

Name: _____

Period: _____

Characteristics of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai

Define the characteristics of the three empires as (P) Political, (E) Economic, or (S) Social. On the back organize the characteristics for each empires. Summarize the characteristics if needed. H.O. In your journal, compare the three empires. How were they similar? How were they different? Write a paragraph explaining these similarities and differences.

Ghana - 500-1240 CE

- Had to trade for salt _____
- Relied on camels for trade _____
- Did not have direct access to much gold, but was able to acquire massive wealth through controlling trade _____
- Slavery was common _____
- Matrilineal society _____
- Powerful king, who often was seen as a god to enhance his power _____
- Wealth of the Empire attracted many diverse visitors from other regions, leading to many different languages spoken throughout _____
- Army of over 20,000 soldiers ready to defend and expand the size of Ghana at all times _____
- Placed heavy taxes on goods travelling across trade routes in their region _____
- Many different types of religions throughout, but predominantly Islamic _____
- The Capital, Kumbi Saleh, was a beautiful symbol of the wealth of the empire, with gold and stone structures. _____

Mali - 1241-1359 CE

- Wealth built on the salt and gold trade. Had access to both in their empire naturally. _____
- Matrilineal society _____
- Relied on camels for trade _____
- Instead of written history, storytellers called griots were in charge of accurately memorizing and retelling the stories of the history of Mali _____
- Slavery was common _____
- Many different languages spoken throughout _____
- Books were the symbol of Mali, and the trade of books gave Mali a large amount of wealth. _____
- Expanded in size through trade relationships and military conquest, growing the empire west to the Atlantic Ocean _____
- Mostly Islamic _____
- The Capital, Timbuktu, was full of mosques, libraries, palaces, universities _____
- Taxes on trade made empire very wealthy, perhaps the wealthiest of all African Kingdoms _____
- Main purpose of military was to protect traders and merchants _____
- Mansa Musa, the richest man ever, is the most remembered King of Mali _____
- A special style of architecture called Sudanic Architecture was common in Mali, and can still be seen today in the Great Mosque of Jenne _____

Songhai - 1360- 1600 CE

- Used Cavalry (soldiers on horseback) to expand north and east along trade routes _____
- Mostly Islamic, but traditional polytheistic religions also existed _____
- Salt and Gold Trade through the Sahara Desert allowed for massive wealth, relied on camels for trade _____
- Muhammad Ture (also known as emperor Askia Muhammad) was a very successful ruler that allowed them to expand more than anyone before them _____
- Made wealth not only from trading goods, but the tax of trade as well _____
- Diverse languages spoken throughout _____
- Further grew the emphasis of education and Islam by building more mosques, libraries, and universities _____
- Powerful Navy and Army – over 40,000 troops on horseback and camelback _____
- Matrilineal society _____
- Slavery was common _____
- Songhai was divided into smaller “provinces” or states, with individual rulers over each, making the empire easier to control _____

Ghana - 500-1240 CE

Political	Economic	Social

Mali - 1241-1359 CE

Political	Economic	Social

Songhai - 1360- 1600 CE

Political	Economic	Social

Name _____

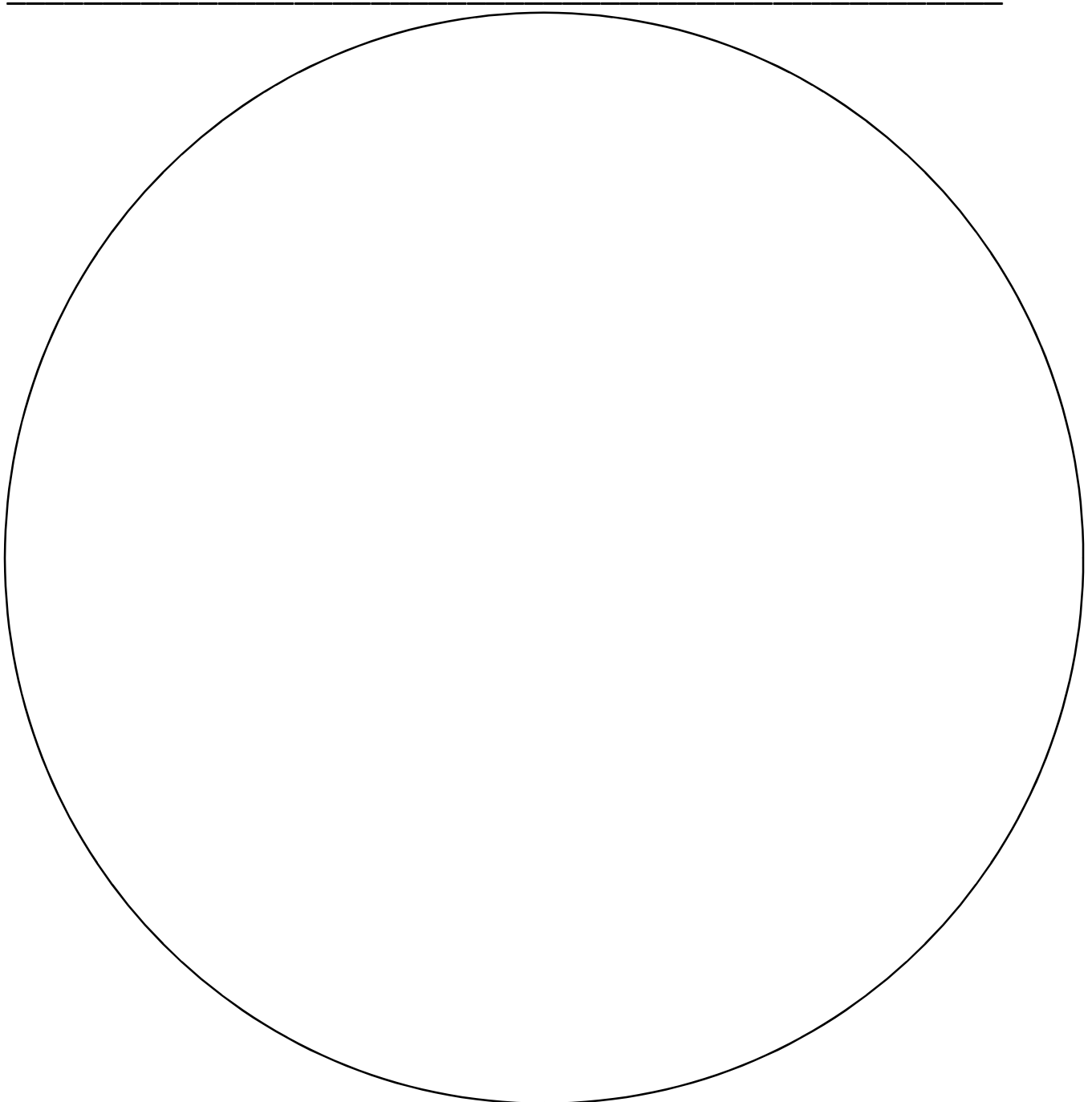
Period _____

Create a seal that represents one of the three major empires of Sub-Sahara Africa. This seal must include the following:

- **Represent 1 major political characteristic of the empire - 20 points**
- **Represent 1 major social characteristic of the empire - 20 points**
- **Represent 1 major economic characteristic of the empire - 20 points**

Total - 60 points

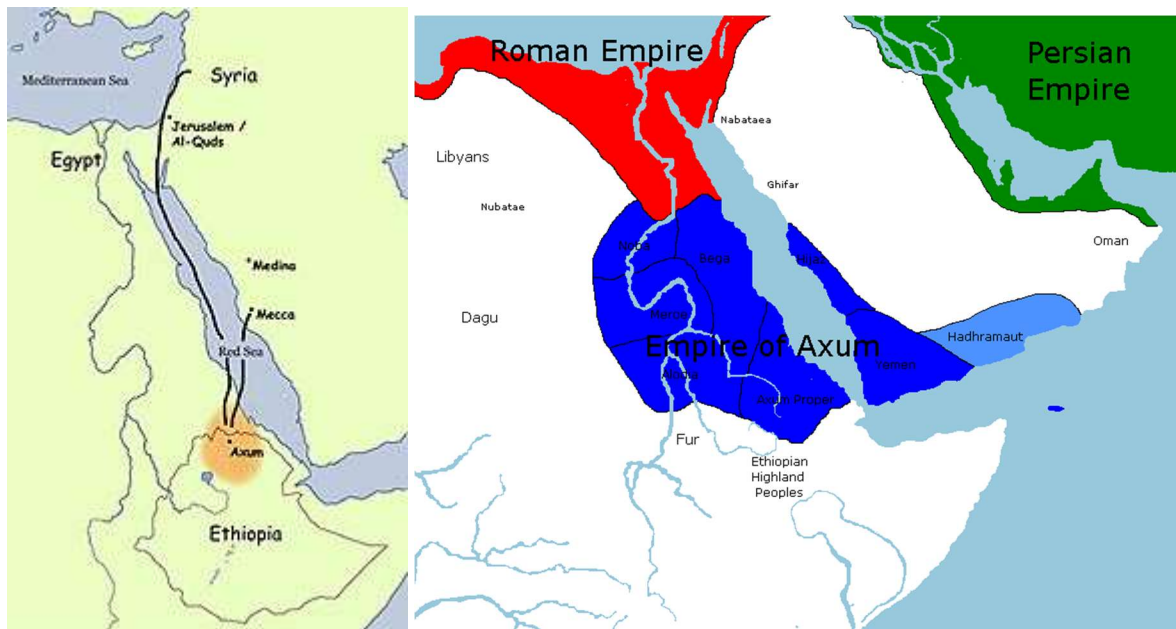
The Seal Of



King Ezana of Axum

During the Roman Empire, starting around the year 300 CE, the Roman Empire sent Christian missionaries along the Red Sea trade route to Yemen and Ethiopia. The goal of these missionaries was to convert, or convince people to become Christians. Around the year 400 CE, a man and two young boys traveled on a trade ship as missionaries, and followed the merchants to India. Their goal was to stop in Ethiopia on the return voyage and attempt to convert the people of the current empire in Ethiopia, Axum, to Christianity. On the way back home, the ship stopped at a Red Sea port of Axum, one of the most successful trade cities in East Africa. The Ethiopians distrusted the Romans and killed everyone on board except the two boys. The boys were allowed to live, and became friends with a young boy close to them in age in Axum that was named Ezana. As Ethiopia continued on, Ezana became king of Axum and converted all of Ethiopia to Christianity, and set up Christian communities throughout the Empire. King Ezana ordered the destruction of the old temples, and replaced them with churches covered in intricate biblical paintings.

Christianity at first strengthened Axum's trade relationships with Europe and the Roman Empire. However, as the Roman Empire fell, and as Islam slowly took over all of North/Sub-Saharan Africa in the 600s, Christianity eventually led to decreased trade with the rest of now Islamic Africa. Although Axum eventually lost its wealth, and fell due to civil wars, even today, Ethiopia remains a Christian region, largely because of King Ezana and his actions. Historians argue that the foundational unifying beliefs of Christianity is part of what made the religion and culture survive even after the decline of the empire of Axum.



Name/Date _____

Instructions: Identify the following characteristics of King Ezana using the excerpt on the back.

Who he was...

➤ _____

What he changed...

➤ _____

➤ _____

➤ _____

Why he changed it...

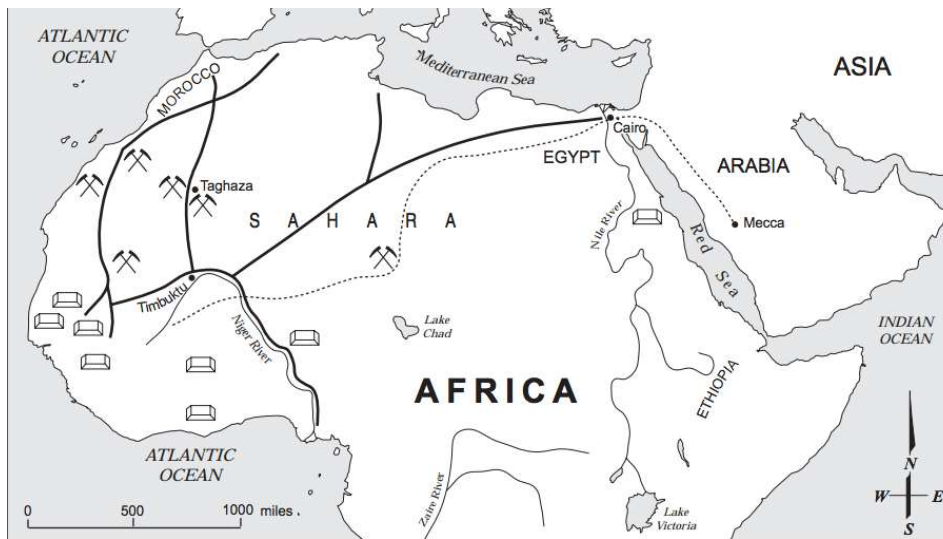
➤ _____

How/Why did Christianity come to Ethiopia?

Mansa Musa of Mali

Of all the rulers of the powerful Empires of the African Middle Ages, Mansa Musa is remembered as the wealthiest, and the greatest. Mansa, meaning king, was a title given to Mansa Musa during his rule from 1312 to 1337. During this time, he managed to double the size of the empire of Mali, extending its rule all the way to the Atlantic Ocean. Mansa Musa had converted to Islam earlier in his life. Islam was known to Mali and Ghana, as it made its way slowly and peacefully throughout Africa across trade routes, over hundreds of years. After spending time strengthening his armies, growing his empire, and strengthening trade, he felt secure enough to follow the 5th pillar of Islam, and make his *hajj*, or pilgrimage, to Mecca. However, Mansa Musa was no ordinary person, so he took a massive entourage of soldiers, servants, and other officials. It is believed that over 60,000 people followed Mansa Musa on his journey to Mecca. To make sure he had spending money for the journey, Mansa Musa had his servants and almost 5,000 camels carry nearly 12,000 tons of gold for the journey.

As he and his massive travel party moved through Africa, Europe, and the Middle East, Mansa Musa built new trade relationships with cities, and used this to further increase his wealth. As he returned to Timbuktu, the capital city of Mali, Mansa Musa brought back scholars, architects, and teachers who helped increase the influence and presence of Islam in his empire. He built mosques, opened Islamic schools and universities, and built massive libraries. By the time Mansa Musa was done with it, Timbuktu was one of the most diverse, educated, and wealthy cities in the world, attracting visitors from all stretches of Africa, Europe, and Asia.



Left: Map showing the travel route of Mansa Musa on his pilgrimage to Mecca

Legend

- Mansa Musa's route to Mecca, 1324
- trade route
- ⚒ salt mine
- 🏠 gold mine



Left: Palace built in Mali by Mansa Musa in Timbuktu

Instructions: Complete the following activity using the excerpt on the back.

Who he was...

➤ _____

Where he went & what he took with him...

➤ _____

What he changed...

➤ _____

➤ _____

➤ _____

➤ _____

➤ _____

How/why did Islam come to Mali?

Fall of Ghana – 500-1240 CE

The first reason for the fall of Ghana was the way in which the empire was organized. At its peak it was made up of many states and peoples, and did not have political and cultural unity. The different ethnic groups such as the Soninke, Susu, Serer, Berber and Tuclor, each had its own language, culture, and religion, and therefore had a lot of disagreements on the right religion to believe in, the best language to use, and the best traditions to adhere to.

Areas that were conquered by Ghana were left to operate under their own traditional rules and were only expected to pay taxes and additional taxes to the kings in times of war. As these conquered states and peoples were always anxious to regain their independence, civil wars occurred regularly, with groups always challenging the authority of the king. This was what happened from the second half of the 1100s onwards owing first to an invasion by Berber warriors from the Mauritanian Sahara, and secondly to the rise of two strong new kingdoms to the south, first the Susu Kingdom and then the empire of Mali. The Empire of Mali successfully took over the Empire of Ghana, because of their weakness from internal rebellion by 1241 CE

Fall of Mali – 1241-1359 CE

By 1359, Mali was divided by a civil war, resulting from disagreements due to the vast diversity of the Empire. Invaders from outside of the kingdom also posed a threat to the survival of Mali. Many groups that had stumbled across trade routes going from Mali into the Arab/Islamic Empire to the North came to discover the massive amount of wealth in gold and salt that was being traded, and realized how wealthy Mali was. This provided incentive for several groups to invade Mali for its wealth, including the kingdom of Songhai.

Because of its overall large size, Mali was difficult to protect. Its wealth attracted invasion from outsiders, and the Kingdom of Mali fell to the power of the Songhai by the 1500s.

Fall of Songhai – 1360- 1600 CE

Into the 1500s, as Europe and Northern Africa became well aware of the massive amount of gold in Africa, invasion of Songhai became a goal of many empires. The Moroccans sent a first wave of 10,000 camels, and 4000 soldiers through the Sahara desert, and they followed with 2500 soldiers carrying muskets(early guns) to defeat a massive Songhai army of over 40,000. Songhai had not yet gotten the technology of guns, making their massive army weaker than a smaller, more advanced Moroccan army.

This great empire was weakened by internal conflicts caused by disagreements over many aspects of society including differences in religion, language, and who should be in charge. If it were not for their lack of unity, they may have been able to successfully defend from Morocco.

Activity Instructions: Using the information above, take notes on pg. 33 in your journal about the fall of each of the West African Empires. You will need to identify as many details as possible that led to its decline!