

Theme 2.4, Connections Across Water; Water-Based Trade

Use the following sources to analyze the role water-based trade played in the development of connections between the world's peoples.

Source 1: Zheng He, the eunuch admiral of the Ming Treasure Ship fleet:

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 30 countries, large and small. (George F. Jewsbury, *Selections from Longman World History: Primary Sources and Case Studies 1*, Longman: New York, 2003, 245.)

Source 2: Ibn Fadlan, a member of an Islamic mission to a Russian trading post, describes the Vikings:

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 (David Whitehouse and Richard Hodges, *Mohammed, Charlemagne, and the Origins of Europe: Archeology and the Pirenne Thesis* [Cornell University Press, 1983] 123.)

Source 3: Scholars now know that complex societies arose in North America over a period of two millennia. One era, identified by 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.