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| **2.** [**The High Postclassical Period, 1000–1500**](http://www.bartleby.com/67/toc3.html#s3.1.2) |
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| The emerging networks involved different types of interactions, ranging from the exchange of scientific ideas and commercial goods to religious conversions and military conquests. These laid the foundations for more global integration by 1500. **Improvements in navigation** facilitated some expansions. They included the **magnetic compass**, in use on Chinese ships by 1100 and on Arab ships soon after; and development of more **accurate maps** by the Arabs. | *1* |
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| **a.** [**Major Interregional Expansions**](http://www.bartleby.com/67/toc3.html#s3.1.2.6) |  |
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| **INTERREGIONAL EURASIAN EMPIRES**. Central Asian peoples created a series of great conquest empires. The **SELJUK SULTANATE** emerged as a part of the migrations of Turkish peoples into the Middle East. Seljuks conquered the eastern provinces of the **Abbasid Caliphate** in the 11th century, proclaiming themselves the protectors of the caliphs and **Sunni Islam**, and following their victory over the **Byzantine Empire** at Manzikert in 1071 (See [1071](http://www.bartleby.com/67/500.html#c3p02329)), they took control of Anatolia. Although the extended Seljuk Sultanate lasted only from 1037 to 1092, Turkish soldiers became the ruling elite in many Muslim lands. | *2* |
| The **MONGOL EMPIRE** was the largest of the central Asian empires. It began with the conquests of **Chinggis Khan** (c. 1170–1227) (See [1206](http://www.bartleby.com/67/374.html#c3p00944)), and by the time of his grandsons' rule, it had become a network of large states. One grandson, **KHUBILAI KHAN** (r. 1260–94), established the **Yuan dynasty**, which controlled China until 1368, although expeditions to conquer **Japan** (1274 and 1280), Vietnam, and Java failed. A second grandson, **HULEGU** (r. 1256–65), established the **ILKHAN EMPIRE** (1256–1335) in the Middle East (See [1265–1335](http://www.bartleby.com/67/305.html#c3p00320)) and brought an end to the **Abbasid Caliphate** with the conquest of Baghdad in 1258. Mongol expansion was stopped in Syria in 1260 by **MAMLUKS** from Egypt. The central Asian territories were under the control of **Djagatai** (d. 1241) and were the basis for later Mongol-Turkish states. In the Far West, most Russian states, including **Kiev** and **Moscow**, came under the control of the khans of the **GOLDEN HORDE**, whose descendants ruled parts of Russia until the 18th century. Invasions of Poland and Hungary brought devastation but no permanent occupation. The fact that Mongols did not rule the Ukraine and the Baltic regions encouraged those areas to distinguish themselves from Russia. The khans of the Golden Horde converted to **Islam** in 1257, and the Ilkhan ruler **Ghazan Khan** became Muslim in 1295. For almost two centuries, Mongol rulers provided a vast domain within which trade flourished and ideas and technologies were exchanged across much of Asia and Europe. However, Mongol leaders were unable to create effectively centralized control, and the Mongol world gradually disintegrated. | *3* |
| **TIMUR-I LANG** (r. 1360–1405) (See [1398–99](http://www.bartleby.com/67/334.html#c3p00639)) (See [1405](http://www.bartleby.com/67/376.html#c3p00972)) created the last great central Asian conquest empire, which controlled most of the territories of the **Ilkhans** and Djagatai's successors. However, the empire collapsed with his death. | *4* |
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| **1000–1400** |  |
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| **EARLY EUROPEAN EXPANSIONS**. The postclassical states in Europe attempted a number of interregional expansion efforts. (Irish monks had discovered Iceland in 790, and **Erik the Red** discovered Greenland in 981.) **SCANDINAVIANS** made some of the earliest efforts to expand, across the North Atlantic. Permanent settlements were established in Iceland, and by the 11th century communities were established for a time in Greenland and some people had traveled even farther west. | *5* |
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| **1000** |  |
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| Leif Ericsson driven off course to Newfoundland (which he called Vinland). | *6* |
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| **1003–6** |  |
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| **Thorfinn Karlsefni**, with three ships, explored parts of the North American coast. Contacts definitely continued until 1189, perhaps until 1347, by which point Greenland's settlements were in decline (See [Scandinavia](http://www.bartleby.com/67/426.html#c3p01463)). | *7* |
| **TEUTONIC KNIGHTS**, a Christian military order, provided leadership for an eastward expansion of warriors and farmers, changing the character of northeast Europe. | *8* |
| **THE RECONQUISTA** (reconquest) (See [1212, July 16](http://www.bartleby.com/67/475.html#c3p02098)) of the Iberian Peninsula by Christians from the Muslims increased in intensity by the 11th century, and continued until the final Muslim defeat in 1492. | *9* |
| **THE CRUSADES** (1095–1291) were the efforts led by the Catholic Church to take the Middle East (See [The Crusades](http://www.bartleby.com/67/505.html#c3p02377))—especially the Holy Land and Jerusalem—from Muslims. Although western European knights ruled Jerusalem for almost a century, after a number of formally proclaimed Crusades, Crusader control in the Holy Land came to an end in the 13th century. The Crusades had an important impact in that they intensified commercial and cultural contacts, but they did not reflect any distinctive European power. | *10* |
| **Isolated efforts to explore the Atlantic** were launched from Portugal, Spain, and Italy. 1270: the Portuguese began to explore the west coast of Africa. 1291: the Vivaldo brothers from Genoa sailed into the Atlantic seeking a western route to “the Indies”; did not return. 1340–41: the Portuguese rediscovered the **Canary Islands** (assigned to Spain after conflicts, by **Treaty of Alcaçovas**, 1480). 1351: Genoese sailors may have reached the Azores. 1360s: regular expeditions from Barcelona were made along the northwest African coast. Technological limits prevented further activity until after 1430. Other contacts with Africa: papal representatives sent to Ethiopia, 1316; Ethiopian delegations visited Venice, beginning in 1402, to discuss alliance against Muslims. | *11* |
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| **1368–1500** |  |
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| **CHINESE EXPANSION**. The Yuan (Mongol) dynasty was defeated by an antiforeign revolution that established the **MING DYNASTY** (1368–1644). Early Ming rulers worked to reestablish Chinese dominance in the areas of long-standing Chinese interests and influence, such as Korea, Vietnam, Tibet, and central Asia. In addition, in 1405–33, Ming rulers sponsored a series of major commercial expeditions led by **CHENG HO (Zheng He)** (See [1405–33](http://www.bartleby.com/67/376.html#c3p00973)). Great Chinese fleets sailed as far as East Africa and the Middle East, establishing the potential for regular, Chinese-dominated trade throughout the Indian Ocean. However, the emperor ordered the halt of the expeditions by 1433. Nonofficial Chinese merchant activity continued in Southeast Asia, where Chinese commercial communities became an important force. | *12* |
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| **1000–1500** |  |
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| **ISLAMIC EXPANSION** continued throughout the Eastern Hemisphere. **Turkish peoples and sultanates** were important vehicles for this expansion. Although the **Seljuk sultans** were defeated, other sultanates were established, creating a belt of states controlled by mercenary military establishments identified with Islam. The **OTTOMAN SULTANATE** (See [The Ottoman Empire](http://www.bartleby.com/67/309.html#c3p00366)), established in the thirteenth century, gained control over most of northern Africa, the eastern Arab world, Anatolia, and much of the Balkan Peninsula by the early 16th century. The Muslim Mongol rulers in Russia and Persia confirmed the military-style Muslim state in those regions, and the **DELHI SULTANATE** (1206–1526) (See [1206–66](http://www.bartleby.com/67/331.html#c3p00606)) was the major Muslim state in India. Non-Turkish sultanates developed as combinations of Muslim and local monarchical traditions throughout Southeast Asia. | *13* |
| **WEST AFRICAN MUSLIM STATES** followed the pattern of combining Islamic and local traditions. Islamic expansion in the region was confirmed by a sequence of major states, beginning with the conversion of the rulers of **Ghana** in the 10th century (See [500–800](http://www.bartleby.com/67/344.html#c3p00725)), followed by **MALI** in the 13th century. The next state in the sequence was the **SONGHAY EMPIRE** (emerging in the 14th century and ending in 1591), whose leaders took the title of *askia,* or military commander. | *14* |
| **EXPANSION THROUGH MISSIONARIES AND TRADERS**. The major means by which Islam expanded beyond the ruling elites in societies outside of the Middle East was through the activities of **merchants**, who carried their faith abroad, along with their products. From the South China Sea and the India Ocean basin to sub-Saharan Africa, merchants were often the first contact between local peoples and Islam. An important means for combining local and Islamic traditions was the development of **SUFISM**, the Islamic form of mystical piety (See [950–1300](http://www.bartleby.com/67/300.html#c3p00264)). Sufism provided the basis for **brotherhoods** that combined popular piety with organizations for social cohesion. Sufi teachers were the major missionary force in the Islamic frontier areas. Great commercial cities on the East African coast, in central Asia, and on the islands of Southeast Asia became special centers for the popular expansion of Islam. | *15* |
| The Islamic world more than doubled in size between the 10th-century decline of the Abbasid Caliphate and the early 16th century. This was largely the result of the activities of Sufis, Muslim merchants, and sultans. | *16* |
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| **1400–1550** |  |
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| **LATER EUROPEAN EXPANSIONS**. By 1439 **Portugal controlled the Azores** and granted land to colonists; Spain soon did the same in the Madeiras and (1480) the Canaries (previously, the islands were inhabited by hunter-gatherers). Both countries imported European plants, weapons, and diseases, set up **sugar plantations** for exports to Europe, and brought in **slaves from northwestern Africa** as workers, foreshadowing later developments in the Americas. | *17* |
| Western European states began larger efforts at expansion in the 15th century. The new national monarchies of **PORTUGAL** and **SPAIN** played leading roles in supporting maritime expeditions for commercial and crusading purposes. **Developing European naval technologies**, utilizing rigid hulls and multiple masts with adjustable sails, made transoceanic travel possible in the Atlantic. Such ships were also able to carry cannons to give them extra firepower. Contacts with Asia gave Europeans knowledge of the **compass** and explosive powder. Motivation for expansions included fear of the new Ottoman Empire and the resultant desire to find independent trade routes, and an unfavorable balance of trade with Asia. | *18* |
| **PORTUGAL** began a major program of oceanic exploration and trade under the leadership of **PRINCE HENRY THE NAVIGATOR** (1394–1460).

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| Portuguese Exploration |
| 1418–19 | Exploration of Madeira Islands. |
| 1427–31 | Definitive discovery of Azores by Diogo de Sevilla. |
| 1433 | Afterten-year effort, Portuguese ships rounded Cape Bojador; increased slave raiding. |
| 1444 | Nuño Tristam reached Senegal River. |
| 1445 | Dinís Diasrounded Cape Verde; increased trade, Portugal–West Africa. |
| 1455–57 | Alvise da Cadamosto, Venetian serving Prince Henry, explored Senegal and Gambia Rivers, discovered Cape Verde Islands. |
| 1470–71 | João de Santarem and Pedro Escolar reached Mina on Gold Coast, set up Portugese trading station (fort, 1482). |
| 1472 | Expeditions passed equator; Fernando Po discovered island that bears his name. |
| 1482–84 | Diogo Cão reached Congo River. |
| 1487 | Portuguese King John sent overland expedition (Pedro da Covilhã) to India and east coast of Africa. |

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| Portuguese ships gradually moved along the African coast, with **Bartolomeu Dias** reaching the Cape of Good Hope in 1487 and **VASCO DA GAMA** sailing around Africa and entering the Indian Ocean in 1497. **PEDRO CABRAL** touched Brazil en route to India (1500); **regular Portuguese trade** to India began. Da Gama attempted to close the Red Sea to Arab trade (1501). Almeida defeated Muslim Indian Ocean fleet (1509). Within the next half century, Portuguese commercial and military bases were established throughout the Indian Ocean basin and in the South China Sea, in **Goa** (1510; governorship of **Alfonso de Albuquerque**), in **Malacca** (1511), and in **Macao** by 1557. **Jorge Alvarez** first reached China in 1513. In 1542 **Antonio de Mota** first reached Japan, after being blown off course. | *20* |
| **SPAIN** began building a major global empire after emerging as a national monarchy through the union of Aragon and Castile, beginning in 1469, and the completion of the **Reconquista** in 1492. In that year, **QUEEN ISABELLA** provided support for the expedition of **Christopher Columbus** (See [1492](http://www.bartleby.com/67/572.html#c3p03093)), who hoped to find a westward route to eastern Asia. He landed in the islands of the Western Hemisphere, and his trips were followed by other expeditions that established Spanish control in Mesoamerican and South American areas outside of those claimed by Portugal. Spanish expeditions conquered and effectively brought an end to the regional civilizations of the Western Hemisphere. **Hernando Cortés** destroyed the **AZTEC EMPIRE** of Mexico in 1518–21, and **Francisco Pizarro** conquered the **INCA EMPIRE** in Peru in 1531–36. | *21* |
| **Further European expeditions** opened the way for travel between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, with **Vasco Núñez de Balboa** sighting the ocean to be called the Pacific in 1513 and **Ferdinand Magellan** organizing the fleet supported by Spain that in 1519–22 was the first to sail around the world (See [1519–22](http://www.bartleby.com/67/574.html#c3p03114)). |  |

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| **3.** [**Historical Trends, 1000–1500**](http://www.bartleby.com/67/toc3.html#s3.4.11) |
|  (See [Historical Trends, 500–1000](http://www.bartleby.com/67/343.html#c3p00723))  |
| Between 1000 and 1500, processes of political, economic, and cultural change moved along the same trajectories as in the earlier period, but at an accelerated pace. This is a period still beyond the reach of all but the most mythical of traditions. Oral traditions, especially those dealing with the origins of kingdoms, often portray the complex processes that led to the formation of larger kingdoms in terms of the heroic actions of the kingdom's founder. Rather than seeing these oral traditions as discrete historical experiences, historians interpret such “foundation traditions” as **symbolic templates** for examining the general historical processes of transforming small-scale polities into larger kingdoms. Using corroborative historical sources—including archeology, king lists, and written records, including *tarikhs,* or chronicles—historians date the founding of many African kingdoms to this period. | *1* |
| In interpreting the history of this period, Africanists have found it difficult to separate political, economic, and cultural change. Instead, they understand change as mutually reinforcing processes that led to the gradual formation of larger polities, which in turn stimulated increased commercial activities and accelerated cultural change and experimentation. Although the central historical experience on the political level during this period was the **gradual process of forming larger states out of clusters of smaller polities**, large states or empires remained inherently unstable and prone to periodic dissolution. Oral traditions dealing with this period, as well as the available written records, are biased toward the more stable and enduring polities and their political histories. In contrast, we know relatively little about **acephalous societies**, although the archaeological excavations at Igbo- Ukwe in southeastern Nigeria demonstrate that complex political organizations may have existed even in societies without rulers. These excavations also point to important patterns of cultural change and social differentiation based on wealth. | *2* |
| In the West African savanna, this period witnessed the flowering of the **medieval West African empires**. Ancient **Ghana** (See [1076](http://www.bartleby.com/67/344.html#c3p00735)), to be distinguished from the modern nation of Ghana, was formed around the 9th century and reached its apogee at the beginning of the 11th century. The Morocco-based **Almoravids** sacked Kumbi-Saleh, the *sahel* capital of Ghana, in 1086, which ushered in the gradual decline of the first West African Empire. The sack of Kumbi-Saleh led to a dispersion of Soninke chiefs, princes, and merchants that stimulated state formation elsewhere in the region. | *3* |
| **Mali**, located in the Mande zone farther south, congealed around a series of micropolities and transformed them into a larger state. The founding of Mali is told in the **epic of Sundiata**. Using armies of conquest, Mali succeeded Ghana in forming a huge territorial empire, which stretched from Senegambia in the west to the Niger Bend in the east, and from the desert's edge in the north to the forest in the south. Mali's rulers converted to Islam, and **Mansa Musa made the pilgrimage** to Mecca in 1325. He was accompanied by such a large entourage and carried so much gold that Arab and European geographers began to include Mali on their world maps. | *4* |
| By the beginning of the 15th century, Mali was in decline and the Niger Bend state of **Songhay** was ascendant. By the time of Sonni Ali (r. 1464–92), Songhay had transformed itself from a small riverain polity into a great empire. Due to the existence of two important *tarikhs* originally written at this time, historians know that Songhay's core military divisions consisted of tightly organized cavalry, infantry, and river-based naval units; territory was governed by appointed military leaders; and bureaucracies managed diplomacy and the massive slave plantations that supplied the court and the standing army with food and materials. | *5* |
| The same processes of change represented in the formation and decline of the West African empires played out on a smaller scale throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa during this period, but the details are less available to historians. In the West African forest zone, **Yoruba and Edo kingdoms** emerged out of compact village communities. In the **interlacustrine** region of East Africa, five or six larger kingdoms developed out of a cluster of some 200 micropolities. Similar patterns yielded the kingdoms of the **BaKongo, Luba,** and **Lunda** of the savannas to the south of the equatorial forest, and they occurred in central Africa, where the **Mwene Mutapa Empire** transformed smaller Shona chieftancies into a larger territorial unit. In all cases, political consolidation was linked with military exploits, commerce, and culture change. | *6* |
| Political power in precolonial Africa was often expressed in terms of **control over people and resources**. The formation of larger polities in sub-Saharan Africa invariably involved competition. Military force was one, but only one, means of achieving control over people and resources. Alternatively, emergent rulers solidified their control over followers through **patronage**, often loaning cattle or distributing women to followers. **Redistribution of wealth**, especially of exotic trade goods, also bound followers to rulers. | *7* |
| Military force was a prime means of maintaining control over people and resources. **Warfare became a central expression of political and economic power**, although communities without formal state organizations also engaged in raiding and warfare. Warfare yielded booty, especially livestock and slaves. **Slaves** were important elements of most premodern societies, especially in societies where land was abundant in relation to the number of people to cultivate it. Since slaves could easily run away, they did not have much value at the point of capture; slaves' value increased the farther away they were transported. Thus **warfare was inextricably linked to long-distance trade**. | *8* |
| This period witnessed the development of important long-distance trade systems that linked sub-Saharan Africa with the Indian Ocean and with North Africa and the Middle East. Slaves, as a by-product of the consolidation of African polities, fed the growing demand for soldiers, for loyal government officials, for concubines, and for agricultural labor in the Muslim empires of North Africa and the Middle East. The trans-Saharan, Nile Valley, and Red Sea slave trades carried approximately 1 million slaves each century, from the 9th to the late 19th century. | *9* |
| Long-distance traders were also interested in **African gold**—which became the principal gold supply for the commercial world of the Mediterranean—as well as in exotic feathers, skins, and incense. Because long-distance trade deals primarily in low-weight, high-value items, it tends to cater to wealthy consumers. African consumers in the intercontinental market were interested in exotic luxuries, such as glass beads, fine ceramics, luxury textiles, paper, and books (especially copies of the Qur‘an), as well as mineral salt, horses, and weapons. | *10* |
| Long-distance traders needed to resolve several important technical impediments to **cross-cultural trade**, including the lack of a common language, adjudication in disputes, and reliable market information. To solve these problems, traders developed a network of linked yet dispersed communities known as **diasporas**. Long-distance trade depended on—and stimulated—local and regional trade. Trade was ubiquitous throughout sub-Saharan Africa, stimulated by specialized economic activities. Economic specialization grew out of adaptation to specialized environments, such as through herding or fishing, and out of specialized knowledge, such as smelting, weaving, or ceramics. Long-distance trade was one form of specialized economic activity, which flowed from the demand for commodities not locally available. The list of imported luxuries illuminates the **close links between long-distance trade, political change, and cultural change**. Most of the goods imported by long-distance traders catered to wealthy consumers and served military or patronage needs. Control over trade was a central part of maintaining political power, and it created needs that required continued participation in long-distance trade. | *11* |
| The traders best able to resolve the technical impediments to cross-cultural trade were those who shared a sense of belonging to supranational communities. In sub-Saharan Africa, most long-distance traders who plied the intercontinental trade routes were Muslims. In their diaspora settlements, Muslim merchants settled with clerics and created Muslim communities. African rulers, particularly those involved in the trans-Saharan, Red Sea, and Indian Ocean trades, saw in Islam a means of participating in a different moral and political community. The **conversion of African rulers to Islam** is indicative of the complex cultural changes that swept the continent during this period. Conversion must also be understood as part of a political calculus, in which some African rulers sought to consolidate their own power at the expense of traditional religious authorities. These were some of the reasons that, in 1492 or 1493, Muhammad Rumfa, ruler of the Hausa city-state of Kano, invited the Saharan cleric al-Maghili to instruct him in the arts of Islamic statecraft. | *12* |
| Although the historical evidence on social change is not very reliable for this period, some trends that became clearer over the period 1500–1800 certainly had their roots in this period. Increasing **social differentiation** by wealth and rank occurred simultaneously with increased trade and political consolidation. There were **no sumptuary laws** to distinguish noble from commoner, although such distinctions must have been fairly obvious. Nobles and the wealthy simply had more possessions than common folk: more wives, more children, more grain, more cattle, more slaves and dependents, bigger houses, and so on. **Warrior aristocracies** also emerged during this period to serve the political needs of larger polities and to provide slaves for the intercontinental trade. Increased trade between African groups and increased warfare heightened a sense of ethnic separateness, and led to the articulation of bounded ethnic identities. These trends became more pronounced in the period 1500–1800, which coincided with Africa's increased participation in the international slave trade. (See [Overview](http://www.bartleby.com/67/869.html#s4.7.22)) | *13* |
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