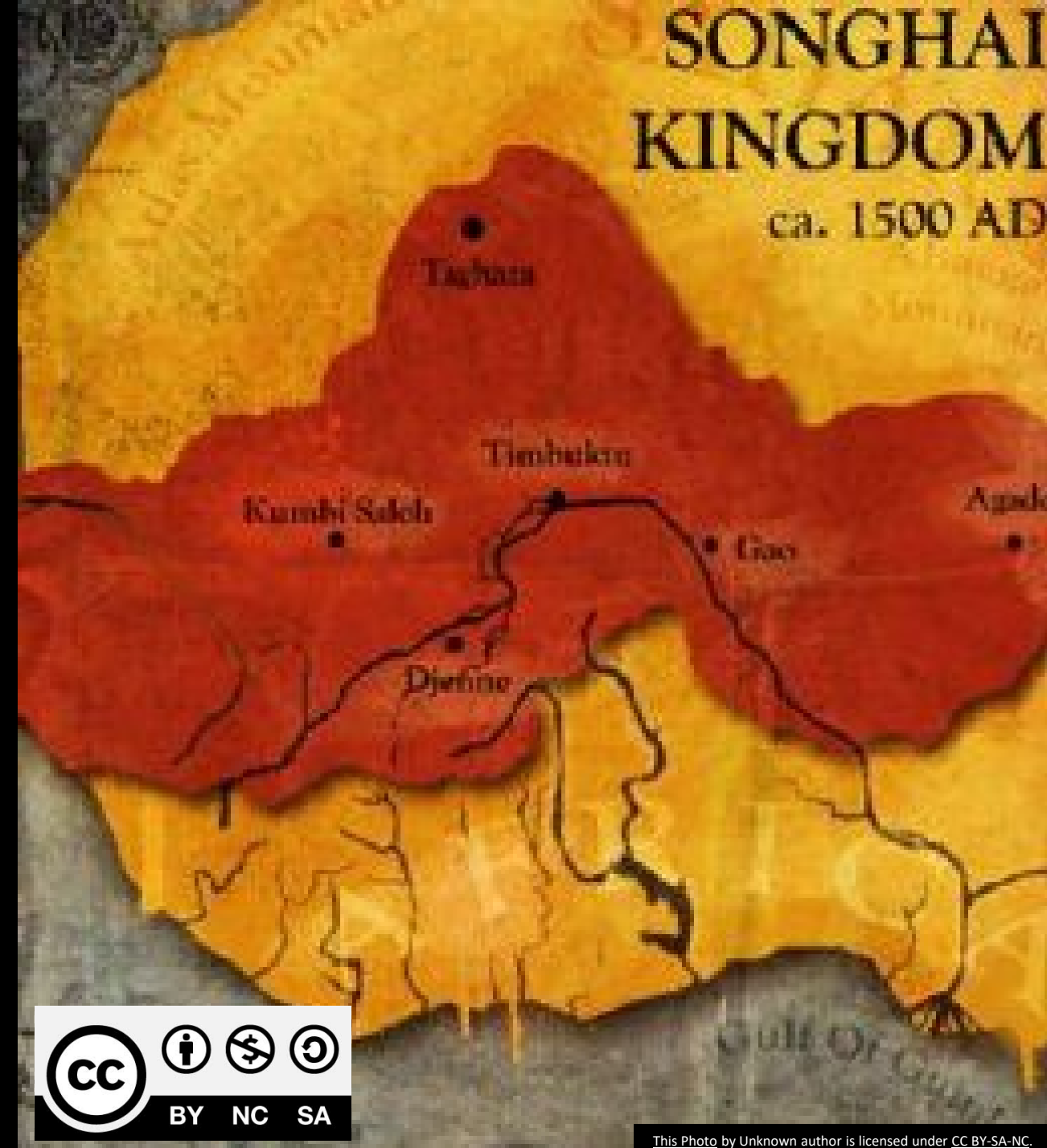


Take a seat and lets time travel back to the Songhai Empire

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Introduction : Songhai Empire

- The Songhai Empire was a state in Western Sahara During the 15th and 16th centuries.
- It has been listed as one of the largest states in the history of Africa.
- The Kingdom developed from a group of fisherman along the R.Niger and it was the last kingdom in W. Sudan.
- The Name Songhai was associated with its leading ethnic group, the Songhai. This Ethnic group consisted of the ruling elite.

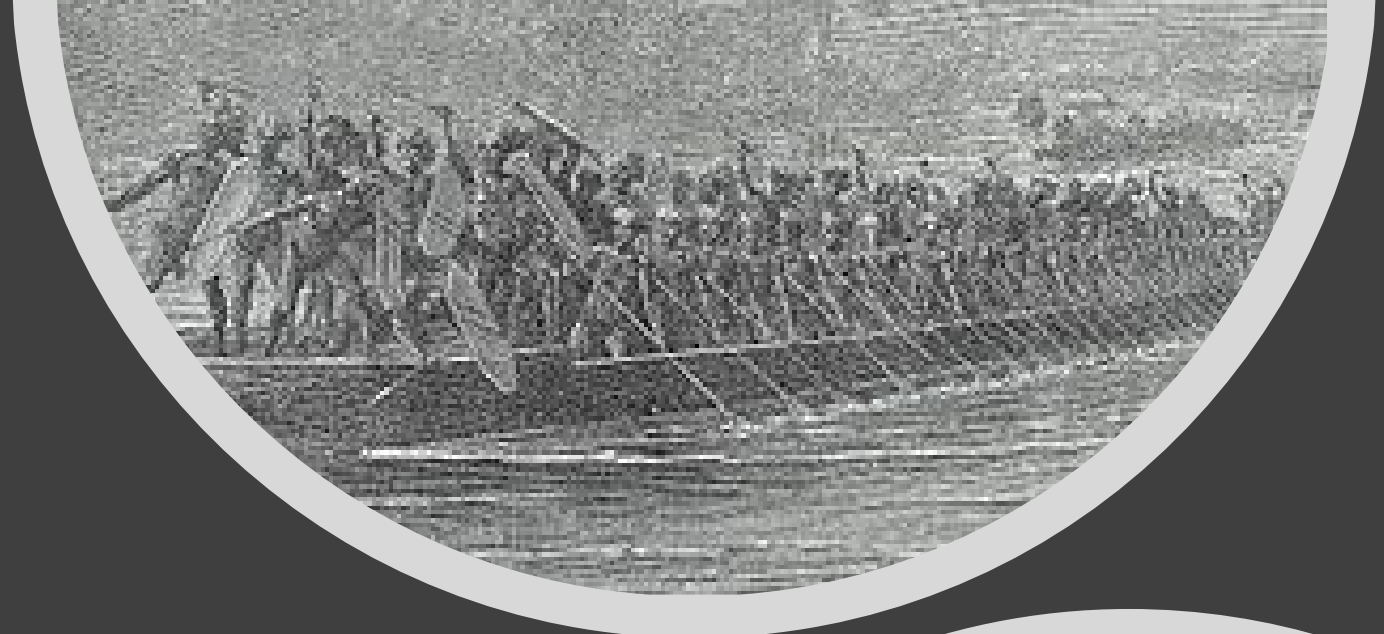


Origin

- The Empire came to rise under the leadership of Sunni Ali
- With Sunni military tactics, he was able to free Gao from the Mali Empire rule and laying foundation for the Songhai empire.
- Making Gao the capital city of Songhai made it easy to conquer closer cities.
- He created military communities such as Tuareg making it easy for him to liberate the Timbuktu who has been held by the Tuareg since 1433.
- The Songhai Empire gained supremacy over other empires in terms of wealth, geographical area as well as power through Sunni's leadership.

Religion and Monarchy in the Empire

- The Empire was highly centralized and had confederated leadership of empires such as Ghana and Mali.
- The Palace leadership constituted a council of the most senior officials. These officials are the finance minister, the admiral who was in charge of the regional governors, the head of the army and the minister of agriculture.
- The empire had an army of 3000 infantry as well as 1000 horseman. The empire's defense system was considered the largest in Western Sudan.
- The empire was known for its cosmopolitan market which embraced barter trade in exchange of items such as gold, slaves, ivory, kola nuts and palm oil with precious items such as copper, arms, horses and clothes.
- The major religion in the empire was Islam. The empire was the strongest Muslim state in Sub-Saharan Africa from the 14th to the 16th century.



Culture in the empire

Most of the cultural aspects in the empire were influenced by the Islamic model. However, some aspects of the culture were still influenced by the period before the introduction of Islamic in the empire.

For instance, birth was seen as a time of danger for both the mother and the child hence seclusion of both was done immediately after birth. The men were not allowed to see them.

On the marriage part, bride price was mandatory before marriage.

In instances of death, mourning would last for forty days and the dead would be buried without fanfare.

Respect for each other was paramount in the empire. Greetings were considered as the greatest form of respect.

The Songhai lived within a fenced compound that consisted of the main house for the husband and smaller houses for each wife and children.



Education in the empire

- The empire embraced both formal and informal education.
- The teachings consisted of survival skills such as farming, fishing, sewing, hunting, building huts, cooking and weaving.
- The girls could attain formal education from their mothers while the boys were taught by their fathers.
- Informal education sought to familiarize the children with the existing gender roles thus molding them into responsible adults.
- Most parents believed that formal education was a loss as the educated children would later move to towns and cities to practice their careers thus leaving them in rural areas.



The Major Kings in empire

- Until its decline, the empire had experienced the leadership of two great kings namely: Sunni Ali and Askia the great.
- Sunni Ali ruled the empire from the year 1464 to the year 1492. Ali was a Muslim King who conquered many of the empire's enemies thus establishing a strong foundation for the empire.
- He was a great military strategist thus facilitating the expansion of the empire through the use of military conquest.
- The second King was Askia the great. He succeeded Sunni Ai despite the fact that he did not possess the kingship rights.
- Through his leadership, Askia was able to organize and expand the conquered territories through the use of his army.



Trade in the Empire

- Trade was the greatest source of wealth for the empire. The wealth acquired through trade was used in building and expanding the empire.
- In order to protect their trade system, the empire ensured that it had a strong and well-built army.
- The empire engaged in different types of trade. The first one was the long-distance trade which was responsible for boosting the local economy.
- The other form of trade in the empire was the slave trade. Trade was important for economic development in the empire. Through the rule of Mohammed Askia, the slaves were put into use as soldiers.



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Impacts of Trade in Songhai Empire

- The trade led to the opening up of the sea route to the Mediterranean. This is because the sea route would offer a better and faster way of transporting goods to North Africa and Europe.
- The Saharan trade was monopolized thus bringing further benefits in terms of fine cloth, sugar and horses to the empire.
- Trade further led to the sophistication of urban centers. This was a result of the new housing techniques that were characterized by the use of stones in buildings.

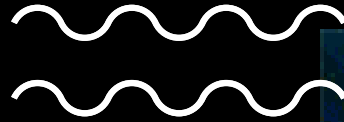
Importance of the Songhai Empire civilization

- The Songhai Empire civilization has proved important in many ways. To begin with, it led to the development of the education sector in the Empire.
- This can be seen in Askia's efforts to expand education by inviting scholars from all over the world to his empire.
- It also led to religious diversity as Muslim and traditional religions were able to peacefully co-exist.
- The trade further led to the expansion of Agriculture as a way of maintaining a constant food supply for the merchants.

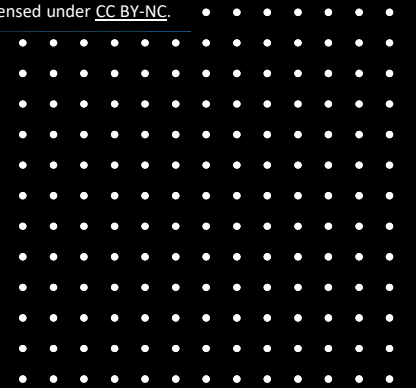
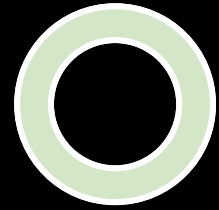
Decline of the Songhai Empire

- The king Sunni died and was later succeeded by his son Baru who was later overthrown by Muhammed Ture in 1493.
- Despite the stability and the existing glory of the empire, it began to experience significant setbacks, as seen in the Western parts from the last quarter of the 16th century.
- The setbacks were a result of incompetent leadership and civil wars in a bid to seek succession after the death of King Ture in 1528.
- The fight was between Ture's sons who divided the empire in half.
- The Songhai empire was therefore taken over by the Moroccans who transformed it into a province thus the end of the empire.

End of time traveling to the Songhai Empire



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- Most Images were taken from google.

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