



# 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.

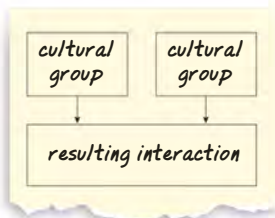
### TERMS & NAMES

- 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.

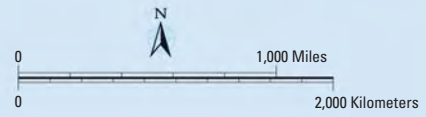
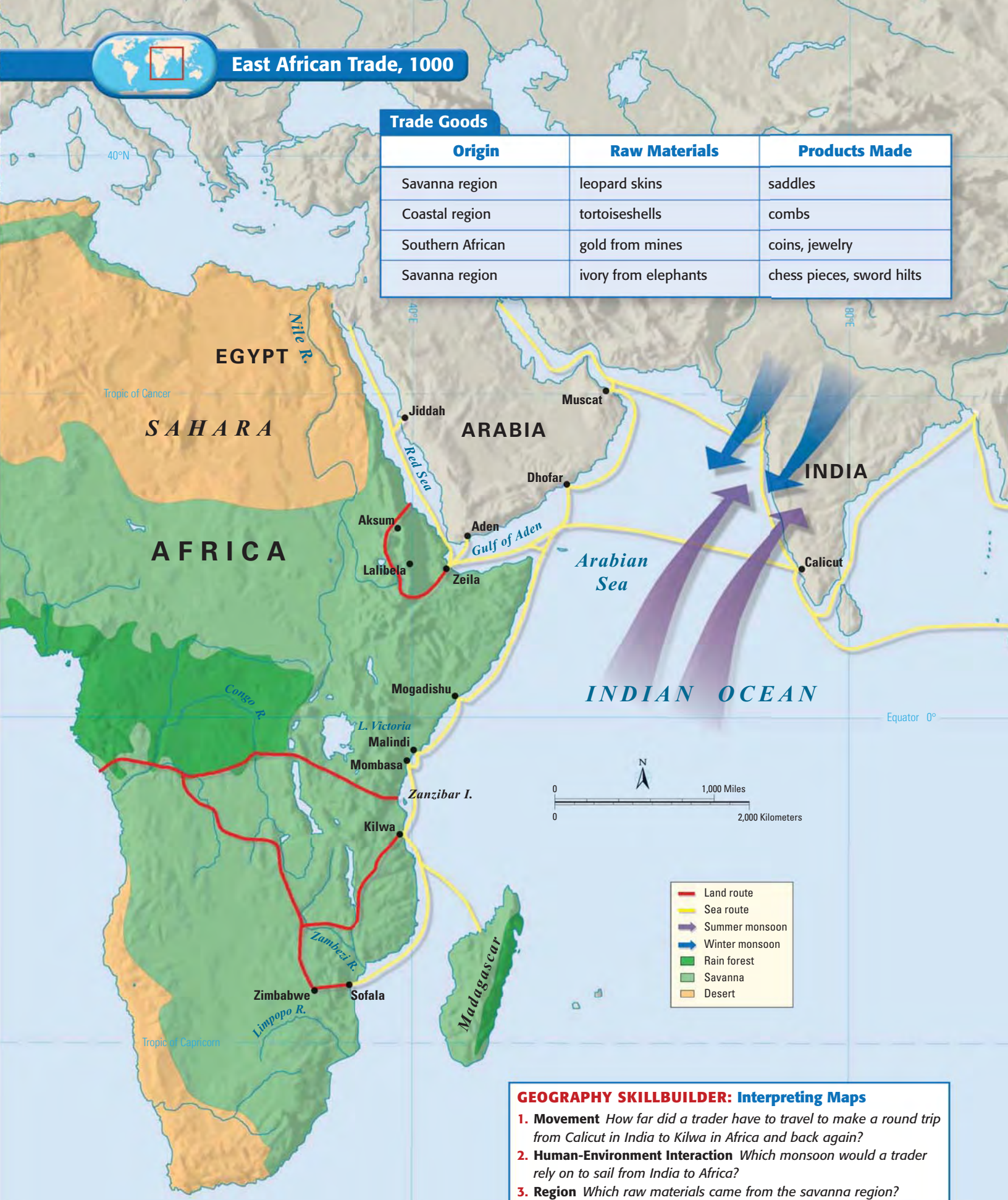
**The City-State of Kilwa** In 1331, Ibn Battuta visited Kilwa. He admired the way that its Muslim rulers and merchants lived. Rich families lived in fine houses of coral and stone. They slept in beds inlaid with ivory and their meals were served on porcelain. Wealthy Muslim women wore silk robes and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



- Land route
- Sea route
- Summer monsoon
- Winter monsoon
- Rain forest
- Savanna
- Desert

**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?

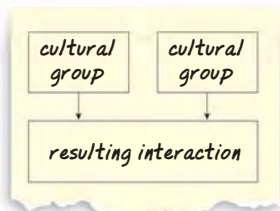
**SECTION 3 ASSESSMENT**

**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**

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

**CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING**

6. **COMPARING** Compare the Portuguese who arrived in East Africa with the rulers of the Mutapa Empire.
7. **SYNTHESIZING** What were some of the effects of East African trade on different cultural groups?
8. **DRAWING CONCLUSIONS** How is Swahili an example of cultural interaction?
9. **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*