

Western Africa

The Empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai



Early Peoples' Way of Life

- People in early West Africa lived as an extended family in one household
 - Extended Family: Parents, Children, and close relatives
- For a long time, West African people lived as hunter-gatherers
- Eventually people began to develop new technologies and advanced cultures
- This led to a surplus, which led to trade
 - Two popular resources that were traded were gold and salt



Ghana



Weapons from Ancient Ghana – Made from Iron

Ghana Controls Trade

- An early group of people in West Africa were the Soninke
 - They banded together for protection around the year 750_{CE} – the beginning of Ghana
- Ghana learned how to work iron, making them very strong
- Ghana traded with people to both the North and South



Silent Barter



- Ghana traders used the Silent Barter method of trading
 - Silent Barter: A process in which people exchange goods without contacting each other directly
- Silent Barter:
 - Salt traders left slabs of salt on the riverbank. Later on, gold miners left what they thought was a fair amount of gold. This was a peaceful process that also kept the locations of the gold mines a secret.
- Ghana used its iron and resources from trading to become a powerful empire

Ghana Builds an Empire

- 800_{CE} – Ghana controls the trade routes in West Africa
 - All trade passed through Ghana
 - The Ghana army kept the routes safe
 - Every trader that passed through had to pay a tax



Ghana Builds an Empire

- The people of Ghana also had to pay taxes, and so did people Ghana conquered
- Common people were only allowed to own gold dust
- Royalty owned ALL of the gold nuggets
 - This made sure the king was richer than everyone else



Expansion of the Empire

- Ghana used its powerful army to conquer other small groups
- The Ghana king Tunka Manin brought Ghana to its height in 1060_{CE}
 - Tunka Manin was said to have been one of the richest people in the entire world
- Tunka Manin was actually the nephew of the previous king
- Kingship in Ghana went from Uncle-to-Nephew, not Father-to-Son

Ghana's Decline

- Eventually the Empire of Ghana will begin to decline for three main reasons
 - Invasion: North African Muslims called Almoravids
 - Almoravids invaded in 1076CE and weakened the Empire
 - Almoravids took away many trade routes from Ghana
 - Overgrazing: Almoravids brought in a lot of cattle
 - This cattle ate all of the grass, which left nothing for Ghana
 - Ghana lost a lot of resources because of the loss of grass
 - Internal Rebellion: People of Ghana rebelled
- 1200CE – Ghana Empire collapses



Mali



Artifact in the shape of an animal used during religious ceremonies

Mali

- As Ghana was declining, a new power was rising: Mali
- One of the first leaders of Mali was Sundiata
 - Sundiata conquered many groups, including the remains of Ghana in the 1230sCE



Sundiata: The Lion King

- Sundiata gained control of all trade routes in West Africa
 - This made his empire very powerful
- Sundiata focused on making agriculture in his empire better
 - He introduced cotton to West Africa
- Sundiata gave himself a new title: Mansa



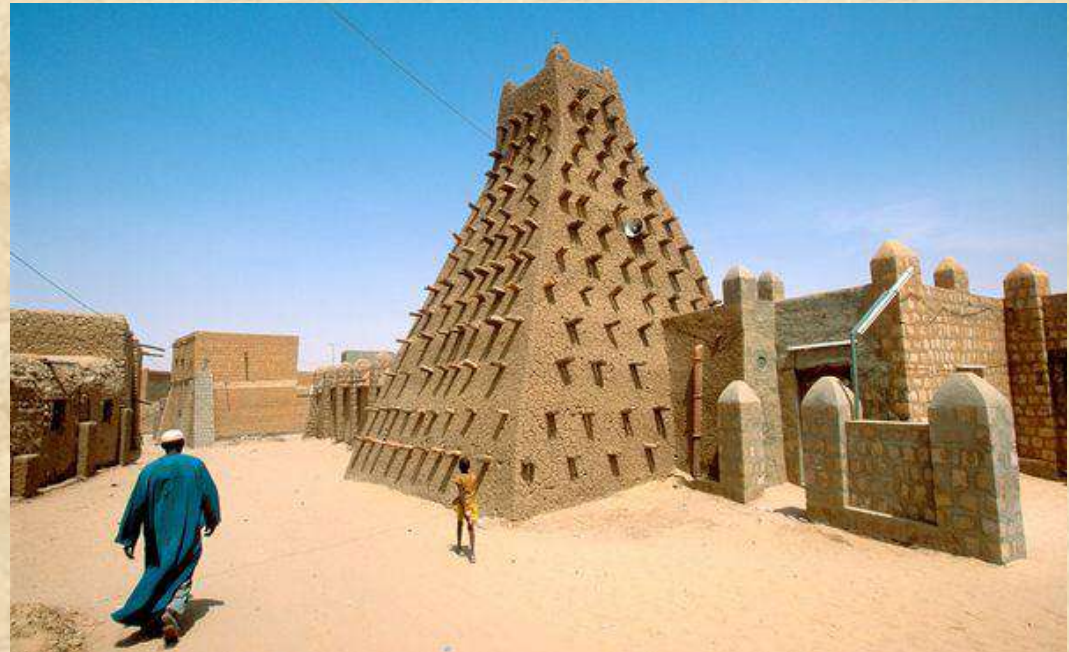
Mansa Musa

- Mali's most famous ruler was a Muslim named Mansa Musa
- Mansa Musa brought Mali to its greatest power in the 1320's
 - Mansa Musa spread Islam throughout his empire
 - He had many mosques and schools built in Mali



Mansa Musa

- Mansa Musa made Timbuktu an important trade city
- Mansa Musa is very famous for making a pilgrimage to Mecca during his reign
 - This introduced Mali and its riches to the rest of the world

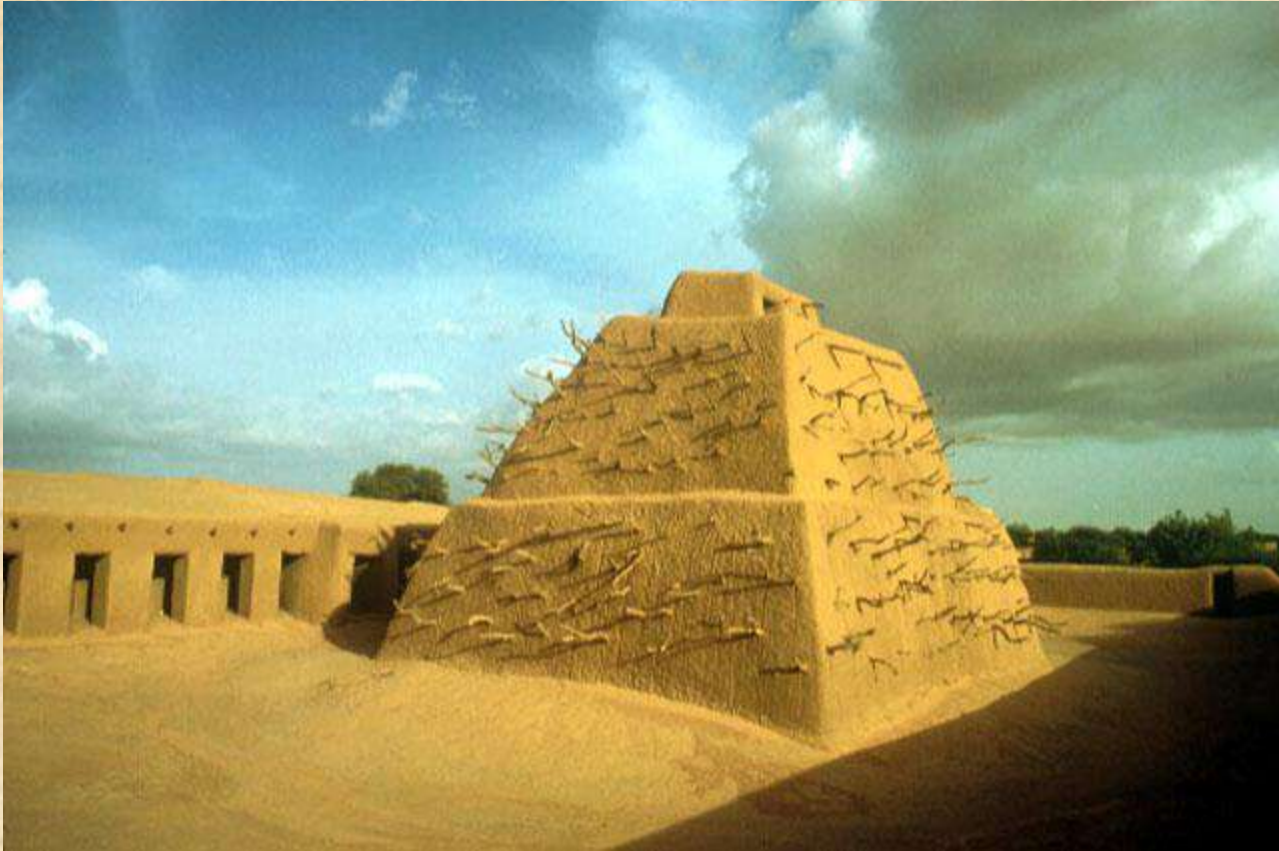


The Fall of Mali

- Mansa Musa's son Maghan took power after Musa died
 - Maghan was a weak ruler
- Invaders destroyed much of Timbuktu and weakened the empire
- More groups invaded and Mali weakened even more
- By 1500_{CE} the empire of Mali was gone



Songhai



Tomb of a King of Songhai

Songhai

- During the later years of the Empire of Mali, the Empire of Songhai was growing
- It grew powerful with trade, like Ghana and Mali
 - The capital city of Songhai was Gao
- Mansa Musa had conquered Songhai in the early 1300s
- By 1400, Songhai had rebelled against Mali and gained its independence and began its empire

Mali and Songhai



The Building of an Empire

- Songhai leaders were Muslims, so they traded with other Muslim groups in Africa
 - Trade made Songhai rich and powerful
- One of the most powerful rulers of Songhai was Sunni Ali in 1464
 - Sunni Ali organized the empire and united everyone
- Sunni Ali conquered much of the remains of Mali



Rebellion

- Sunni Ali died in 1492 and his son Sunni Baru took over
 - Sunni Baru was not Muslim
 - The people rebelled against Sunni Baru
- The leader of the rebellion was Muhammad Ture
 - Muhammad will change his name to Askia after the rebellion succeeds



Askia the Great

- Askia quickly became the leader of Songhai in 1493
 - Askia made Timbuktu a great center of learning
- Askia set up provinces throughout his empire to help run things easier
- Askia set up an army to help protect his empire



Songhai Falls to Morocco

- Morocco was a nation to the north of Songhai
- The Moroccan army invaded Songhai in 1591
 - The Moroccans had superior weapons
 - Including the arquebus, an early form of gun
- The Moroccans destroyed Gao and Timbuktu
- The fall of Songhai marks the end of empires in West Africa

