



# WHO ARE THE SOMALI PEOPLE?

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# Essential Question:

What are the key factors that have influenced the **origins, migrations, and settlements of the Somali people**, and how do different theories explain their cultural and historical development?

# LEARNING TARGET:



I can analyze the origins, migrations, and settlements of the Somali people, distinguishing between different theories regarding their beginnings and understanding how historical movements and cultural exchanges have shaped Somali identity and society.

**What are your thoughts  
on the origins of the  
Somali people?**

**Know...**

**Wonder...**



# Arabian Peninsula Theory

The Somali people are believed to be descended from Arabs who migrated from the Arabian Peninsula to the Horn of Africa, particularly the Somali region.



# African Indigenous Theory

This theory asserts that the Somali people are primarily indigenous to the Horn of Africa, with roots in the ancient Cushitic-speaking populations that inhabited the region long before any significant Arab migration.



# Eastern Cushites Heritage

The Somalis are classified as part of the broader Eastern Cushites, within the Afro-Asiatic language family.

- Includes Cushitic languages: Somali, Oromo, Afar.
- Other Afro-Asiatic languages: Hausa, Arabic, Hebrew, Amharic.





# Proto-Sams and Somali Origins

## Subgroup Identification:

- Somalis are a subgroup of the Omo-Tana called **Sam**.

## Geographical Expansion:

- The proto-Sam spread to the grazing plains of **northern Kenya**.
- They followed the **Tana River** and reached the **Indian Ocean coast** before the first century AD.



# Migration

## Migration Patterns:

One group moved northward to populate **southern Somalia**.

## Economic Adaptation:

This group developed a mixed economy centered on **farming** and **animal husbandry**.

## Cultural Identity:

Members of the proto-Sam who settled in the Somali Peninsula are known as the **Samaale** or **Somaal**.

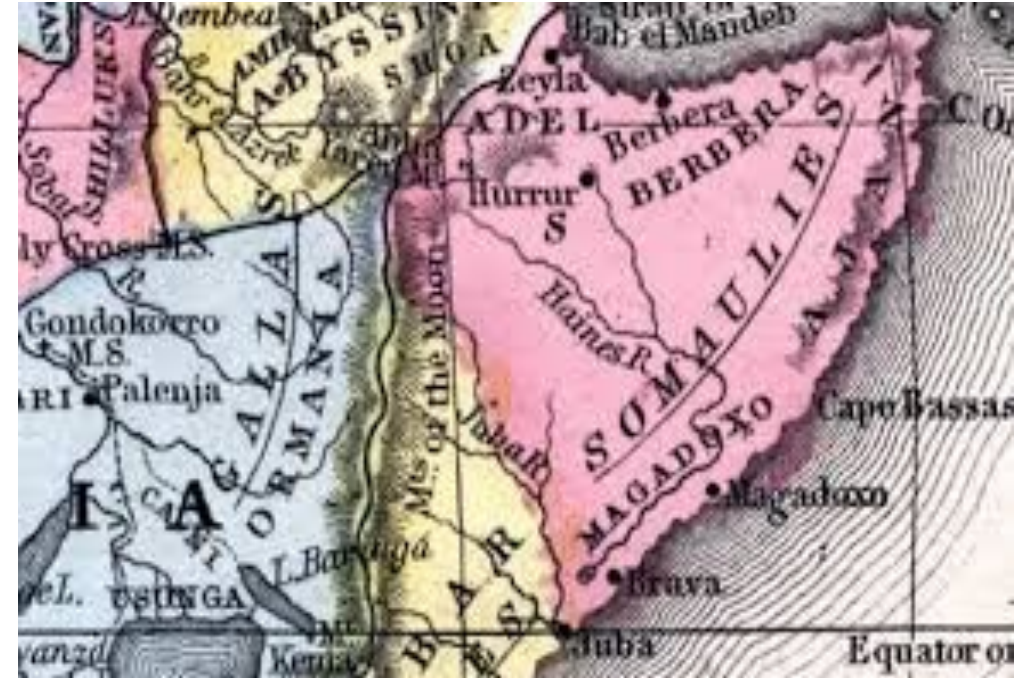


# Expansion of the Samaale

## Further Migration:

The Samaale moved further north in search of **water** and **pasturelands**.

By approximately **100 A.D.**, the Samaale had occupied the entire **Horn of Africa**.



# Somali Expansion and Maritime Contact

## Geographic Expansion:

The expansion of the Somalis to the **Indian Ocean** and the **Red Sea** facilitated sustained contact with **Persians** and **Arab immigrants** who settled along the coast.



# The Significance of Saylac

## Center of Culture

The most significant enclave was the renowned medieval emporium of **Saylac** on the **Gulf of Aden**.

It eventually served as the capital of the medieval state of **Adal**.



# The Decline of Saylac

Between **1560 and 1660**, Ethiopian expeditions repeatedly harassed Saylac, leading to its decline and decay.



# Berbera and the Shift of Islamic Influence

## Emergence of Berbera:

Berbera replaced Saylac as the northern hub of **Islamic influence** in the **Horn of Africa**.



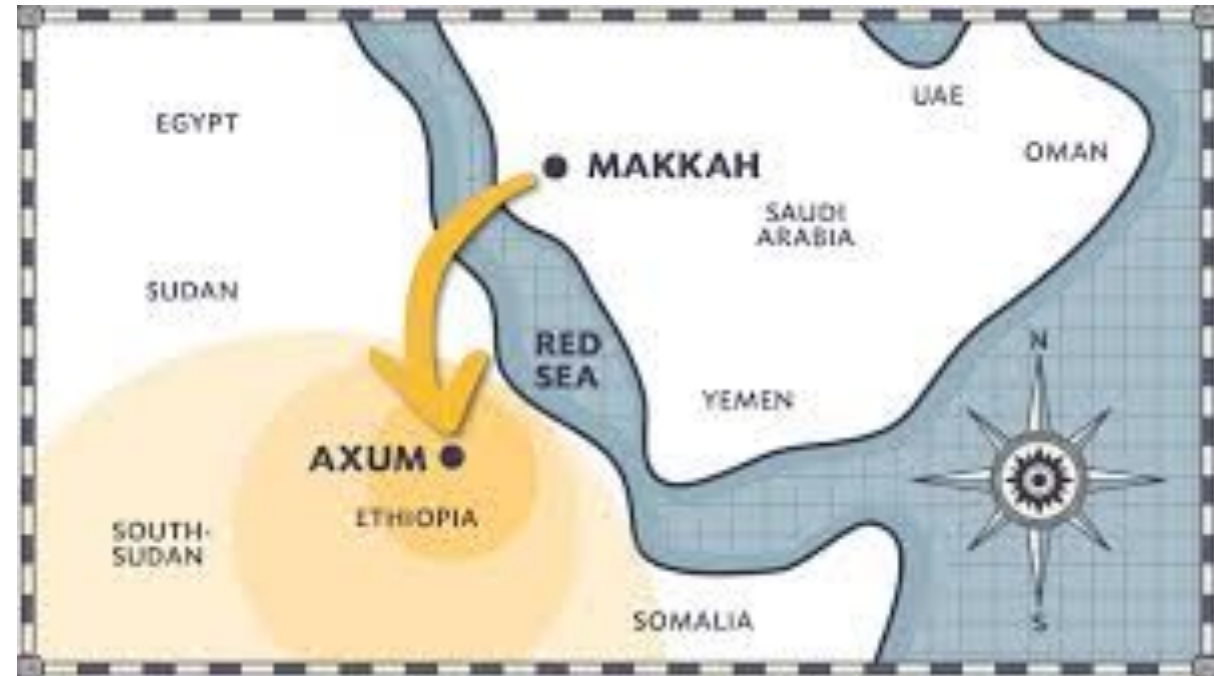
# Spread of Islam in Somalia

## Precedence in the Horn:

Islam established its roots in the **Horn of Africa** before gaining a foothold in the Arabian Peninsula.

## Early Muslim Refugees:

A band of persecuted Muslims, encouraged by the **Prophet Muhammad**, fled across the **Red Sea** into the **Horn of Africa**.



# The Spread of Islam Among Somalis

## Large-Scale Conversion:

A significant conversion of Somalis to **Islam** occurred during the **11th, 12th, and 13th centuries**.



# Second Wave of Somali Migration

## Further Islamic Spread:

The spread of **Islam** along the Somali coast and immigration of **Arabs** inspired a second wave of migration from north to south.

(13th - 19th centuries)

