

BASIC 8

HISTORY LESSON NOTE

FIRST TERM

Subject Content

1. Ghana Empire: Location and origin of Ghana Empire
2. Socio-political structure of Ghana Empire: The Emperor/King of Ghana Empire
3. Socio-political structure of Ghana Empire: Description of the Capital city of Ghana Empire; the court system of Ghana Empire
4. Socio-political structure of Ghana Empire: The defence system and the economy of Ghana Empire
5. Factors that led to the rise of Ghana Empire
6. Factors that led to the fall of Ghana Empire
7. Mali Empire: Location and Origin of Mali Empire
8. The greatest Emperor of Mali Empire: Mansa Musa
9. Factors that led to the rise of Mali Empire
10. Factors that led to the fall of Mali Empire
11. Revision
12. Examination

Week 1

GHANA EMPIRE: LOCATION AND ORIGIN OF GHANA EMPIRE

Specific objectives: At the end of this lesson, I should be able to;

- 1. Identify the location of Ghana Empire**
- 2. Explain the origin of Ghana Empire**

LOCATION OF GHANA EMPIRE

Ghana Empire was a Western African Empire located in the sub Sahara desert situated in the northwest of Niger river in an area that now comprises south-eastern Mauritania and part of Mali.

The original name of the empire of Ghana was known as Wagadu. The name 'Ghana' was the general title of the rulers of Wagadu. The name Ghana gained fame as it was often used in courts which eventually led to the Empire being referred to as Ghana.

ORIGIN OF GHANA EMPIRE

Discussions of the origin of Ghana Empire have produced several accounts from different scholars. In the late 19th century, some traditional accounts were collected from the region which Ghana Empire covered. These traditions which were recorded and published describes the Kingdom as having been founded by a man called Dinga Cisse who is believed to have migrated from north Africa.

According to oral tradition, he migrated to variety of locations in Western Sudan leaving children was the difference wife in each location.

In a quest to achieve power in his final location, he had to kill a goblin and then married his daughters. Upon Dinga Cisse's death, his two sons Khine and Dyane contested the kingship taking over the rulership of the kingdom.

Some other schools of thought states that Ghana Empire was founded by the Berbers – a nomadic group originating from the Benu river from middle Africa. Others suggest that the presence of foreigners around the area was key to the Empire's foundation.

Week 2

SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF GHANA EMPIRE: THE EMPEROR/KING OF GHANA

Specific objectives: At the end of this lesson, I should be able to;

- 1. Explain the system of rulership but the Emperors of Ghana**
- 2. Discuss the means adopted by The emperors in funding the administration**

The kingdom of Wagadu had a Central emperor who resided in the capital city of Ghana. The general title of the Emperors in Ghana (Wagadu Kingdom) was known as "Ghana". The word Ghana meant "warrior-king ". It was the title Which the Soninke people used in calling their kings. This was however the name the Arabs (Berbers) used to call the place. Overtime, the kingdom of Wagadu became known as Ghana Empire.

The first king in Ghana Empire was Dinga Cisse who is believed to have founded the empire.

Various territories or provinces in Ghana Empire were administered by a governor who was appointed by the emperor and who is the representative of the emperor in the territory. The emperor also established a council of ministers. These ministers were to assist the emperor in the administration of the entire Empire.

There was a well structured system put in place by the emperor to make sure that taxes were collected from traders who engaged in gold, salt and ivory trade into and from his Empire.

The Empire eventually structured its system of tax into two;

First was the import and export tax which allowed merchant (traders) to be able to bring goods into and out of Ghana Empire after payment of tax.

The second was production tax which was majorly on gold.

The revenue generated through this tax system helped the emperor to finance the administration of his empire and to pay the ministers, governors and soldiers.

Week 3

SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF GHANA EMPIRE: THE CAPITAL CITY AND COURT SYSTEM OF GHANA EMPIRE

Specific objectives: At the end of this lesson, I should be able to;

- 1. Describe the capital city of Ghana Empire**
- 2. Explain the court system of Ghana**

THE CAPITAL CITY OF GHANA EMPIRE

The capital city of ancient Ghana Empire was Koumbi Saleh on the rim of the Sahara desert. This is where the emperor of Ghana lived in his royal palace. Archaeologist estimate that up to 20,000 people lived in and around the capital city.

The capital actually had two cities 6 miles apart. But settlement between the cities became so crowded due to the influx of people coming in to trade which led to the combination of the two into one. Most of the houses in Koumbi Saleh were built of wood and clay but wealthy and important residents lived in homes of wood and stone.

THE COURT SYSTEM OF GHANA EMPIRE

The Empire had a court of justice and a court of appeal which were both presided over by the emperor of Ghana Empire where he heard and passed judgement on positions and appeals. Each day, the king assembled his court and allowed people to publicly voice their complaints. Whether they were neighbourly conflicts or cases of violated human rights, the king listened to the complaint and gave his judgement.

Such hearings were reportedly peaceful, unless they involved issues of criminal nature. Two of the most serious criminal offences were the denial of debt and shedding of blood. These crimes were tried by ordeals.

According to reports, the accused was given a foul concoction of drink that consisted of sour and bitter tasting wood and water. If he vomited, he was declared innocent and was congratulated for passing the test. If he does not vomit and the beverage remained within, he was considered guilty as charged and suffered the king's wrath.

Week 4

SOCIO-POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF GHANA EMPIRE: THE DEFENCE SYSTEM AND ECONOMY OF GHANA EMPIRE

Specific objectives: At the end of this lesson, I should be able to;

- 1. Explain the defence system of Ghana Empire**
- 2. Describe the economy of Ghana Empire**

THE DEFENCE SYSTEM OF GHANA EMPIRE

The military of Ghana Empire was an important institution in Ghana Empire. The military of Ghana Empire was structured in a way that the ruler of the Empire was the military commander. The Empire had a large army of about 200,000 men with over 40,000 of the men (archers) fully armed with bows and arrows.

The army was tasked with the protection of the kingdom's borders, trade routes and the upkeep of the capital city, major markets and the entire territory of the empire as well as to keep in check the vassal states that were subordinates to Ghana Empire. The army was also a tool used in expanding the Empire through conquest of new territories.

THE ECONOMY OF GHANA

Ghana Empire dominated central west African trade in the upper valley of the Niger river from 6th century. Control of regional trade was a lucrative business for the kings who

passed on goods like gold, ivory, stones, slaves, etc. to Muslim merchants in exchange for salt and other luxurious goods.

The king generated huge revenue from tax as goods were often taxed twice when they came into the empire and again when they left.

The Empire also had resources like iron ore and gold which had so much value and were traded with luxurious goods coming from North.

Week 5

RISE OF GHANA EMPIRE

Specific objectives: At the end of this lesson, I should be able to;

- 1. Explain the political factors that led to the rise of Ghana Empire**
- 2. Discuss the economic factors that led to the rise of Ghana Empire**

Ghana Empire during its time of existence was a very powerful Empire. It rose to prominence between the years 700AD and 1240AD. The factors that led to the rise of Ghana Empire include;

- 1. Introduction of camels to Ghana Empire:** The use of camels in the empire helped the rulers of the empire by promoting trans-Saharan trade, which contributed to the economic prosperity of Ghana.
- 2. Fertile land for Agriculture:** Like in most West African areas, the land of Ghana Empire was fertile for agricultural activities. The people engaged in farming for consumption and trade. This contributed to their economic development. They exchanged agricultural products for other products.
- 3. Presence of natural resources like Gold and Salt:** The Old Ghana Empire had natural resources in very large amount. Gold was one of the major natural resources that made Old Ghana Empire wealthy and famous. Several visitors and North African

traders testified to the rich deposits of gold in the area. Gold ornaments were produced as articles of trade and royal regalia.

4. **Trade and commercial relations with her neighbours:** The people of Old Ghana engaged in long distance trade with her neighbours in Western Sudan and North Africa such as Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Libya and Tunisia. This trade became more important with the natural resources like gold, which was highly demanded by the North Africans and societies across the Mediterranean and the Red Sea.
5. **Strength of the army and territorial expansion:** The Old Ghana Empire developed a very strong army, which ensured its defence and protection of its territorial integrity as well as conquering other neighbouring states; horses were imported from North Africa for the army.
6. **Able leadership:** The Old Ghana Empire had strong rulers who were able to maintain peace and stability of the empire. The rulers established well planned cities. They accommodated Muslim scholars who provided essential services in the administration of the empire. Muslim scholars were employed as judges, treasurers and record keepers.

Week 6

FALL OF GHANA EMPIRE

Specific objectives: At the end of this lesson, I should be able to;

1. **Explain factors that led to the fall of Ghana Empire**
2. **Discuss the reason for the Almoravids invasion of Ghana Empire**

Some factors were responsible for the decline and collapse of Ghana Empire. They are;

1. **Disunity:** The desire for independence on the part of member states known as Vassal states slowly led to its decline

2. **Hardtimes:** The empire often experienced drought leading to famine. This condition was becoming more frequent.
3. **Religious conflicts:** The African Muslim ruling class forcing Islam on the African masses led to conflict which made people flee the empire.
4. **Arab and Berber aggression:** Raids and invasions by the Berbers and the Arabians from Almoravids dynasty of Morocco in North Africa further weakened the empire. The decline of Ghana Empire was heavily caused by the emergence of the Muslim Almoravids who waged a holy war on them in order to impose their religious views on them. The Almoravids upon the war seized Audaghost in 1054AD a major trading deserts of Ghana Empire. Koumbi was also captured in 1076AD and ruled by Empire until 1088AD.

With the aforementioned factors, Ghana Empire was not able to return to his old Glory as the Almoravids domination of Ghana Empire lasted a few years and the activities upset the trade on which the Empire depended on. As a result, the Empire was not able to stand strong which led to the capture of Susu (a major subject of Ghana Empire) in 1240AD by Sumanguru. Subsequently, the city was destroyed by and incorporated into the emerging Empire of Mali leading to final collapse of Ghana Empire in 1240AD

Week 7

MALI EMPIRE: LOCATION AND ORIGIN OF MALI EMPIRE

Specific objectives: At the end of this lesson, I should be able to;

1. **Identify the location of Mali Empire**
2. **Explain the origin of Mali Empire**

LOCATION OF MALI EMPIRE

Mali Empire also known as Manden Kurufaba was located in what today is called west African region.

At it's peak, Mali empire under Laye Keita Musa when the Empire control over 400 cities, towns and villages covered a land area of about 1,240,140 km².

In fact, in the 14th century, Mali Empire was the second largest Empire in the world after the Mongol empire. Mali Empire covered modern day countries of Senegal, Mali, Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, southern Mauritania, northern Burkina Faso, Western Niger and northern Ghana.

ORIGIN OF MALI EMPIRE

Mali Empire was founded by Sundiata Keita in 1235AD. The empire originally started off as a small Madinka kings around Niani in the upper area of Niger river in the 11th century until Sundiata Keita was able to defeat Ghana empire and Sosso empire. With this, he was able to gain independence for his Kingdom and eventually expand its territory.

The emergence of Mali Empire started immediately after Sundiata Keita, the exiled prince mobilized a collision of smaller kingdoms to fight emperor Sumanguru Kante around 1235AD in the battle of Karina in the Koulikoro region of present-day Republic of Mali.

The moment Sundiata Keita defeated Sumanguru who was the emperor of Sosso people, both the empire of Sosso and the declining Ghana became his subject and a new Mali Empire took charge of the trans-Saharan trade route.

Week 8

THE GREATEST EMPEROR OF MALI EMPIRE: MANSA MUSA

Specific objectives: At the end of this lesson, I should be able to;

- 1. State the period of Mansa Musa's rulership of Mali Empire**
- 2. Explain the legacies of Mansa Musa**

The most famous king of Mali Empire was Mansa Kankan Musa. He was the grandson of Sundiata Keita's sister and came into power in 1307 AD.

Mansa Musa was able to restore peace in the western region of west Sudan (the fallen Ghana Empire area) and through his pilgrimage to Mecca, he was able to spread the fame of Mali Empire. Mansa Musa during his reign was able to take control of Timbuktu and Gao and also gold producing regions of Galam, Bambouk and Boure in the south.

Mansa Musa expanded his territory to the east as far as reaching the borders of Hausaland in present day Nigeria.

Mansa Musa during his reign sent ambassadors to Morocco, Tripoli and Egypt and he brought many scholars from Egypt to Mali to advance the course of education in his Empire.

Mansa Musa converted to Islam and in 1324AD, he went on pilgrimage to Mecca passing through Cairo in Egypt. He took a large quantity of gold along with him which he gave as gifts to people as a journey to Mecca.

In 1327AD, Mansa Musa completed the great mosque in Timbuktu and constructed many other magnificent building in Timbuktu. He also built the largest library in Africa at that time. This library could accommodate between 250,000 and 700,000 manuscripts.

Mansa Musa died around 1337AD and was succeeded by his son Mansa Meghan.

Week 9

RISE OF MALI EMPIRE

Specific objectives: At the end of this lesson, I should be able to;

- 1. Explain the political factors that led to the rise of Mali Empire**
- 2. Discuss the economic factors that led to the rise of Mali Empire**

Factors that led to the rise of Mali Empire are thus:

1. **Capable leadership:** Mali Empire produced capable leaders, for example, Mansa Musa who was reputed to be a very wise and efficient administrator.
2. **Conquest of surrounding cities:** The conquest of some cities and its surrounding areas led to the expansion of the empire. Some of the leaders, such as Mansa Abubakar II, Mansa Musa, among others, launched successful military expeditions to expand the empire.
3. **Organisation of a formidable army:** Mali Empire established a strong military which guarded its borders and citizens against conquests. Mali Empire at its peak could boast of an army of more than 100,000 soldiers.
4. **Trading activities:** The empire traded in gold and other commodities with neighbouring states, North Africa and parts of Europe, this generated substantial revenue.
5. **Increase in tax revenue:** Taxes were collected from imported and exported goods which contributed to increase in government revenue.
6. **Control of the trans-Saharan trade routes:** Mali control of the trans-Saharan trade routes boosted its economy. This made North African merchants settle in Mali Empire and promoted trade links with Sudan.

Week 10

FALL OF MALI EMPIRE

Specific objectives: At the end of this lesson, I should be able to;

1. **Mention the year of the Mali empire collapse**
2. **Explain factors that led to the fall of Mali Empire**

Mali Empire due to some factors slowly declined until its final collapse in 1670AD. The factors that contributed to the fall of Mali Empire are contained in the succeeding paragraphs.

- 1. Internal civil wars and rebellions:** Internal disputes resulted to wars within the empire. The empire encountered external attacks which led to the capture of Timbuktu and other major trading centres which affected its revenue supply.
- 2. Incapable leadership:** There was political instability created by the emergence of bad leaders whose reigns were usually short. This was after the reign of Mansa Musa.
- 3. Rise of Songhai empire:** Songhai led the city of Gao to revolt against Mali empire. By the 16th century, the rebels and invaders had reduced the empire to its original size where the Malinke people lived before. The empire experienced gradual loss of its northern and eastern vassal states to the rising Songhai Empire; this affected its revenue and supply of slaves.
- 4. Succession dispute after the death of Mahmud Keita:** There was power struggle among the three sons of Mansa Mahmud IV after his death, which contributed to the fall of the empire.