN THE HAN DYNASTY ESTABLISHED MILITARY OUTPOSTS IN THE NORTHERN PART OF THE PENINSULA. WAVES OF IMMIGRATION AND INFLUENCES FROM CHINA CONTINUED TO FLOW INTO KOREA OVER THE NEXT 1500 YEARS.</p>
1:11:20	<p>MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, IN THE 4TH CENTURY CE, THE CHINESE INTRODUCED A TRADITION THAT WOULD PROVE TO BE A POWERFUL CULTURAL CONDUIT TO THE PEOPLES OF THE KOREAN PENINSULA—BUDDHISM.</p>
1:11:33	<p>HOST: SCHOLARS HAVE SHOWN THAT BY THE EARLY 7TH CENTURY, BUDDHISM WAS BEGINNING TO FLOURISH IN KOREA, ESPECIALLY IN THE STATE OF SILLA. THE PENINSULA WAS UNIFIED—BY SILLA —FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 668.</p> <p>WITH BUDDHISM CAME OTHER CHINESE CULTURAL INFLUENCES – WRITTEN LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND – PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANTLY – POLITICAL IDEAS AND INSTITUTIONS.</p> <p>AS CHINESE CULTURE AND BUDDHISM FLOWERED IN KOREA, SO DID POETRY AND PROSE...ALL WRITTEN IN CLASSICAL CHINESE.</p> <p>AND CONFUCIAN IDEAS, IMPORTED FROM CHINA AND PATRONIZED AND PROMOTED BY THE RULERS OF SILLA, WERE ALSO WIDELY EMBRACED.</p>
1:12:12	<p>CONFUCIANISM WAS USEFUL TO THE RULERS OF SILLA’S SUCCESSORS, THE KORYO AND CHOSON DYNASTIES. IT ESTABLISHED A MORAL BASIS OF RULERSHIP AND SANCTIONED A SOCIAL HIERARCHY DOMINATED BY SCHOLARS STEEPED IN CONFUCIAN CLASSICS.</p> <p>THE MEMBERS OF THIS SCHOLARLY ELITE HAD TO MASTER MANY TEXTS IN ORDER TO PASS EXAMINATIONS IN CONFUCIAN CLASSICS. THE NEED FOR THESE TEXTS CREATED A DEMAND FOR A TECHNOLOGY THAT COULD REPRODUCE THEM REPEATEDLY.</p> <p>MOST HISTORIANS AGREE THAT THE DEVELOPMENT OF <i>PRINTING</i> TECHNOLOGY WAS RELATED TO THE DESIRE TO SPREAD THE TEACHINGS OF BUDDHISM.</p>
1:12:51	<p>HOST: PAPER, DEVELOPED IN CHINA IN THE FIRST CENTURY, C.E., AND WOODBLOCK PRINTING EMERGING IN THE NINTH CENTURY, MADE IT POSSIBLE FOR PRAYERS, AND EVEN IMAGES OF THE BUDDHA TO BE REPRODUCED OVER AND OVER AGAIN. THESE MATERIALS COULD THEN BE EASILY DISTRIBUTED TO NEW DEVOTEES.</p> <p>IN ELEVENTH-CENTURY KOREA, THE ENTIRE BUDDHIST CANON—SOME 6000 VOLUMES IN ALL—WAS CARVED INTO WOODEN BLOCKS. IT TOOK OVER 70 YEARS TO COMPLETE.</p>
1:13:20	<p>TO REPRODUCE TEXTS EVEN MORE EFFICIENTLY, PRINTING FROM MOVABLE TYPE MADE OF CLAY BEGAN IN CHINA IN THE MID-11TH CENTURY.</p>
1:13:28	<p>AND FROM THERE, IT WAS A LOGICAL LEAP TO MOVEABLE TYPE MADE FROM METAL MOLDS. DEVELOPED IN KOREA IN THE 13TH CENTURY, BOTH CONFUCIAN AND BUDDHIST TEXTS WERE REPRODUCED USING METAL MOVEABLE TYPE, ALONGSIDE THE CONTINUED USE OF WOODBLOCK PRINTING.</p>

1:13:46	THIS WAS 200 HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE GUTENBERG PRINTED HIS NOW-FAMOUS BIBLE WITH SIMILAR, INDEPENDENTLY DEVELOPED TECHNOLOGY.
1:13:54	<p>IN 1231, THE MONGOLS INVADED KOREA, AND EVENTUALLY GAINED CONTROL OF THE PENINSULA. AS A RESULT, THE WOODBLOCKS USED TO PRINT THE BUDDHIST CANON IN THE 11TH CENTURY, WERE DESTROYED.</p> <p>BUT THE WORK WAS OF SUCH IMPORTANCE TO THE KOREAN PEOPLE THAT THEY VOWED TO RE-CARVE THEM, AND DID SO IN RECORD TIME—TWENTY YEARS. THE REPRINTED BUDDHIST CANON IS THE OLDEST AND MOST COMPLETE IN EXISTENCE.</p> <p>BECAUSE PRINTING WAS BECOMING SO IMPORTANT, A GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE WAS ESTABLISHED TO PUBLISH THIS AND OTHER WORKS.</p>
1:14:28	<p>HOST:</p> <p>BUT IN MANY WAYS, THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT IN THE TRANSMISSION OF KOREAN TRADITIONS WAS YET TO COME...THE INVENTION OF HAN'GUL, THE NATIVE PHONETIC WRITING SYSTEM CREATED DURING THE REIGN OF KING SEJONG IN THE 15TH CENTURY.</p>
1:14:44	<p>MA JI RHEE:</p> <p>So the creation, ah...Sejong, ah...King Sejong's creation of Hangeul, the Korean, ah, alphabet was a very clear reflection of the Korean identity which strengthened the Korea's expression of Korea's own identity.</p>
1:15:04	<p>HOST:</p> <p>SEJONG WAS A DEVOUT BUDDHIST, BUT HE ADHERED TO CONFUCIAN DOCTRINE AS WELL. HE BELIEVED THAT THE LITERARY ARTS PAVED THE WAY FOR INDIVIDUAL VIRTUE AND, BY EXTENSION, VIRTUOUS GOVERNMENT.</p>
1:15:17	<p>HOST:</p> <p>HE BUILT A ROYAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, THE HALL OF WORTHIES, WHERE HE COLLECTED CONFUCIAN CLASSICS, POLITICAL STUDIES AND MONOGRAPHS ON GEOGRAPHY AND MEDICINE.</p> <p>BUT THE GREATEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE HALL OF WORTHIES UNDER SEJONG'S DIRECTION WAS THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE KOREAN ALPHABET IN 1443.</p> <p>PRIOR TO THIS TIME, KOREAN LANGUAGE HAD ALWAYS BEEN WRITTEN AWKWARDLY, USING CHINESE SCRIPT.</p> <p>SEJONG WANTED AN ALPHABET THAT SPOKE TO HIS PEOPLE.</p>
1:15:45	<p>SEJONG:</p> <p><i>"The sounds of our language differ from those of Chinese and are not easily communicated by using Chinese graphs. Many among the ignorant, therefore, though they wish to express their sentiments in writing, have been unable to communicate. Considering this situation with compassion, I have newly devised twenty-eight letters. I wish only that the people will learn them easily and use them conveniently in their daily life."</i></p>
1:16:15	<p>HOST:</p> <p>THE RESULT WAS ORIGINALLY CALLED "CORRECT SOUNDS TO INSTRUCT THE PEOPLE" AND NOW IS SIMPLY KNOWN AS HAN'GUL - THE "GREAT LETTERS."</p>
1:16:25	<p>THE NEW WRITING SYSTEM WAS PHONETIC, AND ALLOWED KOREANS TO WRITE WORKS IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE FOR THE VERY FIRST TIME.</p>

1:16:31	<p>MA JI RHEE: Because at the time when the, ah, Korean alphabets were created, ah, those alphabets were mostly used by non-literate people or women because women were excluded from any kind of formal education. So compared to the Chinese characters, ah, which are more...it's...not phonetically based, ah, the Korean, um, alphabets, ah, were very easy to learn because it is based upon, um, the simple characters, much simpler than the Chinese characters.</p>
1:17:01	<p>GRAPHIC TRANSITION</p>
1:17:06	<p>HOST: IN KOREA, AS IN SPAIN, WRITTEN TEXTS ALONG WITH MATERIAL CULTURE PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN TRANSMITTING TRADITIONS. IN WEST AFRICA, HOWEVER, PERFORMANCE AND ORAL TRADITIONS WERE DOMINANT.</p>
1:17:19	<p>HOST: FOR THE BAMANA PEOPLES OF WEST AFRICA, BEGINNING AS EARLY AS THE 12TH CENTURY, THE SIGNIFICANT TRANSITIONS IN LIFE WERE MARKED BY INITIATION CEREMONIES. THESE RITES OFTEN FEATURED MASKS AND DANCE AS A WAY OF COMMUNICATING INFORMATION AND VALUES.</p> <p>IN THE PERFORMANCES OF THE INITIATION SOCIETY KNOWN AS TYI WARA, THE ANTELOPE MASK <i>TEACHES</i> ITS MEMBERS NOT ONLY ABOUT THEIR HISTORY—STEEPED IN AGRICULTURAL TRADITION—BUT ALSO ABOUT THE KNOWLEDGE AND QUALITIES THAT MAKE A SUCCESSFUL FARMER.</p>
1:17:57	<p>THE TYI WARA PERFORMERS WORE—AND STILL WEAR—THESE REMARKABLE ANTELOPE MASKS.</p> <p>IMPRESSIVE AS WORKS OF ART, THEY'RE PERHAPS EVEN MORE NOTEWORTHY BECAUSE THE ANTELOPE HAS VIRTUALLY DISAPPEARED IN THIS REGION. THE MASK ITSELF TELLS THE STORY: AS FORESTS WERE CLEARED TO MAKE WAY FOR BAMANA AGRICULTURE, THE ANTELOPE LOST ITS HABITAT.</p> <p>THE ANTELOPE MASK, THEN, IS A TYPE OF BRIDGE TO THE PAST.</p> <p>AND AS WORN IN DANCE PERFORMANCES, THE ANTELOPE ON THE MASK IS A SUPERNATURAL BEING – HALF-MAN, HALF-ANIMAL.</p> <p>AND WHILE THIS RITUAL IS A VEHICLE FOR EXPRESSING THE PAST, IT IS ALSO SPEAKING TO THE PRESENT. THE PAST IS REMEMBERED IN THE CONTEXT OF A TRADITION THAT IS LIVING AND ONGOING.</p>
1:18:43	<p>CANDICE GOUCHER: Historians look at the past and, ah, find that the traditions that are transmitted orally link the past and the present and reflect the present as much as they do the past</p>
1:18:56	<p>HOST: THIS LIVING TRADITION WAS NOT JUST ABOUT PERSONAL REMINISCENCES OR FIRST-PERSON ACCOUNTS OF CURRENT EVENTS. IT WAS ALSO THE WAY HISTORY WAS RELAYED FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT.</p> <p>THE HIGHEST EXPRESSION OF THIS TRADITION RESIDES IN THE WORK OF THE MOST INFLUENTIAL FIGURES IN WEST AFRICAN ORAL TRADITION...THE GRIOTS AND OTHER SPECIALIST HISTORIANS.</p>

1:19:17	<p>HOST: A GRIOT IS A TRADITIONALIST WHO PRESERVES THE PAST THROUGH RECITED OR SUNG PERFORMANCE. GRIOTS IN THE MANDE HEARTLAND COMMONLY PLAY ONE OF A NUMBER OF WEST AFRICAN STRINGED INSTRUMENTS – A KIND OF LUTE. IN OTHER PLACES THE COMMON INSTRUMENT IS THE KORA, A KIND OF STRINGED CALABASH HARP.</p>
1:19:40	<p>THE RICHEST AREA OF THE GRIOT TRADITION TODAY IN WEST AFRICA IS THAT OF THE MANDE LANGUAGE GROUP: PEOPLES IN SENEGAL, MALI, GUINEA, SIERRA LEONE AND LIBERIA.</p> <p>BUT IN THE PAST, MANDE SPEAKERS WERE CONCENTRATED IN THE GREAT MALI EMPIRE WHICH EXTENDED ALL THE WAY FROM THE UPPER NIGER RIVER TO THE ATLANTIC.</p>
1:20:00	<p>THE MANDE PEOPLE CALLED THEIR GRIOTS <i>JELIW</i>. JELIW WERE GENEALOGISTS, EPIC POETS, HISTORIANS, MUSICIANS, MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKERS AND SPEECHWRITERS ALL ROLLED INTO ONE.</p> <p>THE <i>JELIW</i> MAINTAINED TRADITIONS BY PERFORMING THEM TO LARGE PUBLIC AUDIENCES. THEIR MOST POPULAR PERFORMANCE WAS UNDOUBTEDLY THE STORY OF THE FOUNDING OF MALI, THE EPIC OF THE GREAT LEADER SUNJATA.</p>
1:20:24	<p>THIS STORY IS THE MOST WIDESPREAD TALE IN WEST AFRICAN LORE. IT OUTLINES SUNJATA’S BIRTH AND CHILDHOOD, HIS EXILE FROM MALI AND HIS SUBSEQUENT RETURN AND DEFEAT OF HIS ENEMIES. THE TELLING IS ACCOMPANIED BY A NUMBER OF SONGS.</p> <p>THE HISTORICAL ACCURACY OF SOME OF THIS EPIC HAS BEEN QUESTIONED OVER THE AGES. MOST LIKELY IT WAS EMBELLISHED AS IT PASSED FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. DESPITE THAT POSSIBILITY, CERTAIN INCIDENTS IN THE TELLING RING TRUE.</p> <p>ARCHAIC WORDS SUGGEST THAT THE SONGS ARE QUITE OLD. GRIOTS ASSERT THAT THE SONGS DATE BACK TO THE “FIRST SINGERS” WHICH MAY MEAN THAT THEY ARE OLDER THAN THE NARRATIVE ITSELF.</p>
1:21:11	<p>IN ONE PART OF THE TALE, SUNJATA DEFEATS HIS ENEMIES, THE SOSSOS.</p>
1:21:16	<p>(SFX: sounds of hoofbeats and storm, intermixed with the cries of men in battle)</p> <p>GRIOT: <i>The lightning that flashes across the sky is slower, the thunderbolts less frightening and floodwaters less surprising than Sunjata swooping down...The Sossos, trampled under the hooves of his fiery charger cried out. When he turned to the right, they fell in their tens, and when he turned to the left, his sword made heads fall as when someone shakes a tree of ripe fruit.</i></p>
1:21:45	<p>HOST: THE GRIOT DOES MORE THAN JUST TELL A STORY. HE IS A “TIME-BINDER”—SOMEONE WHO LINKS THE PAST TO THE PRESENT. HE CAN LOOK AT THE PAST WITH HIS UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRESENT, AND SHED LIGHT ON CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS. ABOVE ALL, HE MAINTAINS AND STRENGTHENS HIS PEOPLE’S CONNECTION TO THEIR HERITAGE.</p>

1:22:02	<p>CANDICE GOUCHER: Speech itself was imbued with power and part of the power/energy of the griot was the fact that he was transmitting the words of the ancestors and so his role was really to link the past with the present.</p>
1:22:21	<p>HOST: THOUGH THE GRIOT'S ART HAS ALWAYS BEEN POWERFUL, A <i>WRITTEN</i> TRADITION ALSO EMERGED IN WEST AFRICA, DATING FROM AT LEAST THE TWELFTH CENTURY. THIS TRADITION RELIED ON THE ARABIC SCRIPT, AND WAS LARGELY THE DOMAIN OF RELIGIOUS CLERICS.</p> <p>AS ISLAM SPREAD ALONG THE TRANS-SAHARAN TRADE ROUTES TO WEST AFRICA'S COMMERCIAL HUBS, ANCIENT TRADING CENTERS LIKE TIMBUKTU, BECAME MUSLIM CITIES.</p>
1:22:44	<p>HOST: WEST AFRICAN MUSLIM LEADERS LIKE THE CELEBRATED FOURTEENTH CENTURY RULER, MANSA MUSA, MADE PILGRIMAGES TO MECCA AND HIS PEOPLE FOLLOWED SUIT.</p> <p>AS MORE AND MORE WEST AFRICAN MUSLIMS MADE THE TREK TO THE HOLY CITY, THEY CAME IN CONTACT WITH RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS AND BEGAN TO RETURN WITH RELIGIOUS TEXTS.</p>
1:23:03	<p>HISTORIANS HAVE BENEFITED FROM THE FACT THAT WITH TIME, THE GREAT MOSQUES IN CITIES LIKE TIMBUKTU BECAME IMPORTANT CENTERS OF ISLAMIC LEARNING IN WEST AFRICA.</p>
1:23:13	<p>AS LITERACY IN ARABIC SPREAD, NON-RELIGIOUS HISTORIES CALLED <i>TARIKHS</i> APPEARED. THOUGH THEY DIDN'T HAVE THE APPEAL OF THE EPIC ORAL HISTORIES, THEY <i>WERE</i> A SIGNIFICANT ATTEMPT TO TRANSLATE THE SPOKEN RECORD INTO THE WRITTEN WORD.</p>
1:23:27	<p>STILL, THIS LITERARY TRADITION COULD NOT REPLACE THE ROLE OF THE GRIOT. PERFORMANCE HAS REMAINED KEY TO THE TRANSMISSION OF HISTORY AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN WEST AFRICA.</p> <p>TWENTIETH CENTURY TRADITIONALIST TIERNO BOKAR SALIF OF MALI CHARACTERIZED ITS IMPORTANCE THIS WAY:</p>
1:23:47	<p>TIERNO BOKAR SALIF: <i>"Writing is one thing and knowledge is another. Writing is the photograph of knowledge but not the knowledge itself. Knowledge is a light that is in man. It is the heritage of all that our ancestors have known, and it is the germ that they transmit to us, just as the baobab-tree is potentially in its seed."</i></p>
1:24:14	<p>HOST: THE APPEAL OF THE GRIOT ENDURES TODAY IN NEW FORMS. WEST AFRICAN POP STARS AND FILMMAKERS ROUTINELY TRANSFORM TRADITIONAL COMPOSITIONS AND STORIES INTO MODERN WORKS FOR THEIR PEOPLE.</p>
1:24:23	<p>HOST: SPOKEN LANGUAGE, THE WRITTEN AND PRINTED WORD, RELIGION, DANCE, MUSIC, ARCHITECTURE—THESE WERE JUST SOME OF THE WAYS TRADITIONS WERE TRANSMITTED IN ISLAMIC SPAIN, KOREA AND WEST AFRICA.</p>

1:24:39	<p>HOST: THESE TRADITIONS, TRANSMITTED ACROSS TIME AND SPACE, ENRICHED AND INTERACTED WITH NEW CULTURES AND NEW GENERATIONS.</p> <p>BUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN HISTORICAL EVENTS RUPTURE THE TRANSMISSION OF TRADITION? WHEN PEOPLE LOSE THE THREAD OF CONNECTION TO THEIR PAST AND TO THEIR CULTURE?</p>
1:24:55	<p>GRAPHIC TRANSITION FLORY JAGODA: (singing) Where is the key that was in the drawer?</p>
1:24:58	<p>RICHARD BULLIET: The Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492. Over the next century, the Muslims were expelled as well, in a series of stages. Though some Jews and Muslims continued to live in Spain, pretending to convert to Christianity, most of the immigrants settled in North Africa or in the Ottoman Empire at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. There, in cities from Palestine to Bosnia, Jewish communities settled and lived in peace and harmony with their neighbors. And they brought with them their traditions from Spain; their music, their language, and their community structure. In North Africa, the Muslims had a similar effect, settling in cities from Morocco to Tunisia and bringing with them their traditions from Spain. So the tragedy of 1492 proved to be a means of spreading a rich culture from Spain to other parts of the world.</p>
1:26:27	<p>GRAPHIC TRANSITION</p>
1:26:30	<p>HOST: SELECTIVITY IS ALWAYS AN ISSUE IN THE PRESERVATION AND TRANSMISSION OF THE PAST—WHETHER THAT PAST IS WRITTEN DOWN, REVEALED THROUGH DANCE, EXPRESSED IN SONG...OR SENT HURTLING THROUGH CYBERSPACE.</p> <p>TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS, LIKE PRINTING, FILM...EVEN VIDEO GAMES, MAY ALTER THE PERCEPTION OF TIME AND SPACE. BUT THE TRANSMISSION OF TRADITION, AT HEART, REMAINS LINKED TO THE QUESTIONS THAT EACH GENERATION ASKS ABOUT ITS PAST.</p>
1:26:57	<p>WEB TAG</p>
1:26:58	<p>PROGRAM CREDITS</p>
1:27:33	<p>SPECIAL THANKS</p>
1:27:48	<p>OPB LOGO</p>
1:27:55	<p>ANNENBERG LOGO</p>
1:28:10	<p>1-800 ORDER TAG</p>
1:28:25	<p>END</p>