Near the coast of equatorial Africa, separated from the continent by a canal some 50 kilometres long, is the island of Zanzibar (Unguja). It is the largest of the coral islands of East Africa. From its southern part of the coastline, it is separated from the continent by a canal some 50 kilometres long. Although the island is separated from the continent, its history is inextricably linked to the continent of Africa by a canal that makes it highly significant strategically and economically. From a historical perspective, the rise of Zanzibar as a key trading hub was due to its strategic location on the route of the Indian Ocean between East Africa and the Arabian Peninsula.

**Serious Exports**

Notwithstanding a marked heterogeneity of its population – a polytheistic and multi-religious society, characterized by the presence of Arabic, Persian, and Bantu-speaking communities – the economy of Zanzibar was based on the exploitation of its natural resources. The island was rich in natural resources, including spices, frankincense, and myrrh, which were highly valued in the Islamic world.

**Slavery and Trade**

Slavery in Zanzibar was a lucrative trade, with the island serving as a major hub for the slave trade. Slaves were transported from both Africa and Asia, with the majority coming from East Africa. The slave trade was highly profitable for the local rulers, who used it as a source of revenue.

**Religion and Trade**

The religious landscape of Zanzibar was diverse, with the population consisting of Hindus, Muslims, and Christians. The religion of Islam was predominant, with the Omani tribe of Al Bu Sa'id being the most influential. The Omani rulers were known for their patronage of the Islamic faith, which helped to establish Zanzibar as a key trading hub.

**The Mercantile Power of Zanzibar**

Zanzibar was a key player in the Indian Ocean trade, acting as a major hub for the exchange of goods between East Africa and Asia. The island was a major centre for the trade in spices, including cloves, nutmeg, and cinnamon. The city of Zanzibar was a major port, with a vibrant trading community that included Arab, Indian, and African merchants.

**Regional Issues**

The island of Zanzibar was strategically located on the route of the Indian Ocean, making it a key location for trade between Africa and Asia. The city of Zanzibar was a major hub for the exchange of goods, with a vibrant trading community that included Arab, Indian, and African merchants. The island was a key location for the exchange of spices, including cloves, nutmeg, and cinnamon.

**Notes**


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**Regional issues**

**Religion and Trade**

**In the Indian Ocean: Zanzibar in the 1800s**

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