**INTERREGIONAL INTERACTIONS**

**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.**

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.

B. Communication and exchange networks developed in the Americas.

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.

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.

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.

**ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, NEW TRADING CITIES:**
- Novgorod
- Timbuktu
- Swahili city-states
- Hangzhou
- Calicut
- Baghdad
- Melaka
- Venice
- Tenochtitlan
- Cahokia

**ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, NETWORKS:**
- Mississippi River Valley
- Mesoamerica
- Andes

**ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, LUXURY GOODS:**
- Silk and cotton textiles
- Porcelain
- Spices
- Precious metals and gems
- Slaves
- Exotic animals

**ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, NEW FORMS OF CREDIT AND MONETIZATION:**
- Bills of exchange
- Credit
- Checks
- Banking houses
LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR 3.1.II

ENV-3 Explain the environmental advantages and disadvantages of major migration, communication, and exchange networks.

ENV-5 Explain how human migrations affected the environment.

ENV-6 Explain how people used technology to overcome geographic barriers to migration over time.

CUL-6 Explain how cross-cultural interactions resulted in the diffusion of technologies and scientific knowledge.

SB-4 Explain and compare how social, cultural, and environmental factors influenced state formation, expansion, and dissolution.

II. The movement of peoples caused environmental and linguistic effects.

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

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.
III. Cross-cultural exchanges were fostered by the intensification of existing, or the creation of new, networks of trade and communication.

A. Islam, based on the revelations of the prophet Muhammad, developed in the Arabian Peninsula. The beliefs and practices of Islam rejected 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.

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.

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

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, DIASPORIC COMMUNITIES:

- Muslim merchant communities in the Indian Ocean region
- Chinese merchant communities in Southeast Asia
- Sogdian merchant communities throughout Central Asia
- Jewish communities in the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean basin, or along the Silk Roads

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, TRAVELERS:

- Ibn Battuta
- Marco Polo
- Xuanzang

ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, DIFFUSION OF LITERARY, ARTISTIC, AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS:

- 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

LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR 3.1.III

CUL-1 Compare the origins, principal beliefs, and practices of the major world religions and belief systems.

CUL-2 Explain how religious belief systems developed and spread as a result of expanding communication and exchange networks.

CUL-3 Explain how major philosophies and ideologies developed and spread as a result of expanding communication and exchange networks.

CUL-4 Analyze the ways in which religious and secular belief systems affected political, economic, and social institutions.

CUL-5 Analyze ways in which religious beliefs and practices have sustained or challenged class, gender, and racial ideologies.

CUL-6 Explain how cross-cultural interactions resulted in the diffusion of technologies and scientific knowledge.

CUL-7 Analyze how new scientific, technological, and medical innovations affected religions, belief systems, philosophies, and major ideologies.

CUL-8 Explain how economic, religious, and political elites defined and sponsored art and architecture.

CUL-9 Explain the relationship between expanding exchange networks and the emergence of various forms of transregional culture, including music, literature, and visual art.

SB-4 Explain and compare how social, cultural, and environmental factors influenced state formation, expansion, and dissolution.

SB-5 Analyze the political and economic interactions between states and non-state actors.

ECON-10 Analyze the roles of pastoralists, traders, and travelers in the diffusion of crops, animals, commodities, and technologies.

ECON-12 Evaluate how and to what extent networks of exchange have expanded, contracted, or changed over time.

SOC-3 Assess the impact that different ideologies, philosophies, and religions had on social hierarchies.

SOC-5 Analyze ways in which religious beliefs and practices have sustained or challenged class, gender, and racial ideologies.

SOC-8 Analyze the extent to which migrations changed social structures in both the sending and receiving societies.
IV. There was continued diffusion of crops and pathogens, including epidemic diseases like the bubonic plague, throughout the Eastern Hemisphere along the trade routes.

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.

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.

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.

C. Some states synthesized local with foreign traditions

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.

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.

C. Agricultural production increased significantly due to technological innovations.

D. 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 periods of increased urbanization buoyed by rising productivity and expanding trade networks.

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.

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.

D. The diffusion of Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and Neo-Confucianism often led to significant changes in gender relations and family structure.

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<tr>
<th>LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR 3.3.III</th>
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<td><strong>CUL-4</strong> Analyze the ways in which religious and secular belief systems affected political, economic, and social institutions.</td>
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<td><strong>CUL-5</strong> Explain and compare how teachings and social practices of different religious and secular belief systems affected gender roles and family structures.</td>
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<td><strong>SB-2</strong> Analyze how the functions and institutions of governments have changed over time.</td>
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<td><strong>SB-7</strong> Assess how and why internal conflicts, such as revolts and revolutions, have influenced the process of state building, expansion, and dissolution.</td>
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<td><strong>ECON-3</strong> Assess the economic strategies of different types of states and empires.</td>
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<td><strong>ECON-5</strong> Explain and compare forms of labor organization, including families and labor specialization within and across different societies.</td>
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<td><strong>SOC-1</strong> Analyze the development of continuities and changes in gender hierarchies, including patriarchy.</td>
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<td><strong>SOC-2</strong> Assess how the development of specialized labor systems interacted with the development of social hierarchies.</td>
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**ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, REGIONS WHERE FREE PEASANTS REVOLTED:**
- China
- The Byzantine Empire

**ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES, CHANGES IN GENDER RELATIONS AND FAMILY STRUCTURE:**
- Divorce for both men and women in some Muslim states
- The practice of foot binding in Song China