## ADEDIGBA ALIU ADEGORITE

## MATRIC: FTP/CSC/20/0003710

## DEPT: COMPUTER SCIENCE

## GST 224 ASSIGNMENT

## (LEADERSHIP SKILLS)

Leadership Choice **Mansa Musa**

**BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF MANSA MUSA**

Mansa Musa was an important ruler of the golden age of the Malinké kingdom, based on the upper Niger River in Mali, West Africa. He ruled between 707–732/737 according to the Islamic calendar (AH), which translates to 1307–1332/1337 CE. Malinké, also known as Mande, Mali, or Melle, was founded around 1200 CE, and under Mansa Musa's reign, the kingdom leveraged its rich copper, salt, and gold mines to become one of the richest trading empires in the world of its day.

**A Noble Inheritance**

Mansa Musa was the great-grandson of another great Mali leader, Sundiata Keita (~1230-1255 CE), who established the Malinké capital at the town of Niani (or possibly Dakajalan, there is some debate about that). Mansa Musa is sometimes referred to as Gongo or Kanku Musa, meaning "the son of the woman Kanku." Kanku was the granddaughter of Sundiata, and as such, she was so Musa's connection to the legitimate throne.

Fourteenth-century travelers report that the earliest Mande communities were small, clan-based rural towns, but under the influence of Islamic leaders such as Sundiata and Musa, those communities became important urban trading centers. Malinke reached its height by about 1325 CE when Musa conquered the cities of Timbuktu and Gao.

## Growth and Urbanization of Malinké

Mansa Musa—Mansa is a title meaning something like "king"—held many other titles; he was also the Emeri of Melle, the Lord of Mines of Wangara, and the Conquerer of Ghanata and a dozen other states. Under his rule, the Malinké empire was stronger, richer, better organized, and more literate than any other Christian power in Europe at the time.

Musa established a university at [Timbuktu](https://www.thoughtco.com/where-is-timbuktu-1433600) where 1,000 students worked towards their degrees. The university was attached to the Sankoré Mosque, and it was staffed with the finest jurists, astronomers, and mathematicians from the scholarly city of Fez in Morocco.

In each of the cities conquered by Musa, he established royal residences and urban administrative centers of government. All of those cities were Musa's capitals: the center of authority for the entire Mali kingdom moved with the Mansa: the centers where he was not currently visiting were called "king's towns."

## Pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina

All of the Islamic rulers of Mali made pilgrimages to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, but the most lavish by far was Musa's. As the richest potentate in the known world, Musa had full right of entry into any Muslim territory. Musa left to see the two shrines in Saudi Arabia in 720 AH (1320–1321 CE) and was gone for four years, returning in 725 AH/1325 CE. His party covered great distances, as Musa toured his western dominions on the way and back.

Musa's "golden procession" to Mecca was immense, a caravan of an almost inconceivable 60,000 people, including 8,000 guards, 9,000 workmen, 500 women including his royal wife, and 12,000 enslaved people. All were dressed in brocade and Persian silks: even the enslaved people carried a staff of gold weighing between 6 and 7 pounds each. A train of 80 camels each carried 225 pounds (3,600 troy ounces) of gold dust to be used as gifts.

Every Friday during the sojourn, wherever he was, Musa had his workmen build a new mosque to supply the king and his court with a place to worship.

## Bankrupting Cairo

According to historical records, during his pilgrimage, Musa gave away a fortune in gold dust. In each of the Islamic capital cities of Cairo, Mecca, and Medina, he also gave an estimated 20,000 gold pieces in alms. As a result, prices for all merchandise rocketed in those cities as the recipients of his generosity rushed to pay for all kinds of goods in gold. The value of gold quickly depreciated.

By the time Musa returned to Cairo from Mecca, he had run out of gold and so he borrowed back all the gold he could get at a high rate of interest: accordingly, the value of gold in Cairo mounted to unprecedented heights. When he finally returned to Mali, he immediately repaid the vast loan plus interest in a single astounding payment. Cairo's money lenders were ruined as the price of gold fell through the floor, and it has been reported that it took at least seven years for Cairo to fully recover.

## Mansa Musa’s Legacy

The organization and smooth administration of a purely African empire, the founding of the University of Sankore, the expansion of trade in Timbuktu, the architectural innovations in Gao, Timbuktu, and Niani and, indeed, throughout the whole of Mali and in the subsequent Songhai empire are all testimony to Mansa Mūsā’s superior administrative gifts. In addition, the moral and religious principles he had taught his subjects endured after his death.