

In the beginning of
the eleventh century,



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In this essay I will describe the civilizations of Africa and the New World. I will show how these great civilizations were alike and how they were not. The Africans and the Indians were alike in their rise to greatness, each achieving it through conquest.

They were also alike in their means of survival; all were agricultural peoples. These two cultures both experienced tremendous wealth and all were a model for civilizations to come. All African societies shared one basic feature: a close relationship between political and social organization (McKay, 292).

African societies were referred to as “stateless societies”, which were culturally similar ethnic groups. The smaller ones were nomadic hunting groups while the larger ones were often agricultural or herding groups (McKay, 293). Africa is composed of many kingdoms, two of which will be discussed in the following paragraphs. The Kingdom of Ghana was one of the most remarkable African kingdoms. The Ghanians were an agricultural people and skillful farming and an efficient irrigation system led to an abundant supply of crops, which led to a dramatic growth in population.

By the beginning of the eleventh century, the king exercised power over a territory equivalent to the size of Texas. All authority sprang from the king. Religious ceremonies and court rituals emphasized the king’s sacredness and were intended to strengthen his authority. A council of ministers assisted the king in the work of government, most of these ministers were Muslim. Muslim ideas, skills, and literacy served the royal administration well. However, the king and his peoples clung to their ancestral religion, and Ghana’s basic political institutions remained African (293). The governing aristocracy-the king, his court, and Muslim administrators-occupied the

highest rung on the Ghanians social ladder. On the next rung stood the merchant class, next were the farmers and last were the slaves; apart from these social classes stood the army.

High status was based on blood and royal service (295). Building on Ghana's foundations, Mali developed into a better-organized and more powerful state than Ghana. The kingdom of Mali owed its greatness to two basic assets. First, its strong agricultural and commercial base provided for a large population and enormous wealth.

Second Mali had two rulers, Sundiata and Mansa Musa, who combined military success with exceptionally creative personalities. Sundiata who ruled from 1230 to 1255 transformed the city into an important financial and trading center. He then launched a policy of imperialism and through a series of military victories Sundiata and his successors absorbed into Mali other territories of the former kingdom of Ghana (296). Sundiata's descendant Mansa Musa who reigned from 1312 to 1337 continued these expansionist policies in the fourteenth century. Throughout his territories Mansa Musa maintained strict royal control over rich Trans-Saharan trade.

As a result, this empire, which was twice the size of Ghana, brought Mansa Musa enormous wealth. The social classes were divided in the same way as in Ghana. The emperor took responsibility for the territories that formed the heart of the empire and appointed governors to rule the outlying provinces or kingdoms (297). The Aztec Empire ruled Mexico from 1427 to 1519 C. E.

Its founders were the Mexica and they migrated to the Valley of Mexico in the middle of the 13th century. The Mexica were a hunter-gatherer people

<https://assignbuster.com/in-the-beginning-of-the-eleventh-century/>

and they farmed for a living. In 1325 they founded the city of Tenochtitlan. In 1427 the Mexica formed a triple alliance with the city-states of Texacoco and Tlacopan, and they began a series of conquests, which led to a great and extended empire. The basic unit of Aztec society was the calpulli, which was a clan or group, based on family relationships, that regulated its own affairs and was overseen by an elected council. The calpulli became based on political divisions, as the city grew large and complex. The ruler of the Aztecs was considered semi-divine and a descendant of the Aztec gods.

The Aztec society had strict classes, but its citizens were not refrained from change in status. The Aztec people were excellent crafts people, but farming provided the basis of the Aztec economy. They developed irrigation systems and chinampas, artificial islands, in order to grow corn, squash, vegetables