



# UNIT 3

**REGIONAL AND  
TRANSREGIONAL  
INTERACTIONS  
(600-1450)**

Short Cut

# Unit 3 Short Cut

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## GENERAL REMARKS

Between 600 and 1450, newer world civilizations matured, largely on the foundations of older cultures that had collapsed or faded away. It was also during this era that world civilizations vastly increased their **regional and transregional interactions** with each other—economically, religiously, and culturally, as well as by means of diplomacy and war.

Many of the world's **classical civilizations** failed or fell into decline between the 200s and 600s C.E., including the Roman Empire (with the Greek influence it had kept alive), Han China, and India's Mauryan and Gupta Empires. The same process continued up to about 1000 C.E., as other societies considered “classical”—such as Tang China, Heian Japan, and the Abbasid caliphate—were weakened or collapsed.

New civilizations built on what remained of these classical cultures. In some cases, as in Europe after the fall of Rome, a lengthy period of backwardness and decentralization followed the collapse of a classical civilization. In others, as in China, the transition was less traumatic or lasted a shorter time. Whatever the case, a myriad of sophisticated cultures, many of them drawing upon the legacy left behind by their classical predecessors, appeared throughout the world during these years.

One important historical question is whether these civilizations are best studied as **nation-states** (countries as formally defined political entities, in the modern sense of the word) or **cultural units** (defined less by political boundaries and more by ethnic similarities, shared cultural traditions, ethnicity, or government by a larger imperial or regional power). Examples of the latter include the Islamic world, which came into being with the sudden **rise and expansion of Islam** during this period, as well as European Christendom, sub-Saharan Africa, and Mesoamerica.

The other central trend of this age was the continued growth of **networks of communication and exchange** between world cultures. (On a related note, **increased productive capacity** became the economic norm in most parts of the world.) Although the Americas remained isolated, vibrant **systems of interaction** arose to link the various civilizations of Africa and Eurasia. Trade, religious influence, technological, and cultural exchange all marked this era. **Diaspora communities, migration, and the movement of nomadic peoples**, such as the Vikings, Bantu, and Mongols, greatly affected settled societies—and a key question pertaining to this period is how nomadic movement compares to the importance of **cities** as a cause of historical change. Even though the world was not as joined together as it would later become, it was moving swiftly and steadily toward interaction on a truly global scale.

## BROAD TRENDS

<b>State Building, Expansion, and Conflict, 600–1450</b>	
<b>ca. 600–900</b>	
<b>Europe</b>	Byzantium (300s–1453) Constantinople barbarian kingdoms feudalism
<b>Middle East</b>	(Byzantium) early caliphates (Medina and Umayyad) Abbasid caliphate (750–1258) Baghdad dar al-Islam and “circle of justice” Sharia law
<b>Africa</b>	Ghana (ca. 800–1200)
<b>East (and Central) Asia</b>	Sui (589–618) and Tang (618–906) dynasties in China mandate of heaven Chang’an + Hangzhou Nara (700s) and Heian (794–1185) regimes in Japan
<b>South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania</b>	disunity in India Khmer (500s–1400s) and Srivijayan (500s–1100s) empires city-states in Southeast Asia
<b>Americas</b>	Mississippian culture (ca. 700–1500) Cahokia city-states in Mesoamerica Toltec (ca. 800–1000)
<b>Global and Interregional</b>	Islamic expansion into Africa and Asia Islamic conquest of Spain (al-Andalus) battles of Tours/Poitiers (732) and Talas (751)
<b>ca. 900–1200</b>	
<b>Europe</b>	early nation-states papal-imperial struggle and the ideal of Christendom Italian city-states (Venice) feudalism continues
<b>Middle East</b>	political diffracton of Abbasid caliphate dar al-Islam and “circle of justice” Sharia law
<b>Africa</b>	Ghana Great Zimbabwe (ca. 1000–1400) Swahili city-states
<b>East (and Central) Asia</b>	Song dynasty (960–1279) in China mandate of heaven breakdown of Heian regime in Japan the shogun, samurai daimyo, and feudalism in Japan (1100s–1500s)

<b>State Building, Expansion, and Conflict, 600-1450</b>	
<b>South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania</b>	disunity in India Khmer and Srivijayan empires city-states in Southeast Asia
<b>Americas</b>	city-states in Mesoamerica
<b>Global and Interregional</b>	battle of Manzikert (1071) Crusades (Christian Europe vs. Islamic Middle East)
<b>ca. 1200-1450</b>	
<b>Europe</b>	nation-states gradually centralize papal power peaks, then weakens Italian city-states + Novgorod feudalism continues Mongol rule over Russia (Golden Horde) fall of Constantinople and Ottoman conquest of Byzantium (1453)
<b>Middle East</b>	Mongol Il-khanate (mid-1200s to mid-1300s) Ottoman empire (1299-1922) + conquest of Byzantium (1453) dar al-Islam and "circle of justice" Sharia law
<b>Africa</b>	Mali (mid-1200s to 1600s; Mansa Musa in 1300s) Timbuktu Songhai (mid-1400s to late 1500s) Great Zimbabwe Swahili city-states
<b>East (and Central) Asia</b>	Yuan (Mongol) dynasty in China (1271-1368) Chagatai (Mongol) khanate in Central Asia (early 1200s to mid-1600s) Ming dynasty (1368-1644) in China mandate of heaven the warlord Timur (1300s)
<b>South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania</b>	Delhi sultanate (1206-1526) in India Calicut Khmer empire city-states in Southeast Asia and Malay sultanates Melaka
<b>Americas</b>	city-states in Mesoamerica Aztecs (Mexico, mid-1200s to 1520) Tenochtitlan Incas (ca. 1300s to early 1500s)
<b>Global and Interregional</b>	Crusades end (1290s) Mongol conquests under Genghis Khan (early 1200s) and the pax Mongolica battle of Ain Jalut (1260)

## State Building, Expansion, and Conflict

- Most forms of rulership remained non-representative. Monarchies and oligarchies were the most common.
- Many states were not nations in the modern sense of the world. Some were decentralized. Others were multicultural empires whose various peoples were joined only by the fact that a single authority had conquered them all.
- When classical empires collapsed, the states taking their places typically made use of traditional sources of legitimacy and power—such as patriarchal authority, religious backing, and the support of landowning elites—but blended them with innovative governing techniques. Examples include Byzantium and the post-Han dynasties (Sui, Tang, and Song) in China.
- New modes of government appeared, among them the Islamic caliphates, the Mongol khanates, city-state systems (as in East Africa, Southeast Asia, the Americas, and Italy), and feudalism (most distinctive in medieval Europe and Japan).
- Imperial expansion, as well as conflict and contact between civilizations, caused cultural borrowing, diffusion, and the transfer of technologies and cultural practices. Europe's Crusades against the Middle East provide one example, while others include the impact of Mongol expansion, the interchange between Tang China and the Abbasid caliphate, the regional impact of Persian culture throughout the Islamic world, and China's wider cultural influence throughout East Asia.
- Cities placed a larger role in the political life of most civilizations.
- The invention of gunpowder technology and its diffusion throughout Eurasia began to change the balance of world power.

<b>Culture, Science, and Technology, 600–1450</b>	
<b>ca. 600–900</b>	
<b>Europe</b>	papal ideal of Christendom emerges Latin as regional language of religious and educated elite (Greco-Roman foundation of European culture) longboats (Vikings)
<b>Middle East</b>	birth and expansion of Islam (600s+) Sunni-Shiite split Arabic as religious language (note cultural importance of Persian and widespread use of Turkic languages) astrolabe improved (700s) camel saddle improved
<b>Africa</b>	spread of Islam via war and trade sculpture, wood carving, weaving, metal-working oral traditions (griots)
<b>East (and Central) Asia</b>	Neo-Confucianism diffusion of Buddhist culture horse collar improved in China gunpowder invented in China (800s–900s)
<b>South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania</b>	diffusion (and mingling) of Buddhist and Hindu culture Borobudur temple outrigger canoes (Polynesia)

<b>Culture, Science, and Technology, 600-1450</b>	
<b>Americas</b>	earth mounds in North America pyramids in Mesoamerica (polytheism and human sacrifice)
<b>Global and Interregional</b>	Islam's cultural influence in Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia Tang-Abbasid cultural transfer interregional travel = pilgrimage of Xuanzang (600s) influence of Greek and Indian mathematics on Islamic world (algebra in 800s)
<b>ca. 900-1200</b>	
<b>Europe</b>	papal ideal of Christendom climaxes great schism between Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy scholasticism (partial reconciliation of Christian doctrine with Greco-Roman thinkers like Aristotle and Plato) universities code of chivalry romanesque and gothic cathedrals castle-building
<b>Middle East</b>	<i>The Thousand Nights and a Night (Arabian Nights)</i> Omar Khayyám, <i>Rubaiyat</i> expertise in medicine, astronomy, and mathematics madrasas Sufism
<b>Africa</b>	continued spread of Islam sculpture, wood carving, weaving, metalworking oral traditions (griots) emergence of Swahili as regional language Great Zimbabwe city complex
<b>East (and Central) Asia</b>	Zen (Chan) Buddhism woodblock printing improved and movable-type concept invented in China compass invented in China (late 1000s-early 1100s) water mills and water clocks in China <i>The Tale of Genji</i> , Lady Murasaki samurai culture and code of Bushido in Japan
<b>South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania</b>	diffusion (and mingling) of Buddhist and Hindu culture Angkor Wat outrigger canoes (Polynesia)
<b>Americas</b>	earth mounds in North America pyramids and Toltec/Aztec influence in Mesoamerica (polytheism and human sacrifice)
<b>Global and Interregional</b>	improved horse collar, compass, and printing spread from China to Middle East and Europe Greek science and philosophy reintroduced to Europe from Muslim Spain European-Islamic cultural transfer during Crusades

Culture, Science, and Technology, 600–1450	
ca. 1200–1450	
<b>Europe</b>	Renaissance humanism movable-type printing press (mid-1400s)
<b>Middle East</b>	Rumi's poetry
<b>Africa</b>	Islamic influences sculpture, wood carving, weaving, metalworking oral traditions (griots) <i>Sundiata</i> epic (Mali, 1300s+) Great Zimbabwe city complex mud-and-timber mosques of Timbuktu
<b>East (and Central) Asia</b>	Zheng He (1400s) and interregional travel Forbidden City Heian Shrine
<b>South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania</b>	diffusion (and mingling) of Buddhist and Hindu culture Islam arrives in India
<b>Americas</b>	earth mounds in North America pyramids and Aztec influence in Mesoamerica (polytheism and human sacrifice) Inca influence on Andes culture Temple of the Sun and Machu Picchu quipu
<b>Global and Interregional</b>	interregional travel = Marco Polo (1200s), Ibn Battuta (1300s), and Zheng He (1400s) cultural transfer throughout Mongol empires gunpowder acquired by Middle East and Europe (1200s)

## Culture, Science, and Technology

- Distinct artistic and cultural traditions developed in all major regions. However, cultural diffusion and mutual influence among these traditions became increasingly common, thanks to the expansion of empires, the growing extent of trade networks, the emergence of diasporic communities, and the spread of religious beliefs.
- A new religion, Islam, was born in the Middle East and rapidly spread throughout Afro-Eurasia.
- The civilizations possessing the greatest degree of scientific knowledge and cultural sophistication were East Asia, India, the Middle East, and Muslim Spain (al-Andalus).
- Europe underwent great cultural development, especially during the Renaissance.
- China and India exerted tremendous cultural and religious influence over their neighbors. Buddhism, Hinduism, and art and architectural styles spread from these states to Southeast Asia, Korea, Japan, Tibet, and elsewhere.
- In their own right and because of the knowledge they imported from China and India, the Middle East and Muslim Spain played a large role in spreading philosophy, science, technology, music, art, and architecture to North Africa and Europe. The Middle East's cultural influence on medieval and Renaissance Europe was indispensable.

- Travelers and explorers created links between societies and increased geographical and cultural awareness. Examples include Zheng He, Xuanzang, Marco Polo, and Ibn Battuta.
- In the Americas, major civilizations such as the Toltec, Aztecs (Mexico), and Inca left their cultural and religious imprint on many of their neighbors.
- Certain languages attained regional status, either because of their cultural preeminence, their usefulness as languages of learning, or their suitability as a lingua franca for trade. Examples include Swahili, the Turkic and Arabic languages, and Latin.
- The improvement of block printing in China, as well as the invention of the concept of movable type there, began to alter cultural life not only in Asia, but elsewhere, as this new innovation spread westward. The culmination of this trend was the invention of the movable-type printing press in Europe during the mid-1400s. The resulting information explosion revolutionized intellectual life in many parts of Eurasia.
- The invention of gunpowder technology and the magnetic compass in China had global impacts described below.

<b>Economic Systems, 600–1450</b>	
<b>ca. 600–900</b>	
<b>Europe</b>	open-water navigation improves (impact of Viking longships) feudal manorialism (serfdom)
<b>Middle East</b>	Mediterranean trade trans-Saharan caravans (Arab-Berber expertise with camels) Silk Roads (connection with Indian Ocean basin)
<b>Africa</b>	pastoralism continues in many areas Mediterranean trade trans-Saharan caravans (Arab-Berber expertise with camels) Indian Ocean trade continues
<b>East (and Central) Asia</b>	nomadic pastoralism continues in steppe zone Grand Canal in China China's regional trade network Silk Roads connection with Indian Ocean basin
<b>South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania</b>	Indian Ocean trade continues spices, cotton
<b>Americas</b>	pastoralism continues in many areas mit'a labor system in Andes trade networks in Mesoamerica, the Andes, and the Mississippi Valley
<b>Global and Interregional</b>	general rise in agricultural production (due to technological innovation) new trading cities emerge luxury goods fuel expansion of trade networks minting of coins and printing of paper money spreads credit and banking become more common slavery and serfdom become increasingly common

<b>Economic Systems, 600–1450</b>	
<b>ca. 900–1200</b>	
<b>Europe</b>	feudal manorialism (serfdom) revival of European and Mediterranean trade guilds (artisans and craftsmen) Italian peninsula and Mediterranean trade Crusades stimulate appetite for goods from the east
<b>Middle East</b>	Mediterranean trade trans-Saharan caravans (Arab-Berber expertise with camels) Silk Roads partly disrupted (connection with Indian Ocean basin)
<b>Africa</b>	pastoralism continues in many areas Mediterranean trade trans-Saharan caravans (Arab-Berber expertise with camels) salt, gold, ivory Indian Ocean trade rise of Swahili city-states
<b>East (and Central) Asia</b>	nomadic pastoralism continues in steppe zone Silk Roads partly disrupted connection with Indian Ocean basin silk, iron, steel, and porcelain industries expand in China feudal landholding in Japan (serfdom)
<b>South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania</b>	Indian Ocean trade cotton industry in India spices
<b>Americas</b>	pastoralism continues in many areas mit'a labor system in Andes trade networks in Mesoamerica, the Andes, and the Mississippi Valley
<b>Global and Interregional</b>	general rise in agricultural production (due to technological innovation) increased craft production new trading cities and merchant classes luxury goods coins and paper money credit and banking slavery and serfdom become increasingly common
<b>ca. 1200–1450</b>	
<b>Europe</b>	feudal manorialism (serfdom declining in Western Europe) European and Mediterranean trade intensifies guilds (artisans and craftsmen) Italian peninsula and Mediterranean trade Hanseatic League
<b>Middle East</b>	Mediterranean trade trans-Saharan caravans (connection with Indian Ocean basin) Silk Road revives

<b>Economic Systems, 600-1450</b>	
<b>Africa</b>	<p>pastoralism continues in many areas</p> <p>Mediterranean trade</p> <p>trans-Saharan caravans</p> <p>salt, gold, ivory</p> <p>Indian Ocean trade</p> <p>Swahili city-states</p>
<b>East (and Central) Asia</b>	<p>nomadic pastoralism continues in steppe zone</p> <p>Silk Road revives</p> <p>connection with Indian Ocean basin</p> <p>silk, iron, steel, and porcelain industries expand in China</p> <p>feudal landholding in Japan (serfdom)</p>
<b>South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania</b>	<p>Indian Ocean trade</p> <p>cotton industry in India</p> <p>spices</p>
<b>Americas</b>	<p>pastoralism continues in many areas</p> <p>mit'a labor more extensive under Inca</p> <p>trade networks in Mesoamerica, the Andes, and the Mississippi Valley</p>
<b>Global and Interregional</b>	<p>general rise in agricultural production (due to technological innovation)</p> <p>increased craft production</p> <p>new trading cities and merchant classes</p> <p>luxury goods</p> <p>coins and paper money</p> <p>credit and banking</p> <p>slavery and serfdom become increasingly common</p>

## **Economic Systems**

- Economic production increased globally.
- Transregional trade was practiced on a massive scale. Existing routes, such as the Silk Roads, the Mediterranean sea lanes, the trans-Saharan caravan trails, and the Indian Ocean basin, witnessed huge upswings in commercial activity. New routes expanded trade in Mesoamerica and the Andes as well.
- New cities emerged as key centers for interregional trade. They include Venice, Novgorod, Baghdad, the Swahili city-states, Timbuktu, Hangzhou, Melaka (Malacca), Calicut, Cahokia, and Tenochtitlan.
- Trading organizations like northern Europe's Hanseatic League came into existence.
- Demand for luxury goods assumed a more prominent role in interregional commerce. Silk, cotton, porcelain, and spices from the Middle East and South and East Asia became especially important.
- In Afro-Eurasia trade was made easier and safer by the emergence of new forms of banking and monetization (credit, checking, banking houses), as well as state practices like the minting of coins and the printing of paper money. Customs agencies and standard weights and measures helped to regulate and regularize trade.
- Interregional trade was facilitated by the warmer weather of the medieval climatic optimum and then affected by the global cooling that led to the Little Ice Age.

- Technological innovation played a role in expanding trade, especially in the fields of ship design (including the Viking longboat, the Indian Ocean dhow, and the Chinese junk) and navigation (especially the astrolabe and the magnetic compass). Also important was the effective adaptation of environmental knowledge (such as Saharan camel herders' knowledge of the desert or Central Asian pastoralists' use of horses for steppe travel).
- Agricultural production increased worldwide, thanks partly to climatic changes, partly to technological innovations (including the horse collar, better terracing, rice cultivation in Asia, and waru waru and chinampa techniques in the Americas).

<b>Social Structures, 600–1450</b>	
<b>ca. 600–900</b>	
<b>Europe</b>	rise of serfdom Christian doctrine and patriarchy
<b>Middle East</b>	Jewish diaspora Islam and patriarchy (veiling, seclusion, polygamy) jizya tax for subject non-believers (dhimmi) military slaves (mamluks)
<b>Africa</b>	greater prevalence of matriarchy and matrilinealism
<b>East (and Central) Asia</b>	Sogdian merchant diaspora along the Silk Roads An Shi rebellion in China (700s) Neo-Confucianism and patriarchy (foot binding)
<b>South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania</b>	Chinese merchant diaspora in Southeast Asia Hinduism and patriarchy (sati, seclusion)
<b>Americas</b>	mit'a labor system in Andes ayllu clan system in Andes
<b>Global and Interregional</b>	greater urbanization and trading cities Muslim merchant diaspora in Africa and Indian Ocean basin slavery and serfdom become increasingly common patriarchy continues or deepens
<b>ca. 900–1200</b>	
<b>Europe</b>	serfdom vs. free peasantry peasant revolt in Byzantium (900s) craftsmen and guilds moneylending by Jewish diaspora (anti-Semitism) Christian doctrine and patriarchy
<b>Middle East</b>	Islam and patriarchy (veiling, seclusion, polygamy) jizya tax for subject non-believers (dhimmi) military slaves (mamluks)
<b>Africa</b>	greater prevalence of matriarchy and matrilinealism Muslim merchant diaspora Arab slavers in North and East Africa

<b>Social Structures, 600–1450</b>	
<b>East (and Central) Asia</b>	Neo-Confucianism and patriarchy (foot binding) samurai nobility and feudalism in Japan (serfdom) samurai patriarchalism
<b>South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania</b>	Chinese merchant diaspora in Southeast Asia Hinduism and patriarchy (sati, seclusion)
<b>Americas</b>	mit'a labor system in Andes ayllu clan system in Andes
<b>Global and Interregional</b>	growth of artisan (craftsman) classes growth of merchant classes greater urbanization and trading cities Muslim merchant diaspora in Africa and Indian Ocean basin Jewish diaspora (Middle East, Europe, Indian Ocean basin) slavery and serfdom become increasingly common patriarchy continues or deepens
<b>ca. 1200–1450</b>	
<b>Europe</b>	serfdom (declining in Western Europe) vs. free peasantry peasant revolts in England, France, and elsewhere (1300s) craftsmen and guilds moneylending by Jewish diaspora (anti-Semitism) Christian doctrine and patriarchy witch hunts ( <i>Hammer of Witchcraft</i> , 1400s)
<b>Middle East</b>	Islam and patriarchy (veiling, seclusion, polygamy, the harem) jizya tax for subject non-believers (dhimmi) start of Ottoman millet (religious community) system devshirme (Ottoman slave-recruiting system) military slaves (mamluks and janissaries)
<b>Africa</b>	greater prevalence of matriarchy and matrilinealism Arab slavers in North and East Africa origins of Atlantic slave trade
<b>East (and Central) Asia</b>	Red Turban uprising in China (1300s) Neo-Confucianism and patriarchy (foot binding) samurai nobility and feudalism in Japan (serfdom) samurai patriarchalism
<b>South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania</b>	Chinese merchant communities in Southeast Asia Hinduism and patriarchy (sati, seclusion) Islam and patriarchy (veiling, seclusion, polygamy)
<b>Americas</b>	mit'a labor system deepens under Inca ayllu clan system in Andes
<b>Global and Interregional</b>	greater urbanization and trading cities growth of artisan (craftsman) classes growth of merchant classes Muslim merchant diaspora in Africa and Indian Ocean basin Jewish diaspora (Middle East, Europe, Silk Roads, Indian Ocean basin) slavery and serfdom become increasingly common patriarchy continues or deepens

## Social Structures

- Population growth continued in all parts of the world.
- Many peoples continued to practice nomadic pastoralism.
- Of settled societies, the vast majority remained fundamentally agricultural. In the countryside, the chief forms of labor organization were free peasant production (typically owing rents to landlords or taxes to the government) and serfdom (unfree labor bound to the land and owing labor to the landowner).
- Urbanization, or the growth of cities, proceeded worldwide, although periods of decline were mixed with periods of revival and expansion. In cities, the rise of trade and commerce made merchant classes larger and more influential. Also in urban settings, a key form of labor organization was craft production, with artisans often banding together in guilds.
- Other forms of labor organization include coerced and unfree labor (especially slavery, serfdom, and the mit'a), as well as military conscription. The demand for slaves, whether for domestic labor, agricultural work, or military service, grew substantially.
- Unrest and revolts caused by unfair treatment of workers and peasants became more common in various parts of the world (significant examples during this era include China and Byzantium).
- Along far-reaching trade routes, diasporic communities and foreign enclaves formed in many ports and towns.
- Class hierarchies, social stratification, and caste systems continued to function. Social mobility increased in a few places, often in urban settings where trade and commerce dominated.
- Patriarchalism, often buttressed by traditional religion, continued to be the norm. Still, women's roles varied from society to society. Women's political rights tended to be minimal to nonexistent, and they had sharply defined occupational roles, generally confined to childbearing, homemaking, and low-status jobs such as weaving, food gathering, farm chores, and domestic servitude.
- In most places, women had at least some freedoms and rights (which might include the right to divorce abusive husbands, the right to a dowry, the right to at least some education, or the right to inherit and own property). They also tended to play informal but important roles as they managed households and family finances, supervised the education and upbringing of children, and influenced their husbands.
- In most societies, upper-class women lived easier lives but found themselves more constrained by religious and cultural restrictions on their behavior (such as seclusion or purdah, foot-binding, and veiling). Lower-class women, whose lives were much harder, were often less bound by such restrictions because the rules of "proper" behavior applied less to them.
- In places like West Africa, Japan (during certain periods), the Mongol Empire, and parts of Southeast Asia, women enjoyed more respect than average during this period.
- Gender relations and family structure were frequently influenced by religious change, with Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Neo-Confucianism playing significant roles.
- In addition to monogamous marriage, practices such as polygamy, concubinage, and harems were permitted in certain places. Terms of divorce varied from place to place, and whether or not children born outside of marriage were recognized as legitimate likewise varied.

## Humans and the Environment, 600-1450

ca. 600-900	
<b>Europe</b>	Viking migrations begin (late 700s)
<b>Middle East</b>	
<b>Africa</b>	Bantu migrations continue (ca. 1500 B.C.E.-1000 C.E.) bananas arrive from Middle East
<b>East (and Central) Asia</b>	
<b>South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania</b>	Polynesian migrations (ca. 1500 B.C.E.-1200 C.E.)
<b>Americas</b>	chinampa agriculture and terrace farming continue waru waru agriculture in Andes
<b>Global and Interregional</b>	medieval climatic optimum migration of Mongol-Turkic horse pastoralists (East and Central Asia, Middle East)
ca. 900-1200	
<b>Europe</b>	Viking migrations continue cotton, sugar, and citrus spread through Mediterranean
<b>Middle East</b>	cotton, sugar, and citrus spread through Islamic world
<b>Africa</b>	
<b>East (and Central) Asia</b>	Champa rice spreads to China
<b>South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania</b>	Polynesian migrations continue
<b>Americas</b>	
<b>Global and Interregional</b>	migration of Mongol-Turkic horse pastoralists (East and Central Asia, Middle East)
ca. 1200-1450	
<b>Europe</b>	black death (mid-1300s)
<b>Middle East</b>	black death (early to mid-1300s)
<b>Africa</b>	
<b>East (and Central) Asia</b>	black death (early 1300s)
<b>South (and Southeast) Asia and Oceania</b>	
<b>Americas</b>	
<b>Global and Interregional</b>	Little Ice Age begins

## Humans and the Environment

- The Americas remained cut off environmentally and culturally from Afro-Eurasia.
- Nomadic and migratory populations (especially those of the Vikings, Mongols, Bantus, and Polynesians) continued to have a profound impact on large parts of the world.
- Massive epidemics struck Eurasia. Most famous was the “black death”: the wave of plague that swept China, the Middle East, and Europe in the 1300s.
- Human impact on the environment increased dramatically as a result of population growth and the greater capacity of advanced and urbanized societies to carry out large-scale engineering projects (such as China’s Grand Canal).
- The increased scale of agricultural production heightened the risks of soil erosion, deforestation, and other forms of major environmental damage.
- Mining, which expanded industrial production and increased demand for metals, gems, and jewels, exerted a growing impact on the environment.
- Increased trade activity spread plants and foodstuffs (including bananas, rice, cotton, sugar, spices, and fruits) far from their points of origin.
- A global warming trend called the medieval climatic optimum lasted between 800 and 1300, greatly affecting migration, agriculture, and interregional trade.
- Between the late 1200s and the early 1500s, a cooling trend began, leading to the so-called Little Ice Age, which persisted until the 1800s.

## QUESTIONS AND COMPARISONS TO CONSIDER

- Differences and likenesses of various interregional trade networks. What technological and communications innovations shaped them?
- Differences and likenesses among systems of labor organization, both free and coerced.
- What roles did environmental factors, such as the medieval climatic optimum and the Little Ice Age, play in social and economic development? What about diseases?
- Intellectual and cultural developments in different societies, and the intellectual and cultural influences exerted by different societies on each other. Good examples include the Middle Eastern influence on medieval Europe, India’s influence on Southeast Asia, the mutual influence between Tang China and the Abbasid caliphate (or between China and its neighbors), and the transfer of technology and knowledge throughout the Mongol empire during the “pax Mongolica.”
- Pay attention to explorers, travelers, and diasporic communities as agents of cultural diffusion and change. What cross-cultural exchanges were encouraged by the growth of trade and communications networks?
- Be aware of the methods and techniques that powerful states and empires used to administer their lands and project power effectively. How did they legitimate their power?
- How did the fall of powerful states and the reconstitution of new ones unfold in different parts of the world? Consider the post-Han dynasties in China or Europe after the fall of Rome, or the rise and fall of the different caliphates.
- How did new technology affect warfare during these years? Travel? Trade? Agriculture?
- What new state forms appeared during these years? How important is the nation-state, as opposed to empires and larger cultural units, as an object of study during this historical period?

- Consider the role of nomadic movement as a cause of change (environmental, social, political) during these years. Do the same for the growth of cities.
- Examine major migratory movements during this period and their various effects.
- What roles did religions play in political development, especially in areas that attempted to create large, multinational civilizations united by religion, such as Christendom and the Islamic caliphates?
- How did religion affect the status of women and the dynamics of family life in various parts of the world?