

## Swahili Cities of East Africa

The two primary source extracts below were written by Duarte Barbosa, a Portuguese trader upon trading in East Africa around 1500 C.E.

**Instructions:** Read the two sources then answer the essential questions that follow. The map has been provided for your geographical reference.



**KILWA:** Going along the coast from this town of Mozambique, there is an island hard by the mainland which is called Kilwa, in which a Moorish town with fair houses of stone and mortar, with many windows after our fashion, very well arranged in streets, with many flat roofs. Around it are streams and orchards and fruit gardens with many channels of sweet water. It has a Moorish king over it. From this place they trade with Sofala, whence they bring back gold.

Before the King our Lord of Portugal sent out his expedition to discover India, the Moors of Sofala, Cuama, Angoya, and Mozambique were all subject to the king of Kilwa, who was the most mighty king among them. And in this town was plenty of gold, as no ships passed towards Sofala without first coming to this island. Of the Moors there are some fair and some black, they are finely clad in many rich garments of gold and silk and cotton, and the women as well; also with much gold and silver in chains and bracelets, which they wear on their legs and arms, and many jeweled earrings in their ears. These Moors speak Arabic and follow the creed of the Alcoran (Quran).

**SOFALA:** They came in small vessels named *zambucos* from the kingdom of Kilwa, Mombasa, and Malindi, bringing many cotton cloths, some spotted and others white and blue, also some of silk, and many small beads, gray, red, and yellow, which things come to the said kingdom from the great kingdom of Cambay (India).

The Moors of Sofala kept these wares and sold them afterwards to the heathen of the Kingdom of Benametapa, who came thither laden with gold which they gave in exchange for the said cloths without weighing it. These Moors collect also great store of ivory which they find hard by Sofala, and this they also sell in the Kingdom of Cambay.

These Moors are black, and some of them tawny; some of them speak Arabic, but the more part use the language of the country. They clothe themselves from the waist down with cotton and silk cloths, and other cloths they wear over their shoulders like capes, and turbans on their heads. Some of them wear small caps dyed in grain in chequers (checks) and other woolen cloths in many tints.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Who were the Moors?

**Moor**, in English usage, a Moroccan or, formerly, a member of the Muslim population of **al-Andalus**, now Spain and Portugal. Of mixed Arab, Spanish, and Amazigh (Berber) origins, the Moors created the Arab Andalusian civilization and subsequently settled as refugees in the Maghreb (in the region of North Africa) between the 11th and 17th centuries. (On January 2, 1492, King Boabdil surrendered Granada to the Spanish forces, and in 1502 the Spanish crown ordered all Muslims forcibly converted to Christianity. The next century saw a number of persecutions, and in 1609 the last Moors still adhering to Islam were expelled from Spain).

Answer the following questions using complete sentences and relevant information contained within the passages.

1. According to the two reports of Duarte Barbosa, what would you conclude was his reaction to what he saw in the East African cities of Kilwa and Sofala?
2. What specific items did he notice and record in his writings and why do you think that he saw these items as important?
3. What are they most important items that are traded in this region of Africa and what evidence is there within the two passages of long-distance trade?
4. Withing the two passages, identify specific areas of cultural assimilation, especially with both religion and language.