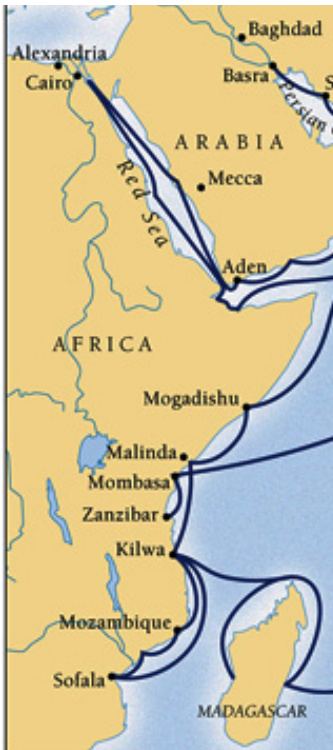


IBN BATTUTA ON MERCHANTS IN MOGADISHU

Directions: The famous Moroccan Berber traveler and scholar Ibn Battuta visited the city of Mogadishu, in what is today the nation of Somalia, along the East African coast. Mogadishu was one of the many Swahili states that grew powerful in this period due to their involvement of the Indian Ocean trade. Read his account below to see how the people of Mogadishu treated the visiting merchants.



Treatment of Visiting Merchants

On leaving Zayla we sailed for fifteen days and came to Maqdashaw (Mogadishu), which is an enormous town. [with] many resources; they own large numbers of camels, of which they slaughter hundreds every day [for food], and also have many sheep. It is the custom of the people of this town that, when a vessel (ship) reaches port, it is met by *sumbuqs*, which are small boats, in each of which are a number of young men, each carrying a covered dish containing food. He presents this to one of the merchants on the ship saying, "this is my guest," and all others do the same. Each merchant... goes only to the house of the young man who is his host... The host then sells the merchant's goods for him and buys for him, and if anyone buys anything from the merchant at too low a price, or sells to the merchant in the absence of his host, the people of Magdashaw consider the sale as invalid (canceled). There is a profit for them in this routine...



Special Treatment on Friday

...We stayed three days and food was brought to us three times a day, for that is their custom. On the fourth day, which was a Friday, the Islamic judge and students and one of the rulers' assistants came to me, bringing a set of robes. These official robes of theirs consist of a silk wrapper which one ties round his waist in place of trousers and a belt. We went to the grand mosque and made our prayers behind the area that was only for the ruler. When the leader came out of the door he said, "You are heartily welcome, and you have honored our land and given us pleasure."

1. How were merchants treated when they came to visit the town of Mogadishu?
2. Who actually did the buying and selling for the merchant? What advantage do you think this gave the merchant?

3. How was Ibn Battuta treated during his visit?

4. Why do you think the people of Mogadishu treated their guests and visitors in such a way? Why would it be in the interest of the city to do so?

SUMMARY QUESTIONS: Indian Ocean Trade Network

1. How did monsoons make the Indian Ocean Trade Network possible?

2. Why did Lateen sails help facilitate (make easier) trade in the Indian Ocean?

3. How did the Indian Ocean Trade Network lead to the creation of new states/empires? Give one example.

4. How did the Indian Ocean Trade Network lead to the creation of a new language?

5. How did the Indian Ocean Trade Network help the spread of religion? Give one example.