

Key Learning

Two new kingdoms emerged in the old Aksumite lands. The first dynasty that ruled the new kingdom was called Zagwe. In 1270 the Zagwe king was overthrown by a rebel army. The new kingdom of Ethiopia would last for over 700 years. Historians call the dynasty that ruled Ethiopia the Solomonic dynasty. This new empire faced many challenges.

Zara Yaqob's father ruled Ethiopia for 31 years. But he died in 1413 after being kicked by a horse. Zara Yaqob's brothers fought each other for power. Ethiopia was ruled by four kings in four years! In 1434 Zara Yaqob returned and was crowned king. In 1439 he travelled to Aksum to be consecrated.

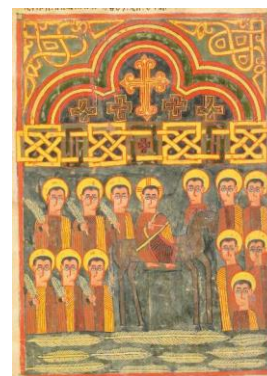
Historians think that Zara Yaqob decided that his people would be more united if they shared the same religion. He wanted to make Christianity part of the daily lives of the Ethiopian people. In May 1450 Zara Yaqob sent three ambassadors to Rome to meet the pope. They brought back many items with them to fill the churches and monasteries in Ethiopia.

The Edo people lived in the kingdom of Benin. Historians think that Ewuare became Oba of Benin in around 1440CE. Many small kingdoms developed in this part of west Africa especially in the rainforest. Historians know about these kingdoms through intricately decorated objects. The peoples of west Africa also told oral traditions.

Oba Ewuare and Zara Yaqob both ruled at the same time but each ruled very differently. Edo oral traditions say that in order to win the throne, Eware had Benin City burned to the ground and then he decided to rebuild the city. The layout was planned to create a strict hierarchy. In the middle of the city was his palace.

Special objects have been discovered and historians have used these to work out how the oba showed their power to their people. The oba also strictly controlled how craftspeople worked and how objects were made. The Edo had special rituals with which to honour their ancestors and gods and to seek their help in protecting the kingdom.

Medieval African Kingdoms; Ethiopia and Benin



Vocabulary

Artisan	A person skilled in making things, especially by using the hands.
Befell	(especially of something bad) happen to (someone).
Brocade	A rich fabric woven with a raised pattern, typically with gold or silver thread.
Christendom	The worldwide body or society of Christians.
Entreaty	An earnest or humble request.
Furtively	in a way that attempts to avoid notice or attention; secretly.
Hide	an animal skin treated for human use.
Hierarchy	a system in which members of an organization or society are ranked according to relative status or authority.
Millet	a cereal grown in warm countries and regions with poor soils, bearing a large crop of small seeds which are chiefly used to make flour.
Reclaim	Retrieve or recover (something previously lost, given, or paid); obtain the return of.
Regalia	The distinguishing decorations or symbols of any organization, position, or office/the signs and symbols of royalty.
Relics	An object surviving from an earlier time, especially one of historical interest.
Psalter	A copy of the biblical Psalm.
Psalms	A sacred song or hymn, in particular any of those contained in the biblical Book of Psalms and used in Christian and Jewish worship.
Virtues	Behaviour showing high moral standards.

Medieval African Kingdoms; Ethiopia and Benin

1270 The Zagwe king was overthrown	1434 Zara Yaqob became king of Ethiopia.	1439 Zara Yaqob was consecrated in Aksum.	1440 Eware became Oba.	1450 Zara Yaqob sent three ambassadors to Rome to meet the pope.
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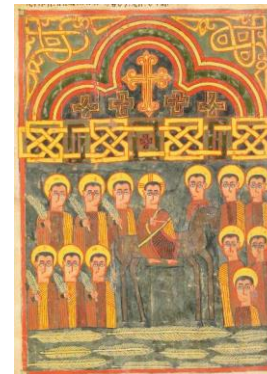
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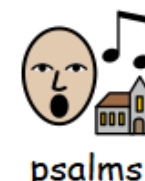
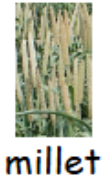
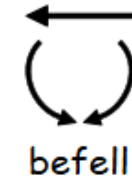
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Vocabulary



Rights and Global Goals

Rights



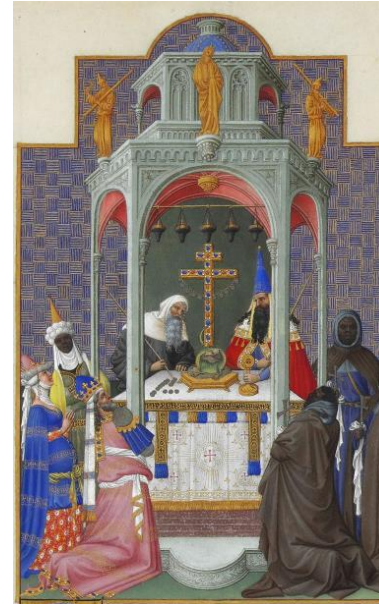
Global Goals

No. 9 - Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

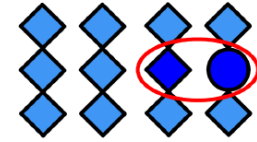
No. 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities

Prior Learning

- Year 4- Christianity in three empires with a focus on Aksum



Big Ideas



Similarity
and
Difference

National Treasures

Over 900 objects from the historic Kingdom of Benin are currently cared for by the British Museum.

