

The Songhai Empire

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- Location

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- Located in Western Africa south of the Sahara Desert and along the Niger River, the Songhai Empire stretched over 1,000 miles from the Niger to the Atlantic Ocean.

Gao was the capital of the Songhai Empire. It is located in present day Mali on the banks of the Niger River.



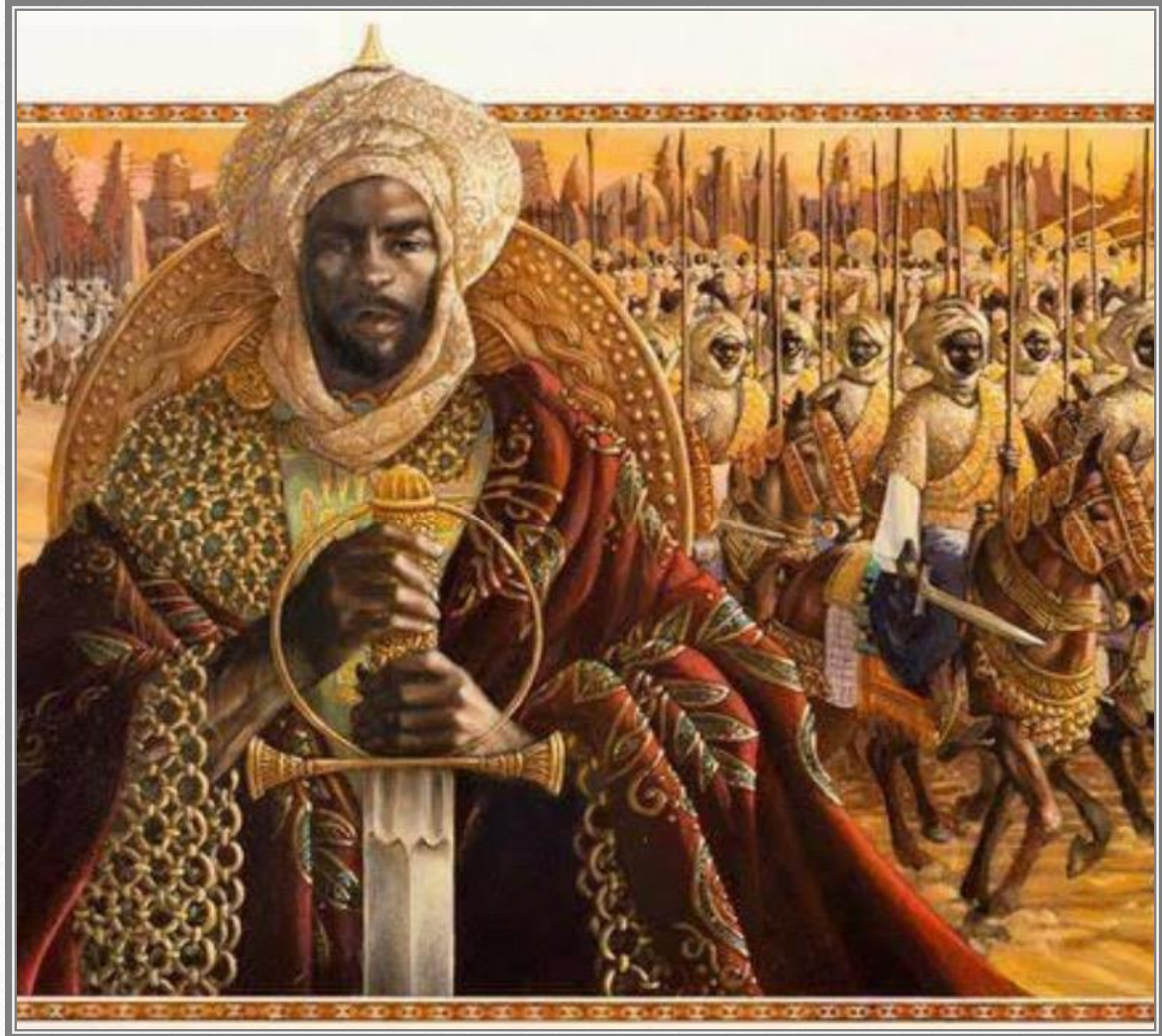
The Rise of the Empire

- The Songhai empire originated as a smaller kingdom along the eastern bend of the Niger River, the empire would later expand their territory from the ruling of King Sunni Ali.

- The Songhai Empire started out as a fishing and trading center on the Niger River in a place called Gao where West African and Muslim traders visited often.

Sunni Ali

- The Songhai Empire first came into power under the leadership of Sunni Ali in 1464. He was being held as a political prisoner by the leader of the Mali Empire who ruled over the empire.
- Sunni Ali escaped to the city of Gao and took control of the city. From the city of Gao, he established the Empire and began to conquer nearby regions including the wealthy trading cities of Timbuktu and Djenne.
- He strengthened Songhai and added territory including much of Mali.





The Salt Trade

Salt from the Sahara desert was one of the major trade goods of ancient West Africa where very little deposits of the mineral could be found.

- Transported through camels and by boat along such rivers as the Niger and Senegal, salt found its way to trading centers where it was exchanged for other goods such as ivory, copper, iron, and cereals.
- Came from the mines of southern West Africa. .



Niger And Senegal routes

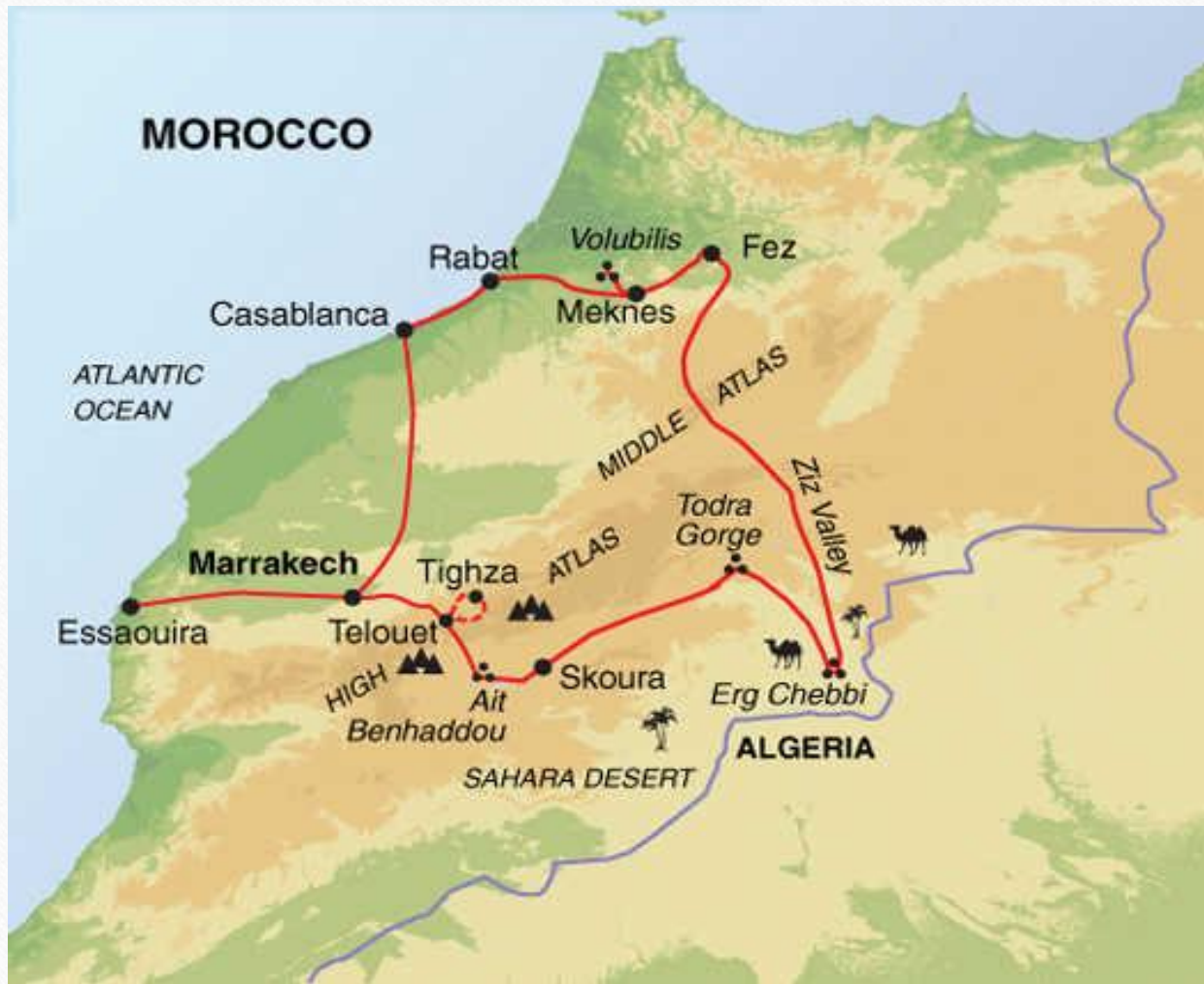
"[Map of Niger River.](#)" *World History Encyclopedia*. World History Encyclopedia, 23 Jan 2018. Web. 16 May 2022.

- This is a map of where the salt and goods were being transported by the camels and boats along rivers in Niger and Senegal.



Slaves During trade

- The slave trade became an important part of the Songhai Empire. Slaves were used to help transport goods across the Sahara Desert to Morocco and the Middle East.
- Slaves were also sold to Europeans to work in Europe and the Americas. Slaves were usually captives of war captured during raids on nearby regions.



Sahara desert to Morocco routes

- This is the path that slaves would take when they transported goods during trading.

Citation-

<https://holidays.theguardian.com/holidays/highlights-of-morocco>



Trans Saharan Trade

- The Songhai Empire grew very wealthy thanks to the control of trading posts along the Trans-Saharan Trade Route, including Jenne and Timbuktu.
 - This trade route connected North Africa to South and West Africa. Across these routes, a variety of goods, including foodstuffs, cloth, shells, and kola nuts flowed by the arab merchants.



The Trans Saharan routes

Citation-

["Trans-Saharan Trade Routes."](#) *World History Encyclopedia*. World History Encyclopedia, 01 Mar 2019. Web. 17 May 2022.

- These were the routes that were taken by the Arab merchants during the most important route which was the trans Saharan .



Askia Muhammad

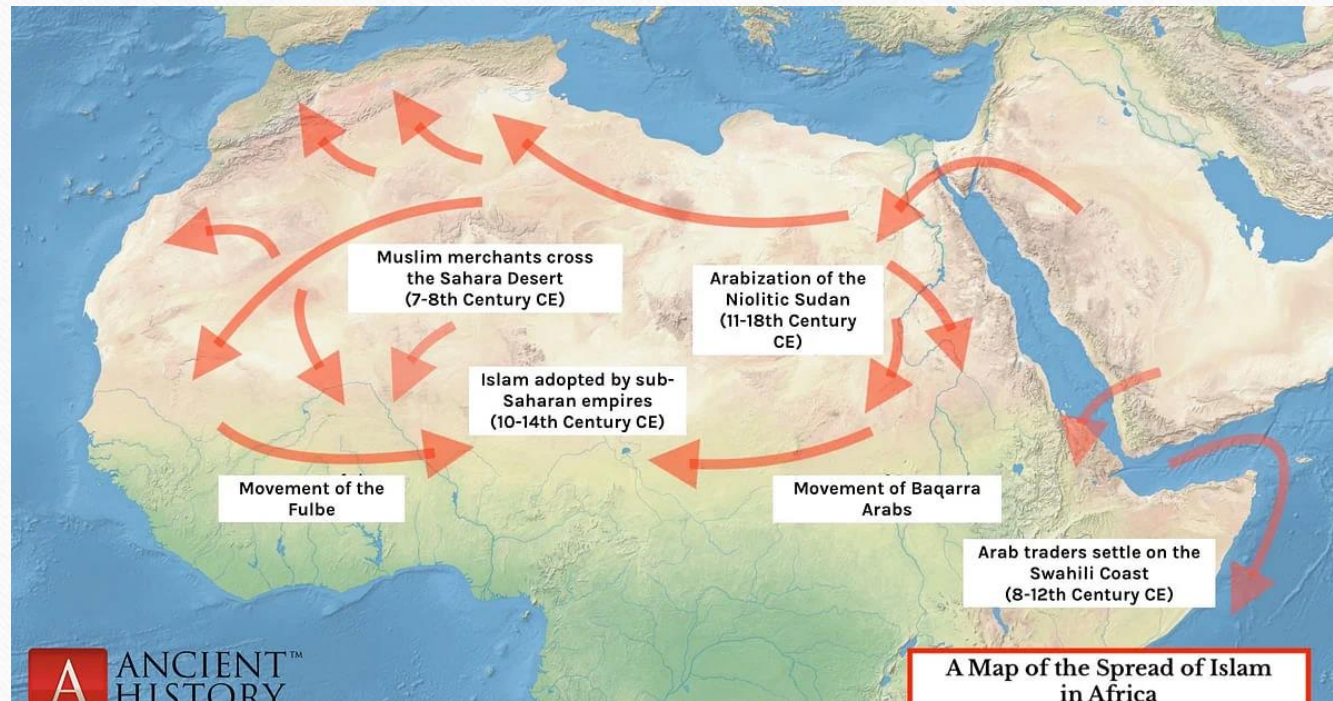
- Askia Muhammad I, was the ruler of the Songhai Empire in the late 15th and early 16th centuries.
- His most significant achievements are he divided Songhai into provinces and grew finance and navy, this ultimately led to the creation of the largest empire in the history of West Africa.
- Askia left behind a rich cultural and religious heritage, including Islamic law

Songhai Religion

- Songhai followed the religion of Islam. Islam began to spread in Songhai under the ruling of Dia Dynasty.
- Islam came to the Songhai through North African traders who had converted to Islam after the death of the Prophet Mohammed.



Citation - "[The Spread of Islam in Ancient Africa.](#)" *World History Encyclopedia*. World History Encyclopedia, 10 May 2019. Web. 17 May 2022.



- This is a map of the spread of the religion of Islam in Africa.



Songhai Government

- The Songhai Empire was divided into five provinces each led by a governor. Under Askia Muhammad, all the governors, judges, and town chiefs were Muslims.
- The emperor had total power, but he also had ministers who ran different aspects of the empire for him. They also counseled the emperor on important issues.

Decline of Songhai Empire



- Despite its wealth and learning, the Songhai empire lacked modern weapons, In 1561 a Moroccan fighting force of several thousand men armed with cannons crossed the Sahara and invaded Songhai.
- The Moroccan troops defeated the Songhai warriors and The Songhai empire fell apart after a Moroccan military struck. The Songhai towns fell into disorder, and Africa's greatest kingdom vanished.

References

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