

# Mansa Musa

## How could one man's travels become a major historic event?

**When did he live?** the late 1200s and early 1300s

**Where did he live?** Mali

**What did he do?** Mansa Musa, the ruler of Mali, was one of the Muslim kings of West Africa. He became a major figure in African and world history largely because of a pilgrimage he made to the city of Mecca.

**Why is he important?** Mansa Musa's spectacular journey attracted the attention of the Muslim world and of Europe. For the first time, other people's eyes turned to West Africa. During his travels, Mansa Musa gave out huge

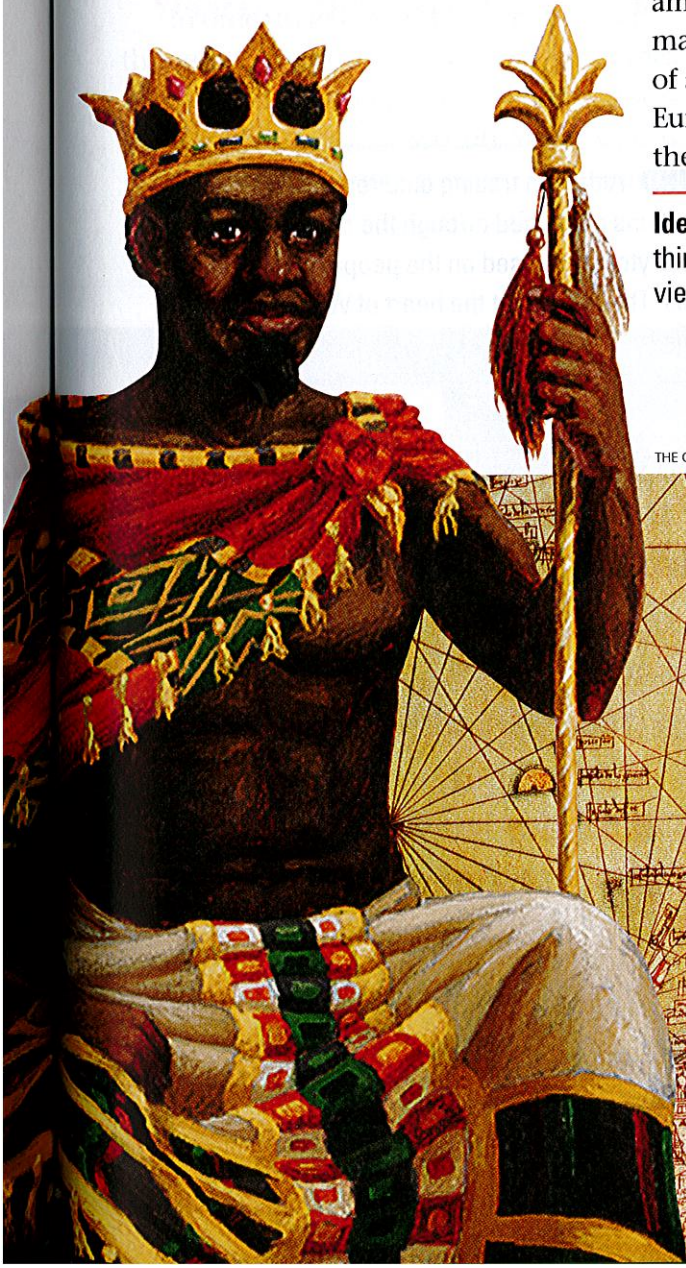
amounts of gold. His spending made people eager to find the source of such wealth. Within 200 years, European explorers would arrive on the shores of western Africa.

**Identifying Points of View** How do you think Mansa Musa changed people's views of West Africa?

### KEY FACTS

**According to chroniclers of the time, Mansa Musa was accompanied on his journey to Mecca by some 60,000 people. Of those people**

- **12,000** were servants to attend to the king.
- **500** were servants to attend to his wife.
- **14,000** more were slaves wearing rich fabrics such as silk.
- **500** carried staffs heavily decorated with gold. Historians have estimated that the gold Mansa Musa gave away on his trip would be worth more than \$100 million today.



**This Spanish map from the 1300s shows Mansa Musa sitting on his throne.**

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