

Global Tapestry: Connections and Transformations (1200–1450 CE)

Explore the global connections, empires, trade networks, and technological advancements that transformed the world from 1200 to 1450 CE.

Global Connections and the Misconception of the 'Dark Ages'

While Western Europe faced political fragmentation during the so-called 'Dark Ages', advancements were taking place in other parts of the world. This slide explores the Islamic Golden Age, the flourishing of the Byzantine Empire, and the development of complex civilizations in the Americas, emphasizing the importance of recognizing global histories beyond Eurocentric narratives.



Introduction to Communities and Empires

960 CE

- The Song Dynasty, known for its economic and cultural prosperity.

1206 CE

Emergence of the Mongol Empire under Genghis Khan, known for its vast territorial expansion and facilitation of cross-cultural exchange along the Silk Roads.

1204 CE

Sacking of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade, leading to the collapse of the Byzantine Empire and the establishment of the Latin Empire.

C.1235 CE

Rise of the Mali Empire in West Africa, renowned for its immense wealth from the trans-Saharan gold and salt trade and the influence of Islamic culture.

C.1438 CE

Consolidation of the Inca Empire in the Andes, marked by the development of an extensive road network, sophisticated agricultural practices, and a centralized administrative system.



The Rise of Islam and Early Expansion (622– 750 CE)

The life of the Prophet Muhammad is central to the rise of Islam. Born in Mecca in 570 CE, Muhammad received the first of many divine revelations from God (Allah) through the archangel Gabriel, leading to the founding of the Islamic faith. This rapid expansion of the new religion transformed the Middle East and influenced the course of world history.

The Five Pillars of Islam

- **SHAHADA: THE DECLARATION OF FAITH IN ONE GOD (ALLAH) AND BELIEF IN THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD**
- **SALAT: THE RITUAL PRAYER PERFORMED FIVE TIMES A DAY**
- **ZAKAT: THE PRACTICE OF GIVING A PERCENTAGE OF ONE'S WEALTH TO THOSE IN NEED**
- **SAWM: THE PRACTICE OF FASTING DURING THE HOLY MONTH OF RAMADAN**
- **HAJJ: THE PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY CITY OF MECCA THAT EVERY MUSLIM MUST UNDERTAKE AT LEAST ONCE IN THEIR LIFETIME**

Expansion of Islam and the Caliphates (632-1258 CE)

THE SUNNI-SHIA SPLIT

Explores the political and religious division that occurred within Islam following the death of Prophet Muhammad, leading to the emergence of the Sunni and Shia sects.

THE UMAYYAD CALIPHATE (661-750 CE)

Examines the rise and achievements of the Umayyad dynasty, including the expansion of the Islamic Empire into North Africa, Spain, and Central Asia.

THE ABBASID CALIPHATE (750-1258 CE)

Highlights the Abbasid Caliphate's advancements in literature, science, and philosophy, as well as the establishment of Baghdad as a center of Islamic learning and culture.

THE FLOURISHING OF CÓRDOBA

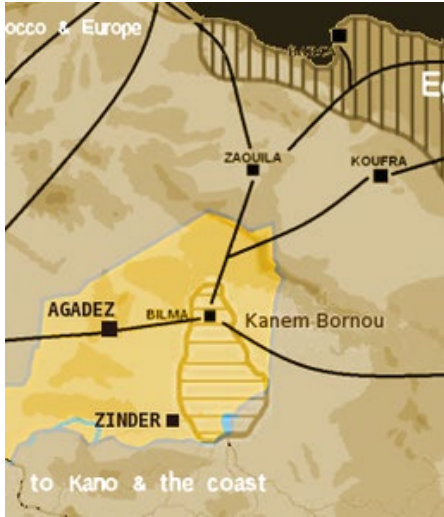
Discusses the intellectual and cultural golden age that took place in Córdoba, the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate in Spain, which became a hub of Islamic, Jewish, and Christian scholarship.



The Mongol Empire (1206–1368 CE)

The Mongol Empire, founded by the legendary Genghis Khan, rose to become the largest contiguous land empire in history. Through his strategic military campaigns, Genghis Khan conquered vast territories across Eurasia, unifying diverse peoples under Mongol rule. The Pax Mongolica, a period of relative peace and stability, facilitated an unprecedented level of trade and cultural exchange across the empire, allowing for the spread of goods, technologies, and ideas.

West Africa: Kingdoms of Mali and Ghana



TRANS-SAHARAN TRADE ROUTES MAP

A detailed map highlighting the major trans-Saharan trade routes connecting West Africa with the Islamic world, showcasing the extensive network of commerce.



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TIMBUKTU ARCHITECTURAL ILLUSTRATION

An artistic reconstruction of the historic city of Timbuktu, depicting its vibrant Islamic architecture and its role as a cultural hub for the region.



MANSA MUSA PILGRIMAGE PAINTING

A painting depicting Mansa Musa, the ruler of the Mali Empire, during his famous pilgrimage to Mecca, which had a significant global impact on the region's wealth and prominence.



SALT MINING IN THE SAHARA

An image showcasing the salt mining operations in the Saharan region, highlighting the importance of this valuable resource in the trans-Saharan trade.



GOLD NUGGETS FROM WEST AFRICA

A close-up shot of gold nuggets, representing the abundant gold deposits that fueled the wealth and prosperity of the West African kingdoms.

Global Tapestry: Connections and Transformations (1200–1450 CE)

The pre-Inca civilizations of the Andes, Chimu and Wari, developed sophisticated infrastructure and social hierarchies during this period. Chimu's elaborate irrigation systems and Wari's expansive road networks laid the foundation for the later Inca Empire's developments. Artisans played a crucial role in both societies, producing intricate pottery and engaging in terraced agriculture.





The Inca Empire: A Tapestry of Power and Innovation

The Inca Empire was a vast and sophisticated civilization that dominated much of South America during the 15th and 16th centuries. Their advanced administrative system, monumental architecture, and expansive infrastructure enabled them to govern and integrate diverse populations across a sprawling empire.

Pre-Aztec Civilizations in Mesoamerica: Toltecs and Mississippians



TOLTEC MILITARY-BASED SOCIETY



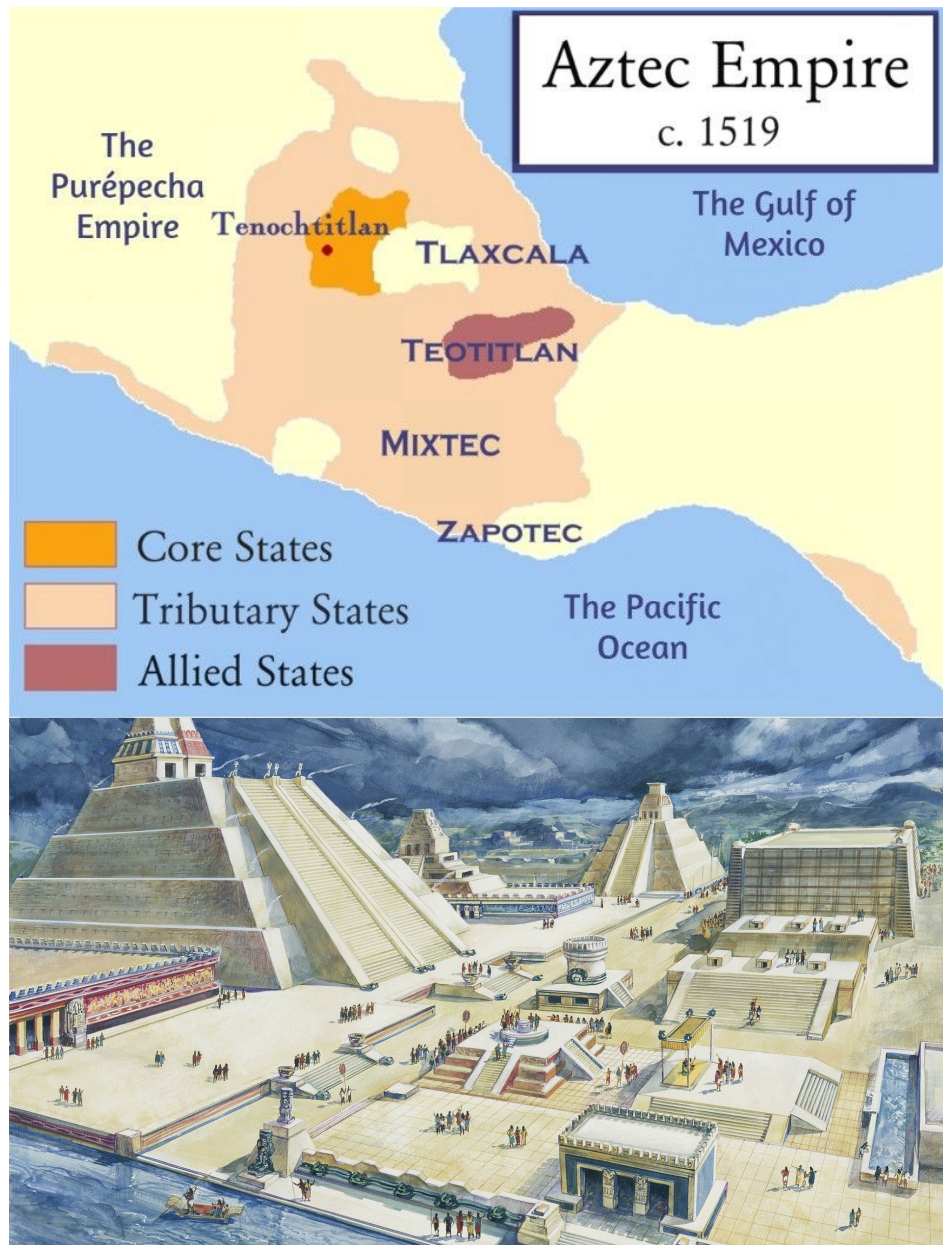
TOLTEC INFLUENCE ON THE AZTECS



MISSISSIPPIAN MOUND-BUILDING



MISSISSIPPIAN TRADE NETWORKS



Aztec Empire: Rise and Decline

The Aztec Empire, centered in the capital city of Tenochtitlán, was a powerful state in central Mexico that developed a highly structured society with a ruling elite, warrior class, and tribute-paying commoners. Their empire was built around a strategic alliance between three city-states and sustained through an extensive tribute system and innovative agricultural practices.

Global Tapestry: Connections and Transformations (1200–1450 CE)



POLYNESIAN VOYAGING CANOE

A double-hulled Polynesian voyaging canoe, with an advanced sail-and-outrigger design that enabled long-distance ocean travel across the Pacific.



ASTRONOMICAL NAVIGATION

Polynesian navigators used the stars, wave patterns, and bird migrations to guide their voyages, demonstrating remarkable celestial navigation skills.



MOAI STATUES OF RAPA NUI

The iconic Moai statues on Easter Island (Rapa Nui), carved between 1200 and 1500 CE, were used to represent ancestors and assert control over the island's resources.



POLYNESIAN RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

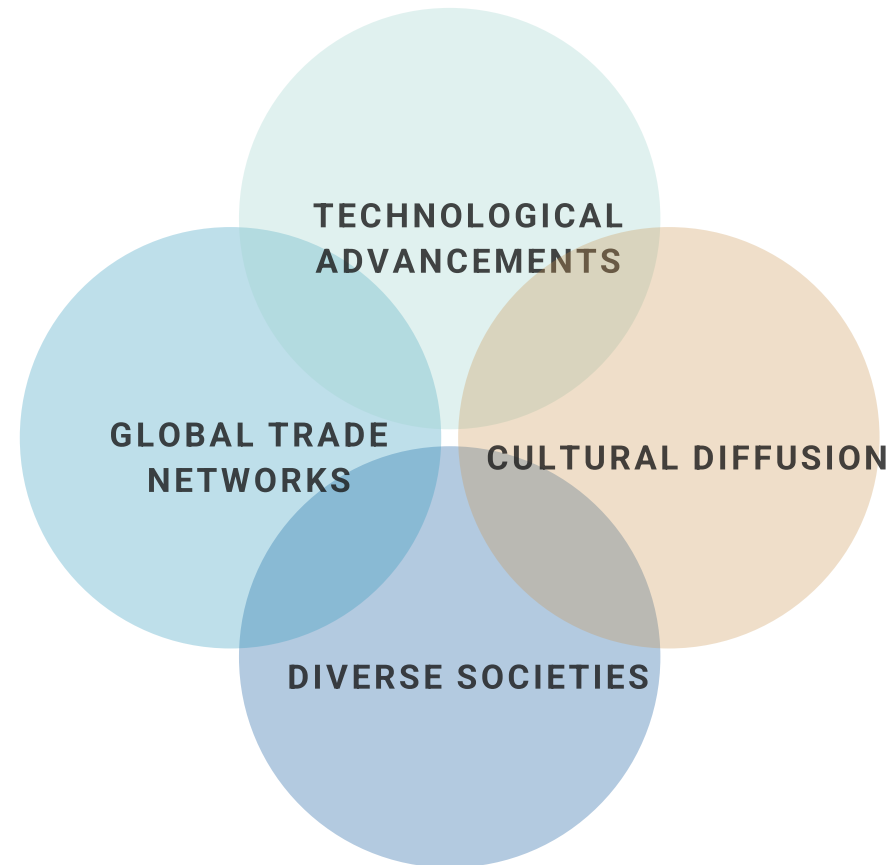
Polynesian religious practices revolved around the concept of mana, which imbued both people and objects with spiritual power, and the veneration of ancestors.

Global Tapestry: Connections and Transformations (1200–1450 CE)

The Song Dynasty (960-1279 CE) was a period of remarkable cultural and technological advancement in China. The government's implementation of a meritocratic civil service system and the dynasty's thriving trade networks fostered economic prosperity and population growth, with cities like Kaifeng and Hangzhou becoming among the largest in the world at the time.



Global Tapestry: Connections and Transformations (1200-1450 CE)



Discussion Questions

- **HOW DID DIVERSE POLITICAL SYSTEMS (EMPIRES, CITY-STATES, ETC.) SHAPE INTERACTIONS ACROSS AFRO-EURASIA, THE AMERICAS, AND THE PACIFIC BETWEEN 1200 AND 1450?**
- **WHAT ROLE DID TRADE, RELIGION, AND CONQUEST PLAY IN THE RISE AND EXPANSION OF POWERFUL EMPIRES LIKE THE ISLAMIC CALIPHATES, MONGOL EMPIRE, AND WEST AFRICAN KINGDOMS?**
- **HOW DID ADVANCED AGRICULTURE, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESS OF EMPIRES LIKE THE INCA AND AZTECS?**
- **WHAT WERE THE MAJOR IMPACTS OF THE SUNNI-SHIA DIVIDE AND ISLAMIC LEARNING CENTERS LIKE BAGHDAD ON THE POLITICAL AND INTELLECTUAL LANDSCAPE OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD?**
- **HOW DID POLYNESIAN NAVIGATION AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE SHAPE SOCIETIES ACROSS THE PACIFIC?**

Introduction to Networks of Exchange

- **INTERCONNECTED TRADE ROUTES**

Expansive trading networks that connected East Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe, facilitating the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultural practices.

- **SPREAD OF GOODS AND TECHNOLOGIES**

The movement of products like silk, spices, porcelain, and innovations such as the compass, gunpowder, and paper across these vast networks.

- **CULTURAL DIFFUSION**

The interactions between diverse civilizations along the trade routes led to the spread of religious beliefs, such as the dissemination of Buddhism and Islam.

- **SHARED INNOVATIONS**

The exchange of knowledge and techniques across these interconnected regions resulted in advancements in agriculture, architecture, and various industries.

Silk Roads (130 BCE – 1453 CE)

The Silk Roads were a vast network of trade routes connecting the East and West, facilitating the exchange of goods, technologies, and cultural ideas. Valuable commodities such as silk, porcelain, and spices were traded along these routes, while the spread of Buddhism and Islam was also facilitated by the interconnectivity of the Silk Roads.



Indian Ocean Trade (800–1500 CE)



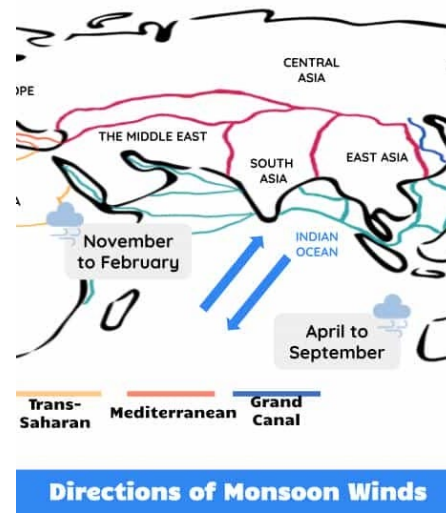
DHOW SAILING SHIP

An illustration of a traditional Dhow sailing ship used in the Indian Ocean trade network.



SWAHILI COAST ARCHITECTURE

A photograph of the distinctive Swahili architecture in a coastal city such as Zanzibar or Kilwa, reflecting the cultural exchange across the Indian Ocean.



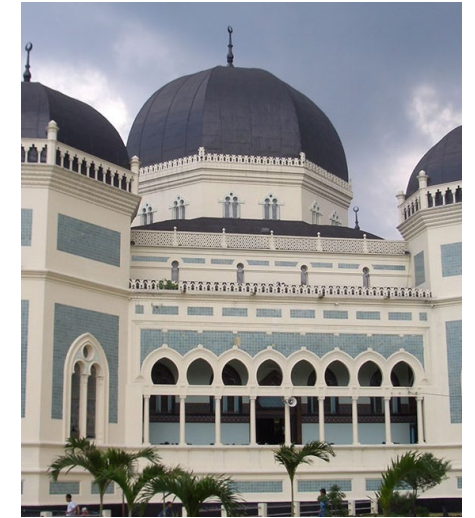
MONSOON WIND PATTERNS

A diagram showing the seasonal monsoon wind patterns that facilitated predictable and reliable trade across the Indian Ocean.



SPICE TRADE ROUTES

A map highlighting the major trade routes and hubs for the lucrative spice trade, connecting Africa, the Middle East, India, and Southeast Asia.



ISLAMIC INFLUENCE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

An image depicting the spread of Islamic architecture, such as a mosque, in Southeast Asian port cities due to the Indian Ocean trade network.

Trans-Saharan Trade (8th-17th Century)



GOLD PRODUCTION IN GHANA



SALT MINES IN SAHARAN REGIONS



ISLAMIC SCHOLARLY INFLUENCE IN TIMBUKTU



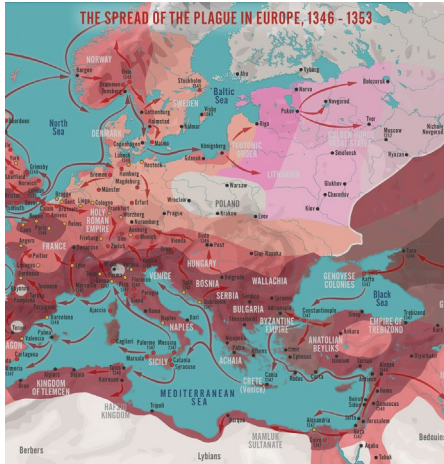
MERCHANT TRADE NETWORKS ACROSS WEST AFRICA



Polynesian Migrations and Pacific Trade

Polynesian sailors developed advanced navigation techniques using the stars, ocean swells, and bird migrations to traverse the vast Pacific Ocean. They settled distant islands like Hawaii, Easter Island, and New Zealand, establishing complex trade networks and cultural exchange across the region.

The Spread of the Black Death (1347-1351 CE)



MAP OF THE BLACK DEATH'S SPREAD

A map tracing the movement of the plague from Central Asia through trade routes to Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East.



PLAGUE-INFESTED SHIP

An illustration depicting a merchant ship harboring rats and fleas, which carried the plague-causing bacteria to port cities.



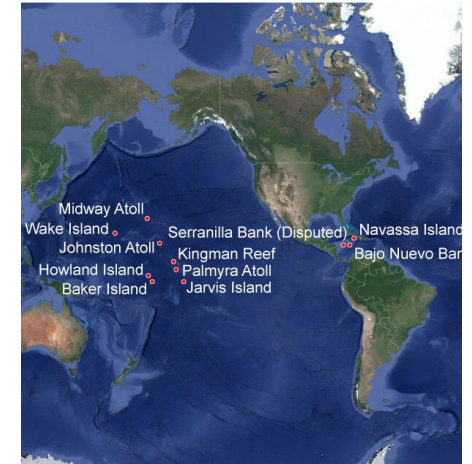
PLAGUE DOCTOR'S ATTIRE

An image of a plague doctor wearing a distinctive mask and protective clothing, attempting to treat the infected during the epidemic.



DEVASTATION IN EUROPE

A painting or engraving showing the widespread destruction and mass graves in European cities during the height of the Black Death pandemic.



UNTOUCHED PACIFIC ISLANDS

A map or illustration highlighting the regions in the Pacific and the Americas that remained largely untouched by the Black Death due to their isolation from major trade routes.



Global Tapestry: Connections and Transformations (1200-1450 CE)

The Black Death, a devastating pandemic that swept across Eurasia in the 14th century, had profound social and economic consequences. The mass mortality caused significant labor shortages, leading to the collapse of feudalism in some regions as peasants gained more leverage over landowners. Culturally and religiously, societies responded in diverse ways, with some turning to religious explanations while others sought medical cures. The impact of the plague was also reflected in the arts, as themes of death and despair became more common.

Conclusion: Trade and Its Effects on Different Regions

- **EXPANSION OF TRADE NETWORKS**

Trade networks between 1200 and 1450 CE fostered cultural exchanges, technological advancements, and religious dissemination across Afro-Eurasia.

- **SPREAD OF DEVASTATING DISEASES**

The increased connectivity led to the spread of the devastating Black Death, which killed millions in Europe, while regions like the Pacific islands and the Americas remained largely unaffected due to their geographic isolation.

- **SETTING THE STAGE FOR GLOBAL TRANSFORMATIONS**

These connections and exchanges set the stage for even greater global transformations that would occur in the following centuries.

Discussion Questions

- 1. HOW DID THE SPREAD OF THE BLACK DEATH AFFECT THE ECONOMIES AND SOCIAL STRUCTURES OF EUROPE, AND WHY WERE SOME REGIONS, LIKE THE PACIFIC AND THE AMERICAS, SPARED FROM ITS DEVASTATION?**
- 2. WHAT ROLE DID THE MONGOL EMPIRE PLAY IN FACILITATING TRADE ALONG THE SILK ROADS, AND HOW DID THEIR GOVERNANCE ENCOURAGE BOTH ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND THE SPREAD OF PLAGUE?**
- 3. HOW DID THE INDIAN OCEAN TRADE NETWORK DIFFER FROM THE SILK ROADS IN TERMS OF THE GOODS EXCHANGED AND THE ROLE OF ISLAM IN CONNECTING REGIONS? HOW DID THE EXPANSION OF TRANS-SAHARAN TRADE ROUTES TRANSFORM THE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE OF WEST AFRICA, AND WHAT WERE THE LASTING IMPACTS OF THESE CHANGES?**

Introduction to Production and Distribution

AGRICULTURAL ADVANCEMENTS

Improved farming techniques, introduction of new crops, and expansion of irrigation systems led to increased agricultural output across the world, supporting growing populations and urban centers.

URBANIZATION AND SPECIALIZATION

The expansion of trade networks encouraged the growth of cities and the specialization of production, with artisans and merchants focusing on specific goods for exchange.

SURPLUS AND EXCHANGE

The ability to produce surplus goods beyond local needs facilitated trade and the exchange of commodities, ideas, and technologies across vast distances.

TRIBUTE SYSTEMS

Powerful empires like the Mongols, Aztecs, and Inca established tribute systems, where conquered regions were required to provide goods, labor, and resources to the central authorities.

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

Developments in areas like iron production, ceramics, and paper manufacturing enabled greater efficiency and scale in the creation and distribution of goods.

The Americas: Agricultural Systems and Trade

The Americas witnessed the development of sophisticated agricultural systems and intricate trade networks during the post-classical era. The Ancestral Puebloans, an indigenous civilization in the American Southwest, implemented sustainable farming practices, utilizing advanced irrigation techniques to thrive in the harsh desert environment. Meanwhile, the Aztec Triple Alliance established a complex tribute system, where conquered territories were required to provide agricultural goods, crafts, and precious materials, contributing to the empire's economic and military power.



Song Dynasty: Commercial and Technological Advancements



CHAMPA RICE

Image of lush green rice paddies, demonstrating the high yield and productivity of the Champa rice strain introduced during the Song Dynasty.



SONG DYNASTY PORCELAIN

Vibrant and intricate porcelain vases, plates, and other ceramics produced through mass manufacturing techniques during the Song Dynasty.



SONG DYNASTY IRON PRODUCTION

Illustration of a large-scale iron smelting furnace, showcasing the advanced metallurgical techniques that enabled the mass production of iron during the Song Dynasty.



SONG DYNASTY PAPER MONEY

An image of early Chinese paper currency, demonstrating the introduction of this revolutionary financial innovation during the Song Dynasty.



Mongol Empire: Trade and Production

The Mongol Empire, under the leadership of Genghis Khan, established a vast tribute system that spanned across its territories. The Mongols encouraged production by relocating skilled artisans from conquered regions to centralized workshops, leading to a flourishing of silk, textile, and jewelry manufacture.

West Africa: Gold and Salt Production



GOLD MINING IN MALI

Image showing the intricate process of gold mining in the Malian empire, with workers extracting ore from deep shafts and using traditional techniques to refine the precious metal.



SALT CARAVANS CROSSING THE SAHARA

Depiction of the vast camel caravans that transported salt from the Saharan regions to the markets of West Africa, playing a crucial role in the trans-Saharan trade network.



TIMBUKTU, A CENTER OF GOLD AND SALT TRADE

Illustration of the bustling city of Timbuktu, a major hub for the exchange of gold and salt, where merchants from across the region would congregate to conduct their business.



MALIAN GOLD ARTIFACTS

Display of intricate gold jewelry, statues, and other artifacts that showcase the wealth and artistry of the Malian empire, enabled by the extensive gold mines within its territories.

Inca Empire: Labor Systems and Agricultural Production



INCA ROAD SYSTEM

The Inca Empire constructed an extensive network of roads spanning over 14,000 miles, facilitating the movement of goods, armies, and people throughout the empire.



INCA TERRACED FARMING

The Inca adapted to the steep Andean slopes by building complex systems of irrigation and stone-walled terraces, maximizing arable land and allowing them to grow crops like maize, quinoa, and potatoes.



INCA MIT'A SYSTEM

The Inca employed the Mit'a system, a form of state-controlled labor in which citizens provided service to the empire in lieu of paying taxes, used for large-scale construction projects.

Aztec Empire (1428–1521 CE): Tribute and Agricultural Production



AZTEC TRIBUTE SYSTEM

An Aztec tribute collector demands goods from a conquered people, showcasing the complex tributary system that provided the Aztec capital with resources.



CHINAMPAS OF TENOCHTITLAN

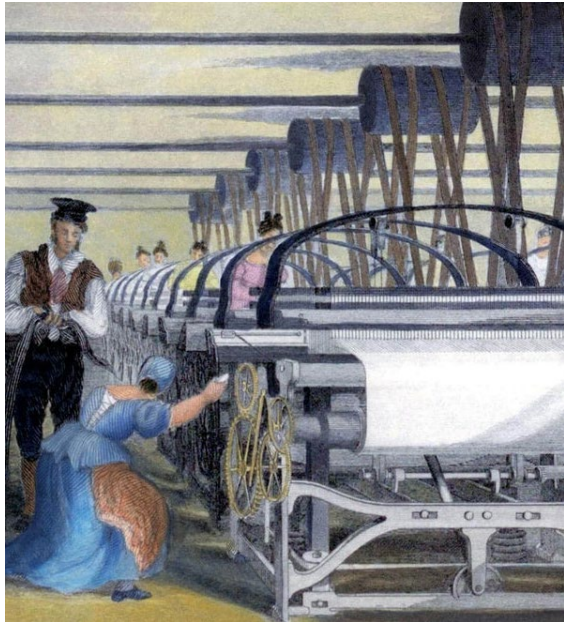
Intricate man-made floating gardens, known as chinampas, surround the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, allowing for highly productive agricultural output.



AZTEC WARRIOR

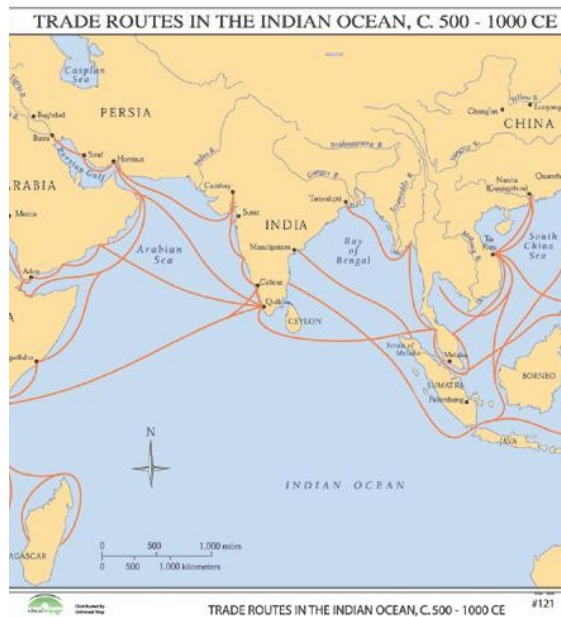
A fierce Aztec warrior, adorned in traditional regalia, represents the military prowess that allowed the Aztec Empire to expand and dominate the region.

India's Role in the Indian Ocean Trade



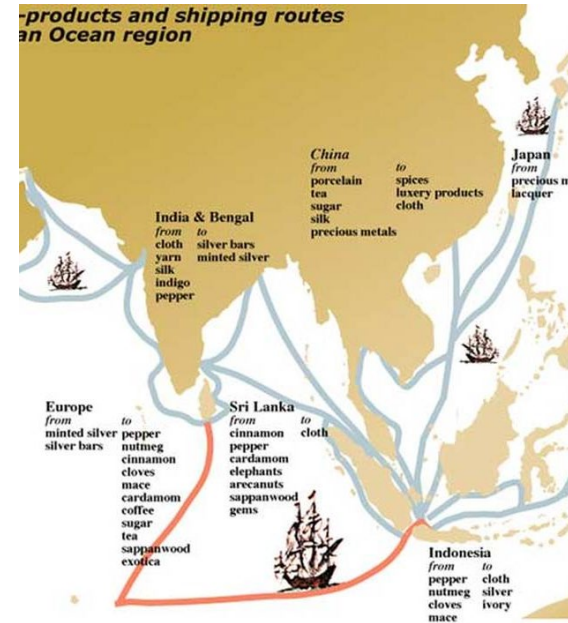
INDIAN COTTON TEXTILES

Ornate and intricate cotton textiles from Gujarat, India, were highly sought after across Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East.



SPICE TRADING IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

Exotic spices from Southeast Asia were traded for Indian cotton fabrics, facilitating the exchange of goods across the Indian Ocean.



INDIAN OCEAN TRADE ROUTES

Well-established maritime trade routes connected India to major hubs in Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, enabling the exchange of goods and ideas.



TEXTILE PRODUCTION IN GUJARAT

The textile industry in the Indian state of Gujarat became a major center for the production and export of fine cotton and dyed fabrics.

English Wool Trade (1200–1500 CE)



WOOL FLEECE

Depiction of a sheep and its wool fleece, a key raw material for the English wool trade.



FLEMISH WEAVING

Flemish weavers processing wool into high-quality cloth, a key step in the English wool trade.



MERCHANT GUILD MEMBERS

Members of a powerful merchant guild, which regulated the production and sale of wool in medieval Europe.



WOOL EXPORT LEDGER

An accounting ledger recording the export of English wool, a major economic driver in the medieval period.

Economic Transformation Across Regions



SPECIALIZED PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

Empires like the Song Dynasty, Aztecs, and Inca developed advanced agricultural, manufacturing, and trade systems to meet the needs of growing populations and expanding trade networks.



LUXURY GOODS AND WEALTH CREATION

The production of luxury goods like Song Dynasty porcelain and the accumulation of wealth by rulers like Mansa Musa of Mali demonstrated the economic power generated by these regional trade networks.



MASSIVE LABOR MOBILIZATION

The Inca Mit'a system allowed for the mobilization of large labor forces to construct infrastructure like roads and terrace farming, facilitating greater state control and economic integration.

FROM 1200 TO 1450 CE, THE WORLD WITNESSED REMARKABLE ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS ACROSS REGIONS, AS EMPIRES DEVELOPED SOPHISTICATED PRODUCTION AND TRADE SYSTEMS THAT GENERATED UNPRECEDENTED WEALTH AND POWER. THESE INNOVATIONS WOULD SHAPE GLOBAL ECONOMIES FOR CENTURIES TO COME.

Discussion Questions

How did the tribute systems in the **Inca** and **Aztec** empires enable them to manage vast territories and support large populations?

What role did technological innovations, such as the **compass** and **smelting techniques**, play in transforming production and distribution across **Afro-Eurasia**?

How did the **Song Dynasty's** innovations in agriculture and porcelain production contribute to its economic dominance during this period?

In what ways did the **wool trade** shape the economic and social structure of **medieval England**, and how did it connect **Europe** to broader trade networks?

Additional Considerations - The Role of Women

While the societies of the Inca, Aztec, and Polynesian regions varied in their political and economic structures, they shared a common theme - the significant role of women. Women in these civilizations often held influential positions in religious rituals, economic activities, and even leadership roles, demonstrating their prominence and valued contributions.





Conclusion - A World of Connection and Transformation (1200-1450 CE)

The interconnected world of the 13th to 15th centuries was marked by remarkable transformations, as diverse civilizations and empires adapted to environmental challenges and expanded through global trade, technological innovations, and labor systems. This era laid the groundwork for the early modern period and the era of globalization that followed.

Discussion Questions

Comparing and Contrasting: How did the various empires and civilizations discussed in the lecture—such as the Mongol, Islamic, Aztec, and Inca—differ in their approaches to governance, economic systems, and cultural practices? What were the common challenges faced by these empires, and how did they respond to them? In what ways did these empires interact with each other, and what were the consequences of these interactions?

Analyzing Change and Continuity: How did the period between 1200 and 1450 CE represent both a time of continuity and change? What aspects of life remained relatively stable, and what underwent significant transformation? What were the key factors that drove these changes, and how did they impact different societies and regions? To what extent did the events and developments of this period lay the groundwork for the modern world?

Evaluating Perspectives: How does a global perspective challenge the traditional Eurocentric view of the "Dark Ages"? What are the limitations of relying solely on written sources for understanding the past, and how can oral histories and archaeological evidence provide alternative perspectives? How do different historical narratives shape our understanding of the past, and why is it important to critically evaluate these narratives?

Connecting to the Present: What are some of the legacies of the post-classical era that continue to influence the world today? How do the patterns of globalization and cultural exchange that emerged during this period resonate with contemporary experiences? What lessons can we learn from the successes and failures of past civilizations as we navigate the challenges of the 21st century?

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