Period 3: Regional and Interregional Interactions, c. 600 C.E. to c. 1450

Key Concept 3.1. Expansion and Intensification of Communication and Exchange Networks

Although Afro-Eurasia and the Americas remained separate from one another, this era witnessed a deepening and widening of networks of human interaction within and across regions. The results were unprecedented concentrations of wealth and the intensification of cross-cultural exchanges. Innovations in transportation, state policies, and mercantile practices contributed to the expansion and development of commercial networks, which in turn served as conduits for cultural, technological, and biological diffusion within and between various societies. Pastoral or nomadic groups played a key role in creating and sustaining these networks. Expanding networks fostered greater interregional borrowing, while at the same time sustaining regional diversity. The prophet Muhammad promoted Islam, a new monotheistic religion, at the start of this period. It spread quickly through practices of trade, warfare, and diffusion characteristic of this period.

I. Improved transportation technologies and commercial practices led to an increased volume of trade, and expanded the geographical range of existing and newly active trade networks. [ENV-3, 6, 8 | CUL-6 | SB-1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9 | ECON-2, 5, 10, 11, 12]

A. Existing trade routes — including the Silk Roads, the Mediterranean Sea, the Trans-Saharan, and the Indian Ocean basin — flourished, and promoted the growth of powerful new trading cities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers have flexibility to use examples of new trading cities such as the following:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Novgorod</td>
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<td>• Timbuktu</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Swahili city-states</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Hangzhou</td>
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<td>• Calicut</td>
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<td>• Baghdad</td>
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<td>• Melaka</td>
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B. Communication and exchange networks developed in the Americas.
Teachers have flexibility to use examples of *networks* such as the following:

- Mississippi River Valley
- Mesoamerica
- Andes

C. The growth of interregional trade in luxury goods was encouraged by significant innovations in previously existing transportation and commercial technologies, including the caravanserai, use of the compass, astrolabe, and larger ship designs in sea travel; and new forms of credit and monetization.

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of *luxury goods* such as the following:

- Silk and cotton textiles
- Porcelain
- Spices
- Precious metals and gems
- Slaves
- Exotic animals

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of *new forms of credit and monetization* such as the following:

- Bills of exchange
- Credit
- Checks
- Banking houses

D. Commercial growth was also facilitated by state practices; including the Inca road system; trading organizations, including the Hanseatic League; and state-sponsored commercial infrastructures, including the Grand Canal in China.

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of *state practices* such as the following:

- Minting of coins
- Use of paper money

E. The expansion of empires — including China, the Byzantine Empire, the Caliphates, and the Mongols — facilitated Afro-Eurasian trade and communication as new peoples were drawn into their conquerors’ economies and trade networks.
II. The movement of peoples caused environmental and linguistic effects.
[ENV-3, 5, 6 | CUL-6 | SB-4]

A. The expansion and intensification of long-distance trade routes often depended on environmental knowledge and technological adaptations to it.

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of environmental knowledge and technological adaptations such as the following:

- The way Scandinavian Vikings used their longships to travel in coastal and open waters as well as in rivers and estuaries
- The way the Arabs and Berbers adapted camels to travel across and around the Sahara
- The way Central Asian pastoral groups used horses to travel in the steppes

B. Some migrations had a significant environmental impact, including:

- The migration of Bantu-speaking peoples who facilitated transmission of iron technologies and agricultural techniques in Sub-Saharan Africa
- The maritime migrations of the Polynesian peoples who cultivated transplanted foods and domesticated animals as they moved to new islands

C. Some migrations and commercial contacts led to the diffusion of languages throughout a new region or the emergence of new languages.

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of the diffusion of languages such as the following:

- The spread of Bantu languages
- The spread of Turkic and Arabic languages

III. Cross-cultural exchanges were fostered by the intensification of existing, or the creation of new, networks of trade and communication.
[CUL-1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9 | SB-4, 9, 10 | ECON-10, 12 | SOC-3, 5, 8]

A. Islam, based on the revelations of the prophet Muhammad, developed in the Arabian peninsula. The beliefs and practices of Islam reflected interactions among Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians with the local Arabian peoples. Muslim rule expanded to many parts of Afro-Eurasia due to military expansion, and Islam subsequently expanded through the activities of merchants and missionaries.

B. In key places along important trade routes, merchants set up diasporic communities where they introduced their own cultural traditions into the indigenous culture.

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of diasporic communities such as the following:

- Muslim merchant communities in the Indian Ocean region
- Chinese merchant communities in Southeast Asia
C. As exchange networks intensified, an increased number of travelers within Afro-Eurasia wrote about their travels. Their writings illustrate both the extent and the limitations of intercultural knowledge and understanding.

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of travelers such as the following:
- Ibn Battuta
- Marco Polo
- Xuanzang

D. Increased cross-cultural interactions resulted in the diffusion of literary, artistic, and cultural traditions, as well as scientific and technological innovations.

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of the diffusion of literary, artistic, and cultural traditions such as the following:
- The spread of Christianity throughout Europe
- The influence of Neoconfucianism and Buddhism in East Asia
- The spread of Hinduism and Buddhism into Southeast Asia
- The spread of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia
- The influence of Toltec/Mexica and Inca traditions in Mesoamerica and Andean America

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of the diffusion of scientific and technological innovations such as the following:
- The influence of Greek and Indian mathematics on Muslim scholars
- The return of Greek science and philosophy to Western Europe via Muslim al-Andalus in Iberia
- The spread of printing and gunpowder technologies from East Asia into the Islamic empires and Western Europe

IV. There was continued diffusion of crops and pathogens, including epidemic diseases like the bubonic plague, throughout the Eastern Hemisphere along the trade routes. [ENV-5, 7, 8 | ECON-10, 12]

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of diffusion of crops such as the following:
- Bananas in Africa
- New rice varieties in East Asia
- The spread of cotton, sugar, and citrus throughout Dar al-Islam and the Mediterranean basin
Key Concept 3.2. Continuity and Innovation of State Forms and Their Interactions

State formation in this era demonstrated remarkable continuity, innovation, and diversity in various regions. In Afro-Eurasia, some states attempted, with differing degrees of success, to preserve or revive imperial structures, while smaller, less centralized states continued to develop. The expansion of Islam introduced a new concept — the Caliphate — to Afro-Eurasian statecraft. Pastoral peoples in Eurasia built powerful and distinctive empires that integrated people and institutions from both the pastoral and agrarian worlds. In the Americas, powerful states developed in both Mesoamerica and the Andean region.

I. Empires collapsed and were reconstituted; in some regions new state forms emerged. [CUL-2, 4, 5 | SB-1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 | ECON-3, 12 | SOC-1, 4]

A. Following the collapses of empires, most reconstituted governments, including the Byzantine Empire and the Chinese dynasties — Sui, Tang, and Song — combined traditional sources of power and legitimacy with innovations better suited to their specific local context.

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of traditional sources of power and legitimacy such as the following:

- Patriarchy
- Religion
- Land-owning elites

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of innovations such as the following:

- New methods of taxation
- Tributary systems
- Adaptation of religious institutions

B. In some places, new forms of governance emerged including those developed in various Islamic states, the Mongol Khanates, city-states, and decentralized government (feudalism) in Europe and Japan.

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of Islamic states such as the following:

- Abbasids
- Muslim Iberia
- Delhi Sultanates
Teachers have flexibility to use examples of city-states such as the following:
- In the Italian peninsula
- In East Africa
- In Southeast Asia
- In the Americas

C. Some states synthesized local with foreign traditions.

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of synthesis by states such as the following:
- Persian traditions that influenced Islamic states
- Chinese traditions that influenced states in Japan

D. In the Americas, as in Afro-Eurasia, state systems expanded in scope and reach; networks of city-states flourished in the Maya region and, at the end of this period, imperial systems were created by the Mexica (“Aztecs”) and Inca.

II. Interregional contacts and conflicts between states and empires encouraged significant technological and cultural transfers, including transfers between Tang China and the Abbasids, transfers across the Mongol empires, transfers during the Crusades, and transfers during Chinese maritime activity led by Ming Admiral Zheng He. [CUL-6 | SB-4, 6, 8, 10 | ECON-10]

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of technological and cultural transfers such as the following:
- Paper-making techniques between Tang China and the Abbasids
- Gunpowder during the Mongol Empire
- Neoconfucianism from China to Korea and Japan

Key Concept 3.3. Increased Economic Productive Capacity and Its Consequences

Changes in trade networks resulted from and stimulated increasing productive capacity, with important implications for social and gender structures and environmental processes. Productivity rose in both agriculture and industry. Rising productivity supported population growth and urbanization but also strained environmental resources and at times caused dramatic demographic swings. Shifts in production and the increased volume of trade also stimulated new labor practices, including adaptation of existing patterns of free and coerced labor. Social and gender structures evolved in response to these changes.

I. Innovations stimulated agricultural and industrial production in many regions. [ENV-8, 9 | ECON-1, 3, 5, 10, 12]

A. Agricultural production increased significantly due to technological innovations.
Teachers have flexibility to use examples of technological innovations such as the following:

- The chinampa field systems
- Waru waru agricultural techniques in the Andean areas
- Improved terracing techniques
- The horse collar

B. Demand for foreign luxury goods increased in Afro-Eurasia. Chinese, Persian, and Indian artisans and merchants expanded their production of textiles and porcelains for export; industrial production of iron and steel expanded in China.

II. The fate of cities varied greatly, with periods of significant decline, and with periods of increased urbanization buoyed by rising productivity and expanding trade networks. [ENV-4, 5, 7 | SB-4, 5, 9 | ECON-2, 3, 5, 12]

A. Multiple factors contributed to the decline of urban areas in this period, including invasions, disease, and the decline of agricultural productivity.

B. Multiple factors contributed to urban revival, including: the end of invasions; the availability of safe and reliable transport; the rise of commerce and warmer temperatures between 800 and 1300; increased agricultural productivity and subsequent rising population; and greater availability of labor.

III. Despite significant continuities in social structures and in methods of production, there were also some important changes in labor management and in the effect of religious conversion on gender relations and family life. [CUL-4, 5 | SB-2, 4, 6, 7, 10 | ECON-3, 5, 6 | SOC-1, 2, 4, 5, 8]

A. The diversification of labor organization that began with settled agriculture continued in this period. Forms of labor organization included free peasant agriculture, nomadic pastoralism, craft production and guild organization, various forms of coerced and unfree labor, government-imposed labor taxes, and military obligations.

B. As in the previous period, social structures were shaped largely by class and caste hierarchies. Patriarchy persisted; however, in some areas, women exercised more power and influence, most notably among the Mongols and in West Africa, Japan, and Southeast Asia.

C. New forms of coerced labor appeared, including serfdom in Europe and Japan and the elaboration of the mit’a in the Inca Empire. Free peasants resisted attempts to raise dues and taxes by staging revolts. The demand for slaves for both military and domestic purposes increased, particularly in central Eurasia, parts of Africa, and the eastern Mediterranean.

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of regions where free peasants revolted such as the following:

- China
- The Byzantine Empire
D. The diffusion of Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Neoconfucianism often led to significant changes in gender relations and family structure.

Teachers have flexibility to use examples of *changes in gender relations and family structure* such as the following:

- Divorce for both men and women in some Muslim states
- The practice of foot binding in Song China