

# Societies and Empires of Africa, 800–1500

## Connect History and Geography

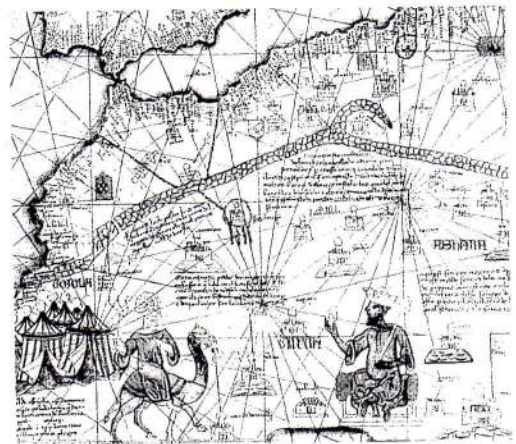
During the Middle Ages, important developments took place in Africa. A thriving trade in salt, gold, and other products supported the rise of a number of powerful city-states and kingdoms. As the map at the right shows, some of these kingdoms became empires. Examine the map and use it to answer the questions below.

1. What empires developed in West Africa during this period?
2. What factors might have caused three empires to arise in the same area?
3. How were the locations of Timbuktu and Kilwa different?
4. How would that difference have influenced trade?

For more information about African empires . . .

[CLASSZONE.COM](http://CLASSZONE.COM)

In 1324, Mansa Musa left Mali for the hajj to Mecca. On the trip, he gave away enormous amounts of gold.



The Yoruba people of West Africa consider twins lucky. This wooden twin image wears a beaded jacket that has a twin on each shoulder.

800  
Empire of Ghana  
thrives on trade.

1000  
Hausa city-states  
begin to emerge.

800

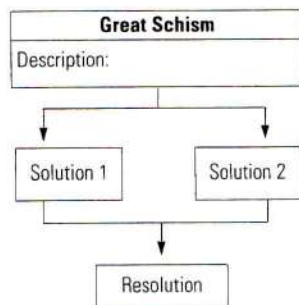
## CRITICAL THINKING

### 1. EDUCATION AFTER THE CRUSADES

**THEME CULTURAL INTERACTION** How might life have been different for Europeans if Muslims had not shared their knowledge and skills?

### 2. THE GREAT SCHISM

Using a problem-solution outline like the one below, summarize the Great Schism. Describe the problem, identify at least two attempted solutions, and note how the Church finally solved the problem.



### 3. JOAN OF ARC AND THE 15TH CENTURY

How does Joan of Arc's story reflect the violence and pessimism of the early 1400s?

### 4. ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES

In 1295, Edward I of England sent letters such as the following to sheriffs throughout the land, announcing a meeting of Parliament. Read the letter and answer the questions below it.

#### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

The king to the sheriff of Northampton, greeting. Whereas we wish to have a conference and discussion with the earls, barons, and other nobles of our realm concerning the provision of remedies for the dangers that in these days threaten the same kingdom . . . we command and firmly enjoin you that without delay you cause two knights, of the more discreet and more capable of labor, to be elected from the aforesaid county, and two citizens from each city of the aforesaid county, and two burgesses from each borough, and that you have them come to us . . . to do whatever in the aforesaid matters may be ordained by common counsel.

- Why is the king calling a meeting of Parliament?
- Who will represent the cities and boroughs, and how will they be chosen?

## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

### 1. LIVING HISTORY: Unit Portfolio Project

**THEME RELIGIOUS AND ETHICAL SYSTEMS** Your unit portfolio project focuses on how religion affected life during the Middle Ages (see page 229). For Chapter 14, you might add one of the following ideas.

- Prepare the script for a newscast announcing the capture of Jerusalem by Crusaders and its impact on Christians and Muslims.
- Draw a cartoon about the clash between King Philip IV and Pope Boniface VIII. Try to show the conflict between religious and secular leaders.

### 2. CONNECT TO TODAY: Cooperative Learning

**THEME ECONOMICS** The bubonic plague and the Hundred Years' War both had a major impact on the economy of medieval Europe. During the plague, populations fell, trade declined, prices rose, farmland was abandoned, and workers demanded higher wages. Today, disease, natural catastrophes, and war still have a great impact on an economy. Work with a team to research and present the effect of war, disease, or natural catastrophe on a country's economy.



Use the Internet, magazines, or books to research the topic. You might choose a war such as the U.S. Civil War, World War II, or the Vietnam War. You might choose a disease such as heart disease or cancer. You might choose a natural disaster such as a hurricane or flood.

- As part of your presentation, make a graph that shows statistical information about the impact of the event you have chosen on the economy.
- Compare your team's event with those of other teams to determine their relative economic impacts.

### 3. INTERPRETING A TIME LINE

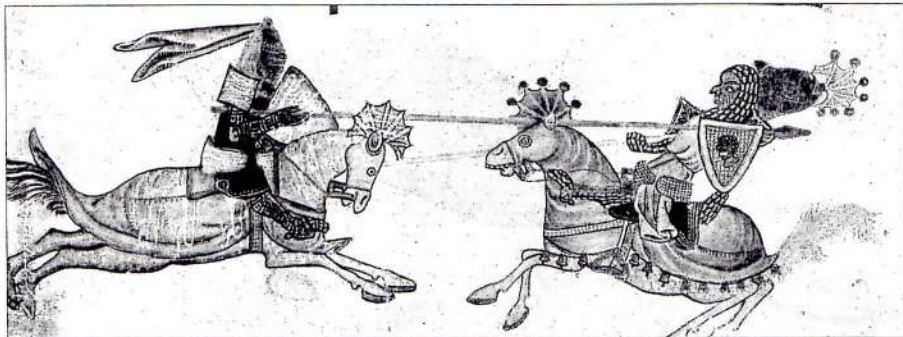
Revisit the unit time line on pages 228–229. Which events during the medieval period in Europe were triggered by a struggle for individual power?

## FOCUS ON ART

The painting below shows Richard the Lion-Hearted (left) unhorsing Saladin during the Third Crusade. In fact the two men never met in personal combat. Notice the way the two leaders are depicted.

- What elements suggest that Richard is the hero of this painting?
- What elements suggest that Saladin is the villain?

**Connect to History** What evidence of the artist's bias is there in this painting about the confrontation between Islam and Christianity?



# EUROPE

ADDITIONAL MAPS: 1310-1450



**1076** Muslim Almoravids conquer Ghana.  
**1100** Ife established as a Yoruba kingdom.

**1235** Sundiata founds Mali Empire.

**1324** Mali king Mansa Musa goes on hajj to Mecca.

**1464** Sunni Ali begins Songhai Empire.

**1500**

# Interact *with* History

You are a trader who has traveled from a North African seaport south across the Sahara. You have arrived at the great trading center of Timbuktu. Among your trade items are manufactured goods and salt. In Timbuktu, you will meet with traders from the gold-mining regions to the south. You want to receive as much gold as possible for your trade items. The traders from the south want to receive as much salt and as many manufactured goods as they can in exchange for their gold. Together you must come to an agreement about what various trade items are worth.

## *What makes trade items valuable?*

To survive the trip across the Sahara, traders stopped at oases for water. However, it was 500 miles to Timbuktu from the nearest oasis! The journey was very hard.

The camel was the only animal that could go without water long enough to cross the Sahara.

This cloth was shipped across the Mediterranean Sea to North Africa. Then it began the long journey to Timbuktu.

Workers in the Sahara endured hardship to mine this salt. In a hot climate, salt helps the human body to retain water. Salt was scarce in the gold-mining region.

These beautiful cowrie shells came all the way from East Africa. They were used as money.

The king often demanded these gold nuggets as taxes. The bag contained gold dust, which the trader used as money.

### EXAMINING *the* ISSUES

- Does an item have to be a luxury to be extremely valuable?
- How do scarcity, usefulness, and transportation cost affect an item's value?
- Do all items have the same value to all people?

As you discuss these questions in class, think about what you have learned about other trading peoples, such as the Phoenicians and the Europeans.

**As you read** about trade in the various regions of Africa, notice what steps rulers took to control trade moving through their territory.

# North and Central African Societies

## TERMS & NAMES

- lineage
- stateless societies
- patrilineal
- matrilineal
- Maghrib
- Almoravids
- Almohads

## MAIN IDEA

North and central Africa developed hunting-gathering societies, stateless societies, and Muslim states.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Modern African nations often must find ways to include these various peoples and traditions in one society.

**SETTING THE STAGE** Throughout history, different groups of Africans have found different ways to organize themselves to meet their political, economic, and social needs. In the varied regions of Africa, climate and topography, or landforms, influenced how each community developed. Some people built desert empires united by religion. Others near the coast created political systems based on extended family ties. Still others lived in the rain forest and formed close-knit family groups to support themselves by hunting and gathering. Section 1 examines these three types of African societies. In addition, many African groups developed kingdoms and city-states—which are discussed in Sections 2 and 3.

## Hunting-Gathering Societies

Hunting-gathering societies—the oldest form of social organization in the world—began in Africa. Hunting-gathering societies still exist in Africa today, though they form an extremely small percentage of the population. Scattered throughout Africa, these groups speak their own languages and often use distinctive hunting techniques. However, they all rely on hunting and gathering for survival. By studying these groups, scholars learn clues about how hunter-gatherers may have lived in the past. However, no hunter-gatherers today live precisely as prehistoric peoples did.

**Forest Dwellers** The Efe (AY-fay) are just one of several hunting-gathering societies in Africa. They make their home in the Ituri Forest in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire). Like their ancestors, the modern-day Efe live in small groups of no more than 50 members, all of whom are related. Each family occupies its own grass-and-brush shelter within a camp, but their homes are rarely permanent. Their search for food causes them to be somewhat nomadic. As a result, the Efe collect few possessions and move to new camps as they use up the resources in the surrounding area.

In the Efe society, women are the gatherers. They walk through the forest searching for roots, yams, mushrooms, and wild seeds. Efe men and older boys do all the hunting. Sometimes they gather in groups to hunt small antelope called duikers. At other times, hunters go solo and use poison-tipped arrows to kill mammals such as monkeys. On some occasions, Efe men collect wild honey, a prized delicacy of the forest. Unlike prehistoric hunter-gatherers, the Efe add to their diet by trading honey, wild game, and other forest products for crops grown by farmers in nearby villages.

**Social Structure** A respected older male, such as a father, uncle, or father-in-law, typically serves as group leader.

## CONNECT to TODAY

### Hunter-Gatherers

The girl shown below is a member of the Efe people. Today the Efe and other hunter-gatherers live in tropical rain forests in several African nations. However, they make up less than 1 percent of the population of Africa.

Hunter-gatherers also exist on other continents. The Inuit of North America have traditionally fished and hunted. Today, some use modern equipment such as rifles and snowmobiles. However, many have abandoned hunting to look for wage-paying work.

Modern society has disrupted the hunting-gathering culture of the Aborigines of Australia. They suffer high rates of poverty, disease, and unemployment. Today, Aborigines make up less than 2 percent of Australia's population.



## THINK THROUGH HISTORY

### A. Drawing Conclusions

Considering the way the Efe live, why might they need to limit their groups to 50 members or less?

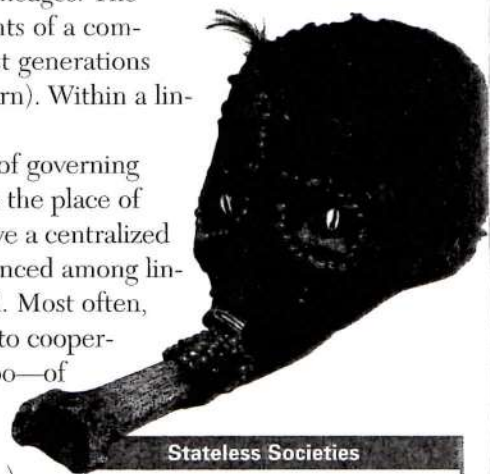
Although members of the group listen to and value this man's opinion, he does not give orders or act as chief. Each family within the band makes its own decisions and is free to come and go. Group members settle arguments through long discussions. If conflicts cannot be settled by talking, a group member may decide to move to a different hunting band. Daily life for the Efe is not governed by formal, written laws. However, they do have logical guidelines that determine how members share food and possessions.

When a respected elder of the Tiv dies, his skull and thigh bone are made into an *imborirungu*, shown here. The living elders use the *imborirungu* to try to communicate with the dead leader's soul.

## Stateless Societies

As in other parts of the world, family organization is central to African society. In many African societies, families are organized in groups called lineages. The members of a **lineage** (LIHN-ee-ihj) believe they are descendants of a common ancestor. Besides its living members, a lineage includes past generations (spirits of ancestors) and future generations (children not yet born). Within a lineage, members feel strong loyalties to one another.

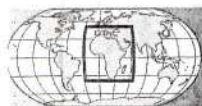
South of the Sahara, many African groups developed systems of governing based on lineages. In some African societies, lineage groups took the place of rulers. These societies, known as **stateless societies**, did not have a centralized system of power. Instead, authority in a stateless society was balanced among lineages of equal power so that no one family had too much control. Most often, members of a stateless society worked through their differences to cooperate and share power. The Igbo (IHG-boh) people—also called Ibo—of southern Nigeria lived in a stateless society as early as the ninth century. (Although the Igbo lived in West Africa, their political structure was similar to stateless societies found in central Africa.) If a dispute arose within an Igbo village, respected elders from



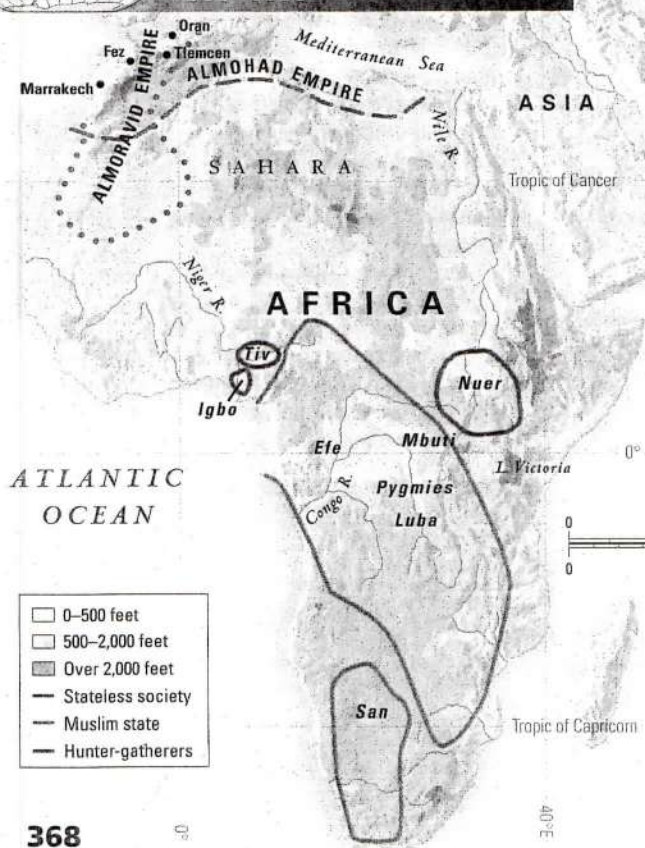
Stateless Societies

Stateless societies did not have centralized power. Instead, power was balanced among lineage groups, usually within villages.

- The Tiv, in what is today Nigeria, had no formal government.
- The Igbo of southern Nigeria resolved disputes by having elders from different lineages meet.
- The Nuer of the southern Sudan organized over 250,000 people without an official ruler.



## Selected African Societies, 800–1500



### Hunter-Gatherers

The seminomadic hunter-gatherers lived by gathering wild foods and hunting animals. When they exhausted an area's resources, they moved on.

- The Efe lived in the Ituri Forest of what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo. They were hunter-gatherers who traded with farming villages.
- The San (also called the Bushmen) lived in most of southern Africa and part of East Africa.

### Muslim States

In North Africa, two groups of Muslim reformers founded empires.

- In the 11th century, the Almoravid Dynasty controlled Mauritania, Morocco, and part of Spain.
- Beginning in the mid-1100s, the Almohad Dynasty controlled Morocco, much of the Maghrib, and part of Spain.

### GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

1. **Location** Where were the Muslim states located?
2. **Region** Why would hunter-gatherers be spread across such a large region?

**Background**  
British colonizers mis-  
labeled "Igbo" as  
"Ibo." That is why  
there are two  
spellings.

different lineages settled the problem. While this political structure served the Igbo well for many centuries, Igbos later encountered challenges from European colonizers who expected one single leader to rule over the whole society. (See Chapter 27.)

**Tracing Family Descent** In African societies, the way a society traces lineage decides inheritance rights and what groups individuals belong to. Members of a **patrilineal** society trace their ancestors through their fathers. Inheritance passes from father to son. When a son marries, then he, his wife, and their children remain part of his father's extended family.

In a **matrilineal** society, children trace their ancestors through their mothers. Young men from a matrilineal culture inherit land and wealth from their mother's family. Although group memberships and inheritance rights in a matrilineal society are based on descent from women, men usually hold the positions of authority.

**Background**  
In matrilineal soci-  
eties that are also  
kingdoms, the king's  
heir is his sister's son,  
not his own son.

**Age-Set System** In many African societies, young people form close ties to individuals outside their lineage through the age-set system. An age set consists of young people within a region who are born during a certain time period. Each age set passes together through clearly identified life stages, such as warrior or elder. Ceremonies mark the passage to each new stage.

Men and women have different life stages, and each stage has its own duties and importance. Responsibilities can include working on community building projects, herding cattle, or assisting in the raising of children. Societies like the Igbo use the age-set system to teach discipline, community service, and leadership skills to their young.

**THINK THROUGH HISTORY**  
**3. Making**  
**Inferences** What  
advantages might an  
age-set system have  
for a society?

## Muslim States

While stateless societies developed south of the Sahara, Islam played a vital role in the political history of North Africa. After Muhammad's death in 632, Muslims swept across the northwest part of the continent. They converted many by conquest and others peacefully. By 670, Muslims ruled Egypt and had entered the **Maghrib**, the part of North Africa that is today the Mediterranean coast of Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria.

As Islam spread, some African rulers converted to Islam. These African Muslim rulers then based their government upon Islamic law. Muslims believe that God's law is a higher authority than any human law. Therefore, Muslim rulers often relied on religious scholars as government advisers.

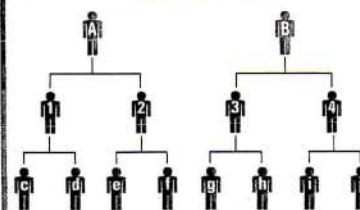
**Islamic Law** In Islam, following the law is a religious obligation. Muslims do not separate their personal life from their religious life, and Islamic law regulates almost all areas of human life. Because of this, Islamic law helped to bring order to Muslim states. It provided the state with a set of values that shaped a common identity.

In addition to unifying individual states, law helped to unify the Muslim world. Even though various Muslim states might have ethnic or cultural differences, they lived under a common law. Islamic law has been such a significant force in African history that some states—especially in North Africa—are still politically and socially influenced by it today.

Among those who converted to Islam were the Berbers. Fiercely independent desert dwellers, the Berbers were the original inhabitants of North Africa. Until their conquest by the Muslim Arabs in the 600s, some of these nomadic African people were Christians and Jews. While they accepted Islam as their faith, many maintained their Berber identities and loyalties. Two Berber groups, the Almoravids and the Almohads, founded empires that united the Maghrib under Muslim rule.

**Almoravid Reformers** In the 11th century, Muslim reformers founded the Almoravid (AL-muh-RAHV-uhd) Dynasty. Its members came from a Berber group liv-

## Daily Life



### Negotiating Conflict

In a stateless society, the power to negotiate conflicts shifts from generation to generation as circumstances demand.

Look at the diagram of two lineages above. If **d** is in conflict with **f**, then **c** will side with his brother **d** and **e** will side with his brother **f**. Therefore, the parents—**1** and **2**—will meet to negotiate.

If **f** is in conflict with **g**, both entire lineages will take sides in the dispute. Therefore, the members of the oldest surviving generation—**A** and **B**—must meet to negotiate.



## SPOTLIGHT ON

### Marrakech

Located in west central Morocco, Marrakech was once the capital of both the Almoravid and the Almohad dynasties. During the height of its prosperity in the 1400s, the city's location on the edge of the Sahara made it an important trade center. It was filled with bustling markets like the present-day wool market shown above.

Marrakech also became an important Islamic religious center. It attracted scholars and thinkers from throughout the Islamic world. Today, with a population of over 600,000, Marrakech is Morocco's third largest city and once again a hub of trade. As in the past, Marrakech is famous for its fine leather work and carpets.

ing in the western Sahara in what is today Mauritania. The movement began after a devout Berber Muslim made a hajj, or pilgrimage, to Mecca. On his journey home, he convinced a Muslim scholar from Morocco named Abd Allah Ibn Yasin to return with him to teach his people about Islam. Ibn Yasin's teachings soon attracted followers, and he founded a strict religious brotherhood, known as the **Almoravids**. According to one theory about the name's origin, the group lived in a *ribat*, or fortified monastery. They were therefore called the "people of the *ribat*"—*al-Murabitun*, which eventually became "Almoravid."

In the 1050s, Ibn Yasin led the Almoravids in an effort to spread Islam through conquest. Although Ibn Yasin died in battle in 1059, the Almoravids went on to take Morocco and found Marrakech. It became their capital. They overran the West African empire of Ghana by 1076. The Almoravids also captured parts of southern Spain, where they were called Moors.

**Almohads Take Over** In the mid-1100s, the **Almohads** (AL-moh-HADZ), another group of Berber Muslim reformers, wrested power from the Almoravids. The Almohads began as a militant religious movement in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. (In Arabic, the Almohads are known as *al-Muwahhidun*, meaning "those who affirm the unity of God.")

The Almohads followed the teachings of Ibn Tumart. After a pilgrimage to Mecca, Ibn Tumart denounced the later Almoravid rulers for moving away from the traditional practice of Islam. He urged his followers to strictly obey the teachings of the Qur'an and Islamic law. The Almohads, led by Abd al-Mumin, fought to oust the Almoravids and remain true to traditional Islamic beliefs.

By 1148 the Almohads controlled most of Morocco and ended Almoravid rule. The new Muslim reformers kept Marrakech as their capital. By the end of the 12th century, they had conquered much of southern Spain. In Africa, their territory stretched from Marrakech to Tripoli and Tunis on the Mediterranean. The Almohad Dynasty gradually declined and broke up into individual Muslim dynasties. While the Almohad Dynasty lasted just over 100 years, it united the Maghrib under one rule for the first time.

Stronger empires were about to emerge to the south of the Almohad Empire. Societies in West Africa—discussed in Section 2—created magnificent empires that boasted tremendous economic and political power and strong links to international trade routes.

### Background

Morocco is in north-west Africa. In A.D. 46, Rome made it a province. Under Roman rule, many Moroccans became Christian. Muslims took over the area in the 700s.

### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

#### C. Recognizing Effects

What was the main effect of Almohad rule on the Maghrib?

## Section 1 Assessment

### 1. TERMS & NAMES

#### Identify

- lineage
- stateless societies
- patrilineal
- matrilineal
- Maghrib
- Almoravids
- Almohads

### 2. TAKING NOTES

Using a web diagram like the one below, list characteristics of stateless societies.



How might these characteristics have helped stateless societies to endure for many centuries?

### 3. COMPARING

In what ways are hunting-gathering societies and stateless societies similar?

#### THINK ABOUT

- family structures
- social structures
- methods of handling conflict

### 4. THEME ACTIVITY

#### Religious and Ethical Systems

Working with a partner, prepare a time line showing the impact of Islam on North Africa. Include significant events for the period described in this section.



# 2 West African Empires and Civilizations

## TERMS & NAMES

- Ghana
- Mali
- Sundiata
- Mansa Musa
- Ibn Battuta
- Songhai
- Hausa
- Yoruba
- Benin

### MAIN IDEA

West Africa contained several powerful empires and states, including Ghana, Mali, and Songhai.

### WHY IT MATTERS NOW

These empires demonstrate the richness of African culture before European colonization.

**SETTING THE STAGE** While the Almohads and Almoravids were building empires in North Africa, three powerful empires flourished in West Africa. These ancient African empires arose in the Sahel—the savanna region just south of the Sahara. They grew strong through the controlling of trade.

## Ghana: Land of Gold

By A.D. 200, trade across the Sahara had existed for centuries. However, this trade remained infrequent and irregular because of the harsh desert conditions. Most pack animals—oxen, donkeys, and horses—could not travel very far in the hot, dry Sahara without rest or water. Then in the third century A.D., Berber nomads began using camels. The camel could plod steadily over much longer distances, covering as much as 60 miles in a day. In addition, it could travel up to ten days without water, twice as long as most pack animals. With the camel, nomads blazed new routes across the desert and trade increased.

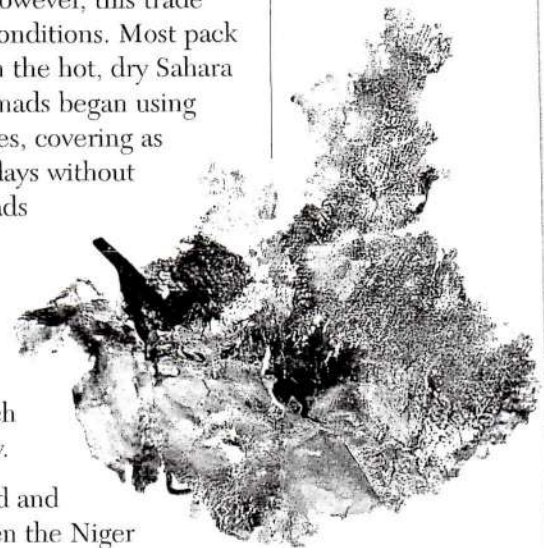
The trade routes crossed the savanna through the region farmed by the Soninke (soh-NIHN-keh) people. The Soninke people called their ruler *ghana*, or war chief. Muslim traders began to use the word to refer to the Soninke region. By the 700s, Soninke rulers of the kingdom of **Ghana** were growing rich from taxing the goods that traders carried through their territory.

**Gold-Salt Trade** The two most important trade items were gold and salt. Gold came from a forest region south of the savanna between the Niger (NY-juhr) and Senegal (SEHN-ih-GAWL) rivers. Miners dug gold from shafts as deep as 100 feet or sifted it from fast-moving streams. Some sources estimate that until about 1350, at least two-thirds of the world's supply of gold came from West Africa. Although rich in gold, West Africa's savanna and forests lacked salt, a material essential to human life. The Sahara contained deposits of salt. In fact, in the Saharan village of Taghaza, workers built their houses from salt blocks because it was the only material available.

Arab and Berber traders crossed the desert with camel caravans loaded down with salt. They also carried cloth, weapons, and manufactured goods from ports on the Mediterranean. After a long journey, they reached the market towns of the savanna. Meanwhile, African traders brought gold north from the forest regions.

Merchants met in trading cities, where they exchanged goods under the watchful eye of the king's tax collector. In addition to taxing trade, royal officials made sure that all traders weighed goods fairly and did business according to law. Royal guards also provided protection from bandits.

**Empire of Ghana** In his royal palace, the king stored gold nuggets and slabs of salt (collected as taxes). Only the king had the right to own gold nuggets, although gold dust freely circulated in the marketplace. By this means, the king limited the supply of gold and kept its price from falling. Ghana's African ruler acted as a religious leader,



Miners in a forest region of West Africa dug up gold nuggets like this. The king of Ghana passed a law that all nuggets should be given to him.

### Background

Salt helps the human body retain water in hot weather. It also preserves food so that it does not spoil so quickly.

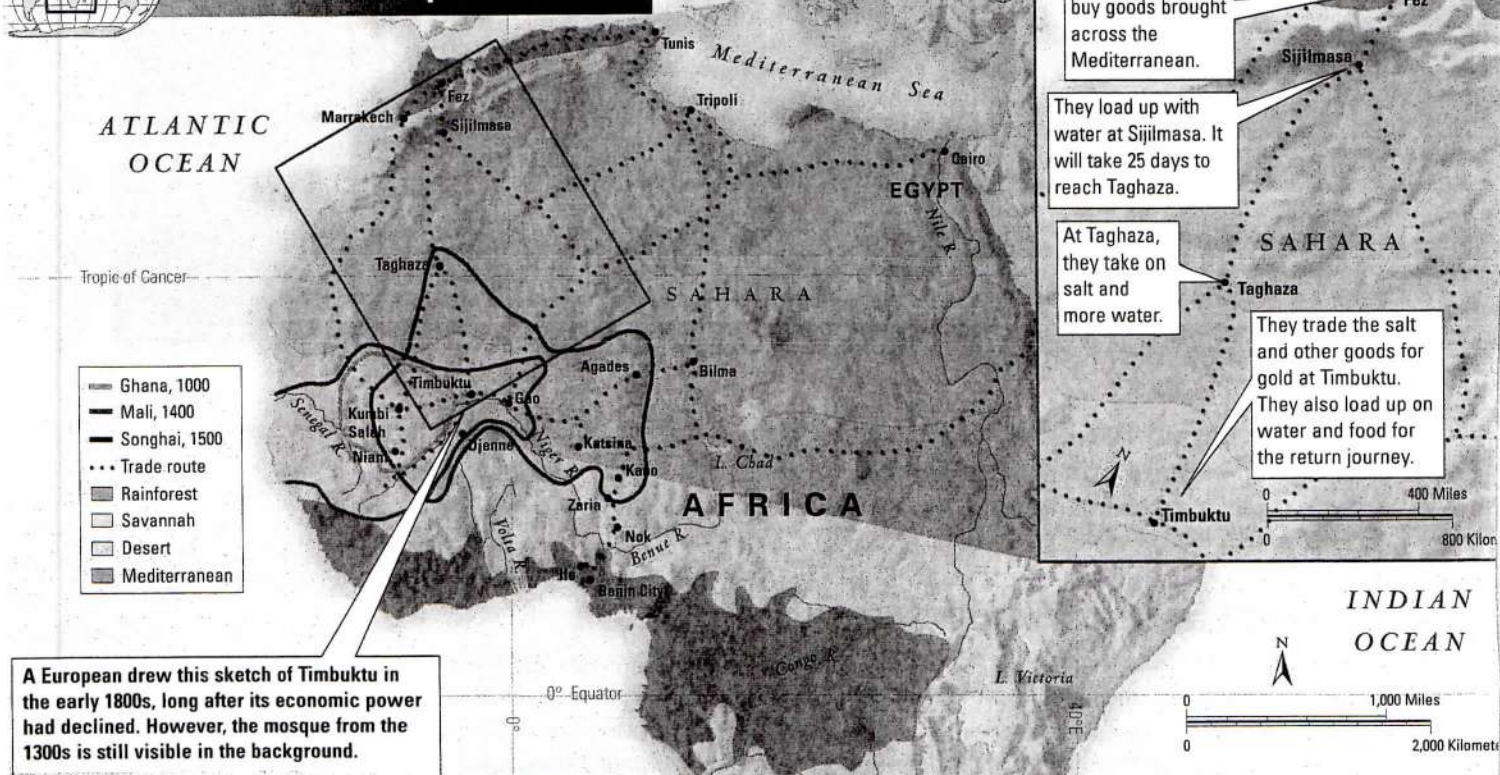
### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

#### 1. Recognizing

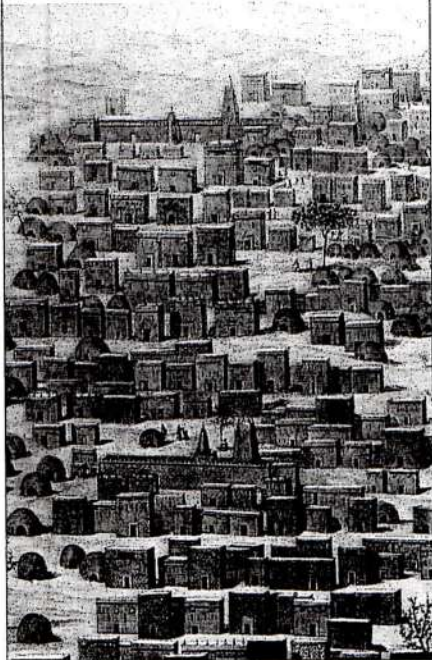
**Effects** What were the positive and negative effects of the king's control of trade?



# West African Empires, 700–1500



A European drew this sketch of Timbuktu in the early 1800s, long after its economic power had declined. However, the mosque from the 1300s is still visible in the background.



**GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps**

- 1. Region** Compare the regions occupied by the Ghana, Mali, and Songhai empires in terms of size and location.
- 2. Human-Environment Interaction** How did the environment both contribute resources to and cause problems for traders?

chief judge, and military commander. He headed a large bureaucracy and could call up a huge army. In 1067, a Muslim geographer and scholar named al-Bakri wrote a description of Ghana's royal court:

### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

The king adorns himself . . . wearing necklaces and bracelets. . . The court of appeal is held in a domed pavilion around which stand ten horses with gold embroidered trappings. Behind the king stand ten pages holding shields and swords decorated with gold, and on his right are the sons of the subordinate [lower] kings of his country, all wearing splendid garments and with their hair mixed with gold.

AL-BAKRI, quoted in *Africa in the Days of Exploration*

By the year 800, Ghana had become an empire. Because Ghana's king controlled trade and commanded a large army, he could demand taxes and gifts from the chiefs of surrounding lands. As long as the chiefs made their payments, the king left them in peace to rule their own people.

**Islamic influences** While Islam spread through North Africa by conquest, south of the Sahara, Islam spread through trade. Muslim merchants and teachers settled in the states south of the Sahara and introduced their faith there.

Eventually, Ghana's rulers converted to Islam. By the 11th century, Muslim advisers were helping the king run his kingdom. While Ghana's African rulers and many members of the court accepted Islam, many people in the empire clung to their animistic beliefs and practices. Much of the population never converted. Those who did kept many of their former beliefs, which they observed along with Islam. Among the upper class, Islam's growth encouraged the spread of literacy. To study the Qur'an, converts to Islam had to learn to read and write Arabic.

**Background**  
Al-Bakri claimed that Ghana's army was 200,000 strong. Some modern scholars believe that figure was exaggerated.

**Background**  
Animism is the belief that spirits—residing in animals, plants, and natural forces—play an important role in regulating daily life.

## 3. Analyzing

**Causes** Why would the disruption of trade destroy Ghana's power?

In 1076 the Muslim Almoravids of North Africa completed their conquest of Ghana. Although the Almoravids eventually withdrew from Ghana, the war had badly disrupted the gold-salt trade. Ghana never regained its power.

## Empire of Mali

By 1235 the kingdom of **Mali** had emerged. Its founders were Mande-speaking people, who lived south of Ghana. Like Ghana's, Mali's wealth was built on gold. As Ghana remained weak, people who had been under its control began to act independently. In addition, miners found new gold deposits farther east. This caused the most important trade routes to shift eastward, which made a new group of people—the people of Mali—wealthy. It also allowed them to seize power.

### Sundiata Conquers an Empire

Mali's first great leader, **Sundiata** (sun-JAHT-ah), came to power by crushing a cruel, unpopular leader. Then, in the words of a Mande oral tradition, "the world knew no other master but Sundiata." Sundiata became Mali's *mansa*, or emperor. Through a series of military victories, he took over the kingdom of Ghana and the trading cities of Kumbi and Walata. A period of peace and prosperity followed.

Sundiata proved to be as great a leader in peace as he had been in war. He put able administrators in charge of Mali's finances, defense, and foreign affairs. From his new capital at Niani, he promoted agriculture and reestablished the gold-salt trade. Niani became an important center of commerce and trade. People began to call Sundiata's empire Mali, meaning "where the king lives."

**Mansa Musa Expands Mali** Sundiata died in 1255. Influenced by Arab traders, some of Mali's next rulers became Muslims. These African Muslim rulers built mosques, attended public prayers, and supported the preaching of Muslim holy men. The most famous of them was **Mansa Musa** (MAHN-sah moo-SAH), who may have been Sundiata's grandnephew.

Like Sundiata, Mansa Musa was a skilled military leader who exercised royal control over the gold-salt trade and put down every rebellion. His 100,000-man army kept order and protected Mali from attack. Under Mansa Musa, the empire expanded to roughly twice the size of the empire of Ghana. To govern his far-reaching empire, he divided it into provinces and appointed governors, who ruled fairly and efficiently.

A devout Muslim, Mansa Musa went on a hajj to Mecca from 1324 to 1325. When he returned, Mansa Musa ordered the building of new mosques at the trading cities of Timbuktu (TIHM-buhk-TOO) and Gao. Timbuktu became one of the most important cities of the empire. It attracted Muslim judges, doctors, religious leaders, and scholars from far and wide to its mosques and universities.

## HISTORY MAKERS

### Sundiata ?-1255

Sundiata came from the kingdom of Kangaba near the present-day Mali-Guinea border. According to oral tradition, he was one of 12 royal brothers who were heirs to the throne of Kangaba.

When Sumanguru, ruler of a neighboring state, overran Kangaba in the early 1200s, he wanted to eliminate rivals, so he murdered all of Sundiata's brothers. He spared Sundiata, who was sickly and seemed unlikely to survive. However, as Sundiata grew up, he gained strength and became a popular leader of many warriors. In 1235, Sundiata's army defeated Sumanguru and his troops.

Although a Muslim, Sundiata also performed traditional African religious ceremonies as emperor. This helped him unify his empire.

### Mansa Musa ?-1332

The strongest of Sundiata's successors, Mansa Musa was a devout Muslim. On his hajj, Mansa Musa stopped in Cairo, Egypt. Five hundred slaves, each carrying a staff of gold, arrived first. They were followed by 80 camels, each carrying 300 pounds of gold dust. Hundreds of other camels brought supplies. Thousands of servants and officials completed the procession.

An Egyptian official wrote:

This man Mansa Musa spread upon Cairo the flood of his generosity: there was no person, officer of the court, or holder of any office of the Sultanate who did not receive a sum of gold from him.

Mansa Musa gave away so much gold that the value of this precious metal declined in Egypt for 12 years.

This is a Spanish mapmaker's idea of how Mansa Musa looked.



### Background

Between Sundiata and Mansa Musa, Mali experienced turmoil—five different rulers in only 30 years!

**Travels of Ibn Battuta** In 1352, one of Mansa Musa's successors prepared to receive a traveler and historian named **Ibn Battuta** (IHB-uhn ba-TOO-tah). A native of Tangier in North Africa, Ibn Battuta had traveled for 27 years, visiting most of the countries in the Islamic world.

After leaving the royal palace, Ibn Battuta visited Timbuktu and other cities in Mali. He found he could travel without fear of crime. As a devout Muslim, he praised the people for their study of the Qur'an, but criticized them for not strictly practicing Islam's moral code. However, Mali's justice system also impressed him:

#### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

They are seldom unjust, and have a greater abhorrence of injustice than any other people. Their sultan shows no mercy to anyone who is guilty of the least act of it. There is complete security in their country. Neither traveler nor inhabitant in it has anything to fear from robbers.

**IBN BATTUTA**, quoted in *Africa in the Days of Exploration*

Ibn Battuta left Mali in 1353. Within 50 years, the once-powerful empire began to weaken. Most of Mansa Musa's successors lacked his ability to govern well. In addition, the gold trade that was one basis of Mali's wealth again shifted eastward as new goldfields were developed.

## Empire of Songhai

As Mali declined in the 1400s, people who had been under its control began to break away. Among them were the **Songhai** (SAWNG-HY) to the east. They built up an army, extended their territory to the large bend in the Niger River near Gao, and gained control of the all-important trade routes. Gao was the capital of their empire.

**Sunni Ali, a Conquering Hero** The Songhai had two extraordinary rulers. One was Sunni Ali, who built a vast empire by military conquest. Sunni Ali's rule began in 1464 and lasted almost 30 years.

Sunni Ali built a professional army that had a riverboat fleet of war canoes and a mobile fighting force on horseback. He forged the Songhai empire through his skill as a military commander and his aggressive leadership. In 1468, Sunni Ali achieved his first major military triumph. He captured the city of Timbuktu, which had been an important part of Mali's empire.

Five years later, he took Djenné, also a trade city that had a university. To take Djenné, Sunni Ali besieged the city for seven years before it fell in 1473. Sunni Ali sealed the takeover of Djenné by marrying its queen.

**Askia Muhammad Governs Well** After Sunni Ali's death in 1492, his son succeeded him as ruler. Almost at once, he faced a major revolt by Muslims who were angry that he did not practice their religion faithfully. The leader of the revolt was a devout Muslim named Askia Muhammad. He drove Sunni Ali's son from power and replaced him.

### Daily Life

#### Islam in West Africa

South of the Sahara, many converts to Islam also kept their African beliefs. They found ways to include their traditional rituals and customs into their new religion.

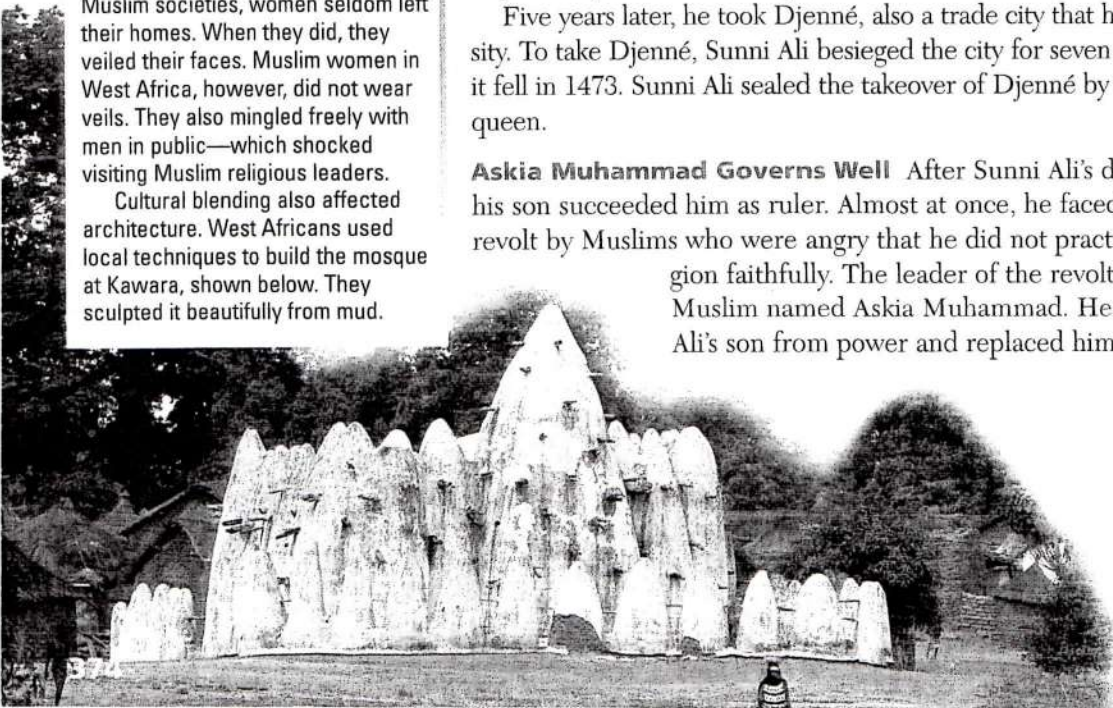
The status of women in West African societies demonstrates how local custom altered Muslim practice. In many 15th-century Muslim societies, women seldom left their homes. When they did, they veiled their faces. Muslim women in West Africa, however, did not wear veils. They also mingled freely with men in public—which shocked visiting Muslim religious leaders.

Cultural blending also affected architecture. West Africans used local techniques to build the mosque at Kawara, shown below. They sculpted it beautifully from mud.

#### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

##### C. Making

**Inferences** Why might the people who had been conquered by Mali want to break away?



During his 35-year rule, Askia Muhammad proved to be an excellent administrator. He set up an efficient tax system and chose able officials. Adding to the centralized government created by Sunni Ali, he appointed officials to serve as ministers of the treasury, army, navy, and agriculture. Under his rule, the well-governed empire thrived.

Despite its wealth and learning, the Songhai Empire lacked modern weapons. In 1591, a Moroccan fighting force of several thousand men equipped with gunpowder and cannons crossed the Sahara and invaded Songhai. The Moroccan troops quickly defeated the Songhai warriors, who were armed only with swords and spears. The collapse of the Songhai Empire ended a 1,000-year period in which powerful kingdoms and empires ruled the central region of West Africa.

#### Background

The Chinese invented gunpowder in the 9th century. About 1200, Arabs developed the first gun, which shot arrows.

## Other Peoples of West Africa

While empires rose and fell in some parts of West Africa, in other areas city-states developed. As in Ghana, Mali, and Songhai, Muslim traditions influenced some of these city-states. Other city-states held to their traditional African beliefs.

**Hausa City-States Compete** The **Hausa** (HOW-suh) were a group of people named after the language they spoke. The city-states of the Hausa people first emerged between the years 1000 and 1200 in the savanna area east of Mali and Songhai in what is today northern Nigeria. Songhai briefly ruled the Hausa city-states, but they soon regained their independence. In such city-states as Kano, Katsina, and Zazzau (later Zaria), local rulers built walled cities for their capitals. These cities had populations of 50,000 or more. From their capitals, Hausa rulers governed the farming villages outside the city walls.

Each ruler depended on the crops of the farmers and on a thriving trade in salt, grain, and cotton cloth made by urban weavers. Because they were located on trade routes that linked other West African states with the Mediterranean, Kano and Katsina became major trading states. They profited greatly from supplying the needs of caravans. Kano was noted for its woven and dyed cloth and for its leather goods.

Zazzau, the southernmost state, conducted a vigorous trade in enslaved persons. Zazzau's traders raided an area south of the city and sold their captives to traders in other Hausa states. These traders sold them to other North or West African societies in exchange for horses, harnesses, and guns. The Hausa kept some enslaved workers to build and repair city walls and grow food for the cities.

All the Hausa city-states had similar forms of government. Rulers held great power over their subjects, but ministers and other officials acted to check this power. For protection from outside enemies and from each other, each city-state raised an army of mounted horsemen. Although rulers often schemed and fought to gain control over their neighbors, none succeeded for long. The constant fighting among city-states prevented any one of them from building a Hausa empire.

**Yoruba Kings and Artists** Like the Hausa, the **Yoruba** (YAWR-uh-buh) people all spoke a common language. Originally the Yoruba-speaking people belonged to a number of small city-states in the forests on the southern edge of the savanna in what is today Benin and southwestern Nigeria. In these communities most people farmed. Over time, some of these smaller communities joined together under strong leaders. This led to the formation of several localized Yoruba kingdoms.

Considered divine, Yoruba kings served as the most important religious and political leaders in their kingdoms. All Yoruba chiefs traced their descent from the first ruler of Ife (EE-fay). According to legend,

### SPOTLIGHT ON

#### Queen Amina's Reign

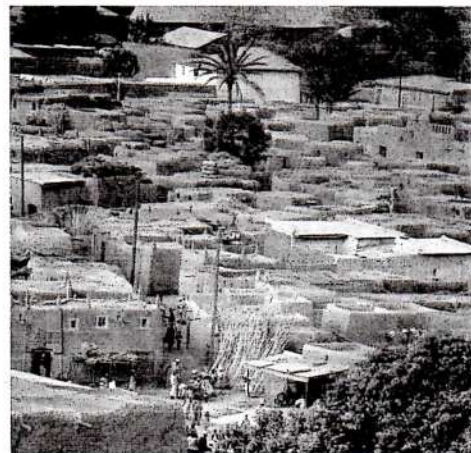
In the 1500s, the Hausa city-state of Zazzau (later called Zaria) was governed by Queen Amina. She was remembered as the "headdress among the turbans." Her rule was distinguished for its military conquests.

The *Kano Chronicle*, a history of the city-state of Kano, records:

At this time Zaria, under Queen Amina, conquered all the towns as far as Kawararafa and Nupe. Every town paid tribute to her. . . . Her conquests extended over 34 years.

Queen Amina's commitment to her Muslim faith also led her to encourage Muslim scholars, judges, and religious leaders from religious centers at Kano and Timbuktu to come to Zazzau.

This modern Hausa village in Nigeria has many traditionally constructed mud buildings.



#### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

##### 1. Analyzing

**Causes** In your own words, restate the main reason that the Hausa did not develop an empire.

# Benin Sculpture

According to tradition, Yoruba artists taught their techniques to artists in nearby Benin. One of the primary functions of the artists of Benin was to please the ruler by recording his history or displaying his power. Adorning the palace walls were brass plaques commemorating the ruler's great achievements. Brass heads showed the ruler and his family as idealized figures.

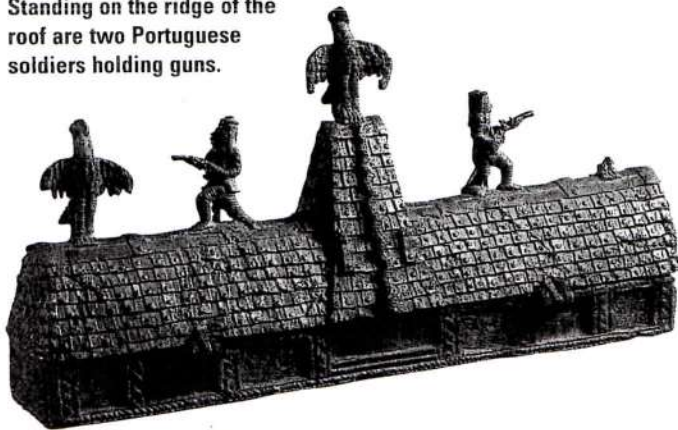
## Brass Leopard

This snarling leopard is a symbol of the king's royal power. It is also a water vessel used on ceremonial occasions. Water was poured into the hollow vessel through a hole on top of the head. When the vessel was tilted, water poured out through the nostrils.



## Bronze Box

This box is shaped like a section of the palace. On the center tower are a bird, which symbolizes disaster, and a python. Standing on the ridge of the roof are two Portuguese soldiers holding guns.



## Connect to History

**Drawing Conclusions** What does each of these sculptures reveal about who had power in Benin? What can you conclude about changes that might have been happening in Benin?

SEE SKILLBUILDER HANDBOOK, PAGE R17

## Connect to Today

**Comparing** How do people today try to demonstrate their power to others—through art or through some other way? Explain.

## Queen Mother

Benin is perhaps most famous for royal heads such as this one. In Benin, the queen mother held a great deal of power. To symbolize that, she wore a woven crown called a "chicken's beak."



the creator sent this first ruler down to earth at Ife, where he founded the first Yoruba state. His many sons became the heads of other Yoruba kingdoms. All Yoruba chiefs regarded the king of Ife as their highest spiritual authority. To demonstrate his power, each king surrounded himself with a large royal court and soldier-bodyguards. However, a secret society of religious and political leaders limited the king's rule by reviewing the decisions he made.

Ife and Oyo were the two largest Yoruba kingdoms. Ife, developed by 1100, was the most powerful Yoruba kingdom until the late 1600s, when Oyo became more prosperous. As large urban centers, both Ife and Oyo had high walls surrounding them. With fertile soil and ample rainfall, most rural farms in the surrounding areas produced surplus food, which was sent to the cities. This enabled city dwellers to become traders and craftspeople.

The Ife produced gifted artists who carved in wood and ivory. They produced terra cotta sculptures and cast in bronze, brass, and copper. Some scholars believe that the rulers supported artists, who may have lived at court. Many clay and metal casts portray Ife rulers in an idealistic way.

**Kingdom of Benin** To the south and west of Ife, near the delta of the Niger River, lay the kingdom of **Benin** (buh-NIHN). Like the Yoruba people of Ife and Oyo, its people made their homes in the forest. The first kings of Benin date from the 1300s. Like the Yoruba kings, the oba, or ruler, of Benin based his right to rule on claims of descent from the first king of Ife.

In the 1400s, the oba named Ewuare made Benin into a major West African state. He did so by building a powerful army. He used it to control an area that by 1500 stretched from the Niger River delta in the east to what is today Lagos, Nigeria. Ewuare also strengthened Benin City by building walls around it. Inside the city, broad streets were lined by neat rows of houses.

The huge palace contained many courtyards and works of art. Artists working for the oba created magnificent brass heads of the royal family and copper figurines. Brass plaques on the walls and columns of the royal palace of the oba showed legends, historical scenes, and the great deeds of the oba and his nobles. According to tradition, Benin artists learned their craft from an Ife artist brought to Benin by the oba to teach them.

In the 1480s, Portuguese trading ships began to sail into Benin's port at Gwatto. The Portuguese traded with Benin merchants for pepper, leopard skins, ivory, and enslaved persons. This began several centuries of European interference in Africa—during which they enslaved Africans and seized African territory for colonies. Meanwhile, East Africans—discussed in Section 3—prospered from trade and developed thriving cities and empires.



This mask is typical of the traditional Yoruba style.

**Vocabulary**  
terra cotta: a reddish-brown clay, hard ceramic.

## Section 2 Assessment

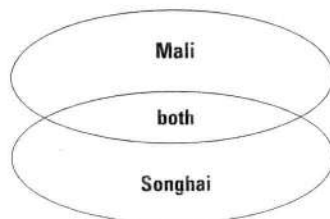
### 1. TERMS & NAMES

Identify

- Ghana
- Mali
- Sundiata
- Mansa Musa
- Ibn Battuta
- Songhai
- Hausa
- Yoruba
- Benin

### 2. TAKING NOTES

Compare the Mali Empire and the Songhai Empire using a Venn diagram like the one below.



### 3. DRAWING CONCLUSIONS

Which of the two—the Yoruba people or the people of Benin—had more influence on the other? Explain.

**THINK ABOUT**

- when the kingdoms flourished
- political traditions of each
- artistic traditions of each

### 4. ANALYZING THEMES

**Economics** What do you think was the most effective method Ghana used to regulate its economy? Explain.

**THINK ABOUT**

- trade routes
- ownership of gold
- taxes

# Eastern City-States and Southern Empires

## TERMS & NAMES

- Swahili
- Great Zimbabwe
- Mutapa

### MAIN IDEA

From 1000 to 1500, East African city-states and southern African empires gained wealth and power through trade.

### WHY IT MATTERS NOW

The country of Zimbabwe and cities such as Mogadishu and Mombasa have their roots in this time period.

**SETTING THE STAGE** As early as the third century, the kingdom of Aksum had taken part in an extensive trade network. From its Red Sea port, Aksum traded with Arabia, Persia, India, and Rome. In the 600s, Muslim forces gained control of Arabia, the Red

Sea, and North Africa. The Muslims cut off the Aksumites from their port. The Aksumites moved their capital south from Aksum to Roha (later called Lalibela) shortly before 1100. In the meantime, other cities on the east coast were thriving on Indian Ocean trade.

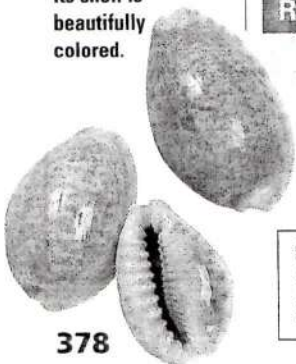
## Global Impact

### Swahili

Over the centuries, contacts between two peoples—Bantu speakers and Arabs—led to the creation of a new people and a new language. Many Arab traders married African women. In time, people of mixed Arab and African ancestry came to be called Swahili. The word comes from an Arabic term meaning “people of the coast” and refers to the East African coast.

Although Swahili peoples do not share a single culture, they do speak a common language. Swahili is a Bantu language with many words borrowed from Arabic. Today, Swahili is spoken by about 30 million people—about half of all people who speak a Bantu language. In Tanzania and Kenya, Swahili is the official language.

In some parts of Africa, cowrie shells were used for currency. The cowrie is a sea snail that lives in the Indian Ocean. Its shell is beautifully colored.



## East Coast Trade Cities

By 1100, waves of Bantu-speaking people had migrated across central Africa to the east coast. There they established farming and fishing villages. At the same time, traders took advantage of the monsoons to make their way across the Indian Ocean to East Africa. Slowly, the existing coastal villages grew into bustling seaports, built on trade between East African merchants and traders from Arabia, Persia, and India. As trade increased, many Muslim Arab and Persian traders settled in these port cities. Arabic blended with the Bantu language to create the **Swahili** (swah-HEE-lee) language.

Persian traders moved south from the Horn of Africa—a triangular peninsula near Arabia. They brought Asian manufactured goods to Africa and African raw materials to Asia. In the coastal markets, Arab traders sold porcelain bowls from China and jewels and cotton cloth from India. They bought African ivory, gold, tortoiseshell, ambergris, leopard skins, and rhinoceros horns to carry to Arabia.

By 1300, more than 35 trading cities dotted the coast from Mogadishu in the north to Kilwa and Sofala in the south. Like the empires of West Africa, these seaports grew wealthy by controlling all incoming and outgoing trade. Some cities also manufactured trade goods for export. For example, weavers in Mogadishu and Sofala made cloth. Workers in Mombasa and Malindi made iron tools.

### Background

More Bantu-speaking people moved south than east. Eventually, they settled much of southern Africa.

### Vocabulary

ambergris: a grayish-white substance from the intestines of sperm whales, used to make perfume.

## Trade Goods

Raw Materials	Point of Origin	Products Made
• leopard skins	• savanna region	• saddles
• tortoiseshell	• shells of hawksbill sea turtles	• combs
• gold	• mines in southern Africa	• coins, jewelry
• ivory	• tusks from elephants in savanna region	• carved chess pieces and sword hilts

### SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts

1. Which raw materials came from the savanna region?
2. Rank the raw materials in order of value, and explain your decision.



**The City-State of Kilwa** In 1331, Ibn Battuta visited Kilwa. He called it one of the most beautiful cities in the world. He admired the luxurious way that its Muslim rulers and merchants lived. The richest families lived in fine houses of coral and stone. They slept in beds inlaid with ivory and their meals were served on Chinese porcelain. Wealthy Muslim women wore silk robes and gold and silver bracelets.

Kilwa grew rich because it was as far south on the coast as a ship from India could sail in one monsoon season. Therefore, trade goods from southerly regions had to funnel into Kilwa, so Asian merchants could buy them.

In addition, in the late 1200s Kilwa had seized the port of Sofala, which was a trading center for gold mined inland. By controlling Sofala, Kilwa was able to control the overseas trade of gold from southern Africa. This made Kilwa the wealthiest, most powerful coastal city-state.

**Portuguese Conquest** In 1488, the first Portuguese ships rounded the southern tip of Africa and sailed north, looking for a sea route to India. They wanted to gain profits from the Asian trade in spices, perfumes, and silks. When the Portuguese saw the wealth of the East African city-states, they decided to conquer those cities and take over the trade themselves.

Using their heavy ships' guns, the Portuguese took Sofala, Kilwa, and Mombasa. They burned parts of Kilwa and built forts on the sites of Kilwa and Mombasa. The Portuguese remained a presence on the East African coast for the next two centuries.

## Islamic Influences

As in West Africa, Muslim traders introduced Islam to the East African coast, and the growth of commerce caused it to spread. Even the smallest towns had a mosque for the faithful. A Muslim sultan, or ruler, governed most cities. In addition, most government officials and wealthy merchants were Muslims.

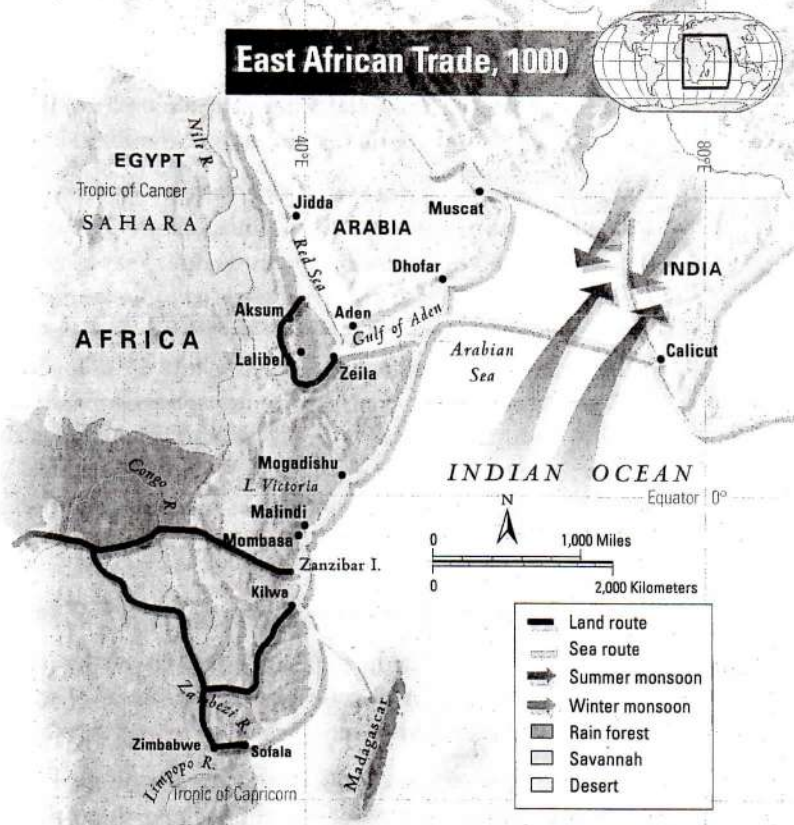
**Islamic Law** In 1331, Ibn Battuta visited the East African city of Mogadishu. He described how Muslim religious leaders and government officials decided legal matters:

### A VOICE FROM THE PAST

The Shaikh [sultan] takes his place in his hall of audience and sends for the Qadi [judge]. He takes his place on the Shaikh's left and then the lawyers come in and the chief of them sit in front of the Shaikh. . . . Then food is brought and . . . those who are in the audience chamber eat in the presence of the Shaikh. . . . After this the Shaikh retires to his private apartments and the Qadi, the wazirs [government ministers] . . . and . . . chief amirs [military commanders] sit to hear causes and complaints. Questions of religious law are decided by the Qadi, other cases are judged by the . . . wazirs and amirs. If a case requires the views of the [Shaikh], it is put in writing for him. He sends back an immediate reply.

**IBN BATTUTA**, *Travels of Ibn Battuta*

## East African Trade, 1000



### GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

- 1. Movement** How far did a trader have to travel to make a round trip from Calicut in India to Kilwa in Africa and back again?
- 2. Human-Environment Interaction** Which monsoon would a trader rely on to sail from India to Africa?

### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

#### A. Analyzing

**Causes** What were the two main reasons Kilwa became so wealthy?

### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

#### 3. Summarizing

Name the four types of people who decided legal matters and what type of cases they judged.

Most rulers, government officials, and merchants were Muslim. However, the vast majority of people along the East African coast held on to their traditional religious beliefs. This was also true of the people who lived in inland villages.

**Enslavement of Africans** Along with luxury goods, Arab Muslim traders exported enslaved persons from the East African coast. Traders sent Africans acquired through kidnapping and raids to markets in Arabia, Persia, and Iraq. The wealthy in these countries often bought enslaved persons to do burdensome domestic tasks. Muslim traders shipped enslaved Africans across the Indian Ocean to India, where Indian rulers employed them as soldiers. Enslaved Africans also worked on docks and ships at Muslim-controlled ports and as household servants in China.

Although traders had been enslaving East Africans and selling them overseas since about the ninth century, the numbers remained small—perhaps about 1,000 a year. The trade in enslaved persons did not increase dramatically until the 1700s. At that time, Europeans started to buy captured Africans for their colonial plantations.

#### THINK THROUGH HISTORY

##### C. Drawing

**Conclusions** How extensive was the trade in enslaved persons from East Africa before 1700?

## Southern Africa and Great Zimbabwe

The gold and ivory that helped the coastal city-states grow rich came from the interior of southern Africa. In southeastern Africa the Shona people established a city called **Great Zimbabwe** (zihm-BAHB-way), which grew into an empire built on the gold trade.

**Great Zimbabwe** By 1000, the Shona people had claimed the fertile, well-watered plateau between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers in modern Zimbabwe. The area was well suited to farming and cattle raising. Its location also had economic advantages. Great Zimbabwe stood near an important trade route linking the inland goldfields with the coastal trading city of Sofala. Sometime after 1000, Great Zimbabwe gained control of these trade routes. From the 1200s through the 1400s, it became the capital of a thriving state. Its leaders taxed the traders who traveled these routes. They also demanded payments from less powerful chiefs. The city of Great Zimbabwe was the economic, political, and religious center of its empire.

By 1450, the city of Great Zimbabwe was abandoned. No one knows for sure why it happened. According to one theory, cattle grazing had worn out the grasslands. In addition, farming had worn out the soil, and people had used up the salt and timber. The area could no longer support a large population.

**Ruins of Zimbabwe** Almost everything that is known about Great Zimbabwe comes from its impressive 60 acres of ruins. Portuguese explorers knew about the site in the

#### Background

The Shona are a group of Bantu-speaking peoples.

### Great Zimbabwe

**1000** Great Zimbabwe begins to control trade routes over which gold is carried.

**1200** Great Zimbabwe taxes traders and becomes wealthy.

**1450** The city of Great Zimbabwe is abandoned.

1000 1500

#### City of Great Zimbabwe

The Shona people built this impressive city to be the center of their empire.

- It covered more than 60 acres.
- Its population was more than 10,000.
- The walls contain approximately 900,000 stone blocks. They were so well built that the blocks hold together without mortar.

This photograph shows part of the Great Enclosure and the cone-shaped tower. ➤



This picture of a person standing next to the tower shows how very high both the tower and the enclosing walls are.

1500s. Karl Mauch, a German explorer, was one of the first Europeans to physically rediscover the remains of these stone dwellings in 1871.

The word *zimbabwe* comes from a Shona phrase meaning “stone enclosure.” The ruins consist of two complexes of stone buildings that once housed the royal palace of Great Zimbabwe’s rulers. The Great Enclosure is a massive curving wall up to 36 feet high and 15 feet thick. Because there was no way for soldiers to climb to the top of the walls, archaeologists theorize that they were not used primarily as defenses. The massive walls were probably built to impress visitors with the strength of Zimbabwe and its ruler. Inside the walls stands a cone-shaped tower. Among the ruins were found tall figures of birds, carved from soapstone. Archaeologists believe the construction of Great Zimbabwe may have taken 400 years.

**Background**

Most other walled cities were built so that soldiers could climb to the top of the walls and shoot arrows at attackers.

**Mutapa Empire** According to Shona oral tradition, a man named Mutota left Great Zimbabwe about 1420 to find a new source of salt. Traveling north, he settled in a valley with fertile soil, good rainfall, and ample wood. There he founded a new state to replace Great Zimbabwe. As the state grew, its leader Mutota used his army to dominate the northern Shona people living in the area. He forced them to make payments to him.

These conquered people called Mutota and his successors *mwene mutapa*, meaning conqueror or “master pillager.” The Portuguese who arrived on the East African coast in the early 1500s believed *mwene mutapa* to be a title of respect for the ruler. The term is also the origin of the name of the **Mutapa Empire**. By the time of Mutota’s death, the Mutapa Empire had conquered all of what is now Zimbabwe except the eastern portion. By 1480 Mutota’s son Matope claimed control of the area along the Zambezi River to the Indian Ocean coast.

The Mutapa Empire was able to mine gold deposited in nearby rivers and streams. In addition, Mutapa rulers forced people in conquered areas to mine gold for them. The rulers sent gold to the coastal city-states in exchange for luxuries. Even before the death of Matope, the southern part of his empire broke away. However, the Mutapa Dynasty continued to remain in control of the smaller empire.

In the 1500s, the Portuguese tried to conquer the empire. When they failed to do so, they resorted to interfering in Mutapa politics. They helped to depose one ruler and put one they could control on the throne. This was a forerunner of increasing European interference in Africa in centuries to come.

This is a Portuguese portrait of one of the kings of the Mutapa Empire.



**THINK THROUGH HISTORY**

**D. Making**

**Inferences** Why do you think the Portuguese wanted to conquer the Mutapa Empire?

**Section 3 Assessment**

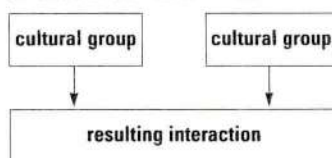
**1. TERMS & NAMES**

*Identify*

- Swahili
- Great Zimbabwe
- Mutapa

**2. TAKING NOTES**

Use a chart like the one below to explain one example of cultural interaction brought about by trade on the coast of East Africa.



Do you think this interaction had a positive or negative effect? Explain.

**3. COMPARING**

Compare the Portuguese who arrived in East Africa with the rulers of the Mutapa Empire.

**THINK ABOUT**

- how they treated other groups of people
- what motivated their actions

**4. THEME ACTIVITY**

**Interaction with Environment**

Create a chart, sketch, or collage that demonstrates how the people of Great Zimbabwe interacted with their environment, both positively and negatively, over time.

# Chapter 15 Assessment

## TERMS & NAMES

Briefly explain the importance of each of the following to the societies and empires of Africa from 800 to 1500.

1. lineage
2. stateless societies
3. patrilineal
4. matrilineal
5. Ghana
6. Mali
7. Ibn Battuta
8. Songhai
9. Swahili
10. Great Zimbabwe

### Interact with History

On page 366, you looked at a situation in which traders exchanged gold for salt. Now that you've read the chapter, reevaluate what makes trade items valuable. How did environmental conditions affect what items had value in Africa? Did government policies have any effect on value? Consider what you learned about trading states in both West and East Africa.

## REVIEW QUESTIONS

SECTION 1 (pages 367–370)

### North and Central African Societies

11. How is a dispute settled in Efe society?
12. What is an age-set system?
13. How were the beginnings of the Almoravid and Almohad empires similar?

SECTION 2 (pages 371–377)

### West African Empires and Civilizations

14. What accounted for Ghana's financial success?
15. Name two ways Islam spread through Africa.
16. Describe the economy of the Hausa city-states.

SECTION 3 (pages 378–381)

### Eastern City-States and Southern Empires

17. How did the Swahili language evolve?
18. Why was it important for Kilwa to control Sofala?
19. Who was most affected by the introduction of Islam to East Africa?
20. What was the relationship of Great Zimbabwe to the Mutapa Empire?

## Visual Summary

### Societies and Empires of Africa

Igbo people
Mohenjo-daro
Almohads
<b>Ghana</b>
Mali
Songhai
Benin
Swahili
Great Zimbabwe
<b>Mutapa Empire</b>

#### Organization & Time Periods

- Existed as a stateless society from **9th through 19th centuries**
- Muslim state from **mid-1000s to mid-1100s**
- Muslim state from **mid-1100s to mid-1200s**
- West African empire from **700s to 1076**
- West African empire from **1235 to 1400s**
- West African empire that flourished in the **1400s and 1500s**
- West African trading kingdom strong in **1400s and 1500s**
- East African city-state flourished from **1200s to 1400s**
- Capital of trade-based empire from **1200s until about 1450**
- Founded **about 1420** by man from Great Zimbabwe

#### Significant Facts

- Elders resolved conflicts
- Founded city of Marrakech
- Unified the Maghrib under one authority for first time in history
- Grew wealthy and powerful by controlling gold-salt trade
- Mansa Musa's hajj made Mali's wealth famous
- Conquered Mali and gained control of trade routes
- Famous for bronze and brass works of art
- Grew wealthy from trade
- City abandoned, perhaps because natural resources were used up
- Remained independent in spite of Portuguese attempts to conquer