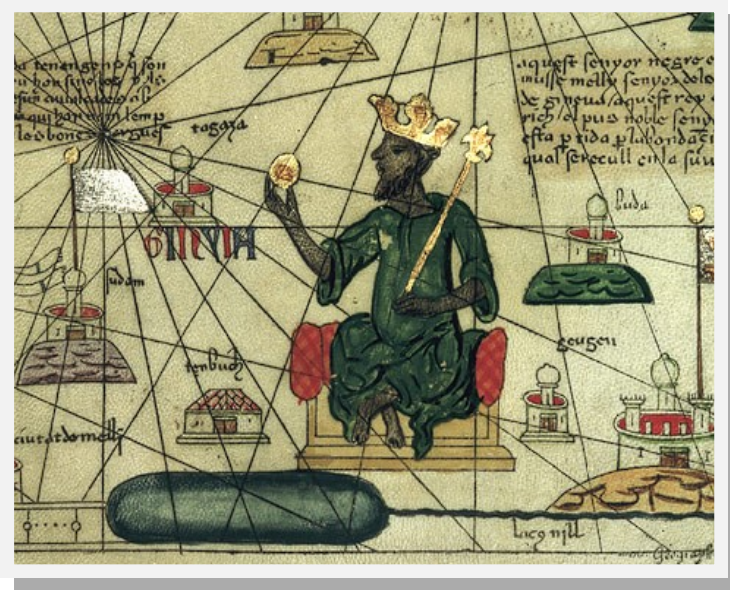


MANSA MUSA'S GREAT JOURNEY

Mansa Musa, Born c. 1280, Died c. 1337

LEADERSHIP

Mansa Musa was the emperor of Mali in West Africa. The Mali of Musa's time was incredibly wealthy and located along the Atlantic coast, southwest of present-day Mali. In 1307, Mansa Musa became the ninth ruler of Mali. "Mansa" is an honorable title, which means *highness*. Musa was the first African ruler to become famous in the Middle East and Europe. He was respected for his ability to rule a prosperous and organized realm. Sudiata Keita, Musa's grandfather or grand-uncle, had previously reigned over Mali beginning in 1235.



traveled to Mecca. His procession reported to include 60,000 men, 12,000 slaves who each carried four-pound gold bars and heralds with gold staffs dressed in silks. Also in the train were 80 camels, which varying reports claim carried between 50 and 300 pounds of gold dust each. Musa provided all necessities for the procession, feeding the entire company of men

and animals. He gave away the gold to the poor he met along his route. While traveling, he spent and gave away an extensive amount of gold. His lavish spending nearly caused the downfall of the Egyptian economy.

RELIGION

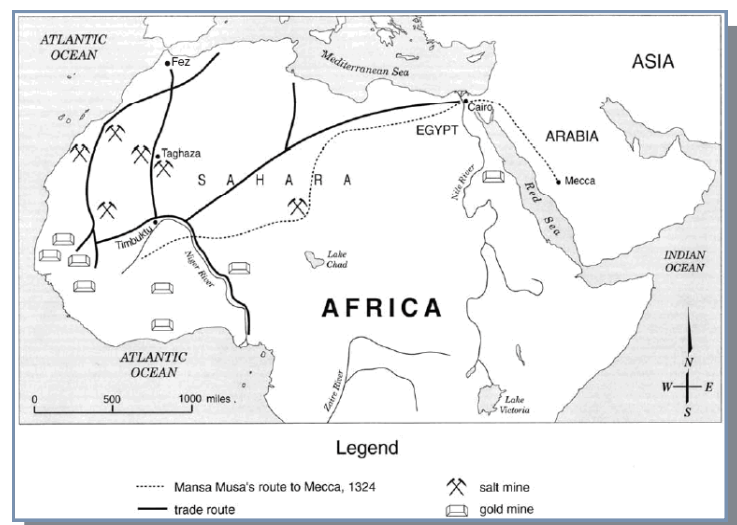
Musa was responsible for the spread of Islam. Muslims are people who believe in Islam. They believe in one god and follow five pillars of worship that govern all aspects of their lives. As an outward symbol of his devotion to Islam, Musa took the esteemed trip to the holy land of Mecca in 1324. This pilgrimage is called hajj. Typically only wealthy people were able to make this journey during Musa's time.

Other religions in Mali were considered pagan religions. Pagan religions involve many gods. Serious conflicts between traditional religions and Islam eventually led to the downfall of several countries outside of Mali because the leaders were not able to diffuse the tension between the religious groups.

LEGACY

As a strong leader, Musa was able to maintain religious order, expand his military control, and strengthen the economy. Musa led his people by example when he

When he returned from Mecca, gold was in high demand. Mali had a monopoly of gold in that region and vast geographic control. Musa was able to use his wealth to reconstruct Mali, building mosques (religious places of worship), schools, and public buildings. His legacy as a successful leader of the time was difficult for his successors to follow. Many of them had trouble ruling over such a large expanse of land and people. Today, Mali is an impoverished, land-locked country much different from that of Musa's reign.



MANSA MUSA'S GREAT JOURNEY: COMMON CORE QUESTIONS

1. Where is Mali geographically located? _____

2. What does "Mansa" mean?

3. Justify why Mansa Musa deserves the title "Mansa". Use an excerpt from the text to support your answer.

4. Describe the importance of Mecca to Muslims.

5. Define "hajj"? Why is it important in reference to the reading?

6. How did Musa encourage the growth of Islam?

7. **Differentiate between pagan religions and Islam.** What is the major difference between these two religions?

8. **Think about it!** How could conflicts between traditional religions and Islam cause the downfall of a society?

9. **Use evidence to support a claim:** Prove why Mansa Musa was a successful leader of Mali. Use evidence from the text to support your answer.

" _____ "

This quote demonstrates _____

10. In your opinion, what characteristics make a great leader? Use an example from personal experience.