

MANSA MUSA: AFRICAN KING OF GOLD

A UNIT OF STUDY FOR GRADES 7-9

By

Joe Palumbo

"This king is the greatest of the Muslim kings of the Sudan. He rules the most extensive territory, has the most numerous army, is the bravest, the richest, the most fortunate, the most victorious over his enemies, and the best able to distribute benefits."



Mansa Musa, king of Ancient Mali, hold a huge gold nugget in his hand, attracting an Arab trader. This map, drawn in 1375, comes from Catalan, Spain. The extent of the Mali empire is shown by the defensive wall arching across the Sahara Desert in the upper part of the picture.

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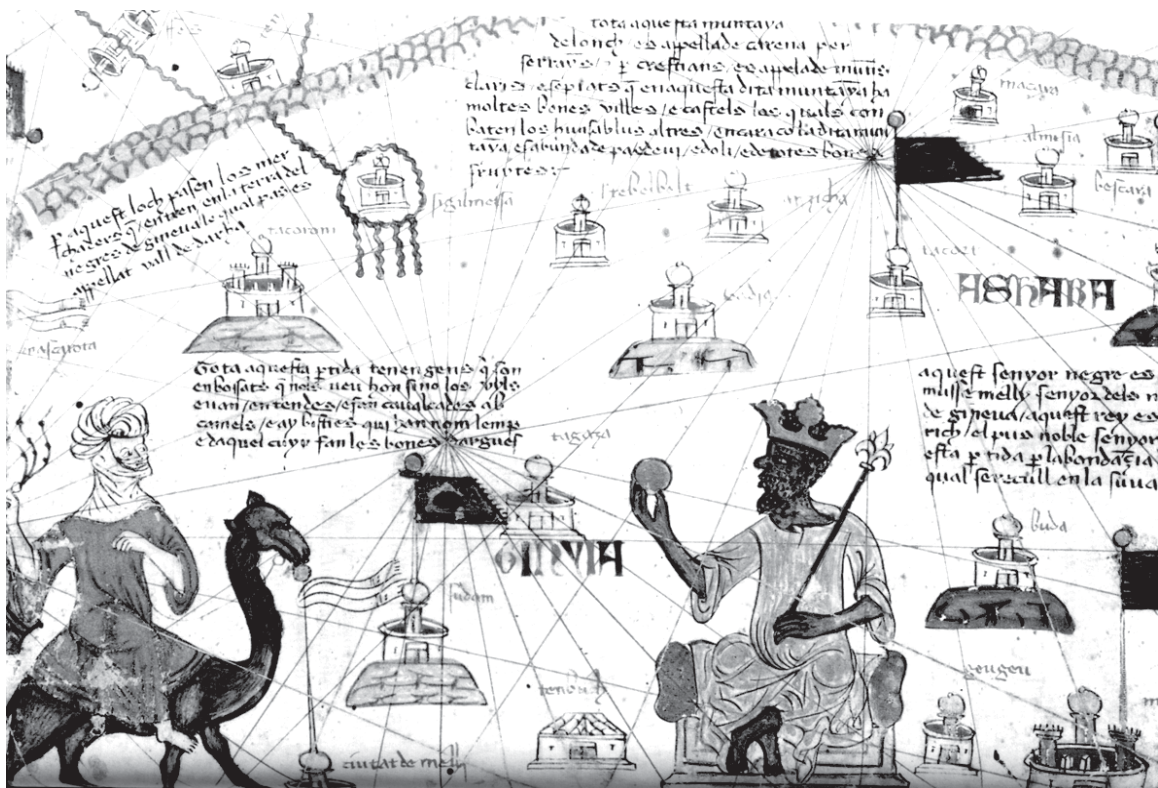


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COVER ILLUSTRATION: Catalen Atlas by Abraham Cresques, colored ink on parchment, 1375, British Museum, London.

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INTRODUCTION

I. APPROACH AND RATIONALE

Mansa Musa: African King of Gold is one of over sixty teaching units published by the National Center for History in the Schools that are the fruits of collaborations between history professors and experienced teachers of both United States and World History. The units represent specific issues and dramatic episodes in history from which you and your students can pause to delve into the deeper meanings of these selected landmark events and explore their wider context in the great historical narrative. By studying crucial turning points in history, the student becomes aware that choices had to be made by real human beings, that those decisions were the result of specific factors, and that they set in motion a series of historical consequences. We have selected issues and dramatic moments that best bring alive that decision-making process. We hope that through this approach, your students will realize that history is an ongoing, open-ended process, and that the decisions they make today create the conditions of tomorrow's history.

Our teaching units are based on primary sources, taken from government documents, artifacts, journals, diaries, newspapers, magazines, literature, contemporary photographs, paintings, and other art from the period under study. What we hope to achieve using primary source documents in these lessons is to remove the distance that students feel from historical events and to connect them more intimately with the past. In this way we hope to recreate for your students a sense of "being there," a sense of seeing history through the eyes of the very people who were making decisions. This will help your students develop historical empathy, to realize that history is not an impersonal process divorced from real people like themselves. At the same time, by analyzing primary sources, students will actually practice the historian's craft, discovering for themselves how to analyze evidence, establish a valid interpretation and construct a coherent narrative in which all the relevant factors play a part.

II. CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION

Within this unit, you will find: Teaching Background Materials, including Unit Overview, Unit Context, Correlation to the National Standards for History, Unit Objectives, and Introduction to *Mansa Musa: African King of Gold*; A Dramatic Moment; and Lesson Plans with Student Resources. This unit, as we have said above, focuses on certain key moments in time and should be used as a supplement to your customary course materials. Although

Introduction

these lessons are recommended for use by grades 7–12, they can be adapted for other grade levels.

The Teacher Background section should provide you with a good overview of the entire unit and with the historical information and context necessary to link the **Dramatic Moment** to the larger historical narrative. You may consult it for your own use, and you may choose to share it with students if they are of a sufficient grade level to understand the materials.

The Lesson Plans include a variety of ideas and approaches for the teacher which can be elaborated upon or cut as you see the need. These lesson plans contain student resources which accompany each lesson. The resources consist of primary source documents, handouts and student background materials, and a bibliography.

In our series of teaching units, each collection can be taught in several ways. You can teach all of the lessons offered on any given topic, or you can select and adapt the ones that best support your particular course needs. We have not attempted to be comprehensive or prescriptive in our offerings, but rather to give you an array of enticing possibilities for in-depth study, at varying grade levels. We hope that you will find the lesson plans exciting and stimulating for your classes. We also hope that your students will never again see history as a boring sweep of facts and meaningless dates but rather as an endless treasure of real life stories and an exercise in analysis and reconstruction.

TEACHER BACKGROUND

I. Unit Overview

One of the greatest and most far-reaching empires of the later middle ages was in West Africa. The kingdom of Mali impressed both the Muslim and the Christian worlds with its wealth. One of Mali's greatest leaders, the emperor Mansa Musa, awakened the world to Mali's power on his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324 when he spent and distributed so much gold that it deflated its price in Cairo for the next twelve years.

Several Arab scholars were so impressed by this man that they followed him back to Mali to investigate the empire. The writings of these scholars serve as the primary source documents for this unit. Through the examination, interpretation and synthesis of these writings, students will be able to analyze the people and culture of Mali, the role of the emperor, and the character of Mansa Musa himself.

The investigation of African kingdoms is crucial to a more complete understanding of world history. For too long Africa has been treated as the backwater of history with students and teachers alike having limited knowledge of this area. It will be a fascinating and enlightening project for students to learn about an African who fourteenth-century Europeans described as "the richest and most noble king in all the land."

This unit challenges the idea that Africa was "a dark continent" and unknown to the outside world before the arrival of Europeans. It will show that strong, well-organized states existed in Africa long before European colonialism. Here, as in medieval Europe, the kings' strength and respectability heavily depended on the material wealth they possessed. They shared this wealth among their loyal followers, (often chiefs, lords, or military leaders), who in turn shared it among those they ruled or commanded.

It is important also in presenting this topic to remind students that the rule of the kings was by no means democratic as we understand democracy today. Any differences between various reigns were due to the personality or the unique forces in operation within individual societies. The focus should thus be on critical appreciation rather than blind glorification of the past, as the past was not faultless.

II. Unit Context

This unit would fit best during a study of the late middle ages (1300–1517). It would be most effective if it were placed in the chronological framework of events occurring in Europe, the Mediterranean region, and the Muslim world and not set apart as a topic exclusive to itself. If time permits, an investigation into both the kingdoms of Ghana and Songhay, which flourished before and after Mali, would be helpful, although the unit can be taught alone. It is essential, however, that students first study the rise of Islam since Mali was an empire whose ruling class had converted to Islam.

This unit will also help students understand the spread of Islam beyond the Middle East, as well as the patterns of long-distance trade that linked Mali to the wider Afro-Eurasian world.

III. Correlation to National History Standards

Mansa Musa: African King of Gold provides teaching materials that address the National Standards for World History in *National Standards for History, Basic Edition* (National Center for History in the Schools, 1996), **Era 5: Intensified Hemispheric Interactions, 1000–1500**. Lessons within this unit specifically address **Standard 4A: The Growth of States, Towns, and Trade in Sub-Saharan African between the 11th and 15th Centuries**.

This unit likewise integrates a number of specific Historical Thinking Skills including: reconstruct patterns of historical succession and duration (**Standard 1: Chronological Thinking**); draw upon visual and literary sources (**Standard 2: Historical comprehension**); formulate historical questions and obtain historical data from a variety of sources (**Standard 4: Historical Research**); and marshal evidence of antecedent circumstances (**Standard 5: Historical Issues—Analysis and Decision Making**).

IV. Unit Objectives

- ◆ Understand the importance of geography in the study of history.
- ◆ Read and interpret primary source documents by Arab scholars who visited or learned about Mali in the fourteenth century.
- ◆ Differentiate between historical facts and historical interpretations.

IV. Introduction to *Mansa Musa: African King of Gold*

The great political problem in the western region of the Western Sudan was how to bring peace and order into the confusion that had followed the collapse of Ghana. The problem was tackled, and largely solved, by a Mali emperor whose name became more famous even than that of Sundiata, the king who established the new empire of Mali. This was Mansa Kankan Musa, who carried Mali to the height of its power and enjoyed a reputation at home and abroad as an able and pious king. Mansa was his title and means “ruler” or “sultan.” Musa is Arabic for “Moses.”

Mansa Musa came to power around 1312. By the time of his death in 1337, Mali had grown into one of the largest empires in the world.¹ What Mansa Musa accomplished was to repeat the success of Ghana on a more ambitious scale. He already had firm control of the trade routes to those lands. Now he brought the lands of the Middle Niger under his control and enclosed the key trading cities of Timbuktu and Gao within his empire. He imposed his rule on southern Saharan trading cities like Walata, and pushed his armies northward until their influence was felt as far as the salt deposits of Taghaza in the north central desert. He sent them eastward beyond Gao to the very frontiers of Hausaland (today northern Nigeria) and westward down the Gambia and Senegal River valleys to the Atlantic Ocean.

Through twenty-five successful years Mansa Musa progressively enclosed a large part of the central and western regions of the Western Sudan within a single system of law and order. He did this so well that Ibn Battuta, traveling through Mali some twelve years after the great emperor's death, could find “complete and general safety in the land.”

Muslim merchant groups, notably the Dyula and Wangara grew in strength with the widening power of Mali. Their trading operations began to spread into many parts of West Africa, pushing their enterprises far down into the forest lands as well as across the plains of the north.

This was also a period of Islamic expansion in the Western Sudan. Unlike the rulers of Ghana, Mansa Musa accepted the new religion. Many members of his royal court, as well as provincial chiefs and officers, followed him. So did some

*The year of Musa's death is often given as 1332. But the great North African historian, Ibn Khaldun, whose writings remain the best source of information on the dates of the rulers of Mali, has recorded that Musa was still alive in 1337.

Teacher Background

of their subjects. Other rulers and peoples remained loyal to their own religions, but Islam steadily widened its influence. More and more West Africans went on pilgrimages to Mecca. More and more North Africans and Egyptians visited Mali. Trade and Islam grew together, and both prospered.

Mansa Musa himself made a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324. His journey through Egypt was long remembered with amazement because Musa took with him so much gold and gave away so many golden gifts that “the people of Cairo earned incalculable sums.” So lavish was Musa with his gifts that he upset the value of goods on the Cairo market. Gold became more plentiful and therefore less valued, so prices rose accordingly. The North African scholar al-Umari, who lived in Cairo a few years after Mansa Musa’s visit declared that of all the Muslim rulers of West Africa Musa was “the most powerful, the richest, the most fortunate, the most feared by his enemies, and the most able to do good to those around him.” Behind these words of praise one may glimpse the power and reputation that Mali drew from its control of a very wide region of trade in precious goods such as salt, ivory, kola nuts, and especially gold.

Under Mansa Musa, Mali ambassadors and royal agents were established in Morocco, Egypt, and elsewhere. North African and Egyptian scholars visited Mali’s capital. On returning from pilgrimage, Mansa Musa brought with him a number of learned men from Egypt. One of them, called al-Saheli, is said to have designed new mosques at Gao and Timbuktu and built a palace for the emperor. The fashion of building houses of brick became popular among wealthy people in the cities of the Western Sudan.

Niani, the capital of this empire, has long since disappeared. Yet as late as the sixteenth century, the Moroccan traveler Leo Africanus could still describe it as a place of “six thousands hearths,” and its inhabitants as “the most civilized, intelligent, and respected” of all the peoples of the Western Sudan.

V. Lesson Plans

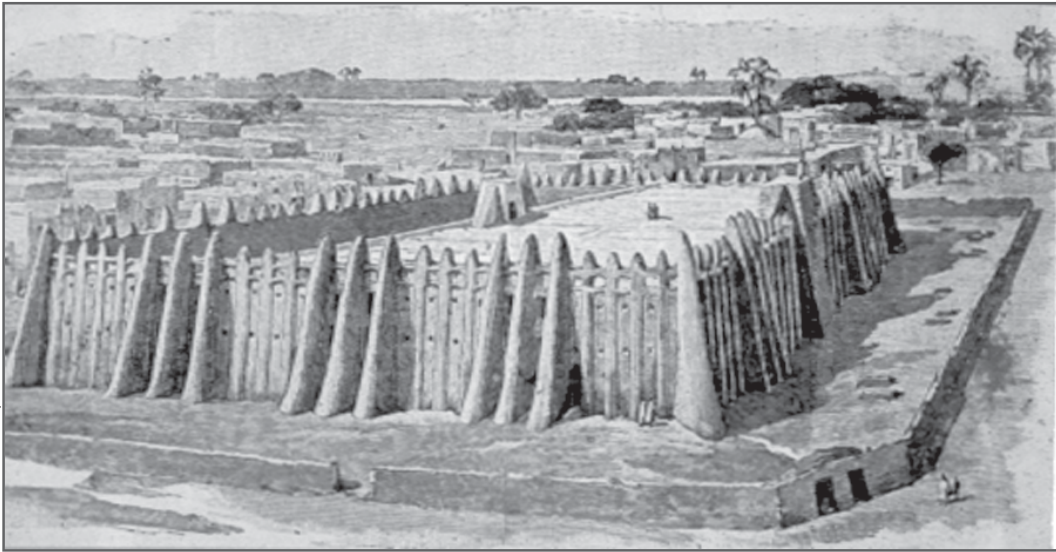
1. The Geography of Mali and Africa
2. Mansa Musa and Mali
3. Historical Bias
4. Student Projects

A Dramatic Moment

In 1324, Mansa Musa, sultan of the West African empire of Mali, arrived in Egypt at the head of an immense caravan. A pious Muslim, he was on a 4,000-mile journey to Arabia to make a pilgrimage to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. His arrival in Cairo, Egypt's capital, in the company of hundreds of officers and attendants caused a public stir. His caravan was laden with gold, and he and his entourage spent or gave away huge amounts of it, much to the delight of Cairo's merchants. A short time after Mansa Musa's visit, a Syrian scholar named al-'Umari interviewed several people about the episode for a book he was writing. One of his informants was a high official in the government of al-Malik al-Nasir, the sultan of Egypt and one of the most powerful monarchs of the fourteenth century. Here is what this official told al-'Umari about escorting Mansa Musa into the city.

When I went out to meet him . . . on behalf of the mighty sultan al-Malik al-Nasir, he did me extreme honor and treated me with the greatest courtesy. He addressed me, however, only through an interpreter despite his perfect ability to speak in the Arabic tongue. Then he forwarded to the royal treasury many loads of unworked native gold and other valuables. I tried to persuade him to go up to the Citadel to meet the sultan, but he refused persistently, saying: "I came for the Pilgrimage and nothing else. I do not wish to mix anything else with my Pilgrimage." He had begun to use this argument, but I realized that the audience was repugnant to him because he would be obliged to kiss the ground and the sultan's hand. I continued to cajole him, and he continued to make excuses, but the sultan's protocol demanded that I should bring him into the royal presence, so I kept on at him till he agreed. When we came in the sultan's presence, we said to him: "Kiss the ground!" but he refused outright saying: "How may this be?" Then an intelligent man who was with him whispered to him something we could not understand, and he said: "I make obeisance to God who created me!" then he prostrated himself and went forward to the sultan. The sultan half rose to greet him and sat him by his side. They conversed together for a long time, then sultan Musa went out.

Source: Al-'Umari, *Masalik*, in J.F.P. Hopkins and N. Levzion, eds. and trans., *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 269-270.



After his pilgrimage, Musa commissioned the Granada architect Abu Ishaq al-Sahil to design the Sankore mosque as part of his campaign to bring the Islam faith to his citizens

LESSON ONE

THE GEOGRAPHY OF MALI AND AFRICA

A. OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To correctly label a map of fourteenth-century Africa.
- ◆ To be able to recognize the kingdom of Mali and understand how it relates to the geography of Europe and the Middle East.
- ◆ To interpret the map and begin to draw conclusions about the kingdom of Mali based on information in the map.

B. LESSON ACTIVITIES

1. Tell the students that they are going to be working on a map of Africa with the goal of placing the **Dramatic Moment** (Mansa Musa's journey to Mecca) into a geographical framework. Use the **Teacher Resource Map** on page 11 as a resource
2. Hand out **Student Handout One**, the blank map of Africa. Either draw a matching, unlabeled map on the board or create an overhead transparency.
3. Using the list below, call on students to see if any can correctly identify locations. Label correct identifications on your map while asking the students to do the same on their copies.

Sahara Desert
Atlantic Ocean
Black Sea
Europe
Red Sea

Nile River
Mediterranean Sea
Egypt
Arabian Peninsula

4. Add to your map: the kingdom of Mali, the Niger River, and three important cities in Mali (Timbuktu, Gao and Jenne). Have students do the same.

Lesson One

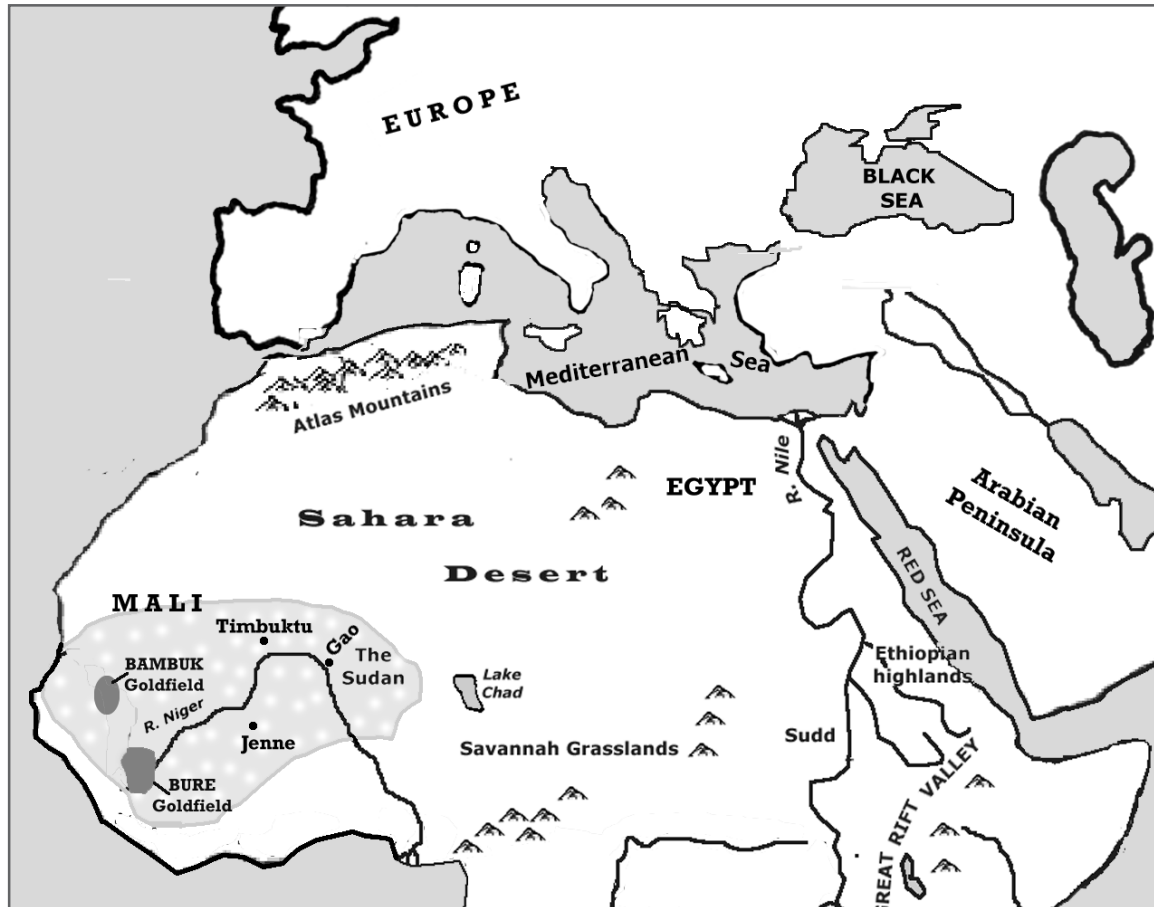
Questions

- a. What connection is there between the location of the cities and the location of the Niger River?
 - b. What kind of comparison in size can you make between the kingdom of Mali and countries of Europe you've studied?
 - c. What conclusions can you begin to draw about Mali?
 - d. How might these cities be important to Mali? [trading centers on the Mediterranean Sea]
 - e. What geographical feature separates them from Mali? [the Sahara]
 - f. How were people able to cross the Sahara Desert?
5. Draw in the most common trade routes and have the students label them on their maps.
 6. Label the gold fields of Bambuk and Bure and have the students do the same. Ask the following questions and let the students study their maps to see if they can draw the connection themselves:
 - a. Look at where Timbuktu is located: Why do you think the city was an important trade center? What might Timbuktu be a convenient place for? [A transfer point from the desert caravans to the boats of the Niger, a port of the "desert ocean." Comparisons can be drawn if the students are at all familiar with a modern port at which containers are transferred from ships to trucks and trains.]
 7. At this point you can do either of the following activities based on your own class and the resources available to you:
 - a. Give students an atlas which has a graphic-relief map of Africa and ask them to color in the rest of the continent based on that graphic relief map.

- b. Ask students to turn their maps into limited political maps of the fourteenth century by shading each of the following area a different color.

Kingdom of Mali
Christian Europe
Islamic States
Middle East

8. To close the lesson, remind the students that they will need this map every day of this unit. It would be a good idea to give a short quiz on this map to open the class the next day.



Equator



Inset map from: Margaret Shinnie, *Ancient African Kingdoms* (New York: New American Library, 1970, c1965), p.84.



LESSON TWO

MANSA MUSA AND MALI

A. OBJECTIVES

- ◆ To read primary source documents written by Arab scholars in the fourteenth century working in cooperative groups.
- ◆ To identify facts they can learn about Mali by paraphrasing original sources.
- ◆ To draw broader conclusions about the kingdom of Mali by interpreting gathered facts.
- ◆ To work together in small groups to prepare and present a report to the class.

B. LESSON ACTIVITIES

1. Explain that after Mansa Musa's visit to the Arab world he created such an interest in Mali that several Arab scholars followed him back home. While in Mali they wrote down many of the things they saw and learned. They will read some of these Arab writings and see what secrets they can uncover about Mali. Explain that no written evidence in the language of the people of Mali exists from this period, so almost all that we want to learn about Mali we have to get from these readings.
2. Divide the class into five groups. Each group should look at a different set of readings dealing with different aspects of Mali. Each group will be responsible for being the expert on that subject and reporting their findings to rest of the class. The subjects are:
 - a. What customs surrounded the King? (**Document A**)
 - b. What were some of the duties of the King? (**Document B**)
 - c. What was Mali the place like? (**Document C**)
 - d. What were the people of Mali like? (**Document D**)
 - e. What was Mansa Musa like? (**Document E**)
3. Have each group appoint a secretary, a timekeeper, and a spokesperson. Each set of readings is divided into short numbered segments. It is most time-efficient if the students decide among themselves who is going to work on which segments and then periodically share their information with the other members in their group.

4. The questions below each segment will help the students to think critically about the readings. They force the students to interact with the entire document and help avoid skimming. Depending on your class and your teaching style, you may want answers to each question written in complete sentences on another piece of paper or you may simply want the students to write down the main points they think are important.
5. Make sure you circulate around the room as some of the language can be difficult. If your class has many below-grade level readers you should go over important vocabulary first.
6. Give the students a 10-minute warning and tell them to make sure that they have shared all their information and that the spokespersons are aware of what they will report to the class. Each group should be prepared to state at least two facts and two conclusions for each segment of their readings. Encourage students to make the information as interesting as possible.
7. Call time and pass out the “Summary of Information Sheet” (**Student Handout Two**) to every student. Explain that as each group reports their facts and conclusions, they are responsible for recording that information so that when they’re done they will have a complete record of the class findings on Mali.
8. Begin the student reports. If the spokesperson has any trouble any member of the group may help him or her out. As the students present, ask them questions to draw out more information if necessary, and also encourage other students to ask questions.
9. When all the presentations are finished explain to the class that what they have just done is historical research and they have written their own history of Mali based on primary source documents. Lesson Three will take this one step further as the class evaluates the history they have compiled.
10. Homework Assignment:

Write a one day diary entry for a person who might have lived in Mali. The person can be anyone in the society so long as what they talk about is based on something they learned in their research of the readings.

SUMMARY OF INFORMATION SHEET**Customs Surrounding the King**

Facts	Conclusions

Duties of the King

Facts	Conclusions

Mali the Place

Facts	Conclusions

The People of Mali

Facts	Conclusions

Mansa Musa Himself

Facts	Conclusions

CUSTOMS SURROUNDING THE KING AND HIS COURT (Primary Sources)

Segment I

The sultan comes out of a door in the corner of the palace with his bow in his hand and his quiver between his shoulders. On his head he wears a *shashiyya* [skullcap] of gold tied with a golden strap. It has extremities like think knives and is more than a span long. His clothing consists for the most part of a furry red *jubba* [tunic] of the European cloth which is called *mutanfas*. The singers come out in front of him with gold and silver stringed instruments in their hands and behind him about 300 armed slaves. He walks slowly, with great deliberation, and sometimes halts. When he reaches the *banbi* [dais] he stands looking at the people, then he mounts gently, in the same way that the khatib [preacher] mounts the pulpit. As he sits the drums are beaten and the trumpets are sounded. Three slaves come out quickly and summon the deputy and the *farariyya* [officers] and they enter and sit down. The two horses and the two rams with them are brought. Dugha [musician] stands at the door and the rest of the people are in the street under the trees.

The Sudan are the humblest of people before their king and the most submissive towards him. They swear by his name. . . . When he calls to one of them at his sessions in the pavilion . . . the person called takes off his clothes and puts on ragged clothes, and removed his turban and puts on a dirty *shashiyya*, and goes in holding up his garments and trousers half-way up his leg, and advances with submissiveness and humility. He then beats the ground vigorously with his two elbows, and stands . . . to listen to his words.



If one of them addresses the sultan and the latter replies he uncovers the clothes from his back and sprinkles dust on his head and back, like one washing himself with water. I used to marvel how their eyes did not become blinded.

Mansa Musa

(holding a piece of gold)

Detail from:

"Map of North Africa"

The Catalan Atlas

(Spain, Majorca 14th century)

When the sultan says something in his session those present remove their turbans from their heads and listen attentively to his words. Sometimes one of them will stand before the sultan and mention the deeds which he has performed in his service, saying: "I did so-and-so on such-and-such a day." Those who know the truth about this express their affirmation by seizing the string of the bow and releasing it as one does when he is shooting. When the sultan says to him: "You have spoken the truth" or thanks him, he removes his clothes and sprinkles himself with dust. This is good manners among them.

—*Corpus*, 291-92 (Ibn Battuta)

Questions

1. How did people show their respect for the king of Mali?
2. What is expected of people in the present of their king?
3. What can you assume about the power of the king of Mali from these customs surrounding the king?

Segment II

Whoever sneezes while the king is holding court is severely beaten and he permits nobody to do so. But if a sneeze comes to anybody he lies down face to ground to sneeze so that nobody may know of it. As for king, if he sneezes all those present beat their breasts with their hands.

—*Corpus*, 265 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. Why are there different "rules" for the king and members of his court?
2. What does this custom tell about the power or importance of the king?

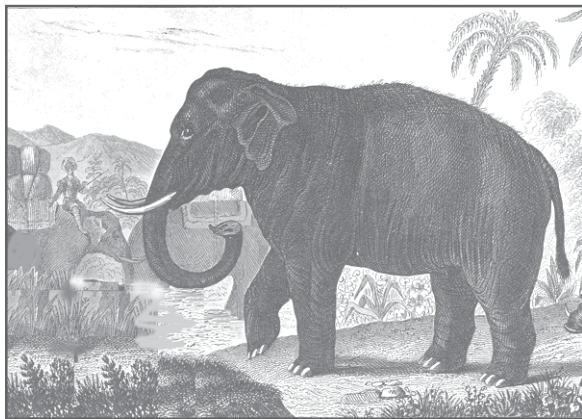
Segment III

The king of this realm sits in his palace on a big dais (*mastaba*) which they call *banbi* on a big seat (*dakka*) made of ebony like a throne (*takht*) and of a size for a very heavily-built sitter (*al-mutajallis al-'azim al-muttasi*). Over the dais, on all sides, are elephant tusks one beside the other. He has with him his arms, which are all of gold—sword, javelin (*mizraq*), quiver, bow, and arrows (*nush-shab*). He wears big trousers cut out of about twenty pieces which none but he wears. About 30 slaves (*mamluk*) stand behind him, Turks and others who are bought for him in Egypt. One of them carries in his hand a parasol (*jitr*) of silk surmounted by a dome and a bird of gold in the shape of a falcon. This is borne on the king's left. His emirs sit around in the shape of a falcon. This is borne on the king's left. His emirs sit around and below him in two ranks to right and left. Further away are seated the chief horsemen of his army. In front of him there stands a man to attend him, who is his executioner [or swordbearer: *sayyaf*], and another, called *sha'ir* "poet" who is his intermediary (*safir*) between him and the people. Around all these are people with drums in their hands, which they beat. Before the kings are people dancing and he is pleased with them and laughs at them. Behind him two flags are unfurled, and before him two horses are tied ready for him to ride whenever he wishes. . . . A custom of this sultan is that he does not eat in the presence of anybody, but eats always alone.

—*Corpus*, 265 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. What does this passage tell about the wealth and power of the king?
2. How does the seating arrangement of the emirs reflect on the power of the king?



Iconographic Encyclopaedia of Science, Literature, and Art
(1851)

Segment IV

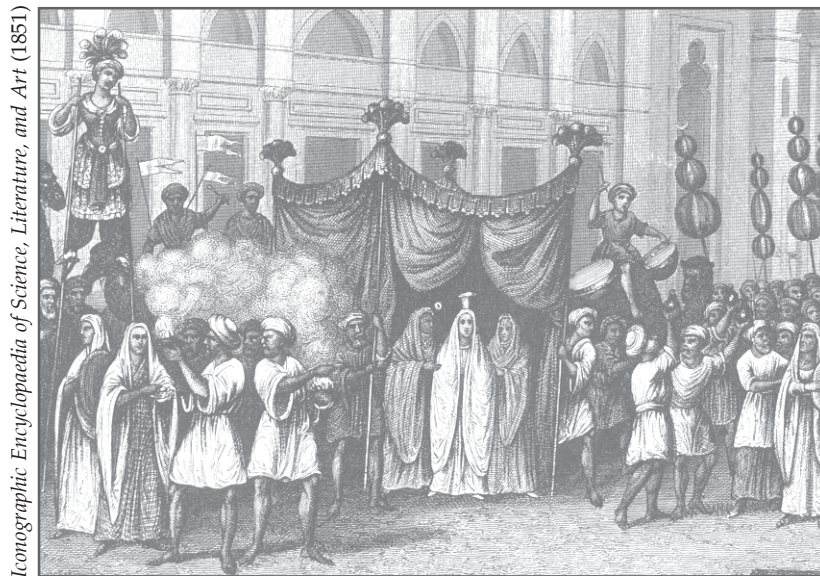
... And it is a custom of his people that if one of them should have reared a beautiful daughter he offers her to the king as a concubine (*ama marwstu'a*) and he possesses her without a marriage ceremony as slaves are possessed, and this in spite of the fact that Islam has triumphed among them and that they follow the Malikite school and that this sultan Musa was pious and assiduous in prayer, Koran reading, and mentioning God [*dhikr*].

"I said to him (said Ibn Amir Hajib) that this was not permissible for a Muslim, whether in law (*shar'*) or reason (*'aql*), and he said: 'Not even for kings?' and I replied: 'No! not even for kings! Ask the scholars!' He said: 'By God, I did not know that. I hereby leave it and abandon it utterly!'

—*Corpus*, 268 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. What did the king do when he learned the custom was not permitted under Islamic law?
2. What does this account reveal about the king?



Islamic Nuptials

Segment V

Nobody may enter the abode of this king save barefooted, whoever he may be. Anyone who does not remove his shoes, inadvertently or purposely is put to death without mercy. Whenever one of the emirs or another comes into the presence of this king he keeps him standing before him for a time. Then the newcomer makes a gesture with his right hand like one who beats the drum of honour (*juk*) in the lands of Turan and Iran. If the king bestows a favour upon a person or makes him a fair promise or thanks him for some deed the person who has received the favour grovels before him from one end of the room to the other. When he reaches there the slaves of the recipient of the favour or some of his friends take some of the ashes which are always kept ready at the far end of the king's audience chamber for the purpose and scatter it over the head of the favoured one, who then returns grovelling until he arrives before the king. Then he makes the drumming gesture as before and rises.

. . . The man raises his right hand to near his ear. There he places it, it being held up straight, and places it in contact with his left hand upon his thigh. The left hand has the palm extended so as to receive the right elbow. The right hand too has the palm extended with the fingers held close beside each other like a comb and touching the lobe of the ear.

—*Corpus*, 266 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. What were the rituals required of persons in the presence of the king?
2. What are the consequences if one does not follow the prescribed rituals?
3. What do these rituals reveal about the power of the king?

Segment VI

On the feast day, when Dugha has finished his performance, the poets come. They are called *jula* [spelled out], of which the singular is *jali*. Each of them has enclosed himself within an effigy made of feathers, resembling a [bird called] *shaqshaq*, on which is fixed a head made of wood with a red beak as though it were the head of a *shaqshaq*. They stand in front of the sultan in this comical shape and recite their poems. I was told that their poetry was a kind of exhortation in which they say to the sultan: "This *banbi* on which you are sitting was sat upon by such-and-such a king and of his good deeds were so-and-so; and such-and-such a king, and of his good deeds were so-and-so; so you do good deeds which will be remembered after you." Then the chief of the poets mounts the steps of the *banbi* and places his head in the lap of the sultan. Then he mounts to the top of the *banbi* and places his head on the sultan's right shoulder, then upon his left shoulder, talking in their language. Then he descends. I was informed that this act was already old before Islam, and they had continued with it.

—*Corpus*, 293 (Ibn Battuta)

Questions

1. Based on this story, what kind of entertainment did the kings prefer?
2. What were the poets allowed to do that other people couldn't?
3. What does this tell you about the importance of poets to Mali?

DUTIES OF THE KING (Primary Sources)

Segment I

Complaints and appeals against administrative oppression (*mazalim*) are placed before this king and he delivers judgment on them himself. As a rule nothing is written down; his commands are given verbally. He has judges, scribes, and government offices (*diwan*).

Questions:

1. Why do you think the laws are not written?
2. Who interprets or judges the merits of the law in Mali?

Segment II

I was present at the sultan's session one day when one of their *faqih*s [legal scholars], who had arrived from a distant country, came and stood before the sultan and spoke to him at length. The *qadi* [judge] rose and said that he spoke the truth, then the sultan said that they spoke the truth. Each one of them took his turban from his head and sprinkled himself with dust in front of him. By my side there was one of the white men, who said to me: "Do you know what they said?" I said: "I don't know." He said: "The *faqih* has given the information that the locusts have fallen on their country. One of their righteous men went out to the place where the locusts were and was at a loss what to do and said: 'This is a lot of locusts.' A locust answered him and said: 'God sends us to the country in which there is much oppression in order to spoil its crops.'" The *qadi* and the sultan believed him and the latter said thereupon to the *emirs* [officers]: "I am innocent of oppression and any one of you who is oppressive I will punish. And if anybody knows of an oppressor and does not tell me of him, then the sin of that oppressor will fall upon his neck, and God will call him to reckoning!" When he spoke these words the *farariyya* [officers] took off their turbans and asserted their innocence of oppressions.

—*Corpus*, 293-94 (Ibn Battuta)

Questions

1. Why was the country plagued with locusts?
2. How does the king respond?
3. What does this story reveal about the importance of religion in the governing of Mali?

Segment III

Sultan Musa told him a great deal about himself and his country and the people of the Sudan who were his neighbors. One of the things which he told him was that his country was very extensive and contiguous with the Ocean. By his sword and his armies he had conquered 24 cities each with its surrounding district with villages and estates.

—*Corpus*, 267 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. How did Sultan Musa extend his power?
2. How important do you think the army was to maintaining the king's control over neighboring cities?



Detail from:
"Map of North Africa"
The Catalan Atlas
(Spain, Majorca 14th century)

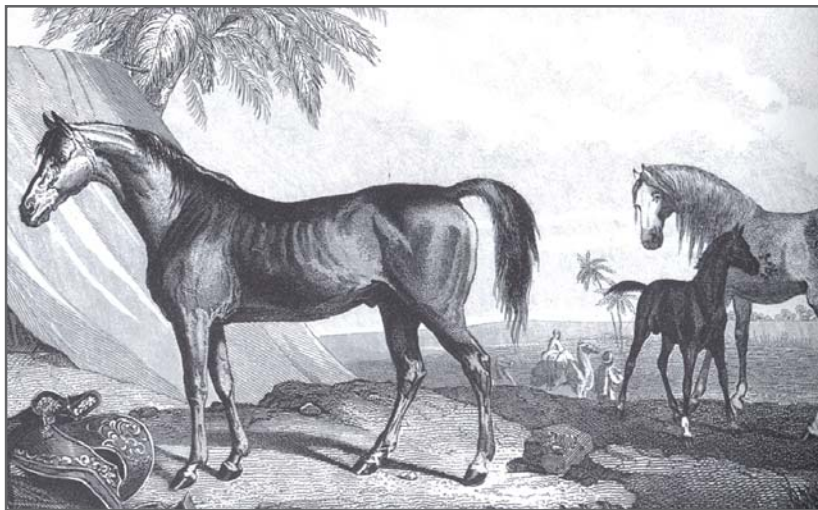
Segment IV

The king of this country imports Arab horses and pays high prices for them. His army numbers about 100,000, of whom about 10,000 are cavalry mounted on horses and the remainder infantry without horses or other mounts. They have camels but do not know how to ride them with saddles.

—*Corpus*, 266 (al-'Umari)

Question

1. Why do you think the king is so powerful?



Iconographic Encyclopaedia of Science, Literature, and Art (1851)

Segment V

The *emirs* [officers] and soldiers of this king have fiefs and benefices. Among their chiefs are some whose wealth derived from the king reaches 50,000 mithqals of gold every year, besides which he keeps them in horses and clothes. His whole ambition is to give them fine clothes and to make his towns into cities.

—*Corpus*, 266 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. How does the king keep his army happy?
2. Why do you think it was necessary to keep the army happy?

Segment VI

I asked him if he had enemies with whom he fought wars and he said: 'Yes, we have a violent enemy who is to the Sudan as the Tatars [Mongols] are to you. They are wide in the face and flat-nosed. They shoot well with [bow and] arrows (nushshab). . . . Battles take place between us and they are formidable because of their accurate shooting. War between us has its ups and downs.'

—*Corpus*, 268 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. How powerful is the enemy?
2. Why do you think the king compares them to the Tatars?

Segment VII

Under the authority of the sultan of this kingdom is the land of Mafazat al-Tibr. They bring gold dust (*tibr*) to him each year. They are uncouth infidels. If the sultan wished he could extend his authority over them but the kings of this kingdom have learnt by experience that as soon as one of them conquers one of the gold towns and Islam spreads and the muezzin calls to prayer there the gold there begins to decrease and then disappears, while it increased in the neighbouring heathen countries. When they had learnt the truth of this by experience they left the gold countries under the control of the heathen people and were content with their vassalage and the tribute imposed on them.

—*Corpus*, 262 (al-'Umari).

Questions

1. Why are the people of Mafazat al-Tibr called "infidels?"
2. Why would the king of Mali not wish to conquer these "infidels?"
3. What does this story tell about the importance of gold to the kings of Mali?

Segment VIII

. . . He also stated that there are pagan nations (*umam*) in his kingdom from whom he does not collect the tribute (*jizya*) but whom he simply employs in extracting the gold from its deposits. The gold is extracted by digging pits about a man's height in depth and the gold is found embedded in the sides of the pits or sometimes collected at the bottom of them.

—*Corpus*, 272 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. How is the gold extracted?
2. Why does the king not collect tribute from the gold-digging people?
3. Why are the gold-digging people so important to the king?



Gold Traders

MALI THE PLACE (Primary Source)

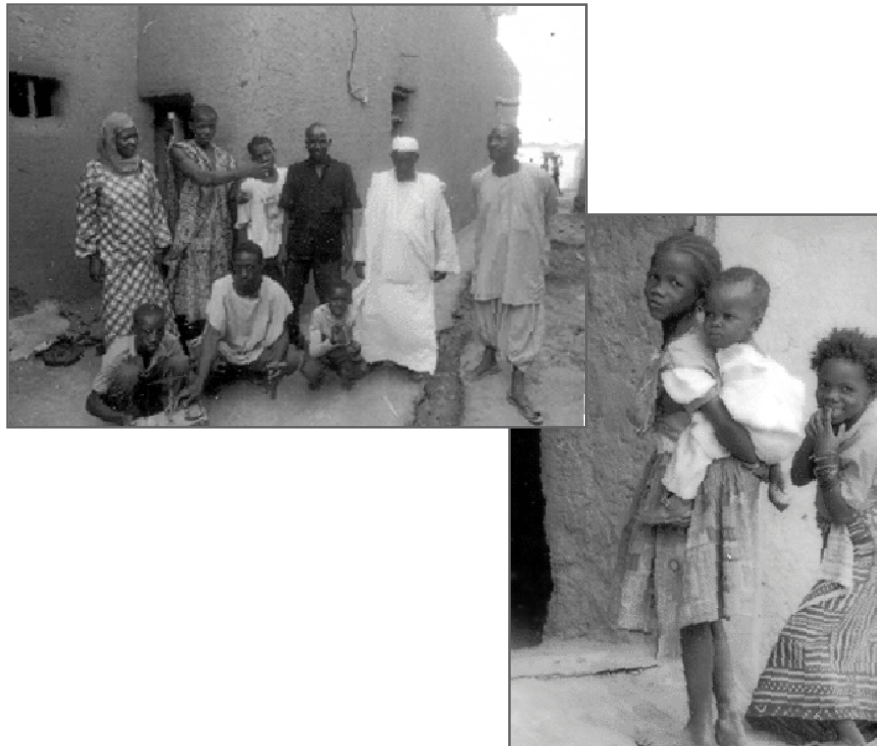
Segment I

Be it known that this kingdom lies to the south of the extreme West and adjoins the Atlantic Ocean ... This country is very hot. The means of subsistence are exiguous [difficult], the varieties of food few. The people are tall, with jet black complexion and crinkly hair. Their height is chiefly due to their [long] legs, not the structure of the trunk.

—*Corpus*, 261 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. Where is Mali located? What is the climate like?
2. What are the physical features of the people?
3. What conclusions can you draw about what life was like in Mali?



A family in Djenné (Jenne)

CARE Photos ©J.F. Housel

Segment II

In the Nil [Niger]* as it flows through their country there are big crocodiles of huge size which may be ten cubits or more long. Al-Dukkali said that one of these crocodiles was caught which had received a spear ten spans long in its heart. The gall-bladder is poison, and is taken to the king's treasury.

—*Corpus*, 264 (al-'Umari).

Questions

1. Would the crocodiles present any threat of trade along the river?
2. If the gall-bladder of the crocodiles is poisonous, why do you think it was taken to the king's treasury? What might the king use it for?



Iconographic Encyclopaedia of Science, Literature, and Art (1851)

Segment III

Their sheep and goats have no pasture, but go scavenging over the garbage heaps. A single goat may give birth to seven or eight kids at a time. There are other wild animals in their deserts—donkeys, cows, gazelles, ostriches and the like, elephants, lions, and panthers. None of them is dangerous except to those who get in their way or provoke them. A man may pass close by them without their interfering with him unless he irritates them.

—*Corpus*, 264 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. What facts can you identify from this reading?
2. What conclusion can you draw about how the people of Mali felt about animals?

Segment IV

They have a wild animal called turummi . . . and is a cross between wolf and hyena. . . . Shaykh Sa'id al-Dukkali said that he saw one with his own eyes. It was . . . the size of a wolf. Whenever it encounters a child or adolescent by night it snatches him up and eats him, but by day it is harmless. It is not bold enough to attack a grown man. It emits a bellow like that of a bull about to charge. It digs up corpses and eats them. Its teeth are like those of crocodiles, flat (musaffah) and fitting into each other like tenon and mortice.

—*Corpus*, 264 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. What do you know about the turummi?
2. How do you think children felt about going out alone at night? Why?

The People of Mali

Segment I

Among the trees of the brush which is between Iwalatan [Walata] and Mali there are those which resemble the fruit of the pear, the apple, the peach (*khawkh*) and the apricot (*mishmish*), but are not any of these, and among them there are trees which bear fruits like a cucumber (*faqqus*), which, when ripe, burst open to reveal something like flour. They cook this and eat it and sell it in the markets. They extract from this earth grains like beans which they roast and eat. They taste like roasted chickpeas (*hummus*). Sometimes they grind them and make from them something resembling fritters (*isfanj*) and fry them with gharti. Gharti is a fruit like a pear, very sweet. . . . Its kernel is crushed and an oil is extracted from it, for which they have many uses. For instance, they cook with it, and light their lanterns with it, and fry these fritters with it, and anoint themselves with it, and mix it with an earth which they have and coat the roofs of their houses with it, as one does with lime. It is abundant and easily available with them and transported from place to place in big gourds of which one contains as much as a qulla in our country contains.

Gourds (*qar'*) grow very big in the land of the Sudan. They make bowls of them, cutting each one in half so as to make two bowls, and carve them elegantly. When one of them goes on a journey he is followed by his male and female slaves (*'abiduh wa-jawarih*) carrying his furnishings and the vessels from which he eats and drinks made of gourds.

—*Corpus*, 286–87 (Ibn Battuta)

Questions

1. Name at least five facts dealing with the food of Mali.
2. Why are gourds so important?

Segment II

Al-Dukkali said to me: "The people of this kingdom make much use of magic and poison. They take great interest in them and are very exact in them. They have plants and animals from which they compound fatal poisons, especially a kind of fish which they have and the gall bladders of crocodiles. They are poisons for which there are no antidotes."

—*Corpus*, 272 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. What skill do the people have in making poisons?
2. How might they put these poisons to use?

Segment III

... Their brave cavaliers wear golden bracelets. Those whose knightly valor is greater wear gold necklets also. If it is greater still they add gold anklets. Whenever a hero (batal) adds to the list of his exploits the king gives him a pair of wide trousers, and the greater the number of a knight's exploits the bigger the size of his trousers. These trousers are characterized by narrowness in the leg and ampleness in the seat. The king is distinguished in his costume by the fact that he lets a turban-end dangle down in front of him. His trousers are of twenty pieces and nobody dares to wear the same.

—*Corpus*, 265 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. What types of people are honored and how are they honored?
2. What does this tell you about what is important to the people?



Traditional gold earrings
(*kwottenai*)

These earrings are worn by married Fulani women in Mali.

National Museum of African Art
This image can be seen in color:

<http://www.nmafa.si.edu/exhibits/site/jewelryL.htm>

Segment IV

It is their custom not to bury their dead unless they be people of rank and status. Otherwise those without rank and the poor and strangers are thrown into the bush like other dead creatures.

—*Corpus*, 266 (al-'Umari)

Question

1. What do the people do with dead bodies?

Segment V

In their deserts there are undomesticated buffalo which are hunted like wild beasts, in the following fashion. They carry away little calves such as may be reared in their houses, and when they want to hunt the buffaloes they send out one of these calves to the place where the buffaloes are so that they may see it, make towards it, and become used to it because of the unity of species which is a cause of association. When they have become used to it the hunters shoot them with poisoned arrows. Having cut out the poisoned place, that is, where the arrow has struck and round about it, they eat the flesh.

—*Corpus*, 264 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. Describe how the people of Mali hunt buffalo.
2. What can you conclude about the people of Mali from this description?



African Buffalo

National Archives of South Africa

Segment VI

Merchants of . . . Cairo have told me of the profits which they made from the Africans, saying that one of them might buy a shirt or cloak (thawb) or robe (izar) or other garment for five dinars when it was not worth one. Such was their simplicity and trustfulness that it was possible to practice any deception on them. They greeted anything that was said to them with credulous acceptance. But later they formed the very poorest opinion of the Egyptians because of the obvious falseness of everything they said to them and their outrageous behavior in fixing the prices of the provisions and other goods which were sold to them, so much so that were they to encounter today the most learned doctor of religious science and he were to stay that he was Egyptian they would be rude to him and view him with disfavour because of the ill treatment which they had experienced at their hands.

—*Corpus*, 271 (al-'Umari).

Questions

1. How did the Egyptians treat the people of Mali who accompanied Mansa Musa?
2. What can you determine from this reading about the character and values of the people of Mali?
3. Were they justified in forming a poor opinion of the Egyptians? Why or why not?



Emblem from Arab Republic of Egypt Ministry of Information, Tourist Division

Segment VII

Ibn Amir Hajib continued: "I asked sultan Musa how the kingdom fell to him, and he said: 'We belong to a house which hands on the kingship by inheritance. The king who was my predecessor did not believe that it was impossible to discover the furthest limit of the Atlantic Ocean and wished vehemently to do so. So he equipped 200 ships filled with men and the same number equipped with gold, water, and provisions enough to last them for years, and said to the man deputed to lead them: "Do not return until you reach the end of it or your provisions and water give out." They departed and a long time passed before anyone came back. Then one ship returned and we asked the captain what news they brought. He said: "Yes, O Sultan, we travelled for a long time until there appeared in the open sea [as it were] a river with a powerful current. Mine was the last of those ships. The [other] ships went on ahead but when they reached that place they did not return and no more was seen of them and we do not know what became of them. As for me, I went about at once and did not enter that river." But the sultan disbelieved him.

Then that sultan got ready 2,000 ships, 1,000 for himself and the men whom he took with him and 1,000 for water and provisions. He left me to deputize for him and embarked on the Atlantic Ocean with his men. That was the last we saw of him and all those who were with him, and so I became king in my own right.

—*Corpus*, 268-69 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. Refer to a world map. Where do you think the sultan might have wanted to send these ships?
2. Does the reading give any hints whether these were sailing ships or large canoes?
3. Do you think it possible for the expedition to have reached the Americas? Why or why not?
4. Considering such factors as wind, current, and the distance from the mouth of the Senegal or Gambia Rivers to the northeastern coast of Brazil, would it have been possible for these ships to reach America safely?
5. How would the wind, current, and distance affect intentions they might have had to return to West Africa?

Segment VIII

This is a list of “qualities” that an Arab scholar gave to the people of Mali after he had lived among them.

One of their good features is their lack of oppression. They are the farthest removed of people from it and their sultan does not permit anyone to practise it. Another is the security embracing the whole country, so that neither traveler there nor dweller has anything to fear from thief or usurper. . . .

Another is their assiduity in prayer and their persistence in performing it in congregation and beating their children to make them perform it. If it is a Friday and a man does not go early to the mosque he will not find anywhere to pray because of the press of the people. It is their habit that every man sends his servant with his prayer-mat to spread it for him in a place which he thereby has a right to until he goes to the mosque. . . . Another of their good features is their dressing in their fine white clothes on Friday. If any one of them possesses nothing but a ragged shirt he washes it and cleanses it and attends the Friday prayer in it. Another is their eagerness to memorize the great Koran. They place fetters on their children if there appears on their part a failure to memorize it and they are not undone until they memorize it.

I went into the house of the qadi [judge] on the day of the festival and his children were fettered so I said to him: "Aren't you going to let them go?" He replied: "I shan't do so until they've got the Koran by heart!" One day I passed by a youth of theirs, of good appearance and dressed in fine clothes, with a heavy fetter on his leg. I said to those who were with me: "What has this boy done? Has he killed somebody?" The lad understood what I had said and laughed, and they said to me: "He's only been fettered so that he'll learn the Koran!"

—*Corpus*, 296 (Ibn Battuta).

Questions

1. What qualities do the people of Mali have that the Arab scholar commends?
2. How devoted are they to Islam?
3. Why do you think Ibn Battuta, the visiting scholar who wrote this selection, approved of chaining young people until they learned the Koran?

Mansa Musa Himself

Segment I

Reread the Dramatic Moment on page 8 and consider the following questions.

Questions

1. How does al-'Umari describe Mansa Musa?
2. Why do you think Mansa Musa only spoke through an interpreter even though he spoke Arabic?
3. Why did Mansa Musa refuse to kiss the ground in the presence of the Egyptian sultan?
4. How was the matter of respect for the Egyptian sultan finally settled?

Segment II

When the time to leave for the Pilgrimage came round the sultan sent to him [Mansa Musa] a large sum of money with ordinary and thoroughbred camels complete with saddles and equipment to serve as mounts for him, and purchased abundant supplies for his entourage and others who had come with him. He arranged for deposits of fodder to be placed along the road and ordered the caravan commanders to treat him with honour and respect.

—*Corpus*, 270 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. Why do you think Mansa Musa impressed the sultan?
2. Why do you think the sultan gave Mansa Musa and his courtiers fine gifts and ordered the caravan commanders to treat Mansa Musa with honor and respect?



Segment III

This sultan Musa, during his stay in Egypt both before and after his journey to the Noble Hijaz, maintained a uniform attitude of worship and turning towards God. It was as though he were standing before Him because of His continual presence in his mind. He and all those with him behaved in the same manner and were well-dressed, grave, and dignified. He was noble and generous and performed many acts of charity and kindness. He had left his country with 100 loads of gold which he spent during his Pilgrimage on the tribes who lay along his route from his country to Egypt, while he was in Egypt, and again from Egypt to the Noble Hijaz and back.

—*Corpus*, 269 (al-'Umari)

Question

1. What are some words that are used to describe Mansa Musa?

Segment IV

Muhanna' b. 'Abd al-Baqi al-'Ujrumi the guide informed me that he accompanied sultan Musa when he made the Pilgrimage and that the sultan was very open-handed towards the pilgrims and the inhabitants of the Holy Places. He and his companions maintained great pomp and dressed magnificently during the journey. He gave away much wealth in alms. "About 200 mithqals of gold fell to me" and Muhanna' "and he gave other sums to my companions." Muhanna' waxed eloquent in describing the sultan's generosity, magnanimity, and opulence.

—*Corpus*, 271 (al-'Umari)

Questions

1. What does being "open-handed towards the pilgrims" mean?
2. What does that tell us about his personality?

LESSON THREE

HISTORICAL BIAS

A. Objectives

- ◆ To discuss the concept of historical perspective or bias and then attempt to distinguish evidence of bias in the histories of Mali that the class has created.
- ◆ To realize that history is always limited by those who write it and must therefore be read critically.
- ◆ To be able to apply this knowledge to other historical settings.

B. Lesson Activities

1. Ask the students to think of a time they may have had a fight with a brother or sister when their parents were not home. When their parents got home and found out something had happened, they asked, "What happened here?" Imagine that only your brother or sister was allowed to tell "what went on" to your parents. How would you feel? Why wouldn't you like it? What are you most worried about happening? Students should see that there would be only "one side" to the story and they would find that "unfair." It would be unfair to the students because most students would believe that in this case their sibling would only tell the story of what "went on" from their *perspective* or *bias*. Define these words.
2. Now ask students to think about yesterday and the work they did on Mali. What does the story about you and your brother or sister have to do with the history you wrote of Mali? Where did you get all your information on Mali? Who wrote it? Try to get the students to arrive at the conclusion that "one side" was given to them (the side of the Arab scholars). That "side" will come with a perspective and bias of the Arab scholars. What might that bias be? When you as a class draw your conclusions about Mali whose bias was influencing your history? What might that bias be?
3. Explain to the class that you are going to show them an example of what you've just been talking about. Read aloud or from the board the following citation:

Lesson Three

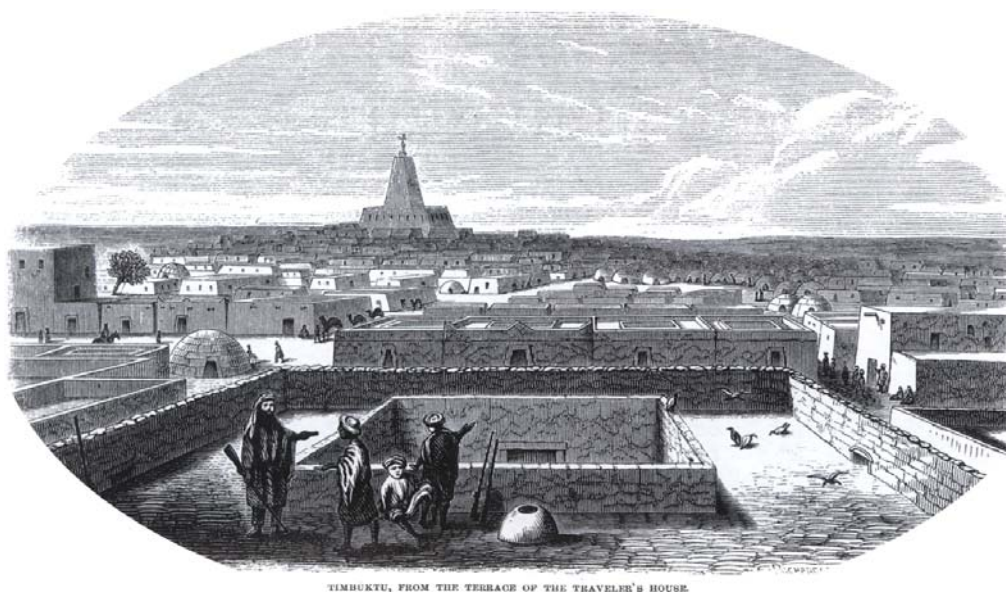
“It is their custom not to bury their dead unless they be people of rank and status. Otherwise those without rank and the poor and strangers are thrown to the bush like other dead creatures.”

—*Corpus*, 266 (al-‘Umari)

What conclusions does this cause you to draw about the people of Mali? [They don’t care about the dead, they don’t care about the poor, they treat dead people like animals etc.] Most students will see this as a negative behavior and you can explain to them that the Arabs also saw this custom in a bad light since Muslims and would be buried shortly after dying in order to conform to Muslim practice. Why do we see this as negative? [It’s not the way we do it, thus we are uncomfortable.]

4. Now explain that the people of Mali had a very specific reason for laying their dead in the bush. Hyenas were very common in that part of Africa. Hyenas will often feed on a corpse. According to the people’s religious tradition the hyena was endowed with spiritual gifts and by eating on the corpse of the dead the animal helped to get the person’s soul to the afterlife. The hyena was sort of a means of transportation to heaven. Now ask the students why it was so important for the dead to be laid out in the bush? Discuss the importance of this.
5. This explanation of this tradition will usually cause students to make comments about how “gross” or “sick” this practice is. This is an excellent opportunity to have them look at their bias. Shouldn’t historians try to leave bias out? Is that possible? Does the history that the students wrote yesterday reflect this new information? Have the students quickly rework that section of their history. Discuss to the length you feel necessary.
6. When you think the students have a working knowledge of bias and perspective as discussed in this lesson allow them either working individually or as a group to go back to their history and try to find examples of other times they or the Arab scholars may have been biased. Have the students cite the reading and explain what they think the bias might be. Some possible areas to search in can include:
 - a. lack of writing
 - b. throwing dust on their heads
 - c. story of the Turummi
 - d. the voyage across the Atlantic

7. After the students have shared with the class some other examples remind them that having a bias or perspective does not make theirs or any other history worse than another. It is simply an element of history. Critical thinking while reading is the key to being a good history student.
8. Remind the students that biased or not, the Arabs are our only main sources on Mali. We are very dependent on what they wrote. As far as we can tell there is no evidence of any written material created by the people of Mali themselves and so we must depend upon what the Arab scholars have written. At this point any factual information about Mali that you gleaned from the teacher background reading that did not come out in yesterday's discussion of the readings should be presented. By the end of this portion of the unit the students should have been presented with the amount of information you as the teacher have chosen to present that will suit your class. This will lead the students into the culminating enrichment lesson that follows.



"Timbuktu, from the Terrace of the Traveler's House"

Heinrich Barth, *Travels and Discoveries in North and Central Africa*, vol. 3 (New York, 1857), Frontispiece.

LESSON FOUR

STUDENT PROJECTS

A. Objectives

- ◆ To synthesize information presented in the primary source readings into a culminating project that takes at least three class periods to complete.
- ◆ To gain experience in higher level thinking skills through the formulation, design and creation of this project.
- ◆ To gain poise in presentation skills when the project is shown before the class.

B. Lesson Activities

In the junior high/middle school setting culminating projects are always highly motivating and rewarding for the students, for they allow the students to do far more than simply memorize information. They allow the student to take some information, digest it and come out with some new creation that is uniquely their own. It is important in a project that spans several days to check on progress in some regular fashion, for without this check many students fall through the cracks and end up turning nothing in. Allow the students a variety of options to support the divergent personality types we have in our classrooms. Depending on your class and your teaching style you may want to use one of these ideas or all of them.

1. **Writing Activities:** Writing should be an essential part of any history curriculum. Students could write a journal of what daily life might have been like for a resident of Mali. Students could write a narrative short story of Mansa Musa's trip to Mecca or many other topics covered in the readings. One student might care to write a poem that they think might have been read by the king's poets to him while he sat upon his throne.
2. **Role-Play:** Some students may enjoy acting out a scene that they create dealing with life in Mali. Staging a scene of the king on his throne

surrounded by attendants is always a popular one. Students also might act out the gathering of food, the extraction of poison from a crocodile's gall bladder or the arrival of Mansa Musa in Cairo. An excellent idea is having students do a news show from Cairo in 1324 reporting the arrival of Mansa Musa to the city. Along with on the scene reports and person on the street interviews, some students could get reporting on Mali itself as sort of background information to the main story of the visit. Two other excellent events to cover either in the news format or as a separate scene would be the meeting at court over the locust infestation or the departure of the ships who set out to explore the Atlantic ocean. The possibilities are endless!

3. **Artwork:** Let the students imagination run wild with pictures of Mansa Musa, his gold, his court life or any other aspect of Mali's culture. To aid in giving students some visuals, see the unit's bibliography, especially Garlake, *Kingdoms of Africa*, an oversized book with many excellent pictures.

It is important that after the students have spent so much time and effort in making these projects a success, they deserve time and recognition for their efforts. Choose a day or two when all the projects are to be presented. Have all students read at least part of their writings aloud; have each person get up to hold up and briefly explain their artwork, have the news shows and role plays performed before the class (invite other classes if you can). This activity always promotes a positive feeling for the students and it makes history come alive as a subject for them. Students will remember the day they played Mansa Musa, King of Mali, far longer than any objective test you could give them on Mali.

C. Evaluation

The project should be used as the chief tool of evaluation for this unit. The students should be aware that their grade on the project, and thus the unit, is based on *how well they use information from their primary sources* in their project. If a project is artistic, interesting but not based on information from the primary source, it should not meet your requirements. The objective is to have the students synthesize the documents and come out with something new. It is only through this method that the students will develop the critical thinking skills that are important to success in history. If, for your own needs you would like to give a test, please do so in addition to the project. However, replacing the project with a test would not meet the objectives of this unit.

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A interesting account of both the Kingdoms of Ghana and Mali with a chapter devoted to Mansa Musa.

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An excellent collection of source materials written by Africans with an African perspective. Covers all periods of African history.

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An excellent summary of Mali's history emphasizing the archaeological record.

Davidson, Basil. *History of West Africa to the Nineteenth Century*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1966.

A short summary of the major kingdoms of West Africa.

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Ibn Battuta visited Mali in 1352–53, not long after the death of Mansa Musa. This book includes a chapter on Ibn Battuta's trans-Saharan journey to Mali.

Garlake, Peter. *Kingdoms of Africa*. London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1978.

An oversized book with plenty of colored maps and pictures suitable for slidemaking.

Harris, Joseph. *Africans and their History*. New York: Mentor Books, 1987.

A widely used paperback that provides a good survey of African history from pre-history to the present.

Hopkins, J.F.P., and N. Levtzion, eds. *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

A fascinating collection of source material of the early Arab scholars who visited or wrote about West Africa during the middle ages.

Levtzion, Nehemia. *Ancient Ghana and Mali*. New York: Africana Publishing Co., 1973.

The most complete study available of these two cultures to date. Discussion of statecraft, trade and culture.

Levtzion and Hopkins, eds. *Early Arabic Sources for West African History*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

A fascinating collection of source material of the early Arab scholars who visited West Africa during the middle ages. A great deal of interesting stories and dangerous escapades. A must for anyone who would like to develop further units on this topic.