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### Research and Writing Assignment- Ghana

While reading, the Empire of Ghana stood out to me, and their climb to power was very fascinating. In this assignment, I will focus on Ghana and compare it to the South Indian Chola Kingdom. According to the text, Ghana's Empire started as a poorly structured kingdom, but by the 700s, it emerged as a powerful state in the western Sahel. Its ruler was Ghana, and he maintained a strong army but highly worshiped religious tradition. In comparison, The Chola Kingdom occupied an important regional place in the Indian Ocean world. It emerged in the late 800s and ruled much of South India in the mid-900s. Like Ghana, it started as a weak kingdom. It adapted to a North Indian model, powered by a warrior elite and an aggressive policy of naval-based raiding and expansion around the Bay of Bengal by their first king Rajaraja I. Although the Chola Empire did put their focus on naval power, their expeditions and raids were made to retrieve religious relics, strengthening royal rule.

When it came to trade, many of the initial problems that the Ghana Empire faced were because of the value of exports. They were, in fact, strong in trade, but any change in trade stability led to more severe threats. Around 1067, the Ghana Empire came into conflict over trade routes with an Islamic state, which added more trouble to the

kingdom and its army. Soon after, the Ghana Empire fell apart. Similarly, when it came to trade for the Chola Empire, expeditions helped them finance trade growth. The empire's kings patronized Hindu temples to grow in trade because they served as a market and merchant activity centers. For a while, the kingdom dominated network connections with no problem, but eventually, in 1279, overextension led to the decline and fall of Chola's rule and power.

Although both of these empires fell after their troubles with trade, they left a significant impact on the culture of the empires that came after them. Ghana, for example, borrowed and adjusted a new writing system. In order to make the writing their own and of their culture, some changes had to be made, but this writing system strengthened their culture. In the case of the Chola, they adopted new artistic culture. They created bronze statues of gods and goddesses, an example being the elephant-headed Ganesh, which demonstrated a new high level of skill for members of the kingdom.

Below is a diagram of Ghana's social hierarchy and a description of the responsibilities of each class member. Like many empires, it was tough for people to move up on the social scale in the Empire of Ghana. But it was also uncommon for people to be demoted from one class to a lower one.

## Rulers/Kings

ruled over everyone and was thought to have divine powers

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## Nobles

people who fought in the King's army and provided it with weapons

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## Farmers

were the largest social class throughout Ancient Ghana, and worked on land owned by the nobles

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## Craftspeople

produced things such as metal work, and pottery

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## Tradesmen

were looked down upon due to the fact that they did not make their own goods but were quite rich, most of them richer than farmers

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## Slaves

worked for the richer people of Ancient Ghana, and were often traded for textiles, beads, or other finished goods.

### **Work Cited**

“Social, Religious, and Political Aspects.” *Ghana*,

<https://ancientafricaghana.weebly.com/ghana--social-religious-and-political-aspects.html>.