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## Mansa Musa And Establishment Of The Mali Empire

The Mali Empire is an empire well-known for its wealth and religious influence in the West Africa. The empire was established in 1235 Common era by King Sundiata Keita and began through the merging of smaller Malinke kingdoms within Ghana and the upper Niger river regions. In the following essay I will be discussing the significance of the Ancient Empire of Mali, to do this I will be focusing on the economic, social and educational contributions it has made towards human history.

Mansa Musa and King Sundiata remain the most successful and well-known leaders of the Mali empire. They were known for developing and maintaining well developed political systems in which the independent provinces of Mali were given local self-governance. Mansa Musa's leadership ensured peace and social prosperity across the Western region. The kings introduced the Islamic religion to the people of Mali and influenced the spread of Islamic knowledge farther into Africa, the people of Mali were not compelled to convert to Islam however Islamic beliefs and values were incorporated into some their traditional and local practices.

The empire of Mali was recognized for having the strongest and most successful economy of its time. The mighty empire was able to revive and support its local economy through the use of various forms of wealth generating strategies. It gained its wealth mainly through its trading, taxes as well as the control it had over important trading routes running through the Sahara desert, the Middle East and Europe. Upon his ruling, king Sundiata expanded the borders of Mali which led to Mali gaining ownership to additional gold mines and introduced a taxing system where imported and exported goods were tax, he also taxed merchants that crossed into Mali's borders. Smaller kingdoms also pledged their allegiance to Mali through annual tax payments and trade. Mansa Musa made the infamous pilgrimage to Mecca where he distributed large amounts of gold to the public and thus making him the first Muslim ruler in West Africa to travel to Mecca. The pilgrimage's extravagance drew awareness to the considerable wealth of Africans which made records throughout Europe. The king's generosity later resulted in a decrease in the value of gold in Egypt which lasted for a number of years. Mansa Musa returned from his travels with Arab scholars and architects who contributed to the continuous development of the city of Timbuktu.

Mali's city of Timbuktu was a world-famous centre of learning and architecture, it was the hub of scholarly activities known throughout the Islamic regions. Timbuktu became the epicentre of Islamic intellectual development and contributed greatly towards Islam and world civilisation through scholarships. Mansa Musa constructed a mosque, Sankore Madrassah (university), that

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was used as both a prayer temple and learning centre of which its library was the greatest of its time and attracted scholars from other Islamic nations. Sankore University offered students the exposure to knowledge on various fields of study with the inclusion of Islamic studies and produced a number of distinguished graduates such as engineers, architects and astronomers. Important academic and religious books were written and copied in Timbuktu where thousands of manuscripts were stored at the Madrassah. It is suggested that if Sankore University was preserved and survived the foreign invasions, it could have transformed the face of the academic and cultural history of Africa. The university its education standard was considered to be at a level that surpasses other Islamic institutions in the world and remains one of the oldest operating institutions in Africa.

The establishment of this empire resulted in the gradual accumulation of wealth, the birth of cultures and the practice of Islamic religion in West Africa. The essay above has given account to the various contributions made by the Empire of Mali to human history.

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