

Free Reading Mansa Musa and the Empire of Mali by P. James Oliver

Mansa Musa and the Empire of Mali

By: P. James Oliver

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Oliver's well-researched biography of Mansa Musa reads like an exotic tale of gold, glory, and adventure. During his long reign as Mali's emperor, Mansa Musa led his empire into its Golden Age; presided over a spectacular, 60,000 person, 9,000 mile pilgrimage; founded a university in Timbuktu; and helped revolutionize architecture across the Sudan. Oliver does not allow Musa's story to get bogged down in detail by seamlessly weaving a lot of history into his narrative and by supplying curious readers with an extensive Glossary. Many of the African ancestors of today's African-Americans came from West Africa. From 700 -- 1600 A. D., one after the other, three great, black, commercial empires dominated West Africa. They were powerful, prosperous, complex, stable -- and large. At its height, the Empire of Mali was the size of all of Western Europe. Well-crafted and fast paced, Oliver's book is enhanced by a liberal sprinkling of enjoyable drawings, clear and helpful maps, and interesting photos. Not only are Mansa Musa's triumphs and dilemmas clearly portrayed, but so are the lives of the people of medieval Mali.

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