

DBQ Practice:
The Islamic Empires in the 16th & 17th Centuries

The Ottoman, Safavid and Mughal Empires were multi-faceted and complex. To get a sense of the nature of the religious and social structures of these three empires analyze the documents below. You are to use these documents as if you are preparing to write a DBQ (don't worry, you won't write the whole thing) so follow the steps below.

Step I: Task Analysis	Read the following prompt and describe in your own words what is really being asked of you in the space provided.
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PROMPT: Based on the following documents, discuss and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the Ottomans, Safavid, and Mughal empires by 1700. What additional sources would help you answer this question?

Describe what the prompt is asking you to do:

Step II: Document Analysis

Read each document and make notes according to how it relates to the task at hand.

Step III: Document Grouping	Reread your analysis of the documents and group them according to what they have to say and their relationship to each other. In the space provided group the documents together and capture the way in which you grouped them by providing a title to each group. <u>Please use the document titles when grouping them.</u>
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Step IV: Thesis

Based on what you have done to this point write a clear, comprehensive and analytical thesis in response to the prompt.

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Step V: Point of View

Select two documents and identify the point of view of the author, why he or she has that point of view and why this point of view is important to recognize.

Document Title:

Analysis of the Point of View in the selected document:

Document Title:

Analysis of the Point of View in the selected document:

Step VI: Additional documents

Identify two specific additional documents you would like to have for this assignment and **why** each would help you better analyze the prompt.

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DBQ on Gunpowder Empires

Question: Based on the following documents, discuss and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the Ottomans, Safavid, and Mughal empires by 1700. What additional sources would help you answer this question?

Document 1

Jahangir, *Memoirs*

Jahangir was the Mughal Emperor from 1605 to 1627, taking over from his father, Akbar. At the height of his reign, he wrote his memoirs outlining what he viewed as his greatest accomplishments, including these decrees:

1. I canceled the [taxes and duties] of every province and district imposed for their own profit.
2. I ordered that when a district lay wasted by thieves and highway bandits or was destitute of inhabitants, that towns should be built, . . . and every effort made to protect the subjects from injury . . .
3. Merchants traveling through the country were not to have their bales or packs opened without their consent.
4. When a person shall die and leave children, whether he is an infidel or a Muslim, no man was to interfere a pin's point in his property; but when he has no children or direct and unquestionable heirs his inheritance is to be spent on approved expenditures such as construction of mosques and caravansaries, repair of bridges, and the creation of water tanks and wells.
5. No person was permitted either to make or to sell wine or any other intoxicating liquor. I undertook to institute this regulation, although it is well known that I myself have the strongest inclination for wine, in which from the age of sixteen I have liberally indulged
6. No official was permitted to take up his abode in the house of any subject of my realm. On the contrary, when individuals serving in the state armies come to any town, and can rent a place to live, it would be commendable; otherwise they were to pitch their tents outside town and prepare abodes for themselves.
7. No person was to suffer, for any offense, the cutting off of a nose or ear. For theft, the offender was to be scourged with thorns, or deterred from further transgressions by an oath on the Qur'an. . .
9. The tax collectors of royal lands and landlords may not intermarry with the people of the districts in which they reside without my permission.
10. Governors in all large cities were directed to establish infirmaries and hospitals with physicians appointed to treat the sick. Expenses are to be covered by income from royal lands.
11. During the month of my birth there could be no slaughter of animals in my realm In every week also, on Thursday, that being the day of my ascension, and Sunday, my father's birthday. . .
12. I issued a decree confirming the dignitaries and landlords of my father's government in all that they had enjoyed while he was living; and where I found sufficient merit, I conferred an advance of rank

Source:

http://64.233.169.104/search?q=cache:Uy0cFNCjsiYJ:faculty.salisbury.edu/~mlperreault/Jahangir.doc+jahangir+regulations+governors&hl=en&it=clnk&cd=9&gl=us&lr=lang_en

Document 2

Ogier Ghiselin de Busbecq:
The Turkish Letters, 1555-1562

Busbecq, a Fleming, was the ambassador of the Holy Roman Emperor at the Ottoman sultan's court in Constantinople from 1555-62.

No distinction is attached to birth among the Turks; the deference to be paid to a man is measured by the position he holds in the public service. There is no fighting for precedence; a man's place is marked out by the duties he discharges. In making his appointments the Sultan pays no regard to any pretensions on the score of wealth or rank, nor does he take into consideration recommendations or popularity, he considers each case on its own merits, and examines carefully into the character, ability, and disposition of the man whose promotion is in question. It is by merit that men rise in the service, a system which ensures that posts should only be assigned to the competent. Each man in Turkey carries in his own hand his ancestry and his position in life, which he may make or mar as he will. Those who receive the highest offices from the Sultan are for the most part the sons of shepherds or herdsmen, and so far from being ashamed of their parentage, they actually glory in it, and consider it a matter of boasting that they owe nothing to the accident of birth; for they do not believe that high qualities are either natural or hereditary, nor do they think that they can be handed down from father to son, but that they are partly the gift of God, and partly the result of good training, great industry, and unwearied zeal; arguing that high qualities do not descend from a father to his son or heir, any more than a talent for music, mathematics, or the like; and that the mind does not derive its origin from the father, so that the son should necessarily be like the father in character, our emanates from heaven, and is thence infused into the human body. Among the Turks, therefore, honours, high posts, and judgeships are the rewards of great ability and good service. If a man be dishonest, or lazy, or careless, he remains at the bottom of the ladder, an object of contempt; for such qualities there are no honours in Turkey!

This is the reason that they are successful in their undertakings, that they lord it over others, and are daily extending the bounds of their empire. These are not our ideas, with us there is no opening left for merit; birth is the standard for everything; the prestige of birth is the sole key to advancement in the public service.

Source: <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1555busbecq.html>

Document 3

François Bernier:

An Account of India and the Great Moghul, 1655 CE

Bernier was a French traveler and representative of King Louis XIV for the French East India company wrote a book about his travels for 12 years in the Mughal Empire during the time of Emperor Aurangzeb.

The persons thus put in possession of the land, whether as timariots, governors, or contractors, have an authority almost absolute over the peasantry, and nearly as much over the artisans and merchants of the towns and villages within their district; and nothing can be imagined more cruel and oppressive than the manner in which it is exercised. There is no one before whom the injured peasant, artisan, or tradesman can pour out his just complaints; no great lords, parliaments, or judges of local courts, exist, as in France, to restrain the wickedness of those merciless oppressors, and the Kadis, or judges, are not invested with sufficient power to redress the wrongs of these unhappy people. This sad abuse of the royal authority may not be felt in the same degree near capital cities such as Dehly and Agra, or in the vicinity of large towns and seaports, because in those places acts of gross injustice cannot easily be concealed from the court.

Source: <http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/bernier/index.html>

Document 4

Eskandar Beg, *History of Shah Abbas the Great*, the chief secretary and advisor to Abbas I, shah of Safavid Empire (Persia), 1587 – 1629. His history had official approval and was based on his own observations and interviews with officials, soldiers, merchants, and travelers for the work.

The welfare of his people was always a prime concern of the Shah, and he was at pains to see that the people enjoyed peace and security, and that oppression by officialdom, the major cause of anxiety on the part of the common man, was totally stamped out in his kingdom. Substantial reductions were made in the taxes due . . . first, the tax on flocks in Iraq, amounting to nearly fifteen thousand Iraqi toman, was remitted to the people of that province, and the population of Iraq, which is the flourishing heart of Iran and the seat of government, by this gift was preferred above the other provinces. Second, all divan levies were waived for all Shi'ites throughout the empire during the month of Ramadan. The total revenues for one month, which according to the computation of the divan officials amounted to some twenty thousand toman, were given to the people as alms. The object was that they should be free from demands for taxes during this blessed month, which is a time to be devoted to the service and worship of God.