

# The Kingdom of Aksum

## MAIN IDEA

**POWER AND AUTHORITY** The kingdom of Aksum became an international trading power and adopted Christianity.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

Ancient Aksum, which is now Ethiopia, is still a center of the Ethiopian Orthodox Christian Church.

## TERMS & NAMES

- Aksum
- Ezana
- Adulis
- terraces

**SETTING THE STAGE** While migrations were taking place in the southern half of Africa, they were also taking place along the east coast. Arab peoples crossed the Red Sea into Africa perhaps as early as 1000 B.C. There they intermarried with Kushite herders and farmers and passed along their written language, Ge'ez (GEE•ehz). The Arabs also shared their skills of working stone and building dams and aqueducts. This blended group of Africans and Arabs would form the basis of a new and powerful trading kingdom.

## The Rise of the Kingdom of Aksum

You learned in Chapter 4 that the East African kingdom of Kush became powerful enough to push north and conquer Egypt. During the next century, fierce Assyrians swept into Egypt and drove the Kushite pharaohs south. However, Kush remained a powerful kingdom for over 1,000 years. Finally, a more powerful kingdom arose and conquered Kush. That kingdom was **Aksum** (AHK•soom). It was located south of Kush on a rugged plateau on the Red Sea, in what are now the countries of Eritrea and Ethiopia. (See map on page 226.)

In this area of Africa, sometimes called the Horn of Africa, Arab traders from across the Red Sea established trading settlements. These traders were seeking ivory to trade in Persia and farther east in the Indian Ocean trade. They brought silks, textiles, and spices from eastern trade routes. Eventually, the trading settlements became colonies of farmers and traders. Trade with Mediterranean countries also flowed into seaports located here.

**The Origins of Aksum** A legend traces the founding of the kingdom of Aksum and the Ethiopian royal dynasty to the son of King Solomon (of ancient Israel) and of the Queen of Sheba, (a country in southern Arabia). That dynasty lasted into the 20th century, until the last ruler, Haile Selassie, died in 1975.

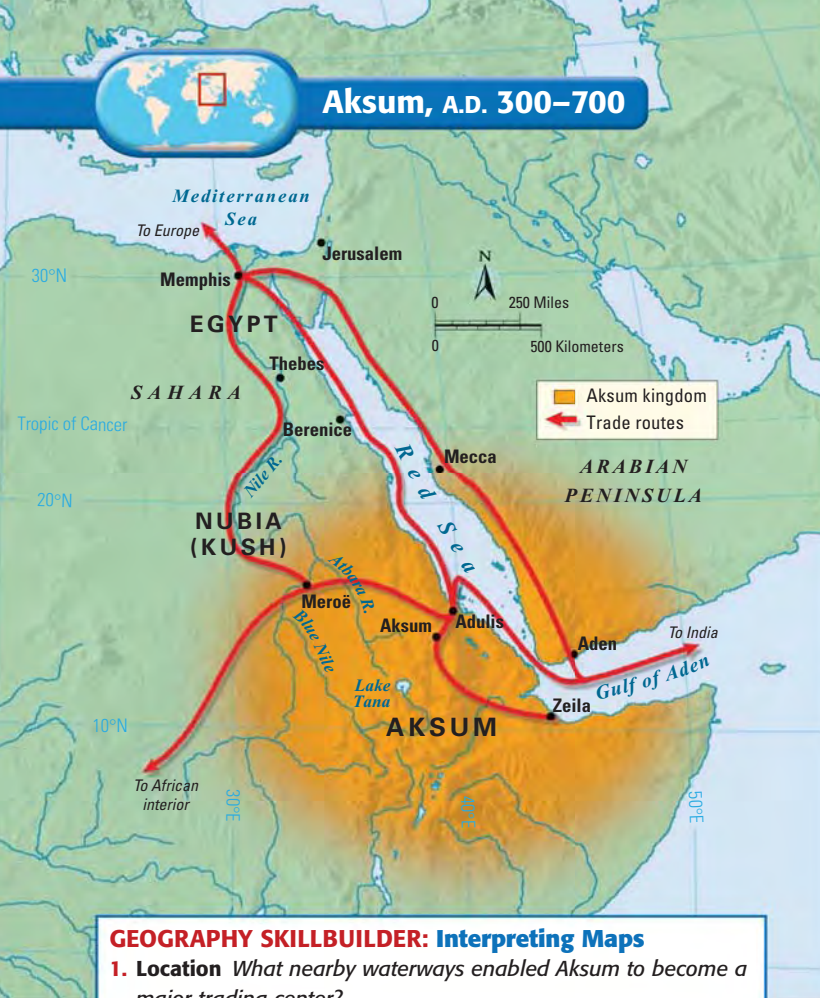
The first mention of Aksum was in a Greek guidebook written around A.D. 100, *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*. It describes Zoskales (ZAHS•kuh•leez), thought to be the first king of Aksum. He was “a stickler about his possessions and always [greedy] for getting more, but in other respects a fine person and well versed in reading and writing Greek.” Under Zoskales and other rulers, Aksum seized areas along the Red Sea and the Blue Nile in Africa. The rulers also

## TAKING NOTES

**Summarizing** List the achievements of Aksum.



## Aksum, A.D. 300–700



### GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

- 1. Location** What nearby waterways enabled Aksum to become a major trading center?
- 2. Movement** To which continents or countries did Aksum's trade routes give it access?

crossed the Red Sea and took control of lands on the southwestern Arabian Peninsula.

**Aksum Controls International Trade** Aksum's location and expansion made it a hub for caravan routes to Egypt and Meroë. Access to sea trade on the Mediterranean Sea and Indian Ocean helped Aksum become an international trading power. Traders from Egypt, Arabia, Persia, India, and the Roman Empire crowded Aksum's chief seaport, **Adulis** (AHD•uh•luhs), near present-day Massawa. **A**

Aksumite merchants traded necessities such as salt and luxuries such as rhinoceros horns, tortoise shells, ivory, emeralds, and gold. In return, they chose from items such as imported cloth, glass, olive oil, wine, brass, iron, and copper. Around A.D. 550, an Egyptian merchant named Cosmas described how Aksumite agents bargained for gold from the people in southern Ethiopia:

### MAIN IDEA

#### Recognizing Effects

**A** How did Aksum's location and interactions with other regions affect its development?

### PRIMARY SOURCE **B**

They take along with them to the mining district oxen, lumps of salt, and iron, and when they reach its neighborhood they . . . halt . . . and form an encampment, which they fence round with a great hedge of thorns. Within this they live, and having slaughtered the oxen, cut them in pieces and lay the pieces on top of the thorns along with the lumps of salt and the iron. Then come the natives bringing gold in nuggets like peas . . . and lay one or two or more of these upon what pleases them. . . . Then the owner of the meat approaches, and if he is satisfied he takes the gold away, and upon seeing this its owner comes and takes the flesh or the salt or the iron.

**COSMAS** quoted in *Travellers in Ethiopia*

**A Strong Ruler Expands the Kingdom** The kingdom of Aksum reached its height between A.D. 325 and 360, when an exceptionally strong ruler, **Ezana** (AY•zah•nah), occupied the throne. Determined to establish and expand his authority, Ezana first conquered the part of the Arabian peninsula that is now Yemen. Then, in 330, Ezana turned his attention to Kush, which already had begun to decline. In 350, he conquered the Kushites and burned Meroë to the ground:

### PRIMARY SOURCE

I carried war against [them] when they had rebelled. . . . I burnt their towns of stone and their towns of straw. At the same time, my men plundered [stole] their grain, their bronze, their iron and their copper, destroyed the idols in their homes, their stocks of corn and of cotton; and they threw themselves into the river.

**KING EZANA OF AKSUM**, quoted in *Africa: Past and Present*

### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Primary Sources

**B** Why don't the traders speak to each other instead of laying down goods or gold?

## An International Culture Develops

From the beginning, Aksumites had a diverse cultural heritage. This blend included traditions of the Arab peoples who crossed the Red Sea into Africa and those of the Kushite peoples they settled among. As the kingdom expanded and became a powerful trading center, it attracted people from all over the ancient world.

The port city of Adulis was particularly cosmopolitan. It included people from Aksum's widespread trading partners, such as Egypt, Arabia, Greece, Rome, Persia, India, and even Byzantium. In the babble of tongues heard in Aksum, Greek stood out as the international language of the time, much as English does in the world today.

**Aksumite Religion** The Aksumites, like other ancient Africans, traditionally believed in one god. They called their god Mahrem and believed that their king was directly descended from him. They were also animists, however, and worshiped the spirits of nature and honored their dead ancestors. They offered sacrifices—often as many as a dozen oxen at a time—to those spirits, to Mahrem, and often to the Greek god of war, Ares.

Merchants exchanged more than raw materials and finished goods in Aksum. They shared ideas as well. One of these ideas was a new religion, Christianity, which you learned about in Chapter 6. Based on the teachings of Jesus and a belief in one God—monotheism—Christianity began in Palestine about A.D. 30. It spread throughout the Roman Empire and then to Africa, and eventually to Aksum.

**Aksum Becomes Christian** Ezana succeeded to the throne as an infant after the death of his father. While his mother ruled the kingdom, a young Christian man from Syria who had been captured and taken into the court educated him.

## Global Impact


### A Road Paved with Gold: Aksum to Rome

The kingdom of Aksum had a tremendous impact on the ancient Mediterranean world. It particularly influenced one of the most important powers of the time, the Roman Empire. Roman ships came to Adulis weekly to trade with the Aksumites. Many Roman merchants lived in Adulis and in the capital city, Aksum.

One of the chief commodities that linked the two powers was gold. The Aksumites had access to it from inland gold mines, and the Romans needed it to support the monetary system of their growing empire. Rome and Aksum were linked not only by gold, however. They also shared a spiritual link in their commitment to Christianity.

▼ This mural depicting Bible stories is located on the wall of one of the oldest Christian churches in Aksum.




When Ezana finally became ruler of Aksum, he converted to Christianity and established it as the kingdom's official religion. He vowed, "I will rule the people with righteousness and justice and will not oppress them, and may they preserve this Throne which I have set up for the Lord of Heaven." King Ezana's conversion and his devout practice of Christianity strengthened its hold in Aksum. The establishment of Christianity was the longest lasting achievement of the Aksumites. Today, the land of Ethiopia, where Aksum was located, is home to millions of Christians. 

**Aksumite Innovations** The inscription on Ezana's stele is written in Ge'ez, the language brought to Aksum by its early Arab inhabitants. Aside from Egypt and Meroë, Aksum was the only ancient African kingdom known to have developed a written language. It was also the first state south of the Sahara to mint its own coins. Made of bronze, silver, and gold, these coins were imprinted with the saying, "May the country be satisfied." Ezana apparently hoped that this inscription would make him popular with the people. Every time they used a coin, it would remind them that he had their interests at heart.

In addition to these cultural achievements, the Aksumites adapted creatively to their rugged, hilly environment. They created a new method of agriculture, terrace farming. This enabled them to greatly increase the productivity of their land. **Terraces**, or steplike ridges constructed on mountain slopes, helped the soil retain water and prevented its being washed downhill in heavy rains. The Aksumites dug canals to channel water from mountain streams into the fields. They also built dams and cisterns, or holding tanks, to store water.

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Causes

 What conditions led to Aksum's becoming Christian?

### > Analyzing Architecture



#### Pillars of Aksum

Aksumites developed a unique architecture. They put no mortar on the stones used to construct vast royal palaces and public buildings. Instead, they carved stones to fit together tightly. Huge stone pillars were erected as monuments or tomb markers. The carvings on the pillars are representations of the architecture of the time.

To the left, the towering stone pillar, or stele, was built to celebrate Aksum's achievements. Still standing today, its size and elaborate inscriptions make it an achievement in its own right. It has many unique features:

- False doors, windows, and timber beams are carved into the stone.
- Typically, the top of the pillar is a rounded peak.
- The tallest stele was about 100 feet high. Of those steles left standing, one is 60 feet tall and is among the largest structures in the ancient world.
- The stone for the pillar was quarried and carved two to three miles away and then brought to the site.
- Ezana dedicated one soaring stone pillar to the Christian God, "the Lord of heaven, who in heaven and upon earth is mightier than everything that exists."

#### SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Visual Sources

**Comparing** How would constructing these pillars be similar to constructing the pyramids in Egypt?

## The Fall of Aksum

Aksum's cultural and technological achievements enabled it to last for 800 years. The kingdom finally declined, however, under invaders who practiced the religion called Islam (ihsh•LAHM). Its founder was the prophet Muhammad; by his death in 632, his followers had conquered all of Arabia. In Chapter 10, you will learn more about Islam and Muhammad. This territory included Aksum's lands on the Arabian coast of the Red Sea.

**Islamic Invaders** Between 632 and 750 Islamic invaders conquered vast territories in the Mediterranean world, spreading their religion as they went. (See the map on page 261.) Aksum protected Muhammad's family and followers during their rise to power. As a result, initially they did not invade Aksum's territories on the African coast of the Red Sea. Retaining control of that coastline enabled Aksum to remain a trading power.

Before long, though, the invaders seized footholds on the African coast as well. In 710 they destroyed Adulis. This conquest cut Aksum off from the major ports along both the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. As a result, the kingdom declined as an international trading power. But it was not only Aksum's political power that weakened. Its spiritual identity and environment were also endangered.

**Aksum Isolated** As the invaders spread Islam to the lands they conquered, Aksum became isolated from other Christian settlements. To escape the advancing wave of Islam, Aksum's rulers moved their capital over the mountains into what is now northern Ethiopia. Aksum's new geographic isolation—along with depletion of the forests and soil erosion—led to its decline as a world power. **D**

Although the kingdom of Aksum reached tremendous heights and left a lasting legacy in its religion, architecture, and agriculture, it never expanded outside a fairly small area. This is a pattern found in other cultures, both in Africa and around the world. In the next chapter, you will study the pattern as it played out among the native peoples of North and South America.

### MAIN IDEA

#### Recognizing Effects

**D** How did the Muslim conquest of Africa affect the kingdom of Aksum?

### SECTION

## 3

### ASSESSMENT

**TERMS & NAMES** 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Aksum
- Adulis
- Ezana
- terraces

#### USING YOUR NOTES

2. Which of Aksum's achievements has continued into modern times?



#### MAIN IDEAS

3. How did Aksum's location help make it a trade city?
4. Why did the people of Aksum become Christians?
5. Why did Aksum's leaders move their capital?

#### CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING

6. **DRAWING CONCLUSIONS** How did Aksum's location and interaction with other regions affect its development?
7. **ANALYZING CAUSES** Why did the kingdom of Aksum decline?
8. **EVALUATING DECISIONS** What impact did Ezana's decision to become a Christian have on the kingdom of Aksum?
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** **POWER AND AUTHORITY** Write an **opinion paper** on the following statement: The kingdom of Aksum would have reached the same heights even if Ezana had not become king.

#### INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY INTERNET ACTIVITY

Use the Internet to trace the beginnings of the Ethiopian dynasties to the Aksum kings. Then create an Ethiopian dynasty **family tree** showing the dynasty in power until late in the 20th century.

#### INTERNET KEYWORD

*Ethiopian dynasty*

# Societies and Empires of Africa, 800–1500

## Previewing Main Ideas

**RELIGIOUS AND ETHICAL SYSTEMS** Beginning about 640, Islam created two North African empires. Merchants and traders spread Islam into both West and East Africa, where it influenced rulers.

**Geography** *What empires developed in West Africa during this period?*

**INTERACTION WITH ENVIRONMENT** In parts of Africa, hunter-gatherers used up an area's food supply and then moved on. In some Saharan villages, workers built houses of salt. The location of gold determined trade routes.

**Geography** *What factors might have caused three empires to arise in the same area?*

**ECONOMICS** Trade networks developed in Africa because different regions had items that other regions wanted. African city-states and empires that were able to control and tax such trade became wealthy and powerful.

**Geography** *How were the locations of Timbuktu and Kilwa different and how might that have influenced trade?*

### INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

#### eEdition

- Interactive Maps
- Interactive Visuals
- Interactive Primary Sources



#### INTERNET RESOURCES

Go to [classzone.com](http://classzone.com) for:

- Research Links
- Internet Activities
- Primary Sources
- Chapter Quiz
- Maps
- Test Practice
- Current Events

AFRICA

800

**800**  
Empire of Ghana thrives on trade.



**1000**  
Hausa city-states begin to emerge. (bronze head)

**1100**  
Yoruba kingdom of Ife is established.

1000

WORLD

**850s**  
Byzantine culture spreads to Russia.



**1095**  
First Crusade begins. (battle between Muslims and Crusaders)



# Africa, 800-1500



- Ghana, 800s to 1000s
- Hausa city-states, 1200s to 1500s
- Mali, 1200s to 1400s
- Songhai, 1400s to 1500s
- Other kingdoms

0 500 1000 Miles  
0 500 1000 Kilometers  
Polyconic Projection

**1235**  
Sundiata founds Mali Empire.



**1324**  
Mali king Mansa Musa goes on hajj to Mecca. (mapmaker's depiction of Mansa Musa)

**1464**  
Sunni Ali begins Songhai Empire.

**1200**

**1400**

**1500**

**1279**  
Kublai Khan conquers China.

**1347**  
Bubonic plague devastates Europe. (illustration of Death strangling a victim of the plague)



## How might trade benefit both sides?

You are crossing the Sahara with goods to trade. Your destination is Timbuktu, the great trading center of Africa. There you will meet with other traders, especially those from the gold-mining regions to the south. You hope to make the journey worthwhile by trading salt and manufactured goods for as much gold as possible. The gold traders will want to receive as much of your salt and manufactured goods as they can in exchange. Together you must come to an agreement on what your trade items are worth.

**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.

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.

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

### EXAMINING *the* ISSUES

- **What elements are necessary for a mutually successful trade?**
- **How do scarcity and abundance affect trade?**

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.





1

# North and Central African Societies

## MAIN IDEA

**RELIGIOUS AND ETHICAL SYSTEMS** 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.

## TERMS & NAMES

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

**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.

## 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 their own hunting techniques. By studying these groups, scholars learn clues about how hunter-gatherers may have lived in the past.

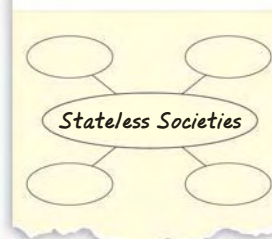
**Forest Dwellers** The Efe (AY•fay) are just one of several hunting-gathering societies in Africa. They make their home in the Ituri Forest in the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire). Like their ancestors, the modern-day Efe live in small groups of between 10 and 100 members, all of whom are 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. 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. 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.

## TAKING NOTES

**Summarizing** Use a web diagram to list characteristics of stateless societies.



## 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. 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 different lineages settled the problem. Igbos later encountered challenges from 19th-century European colonizers who expected one single leader to rule over society.

**Tracing Family Descent** In African societies, the way a society traces lineage determines how possessions and property are passed on 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, 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. However, even in a matrilineal society, men usually hold the positions of authority.

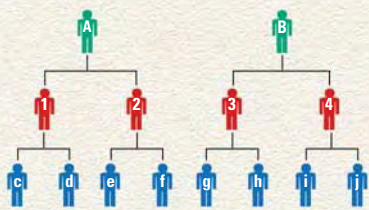
**Age-Set System** In many African societies, young people form close ties to individuals outside their lineage through the age-set system. An age set consists of young people within a region who are born during a certain time period. Each age set passes together through clearly identified life stages, 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. Societies like the Igbo use the age-set system to teach discipline, community service, and leadership skills to their young. **A**

## Muslim States

While stateless societies developed south of the Sahara, Islam played a vital role in North Africa. After Muhammad's death in 632, Muslims swept across the northwest part of the continent. They converted many by the sword of 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 Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco.

### Social History



#### Negotiating Conflict in Stateless Societies

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.

#### INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

**INTERNET ACTIVITY** Use the Internet to prepare a poster on methods of conflict resolution. Go to **classzone.com** for your research.

#### MAIN IDEA

#### Making Inferences

**A** What advantages might an age-set system have for a society?

## Selected African Societies, 800–1500

INTERACTIVE



## Societies

### Hunter-Gatherers

The seminomadic hunter-gatherers lived by gathering wild foods and hunting animals.

- The Efe were hunter-gatherers who traded with farming villages.
- The San (also called the Bushmen) lived in southern Africa and part of East Africa.

### Stateless Societies

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

- The Tiv had no formal government.
- The Igbo resolved disputes by having elders from different lineages meet.
- The Nuer organized over 250,000 people without an official ruler.

### Muslim States

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

- In the 11th century, the Almoravid Empire controlled Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, and part of Spain.
- Beginning in the mid-1100s, the Almohad Empire 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?

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. (See World Religions, pages 290–291.)

**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. Islamic law helped to bring order to Muslim states.

However, various Muslim states had ethnic and cultural differences. Further, these states sometimes had differing interpretations, and schools, of Islamic law. Nonetheless, Islamic law has been such a significant force in history that some states, especially in North Africa, are still influenced by it today.

Among those who converted to Islam were the Berbers. Fiercely independent desert and mountain dwellers, the Berbers were the original inhabitants of North Africa. 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) Empire. Its members came from a Berber group living in the western Sahara in what is today Mauritania. The movement began after devout Berber Muslims made a hajj, or pilgrimage, to Mecca. On their journey



▲ Carpets for sale in Marrakech, Morocco

home, they convinced a Muslim scholar from Morocco named Abd Allah Ibn Yasin to return with them to teach their 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*,” or *al-Murabitun*. This eventually became “Almoravid.”

In the 1050s, Ibn Yasin led the Almoravids in an effort to spread Islam through conquest. After Ibn Yasin’s death 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, seized power from the Almoravids. The Almohads began as a religious movement in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco.

The Almohads followed the teachings of Ibn Tumart. After a pilgrimage to Mecca, Ibn Tumart criticized 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 overthrow the Almoravids and remain true to their view of 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 Empire broke up into individual Muslim dynasties. While the Almohad Empire lasted just over 100 years, it united the Maghrib under one rule for the first time. **B**

Stronger empires were about to emerge. Societies in West Africa created empires that boasted economic and political power and strong links to trade routes.

**MAIN IDEA**

**Recognizing Effects**

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

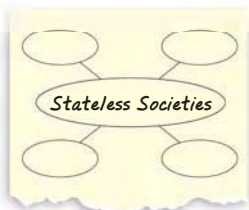
**SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT**

**TERMS & NAMES** 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

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

**USING YOUR NOTES**

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



**MAIN IDEAS**

3. What sorts of food do the Efe hunt and gather in the Ituri Forest?
4. What different purposes does the age-set system serve in African societies?
5. What role did Islam play in the political history of North Africa?

**CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING**

6. **ANALYZING ISSUES** What was the main disagreement that the Almohads had with the Almoravids?
7. **DRAWING CONCLUSIONS** How did the law help to unify Muslim society?
8. **COMPARING** In what ways are hunting-gathering societies and stateless societies similar?
9. **WRITING 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. Display your time line in the classroom.

**CONNECT TO TODAY MAKING A CHART**

Research hunting-gathering societies in Africa today. Find out their numbers and where they live and present your findings in a **chart**.

# West African Civilizations

## MAIN IDEA

**ECONOMICS** West Africa contained several rich and powerful states, including Ghana, Mali, and Songhai.

## WHY IT MATTERS NOW

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

## TERMS & NAMES

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

**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 by controlling trade. In this section you will learn about the West African empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai.

## Empire of Ghana

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 more than ten days without water, twice as long as most pack animals. With the camel, nomads blazed new routes across the desert and trade increased.

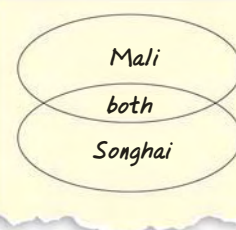
The trade routes crossed the savanna through the region farmed by the Soninke (soh•NIHN•keh) people. The Soninke people called their ruler *ghana*, or war chief. Muslim traders began to use the word to refer to the Soninke region. By the 700s, **Ghana** was a kingdom, and its rulers were growing rich by 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.

## TAKING NOTES

**Comparing and Contrasting** Use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast information about the Mali and Songhai empires.





## West African Empires, 1000–1500

INTERACTIVE

### Empire of Ghana, A.D. 1000



### Empire of Mali, A.D. 1400



### Empire of Songhai, A.D. 1500



#### GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

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

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.

**Land of Gold** 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.

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, 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:

#### PRIMARY SOURCE

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*

**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 end of the 11th century, Muslim advisers were helping the king run his kingdom. While Ghana's African rulers accepted Islam, many people in the empire clung to their animistic beliefs and practices. Animism is the belief that spirits living in animals, plants, and natural forces play an important role in daily life. 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 Arabic.

**MAIN IDEA**

**Analyzing Causes**

**A** 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. As a result, Ghana never regained its power. **A**

## Empire of Mali

By 1235 the kingdom of **Mali** had emerged. Its founders were Mande-speaking people, who lived south of Ghana. Mali's wealth, like Ghana's, 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 enabled 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. 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. Mansa Musa ruled from about 1312 to 1332.

## History Makers

### Sundiata ?–1255

Sundiata came from the kingdom of Kangaba near the present-day Mali-Guinea border. According to tradition, he was one of 12 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.

### Mansa Musa ?–1332?

Mansa Musa, the strongest of Sundiata's successors, 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.

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

### INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

**RESEARCH LINKS** For more on Sundiata and Mansa Musa, go to [classzone.com](http://classzone.com)

## > Analyzing Primary Sources

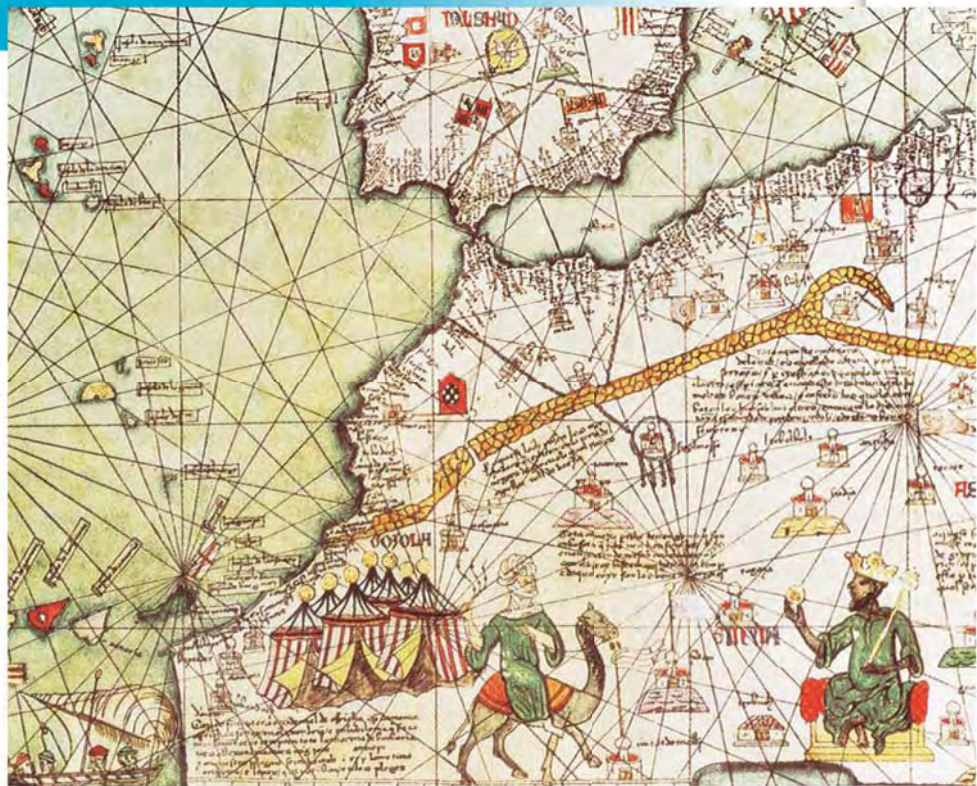
### Mansa Musa's Kingdom

In 1324, Mansa Musa left Mali for the hajj to Mecca. On the trip, he gave away enormous amounts of gold. Because of this, Europeans learned of Mali's wealth. In 1375, a Spanish mapmaker created an illustrated map showing Mansa Musa's kingdom in western Africa. Drawn on the map is Mansa Musa holding a gold nugget.

At the top of the map is Spain. At the bottom of Spain, the Mediterranean meets the Atlantic Ocean at the Strait of Gibraltar. South of Gibraltar is Africa. Filling most of the map is North Africa, with the Mediterranean extending east and the Atlantic west of Gibraltar.

### DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS

- Determining Main Ideas** *What was a major source of wealth for the Empire of Mali?*
- Making Inferences** *How might Mali's (and Africa's) wealth have influenced interactions between Africans and Europeans?*



Between the reigns of Sundiata and Mansa Musa, Mali experienced turmoil. There had been seven different rulers in approximately 50 years. 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, Mansa Musa 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, he 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. They attended Timbuktu's outstanding mosques and universities.

**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. However, he also criticized them for not strictly practicing Islam's moral code. Even so, Mali's justice system greatly impressed him:

### PRIMARY SOURCE

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 had been the basis of Mali's wealth shifted eastward as new goldfields were developed elsewhere.

## 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) people to the east. They built up an army and extended their territory to the large bend in the Niger River near Gao. They gained control of the all-important trade routes. Gao was the capital of their empire. **B**

### MAIN IDEA

#### Making Inferences

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

**Sunni Ali, a Conquering Hero** The Songhai had two extraordinary rulers, both of whom were Muslims. 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 expanded Songhai into an 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 surrounded the city with his army for seven years before it fell in 1473. Sunni Ali completed 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, the son 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.

During his 37-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. The Chinese had invented gunpowder in the ninth century. About 1304, Arabs developed the first gun, which shot arrows. 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.

## Other Peoples of West Africa

While empires rose and fell, city-states developed in other parts of West Africa. 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

## Social History

### 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 in 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.

## History *in* Depth

### 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 Kawarajara 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 Yoruba crown made of glass beads and grass cloth stands about 20 inches high.



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. 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 slaves 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, 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 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, 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. 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. Most rural farms in the surrounding areas produced surplus

### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Causes

 What was the main reason that the Hausa did not develop an empire?

food, which was sent to the cities. This enabled city dwellers to become both traders and craftspeople.

**Vocabulary**

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

The Ife were gifted artists who carved in wood and ivory. They produced terra cotta sculptures and cast in metal. Some scholars believe that the rulers supported artists. 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, the people of Benin made their homes in the forest. The first kings of Benin date from the 1200s. 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 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 territories for colonies. Meanwhile, East Africans—discussed in Section 3—prospered from trade and developed thriving cities and empires.



▲ This ivory mask is one of four taken from the king of Benin in 1897. It was worn on the belt of a ceremonial costume.

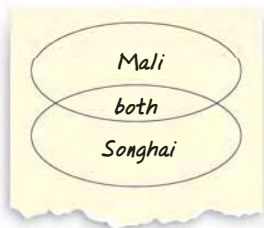
**SECTION 2 ASSESSMENT**

**TERMS & NAMES** 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

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

**USING YOUR NOTES**

2. What are some similarities between the two empires? Explain.



**MAIN IDEAS**

3. How did Ghana’s gold-salt trade work?
4. How did Sunni Ali build an empire?
5. What form of government was typical of Hausa city-states?

**CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING**

6. **DRAWING CONCLUSIONS** Which of the two—the Yoruba or the people of Benin—had more influence on the other?
7. **COMPARING** What are some of the similarities between the Hausa city-states and other city-states you have read about?
8. **COMPARING** What are some of the similarities between Sundiata and Mansa Musa?
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** **ECONOMICS** What do you think was the most effective method Ghana used to regulate its economy? Explain your answer in a short **paragraph** in which you touch upon trade routes, gold, and taxes.

**CONNECT TO TODAY** **CREATING A POSTER**

Learn more about the mining and production of salt today. Present your findings in a **poster**, with illustrations and captions.

## Benin Bronzes

Benin is famous for its bronze and brass sculptures. Benin sculpture was made by guilds controlled by the king. One of the main functions of Benin art was to please the ruler by recording his history or by displaying his power. For instance, brass plaques commemorating the ruler's great achievements adorned the palace walls. Busts of the ruler and his family showed them as idealized figures.

### INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY

**RESEARCH LINKS** For more on Benin art, go to [classzone.com](http://classzone.com)

### Queen Mother ▶

Perhaps the most widely known type of Benin sculpture was the royal head, such as this one. In Benin, the Queen Mother held a lot of power. To symbolize that power, she wore a woven crown called a "chicken's beak."



### ◀ Plaque

Plaques such as this decorated the palace of the Oba, or ruler, of Benin

## The Lost-Wax Process

Many of the Benin sculptures were made using the lost-wax process.

1. The artist forms a core of clay that is roughly the shape of the planned sculpture.



2. The artist applies a layer of wax over the core, then carves fine details into the surface of the wax.



3. A layer of fine clay is spread over the wax surface. This creates a smooth finish and captures the small details.



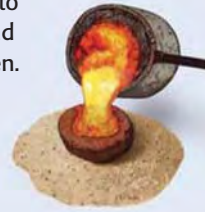
4. Several layers of coarse clay are applied to create the mold.



5. The entire object is fired in a kiln (oven). The clay hardens, and the wax melts away, leaving a clay mold. (The melted wax is the origin of the name "lost-wax.")



6. Melted bronze is poured into the mold and left to harden.



7. The clay mold is broken off, revealing the finished bronze sculpture.



### Leopard ►

Admired for its power, fierceness, and intelligence, the leopard was depicted on many royal objects. This snarling leopard is a symbol of the king's power. It is also a water vessel that was used on ceremonial occasions.



### ◀ Musician

This figure was probably made in the late 16th or early 17th century. It shows an attendant of the king blowing a horn or flute. This type of figure was often found on altars.

## Connect to Today

1. **Making Inferences** Why do you think the figure of a servant blowing a horn was found on an altar?

See Skillbuilder Handbook, Page R10.

2. **Comparing and Contrasting** Use library resources to identify a sculpture of a U.S. leader. What quality about that leader does the sculpture portray? How is it similar to or different from Benin's royal sculptures?



# 3

## Eastern City-States and Southern Empires

### MAIN IDEA

**INTERACTION WITH ENVIRONMENT** African city-states and empires gained wealth through developing and trading resources.

### WHY IT MATTERS NOW

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

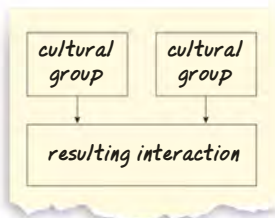
### TERMS & NAMES

- Swahili
- Mutapa
- Great Zimbabwe

**SETTING THE STAGE** As early as the third century A.D., 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 because of Indian Ocean trade. In this section, you will learn about East African trade, Islamic influences in East Africa, and the peoples of southern Africa.

### TAKING NOTES

**Analyzing Causes** Use a chart to explain one example of cultural interaction resulting from trade.



### East Coast Trade Cities

Villages along the east coast began to develop into important 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. 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.

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

# East African Trade, 1000

## Trade Goods

Origin	Raw Materials	Products Made
Savanna region	leopard skins	saddles
Coastal region	tortoiseshells	combs
Southern African	gold from mines	coins, jewelry
Savanna region	ivory from elephants	chess pieces, sword hilts



### GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

- 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?
- Human-Environment Interaction** Which monsoon would a trader rely on to sail from India to Africa?
- Region** Which raw materials came from the savanna region?

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. As a result, Kilwa became the wealthiest, most powerful coastal city-state. **A**

**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 shipboard cannon, the Portuguese took Sofala, Kilwa, and Mombasa. They burned parts of Kilwa and built forts on the sites of Kilwa and Mombasa. The Portuguese kept their ports and cities on the East African coast for the next two centuries.

## Islamic Influences

Muslim traders introduced Islam to the East African coast, and the growth of commerce caused the religion 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. However, the vast majority of people along the East African coast held on to their traditional religious beliefs.

### MAIN IDEA

#### Analyzing Causes

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

## > Analyzing Primary Sources

### Islamic Law in Mogadishu

In 1331, Ibn Battuta, traveling by caravan similar to the one at right, visited the African city of Mogadishu. He described how Muslim officials decided legal matters.

#### PRIMARY SOURCE

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*

#### DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTIONS

- Summarizing** Who were the four types of people who decided legal matters?
- Clarifying** What types of cases did they judge?





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 to markets in Arabia, Persia, and Iraq. Wealthy people in these countries often bought slaves to do 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 Muslim 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 slaves did not increase dramatically until the 1700s. At that time, Europeans started to buy captured Africans for their colonial plantations. **B**

**MAIN IDEA**

**Summarizing**

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



▲ An Arab slave market in Yemen, A.D. 1237

## 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 settled 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. The city of Great Zimbabwe stood near an important trade route linking the 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. Because of this growing wealth, Great Zimbabwe became the economic, political, and religious center of its empire.

But by 1450, 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.

Almost everything that is known about Great Zimbabwe comes from its impressive ruins. Portuguese explorers knew about the site in the 1500s. Karl Mauch, a German explorer, was one of the first Europeans to discover the remains of these stone dwellings in 1871.

# Great Zimbabwe

Great Zimbabwe was an important city in southern Africa. The word *zimbabwe* comes from a Shona phrase meaning “stone houses.” The ruins consist of two complexes of stone buildings that once housed the royal palace of Great Zimbabwe’s rulers. There are great curving walls around the ruins. 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 about 400 years.

### City of Great Zimbabwe

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

- It covered many 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.
- The Great Enclosure is a curving wall up to 36 feet high and 15 feet thick.



This photograph shows part of the Great Enclosure.



This picture of two girls standing next to a wall shows how very high the enclosing walls are.

### SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Visual Sources

- 1. Drawing Conclusions** *If the walls were not built for defense, what does this suggest about the safety and security of Great Zimbabwe?*
- 2. Making Inferences** *If military assault did not account for the fall of Zimbabwe, what other factors might have played a part?*

# The 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 support him and his army.

**Mutapa Rulers** 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 remained 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 overthrow one ruler and replace him with one they could control. This signaled increasing European interference in Africa in centuries to come. 🌐

**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. 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. The Swahili peoples traded the gold and ivory of Africa for goods from India and China. During the 1500s and 1600s, the Portuguese looted Swahili cities and damaged Swahili trade.

**MAIN IDEA**

**Making Inferences**

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

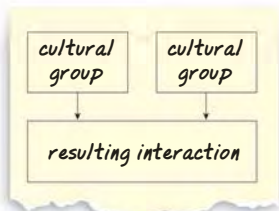
**SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT**

**TERMS & NAMES** 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

- Swahili
- Great Zimbabwe
- Mutapa

**USING YOUR NOTES**

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



**MAIN IDEAS**

- How did the Swahili language develop?
- How was Islam introduced to East Africa?
- How did the people of Great Zimbabwe positively interact with their environment?

**CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING**

- COMPARING** Compare the Portuguese who arrived in East Africa with the rulers of the Mutapa Empire.
- SYNTHESIZING** What were some of the effects of East African trade on different cultural groups?
- DRAWING CONCLUSIONS** How is Swahili an example of cultural interaction?
- WRITING ACTIVITY** **INTERACTION WITH ENVIRONMENT** How did the people of Great Zimbabwe negatively interact with their environment? Write a one-paragraph **essay** explaining your answer.

**INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY INTERNET ACTIVITY**

Use the Internet to research the modern African country of Zimbabwe. Find out where it is located in Africa, its capital, and other information. Enter your findings on an **outline map** of Africa.

**INTERNET KEYWORD**  
*Zimbabwe*

# Chapter 15 Assessment

## TERMS & NAMES

For each term or name below, briefly explain its connection to African history from 800 to 1500.

1. lineage
2. stateless society
3. matrilineal
4. Ghana
5. Mali
6. Songhai
7. Swahili
8. Great Zimbabwe

## MAIN IDEAS

### North and Central African Societies

Section 1 (pages 409–412)

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

### West African Civilizations

Section 2 (pages 413–421)

12. What accounted for Ghana's financial success?
13. What were two ways that Islam spread through Africa?
14. What was the economy of the Hausa city-states like?

### Eastern City-States and Southern Empires

Section 3 (pages 422–427)

15. How did the Swahili language evolve?
16. Why was it important for Kilwa to control Sofala?

17. Who was most affected by the introduction of Islam to East Africa?
18. What was the relationship of Great Zimbabwe to the Mutapa Empire?

## CRITICAL THINKING

### 1. USING YOUR NOTES

In a chart like the one shown, list for each leader what group of people he led and one of his achievements.

Leader	Group	Achievement
Ibn Yasin		
Askia Muhammad		
Ewure		

### 2. RECOGNIZING EFFECTS

**RELIGIOUS AND ETHICAL SYSTEMS** In what way did Islam encourage the spread of literacy?

### 3. RECOGNIZING EFFECTS

**INTERACTION WITH ENVIRONMENT** How did people adapt to the harsh conditions of the Sahara? Discuss traders who crossed the Sahara and people who lived in the Saharan village of Taghaza.

### 4. SUMMARIZING

How are group membership, inheritance rights, and positions of authority usually decided in a matrilineal society?

### 5. CLARIFYING

Why was the location of Great Zimbabwe advantageous?

## VISUAL SUMMARY

### Societies and Empires of Africa

	Organization & Time Period	Important Facts
<b>Igbo People</b>	Existed as a stateless society from <b>9th to 19th centuries</b>	Elders resolved conflicts
<b>Almoravids</b>	Muslim state from <b>mid-1000s to mid-1100s</b>	Founded city of Marrakech
<b>Almohads</b>	Muslim state from <b>mid-1100s to mid-1200s</b>	Unified the Maghrib under one authority for first time in history
<b>Ghana</b>	West African empire from <b>700s to 1076</b>	Grew wealthy and powerful by controlling gold-salt trade
<b>Mali</b>	West African empire from <b>1235 to 1400s</b>	Mansa Musa's hajj made Mali's wealth famous
<b>Songhai</b>	West African empire that flourished in the <b>1400s and 1500s</b>	Conquered Mali and gained control of trade routes
<b>Benin</b>	West African trading kingdom strong in <b>1400s and 1500s</b>	Famous for bronze and brass works of art
<b>Kilwa</b>	East African city-state flourished from <b>1200s to 1400s</b>	Grew wealthy from trade
<b>Great Zimbabwe</b>	Capital of trade-based empire from <b>1200s until about 1450</b>	City abandoned, perhaps because natural resources were used up
<b>Mutapa Empire</b>	Founded about <b>1420</b> by man from Great Zimbabwe	Remained independent in spite of Portuguese attempts

Use the map and your knowledge of world history to answer the questions.

Additional Test Practice, pp. S1–S33



- Which is the most widespread ethnic group?
  - Soninke
  - Berbers
  - Hausa
  - Igbo
- In which nation does that group *not* live?
  - Algeria
  - Mauritania
  - Niger
  - Libya
- Which group does *not* live in modern Nigeria?
  - Soninke
  - Hausa
  - Yoruba
  - Igbo
- What geographical feature might explain why there are no ethnic groups shown in the center of the map?
  - Atlantic Ocean
  - equator
  - the Sahara
  - Tropic of Cancer

**INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY**

**TEST PRACTICE** Go to [classzone.com](http://classzone.com)

- Diagnostic tests
- Strategies
- Tutorials
- Additional practice

**ALTERNATIVE ASSESSMENT**

**1. Interact *with* History**

Recall your discussion of the question on page 408: How might trade benefit both sides? Now that you've read the chapter, reevaluate what makes trade beneficial. 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.

**2. WRITING ABOUT HISTORY**

**ECONOMICS** Do you think Africa was connected to most of the world through trade, or was it relatively isolated from the rest of the world? Write an **essay** in which you support your answer with evidence from the chapter.

Consider the following:

- Muslim states of North Africa
- gold-salt trade
- empires and kingdoms of West Africa
- east coast trade cities

**INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY**

**Participating in a WebQuest**

**Introduction** Today, much of eastern Africa still relies heavily on trade. With a group of students, have each member choose one East African country to research in terms of its trade and culture. Issues to investigate might include what goods present-day East African nations trade and who their trading partners are.

**Task** Create an electronic presentation of information on exports and imports, quantities shipped, where the goods are going, and how they are being transported.

**Process and Resources** Have each member of the group bring his or her information on East African trade and culture to the group to create a presentation. Use this chapter and the Internet as resources for your research.

**Evaluation and Conclusion** East African trade has been important to the economies of the region. How did this project contribute to your understanding of the interrelationship between prosperity and trade?