



Ancient Ghana: The Land of Gold (Kingdoms of Africa)

By Philip Koslow

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Gr 6-9--This handsome volume offers readers a close look at the history of the region that is known today as ancient Ghana, which flourished from the 8th-12th centuries. Koslow begins with a discussion of the methods by which much of the information was obtained, citing archaeological digs and stories handed down by the griots. The spread of Islam across West Africa and the effect it had on the peoples living there as well as the importance of the gold trade to the social and commercial development of the region are described. Detailed maps and black-and-white photographs and reproductions help to clarify the material. A few full-color photographs appear, particularly focusing on the artwork of the people. Unfortunately, the text is dry, rarely bringing to life this exciting time in African history, and very little of the culture is conveyed. The narrative is heavily interspersed with numerous authoritative references, such as one might find in a term paper. For the most part, however, the language and vocabulary are well chosen given the age of the intended audience. The list for further reading is made up of scholarly adult titles. Patricia and Fredrick McKissack's *The Royal Kingdoms of Ghana, Mali and Songhay* (Holt, 1993) is another good choice, covering some of the same material, although not in as great depth with respect to the historical details. Libraries will be well served by both titles.

Linda Greengrass, Bank Street College Library, New York City

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