

# 1 The Kingdom of Mali

## GROUP 1.1

### Introduction

Historians believe that Mande peoples, led by the 'Lion Prince' Sunjata Keita, established the Kingdom of Mali in around 1235. Over the next 200 years the kingdom expanded and became incredibly wealthy and powerful. It was a leading world power. Yet, by the middle of the fifteenth century, it had all but disappeared. You are going to find out how historians know about the Kingdom of Mali, how and why the kingdom rose and fell, and what the life of Mansa Musa (the country's most famous ruler) shows us about the Kingdom of Mali. To help you throughout this chapter, we are going to start with advice on how to pronounce some names and places, a timeline of the main events and a map of the Kingdom of Mali.

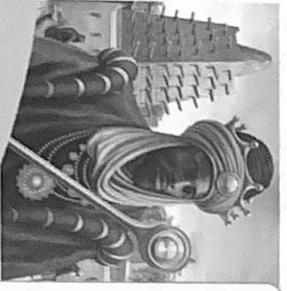
### How do I say?

When you start to learn about the history of another country, it can be difficult to know how to pronounce the names of people and places. Here is a handy guide to help you correctly say ten of the names you'll come across in this chapter. You emphasise the sound in bold.

- Djinguereber Mosque: **jin**-jer-ber mosk
- griot: **gree**-oh
- Haji: **hai**
- Makkah: **ma**-kukh
- Mandinka: **man**-**din**-ka
- Mali: **ma**-li
- Mansa Musa: **man**-sah **mo**-sa
- Sankore Mosque: **san**-**kor**-ay mosk
- Sunjata Keita: **soon**-**ja**-ta **key**-ta
- Timbuktu: **tim**-**buhk**-too



**c1235**  
Sunjata Keita founds the Kingdom of Mali

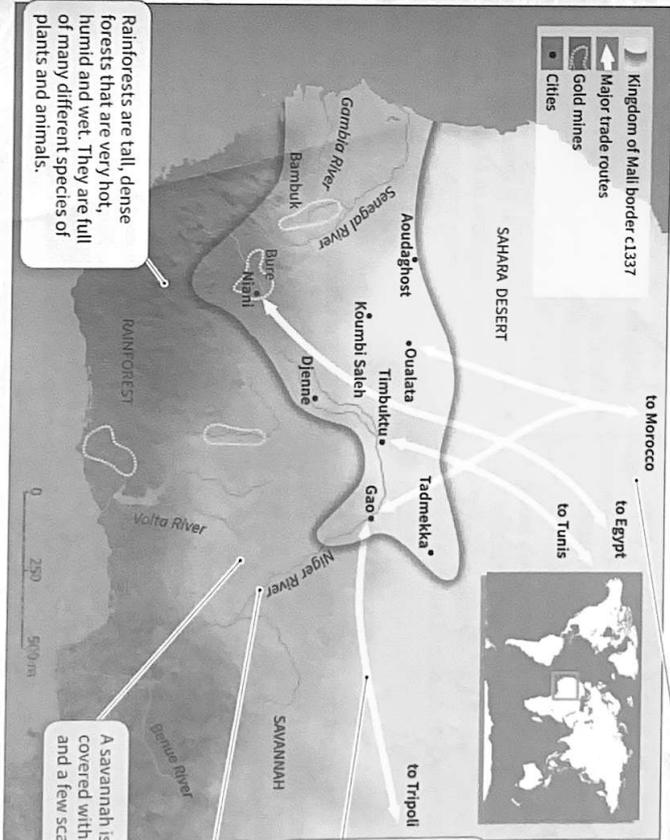


**1324**  
Mansa Musa gains global recognition by performing Hajj. This is a pilgrimage to Makkah that all Muslims must complete once in their lives, if they are physically able to and can afford it

**1255**  
Sunjata Keita dies

**1312**  
Musa becomes mansa (ruler) of the Kingdom of Mali. Although it is difficult to fairly calculate his fortune, some estimate Mansa Musa was worth more than £260 billion in today's money

**MAP A** A map of West Africa and the Kingdom of Mali. Today, the borders of most countries are usually clearly defined: you know if you stand here you're in one country and if you stand there you're in another country, but we cannot be so certain about the position of borders, cities and trade routes during the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in West Africa. Nevertheless, this map should help you understand where the Kingdom of Mali was located, and where some of the key events you will learn about in this chapter took place.



The Sahara Desert is the third largest desert in the world. In summer it is one of the hottest regions in the world during the day, but the air becomes much cooler at night.

Major trade routes extended across the Sahara Desert to Morocco, Tunisia and Tripoli, and on to Europe, China and Persia (a large kingdom centred in what is now modern-day Iran).

The Niger River is the main river in West Africa and provides water for drinking and farming.

A savannah is a warm, wide-open space covered with different types of grasses and a few scattered bushes and trees.

Rainforests are tall, dense forests that are very hot, humid and wet. They are full of many different species of plants and animals.

**1337**  
Mansa Musa dies and Mali becomes steadily weaker. People inside the kingdom fight for control and it is attacked from the outside too.

**1469**  
The Kingdom of Songhay captures the city of Timbuktu from the Kingdom of Mali



### Later on...

**1960**  
From the middle of the fifteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, the land that once formed the Kingdom of Mali was ruled by different African kings. In 1894, French forces captured Timbuktu and, by 1899, the country that is now known as Mali was under French control. In 1960, Mali gained independence from France and the Republic of Mali was founded.

## 1.1B Digging deeper: primary sources about the Kingdom of Mali

Historians use primary evidence to help them make sense of the past, to give them glimpses of different places at different times. Historians of the Kingdom of Mali use four key sources.

### 1 Griots: Oral historians

Since the thirteenth century, griots – storytellers from Mali – have passed on oral accounts, through songs and the spoken word, to future generations. Today, they continue to play a very important role, telling and retelling the history of the Kingdom of Mali and keeping traditions alive. In a society where things were written down far less frequently than they were in Europe at the same time, griots have preserved accounts that would otherwise have been lost.

Griots were important figures in the Kingdom of Mali and were royal advisors. They created and shared stories about the kingdom's rulers, helping to present Mali in the best possible light at home and further afield. The stories they told have changed over time, as they were passed down from griot to griot, because each griot interpreted things in their own way. For example, a griot might have had a particular view about something because of the time in which they lived, and changed a few details in their version of events accordingly. Some people argue this means the oral accounts of the griots cannot be totally trusted, and that the griots are not reliable sources. However, many written documents are produced like this too. They are written by people who have particular views and interpret things in their own way, so the fact that a source is written down does not necessarily make it more accurate or reliable.

▼ **SOURCE D** An extract from a poem called 'The Sunjata Story'. It tells how the Kingdom of Mali was created, and has been retold by many generations of griots to keep the story of Mali's first ruler – Sunjata Keita – alive.

Sunjata, the Lion King, king of kings, was my ancestor. He was called Keita which means 'take your heritage, make it greater before you pass it on to posterity [future generations]'. Sunjata became an emperor seven centuries ago.

### 2 Archaeological and architectural remains

Archaeological remains help us understand where people lived and what their daily lives were like. Archaeologists find things people left behind, like shards of pottery, beads, and spindles used to make thread that was woven into cloth. They look at the locations of the finds, how much of each thing they find, how old what they find is, and what the things they find look like. From these, they work out where people lived, what they did with their time and how they traded with each other.

▼ **SOURCE E** A selection of finds from an archaeological dig in Essouk-Tadmekka, Mali.



Buildings that you can still visit today are also a valuable source of information. The Djinguereber Mosque in Timbuktu was built in 1327 from mud bricks by people from Yemen in the Middle East and Egypt in North Africa. It demonstrates the Kingdom of Mali's power and its global connections, as well as the importance of Islam to the kingdom's rulers.

### Later on...

Descendants of the original construction workers continue to repair the Djinguereber Mosque today.



### 3 Written accounts by Islamic scholars

A lot of the written primary evidence we have about the Kingdom of Mali was created by Islamic scholars from the Middle East. They brought the tradition of writing things down with them, and their accounts of what they saw and heard have helped historians develop their understanding of the history of Mali.

▼ **SOURCE F** A written account of Mansa Musa's visit to Cairo in 1324. Mansa Musa ruled the Kingdom of Mali from 1312 to 1337. It was written by al-Umari, an Islamic scholar who visited Cairo in Egypt several years after Mansa Musa left. The source mentions that Mansa Musa gave away so much gold that it lost some of its value because it was so common.

From the beginning of my coming to stay in Egypt I heard talk of the arrival of... [Mansa] Musa on his Pilgrimage and found the Cairenes [residents of Cairo] eager to recount what they had seen of the Africans' prodigal [extravagant] spending... [They] told me of the opulence [wealth], mainly virtues [positive qualities], and piety [religious devotion] of this sultan [ruler]... [Mansa Musa] flooded Cairo with his benefactions [gifts]. He left no... holder of a royal office without the gift of a load of gold... [The royal office holders then] exchanged gold until they depressed its value in Egypt and caused its price to fall.

### 4 Objects

Objects demonstrate the skill of the craftspeople who made them. They also show historians what people in the Kingdom of Mali valued and how they viewed the world. If they were made of raw materials that were not found in the Kingdom of Mali at that time, or they were made in another part of the world, they help historians understand the trading networks that existed at the time.

### Fact

In West African kingdoms, like the Kingdom of Mali, crafts tended to be specific to one gender. For example, objects made of clay were generally made by women and objects made of metal were generally made by men. This means that **Source G** was most likely made by a woman.

### Key Word

mansa

▼ **SOURCE G** A clay sculpture created between 1100 and 1400. It shows a warrior on horseback, and is an example of an object created by craftspeople from the Kingdom of Mali.



### Over to You

- 1 In your own words, define the terms 'griot' and 'scholar'.
- 2 Discuss **Sources D-G** with a partner. What do they tell you about the Kingdom of Mali? Summarise your analysis in a table like this:

Source	Type of source	What does it tell you about the Kingdom of Mali?

If you are able to search on YouTube, look for 'The Sunjata Story – Glimpse of a Mande Epic' and listen to an extract of the griot about the life of Sunjata Keita.

### Knowledge and understanding

- 1 Describe two features of a griot.

## GROUP 1.2

# 1.2 How and why did the Kingdom of Mali rise and fall?

## GROUP 1.3

The Kingdom of Mali was founded by Sunjata Keita around 1235. He transformed Mali into a powerful trading kingdom and a centre of learning. The kingdom then experienced a 'golden age' between 1312 and 1337, under the leadership of Mansa Musa. The kingdom expanded by invading neighbouring countries and became extremely wealthy. Mansa Musa's commitment to Islam and education also ensured Mali had an international reputation for learning. However, after his death, Mali became steadily weaker as people inside the kingdom fought for control and it was attacked from the outside too. Eventually, it became part of the Kingdom of Songhay. So, how did Sunjata Keita create the Kingdom of Mali? Why did it flourish under Mansa Musa? And why was its power significantly reduced in the years after Mansa Musa's death?

### Objectives

- Identify how Sunjata Keita founded and expanded the Kingdom of Mali.
- Examine the Kingdom of Mali's 'golden age' under Mansa Musa.
- Analyse the reasons why the Kingdom of Mali fell.

## 1.2A The foundation and growth of the Kingdom of Mali

### Unrest

The Kingdom of Ghana, which was founded in the fourth century, was the first kingdom to control West Africa. It had a large, powerful army and was wealthy as a result of its trade in gold, iron and salt. However, following a series of poor harvests and rebellions, the kingdom collapsed in the thirteenth century and much of its land was taken over by the Kingdom of Susu.

### Fact

The Kingdom of Ghana is not the same place as modern-day Ghana. Both are in West Africa, but the Kingdom of Ghana was much further north than the country of Ghana today.

Samanguru, who led the Kingdom of Susu at this time, placed trade restrictions on the Mandinka people, who lived in an area of West Africa called Mali. They rose up in rebellion. They were led by Sunjata Keita, who was able to unite other unhappy people living within the Kingdom of Susu to defeat Samanguru at the Battle of Kirina in around 1235. After the battle, Mandinka leaders swore loyalty to Sunjata Keita and named him Mari-Djata ('Lion Lord'). This was a defining moment in the creation of the Kingdom of Mali. In time, Sunjata became mansa (ruler) of this new kingdom.

### Sunjata Keita, the Lion Lord

Much of what we know about Sunjata Keita comes from a poem called 'The Sunjata Story', which has been told and retold for centuries by griots. It tells the story of how the Kingdom of Mali was created. It shows Sunjata Keita in the best possible light and was designed to unite the people of the new Kingdom of Mali.

▼ **SOURCE A** An extract from the poem 'The Sunjata Story'.

Sunjata, the Lion King, king of kings, was my ancestor. He was called Keita which means 'take your heritage, make it greater before you pass it on to posterity. [future generations] Sunjata became an emperor seven centuries ago.

Once Sunjata Keita was firmly established as the mansa of the Kingdom of Mali, he set about expanding its territory and strengthening his control over the country. The diagram on page 17 outlines the main methods Sunjata Keita used to expand and strengthen the Kingdom of Mali.

### The death of Sunjata Keita

After Sunjata Keita died in 1255, his descendants struggled to maintain the long-term stability he had established. It was not until Musa became mansa in 1312, that the Kingdom of Mali once again experienced a period of growth.

All goods that passed through the Kingdom of Mali were taxed. This meant the wealth of the kingdom and size of the kingdom of Mali increased, which meant that money could be spent on invading neighbouring territories as well as invested in education and culture.

Koumbi Saleh, the capital of the former Kingdom of Ghana, was conquered. The size of the Kingdom of Mali increased, which meant Sunjata Keita had control over more people and there were more people to join his army. The kingdom then expanded further, as neighbouring countries were swallowed into Mali's administrative and taxation systems.

The Bambuk and Bure gold mines were conquered. This gave Sunjata Keita access to immense wealth. Some accounts suggest that later, in the fourteenth century, almost half of the gold that circulated in Africa, Europe and Asia came from the Kingdom of Mali. This helped to transform the kingdom into a trading centre with connections to many countries across the globe.

Sunjata Keita used a common religion - Islam - to bind different groups of people living in the kingdom together, but people were still allowed to practise other African religions.

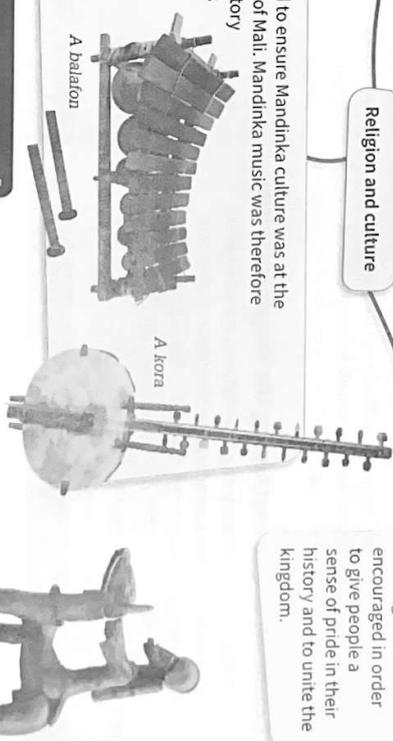
### The role of Sunjata Keita in expanding and strengthening the Kingdom of Mali

#### Trade

#### Conquest

Crafts - such as pottery and cloth-weaving - were encouraged in order to give people a sense of pride in their history and to unite the kingdom.

Sunjata Keita wanted to ensure Mandinka culture was at the heart of the Kingdom of Mali. Mandinka music was therefore used to record the history of the kingdom. Griots used balafons and koras to tell and retell the story of Sunjata Keita and his founding of the kingdom.



A balafon

A kora



▼ **SOURCE B** A clay warrior made in Mali between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries.

### Over to You

- 1 Look at **Source A**. In your own words, describe what 'Keita' means.
- 2 Write a sentence beginning with the adverbial 'Territorially...' to explain how Sunjata Keita expanded and strengthened the Kingdom of Mali through conquest.
- 3 Write a sentence beginning with the adverbial 'Economically...' to explain how Sunjata Keita expanded and strengthened the Kingdom of Mali through trade.
- 4 Write a sentence beginning with the adverbials 'Religiously and culturally...' to explain how Sunjata Keita expanded and strengthened the Kingdom of Mali through religion and culture.

### Change

- 1 The spider diagram presents three main ways Sunjata Keita expanded and strengthened the Kingdom of Mali: trade, conquest, and religion and culture. Which do you think was the most important? Discuss with a partner and then rank the three themes in order of importance.
- 2 In what ways did Sunjata Keita expand and strengthen the Kingdom of Mali? Explain your answer.

## 1.2B The 'golden age' of the Kingdom of Mali

### Mansa Musa becomes ruler

In 1312, the mansa of the Kingdom of Mali – Abu Bakr II – led an expedition into the Atlantic Ocean. Musa was a skilled administrator and was left in charge of the day-to-day running of the kingdom in his absence. Then, when Abu Bakr II failed to return from his voyage, Musa became mansa, and the next ruler.

Mansa Musa wanted to return the kingdom to the stability it had experienced under Sunjata Keita. He was a committed Muslim and initially thought he could unite the kingdom by insisting that everyone become Muslim too. So, one of his first steps was to ban African religious practices among Mali's gold miners. However, the miners went on strike and Mansa Musa was forced to back down. Instead, he decided to continue Sunjata Keita's approach, tolerating a range of different religious beliefs. The importance of gold to Mansa Musa's success as a ruler gave the gold miners great bargaining power. They taught Mansa Musa a valuable lesson about compromise, which he carried with him throughout his reign.

### Expanding and strengthening the Kingdom further

Mansa Musa built on the strong foundations established by Sunjata Keita, further expanding the Kingdom of Mali and further increasing the country's wealth. The diagram on page 19 outlines the main methods Mansa Musa used to expand and strengthen the Kingdom of Mali further.

## GROUP 1.4

### ▼ INTERPRETATION C

An extract from an episode of the BBC Radio 4 series *Homeshool History* by historian Greg Jenner. The episode was called 'Mansa Musa' and was broadcast in 2020.



Mansa Musa was clever, loved learning, supported libraries and it turned out that he was pretty good as a savvy politician... [He] ended up reigning for around 25 years without anyone trying to bump him off the throne... One of the reasons he succeeded was because... [the Kingdom of] Mali... was very diverse, with lots of different cultures, languages, customs and religions. It could have been pretty tense if he had turned up and told everyone to believe the same things that he did, but he didn't. He said you can do what you like as long as you pay your taxes and follow my laws.

Like Sunjata Keita, Mansa Musa obtained a lot of his wealth from taxation. He made the system for collecting taxes simpler, so it was much harder for people to avoid paying what they owed. He kept taxes low for Malian traders and farmers, but charged non-Malians higher taxes. Most of the income from taxation went to the mansa, and Mansa Musa used it to increase the size of his army and rebuild cities like Timbuktu.

Mansa Musa developed more trade routes across the Sahara. Silks from China, spices from India, fabrics from Persia and metalwork from Europe were exchanged for gold and copper from Mali. This generated a huge amount of wealth for the kingdom, which Mansa Musa used to increase the size of his army. The army was then used, among other things, to protect the trade routes.

### The role of Mansa Musa in the continued growth of the Kingdom of Mali

#### Trade

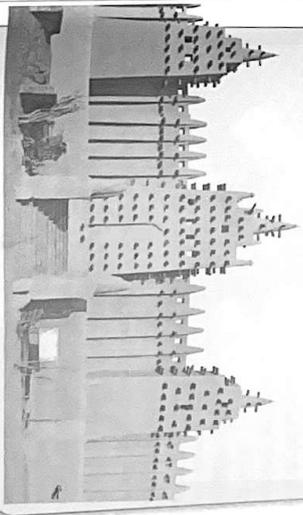
#### Religion and culture

#### Conquest

Mansa Musa increased the size of his army to 100,000 soldiers, and invaded 24 cities and surrounding districts. This doubled the size of the Kingdom of Mali. The newly acquired lands included the city of Timbuktu and gold mines. With more natural resources and trade routes under his control, and more people to tax, Mansa Musa and the Kingdom of Mali became richer and more powerful. It is important not to forget the negative impact this will have had on the people who were conquered, though.

Like Sunjata Keita, Mansa Musa tolerated African religious practices. However, he was a committed Muslim and famously went on Hajj to Makkah in 1324. When he returned, he built many mosques. More people became Muslim as a result, and this helped to unite the kingdom.

▼ **SOURCE D** A modern photograph of Djinguereber Mosque, which was built by Mansa Musa in Timbuktu in 1327.



Under Mansa Musa, the cities of Timbuktu and Gao grew into centres of learning. Sankore University, in Timbuktu, housed the finest library in Africa. Scholars from across the Muslim world travelled to the Kingdom of Mali to study, and scholars from Mali travelled to study abroad too. Mansa Musa encouraged this exchange of knowledge and the Kingdom of Mali's international reputation for education went from strength to strength.

▼ **SOURCE E** A modern photograph of Sankore University, which still exists today as a school for young people to learn about Islam.



### Over to You

- a** Write a sentence beginning with the adverbial 'Territorially...' to explain how Mansa Musa expanded and strengthened the Kingdom of Mali through conquest.

**b** Write a sentence beginning with the adverbial 'Economically...' to explain how Mansa Musa expanded and strengthened the Kingdom of Mali through trade.

**c** Write a sentence beginning with the adverbials 'Religiously and culturally...' to explain how Mansa Musa expanded and strengthened the Kingdom of Mali through religion and culture.
- a** On a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being very similar and 5 being very different), how similar do you think the reigns of Sunjata Keita and Mansa Musa were?

**b** Write a paragraph to explain your thinking.

### Interpretation analysis

- 1 Read Interpretation C.**

**a** What is the interpretation saying or showing?

**b** Who created the interpretation? When did they create it? Is the person who created it a reliable source of information?

**c** Was it created to support a particular point of view? Was it created to make the person reading it or looking at it feel a particular way?
- 2** How convincing is **Interpretation C** about the way Mansa Musa strengthened his control of the Kingdom of Mali? Explain your answer using **Interpretation C** and your contextual knowledge.

### Key Word

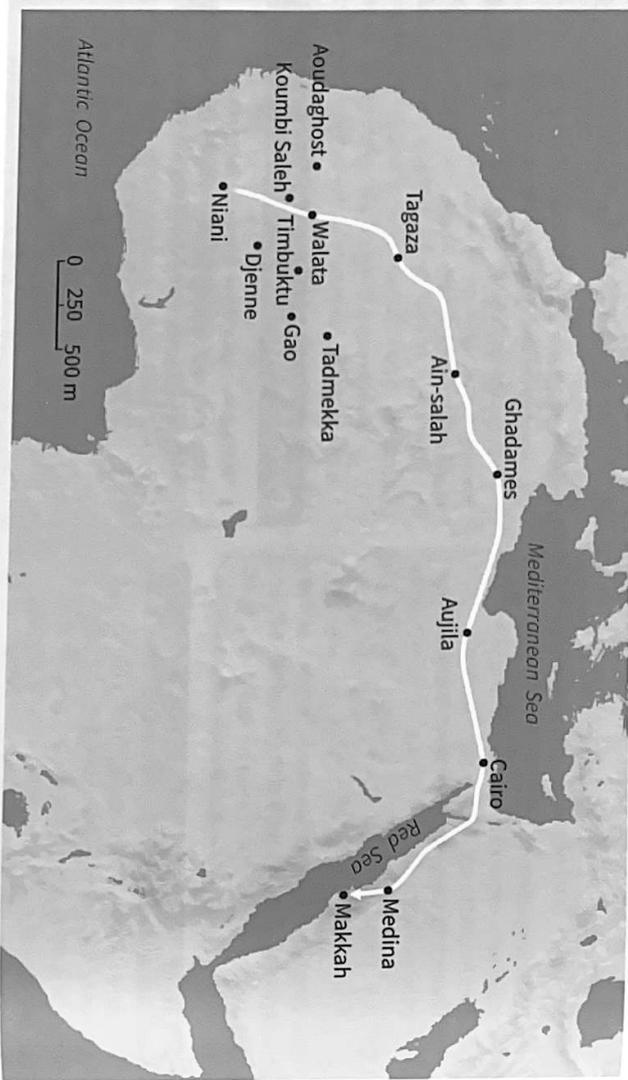
Hajj

GROUP 1.4

When he became mansa, Musa was keen to make his mark on the Kingdom of Mali. Unlike those who ruled before him, being a committed Muslim was very important to him and he showed his dedication to Islam by performing Hajj in 1324.

The pilgrim journey to Makkah was over 4,000 miles long (similar in length to the journey across the Atlantic Ocean from the UK to the USA) and took just over a year to complete. The red line shown on **Map C** shows the route Mansa Musa took across the Sahara Desert, through Cairo and on to Makkah. This Hajj not only sent out important messages to the world about Mansa Musa's religious beliefs; it also displayed his wealth and his love of knowledge.

MAP C The route taken by Mansa Musa to Makkah in 1324.



Leaving Mali

In 1324, Mansa Musa left his capital, probably close to the Niger River, with perhaps as many as 60,000 people in his caravan. Al-'Umari, an Islamic historian who lived at the same time as Mansa Musa, claimed there were 8,000 soldiers, 12,000 personal staff and 80 camels, each carrying 136 kilograms of gold, in the caravan. Mansa Musa's wife Inari Kanute also travelled with him and brought along hundreds of her own staff. They took everything they would need on the journey with them, including a mosque that was built every time Mansa Musa wanted to pray.

**Fact:** Mansa Musa allowed slavery in his kingdom and owned thousands of enslaved people himself. Many of these enslaved people worked in the gold and salt mines that produced his wealth. The slavery that existed in Africa at this time was not the same type of slavery that the Europeans introduced later, in the late fifteenth century. The European form of slavery was called 'chattel slavery'. A chattel slave was viewed as a piece of property, with no legal rights. In Mansa Musa's kingdom, slavery was different. Enslaved people were usually prisoners of war. They were still exploited and made to work hard but, in time, they could become free. In contrast, chattel slaves were enslaved for life, as were their children and grandchildren, unless their owner decided differently.

Arrival in Cairo

When he arrived in Cairo, Mansa Musa was supposed to bow to the Egyptian Sultan (ruler) to show his respect, but chose to kiss the ground in praise of Allah (the Arabic word for 'God') instead. This won over the Sultan, and Mansa Musa and his caravan were given food and shelter over the summer in Cairo. In return, Mansa Musa gave the Sultan a gift of 50,000 gold coins. In fact, Mansa Musa gave away so much gold in Cairo that the value of gold fell and did not recover for over a decade!

**INTERPRETATION E** Al-Maqrizi, an Egyptian historian, describes Mansa Musa's arrival in Cairo in July 1324 at least 80 years after the event.

He is a young man with brown skin, a pleasant face and a good figure, instructed in Maliki rite [Muslim teachings]. He appeared amidst his companions magnificently dressed and mounted [on horseback] and surrounded by more than 10,000 subjects. He brought gifts and presents that amazed the eye with their beauty and splendour.

Makkah

In Makkah, Mansa Musa dressed like an ordinary pilgrim and prayed with other worshippers. After completing Hajj, he stayed in Makkah for a while and met some famous Islamic scholars. He was so taken with their work that he invited some of them back to Mali with him. Among them was Abu al-Sahili, one of the greatest poets and architects of the time, who was involved in designing the Djingereber Mosque in Timbuktu.

Key Word

caravan

**INTERPRETATION F** Dr Gus Casely-Hayford is a historian and an expert in West African history and art. This is an extract from a book he wrote about Timbuktu for young people in 2018.

As much as being pilgrimage, it was also a statement to the world about the wealth, ambition and intellectual culture of Mali. The news of his journey created waves that would reverberate [echo] across the Middle East and Europe... [F]ifty years later... Cresques... would immortalise Mansa Musa, holding a golden nugget at the centre of the Great Catalan Atlas.

**SOURCE G** A gold coin made with gold mined in West Africa, thought to date from the twelfth century.



Over to You

- 1 a What is Hajj?  
b List three facts about Mansa Musa's Hajj.  
c What does Mansa Musa's Hajj show about him?
- 2 What do Mansa Musa's actions while in Makkah reveal to you about his beliefs?
- 3 Look at **Interpretation F**. Describe, in no more than 50 words, the legacy of Mansa Musa's Hajj according to Dr Gus Casely-Hayford.

**INTERPRETATION D** Writing in the seventeenth century, Islamic scholar al-Sa'di describes the beginning of the Hajj.

[Mansa Musa] set off in great pomp [ceremony] with a large party, including 60,000 soldiers and 500 slaves, who ran in front of him as he rode. Each of the slaves bore in his hand a wand fashioned from... gold.

### 1.3C Timbuktu a fourteenth-century centre of learning

## GROUP 1.5

While Mansa Musa was in Makkah, his army generals expanded the Kingdom of Mali by conquering neighbouring countries. The capture of Timbuktu in 1324 was significant. Under Mansa Musa, it was transformed from a small desert settlement into an important trading centre, making Mansa Musa even richer. However, Timbuktu was famed more for wisdom – for its architecture, libraries and universities – than its wealth. As a result, capturing the city also increased the Kingdom of Mali's reputation as a centre of learning.

#### Wealth

Timbuktu is located on the Niger River and had access to trade routes across the Sahara Desert. Valuable natural resources, including salt and gold, arrived in Timbuktu where they were bought and sold and then carried to other countries by caravan. By expanding trade, Mansa Musa increased both the city's wealth and his own wealth.

#### Salt

- Salt was mined in the north of the Kingdom of Mali at Taghaza and was brought in solid blocks to Timbuktu to sell.
- Salt is valuable because it is used to preserve food.
- Our bodies need salt to function properly so it is important to replace salt lost through sweating, all the more so in hot countries like Mali.

#### Gold

- Gold was mined in the south of the Kingdom of Mali at Bambuk and Bure and was brought to Timbuktu to sell.
- Gold is a very valuable metal and it could be exchanged for goods such as cloth, paper and horses.
- The location of the gold mines was kept secret from outsiders.

#### Trade routes

- Mansa Musa controlled trade routes by taxing caravans entering the Kingdom of Mali.
- Trade deals were generally agreed peacefully but the threat of force was used when necessary.
- Mansa Musa gave protection to people who lived along the trade routes, to repay them for giving food and supplies to the caravans.

#### Wisdom

Mansa Musa's riches enabled him to make Timbuktu an important centre for learning.

#### ▼ INTERPRETATION I An African proverb.

A proverb is a saying that summarises a general truth or a piece of advice that is well known.

Salt comes from the north, gold from the south and silver from the country of the white men, but the word of God and the treasures of wisdom are only to be found in Timbuktu.

The Islamic scholars Mansa Musa brought back with him from his Hajj played an important role in rebuilding Timbuktu. For example, al-Sahili, an architect from Andalusia in modern-day Spain, is reported to have been paid the equivalent of £1.5 million in today's money to design the Djinguereber Mosque. The Sankore Mosque was also built, and it was used as both a place of worship and a university. By the end of Mansa Musa's reign, Sankore University was home to thousands of books and manuscripts, forming the largest collection in Africa since the Great Library of Alexandria.

#### Earlier on...

295B02

The Great Library of Alexandria was in Egypt. It was founded in about 295BCE and sources say it contained between 40,000 and 700,000 scrolls, manuscripts and books.

Timbuktu was a centre of Islamic learning, and the ideas that developed in Timbuktu spread throughout Mali. This unified the kingdom. For example, systems of law and order that first developed in the city of Timbuktu were used across the country. The laws were written down, making it easier for Mansa Musa to be consistent in his approach to discipline.

#### ▼ SOURCE J

A manuscript from Timbuktu thought to show astrological charts.



#### ▼ INTERPRETATION K

Historian Toby Green writing in *A Fistful of Shells: West Africa from the age of revolution, which was published in 2019.*



The growth of Mali's power in cities... such as... Timbuktu, and the employment of an architect from Andalusia were all testament to the rising power of this West African state and its global connections – connections that were certainly equal of, or ahead of, much of Europe at that date.

#### The legacy of Mansa Musa

Mansa Musa led the Kingdom of Mali from 1312 to 1337. He expanded the size of the kingdom and increased its wealth. But his long-term impact on the kingdom extends far beyond his reputation as a fabulously rich ruler.

▼ **INTERPRETATION L** An extract from *Mansa Musa and the Empire of Mali* by P. James Oliver which considers Mansa Musa's long-term impact.

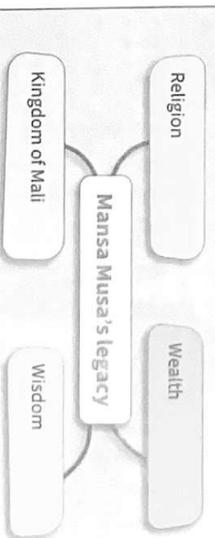
Mansa Musa left a legacy of cultural and religious values that endured long after his death... marketplace became living encyclopaedias of the world where silks... were displayed beside ivory, drums, copper and cattle... The University of Sankore continued to grow in size and stature. Stately mosques stood as examples of architectural innovation and as centres of education and public prayer... It was a time of glory, a time to remember.

#### Over to You

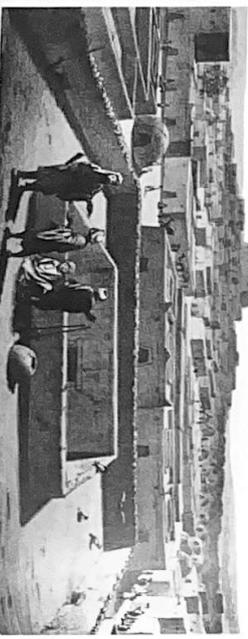
- 1 a How did Mansa Musa transform Timbuktu into a centre of learning?  
b What impression does **Interpretation H** give you of Timbuktu?
- 2 Read **Interpretation K**. What comparison does Toby Green draw between the Kingdom of Mali and European countries in the fourteenth century?

#### Significance

- 1 Copy and complete the following spider diagram to show the different aspects of Mansa Musa's legacy, adding facts from pages 22–27 to complete each box.



- 2 Which aspect of Mansa Musa's legacy is most significant? Rank the aspects in order (1 = most significant, 4 = least significant).
- 3 'Mansa Musa is remembered only for his wealth.' How far do you agree? Explain your answer.



▼ **INTERPRETATION H** An image created from a drawing of Timbuktu made by Heinrich Barth. Barth was a German explorer and scholar, who visited Timbuktu in the 1850s. He spoke African Arabic and a number of African languages, and he spent seven months in Timbuktu.