

## Developments In Africa

*After that the chief of the poets mounts the steps of the pempi [a raised platform on which the ruler sits] and lays his head on the sultan's lap, then climbs to the top of the pempi and lays his head first on the sultan's right shoulder and then on his left, speaking all the while in their tongue, and finally he comes down again. I was told that this practice is a very old custom amongst them, prior to the introduction of Islam, and that they have kept it up.*

—Ibn Battuta, c. 1352

**Essential Question:** How and why did states develop in Africa and change over time?

Ibn Battuta's commentary on Mali society sheds light on the cultural forces at work in Sub-Saharan Africa during the 14th century. A scholar from Morocco on the northwest coast of Africa, he was well versed in Islamic law, also known as shariah. Islamic governments in Mogadishu (east Africa) and Delhi (India) sought his advice and welcomed him to their lands. Ibn Battuta's travelogue demonstrated how Islam's phenomenal growth increased connections among cultures of Asia, Africa, and southern Europe. As Ibn Battuta's account makes clear, African societies that had adopted Islam kept many of their traditions.

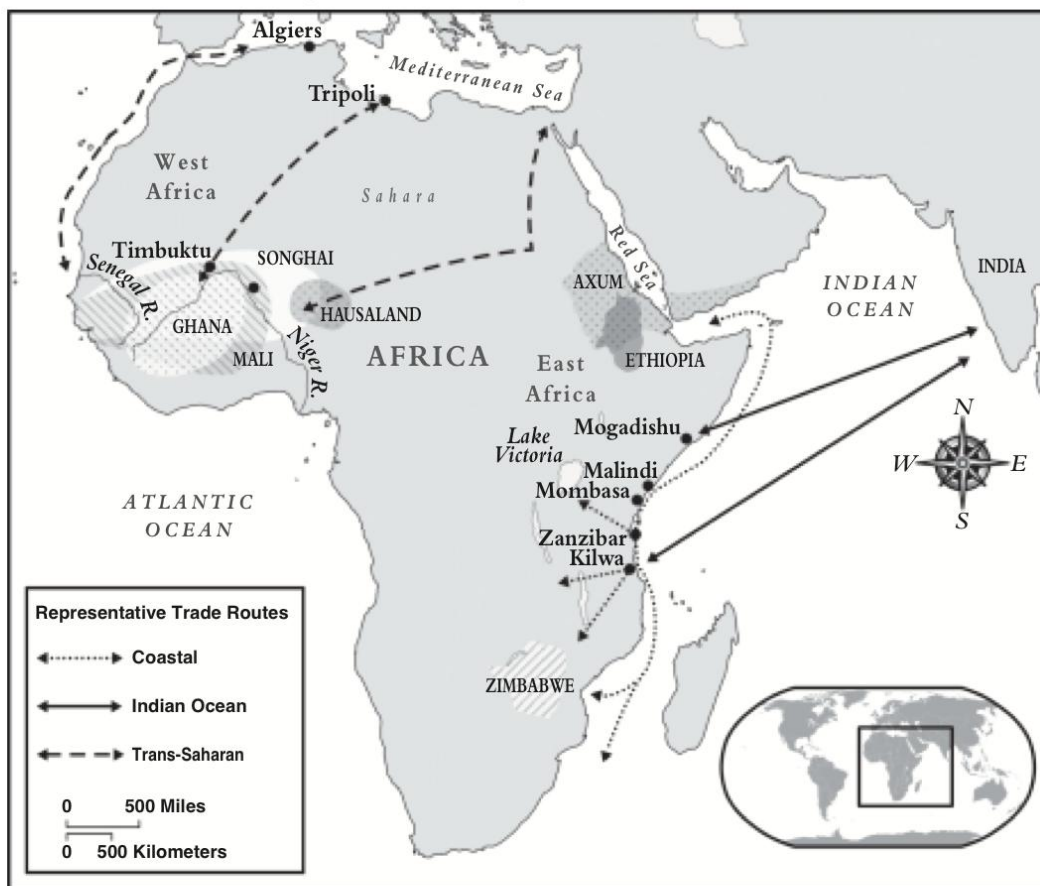
Some parts of Africa resisted Islam. To better defend themselves against attacks by Islamic forces, they built churches with labyrinths, reservoirs, and tunnels. Other parts of the continent, especially in the south, had little contact with Islam until later in history.

### Political Structures in Inland Africa

The development of Sub-Saharan Africa was heavily shaped by the migrations of Bantu-speaking people outward from west-central Africa. By the year 1000, most of the region had adopted agriculture. With the sedentary nature of agriculture, people needed more complex political relationships to govern themselves. In contrast to most Asian or European societies, those in Sub-Saharan Africa did not centralize power under one leader or central government. Instead, communities formed **kin-based networks**, where families governed themselves. A male head of the network, a **chief**, mediated conflicts and dealt with neighboring groups. Groups of villages became districts, and a group of chiefs decided among themselves how to solve the district's problems.



## Early State-Building and Trade in Africa



As populations grew, kin-based networks became more difficult to govern. Competition among neighbors increased, which in turn increased fighting among villages and districts. Survival for small kin-based communities became more challenging. Though many such communities continued to exist in Sub-Saharan Africa until the 19th century, larger kingdoms grew in prominence, particularly after 1000.

**The Hausa Kingdoms** Sometime before 1000, in what is now Nigeria, people of the Hausa ethnic group formed seven states, the **Hausa Kingdoms**. The states were loosely connected through kinship ties, though they too had no central authority. People established prospering city-states, each with a speciality. For example, several were situated in plains where cotton grew well.

Though the region lacked access to the sea, contact with people from outside the region was important. Many Hausa benefited from the thriving **trans-Saharan trade**, a network of trading routes across the great desert. A state on the western edge of the region specialized in military matters and defended the states against attack. Because the states lacked a central authority, however, they were frequently subject to domination from outside.

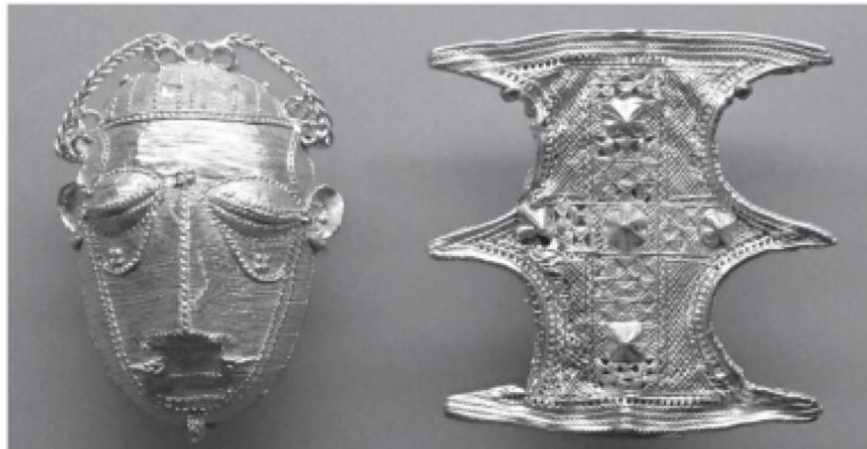


In the 14th century, missionaries introduced Islam to the region. (Connect: Write a paragraph contrasting the decentralized political systems of the peoples in inland Africa with those of the Inca. See Topic 1.4.)

## Political Structures of West and East Africa

Kingdoms on both the western and eastern sides of Africa benefited from increased trade. The exchange of goods brought them wealth, political power, and cultural diversity. The spread of Islam added to the religious diversity of the continent, where animism and Christianity were already practiced. Four of these kingdoms were Ghana, Mali, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia.

**Ghana** Nestled between the Sahara and the tropical rain forests of the West African coast, the kingdom of **Ghana** was not in the same location as the modern nation of Ghana. Historians believe that the kingdom had been founded during the 5th century, at least two centuries before the time of Muhammad, but Ghana reached its peak of influence from the 8th to the 11th centuries. Ghana's rulers sold gold and ivory to Muslim traders in exchange for salt, copper, cloth, and tools. From Ghana's capital city, Koumbi Saleh, the king ruled a centralized government aided by nobles and an army equipped with iron weapons.



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The gold artifacts (upper) were part of the valuable trans-Saharan trade in West Africa. The modern photo of foods and spices (lower) shows the types of goods that have been popular in the Indian Ocean trade in East Africa since the 8th century C.E.



**Mali** By the 12th century, wars with neighboring societies had permanently weakened the Ghanaian state. In its place arose several new trading societies, the most powerful of which was **Mali**. You will read more about Mali in Topic 2.4. Most scholars believe that Mali's founding ruler, Sundiata, was a Muslim and used his connections with others of his faith to establish trade relationships with North African and Arab merchants. Sundiata cultivated a thriving gold trade in Mali. Under his steady leadership, Mali's wealth grew tremendously. His nephew, Mansa Musa, made a pilgrimage to Mecca where his lavish displays of gold left a lasting impression. (See Topic 2.4 for the later developments in West Africa, such as the growth of the city of Timbuktu and the Songhai Empire.)

**Zimbabwe** In East Africa, the architecture demonstrated the growing wealth of one kingdom. Though most houses had traditionally been constructed from wood, by the 9th century chiefs had begun to construct their "zimbabwes," the Bantu word for "dwellings," with stone. This word became the name of one of the most powerful of all the East African kingdoms between the 12th and 15th centuries—**Zimbabwe**. It was situated between the Zambezi and Limpopo rivers in modern-day Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

Zimbabwe built its prosperity on a mixture of agriculture, grazing, trade, and, above all, gold. Like Ghana and Mali on the other side of the continent, Zimbabwe had rich gold fields, and taxes on the transport of gold made the kingdom wealthy. While Ghana and Mali relied on land-based trade across the Sahara, Zimbabwe traded with the coastal city-states such as Mombasa, Kilwa, and Mogadishu. Through these ports, Zimbabwe was tied into the **Indian Ocean trade**, which connected East Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and East Asia. In East Africa, traders blended Bantu and Arabic to develop a new language, **Swahili**. Today, Swahili is spoken by various groups in the African Great Lakes region as well as other parts of Southeast Africa.

The rise and decline of Zimbabwe was reflected in the defensive walls used to protect cities. By the end of the 13th century, a massive wall of stone, 30 feet tall by 15 feet thick, surrounded the capital city, which became known as the **Great Zimbabwe**. The stone wall was the first large one on the continent that people built without mortar. Inside the wall, most of the royal city's buildings were made of stone. In the late 15th century, nearly 20,000 people resided within the Great Zimbabwe. However, overgrazing so damaged the surrounding environment that residents of the bustling capital city abandoned it by the end of the 1400s. The wall still stands in the modern country of Zimbabwe.

**Ethiopia** Christianity had spread from its origins along the east coast of the Mediterranean Sea south into Egypt and beyond. In what is today **Ethiopia**, the kingdom of Axum developed. It prospered by trading goods obtained from India, Arabia, the Roman Empire, and the interior of Africa. Beginning in the 7th century, the spread of Islam made the region more diverse religiously.

In the 12th century, a new Christian-led kingdom in Ethiopia emerged. Its rulers, like those of other countries, expressed their power through architecture. They ordered the creation of 11 massive churches made entirely of rock.



Source: Thinkstock

This is one of the 11 Christian churches in Ethiopia built out of rock.

Carved rock structures had been a feature of Ethiopian religious architecture since the 2nd millennium B.C.E.

From the 12th through the 16th centuries, Ethiopia was an island of Christianity on the continent of Africa. Separated from both the Roman Catholic Church of western Europe and the Orthodox Church of eastern Europe, Ethiopian Christianity developed independently. People combined their traditional faith traditions, such as ancestor veneration and beliefs in spirits, with Christianity to create a distinct form of faith.

## Social Structures of Sub-Saharan Africa

In Sub-Saharan Africa, strong central governments ruling over large territories were uncommon. Instead, Sub-Saharan Africa's small communities were organized around several structures: kinship, age, and gender. Kinship connections allowed people to identify first as members of a clan or family. Age was another significant social marker. An 18-year-old could do more hard labor than a 60-year-old, but younger people often relied on the advice of their elders. Thus, communities divided work according to age, creating age grades or age sets. Finally, gender had an influential role in social organization.

- Men dominated most activities that required a specialized skill. For example, leather tanners and blacksmiths were typically men.



- Women generally engaged in agriculture and food gathering. They also took the primary responsibilities for carrying out domestic chores and raising their family's children.

**Slavery in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southwest Asia** Slavery had a long history in Africa. Prisoners of war, debtors, and criminals were often enslaved. Most men and some women did agricultural work. Most women and some men served in households. In many kin-based societies, people could not own land privately, but they could own other people. Owning a large number of enslaved people increased one's social status. Slavery existed in many forms.

Comparing Three Forms of Slavery			
	Chattel	Domestic	Debt Bondage
<b>Description</b>	Slaves were the legal property of the owner.	Slaves served as cooks, cleaners, or other household workers.	People became slaves, sometimes through mutual agreement, to repay a debt.
<b>Examples</b>	Common in the Americas, 16th century to 19th century	Common in Classical Greece and Rome, and in the Middle East	Common in East Africa before the 15th century and in European colonies in the Americas
<b>Was enslavement permanent?</b>	Yes	Often	Not in theory, although many slaves never regained freedom
<b>Were the children of slaves automatically slaves?</b>	Yes	Often	Children often inherited the debts of their parents
<b>Did slaves have any rights?</b>	No	Some: laws or customs might prevent a master from selling a slave	Some: laws or customs might limit how severely a master could punish a slave

A strong demand in the Middle East for enslaved workers resulted in an **Indian Ocean slave trade** between East Africa and the Middle East. This trade started several centuries before the Atlantic Ocean slave trade between West Africa and the Americas. In some places, it lasted into the 20th century.

The enslaved East Africans, known in Arabic as *zanj*, provided valuable labor on sugar plantations in Mesopotamia. However, between 869 and 883, they and many Arab workers mounted a series of revolts known as the **Zanj Rebellion**. About 15,000 enslaved people successfully captured the city of Basra and held it for ten years before being defeated. The large size and long length of time before it was defeated make the Zanj Rebellion one of the most successful slave revolts in history.



# Cultural Life in Sub-Saharan Africa

Playing music, creating visual arts, and telling stories were and continue to be important aspects of cultures everywhere because they provided enjoyment and mark rituals such as weddings and funerals. In Africa, these activities carried additional significance. Because traditional African religions included ancestor veneration, song lyrics provided a means of communicating with the spirit world. African music usually had a distinctive rhythmic pattern, and vocals were interspersed with percussive elements such as handclaps, bells, pots, or gourds.

Visual arts also commonly served a religious purpose. For example, metalworkers created busts of past rulers so that ruling royalty could look to them for guidance. Artists in Benin, West Africa, were famous for their intricate sculptures in iron and bronze. In the late 19th century, the sophistication of these pieces of art would cause some Europeans to increase their respect for West African cultures.

**Griots and Griottes** Literature, as it existed in Sub-Saharan Africa, was oral. *Griots*, or storytellers, were the conduits of history for a community. Griots possessed encyclopedic knowledge of family lineages and the lives and deeds of great leaders. In general, griots were also adept at music, singing their stories and accompanying themselves on instruments, such as the drums and a 12-string harp called the kora.

The griots were both venerated and feared as they held both the power of language and of story. People said that a griot could sing your success or sing your downfall. By telling and retelling their stories and histories, the griots preserved a people’s history and passed that history on from generation to generation. Kings often sought their counsel regarding political matters. When a griot died, it was as though a library had burned.

Just as men served as griots, women served as griottes. They would sing at special occasions, such as before a wedding. For example, the griotte would counsel the bride to not talk back if her mother-in-law abused her or reassure the bride that if things got too bad, she could return home. Griottes provided women with a sense of empowerment in a patriarchal society.

KEY TERMS BY THEME		
<p><b>SOCIETY:</b> Sub-Saharan kin-based networks Swahili Zanj Rebellion</p> <p><b>ECONOMY:</b> Trade trans-Saharan trade Indian Ocean trade Indian Ocean slave trade</p>	<p><b>TECHNOLOGY:</b> Building Great Zimbabwe</p> <p><b>GOVERNMENT:</b> Kinship chief Hausa Kingdoms</p>	<p><b>GOVERNMENT:</b> West Africa Ghana Mali</p> <p><b>GOVERNMENT:</b> East Africa Zimbabwe Ethiopia</p>

# Developments in Europe

*I should not wish to be Aristotle if this were to separate me from Christ.*

—Peter Abelard, Letter 17 to Heloise (1141)

**Essential Question** How did the beliefs and practices of the predominant religions, agricultural practices, and political decentralization affect European society from c. 1200 to c. 1450?

**A**s the Roman Empire declined in power in the 5th and 6th centuries, Western Europe entered the Middle Ages, sometimes called the medieval period. Throughout Europe, trade declined, intellectual life receded, and the united Roman state was replaced by smaller kingdoms that frequently fought one another for control of territory. In response, European kings, lords, and peasants worked out agreements to provide for common defense. Only the Roman Catholic Church remained powerful in most of Europe from Roman times to the 16th century.

However, between 1000 to 1450, learning and trade began to revive in Europe. This era is called the High Middle Ages. Like many scholars of this period, Peter Abelard studied classical thinkers such as Aristotle and sometimes criticized the Church, but he remained a faithful throughout his life.

## Feudalism: Political and Social Systems

European civilization in the Middle Ages was characterized by a decentralized political organization based on a system of exchanges of land for loyalty known as **feudalism**. Lacking a strong government, people needed some protection from bandits, rival lords, and invaders such as the Vikings from northern Europe. The core of feudalism was a system of mutual obligations:

- A monarch, usually a king, granted tracts of land, called *fiefs*, to lords. In return, a lord became a king's *vassal*, a person who owed service to another person of higher status.
- Lords then provided land to knights. In return, knights became vassals of the lord, and pledged to fight for the lord or king.
- Lords also provided land and protection to peasants. In return, peasants were obligated to farm the lord's land and provide the lord with crops and livestock, and to obey the lord's orders.





Feudalism provided some security for peasants, equipment for warriors, and land to those who served a lord. Since the entire system was based on agriculture, wealth was measured in land rather than in cash.

The feudal system incorporated a *code of chivalry*—an unwritten set of rules for conduct focusing on honor, courtesy, and bravery—as a way to resolve disputes. Since women were to be protected, the code put them on a pedestal while not investing them with any significant additional importance. In practice, women did not have many rights. (Connect: Compare European feudalism and Japanese feudalism. See Topic 1.1.)

**Manorial System** Large fiefs or estates were also referred to as **manors**. The **manorial system** provided economic self-sufficiency and defense. The manor produced everything that people living on it required, limiting the need for trade or contact with outsiders. Many serfs spent their entire lives on a single manor, little aware of events in the rest of Europe.

Manor grounds were small villages that often included a church, a blacksmith shop, a mill, and wine presses. They included the homes of peasants known as **serfs**. Serfs, while not slaves, were tied to the land. This meant they could not travel without permission from their lords. Nor could they marry without their lord's approval. In exchange for protection provided by the lord of the manor, they paid tribute in the form of crops, labor, or, in rare cases, coins. Children born to serfs also became serfs.

As both climate and technology slowly improved, the amount of arable or farmable land gradually increased. Agriculture became more efficient near the end of the Middle Ages. The **three-field system**, in which crops were rotated through three fields, came into use.

- One field was planted with wheat or rye, crops that provided food.
- A second field was planted with legumes such as peas, lentils, or beans. These made the soil more fertile by adding nitrogen to it.
- A third field was allowed to remain fallow, or unused, each year.

Technological developments included windmills and new types of plows. Heavier plows with wheels worked well in the dense soil north of the Alps, while lighter plows worked better in southern Europe. These changes promoted population growth.

## Political Trends in the Later Middle Ages

In the later Middle Ages, monarchies grew more powerful at the expense of feudal lords by employing their own bureaucracy and a military. These employees worked directly for the king or queen. (In contrast, in modern countries such as the United States, bureaucrats and soldiers work for the country, not the chief executive.) The lands these monarchs collected under their control, particularly in England and France, were beginning to look like the modern countries of Europe.



## Europe in the Middle Ages



**France** King Philip II (ruled 1180–1223), was the first to develop a real bureaucracy. Yet it was not until Philip IV (ruled 1285–1314) that the first **Estates-General** met. The Estates-General was a body to advise the king that included representatives from each of the three legal classes, or **estates**, in France: the clergy, nobility, and commoners. Although the French kings consulted this Estates-General when necessary, they did not exact regular taxes from the upper two estates, the clergy and nobility. Consequently, the Estates-General had little power. The clergy and nobility felt little responsibility to protect a government that they were not financing, a problem that only continued to increase in France up to the eve of the French Revolution of 1789.

**Holy Roman Empire** The German king **Otto I** was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in 962, hearkening back to Charlemagne's designation as Emperor of the Romans. Otto's successors survived the power struggle with the papacy over the **lay investiture controversy** of the 11th and 12th centuries. This dispute was over whether a secular (non-religious) leader, rather than the pope, could invest bishops with the symbols of office. It was finally resolved in the Concordat of Worms of 1122, when the Church achieved autonomy from secular authorities. The Holy Roman Empire remained vibrant until it was virtually destroyed during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). It lingered on, but with little power. The Empire came to a formal end when the French leader Napoleon invaded central Europe in 1806.



**Norman England** The Normans were descendants of Vikings who settled in northwestern France, a region known as Normandy. In 1066, a Norman king, William the Conqueror, successfully invaded England. This gave him kingdoms on both sides of the English Channel. He presided over a tightly organized feudal system, using royal sheriffs as his administrative officials. The fusion of Normans and Anglo-Saxons created the modern English people.

Many English nobles objected to the power of William and the succeeding Norman monarchs. These nobles forced limits on that power. In 1215, they forced King John to sign the **Magna Carta**, which required the king to respect certain rights, such as the right to a jury trial before a noble could be sentenced to prison. They also won the right to be consulted on the issue of scutage (a tax paid on a knight who wanted to pay money instead of provide military service). Finally, the first **English Parliament** was formed in 1265. These developments increased the rights of the English nobility, but not of the general population.

In the first full parliamentary meeting in 1265, the House of Lords represented the nobles and Church hierarchy, while the House of Commons was made up of elected representatives of wealthy townspeople. Eventually, the power of these two legislative bodies in England became stronger than that of similar bodies on the European continent.

**The Hundred Years' War** Between 1337 and 1453, the rival monarchies of England and France fought a series of battles known as the Hundred Years' War. English archers armed with longbows (about six feet long) helped win several early victories. However, by the end of the conflict, the English retained only the port of Calais in France. Two other important results of the war were on how people saw themselves and how they fought.

- On each side, serving under a monarch fostered a sense of unity among soldiers who often spoke distinct languages or dialects. The war marked another step towards people identifying themselves as “English” or “French” rather than from a particular region.
- The war also demonstrated the spreading use of gunpowder weapons. Gunpowder had been invented by the Chinese and spread west by Mongols.

**Christians versus Muslims** In addition to conquering England, the Normans also conquered Sicily, taking control of that Mediterranean island from Muslims. Muslims had conquered Spain in the 8th century. From that time, Christians had wanted to reconquer it. This effort, called the *reconquista*, occurred over many centuries. It was finally completed in 1492.

## Roman Catholic Church during the Middle Ages

In 1054, the Christian Church in Europe divided into two branches, a split called the **Great Schism**. The Roman Catholic Church continued to dominate most of Europe for another five centuries, while the Orthodox Church was powerful farther east, from Greece to Russia.



The Roman Catholic Church was the most powerful institution in a Europe divided into hundreds of small political states. Often Church staff were the only people in a community who knew how to read and write. If common people needed something written or read, they asked a Church official to do it. Most manors had a small church and a priest on the grounds. Christianity provided people a shared identity even as vernacular languages, ones spoken by the people in a region, emerged to replace Latin.

**Education and Art** The Church established the first universities in Europe. Because the Church led in the area of education, most philosophers, writers, and other thinkers of the Middle Ages were religious leaders. All artists worked for the Church. Most artwork focused on religious themes, which provided images to help illiterate serfs understand the Bible.

**Church and State** The Church held great power in the feudal system. If a lord displeased the Church, it could pressure the lord in various ways. For example, a local bishop might cancel religious services for his serfs. This angered the serfs, who would demand that the lord give in to the bishop.

Like the Roman Empire, the Roman Catholic Church had an extensive hierarchy of regional leaders. The regional religious leaders, called bishops, owed allegiance to the pope, the supreme bishop in Rome. The bishops also selected and supervised local priests.

**Monasticism** Although some Christian clergy withdrew to monasteries to meditate and pray, they remained part of the economies of Western Europe. The monasteries had the same economic functions of agriculture and protection as other manors. Women were permitted to become nuns and exerted their influence in the monasteries of the Catholic Church.

**Reform** Although clergy took vows of poverty and supported charities in their communities, the clergy also wielded considerable political influence, and some monasteries became quite wealthy. Wealth and political power led to corruption during the 13th and 14th centuries. Eventually, corruption, as well as theological disagreements, drove reformers such as Martin Luther to take stands that would shatter the unity of the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century.

## Christian Crusades

Just as Europeans fought to drive Muslims out of Sicily and Spain, they also sought to reclaim control of the Holy Land, the region of Palestine in the Middle East that contains sites of spiritual significance to Jews, Christians, and Muslims. European Christians had enjoyed access to these lands for centuries, even after they came under the control of Muslims.

Social and economic trends of the 11th century added to the pressure among Europeans to invade the Middle East. Rules of **primogeniture**, under which the eldest son in a family inherited the entire estate, left a generation of younger sons with little access to wealth and land. The landed nobles saw



a military campaign as a way to divert the ambitions of these restless nobles as well as unemployed peasants, who often pillaged the lands of neighboring lords. Furthermore, merchants desired unfettered access to trade routes through the Middle East. The combination of these religious, social, and economic pressures resulted in the **Crusades**—a series of European military campaigns in the Middle East between 1095 and the 1200s.

Politics shaped the conduct of Crusades. Tensions between popes and kings strengthened the intention of the Roman Catholic Church to take control. The Church also used its spiritual authority to recruit believers. It granted relief from required acts of atonement and penance and even promised people they would reach heaven sooner if they joined a Crusade. Support came for the Orthodox branch of Christianity as well. Alarmed by news of the persecution of Christian pilgrims by Seljuk Turks, the Orthodox patriarch at Constantinople appealed to Pope Urban II to help retake the Holy Land from Islamic control.

**The First Crusade** Of the four major Crusades, only the first was a clear victory for Christendom. The European army conquered Jerusalem in July 1099. However, Muslim forces under Saladin regained control of Jerusalem in 1187. The Crusades did promote cultural exchange between Europe and the Middle East. The Middle East had a higher standard of living, and European Crusaders increased the demand for Middle Eastern goods. (Connect: Create a timeline tracing the spread of Islam up through the Crusades. See Topic 1.2.)

**The Fourth Crusade** During the fourth and last major Crusade (1202–1204), Venice, a wealthy city-state in northern Italy, had a contract to transport Crusaders to the Middle East, an area known as the Levant. However, Venice was not paid all of what was due, so the Venetians persuaded the Crusader debtors first to sack Zara, an Italian city, and then Constantinople, a major trade competitor of Venice. The Fourth Crusade never made it to the Holy Land. Eventually, Islamic forces prevailed in the Levant.

## Economic and Social Change

The Crusades were just part of the changes occurring in Europe in the late Middle Ages. Local economic self-sufficiency in Europe gradually gave way to an interest in goods from other European areas and from far-flung ports.

**Marco Polo** In the late 13th century **Marco Polo**, an Italian native from Venice, visited the court of Kublai Khan in Dadu, modern-day Beijing. Polo's captivating descriptions of the customs of the people he met intrigued Europeans. For example, he described how Mongols had multiple marriages, drank mare's milk, burned black stones (coal) to heat their homes, and bathed frequently—often three times per week. Curiosity about Asia skyrocketed, stimulating interest in cartography, or mapmaking.

**Social Change** Growth in long-distance commerce changed the social pyramid of Western Europe. Economic success started to rival religious vocation or military service in winning status. This middle class, between the



elite nobles and clergy and the mass of peasants, began to grow. Known as the **bourgeoisie**, or **burghers**, it included shopkeepers, merchants, craftspeople, and small landholders.

**Urban Growth** With renewed commerce came larger cities. The change to the three-field system and other advances in agriculture led to population growth in the late Middle Ages. This agricultural surplus encouraged the growth of towns and of markets that could operate more frequently than just on holidays. As the demand for more labor on the manors increased, the supply decreased. A series of severe plagues swept through Eurasia in the 14th century. In Europe, an outbreak of bubonic plague known as the Black Death killed as many as one-third of the population. The growing demand for labor and the deaths of so many people gave serfs more bargaining power with lords.

Urban growth was hampered after about 1300 by a five-century cooling of the climate known as the **Little Ice Age**. Lower temperatures reduced agricultural productivity, so people had less to trade and cities grew more slowly. The Little Ice Age led to an increase in disease and an increase in unemployment. These, in turn, created social unrest. The crime rate increased, and Jews, and other groups that already faced discrimination, were the victims of scapegoating—being blamed for something over which they had no control.

**Jews** During the Middle Ages, the small Jewish population in Christian Europe began to grow. Many Jews lived in Muslim areas in the Iberian Peninsula (present-day Spain and Portugal) and around the Mediterranean Sea when these areas were overtaken by European Christians. In time, Jews who could afford to moved northward in Europe. Some political leaders, particularly in Amsterdam and other commercial cities, welcomed them, since they brought valuable experience in business and trade.

The Roman Catholic Church also had a policy that Christians could not charge interest on loans to other Christians. However, Jews were not bound by this restriction. With few other economic opportunities, many northern European Jews became moneylenders. The resulting increase in the flow of money contributed to the economic growth of Europe.

However, anti-Jewish sentiment, or **antisemitism**, was widespread among Christians. They thought of Jews as outsiders and untrustworthy. Jews were expelled from England in 1290, France in 1394, Spain in 1492, and Portugal in 1497, as well as from various independent kingdoms and cities in northern and central Europe. Jews expelled from western and central Europe often moved to eastern Europe. While Jews had lived in this region since the 1st century, their numbers increased greatly because of the expulsions.

**Muslims** Like Jews, Muslims faced discrimination in Europe. In 1492, the Spanish king expelled the remaining Muslims in the kingdom who would not convert to Christianity. Many Muslims moved to southeastern Europe. In the 13th century, the Muslim Ottoman Empire expanded its reach from Turkey into the Balkan countries of present-day Albania, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. These countries developed large Muslim populations.



While Europe was predominantly Christian, and despite their persecution, both Jews and Muslims helped shape society. Unlike most people in Europe in the Middle Ages, Jews lived in urban areas, and they served as a bridge between Christians and the Muslims whose goods they desired in trade. Contacts with traders in Muslim caliphates opened up a world of trade and a world of ideas for Europeans who had long been self-sufficient and isolated under feudalism.

**Gender Roles** Women found their rights eroding as a wave of patriarchal thinking and writing accompanied the movement from an agricultural society to a more urban one. Even fewer women than men received an education, although women often managed manor accounts. One place where women had greater opportunities to display their skills in administration and leadership was in religious orders. Some women became artisans and members of guilds—associations of craftspeople and merchants—although not all had property rights. Women in Islamic societies tended to enjoy higher levels of equality, particularly in parts of Africa and Southeast Asia.

## Renaissance

The expansion of trade, the growth of an agricultural surplus, and the rise of a middle class able to patronize artists sparked great creativity in Europe. The **Renaissance** was a period characterized by a revival of interest in classical Greek and Roman literature, art, culture, and civic virtue. Scholars recovered and studied decaying manuscripts that had been written many centuries earlier. Developed in 1439, Johannes Gutenberg’s movable-type printing press initiated a revolution in print technology. The printing press allowed manuscripts to be mass-produced at relatively affordable costs. It fostered a growth in literacy and the rapid spread of ideas.

One characteristic of the Renaissance was the interest in **humanism**, the focus on individuals rather than God. Humanists sought education and reform. They began to write secular literature. Cultural changes in the Renaissance, such as the increased use of the vernacular language, propelled the rise of powerful monarchies, the centralization of governments, and the birth of nationalism. (Connect: List three elements of classical Greece and Rome revived by the Renaissance. See Prologue.)

**Southern Renaissance** In the regions of Italy and Spain, church patronage supported the Renaissance. For example, the writer Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) used a religious framework for *The Divine Comedy*, which features hell, purgatory, and heaven. Nevertheless, his fearlessness in criticizing corrupt religious officials and his willingness to use Italian vernacular instead of Latin reflected his independence from the Roman Catholic Church. Wealthy families, such as the Medicis of Florence, used their money to support painters, sculptors, and architects.

**Northern Renaissance** By 1400, the Renaissance spirit spread to northern Europe. While many Renaissance artists emphasized piety in their work, others



emphasized human concerns. Geoffrey Chaucer, writing in *The Canterbury Tales* in the late 1300s, portrayed a microcosm of middle-class occupations in England, including several Church positions. His satirical writings portrayed monks who loved hunting and overly sentimental nuns. Like Dante a century earlier, Chaucer chose a vernacular, Middle English, for this work, although many of his other writings were in Latin.



## The Origins of Russia

During the late Middle Ages in Eastern Europe, extensive trade in furs, fish, and grain connected people from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean to Central Asia. The city-state at the center of this trade was Kievan Rus, based in what is today Kiev, Ukraine. Because it adopted the Orthodox Christianity, it maintained closer cultural relationships with Byzantium than with Roman Catholic Europe. In the 13th century, the Mongols overtook this region, so it developed even more separately from the rest of Europe. (See Topic 2.2.)

The Mongols required local nobles to collect taxes for them. As these nobles grew wealthy in their role, they began to resist Mongol rule. In the late 15th century, under the leadership of a Moscow-based ruler known as Ivan the Great, the region became independent of the Mongols. This marked the beginning of the modern state of Russia.





<b>KEY TERMS BY THEME</b>		
<p><b>GOVERNMENT:</b> England Magna Carta English Parliament</p> <p><b>ECONOMY:</b> Self-sufficiency manors manorial system</p> <p><b>TECHNOLOGY:</b> England three-field system</p>	<p><b>SOCIETY:</b> Hierarchies feudalism serfs primogeniture bourgeoisie burghers</p> <p><b>GOVERNMENT:</b> France Estates-General estates</p> <p><b>GOVERNMENT:</b> Holy Roman Empire Otto I</p>	<p><b>CULTURE:</b> Ideas Crusades Marco Polo Renaissance humanism</p> <p><b>CULTURE:</b> Religion lay investiture controversy Great Schism antisemitism</p> <p><b>ENVIRONMENT:</b> Climate Little Ice Age</p>

## Comparison in the Period from c. 1200 to c. 1450

*The world is divided into men who have wit and no religion and men who have religion and no wit.*

—Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) (980–1037), Persian philosopher and physician

**Essential Question:** In what ways was the process of state-building in various parts of the world between c. 1200 and c. 1450 similar and different?

**B**etween c. 1200 and c. 1450, states in core areas of civilization grew larger while smaller states declined. In this way, much of the world followed the same trend of building more centralized, more powerful states. However, the process varied from place to place. In most of Asia, the military strength of the Mongols created the largest land-based empire in world history. In West Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, the religion of Islam was a key part of state-building. In Europe, trade, both internal and with the more advanced civilizations of the Middle East, had greater impact.

### State-Building and New Empires

As stronger, more centralized states rose, the influence of nomadic societies began to wane by the 15th century. During this period, new empires emerged and states around the world expanded.

- The Song Dynasty in China continued a long period of technological and cultural progress.
- The Abbasid Caliphate in the Middle East was fragmented by invaders and shifts in trade. Following it, new Muslim states arose in Africa, the Middle East, and Spain.
- In South and Southeast Asia, the Chola Kingdom and Vijayanagar Empire used trade to build strong states, while the Delhi Sultanate in northern India was more land-based.
- In Africa, the rulers of Mali created an empire that was bigger and more centrally administered than the Empire of Ghana that preceded it.
- In the Americas, the Aztecs formed a tributary empire in Mesoamerica that relied on a strong military. The Inca Empire in the Andean region



used the elaborate mit'a system as a way to support state-building. In contrast, most of the Americas lacked centralized states.

- In Europe, feudal ties declined in importance as centralized states developed. This development was clearer in the Western European kingdoms of England and France than in Eastern Europe.
- Japan, unlike most states, became more decentralized and feudal.

## The Role of Religion in State-Building

One similarity in much of the world was that religion was a vital part of state-building. To help unite a diverse population, empires and states often turned to religion to strengthen political control over their territory. One excellent example of how religion worked with state-building was in the Islamic world. Through the unifying power of shared beliefs and a use of the common language of Arabic, Islam provided the basis for the legitimacy of rulers from West Africa to Southeast Asia.

**China and East Asia** Other states also were strengthened by religion. In China, the Confucian belief system was closely tied to civil service. The Song Dynasty relied on Confucian scholars to run a powerful, enduring bureaucracy. No other state had such a well-established and extensive system for conducting government affairs across such a large territory. The ability to implement laws and carry out imperial edicts was a key part of state-building in China.

Neo-Confucianism (see Topic 1.1) spread to Korea and Japan, allowing rulers in these East Asian regions to justify and consolidate their political power as well. Similarly, rulers in South and Southeast Asia relied on Hinduism and Buddhism to aid them in strengthening their states.

**Europe** In Europe, the relationship between Roman Catholic Church and state-building was somewhat different than in most of Eurasia. At times, the Church was part of the state-building process. However, because European states were so weak for most of the Middle Ages, the Church had provided an alternative structure for organizing society. Then, between 1200 and 1450, as more powerful states emerged in France and the Holy Roman Empire, the Church sometimes became a rival power.

**Diffusion of Religion** The spread of major religions during this time period resulted in the influence of religion over wide areas. Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity all encouraged their followers to convert non-believers. Therefore, missionary activity was an important factor in the decline in the practice of local religions in places such as Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and East Asia. In South Asia, converts to Islam increased partly as a result of military invasions by Islamic armies from Central Asia. However, Hinduism remained the predominant religion in South Asia, setting the stage for intermittent periods of conflict and tolerance between followers of Islam and Hinduism on the sub-continent. Trade networks in the Indian Ocean,



South China Sea, East and Central Asia, and across the Sahara Desert helped to spread religions as commercial activity increased.

## State-Building Through Trade

Fueled by increased trade, cross-cultural exchanges of technology and innovation increased. Innovations in crop production, such as Champa rice that spread from Vietnam to China, helped the Song Dynasty feed and sustain a growing population. The resulting effect, a larger and more urban citizenry, supported the development of China's manufacturing capability—the largest in the world at the time. Porcelain, silk, steel, and iron production all increased during this time. Together, these changes built the Song into the strongest state in China since the time of the Han a millennium earlier.

Paper manufacturing, invented in China in the 2nd century B.C.E., made its way across Eurasia, reaching Europe around the 13th century. The resulting printed material led to increased literacy rates across Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. The focus on intellectual thought and learning led to advances in mathematics and medicine, especially in Islamic centers of learning such as the House of Wisdom in Bagdad.

Europe benefited from exchanges with the Middle East, and through it with the rest of Asia. Not all contact between Europe and Asia was peaceful. Muslims had conquered Spain by force in the 8th century and Christian crusaders attempted to seize lands they considered holy in the Middle East beginning around 1100. The Mongols fostered the transfer of knowledge, but only after they carried out brutal conquests. All of these contacts with Asia contributed to state-building in Europe. Between 1200 and 1450, the process was small and slow, held back by the manorial system and serfdom, but it was noticeable. After 1450, state-building would increase in speed and significance in Europe.

## The Impact of Nomadic Peoples

Nomadic peoples played a key role in the process of state building between c. 1200 and 1450. The Mongols, a pastoral people from the steppes of Central Asia, ruled over significant areas of Asia and Eastern Europe during the 13th century. (For more on the Mongols, see Topic 2.2.) The political stability resulting from Mongol dominance allowed trade across Eurasia to greatly expand. Cross-cultural interactions and transfers intensified and some of the first direct contacts between Europe and China since the classical period occurred, also facilitated by Mongol rule.

Similar to the Mongols, Turkish peoples, also from the Central Asian steppes, increased their dominance over large land-based empires in the eastern Mediterranean, Persia, and South Asia that lasted well past 1450. However, unlike the Mongols, who built their empire initially as a coordinated campaign by unified Mongol clans, different Turkish groups built separate empires. The Seljuk and Ottoman Turks became dominant

forces in the Mediterranean region while another Turkish group established an empire located in Persia and the surrounding territories.

The creation of these empires would be among the last major impacts of the interaction between settled and nomadic peoples. The role of nomads in commerce and cross-cultural exchange diminished as they were replaced by organized groups of merchants and trading companies.

## Patriarchy and Religion

Social organization in most cultures remained patriarchal. However, cultures varied. While religion often reinforced the power of men, its record was mixed. For example, convent life for Christians in Europe and in Jainist and Buddhist religious communities in South Asia provided women with opportunities for learning and leadership. In contrast, in China, women lost some independence as the custom of foot binding became more common.

Four Types of State-Building, c. 1200–c. 1450		
Processes	Description	Examples
<b>Emergence of New States</b>	States arise in land once controlled by another empire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mamluk Empire (formerly Abbasid territory)</li> <li>• Seljuk Empire (formerly Abbasid territory)</li> <li>• Delhi Sultanate (formerly Gupta territory)</li> </ul>
<b>Revival of Former Empires</b>	New leadership continues or rebuilds a previous empire with some innovations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Song Dynasty (based on the Han Dynasty)</li> <li>• Mali Empire (based on the Ghana Kingdom)</li> <li>• Holy Roman Empire (based on the Roman Empire)</li> </ul>
<b>Synthesis of Different Traditions</b>	A state adapts foreign ideas to local conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Japan (Chinese and Japanese)</li> <li>• Delhi Sultanate (Islamic and Hindu)</li> <li>• Neo-Confucianism</li> </ul>
<b>Expansion in Scope</b>	An existing state expands its influence through conquest, trade, or other means	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aztecs in Mesoamerica</li> <li>• Incas in South America</li> <li>• City-states in East Africa</li> <li>• City-states in Southeast Asia</li> </ul>