

Document-Based Assessment

Mansa Musa, King of Mali

From 1312 until 1337, Mansa Musa ruled the West African kingdom of Mali. During his reign, the gold trade in the kingdom expanded as did the amount of territory under Mali's control. The wealth of the kingdom and Mansa Musa's power and generosity became legendary following his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324. In fact, it is said that he spent so lavishly during his hajj that the value of gold actually fell in Egypt. Mansa Musa's renown spread throughout Africa to Europe and Southwest Asia, as the excerpts and map below demonstrate.

Document A

"We belong to a house which hands on the kinship by inheritance. The king [Abobakar II] 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. . . ."

"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."

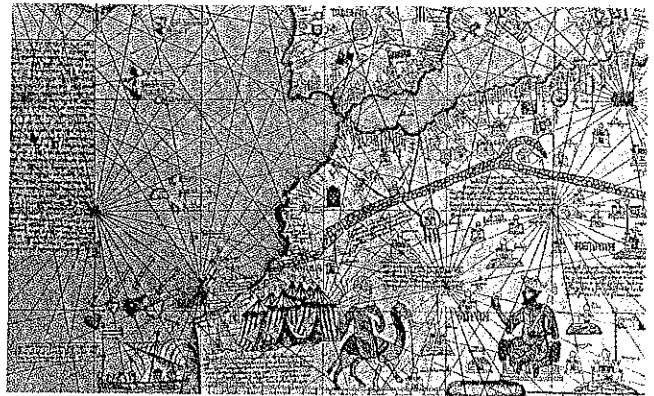
—Mansa Musa, quoted by Ibn Amir Hajib

Document B

"[Mansa Musa] and all those with him . . . 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. . . . As a consequence he needed to borrow money in Egypt and pledged his credit with the merchants at a very high rate of gain so they made 700 dinars profit on 300. Later he paid them back amply. He sent to me 500 mithqals of gold by way of honorarium."

—Ibn Amir Hajib

Document C



Detail of West Africa from a fourteenth-century Spanish world map showing Mansa Musa offering gold to a trader.

Document D

From the beginning of my coming to stay in Egypt I heard talk of the arrival of this sultan Musa on his Pilgrimage. . . . I asked the emir Abu . . . and he told me . . . "When I [the emir] went out to meet him . . . he did me extreme honor and treated me with the greatest courtesy. . . . 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. . . . I realized that the audience was repugnant to him because he would be obliged to kiss the ground and the sultan's hand. . . . so I kept on at him till he agreed."

"[In the sultan's presence Mansa Musa] 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."

—Al 'Umari

Analyzing Documents

Use your knowledge of Mansa Musa, the kingdom of Mali, and Documents A, B, C, and D to answer questions 1–4.

1. According to Document A, Mansa Musa became king after his predecessor
A was killed in a battle.
B lost favor with religious leaders.
C left on a sea voyage.
D was assassinated by an ally of Mansa Musa.
2. The Catalan Atlas, Document C, features Mansa Musa so prominently to
A provide a reference point for the kingdom of Mali.
B show that Mansa Musa is the region's monarch.
C enhance the decorative elements of the map.
D emphasize the wealth, power, and importance of Mansa Musa.
3. Which qualities of Mansa Musa does Document D show?
A cruelty and deceit
B kindness and compassion
C compassion and generosity
D generosity and faith
4. **Writing Task** Why is Mansa Musa's rule known as "the Golden Age of Mali"? Use documents from this page along with information from the chapter in your response.

Document-Based Assessment

Constantinople: "The Great City"

The Byzantines called Constantinople "The Great City" and "The New Rome." By the time of Constantine, Rome was in steep decline. Byzantium—renamed Constantinople—became the capital of Constantine's empire and a center of governmental, religious, and economic life. The city inspired both praise and condemnation, as the documents below illustrate.

Document A

"The focal point of Constantine's new city was the *Milion*, or the First Milestone. It consisted of four triumphal arches forming a square and supporting a cupola [dome], above which was set the most venerable [revered] Christian relic of all—the True Cross itself, sent back by the Empress Helena from Jerusalem a year or two before. From it all the distances in the Empire were measured; it was, in effect the centre of the world."

—*A Short History of Byzantium*, by John Julius Norwich, 1997

Document B

"The city itself is squalid and fetid and in many places harmed by permanent darkness, for the wealthy overshadow the streets with buildings and leave these dirty, dark places to the poor and to travelers; there murders and robberies and other crimes . . . are committed. . . . In every respect she exceeds moderation; for, just as she surpasses other cities in wealth, so, too, does she surpass them in vice."

—From *Journey of Louis VII to the East (1147)*
by Odo of Deuil, a monk who accompanied the French king
on the Second Crusade

Document C



This nineteenth-century painting shows the Byzantine emperor receiving European troops into Constantinople.

Document D

"It is a busy city, and merchants come to it from every country by sea or land, and there is none like it in the world except Bagdad, the great city of Islam. . . . Wealth like that of Constantinople is not to be found in the whole world. Here also are men learned in all the books of the Greeks, and they eat and drink every man under his vine and his fig tree . . . No Jews live in the city, for they have been placed behind an inlet of the sea. An arm of the sea of Marmora shuts them in on the one side, and they are unable to go out except by way of the sea, when they want to do business with the inhabitants."

—*Itinerary* (1160s), by Benjamin of Tudela,
a Jewish traveler

Analyzing Documents

Use your knowledge of the Byzantine empire, Russia, and Eastern Europe and Documents A, B, C, and D to answer questions 1–4.

- Constantine's placement of the relic given by Empress Helena, as described in Document A, suggests that the
A power of the Byzantine empire had shifted to the holy city of Jerusalem.
B holy city of Jerusalem was still the center of civilization.
C focus of the Christian world would shift to the East.
D Byzantine rulers had opposed the crusaders who reclaimed Jerusalem for Christianity.
- According to Document B, Constantinople's wealth and grandeur
A helped to eliminate poverty and crime.
B were the result of highly supervised trading.
C led to greater literacy and appreciation for the arts.
D existed side by side with poverty and crime.
- Document D shows that religious toleration
A extended to all faiths in ancient Constantinople.
B was limited in ancient Constantinople.
C was a founding principle of the city, thanks to Constantine.
D derived from a strong economic foundation.
- Writing Task** Write a letter home from a visitor to ancient Constantinople, describing "the Great City." Use these documents along with information from the chapter in your letter.