

## Ancient Africa

Historically, Africa was a continent with numerous successful kingdoms with very powerful rulers. They traded with China and India more than 2,000 years ago.

African kingdoms = productive farmers, herders, metal workers, artists, and merchants.

These great riches allowed them to build splendid capital cities with royal courts that could match Europe.

### KUSH – 800 B.C.E. to 350 C.E. (1150 years)

First great African kingdom south of the Sahara (Classical Egypt was the first great kingdom overall).

Middle Eastern ideas spread south to Kush along the Nile River.

People would trade over extremely long distances with Kushites.

Kush had skilled iron workers: made weapons and farm equipment. Africans from all over came for the farm equipment.

Capital city = MEROE

- Lots of stone temples, pyramids, and palaces (some of the greatest of the ancient world).
- People were highly literate and well mannered.
- Produced fine pottery, a unique style of art, and writings that cannot be read today.
- The people wore cotton from India and silks from China.

Aside from India and China, other Mediterranean empires met in Meroe to conduct business.

Kush...conquered in 350 C.E. by neighboring AXUM. Many new kingdoms took their place as trading capitals.

### ANCIENT GHANA – 700 C.E. to 1200 C.E. (500 years)

Citizens made iron weapons to conquer neighbors and expand.

It was ideally located on many trade routes. This let them flourish. The government **heavily taxed** merchants who moved through Ghana to trade.

Ghana also had large gold deposits and was famous in Europe. Europeans called it "the land of gold" even though many Europeans never made a visit.

Capital city was only 1 square mile but had over 30,000 people!!!!

- The kingdom could gather 200,000 men if necessary for any battles.
- Most European battles at the time only fielded small numbers.
- The U.S. has 1.4 million active duty personnel as of 2017.

Ancient Ghana began to decline because of bad rulers, and other kingdoms jump in to take over its rich trade in gold, copper, and salt.

## MALI – 1200 C.E. to 1500 C.E. (300 years)

Mali was the most powerful and well-known

((U.S.A. = nation for a little over 200 years and a world power for less than 100 years.))

Mali took over the southern gold mines and northern salt deposits. This was the richest trade network on the continent and gave Mali **EXTREME** power.

Controlled over a half-million square miles of well watered grassland. – controlled food production for the region.

Capital city = Timbuktu. International trading center of education and commerce.

*Canoes from coast meet camels from the Mediterranean.*

Once Mali lost power, various other kingdoms sprang up to assert their control over trading.

## MONOMOTAPA – 1400 C.E. to 1800 C.E.

Traded gold, iron, and ivory with Arab merchants along the east coast of Africa.

They got a variety of luxury items in return (brass rods, shells, Chinese porcelain, etc.)

Capital city = Great Zimbabwe

It had a great palace surrounded by an 800 foot long wall...

**30 ft. high by 20 ft. thick.**

Estimated that a million blocks were used for the wall.

In total, the wall used 30 million pounds of bricks.

Great Zimbabwe was renowned for:

1. architecture
2. large population
3. royal court
4. markets
5. religious centers.

Monomotapa falls into decline:

- Portuguese traders take over the east coast ports.
- THEN, the gold trade.
- THEN, the kingdom of Monomotapa.

The first European to find the former capital of Great Zimbabwe wrote that:

*He picked up “bracelets of pure gold by the dozen.”*

When Portugal decided to give up colonialism, the local Africa citizens had to come up with a name for their new country. They decided to name it ZIMBABWE after the name of Monompotapa’s former capital city.