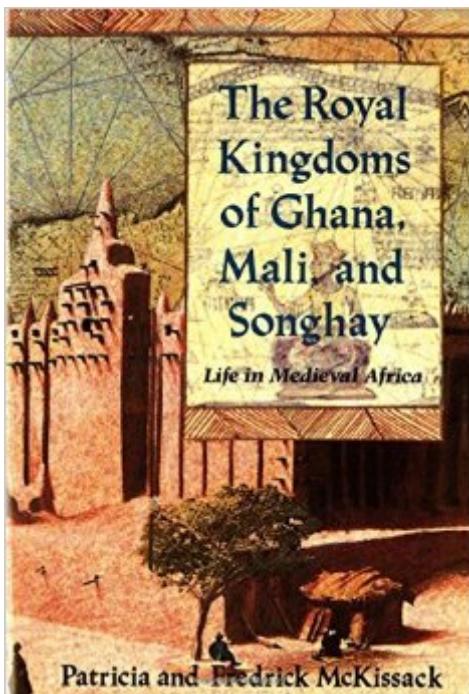


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# The Royal Kingdoms Of Ghana, Mali, And Songhay: Life In Medieval Africa



## **Synopsis**

For more than a thousand years, from A.D. 500 to 1700, the medieval kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay grew rich on the gold, salt, and slave trade that stretched across Africa. Scrapping away hundreds of years of ignorance, prejudice, and mythology, award-winnig authors Patricia and Fredrick McKissack reveal the glory of these forgotten empires while inviting us to share in the inspiring process of historical recovery that is taking place today.

## **Book Information**

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ  See all reviewsÂ  (13 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## **Customer Reviews**

I find that the book is a good introduction to the study of the history of the West African kingdoms. However, it does not give much more than that; little is told about the daily lives of the people, which is what really interests me about any period in history. In addition, I found that the book focuses a bit too much on the mythology, which, let's face it, sounds strange to modern American children, reinforcing the notion that Africans are primitive. The book also does not give enough pictures of what anything or anyone from the kingdoms looked like, forcing the reader to imagine the visuals, which are bound to look more like modern cartoon depictions of Africa than the actual kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhay. That being said, if you have children who are interested in learning a little bit about African history, this book is a good start. It gives bits of information that you don't get in your history classes, even those that teach world history. I learned about these kingdoms way back in the 7th grade, but even then I did not learn that there were Europeans who went to African

universities in the Middle Ages, which is quite a switch from today's world. That little fact is powerful, because it forces the question of what happened to Africa that resulted in the widespread poverty, disease, malnutrition, and war we hear about so much in the news today. Since I am not African-American and do not know many people who are, I am unable to judge with any certainty whether the book is good for enhancing the self-esteem of African-American children (which seems to be one of the purposes of this book). However, I can say that the book is a good introduction to West African history for anyone, regardless of race or age.

This book is short and relatively simplistic in its explanations. You would not want to use it as the pillar to your dissertation on Malian history. Nevertheless, it does give a good general introduction to West African history and the great kingdoms that once flourished by the Niger River. It starts with the creation myths, and then chronologically, explains very simply the beginnings and endings of the kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai. It addresses the mingling of the native religion with Islam, and ends with the downfall of the kingdoms. It also briefly addresses the issue of slavery. I bought this about a month before visiting a friend who is doing research in Bamako (the Capital of Mali). I vaguely recollect learning about a chapter's worth in seventh grade about the Saharan trade routes and something about Ghana and Songhai and Timbuktu, but could not remember much more than the names of the kingdoms. This book was excellent, in giving me enough background to be able to appreciate the depth of the history and the people when I visited. That being said, this is an excellent place to START learning about West African history - but hopefully, it is not where you will end your learning, as there are other resources out there that give much deeper and more thorough information about this great region.

This is an awesome book. I had purchased this book many years ago at a homeschool curriculum fair because I have a friend who is from Ghana. I did not know, at the time, that medieval Ghana is not the same as present day Ghana. I student taught 7th grade social studies and science this past fall semester and I relied on this book quite a bit to teach the origins of sub-Saharan trading. The few textbooks we had in class gave very little detail about this critical time in Africa's history and I wanted to expand the students' knowledge about Africa's trading routes and slave trading. I would highly recommend this book as a classroom reference or as an informative book on the kingdoms of Ghana, Mali, and Sonhay.

Having this book has greatly enriched our lessons on Africa and the royal kingdoms of Mali and

Songhay. Ghana we were already very acquainted with, however, Mali and Songhay has really surprised us. Take a chance and buy this book its especially excellent for African courses and homeschooling curriculums.

Good Book. However, the Moors (black people, original Afrikan) that occupied Spain in 711 AD was not Muslim (this was dated in this book). In fact Muslim and or Islam wasn't even birthed at this time. Let's be clear the Moors that occupied Europe (Spain) were Afrikan (black people, original Afrikan).

I felt I needed to write this review to challenge a few statements or 'reviews' which I have seen on here about this book. Firstly I would like to commend the authors for doing such a marvellous job. My first feedback to the petty 'reviewers' is a response to John M's comment ignorant remarks about the entire African continent. John M states: "That little fact is powerful, because it forces the question of what happened to Africa that resulted in the widespread poverty, disease, malnutrition, and war we hear about" John, first of all have you actually been to any part of Africa? Did you know that Africa is not a country and it is culturally, economically, ethnically, racially and linguistically diverse. You are in no position to label a whole continent with the 'poverty' label when America is filled with some of the worst poverty that you will ever see in a supposedly developed country. Have you seen some of the poverty stricken conditions that some Americans are living in right now in 2016? This book was written by African Americans who are probably targeting people from the same background as them. You are in no position to judge it's effectiveness on their children's self esteem. May I suggest that you travel both throughout America and the world in order to broaden your horizons. To everybody else who has an issue with regard to the fact that the book attempts to raise the self esteem of the African American child. What is your problem? If this is the aim so what? Write your own book and get yourself a life.

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