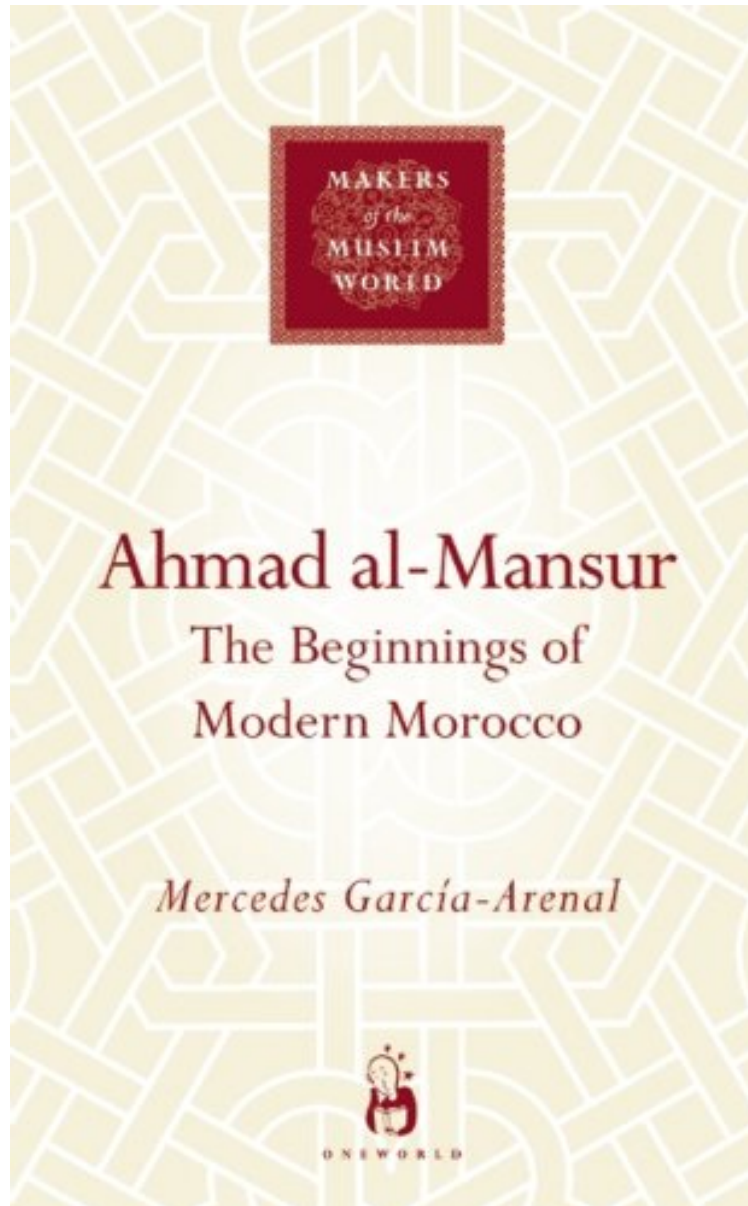


[Mobile book] Ahmad al-Mansur: The Beginnings of Modern Morocco (Makers of the Muslim World)

Ahmad al-Mansur: The Beginnings of Modern Morocco (Makers of the Muslim World)

Mercedes Garca-Arenal

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Mercedes Garca-Arenal : Ahmad al-Mansur: The Beginnings of Modern Morocco (Makers of the Muslim World) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ahmad al-Mansur: The Beginnings of Modern Morocco (Makers of the Muslim World):

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A good read

By Gogo! The author of this book attempts to bring greater attention first of all Morocco and secondly a man who he considers to be one of the most important of all the Sultans in Morocco's history Ahmad al-Mansur. The book is an honest attempt at putting some of the great Moroccan leaders up there with the likes of Muhammad the second or Sulayman the magnificent or Babur the Moghul and in this respect he has not done a bad effort. Where the book does fall short however, is in the first chapter where he gives far too much attention to Bernard Lewis and the fact that Lewis does not consider Morocco to be an important country for "Us" To study as its not in the direct political sphere of the Middle East. Now first of all who actually cares what Lewis thinks? Secondly the books of Lewis are hardly even read over on this side of the pond and are probably only read by neocons who think the world can be placed into neat little boxes on the other side of the pond. Thirdly Lewis's books are filled with sloppy historical research and simply read like a man who sells to the public whatever is popular with the media these days. The author however, has written the book in such a readable style its almost like reading a novel rather than a historical biography. You are not bogged down with endless dates, battles, names you loose track of and events you get past caring about by the time you are halfway through the book. Rather you are given some brief background then straight into the life and times of the man. While it has the benefit of making the book very readable the downside is you would have to know a fair bit about history to really appreciate it. For example you would have to know about the Portuguese king who lost his life fighting in Morocco and the effect it had on the Portuguese empire. The rise of the Ottomans and their control of the eastern mediterranean. The Corsairs of Algeria. In another words, the author is hoping you either know your history or you find his book so entertaining you dont really care. As I say the book covers Ahmad al-Mansurs life and times from his exile in the Ottoman empire to his return and assuming power in Morocco. Its interesting to note that Ahmad was something of a well read man especially in Sufism though while the first half of the book will fill you with admiration for the man in how he managed to engineer his country into a delicate balance between the Ottomans and the Spanish by the end you cant help feeling something of revulsion for his brutal treatment of his own citizens, his rather pointless invasion of the Muslim kingdom of Songhai (Particularly the brutal slaughter of the Muslim swordsmen of Songhai whose cries of "We are your Muslim brothers" Were met by rifle fire and Moroccan and Andalusian troops robbing the corpses of their gold jewelry). Ahmed's rather pointless idea that he should be regarded as the rightful leader of the Muslims in spite of the all to obvious Ottoman empire sitting on his doorstep and the only conquests he had managed to accomplish was a slaughter of his coreligionists who were armed only with swords and spears. His dubious ideas of reconquest in Spain and Portugal which were quite obviously going to come to nothing. It does not appear that he even bothered to arm the Corsairs of Sale to harass the Spanish fleets in order to gain even some prestige or even try to retake land lost in Morocco to the Spanish. What is interesting is the author pointing out that although the Corsairs economically benefited the sea ports they contributed very little to the country. Most of their ships were seized (The pope forbid the sale of timber to Muslim lands) They had no shipyards to speak of or industry centred around the ports so once the pirating died out so did the ports) In fact by the end of the book you will probably be thinking that he was some kind of megalomaniac with ambitions far beyond what he could ever hope to achieve. An excellent index is also included in this book with lots of other further reading.

Sultan Ahmad al-Mansur (1578-1603) was one of the most significant rulers in the history of Morocco, which to this day bears the mark of his twenty-five year rule in the sixteenth century. A brilliant political and military tactician, cunning diplomat and descendent of the Prophet Muhammad himself, al-Mansur was a charismatic religious authority with ambitions to become Caliph and ruler of all Islam. Spanning four continents, this lucid introduction assesses this fascinating figure and his legacy amidst the political intrigue, colonial discovery, and military conquest that dominated the age. Mercedes Garca-Arenal is Professor of Arabic Studies at the Higher Council of Scientific Research in Madrid.

About the Author Mercedes Garcia-Arenal is Professor of Arabic Studies at the Higher Council of Scientific Research in Madrid.