

The  
Management  
University  
of Africa



Sponsored by the Kenya Institute of Management

**UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS**

**SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP**

**DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF EDUCATION ARTS**

**HIS 211: ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS OF AFRICA**

**DATE: 8<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2026**

**DURATION: 2 HOURS**

**MAXIMUM MARKS: 70**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Write your registration number on the answer booklet.
2. **DO NOT** write on this question paper.
3. This paper contains **SIX (6)** questions.
4. Question **ONE** is compulsory.
5. Answer any other **THREE** questions.
6. Question **ONE** carries **25 MARKS** and the rest carry **15 MARKS** each.
7. **Write all your answers in the Examination answer booklet provided.**

**QUESTION ONE**

**Read the following commentary and answer the questions that follow.**

Despite European arguments that Africa did not have any civilizations the urbanization and globalization being experienced in Africa in this early 21st century have deep foundations in the continent's history of civilizations. In Sub-Saharan Africa, for example, theories on the origin of urbanization have developed through the 20th century from an external origin emphasis. There was little recognition of the greater part played by the local people. The producers of these cultures engaged in activities shaped by the environment and sociocultural, political, and economic connections. For instance, in Eastern Africa, Iron Age people became united by language and religion and exploited the coast and sea during the medieval period (from the end of the early Iron Age c. 500 CE to the arrival of the Portuguese at the end of the 15th and to the early 16th century).

Iron Age people traded with inland Africa, East and Southern Asia, and Europe, producing what has become popularly known as the "Swahili civilization." This civilization along the coast of Eastern Africa is marked by material culture of iron working, cloth production, pottery, beads, and glass as well as monumental constructions that range from stone-built mosques, tombs, and palaces. A maritime trade assisted by seasonally reversing monsoon winds exported gold, slaves, animal skins, ivory, and mangrove poles from Eastern Africa and imported beads, porcelain, and silks.

The evidence that marks the Swahili civilization is spread over an area that extends along the coast of Eastern Africa about 3,000 km from Mogadishu (Somalia) in the north to Inhambane (Mozambique) in the south. The Swahili civilization locale also includes the islands of Unguja (Zanzibar), Pemba, Mafia, Comoros, and northern Madagascar. Some remnants marking the Swahili civilization include UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Lamu Old Town, Zanzibar Stone Town, Ruins of Kilwa, Kisiwani and Songo Mnara, and Ilha de Mozambique. The civilization continues in this early 21st century with its

oral traditions and maritime technology that are testimony of coastal Swahili culture continuing through Eastern Africa's social and economic challenges.

**Required:**

- (a) Explain why the Europeans argued that Africa had no civilizations. **(4 marks)**
- (b) Discuss the characteristics of the Swahili civilizations highlighted in the extract. **(10 marks)**
- (c) Describe the role of the locals in the development of the Swahili civilizations? **(5 marks)**
- (d) Account for the decline of the Swahili civilizations in East Africa. **(6 marks)**

**QUESTION TWO**

- (a) Describe the term civilization as used in archaeological studies. **(5 marks)**
- (b) Discuss the main characteristics of ancient African civilizations. **(10 marks)**

**QUESTION THREE**

- (a) Describe the annual flooding of the Nile valley and its importance in the rise of the Egyptian civilization. **(5 marks)**
- (b) Analyze the scientific achievements of the Egyptian civilization. **(10 marks)**

**QUESTION FOUR**

- (a) Outline five reasons why early man engaged food production. **(5 marks)**
- (b) Analyze the impact of Neolithic Revolution to early man. **(10 marks)**

**QUESTION FIVE**

- (a) Outline the factors that led to the rise of the Axum civilization in Africa. **(5 marks)**

(b) Discuss the economic activities of the ancient Kingdom of Aksum. **(10 marks)**

**QUESTION SIX**

(a) Assess the importance of trade in the ancient Ghana Empire. **(6 marks)**

(b) Describe the factors that led to the decline of the Ghana Empire. **(9 marks)**