

# SELECTED THEMES IN THE HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL WORLD

Discipline Core Course

**COURSE CODE: M21HS08DC**

Postgraduate Programme in History



SELF LEARNING MATERIAL



SREENARAYANAGURU  
OPEN UNIVERSITY

## SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

The State University for Education, Training and Research in Blended Format, Kerala

# SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

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*To increase access of potential learners of all categories to higher education, research and training, and ensure equity through delivery of high quality processes and outcomes fostering inclusive educational empowerment for social advancement.*

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To be benchmarked as a model for conservation and dissemination of knowledge and skill on blended and virtual mode in education, training and research for normal, continuing, and adult learners.

## Pathway

Access and Quality define Equity.

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Semester - II

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History of Medieval World  
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MA History  
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[www.sgou.ac.in](http://www.sgou.ac.in)

ISBN 978-81-966572-9-1



9 788196 657291

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March 2024

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Dear

I greet all of you with deep delight and great excitement. I welcome you to the Sreenarayanaguru Open University.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University was established in September 2020 as a state initiative for fostering higher education in open and distance mode. We shaped our dreams through a pathway defined by a dictum 'access and quality define equity'. It provides all reasons to us for the celebration of quality in the process of education. I am overwhelmed to let you know that we have resolved not to become ourselves a reason or cause a reason for the dissemination of inferior education. It sets the pace as well as the destination. The name of the University centres around the aura of Sreenarayanaguru, the great renaissance thinker of modern India. His name is a reminder for us to ensure quality in the delivery of all academic endeavours.

Sreenarayanaguru Open University rests on the practical framework of the popularly known "blended format". Learner on distance mode obviously has limitations in getting exposed to the full potential of classroom learning experience. Our pedagogical basket has three entities viz Self Learning Material, Classroom Counselling and Virtual modes. This combination is expected to provide high voltage in learning as well as teaching experiences. Care has been taken to ensure quality endeavours across all the entities.

The university is committed to provide you stimulating learning experience. The PG programme in History is expected to expose the learners to the intricacies of historian's craft through modules on historiography and historical methods. The learners will be trained on the skills for understanding historical forces enabling them to move further in to the complexities of historical narration in order to revisit history with the right perspective. The modules derived multi-disciplinary flavour due to their cross border penetration. We assure you that the university student support services will closely stay with you for the redressal of your grievances during your studentship.

Feel free to write to us about anything that you feel relevant regarding the academic programme.

Wish you the best.



Regards,  
Dr. P. M. Mubarak Pasha

01.02.2024

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# Land Relations and Social Formations

**BLOCK-01**



## Medievalism

### Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ identify the nature of transition from slavery to serfdom in Medieval Europe
- ◆ assess the role of Christianity, particularly the teachings of Saint Augustine, in the making of the medieval mindset
- ◆ critically evaluate the concept of the 'Dark Age' and its implications

### Background

The pre-feudal era, spanning ancient civilisations, was characterised by the slavery and related social relations. Slavery played a pivotal role in sustaining large-scale agricultural activities, craft production and construction of enterprises in a stupendous scale. Slaves were massively engaged for the production of essential goods and working on expansive plantations and in mines. The institution of slavery contributed to the establishment of rigid social hierarchies, where slave owners wielded considerable power and enjoyed elevated status. This system allowed some free individuals the leisure to engage in intellectual pursuits and artistic endeavours. Additionally, slaves were crucial in military services. The demographic impact of slavery was substantial, with slave populations often outnumbering free citizens and influencing the stability of societies. Moreover, slavery became intertwined with trade and commerce, forming part of extensive networks that facilitated the movement of slaves across regions. The transition to feudalism marked a transformative shift in societal structures, leading to the eventual decline of slavery and the emergence of distinct labour relations during the medieval period.

### Keywords

Feudalism , Slave Mode of Production , Magna Carta, Manorial System, Guilds, Dark Age

# Discussion

## 1.1.1 Medievalism

### ◆ *Concept of Medievalism*

The term “medieval” refers to the Middle Ages, a historical period that spanned roughly the period from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. The word “medieval” itself is derived from the Latin “medium aevum,” meaning “middle age.” This era is often divided into three sub periods: the Early Middle Ages (circa 500–1000), the High Middle Ages (circa 1000–1300), and the Late Middle Ages (circa 1300–1500). The Medieval Ages were characterised by significant social and economic transformations. One notable aspect of this period was the gradual decline of slave mode production, marking a shift in labour practices and related socio-economic structures. This unit explores the factors that contributed to the decline of slave production in Europe during these eras.

## 1.1.1.2 Transition from Slavery to Serfdom

### ◆ *Emergence of serfdom*

As the Roman Empire declined, the deep rooted notions associated with slavery underwent transformation. The collapse of centralised authority and the onset of political fragmentation contributed to the breakdown of large-scale slave-based agricultural production systems. With the emergence of feudalism, peasants, or serfs, got attached to the land and worked on manors. This transition provided local stability, as serfs were bound to specific territories, fostering a more localised and self-sufficient agricultural economy. As the Roman Empire crumbled, regions like Gaul (modern-day France) experienced a shift from slavery to serfdom. The collapse of Roman authority led to the rise of local lords who offered protection in exchange for labour services from the peasantry. This marked the beginning of a decentralised agrarian pattern centering around the manors.

## Influence of Christianity

### ◆ *Role of Christianity*

Christianity, as it spread and established itself as the dominant religion in Europe during the medieval period, played a central role in reshaping social attitudes towards slavery. At the core of Christianity lay a profound emphasis on the inherent dignity and the ideal of equality of all human beings. The teachings of Jesus Christ, centered on love, compassion, and the recognition of the divine spark in every individual, fostered a moral framework that directly conflicted with the dehumanising aspects of slavery. As



the influence of Christianity grew, so did the conviction that every person, regardless of social status, possessed an intrinsic worth that could not be compromised or diminished by enslavement.

◆ *St. Augustine*

An important figure in shaping Christian thought during the 5<sup>th</sup> century was St. Augustine, a prominent theologian whose writings had a profound impact on medieval Christianity. St. Augustine, in his theological reflections, specifically challenged the idea of “natural slavery.” He argued that slavery was a consequence of human sin rather than an inherent and justifiable condition. This theological stance, articulated by one of the most influential Christian thinkers of the time, resonated within the Church and contributed to the formation of an anti-slavery sentiment.

◆ *Influence of Christianity on the rise of feudalism*

While Christianity played a significant role in reshaping attitudes towards slavery in medieval Europe, some argue that its influence was not uniformly against the institution and may have inadvertently contributed to the rise of feudalism, an economic and social system that emerged during the same period. This perspective suggests that certain aspects of Christian teachings and the Church’s organisational structure may have inadvertently facilitated the development of feudal relationships.

◆ *Hierarchical structure of Christianity*

Christianity’s hierarchical structure, reflected in the medieval Church with the Pope, bishops, and clergy, may have inadvertently paved the way for the acceptance of hierarchical relationships in feudalism. Some argue that Christian theology, emphasising divine order and predetermined social roles, indirectly justified social inequality, contributing to a perception that the subjugation of Serfs was part of a divine plan. The Church’s extensive land ownership, while not precisely feudal, could be viewed as supporting the overall stability of feudal relationships by aligning with the intertwined nature of landownership and social hierarchy.

### **Economic Factors**

One historical illustration of this shift occurred in the early Middle Ages within the Carolingian Empire under the rule of Charlemagne. During this period, there was a discernible move towards manorial system, which became a defining economic unit. Within the manorial system, the lord of the manor provided protection and resources to the serfs in exchange for their services. This arrangement created a

◆ *Shift to decentralised economic system*

reciprocal relationship where both parties were mutually dependent for their sustenance and livelihood. Unlike the large-scale agricultural systems dependent on slave labour, the manor relied on the labour of serfs to sustain local agricultural production. This shift marked a departure from the centralised and expansive nature of slavery, pointing towards a broader trend in medieval Europe away from reliance on slaves and towards a more localised and decentralised economic structure.

◆ *Guilds as powerful economic entities*

### **Rise of Guilds and Urbanization**

The medieval period witnessed a transformative shift in the economic structure, marked by the rise of guilds and the growth of urban centers. This development played a crucial role in altering the dynamics of labour and significantly contributed to the decline in reliance on slave labour. Guilds, central to this economic transformation, were associations of skilled craftsmen and merchants. In cities such as Florence and Flanders, guilds emerged as powerful economic entities that not only regulated production but also shaped the overall economic structure. Skilled artisans organised themselves within guilds to establish standards for craftsmanship, regulate pricing, and ensure the quality of goods.

◆ *Magna Carta of 1215*

### **Legal Changes**

Legal reforms and evolving social structures played a significant role in the gradual decline of slave production during the medieval period. Various legal codes emerged, recognising the rights of individuals and placing constraints on the unbridled ownership of slaves. One exemplary illustration of legal reform contributing to the decline of slavery is found in the *Magna Carta* of 1215. While the primary focus of this historical document in England was addressing the issues of royal power, it included clauses that protected the rights of free men. As these legal principles gained traction, the institution of slavery faced increasing scrutiny and erosion. The *Magna Carta* emphasised principles such as due process and the idea that individuals, regardless of their social status, were entitled to certain legal protections. Over time, legal principles derived from foundational documents like the *Magna Carta* became instrumental in shaping a broader recognition of individual rights.

Simultaneously, the expansion of cities and trade led to a growing demand for a more flexible and mobile labour force, prompting a departure from the static nature of slavery.



◆ *Growing demand for labour force*

This shift in economic requirements further diminished the practicality of static and large-scale slave labour systems. As cities grew, so did the need for specialised skills and a labour force capable of responding to the dynamic demands of trade and commerce.

### 1.1.2 The Notion of the 'Dark Age'

◆ *A regressive and stagnant period*

The term 'Dark Age' has been a longstanding label used to describe the period between the fall of the Roman Empire and the onset of the Renaissance, encompassing roughly the 5th to the 14th century. Historically, this characterisation implies a universal perception of the Medieval era as regressive and stagnant. However, in recent years, scholars have increasingly scrutinised and criticised the validity of the term, prompting a reevaluation of its historical accuracy. The historical origins of the term 'Dark Age' can be traced back to the Renaissance, a period marked by a revival of interest in the classical achievements of ancient Greece and Rome. Renaissance intellectuals admired the classical achievements of ancient Greece and Rome, perceiving them as a 'golden age' of intellectual and artistic brilliance. This admiration led to a conscious rejection of the medieval past, creating a stark dichotomy between the perceived stagnation of the medieval period and the supposed rebirth of intellectual and cultural achievements during the Renaissance.

#### 1.1.2.1 Reassessing the Notion

◆ *Heterogeneity of medieval era*

Modern scholars have critically reassessed the term 'Dark age', recognising its Eurocentric perspective and oversimplification of the complex dynamics of the medieval period. The term 'Dark Age' carries implicit implications of universality, implying a widespread decline in human progress and knowledge across the globe during the medieval period, disregarding the intricate dynamics of political, economic, and cultural change. Rather than viewing the era through a monolithic lens, scholars recognise diverse challenges and disruptions that unfolded across regions over time. Some areas encountered economic decline, political turmoil, and disruptions in cultural production, while others experienced prosperity and fostered innovation. While Western Europe experienced political and social upheavals, regions such as the Islamic world and parts of Asia witnessed remarkable advancements in science, philosophy, and the arts. This heterogeneity challenges the oversimplified narrative encapsulated in the term 'Dark Age.' The desire to emphasise the Renaissance as a period of 'rebirth' and

cultural flourishing has led to a reevaluation of the utility and accuracy of the 'Dark Age' label in comprehending the nuanced history of the medieval era.

◆ *Role of monasteries*

One aspect often overlooked is the pivotal role played by monastic centers, contrary to their dismissal in the characterisation of a 'Dark Age.' These centers served as bastions of knowledge, diligently preserving classical wisdom and contributing significantly to the intellectual foundations of subsequent periods. Monastic scholars engaged in the painstaking task of transcribing and safeguarding ancient texts and ensured the continuity of learning.

◆ *Development in intellectual inquiry*

Furthermore, the medieval era witnessed remarkable developments that defy the notion of uniform regression. The rise of Gothic architecture stands as a testament to the innovative spirit of the time, challenging preconceived notions of a stagnant period. Gothic cathedrals, with their soaring spires and intricate designs, reflected advancements in engineering and aesthetics. Scholastic philosophy also experienced notable progress, becoming a focal point for intellectual inquiry and debate. This period saw the synthesis of classical philosophy with Christian theology, fostering a rich intellectual tradition that laid the groundwork for later philosophical developments. Advancements in agricultural practices further contribute to the nuanced understanding of the medieval era, with technological innovations improving crop yields and sustaining growing populations.

## Summarised Overview

The term "medieval" refers to the historical period spanning from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, divided into the Early, High, and Late Middle Ages. The Medieval Ages witnessed significant social and economic changes, including the gradual decline of slave made of production. The transition from slavery to serfdom occurred as the Roman Empire crumbled, leading to the rise of feudalism. Peasants, or serfs, tied to the land in a decentralised agrarian system.

Christianity played a pivotal role in reshaping attitudes towards slavery during this period. Christian values, emphasising human dignity and equality, contributed to moral objections against slavery. St. Augustine, a theologian, argued against natural slavery, influencing the Church's stance against the institution.

The feudal system, a key factor in the decline of slave labour, emphasised local and self-sufficient production. The manorial system, exemplified by Charlemagne's Carolingian Empire, relied on serf labour, marking a shift away

from large-scale slavery. Guilds and the process of urbanisation also transformed the economic landscape. Guilds, such as those in Florence and Flanders, promoted skilled labour, reducing the reliance on unskilled slaves. Legal changes, like the *Magna Carta*, recognised individual rights, contributing to the decline of slavery.

The term 'Dark Age', attributed to the medieval periods has faced criticism for its Eurocentric bias. Scholars argue that it oversimplifies and neglects the diverse developments in medieval societies. The Renaissance bias against the medieval era was universally regressive, challenged by recent scholarship emphasising the vibrancy and resilience of medieval societies. Monastic centers, Gothic architecture, and advancements in various fields highlight the multifaceted nature of the medieval period, challenging the simplistic narrative of a uniformly 'Dark' and regressive era. This reassessment encourages a nuanced understanding of the complexities inherent in medieval history.

## Assignments

1. Critically evaluate the term 'Dark Age' and its historical origins during the Renaissance period. Discuss the implications and criticisms associated with the term, including its Eurocentric bias.
2. Explain the role of Christianity in reshaping social attitudes towards slavery during the medieval period.
3. Discuss the rise of guilds and the growth of urban centres during the medieval period.
4. Explain the significance of Magna Carta in bringing recognition to the individual rights during the medieval period.
5. Analyse the factors that led to the decline of slavery during the medieval period.

## Suggested Reading

1. Alexander, Michael, *Medievalism: The Middle Ages in Modern England*, Yale University Press, 2007.
2. Duby, Georges, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined*, University of Chicago Press, 1982.
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1. Chaudhuri, K.N., *Asia before Europe*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1989.
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3. Hilton, Rodney (Ed.), *History of Europe. Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*, London, 1990.
4. Lopez, Robert S., *The Birth of Modern Europe*, M. Evans & Company, Inc., 1996.
5. Rodriguez, Junius P., "Slavery in medieval Europe", *The Historical Encyclopedia of World Slavery [2 Volumes]*, ABC-CLIO, December 1997.

### Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.



SGOU



## Feudal Society in Europe

### Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ identify the key features of society in medieval Europe
- ◆ examine the components and functions of the manorial system
- ◆ assess Marc Bloch's concept of feudalism

### Background

The transition to the feudal era, often associated with the early medieval period, was a multifaceted process marked by the decline of the Roman Empire and the emergence of new socio-economic structures. As the Roman Empire weakened in the 5th century due to internal strife, invasions, and economic challenges, central authority eroded, leading to the breakdown of the Roman administrative system.

Amid the resulting political vacuum, a decentralised system emerged, characterised by local lords or nobles assuming greater autonomy. The collapse of the traditional Roman economic and social order paved the way for a more localised and self-sufficient model. This period witnessed the rise of feudalism, a system based on land ownership, reciprocal relationships, and hierarchical structures.

Land became a crucial asset, and local lords, often military leaders, gained prominence as they offered protection to their communities in exchange for loyalty and services. The feudal contract formalised these relationships, with lords granting land (fiefs) to vassals in return for military support.

This transition to the feudal era represented a shift from the centralised governance of the Roman Empire to a decentralised, feudal structure that defined medieval European society. The ensuing centuries saw the consolidation and maturation of feudalism, shaping the socio-political landscape and influencing the course of European history.

### Keywords

Feudal pyramid, Knighthood, Chivalry, Serfdom, Annales School, Marc Bloch, Manorial System, Vassalage, Church



# Discussion

## 1.2.1 Feudal Society

### ◆ *Nature of feudal society*

Feudalism, a dominant socio-economic and political structure in medieval Europe, emerged in the aftermath of the fall of the Roman Empire. Characterised by a decentralised system of governance and a complex web of reciprocal relationships, feudalism played a crucial role in shaping the medieval European Society. At the heart of this system was the feudal pyramid, a hierarchical structure that defined the relationships between different social classes. Feudal society was structured around the idea of mutual obligations and land ownership. At its core, the feudal system involved the exchange of land for services and protection. The king, as the highest authority, granted large landholdings, or fiefs, to the nobility, who, in turn, pledged loyalty, military service, and counsel to the monarch. This system helped to maintain a semblance of order in a time marked by political instability and external threats.

### ◆ *Social hierarchy*

#### 1.2.1.2 The Feudal Pyramid

The feudal pyramid was a visual representation of the hierarchical structure of medieval society. At the pinnacle of this pyramid was the monarch, who held ultimate authority and claimed ownership of all the land in the realm. Below the monarch were the nobility, comprising lords, barons, and dukes, to whom the king granted large estates. In return, these nobles swore allegiance and offered military support when called upon. The clergy held a unique role in this structure as it held significant religious authority and held vast tracts of land. The Church played a crucial role in legitimising the feudal system, providing moral and spiritual justification for the existing social order.

### ◆ *Vassal-lord relationships*

Directly beneath the nobility were the vassals, who were granted smaller portions of land by the nobles. In exchange for this land, vassals pledged loyalty and military service to their respective lords. The vassal-lord relationship was a central aspect of feudalism, cemented through a formal ceremony known as “homage,” where the vassal swore an oath of loyalty.

Beneath the nobility and vassals were the peasants or serfs, who formed the majority of the population. Serfs worked on the land and were bound to it, providing agricultural

◆ *Peasants-  
lowest tier of feudal  
pyramid*

produce in return for protection and the right to live on the estate. Serfs had limited mobility and were subject to the authority of the landowner. They were at the lowest tier of the feudal pyramid.

◆ *Different steps  
of feudal pyramid*

The feudal pyramid, though hierarchical, was interconnected through a complex web of relationships and dependencies. The flow of resources, services, and loyalty moved both upward and downward, creating a fragile but functional equilibrium. The stability of the system relied on the reciprocity between different tiers, with each level providing essential functions that contributed to the overall functioning of society.

◆ *Manor as  
fundamental  
economic unit*

### **1.2.2 The Manorial System and Feudal Values**

The manorial system, a cornerstone of medieval European society, intricately governed the relationships among landowners, labourers, and the broader community. Rooted in the aftermath of the Roman Empire's decline, this complex socio-economic structure emerged during the early medieval period to address the turbulent conditions. At its core was the manor, as eloquently described by historian Marc Bloch in "Feudal Society," serving as the fundamental economic unit. Notable scholars, including Georges Duby, F.L. Ganshof, and Elizabeth A.R. Brown has enriched our understanding of the manorial system.

◆ *Relation  
between lords  
and peasants*

The manor, owned typically by a noble, encompassed the lord's residence, agricultural land, and a village, forming a self-sufficient economic entity. The system's diversity, highlighted by Elizabeth A.R. Brown challenged simplistic views, recognising variations in structure and function. Ganshof's economic perspective emphasised mutual obligations and interdependence within the manor. The lord's demesne, cultivated by unfree labourers, coexisted with divided land for peasants, fostering economic intricacies. Peasants, the majority, worked on the land, exchanging agricultural produce for the lord. Local exchanges, labour dues, and rents dispelling the notion of a purely exploitative relationship between lords and peasants.

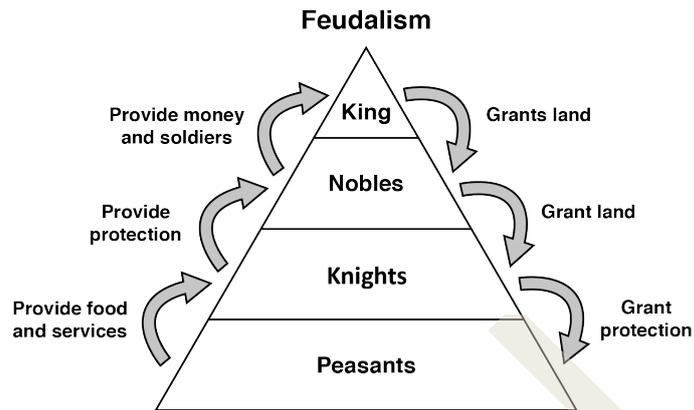


Fig 1.2.1 The European Feudal System

### 1.2.2.1 Vassalage

Concurrently, the practice of vassalage stood as a paramount embodiment of feudal values. Knights, often vassals, pledged loyalty to a lord through the formal ceremony of homage, symbolising a reciprocal relationship. In return, lords granted fiefs, typically land, forming a fundamental aspect of feudalism. This exchange, grounded in land ownership, established a hierarchical structure from the king to the lowest vassal. The lord provided protection and resources, while the vassal reciprocated with military services and other forms of assistance, forming the basis of the feudal contract. This dynamic emphasised the interdependence of various classes within the feudal system, reinforcing the social and economic fabric of medieval European society.

◆ *Basis of feudal contract*

Georges Duby's exploration of social structure in "The Three Orders" illuminated the rigid hierarchy within the manorial system. Society was divided into three orders: those who prayed (the clergy), those who fought (the nobility), and those who worked (the peasants). The lord, typically a noble, held a central position, wielding both economic and social authority over peasants. The lord's control extended beyond economic matters to legal issues and the administration of justice within the manor. The manorial court, as described by Duby, served as a forum for the dispute resolution, contributing to the system's stability. The lord's authority, legitimised by medieval social and religious norms, played a pivotal role in maintaining order.

◆ *Hierarchy in manorial system*

Elizabeth A.R. Brown, in his "The Tyranny of a Construct," disrupted traditional views on the manorial system, arguing against the homogenisation of the medieval peasantry. She emphasised diversity within different manors, urging consideration of variations in economic structures, social

◆ *Diversity of manorial system*

relations, and coercion levels. Brown highlighted the agency of peasants, actively negotiating their roles within the manorial system. Her work encouraged a nuanced understanding of interactions between lords and peasants, transcending simplistic portrayals of oppression.

### 1.2.2.2 Knighthood

◆ *Code of chivalry*

The practice of knighthood in medieval Europe was a quintessential embodiment of feudal values, serving as a distinctive and revered institution within the broader feudal system. Knights, as individuals bound by the code of chivalry, underwent a rigorous and comprehensive process of training and education, shaping them into not just skilled warriors but also bearers of a unique set of moral virtues.

◆ *Journey to knighthood*

The journey to knighthood typically commenced at a young age when a boy of noble birth would be sent to the castle of a lord or a more experienced knight as a page. As a page, the young aspirant learned the fundamentals of chivalry, including horse riding, weaponry, and the basics of combat. Education was not limited to physical prowess alone; pages were also schooled in matters of courtesy, etiquette, and the ideals of honor and integrity. These formative years were crucial in instilling the values that would define their future roles as knights.

◆ *Military training*

Upon reaching adolescence, a page could advance to the status of a squire. This marked a more advanced stage of training, with squires becoming apprentices to seasoned knights. They participated in actual military campaigns, honing their combat skills under the guidance of their mentors. The code of chivalry became central to their education, emphasising virtues such as loyalty, courage, justice, and humility. The moral dimension of chivalry distinguished knights not merely as skilled combatants but as individuals with a profound commitment to ethical conduct.

◆ *Entry into knighthood*

The culmination of this arduous training process was the dubbing ceremony, during which a squire, having proven both martial skill and adherence to chivalric ideals, was knighted by a lord or a more senior knight. This ceremony marked the formal entry into knighthood and represented a profound commitment to the values and responsibilities associated with this esteemed status.

Knights were not merely warriors; they were entrusted with multifaceted responsibilities that extended beyond

◆ *Knights as backbone of feudal army*

the battlefield. Foremost among their duties was military service, wherein they pledged allegiance to their lords and, by extension, to the broader realm. In times of conflict, knights formed the backbone of feudal armies, showcasing their martial prowess and loyalty to their lieges. The battlefield, therefore, became a canvas where the ideals of chivalry were tested and displayed for all to witness.

◆ *Obligation of Knights*

Upholding the honour of their lords was a paramount obligation for knights. This meant not only executing commands with dedication but also defending their lords' reputations in matters of politics, diplomacy, and personal honour. Knights often served as trusted advisors of their lords, contributing to the governance and decision-making processes within the feudal hierarchy.

◆ *Knights as beacons of justice*

Beyond the realm of warfare and politics, knights were tasked with protecting the realm and its inhabitants. This duty involved maintaining law and order, ensuring the safety of communities, and standing as beacons of justice. The chivalric ethos demanded that knights use their strength not for personal gain but for the well-being of the vulnerable and the defenseless.

◆ *As exemplars of noble way of life*

The ethos of knighthood, deeply embedded in both martial prowess and moral virtues, created a distinct social identity within the feudal hierarchy. Knights were not just skilled combatants; they were exemplars of a refined and noble way of life. Their conduct, guided by the principles of chivalry, set them apart as paragons of virtue in a society marked by complex power dynamics and hierarchical structures.

◆ *Church as influential institution*

### 1.2.2.3 The Role of the Church

Religious values constituted a cornerstone of medieval feudal society, with the Church emerging as a powerful and influential institution that permeated various facets of governance, from the monarchs to the nobility. The clergy, which included bishops and abbots, held a dual role, wielding both spiritual authority and significant land holdings, thereby positioning the Church as a formidable player in the feudal relationships.

The influence of the Church extended across all levels of medieval society. At the pinnacle of the ecclesiastical hierarchy were bishops and abbots, who not only guided in the matters of faith but also exercised considerable

◆ *Economic influence of the church*

temporal power. Through the possession of extensive land holdings, the Church secured economic influence, contributing to its overarching sway in the feudal structure. The Church's involvement in land ownership was not merely an economic affair; it carried profound symbolic and political implications. These vast ecclesiastical estates were often exempt from certain taxes and obligations, providing the Church with a unique position of privilege. Moreover, the Church utilised its extensive land holdings strategically, not only to support religious institutions but also to exert influence over secular authorities.

◆ *Divine right of Kingship*

The Church played a pivotal role in legitimising the feudal system, offering a moral and divine sanction that underpinned the existing social order. The monarchs and nobility sought the endorsement of the Church to validate their positions of power. The intertwining of religious and secular authority was particularly evident in the concept of the "divine right of kings," where monarchs claimed their legitimacy as rulers ordained by God. This narrative, endorsed by the Church, served to consolidate and reinforce the authority of monarchs within the feudal framework.

◆ *Legitimation of feudal social order*

The Church's legitimising function extended beyond the secular rulers to the entire social order. Feudal relationships, characterised by hierarchical structures and reciprocal obligations, were often perceived as part of a divinely ordained system. The Church played an active role in promoting this perception, framing feudalism as a reflection of divine will and reinforcing the idea that each person had a predetermined place in the social hierarchy.

◆ *As guardian of religious doctrine*

Moreover, the Church wielded considerable moral influence through its role as the guardian of religious doctrine. The clergy functioned not only as spiritual guides but also as arbiters of morality. The code of conduct prescribed by the Church, including adherence to moral virtues and ethical principles, permeated the fabric of feudal society. The Church's teachings on matters of morality, justice, and charity shaped the ethical standards by which individuals, including monarchs and nobles, were expected to govern themselves.

#### **1.2.2.4 Serfdom**

Serfdom, a prevailing social and economic institution in medieval Europe, characterised the relationship between

◆ *Origin of serfdom*

peasants and landowners. This system, often considered a defining feature of the medieval period, had far-reaching implications for the lives of those bound by its constraints. Serfdom evolved as a response to the instability and upheaval that followed the decline of the Roman Empire. In a feudal system where land ownership was central, the serf became an essential component of the agricultural economy.

◆ *Key features*

Serfs were peasants who worked on the land, usually bound to a specific estate and obligated to provide labour and goods to the landowner, often a lord or noble. One defining characteristic of serfdom was the lack of personal freedom. Unlike slaves, serfs were not owned outright, but their freedom was severely restricted. They were legally tied to the land, unable to leave without the lord's permission. This attachment to the land, along with obligations to the lord, created a form of servitude that endured for much of the medieval period.

◆ *Economic Relationship*

Serfs played a crucial role in the medieval agrarian economy. They were responsible for working on the lord's demesne, a portion of the estate reserved for the lord's personal use. This demesne often yielded agricultural produce that sustained both the lord and the local community. In addition to working the demesne, serfs cultivated their own strips of land for personal sustenance. The economic relationship between serfs and lords was symbiotic, with the lord providing protection and the serf contributing labour and a share of the produce.

◆ *Social structure and legal framework*

The social structure in a serfdom was hierarchical, with the lord at the top and serfs occupying the lowest rung. The legal framework governing serfdom varied across regions, but common elements included restrictions on serfs' mobility, obligations to provide labour, and the payment of rents and dues. The manorial court served as a venue for resolving disputes and enforcing the lord's authority, contributing to the maintenance of social order.

◆ *Variations and regional differences*

It is important to note that serfdom manifested in various forms with regional nuances. In some areas, serfs had more autonomy and were subject to fewer restrictive measures, while in others, particularly during times of crisis, lords could increase control and demands on their serfs. Historians such as Marc Bloch have emphasised the diversity of experiences within the institution of serfdom, cautioning against overgeneralisation.

◆ *Impact on Medieval Society*

The impact of serfdom on medieval society was profound. While it provided a degree of stability in an era marked by political and social unrest, it also entrenched a rigid social hierarchy. The limited opportunities for upward mobility hindered social mobility, creating a system where individuals were born into predetermined roles. Serfdom, in this sense, contributed to the stratification of medieval European societies. The system also had cultural and psychological consequences. The sense of dependence and limited personal freedom that characterised serfdom left an enduring mark on the medieval mindset. The hierarchical structure reinforced existing power dynamics, shaping social attitudes and perceptions for generations.

◆ *Understanding medieval social structure*

### 1.2.3 Marc Bloch and Feudalism: A Historical Exploration

Marc Bloch, a prominent French historian and one of the founding figures of the Annales School, made enduring contributions to the study of medieval history, with a particular focus on feudalism. His groundbreaking work, *Feudal Society*, published in 1939, revolutionised the understanding of medieval social structures and set the stage for a new approach to historical scholarship.

◆ *The Annales School and Inter-disciplinarity*

Marc Bloch, along with Lucien Febvre, co-founded the 'Annales School' in 1929. The school aimed to break away from traditional historical methods, which often focused on political and diplomatic history, and instead advocated for an interdisciplinary and comprehensive approach. The Annales historians sought to explore the totality of historical experience, incorporating elements from geography, sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines. This interdisciplinary approach, known as the "Annales method," became a hallmark of Bloch's work. He believed that understanding historical phenomena required a broader perspective that considered social, economic, and cultural factors. This method was a departure from the traditional historical narratives, as it sought to uncover the underlying structures and long-term developments that shaped societies.



Fig 1.2.2 Marc Bloch

◆ *Feudal Society:  
A Pioneering work*

Marc Bloch's most influential work, "Feudal Society," published just before the outbreak of World War II in 1939, was a landmark in medieval historiography. In this seminal work, Bloch aimed to provide a comprehensive analysis of medieval social structures, challenging prevailing views on feudalism. At the heart of his inquiry was an exploration of the relationships between lords and peasants, the economic organisation of society, and the cultural and ideological underpinnings of feudalism.

◆ *Rethinking  
feudalism*

Bloch's approach to feudalism significantly differed from earlier interpretations. Traditional views had often depicted feudalism as a static and rigid system characterised by clear-cut hierarchical relationships. Bloch, however, emphasised the diversity and dynamism inherent in medieval society. He argued that feudalism was not a monolithic structure but a complex and evolving set of relationships that varied across time and regions. One of Bloch's key contributions was his rejection of a simplistic binary between lords and peasants. He recognised the existence of a diverse array of intermediate groups and social categories that defied easy classification. This nuanced understanding of medieval society challenged the prevailing orthodoxy and paved the way for future scholars to explore the complexities of social structures.

◆ *The three  
orders*

In "Feudal Society," Bloch introduced the concept of the "three orders" as a means of understanding the hierarchical structure of medieval society. The three orders represented those who fought (nobility), those who prayed (clergy), and those who worked (peasants). While acknowledging the utility of this framework, Bloch also stressed the fluidity and overlapping nature of these orders. Individuals could move between orders, and the social landscape was far more intricate than a rigid three-tier structure might suggest.

◆ *Economic  
dimensions*

Bloch's analysis of feudalism extended beyond social structures to the economic dimensions of medieval life. He explored the manorial system, where lords held extensive landholdings and peasants worked on the land in exchange for protection and had the right to cultivate their plots. Bloch recognised the economic interdependence within the manor, with each participant contributing to the overall functioning of the system.

Beyond the economic and social aspects, Bloch delved into the cultural and ideological dimensions of feudalism.

◆ *Cultural and ideological aspects*

He examined the mentalities of medieval people, exploring how their beliefs, values, and cultural practices shaped their understanding of the world. Bloch's attention to mentalities marked a departure from the more traditional focus on political and institutional history.

◆ *Warfare and social change*

Given his experiences during World War I, Bloch brought a unique perspective to the study of medieval warfare. He explored the impact of war on medieval society, emphasising its transformative effects. Bloch argued that warfare was not only a reflection of social structures but also a force capable of reshaping those structures. This dynamic interaction between war and society became a central theme in his work.

◆ *Legacy and impact*

Marc Bloch's contributions to the study of feudalism and medieval history have left an enduring legacy. His emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches, his rejection of simplistic models, and his nuanced understanding of social structures have influenced generations of historians. The Annales School, under Bloch's guidance, became a driving force in shaping the field of historical studies, fostering a more comprehensive and holistic approach to the past. Tragically, Marc Bloch's life was cut short during World War II. As a member of the French Resistance, he was captured by the Gestapo and executed in 1944. His death deprived the world of a brilliant mind and a pioneering historian. However, his ideas and methodologies continue to shape the study of medieval history and remain integral to the broader discipline of history as a whole.

## Summarised Overview

Feudal society in medieval Europe emerged after the fall of the Roman Empire, defined by a decentralised governance structure and reciprocal relationships. The feudal pyramid, illustrating the hierarchy between the monarch, nobility, vassals, and peasants, with the clergy holding religious authority. This system exchanged land for services, fostering stability amid political instability. The manorial system, a vital component, governed relationships between landowners, labourers, and communities, featuring lords, serfs, and a self-sufficient economic unit.

Renowned historian Marc Bloch, co-founder of the Annales School, revolutionised the study of feudalism with his seminal work "Feudal Society." Bloch's interdisciplinary approach explored social, economic, and cultural aspects, challenging traditional views. He introduced the concept of the "three orders," emphasising the fluidity of medieval society. His analysis extended to the manorial system's economic dimensions, cultural ideologies, and the transformative impact

of warfare. Despite Bloch's tragic death during World War II, his legacy persists, shaping the holistic study of medieval history and influencing generations of historians.

## Assignments

1. Discuss the key features of feudal society in medieval Europe, highlighting the roles of the monarch, nobility, vassals, peasants, and clergy within the feudal pyramid.
2. Explore the significance of the manorial system in medieval Europe, examining its impact on the relationships between landowners, labourers, and communities.
3. Assess the contributions of historian Marc Bloch to the study of feudalism, focusing on his interdisciplinary approach and the concept of the "three orders."
4. Analyse the transformative impact of warfare on medieval society, as discussed by Marc Bloch in his work "Feudal Society," and discuss its implications for the social, economic, and cultural dimensions of the time.

## Suggested Reading

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### Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.



SGOU



## Feudal Model in Asia

### Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ identify with the terms like 'Iqta and fief and its features
- ◆ examine the political importance of 'Iqta' system in medieval India
- ◆ explain the administrative reforms of the Delhi Sultanate

### Background

Following the fall of the Gupta Empire in the 6th century CE, India experienced a transition marked by political fragmentation and the rise of regional powers. By the 11th century CE, the subcontinent witnessed the establishment of various Rajput kingdoms, such as the Chauhans and the Paramaras, reflecting a decentralised political structure. These regional rulers, akin to feudal lords, exercised authority over specific territories, granting land to vassals in return for loyalty and military service. The formation of Muslim dynasties, notably the Ghaznavids and later the Ghurids, in the 11th century CE introduced new political dynamics. The Delhi Sultanate, established in the 13th century CE, marked a significant phase of Muslim rule in India. While not a strict feudal system, the Sultanate incorporated elements of centralised authority, land grants, and military service obligations, influencing the socio-political evolution of medieval India.

### Keywords

Feudal model, *Iqta*, *Iqtadar*, *Muqti*, Tax Farming, Fief

### Discussion

The Iqta system, an intricate administrative and economic structure originating in the medieval Islamic world, stands as a testament to the innovative governance systems of Islamic societies during the Middle Ages. Rooted in the principles of meritocracy and resource management, the Iqta system played a pivotal role in shaping the political and economic landscapes of Islamic states from the 9th to



◆ *Origin of Iqta system*

the 15th centuries. Derived from the Arabic word “iqta,” meaning “to grant” or “to assign,” the Iqta system was a form of land tenure system that evolved in response to the expansive territorial conquests of early Islamic empires. As these empires expanded, they encountered the challenge of efficiently administering vast territories and managing diverse populations. The Iqta system emerged as a pragmatic solution to this administrative dilemma.

◆ *Core feature of Iqta*

The core feature of the Iqta system was the allocation of revenue-yielding land, known as “iqta,” to military officers, bureaucrats, or scholars in recognition of their services to the state. These land grants were not hereditary but rather revocable, encouraging holders to remain productive and loyal to the central authority. In return for the assigned land, the Iqta holders, known as “Muqtis,” were responsible for collecting and remitting taxes, maintaining law and order, and contributing to the military defense of the realm.

◆ *Purpose of Iqta system*

The Iqta system, therefore, served a dual purpose – it provided a mechanism for the state to reward its officials while simultaneously fostering a decentralised administrative structure. This system played a crucial role in integrating conquered territories into the larger Islamic state, facilitating revenue collection, and ensuring a standing military force. Over time, the Iqta system underwent various adaptations and refinements across different Islamic empires, leaving an indelible mark on the historical and institutional development of the Islamic world.

### **1.3.1 Evolution of ‘Iqta’ as A System of Tax Farming**

◆ *Role of Iqtadar*

The Delhi Sultanate, established in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century, faced the challenge of administering a vast and diverse territory. In this context, the Iqta system was adapted to suit the needs of the Sultans, who sought a mechanism to efficiently collect revenue and maintain control over their expanding domains. During the early years of the Delhi Sultanate, rulers like Iltutmish and Balban implemented the Iqta system as a means of rewarding military officials and nobles for their services to the state. These officials, known as “Iqtadars,” were granted “Iqtas” or revenue assignments, which included the right to collect taxes from a specific region. The Iqtadars, in turn, were expected to contribute military support to the Sultan.

### 1.3.1.1 Iltutmish's Background and Challenges

#### ◆ *Challenges faced by the Sultan Iltutmish*

The era of Iltutmish, the third ruler of the Delhi Sultanate, marked a transformative period in medieval Indian history. Before delving into Iltutmish's adaptive governance, it is crucial to understand the context of his reign. Having served as a slave under Qutb-ud-din Aibak, Iltutmish emerged as a shrewd and capable leader. He came to power in 1211 C.E amidst internal challenges, including factionalism among the Turkish nobility, external threats from rival powers, and the need to establish a stable administrative framework. Iltutmish also faced the formidable task of consolidating and stabilising the newly established Delhi Sultanate, which had its roots in the conquests of Qutb-ud-din Aibak. One of Iltutmish's noteworthy contributions lies in his adept adaptation of governance practices that suit the diverse and complex socio-cultural fabric of the Indian subcontinent.

#### ◆ *Formalisation and Institutionalisation*

Iltutmish recognised the need for administrative structures that could navigate the intricate social and cultural landscape of India. One of his significant contributions was the formalisation of the Iqta system, an administrative practice borrowed from the earlier Islamic empires but tailored to suit the Indian milieu. The Iqta system involved the grant of revenue-yielding territories to military commanders, or Iqtadars, in exchange for military service. Iltutmish refined this system, ensuring a delicate balance between central authority and local autonomy. Iltutmish recognised the need for a formalised administrative structure to efficiently manage the assignment of Iqtas. He implemented clear guidelines and procedures for the distribution of Iqtas, ensuring that the system was more organised and transparent. This formalisation helped to establish the Iqta system as a key component of the Sultanate's governance.

#### ◆ *Stabilization of the Iqta system*

To address challenges related to revenue collection and administrative stability, Iltutmish worked towards stabilising the Iqta system. He implemented measures to regulate the revenue-sharing arrangements between the state and the Iqta holders, ensuring a steady income for both the military officials and the central government. This stability was crucial for the economic sustainability of the Sultanate.

#### ◆ *Expansion and integration*

Iltutmish's successful military campaigns led to the expansion of the Delhi Sultanate. Recognising the need for an effective administrative system to govern these newly acquired regions, he integrated the Iqta system into the



administrative framework. The Iqta system facilitated the assimilation of diverse territories into the Sultanate, providing a mechanism for local governance.

◆ *Enhancement of administrative efficiency*

In order to improve the administrative efficiency of the Iqta system, Iltutmish introduced reforms in administration. This allowed the central government to have a more direct influence on the Iqtas and their holders. The reforms streamlined communication and decision-making processes, contributing to a more coordinated and effective administration throughout the Sultanate.

◆ *Military loyalty and recruitment*

Iltutmish recognised the importance of maintaining the loyalty of military officials. The Iqta system, under his guidance, served as a means to reward military service. By providing Iqtas to loyal commanders, he ensured a motivated and committed military force. This practice not only secured the loyalty of key military officers, but also encouraged capable individuals to join the military, strengthening the overall defense apparatus of the Sultanate.

◆ *Balancing power structures*

To prevent the concentration of power in the hands of a few, Iltutmish strategically distributed authority among various military commanders through the Iqta system. This decentralisation was aimed at avoiding internal power struggles and rebellions. By balancing power structures, Iltutmish minimised the risk of internal conflicts that could threaten the unity of the empire.

◆ *Preservation of revenue streams*

Iltutmish recognised the financial importance of the Iqta system for the sustainability of the Delhi Sultanate. By implementing measures to preserve and regularise revenue streams derived from the Iqtas, he ensured a consistent income for the central government. This financial stability allowed the Sultanate to invest in infrastructure, maintain a standing army, and undertake other essential governance initiatives.

◆ *Sophisticated mechanism for revenue generation*

### 1.3.1.2 Khalji's Administrative Reform

In the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, the Delhi Sultanate witnessed a remarkable transformation in its administrative landscape under the rule of Alauddin Khalji. Known for his ambitious and pragmatic approach, Alauddin Khalji recognised the potential of the Iqta system as more than just a military reward. His innovative reforms turned the traditional Iqta system into a sophisticated mechanism for revenue generation, significantly impacting the fiscal policies of the Sultanate.

◆ *Transformation of the Iqta*

As the Delhi Sultanate expanded under Alauddin Khalji's military campaigns, the need for efficient revenue mobilisation became increasingly apparent. Alauddin Khalji, a shrewd strategist, expanded the scope of the Iqta system, initially designed for military officials, to include administrators and bureaucrats. This marked a departure from the traditional use of Iqta as a land grant for military service, transforming it into a form of tax farming.

◆ *Tax farming and revenue collection*



Fig 1.3.1 Alauddin Khalji

Under Khalji's reforms, Iqtadars were granted the right to collect revenue from specific regions for a fixed period. This fixed-term arrangement allowed the Sultanate to plan its finances more efficiently, reducing uncertainties associated with tax collection. Iqtadars became, in essence, tax farmers, responsible for remitting predetermined amounts to the state treasury. This shift towards a fixed revenue model facilitated better fiscal management for the central authority.

◆ *Challenges and controversies*

However, the transition from a military-centric Iqta system to a tax-farming model was not free from challenges. Iqtadars were motivated by profit, and accused of exploiting the local population to maximise revenue. Cases of corruption and mal-administration were prevalent, leading to discontent among the people. Despite these challenges, Alauddin Khalji's pragmatic approach recognised the efficiency of the tax-farming model in mobilising resources for the Sultanate's governance and military endeavours.

◆ *Efficient financial planning*

Alauddin Khalji's reforms in the Iqta system allowed the central authority to maintain a significant degree of control over the revenue extraction process. The fixed revenue model ensured a steady and predictable flow of funds, empowering the Sultanate to undertake ambitious military campaigns and infrastructure projects. The efficient financial planning facilitated by the tax-farming model marked a departure from the uncertainties associated with traditional tax collection methods.

### 1.3.1.3 Evolution of the Iqta System under Muhammad bin Tughlaq

#### ◆ Experiment in administration

Muhammad bin Tughlaq ruled from 1325 CE to 1351 CE was a distinctive phase in the history of the Delhi Sultanate, marked by unprecedented experimentation and ambitious policies, especially in the evolution of the Iqta system. Tughlaq, driven by a vision of administrative reform and imperial consolidation, embarked on bold initiatives that aimed to redefine the economic, social, and administrative landscape of the Sultanate. The Iqta system continued to evolve in the 14<sup>th</sup> century under the rule of Muhammad bin Tughlaq. Muhammad bin Tughlaq experimented with the system, introducing novel elements such as token currency and population shifts. Despite the ambitious nature of these policies, it contributed to the subsequent decline of the Tughlaq dynasty.

#### ◆ Introduction of token currency

One of his most noteworthy experiments was the introduction of token currency. Faced with a shortage of precious metals, Muhammad bin Tughlaq sought to stabilise the economy by issuing copper coins with nominal values exceeding their intrinsic worth. However, this move encountered widespread resistance, leading to economic disruptions and decline in trade, as merchants and the general population were skeptical of the new currency.

#### ◆ Shifting of capital

Muhammad bin Tughlaq's grand vision also included large-scale population shifts. He ordered the transfer of the capital from Delhi to Devagiri (Daulatabad) and vice versa, aiming to strategically position the Sultanate and promote agricultural productivity. This ambitious endeavor, however, resulted in logistical challenges, hardships for the populace, and discontent.

#### ◆ Administrative reforms

#### ◆ Experiment with Iqta system

Furthermore, Muhammad bin Tughlaq implemented administrative reforms, seeking to centralise control and streamline governance. His modifications to the Iqta system were part of this broader administrative restructuring, intending to optimise revenue collection and consolidate imperial authority. Yet, these changes faced resistance from existing Iqta holders and regional administrators accustomed to the traditional system, contributing to administrative inefficiencies. Collectively, Muhammad bin Tughlaq's experimentation with the Iqta system and other ambitious policies left a complex legacy. While driven by a vision for progress, the resistance, economic disruptions, and social unrest that ensued ultimately contributed to the

decline of the Delhi Sultanate, underscoring the challenges of implementing radical reforms during this pivotal period.

◆ *Rise of Bahmani Sultanate*

With the rise of the Bahmani Sultanate in the Deccan and the emergence of regional sultanates, variations of the Iqta system persisted. Different rulers adapted the Iqta system to their specific administrative needs, emphasising local nuances. The effectiveness of the Iqta system as a form of tax farming depended on striking the delicate balance between central control and local autonomy, a legacy of Khilji's transformative reforms.

### 1.3.2 Conceptual Differences Between 'Iqta' and 'Fief'

◆ *Origin of Iqta and fief*

The concepts of "Iqta" and "Fief" represent distinctive features of medieval governance and land tenure systems, each originating in different historical contexts and regions. While both involve the granting of land or rights in exchange for certain obligations, the Iqta system emerged in the Islamic world during the early years of the Islamic Caliphate, whereas the Fief system took root in medieval Europe during the feudal period. The Iqta system originated in the Islamic world during the 8th century, serving as a form of land grant awarded to military officers and soldiers for their services to the state. In contrast, the Fief system has its roots in medieval Europe, spanning from the 9th to the 15th century, and characterised by a hierarchical feudal structure where land was granted in exchange for loyalty and military service.

◆ *Nature of Iqta and fief*

In the Iqta system, the grant, known as "Iqtaat," included the right to collect revenue from the assigned land and the responsibility to provide military support when required. This dual nature created a symbiotic relationship between the ruling authority and the military, forming a self-sustaining mechanism. On the other hand, a Fief in medieval Europe involved the grant of land from a lord to a vassal, with the vassal pledging allegiance, providing military service, and rendering other forms of assistance. The Fief was not only an economic arrangement but also a social and political contract, binding lords and vassals in a reciprocal relationship.

◆ *Iqta system- tax farming*  
◆ *Fief- economic arrangements*

The Iqta system evolved into a form of tax farming, especially in Delhi Sultanate, where Iqtadars, or those granted Iqta, collected taxes and contributed a portion of the revenue to the central authority. In contrast, the Fief in medieval Europe was an economic arrangement that allowed



the vassal to derive income from the granted land, often from agricultural produce, rents, or other services provided by peasants on the land.

◆ *Iqta system-  
rooted in Islamic  
governance*

◆ *Fief- no direct  
connection to  
religion*

The Iqta system was deeply rooted in Islamic governance, influenced by Islamic principles, and served as an administrative and economic tool integrated with religious and military elements. Iqta holders were expected to adhere to ethical and legal standards dictated by Islamic jurisprudence. In contrast, the Fief system in Europe was influenced by a combination of Germanic, Roman, and Christian traditions, with its hierarchical structure and code of chivalry contributing to cultural and social aspects. Unlike the Iqta system, the Fief did not have a direct connection to a specific religious doctrine.

◆ *Iqta and  
Fief- adapted to  
regional needs  
and conditions*

The Iqta system exhibited variations across different Islamic regions, adapting to specific needs and conditions. For instance, in the Delhi Sultanate, the Iqta system underwent changes under Alauddin Khilji and Muhammad bin Tughlaq, reflecting the evolving political and economic dynamics. Similarly, the Fief system in medieval Europe had regional variations, with differences in the rights and obligations associated with fiefs. The specifics of feudal relationships and the nature of fiefs could vary in different European kingdoms and principalities, shaped by local customs and laws.

## Summarised Overview

The Iqta system, originating in the medieval Islamic world, was a land tenure system designed to address the administrative challenges of expansive Islamic empires. It involved granting revenue-yielding land, or "iqta," to officials, known as "Muqtis," in exchange for services like tax collection and military support. Non-hereditary and revocable, the system aimed at fostering loyalty and productivity. In the Delhi Sultanate, Iltutmish and Alauddin Khalji adapted the Iqta system. Iltutmish formalised and stabilised it, emphasising a balance between central authority and local autonomy. Alauddin Khalji transformed it into a tax-farming model, expanding its scope to include administrators and bureaucrats for efficient revenue collection. Muhammad bin Tughlaq experimented further, introducing token currency and capital shifts, but faced challenges that contributed to the decline of the Delhi Sultanate. Variations of the Iqta system persisted with the rise of regional Kingdoms. Distinct from Europe's Fief system, Iqta had Islamic roots, religious ties, and variations across regions, while the Fief, rooted in European feudalism, lacked religious connections and varied across kingdoms.

## Assignments

1. Compare and contrast the Iqta system with other forms of land tenure and administrative systems prevalent during the same period in other regions of the world. What were the similarities and differences, and how did they shape political and economic structures?
2. Evaluate the role of the Iqta system in facilitating the expansion of the Delhi Sultanate. How did the allocation of land through the Iqta system contribute to the military and administrative capabilities of the Sultanate?
3. Compare the implementation and impact of the Iqta system under the uqlaq dynasty with its counterparts in other contemporary Islamic states. What were the similarities and differences in terms of administrative practices, revenue collection, and political stability?

## Suggested Reading

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## Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



# Japan

## Learning Outcomes

After the successful completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ gain insight into the historical context and factors contributing to the development of feudalism in Japan
- ◆ explore the evolution of political power in Japan through the establishment of shogunates
- ◆ learn how the Tokugawa Shogunate solidified the feudal structure in Japan

## Background

The development towards feudalism in Japan can be traced to the gradual breakdown of the centralised imperial system during the late Heian period (794-1185 CE). The weakening control of the imperial court over its vast territories created a power vacuum, leading to increased local autonomy and the rise of powerful landowning families. These local leaders, known as Daimyos, began to assert authority over their respective regions, forming the initial foundations of feudalism.

The pivotal moment came in 1185CE when Minamoto Yoritomo established the Kamakura Shogunate, marking a shift towards a feudal system. Yoritomo became the first shogun, a military commander who held de-facto power, while the emperor retained a symbolic role. The shogunate relied on the support of loyal vassals, particularly the samurai, skilled warriors who pledged allegiance to their lords.

## Keywords

Feudal Relations, Kamakura Period, Samurai, Feudalism in Japan, Tokugawa Shogunate, Peace-Military Code, Sakoku



# Discussion

## 1.4.1 Japanese Feudalism

### ◆ Establishment of the Kamakura shogunate

The Kamakura Period (1185-1333CE) in Japan marked a crucial phase in the development of feudal relations, laying the foundations for the subsequent feudal system that would characterise Japanese society. This era was initiated by the establishment of the Kamakura shogunate, which emerged in response to the shifting political landscape and the decline of centralised imperial authority. The Kamakura shogunate was founded by Minamoto no Yoritomo, who, after the Genpei War (1180-1185CE), emerged victorious and sought to consolidate power. Yoritomo was appointed as the *shogun* by the emperor, becoming the de facto military ruler. Unlike the earlier Heian Period, where imperial authority held significant sway, the Kamakura shogunate marked a shift towards a decentralised system of governance.

### ◆ Limited influence of the emperor

Feudal relations during the Kamakura Period were characterised by a clear delineation of power and responsibilities. The *shogun*, as the supreme military commander, held authority over the *samurai* class and maintained control over the warrior government. The imperial court in Kyoto retained its symbolic significance but had limited influence on political and military matters.

### ◆ Decentralisation

Decentralisation played a crucial role in the Bushi system of feudal Japan, where *Daimyo*, or regional lords, exerted significant control over their respective territories. One notable example is the Sengoku period (1467-1603CE), characterised by intense internal conflict as powerful Daimyo sought to expand their influence and consolidate power. Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu were prominent figures during this era, each vying for supremacy and contributing to the overall decentralisation of authority.

### 1.4.1.1 Feudal Pyramid



◆ Feudal structure in Japan

### Emperor:

The emperor occupied the highest position in the feudal hierarchy but held more of a ceremonial and spiritual role than political power during this period. The imperial court resided in Kyoto, but the emperor's influence was largely symbolic.

### Shogun:

The shogun was the military commander with real political power. The shogunate, established by the Minamoto clan in the late 12th century, became the de facto ruling authority. The shogun wielded authority over the samurai class and coordinated military campaigns to maintain control.

### Daimyo:

Daimyo were powerful territorial lords who controlled vast land estates. These feudal lords pledged loyalty to the *shogun* but enjoyed significant autonomy within their domains. *Daimyo* were responsible for governing their territories, collecting taxes, and maintaining order. They also raised private armies of samurai for protection and warfare.

### Samurai:

The *samurai* were the warrior class, serving their *Daimyo* in exchange for land and protection. They adhered to a strict code of conduct called *bushido*, emphasising loyalty, honor, and duty. *Samurai* were skilled in martial arts and played a central role in the military affairs of their respective lords.

### Peasants:

Peasants formed the backbone of Japanese society, working the land and producing agricultural goods. They were subject to heavy taxation by the *Daimyo* in exchange for protection. While considered the lowest class in the hierarchy, peasants played a crucial role in sustaining the economy.

### Artisans:

Artisans were skilled craftsmen and professionals who contributed to the economic prosperity of their communities. They produced various goods, including weapons, armor, textiles, and pottery. Some artisans were retained by *Daimyo* to support their military efforts.

## Merchants:

Merchants engaged in trade and commerce, providing goods and services to the feudal society. Despite being at the bottom of the social hierarchy, some merchants accumulated wealth and influence over time. However, they were often subject to restrictions on their activities to prevent social unrest.

### ◆ The code of Bushido

The Code of Bushido, a set of ethical principles followed by the samurai class, profoundly influenced Japanese society. Loyalty, honour, and self-discipline were paramount virtues. An example illustrating the adherence to Bushido is the tale of the 47 Ronin. After their master's death, these *samurai* sought to avenge him in a display of unwavering loyalty, reflecting the profound impact of the Bushido code on *samurai* behaviour.

### ◆ Castle towns

Castle towns were a product of the Bushi system, as *Daimyo* constructed elaborate castles not only for defense but also as centers of administration and governance. One prominent example is Himeji Castle, known for its strategic design and defensive features. Castle towns, such as Himeji-jo, developed around these structures, fostering economic activity and cultural exchange. Merchants, artisans, and various other residents contributed to the vibrant atmosphere of these towns, highlighting the interconnected nature of feudal Japanese society.

### ◆ Period of Sengoku

The Sengoku period, characterised by incessant warfare and power struggles, set the stage for the development of feudalism in Japan. The decline of the Ashikaga shogunate, which had previously provided centralised authority, left a void that *Daimyo* sought to fill. These regional lords engaged in territorial conflicts, seeking to expand their domains and increase their influence. The landscape became a patchwork of competing fiefdoms, each controlled by a powerful *Daimyo* with their own network of vassals and samurai warriors. The establishment of local military rule marked the inception of feudal relationships, where loyalty and service were exchanged for protection and ownership of the land.

### ◆ Introduction of firearms

The introduction of firearms played a pivotal role in shaping the dynamics of feudalism in Japan. The introduction of guns, particularly arquebuses, by Portuguese traders in the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century transformed the traditional samurai warfare dominated by swords and bows. Firearms provided a new and effective means of combat, altering the balance of power on the battlefield. The adoption of firearms was not uniform,

and its impact varied across different regions and factions. *Daimyo* who embraced these new weapons gained a strategic advantage, while those resistant to change faced the risk of obsolescence.

◆ *Socio-economic change with the introduction of firearms*

The impact of firearms extended beyond the battlefield, influencing the social and economic aspects of feudal Japan. The production of firearms became a valuable industry, and skilled gunsmiths gained prominence. *Daimyo* sought to secure a steady supply of firearms to equip their armies, leading to increased trade and competition among regions for access to this technology. The widespread use of firearms also contributed to changes in castle architecture, as fortifications needed to adapt to withstand gun attacks.

◆ *Importance of incorporating new technologies*

One of the transformative periods in Japanese history, shaped significantly by the impact of firearms, was the Battle of Nagashino in 1575. Oda Nobunaga, a powerful *Daimyo* known for his innovative military strategies, demonstrated the effectiveness of firearms on a large scale. At Nagashino, his forces utilised a defensive position fortified with wooden stockades, behind which rows of arquebusiers (armed infantrymen) unleashed a barrage of gunfire against the charging cavalry of Takeda Katsuyori. The devastating impact of this gunfire, combined with the use of infantry squares to provide continuous fire, resulted in a decisive victory for Oda Nobunaga. This battle highlighted the potential of firearms to alter traditional samurai warfare tactics and showcased the importance of adapting military strategies to incorporate new technologies.

◆ *Impact of firearms*

The transformative impact of firearms set the stage for the unification of Japan under three prominent *Daimyo*: Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu. These leaders, often referred to as the “Three Unifiers,” played key roles in bringing an end to the Sengoku period and establishing a semblance of central authority. Toyotomi Hideyoshi, in particular, continued the legacy of Oda Nobunaga and implemented policies to control the possession of weapons, including firearms, as a means of consolidating power.

### **1.4.2 The Emergence of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the Policy of Isolationism**

The Tokugawa Shogunate, also known as the Edo Period, marked a transformative era in Japanese history. It emerged in the early 17th century, bringing about a prolonged period



◆ *Prolonged period of stability and isolationism*

of stability and isolationism that profoundly shaped Japan's social, political, and economic landscape. Let us explore the factors leading to the establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate and delve into the policy of isolationism that defined much of its rule.

◆ *Battle of Sekigahara*

The 16<sup>th</sup> century in Japan was marked by political turmoil, incessant warfare, and power struggles among regional *Daimyos*. Amid this chaos, Tokugawa Ieyasu emerged as a key figure. The decisive Battle of Sekigahara in 1600CE solidified his control, leading to the establishment of the Tokugawa Shogunate. Tokugawa Ieyasu became the *Shogun* in 1603CE, formally initiating the Tokugawa era.

◆ *Sankin-kotai system*

Tokugawa Ieyasu recognised the importance of centralising power to ensure stability. He implemented a system called "sankin-kotai," which required *Daimyos* to spend alternate years in the capital, Edo (modern-day Tokyo), and their own domains. This not only allowed the shogunate to keep a close watch on the *Daimyos* but also ensured their financial resources were consistently drained by the cost of maintaining residences in both locations.

◆ *Social hierarchy*

The Tokugawa Shogunate implemented policies that aimed to maintain social order and prevent challenges to its authority. The class structure during this period consisted of the samurai, peasants, artisans, and merchants. Samurai were at the top of the hierarchy, enjoying privileges and status. The imposition of strict sumptuary laws limited the extravagance of the lower classes, contributing to a stable social order.

◆ *Edo period*

### 1.4.2.1 Isolationism

The Tokugawa Shogunate's rule during the Edo Period (1603-1868 CE) stands as a transformative chapter in Japan's history, characterised by the interplay of isolationism through "sakoku" and the enforcement of the "Peace-Military Code." These policies not only shaped the era but also left an enduring impact on Japan's social, economic, and cultural landscape, contributing both to stability and the eventual metamorphosis of the nation.

"Sakoku," a strategic response to perceived threats to the shogunate's authority, particularly from foreign influence and Christianity, was formalised in 1635CE through the issuance of the "sakoku edicts." These stringent regulations drastically restricted foreign interactions, leading to the expulsion of Portuguese and Spanish traders and missionaries. The

◆ *Sakoku edicts*

Tokugawa Shogunate, with an unwavering determination to control potential sources of external influence, showcased a pragmatic approach by allowing Dutch trade on the confined island of Dejima in Nagasaki. This nuanced balance between isolation and economic necessity underscored the adaptability of the shogunate in navigating the complex geopolitical landscape.

◆ *Peace-Military Code*

Simultaneously, the “Peace-Military Code” represented a comprehensive set of regulations designed to maintain social order, hierarchy, and the stability of the Tokugawa regime. The hierarchical structure, meticulously planned with the *Shogun* at the apex, *Daimyos* below, followed by *samurai* and commoners, reflected a systematic approach to governance. The implementation of the *sankin-kotai* system, requiring *Daimyos* to alternate residences between Edo and their domains, acted not only as a control mechanism but also as a preventative measure against the potential consolidation of power against the central government.

◆ *Regulations to control trade and commerce*

Economic policies, integral to the Peace-Military Code, aimed to control trade and commerce. Strict regulations were enforced on markets and guilds, minimising economic disparities among *Daimyos* and ensuring a stable economic environment. The restrictions on weaponry, notably through the Sword Hunt and subsequent edicts, symbolised the subordination of the *samurai* class, consolidating the shogunate’s monopoly over military power. These measures, though seemingly restrictive, contributed to the internal stability that characterised the Edo Period.

◆ *Cultural development*

Cultural development flourished amidst the stability fostered by the Tokugawa Shogunate. The arts, literature, and theater experienced a renaissance during this period. Kabuki and Noh theater emerged as prominent forms of entertainment, captivating audiences with their unique storytelling and dramatic performances. Ukiyo-e woodblock prints, depicting scenes of daily life, landscapes, and actors, became a prominent artistic medium. The patronage of the arts, far from being merely a distraction, played a crucial role in reinforcing social cohesion and promoting a shared cultural identity.

### 1.4.2.2 The End of Isolationism in Japan

For centuries, Japan had adhered to a policy of seclusion, limiting foreign influence and interactions to a few designated ports. This isolationist approach, known as *sakoku*, was

◆ *Implemented sakoku to prevent foreign influence and ideas*

implemented to maintain domestic stability and prevent the spread of foreign ideas that could challenge the existing social and political order. While it achieved its intended goal of internal peace, *sakoku* left Japan ill-prepared to deal with the rapidly changing global of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

◆ *Black Ships- highlighted vulnerabilities of closed door policy*

The mid-19th century witnessed Japan grappling with escalating external pressures, primarily from Western powers eager to establish trade and diplomatic relations. The arrival of American naval Commodore Matthew Perry's "Black Ships" (Ironclad naval warships) in 1853 marked a pivotal moment, laying bare the vulnerabilities of Japan's closed-door policy. Perry's intention was to forcibly open diplomatic and trade relations between the United States and Japan.

◆ *Arrival of Commodore Perry*  
◆ *Japan's isolationist stance challenged*

Commodore Perry's arrival demonstrated the technological and military prowess of Western nations, forcing Japan to confront its isolationist stance. The shogunate, under the leadership of Tokugawa Ieyoshi and his successor Tokugawa Iesada, recognised the urgent need to adapt to the evolving international dynamics. The government faced a dilemma – either resist the encroachment of foreign powers and risk military conflict, or embrace reform to navigate the changing currents of global politics.

◆ *Introduced reforms to modernise Japan*

In response to these challenges, the shogunate initiated a series of reforms aimed at modernising Japan and bolstering its ability to engage with the outside world. The process of transformation began with the signing of the Treaty of Kanagawa in 1854, which marked the end of Japan's policy of seclusion. The treaty allowed foreign vessels to enter designated Japanese ports for the purpose of refueling and resupplying, signaling a tentative opening of Japan to the outside world.

◆ *Opposition to the reforms of the Shogunate*

However, internal dissent and opposition to the shogunate's reforms emerged. The *Daimyos*, while initially supportive of the need for change, were wary of losing their traditional privileges and autonomy. The *samurai* class, facing economic hardships due to the peace imposed by the shogunate, became discontented. Moreover, the general population, particularly the merchants and farmers, also felt the impact of economic shifts and began to voice their concerns.

The Tokugawa Shogunate, recognising the need for more comprehensive reforms, initiated a series of decrees

◆ *Tempo Reforms*

collectively known as the “Tempo Reforms” in the late 1840s. These reforms aimed to address economic issues, control urbanisation, and reinforce social order. However, they faced resistance and were only partially successful in achieving their objectives.

◆ *Keio Reforms*

As internal challenges mounted, the shogunate experienced a power struggle among various factions. By the early 1860s, Tokugawa Yoshinobu emerged as the *shogun*, inheriting a complex and precarious political situation. In an attempt to stabilise the government and address the growing discontent, Yoshinobu implemented a series of policies collectively known as the “Keio Reforms.”

◆ *Challenges to the reforms*

◆ *Open up to the world*

The Keio Reforms included measures to strengthen the shogunate’s military capabilities, improve infrastructure, and stimulate the economy. Yoshinobu sought to modernise Japan while maintaining the authority of the shogunate. However, the reforms faced significant challenges and were unable to quell the growing dissatisfaction among the various segments of society. Amidst these internal struggles, the international context continued to evolve. The Western powers, particularly the United States, sought further concessions and opportunities for trade with Japan. The shogunate, under increasing pressure, found itself at a crossroads. The decision to open up to the world and embrace modernisation became unavoidable.

◆ *Meiji Restoration*

◆ *Aim to transform Japan into modern nation state*

In 1868, the culmination of these complex dynamics led to a pivotal moment in Japanese history – the Meiji restoration. The restoration marked the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the restoration of imperial rule under Emperor Meiji. The new government, led by a coalition of samurai and influential figures, embarked on an ambitious program of modernisation and reform. The Meiji restoration aimed at transforming Japan into a modern nation-state with a strong centralised government. The leaders recognised the importance of adapting to Western technologies, institutions, and governance systems to ensure Japan’s survival in the face of global power dynamics. The feudal system, which had defined Japan for centuries, was dismantled, and the emperor assumed a more active role in shaping the nation’s destiny.

The restoration era witnessed rapid changes across various sectors – political, economic, social, and cultural. The government abolished the samurai class, initiated

◆ *Transitioned from feudal society to modern, industrialized nation*

land reforms, established a modern education system, and embraced industrialisation. Japan rapidly modernised its military, adopting Western-style weaponry and strategies. The Meiji restoration not only propelled Japan into the ranks of major world powers but also laid the foundation for its subsequent imperial expansion in the early 20th century. The country underwent a profound metamorphosis, transitioning from a feudal society into a modern, industrialised nation. The once-isolated island nation became a formidable player on the global stage.

## Summarised Overview

Feudalism in Japan, which spanned from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, was characterised by a hierarchical social structure and decentralised political power. The emperor occupied a symbolic position at the top, while the practical governance was carried out by the *shogun*, a military leader who held substantial authority. Below the *shogun* were the *Daimyos*, regional landowners and military commanders, who controlled vast territories. These *Daimyos*, in turn, had vassals known as samurai, who served as warriors and administrators.

The *samurai* class played a crucial role in maintaining order and protecting the interests of their respective lords. Land was the primary source of wealth and power, and the system operated on the principle of land grants in exchange for loyalty and military service. The peasants, at the bottom of the social hierarchy, worked on the land and supported the entire system.

While the emperor remained a symbolic figurehead, real political power shifted between various shogunates. The Ashikaga and Tokugawa shogunates were particularly influential in shaping feudal Japan. However, internal conflicts, external threats, and economic changes eventually led to the decline of feudalism. The Meiji restoration in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century marked the end of the feudal era, bringing about a period of modernisation and the establishment of a centralised imperial government.

## Assignments

1. Explore the historical factors and events that contributed to the development of feudalism in Japan. Analyse the key elements that characterised the feudal system in medieval Japan.

- 1.
2. Examine the distribution of power among different classes and institutions, considering the roles of the emperor, *shogun*, *Daimyos*, and other influential entities in shaping the social hierarchy.
3. Identify and assess the multiple factors that brought about the end of feudalism in Japan. Examine political, economic, and social changes, and evaluate their impact on the dissolution of the feudal system.

## Suggested Reading

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2. Yamamura, Kozo, *The Cambridge History of Japan*, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

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2. Totman, Conrad, *The Collapse of the Tokugawa Bakufu, 1862-1868*, University of Hawaii Press, 1980.
3. Turnbull, Stephen, *The Samurai: A Military History*, Routledge, 2013.



## Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU

# Ideas and Application of Science

**BLOCK-02**



## Arab Legacies

### Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful conclusion of this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ recognise the unique place of Arabia in knowledge transmission
- ◆ discuss the progressive changes that had taken place during the period of Al ma'mun, the Abbasid Caliph
- ◆ analyse the progress achieved by the Arabian world in the advancement of science and technology

### Background

The period between the fifth and fifteenth centuries CE is generally regarded as the medieval period. But the term medieval period does not apply to the same time span all over the world. Even though the political structure of the medieval world had similarities, there were differences in the forms of authority and they were different in Asia, Europe and China during the medieval period.

How the Arabian region came to be the greatest contributor of transmission of knowledge all over the medieval world could be puzzling. As the early Muslim strongholds were generally located in the arid regions, investment for the agricultural extension had to be procured through wealth looted from more prosperous regions lying outside. It is significant that most of the early advances in Arabian Islamic culture were achieved during the period of the Abbasid Caliphate.

New knowledge and ideas acquired in the field of mathematics, medicine and astronomy were significant contributions to the scientific world. This chapter mainly discusses developments in mathematics, philosophy and medicine during the middle ages in Arabia. Moreover, contributions of the important scholars of the time such as Al-Razi, Avicenna, Omar Khayyam, Ibn Rushd also explained.

### Keywords

Golden Age, Al- ma'mun, Bait-ul Hikmah, Translation, Knowledge, Medicine, Mathematics, Astronomy



# Discussion

## 2.1.1 Arabia as the Centre of Knowledge Transmission

### ◆ *Golden age of Islam*

The region comprising Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia was known as Arabia in general. Arabs made significant contributions to the medieval world. The period between the 8th to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries is generally regarded as the golden age of Islam, in which Islamic world saw the flourishing of science, economics and culture. During this period Arabia witnessed peace and prosperity. The city of Baghdad came to be regarded as the center of knowledge and learning. In order to explore knowledge, they invited scholars from the rest of the world to Baghdad, extending liberal patronage for fruitful interaction. During the period of Al ma'mun, in order to boost knowledge *Bait-ul-Hikmah* (house of wisdom) was established. There, scholars also took interest in the translation of books written in Latin, Persian and Greek. In doing so, they preserved their inherited knowledge and further, extended it for future generations.

### ◆ *Knowledge of science*

During the rise of an Islamic civilisation, Europe was still at an early stage in science, medicine and metallurgy. The Arabic-Latin translation movement in the Middle Ages led to the translation of almost all medical, philosophical and scientific works. The impact of Arabic learning on the western civilisation provides the basic foundation for scientific knowledge in pre-modern Europe. Arabs have freely drawn all existing knowledge of Europe into their knowledge domain and developed them further. Their knowledge of science was the most advanced at that point of time. The Arabic societies placed greater emphasis on experiments and in the process facilitated the development of a scientific method in West Asia. The contribution of the Arabs to the world made dynamic changes on the entire body of knowledge acquired hitherto.

### ◆ *Foundation of Universities*

In the field of education, Arabs founded the great universities at Baghdad, Cairo and Cordova. These universities transmitted culture and learning into the universities of Paris and Oxford. Then Arabs introduced the Arabic numerals to the academic world. Algebra was also an Arabic contribution which was invented by Arabic mathematicians. In the field of science also Arabs made commendable strides. The Muslim scholars at Cordova

advanced remarkable contributions to chemistry, medicine and surgery. In addition, they developed the science of optics and astronomy. In the field of medicine their contributions were admirable.

◆ *Influence of the East*

The architecture of the Moors showed the influence of the Byzantine architecture of the East. They also built beautiful mosques in different parts of the world. Arabs also made significant contributions in literature. They read Greek philosophy and science and translated the works of Aristotle. Arabs also showed great interest in poetry, and their most remarkable production is the “One Thousand and One Nights”.

◆ *New inventions*

Another contribution of the Arabs was the manufacture of paper which they passed on to Europe. They mastered several techniques such as grafting for developing agriculture. They also gained expertise in the ways of using the manure and fertilizers. Canals were used by them as a regular method in the extension of agricultural activities. They manufactured pottery and glass of finest quality. And they were also pioneers in dyeing. And the most notable contribution of the Arabs in navigation is the invention of Mariner’s Compass.

◆ *Father of Modern Optics*

The most important development in the field of science was the use of experiments to distinguish scientific theories set within a generally empirical orientation. Progress in methodology with the beginning of experiments was started by Ibn al-Haytham (Al-Hazen ) on optics from circa 1000 CE in his ‘Book of Opticals’ (*Kitab al-Manazir*). He is generally regarded as the father of Modern Optics especially for his empirical proof of the intromission theory of light. Sometimes he is described as the father of scientists for his development of the modern scientific method.

◆ *Transmission of Arabic knowledge*

Between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, much of the Arabic knowledge including earlier Greek works of science, medicine and philosophy were translated into Latin and were further transmitted into European centers of learning. For several centuries, the Muslims, Christians and Jews coexisted peacefully under Islamic rule. The Arabic scholarship flourished in the eleventh and thirteenth centuries under the Umayyad dynasty.

Al Ma’mun is considered as an important figure in the Abbasid dynasty. His period witnessed many intellectual developments in all the Muslim directions, but these developments could not be attached to any particular branch

◆ *Intellectual developments*

of science which influenced the whole intellectual domain. He refined and cultivated all branches of learning like mathematics, astronomy, medicine, geography, philosophy etc. His period was the most splendid and bright period in the history of Islam. His court was attended by men of science and letters, poets and philosophers and tremendous patronage also provided to the historians, grammarians and philosophers. During his period astronomical observations also witnessed such an advancement. The size of the earth was calculated from measurement on the degree of waves in the shores of the Red Sea.

◆ *Revival of science and learning*

By analysing the contributions of Al Ma'mun, it is revealed that he revived traditional science and learning and also provided a great impetus to the Persian language. He was very much interested in philosophical discussions because it created a new vision in society. Therefore it can be said that the period of Al Ma'mun is considered as the zenith on the rational and scientific branches of learning. He devoted his life for the expansion of knowledge and culture respectively. His interest in work, dedication, determination, wisdom, judgment and inspiring bravery and fearlessness made him unique in the medieval world.

◆ *Establishment of educational institutions*

Al Ma'mun never wished to make the knowledge dependable on accidental liberty of individual Caliph or chiefs of the state, rather he made it independent by creating endowments for its creation, extension, and promotion. In order to translate all of these texts, he established several schools, colleges and universities throughout the empire. The people from different parts of the world connected to his court. It was not only the age of philologists and grammarians but also the collectors of tradition and culture.

◆ *Translation works*

Al Ma'mun collected the works of the school of Alexandria from the philosophical works of ancient Greece, later these works were translated into Arabic. Al Ma'mun established *Bait ul Hikmah*, it was a combination of an academy, library and translation centers which proved in many respects as a valuable educational institution. This period also witnessed astronomical inventions. He also established an observatory for this purpose, and also encouraged developments in the field of medicine.

It is a well-known fact that the Muslim conquest had thrown the background for the development of science and literature in Persia. Without any doubt, the patronage

◆ *Augustine of Arabs*

provided by Al Ma'mun also encouraged reviving traditional learning and gave impetus to the progress of the Persian language. Finally it can be said that during his period, every field was made ready for the cultivation of art, literature and science. Intellectual and cultural activities reached its zenith under the guidance of Al Ma'mun, that's why he was recognised as the 'Augustine of Arabs' who devoted his life for the development and improvement of rational faculties.

◆ *Contributions to mathematics*

### 2.1.2 Mathematics, Medicine and Philosophy

Many scholars made significant contributions to the field of science are remarkable. In mathematics, Arabs made significant advances. Ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi, the Persian mathematician developed the concept of algorithm. The term 'algebra' is derived from 'Al jabr', the beginning of the title of one of his publications. Arabs learned the Indian numerals and spread their use far and wide. Arabic mathematicians made great contributions in the refinements to the number system, such as introduction of decimal point notation.

◆ *Contributions to astronomy*

Al Battani made great contributions to astronomy and mathematics. Al Razi contributed to chemistry and medicine. In Astronomy, Albattani improved the measurements of the sun and moon which were earlier made by the Greek astronomer Hipparchus. He translated Ptolemy's great treatise into Arabic with the new title 'Almagest'. Albattani improved the precision of the measurements of the procession of the earth on its axis.

◆ *Foundation of modern Chemistry*

Arab chemists and alchemists played an important role in the foundation of modern chemistry. Scholars such as Will Durant considered Arabs as the founders of chemistry. The Arab experiments in chemistry led to the discovery of many new compounds like sodium carbonate, silver nitrate and sulphuric acid. They devised a calendar which is more accurate than the Gregorian calendar and it used all over the world at present. The Arab astronomers thought it possible that the earth rotates on its own axis and revolves around the sun, contrary to the contemporary European belief putting earth at the center of the universe.

#### 2.1.2.1 Al Razi

Al Razi was a Persian physician, philosopher and alchemist, who lived during the Islamic golden age. He is widely considered one of the most important figures in the history of medicine, and also wrote on logic, astronomy

◆ *Contributions of Al Razi*

and grammar. His metaphysical doctrine derives from the theory of 'five elements', according to which the world is produced out of an interaction between the God and four other eternal principles (soul, matter, time and place). While he was influenced by Plato and the medical writers, mainly Galen (Greek Physician), he rejected *Taqlid* (in Islamic law, the unquestioning acceptance of the legal decisions of another without knowing the basis of those decisions) and thus expressed criticism about some of their views. This is evident from the title of one of his works, 'Doubts about Galen'.

◆ *Al Razi as medical writer*

Al Razi utilised case histories extensively in his writing as an educational tool and as documentation of the various illnesses he diagnosed and treated. Alvarez-Millan discussed the description of diseases occurring in *Kitab al-Tajārib*, the largest and oldest collection of case histories, so far known, in medieval Islamic medical literature. Since Al Razi was a prolific medical writer, that discussion includes a review of his medical and therapeutic principles dealing with eye diseases, as described in his learned treatises, and a comparison with those therapies actually employed in his everyday practice.

◆ *Contributions to Neurology*

Razi made important contributions to neurology and neuroanatomy. He stated that nerves had motor or sensory functions, describing 7 cranial and 31 spinal cord nerves. He assigned a numerical order to the cranial nerves from the optic to the hypoglossal nerves. He classified the spinal nerves into 8 cervical, 12 thoracic, 5 lumbar, 3 sacral, and 3 coccygeal nerves. In his clinical case reports cited in his books *Kitab al-Hawi* and *Al-Mansuri Fi al-Tibb*, he shows an outstanding clinical ability to localize lesions, prognosticate, and describe therapeutic options and reported clinical observations, emphasising the link between the anatomic location of a lesion and the clinical signs.

◆ *Contributions to Neuroanatomy*

Al Razi was a pioneer in applied neuroanatomy. He combined a knowledge of cranial and spinal cord nerve anatomy with an insightful use of clinical information to localize lesions in the nervous system. In addition, he is credited as the first physician to clearly separate and recognise concussion from other similar neurological conditions.

Al Razi is considered the original portrayer of smallpox. While serving as the Chief Physician in Baghdad, he was the first to describe smallpox and to differentiate it from

◆ *Portrayer of Smallpox*

measles. He wrote a treatise on the subject, *Kitab al Judari wa al Hasba* (Books on smallpox and measles). This book was translated more than a dozen times into Latin. In spite of this, it is of interest to know that European physicians continued to confuse these two illnesses until recently.

### 2.1.2.2 Avicenna

◆ *Unani system of medicine*

Abu Ali Al Hussein Ibn Sina, popularly known as Avicenna, is regarded as the most influential scientist and philosopher of Arabia. His contributions to the development of unani systems of medicine is also remarkable. Though the origin of the unani system can be traced to ancient Greece, it was developed in West Asia during the Medieval period. So this system of medicine is also known as the Graeco-Arabic system of medicine.

◆ *Persian scientist and polymath*

Avicenna is the most influential scientist and philosopher of Arabia. He pioneered the science of experimental medicine and was the first physician to conduct clinical trials, who created a philosophical system which is really complete and whole. He had great knowledge in mathematics, medicine, philosophy and astronomy. He was a Persian polymath, who is regarded as the most among the philosophers and writers of the Islamic golden age. Sajjad H. Rizvi has called Avicenna the most influential philosopher of the premodern era.

◆ *Encyclopedia on Science and Philosophy*

Avicenna wrote more than 160 books of which seventeen are on medicine and he is known to us primarily by his *Kitab al Shifa* (The book of Healing), a scientific and philosophical encyclopedia influenced by ancient Greek philosophy. He wrote exclusively on early Islamic philosophy, especially the subjects like logics and metaphysics, including treatises. Like Aristotle, he wished for a special science, metaphysics to study 'being' as 'being'. He was a Muslim peripatetic philosopher influenced by the Greek Aristotelian philosophy. His other famous book *al Qanun fi al -Tibb* (The Canon of Medicine), is an encyclopedia of medicine. Most of his works were written in Arabic- the language of science in the middle east- and some in Persian.

◆ *Views on metaphysics*

Avicenna's metaphysical system was based on Aristotle's, but he modified it in his own way. Avicenna views metaphysics as a rational discipline that enables human reason to understand the inner structure of the world. It is the science of being qua being, explaining every being. Avicenna combines Aristotelian tradition with Neo-Platonic idea of emanation, building a system that includes theology,

cosmology, angelology, physics, psychology, prophetology, and eschatology. Metaphysics is the first and head of all sciences, as it concerns being qua being and comprehends reality as a whole, rather than just some aspects. It is a foundation for physics, psychology, prophetology, and eschatology.

◆ *Philosophy of Avicenna*

Avicenna's metaphysics is a complex and refined work that draws from the traditions of late Ancient commentators and Neo-Platonic writings in the Arabic world. He reinterprets Aristotle's Metaphysics and gives an original structure to his own text. The Arabic-Islamic traditions of philosophy and theology, such as Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, al-Fārābī, and the Kalām, are essential to understanding Avicenna's metaphysics. Avicenna's terminology often depends on his predecessors and some solutions are the result of ongoing discussions about their positions. His metaphysics has a significant impact on the history of philosophy in both the West and the East. Avicenna's interpretations were encountered by every Latin medieval philosopher from the late 12th century onwards, and in the East, particularly in the Persian area, Avicenna's metaphysics profoundly influenced philosophy and theology and founded a centuries-old tradition.

◆ *Divisions of al Qanun fi al Tibb*

Avicenna's contributions to medicine and medical writings were mostly the depiction of Greco- Arabian thoughts, which were bringing a new arena in the medical field. He published a number of books, *Al Qanun fi al -Tibb* is a very significant book in many dimensions and it is divided into five parts, each chapter dealing with specific topics in medicine like drugs, medical procedures and specific descriptions of the organs of the body. His knowledge in medicine was popular far and wide.

### 2.1.2.3 Ibn Rushd

◆ *Modes of Discourses*

The Andalusian philosopher, physician and judge, Ibn Rushd is one of the great figures of philosophy in the Islamic world. He wrote many subjects including philosophy, theology, medicine, astronomy, physics and psychology. His philosophical works include numerous commentaries of Aristotle. The Sunni Islamic traditions, especially *Ash'ari* scholars, criticised his philosophy. In his decisive Treatise, he argues that philosophy, which he defined as conclusions reached through reason and careful method, cannot contradict revelations in Islam because they are simply two different methods of arriving at the truth, and truth cannot contradict itself. He also claims that the *Quran* encourages Muslims to

study philosophy because studying and reflecting on nature improves one's understanding of God. He also distinguishes three types of discourses: rhetorical (persuasive), accessible to the masses, dialectical (debate-based), and demonstrative.

◆ *Nature of God*

Ibn Rushd also lays out his views on the existence and nature of the God in his treatise, 'The Exposition of the Methods of Proof Concerning the Beliefs of the Community'. Ibn Rushd supports the doctrine of divine unity (*tawhid*), claiming that God has seven divine attributes: knowledge, life, power, will, hearing, vision, and speech. He focuses on the characteristic of knowledge and contends that divine knowledge differs from human knowledge in that God knows the universe because God is its cause, whereas humans only know the universe through its effects.

◆ *Political philosophy*

Ibn Rushd's political philosophy is outlined in his Commentary on Plato's Republic. According to the author, a Pious Caliphate is a model republic where the Muslim *Imam*, Caliph, and state lawgiver is a philosopher-king who values knowledge, learning, truth, magnanimity, courage, steadfastness, eloquence, and the ability to "light quickly on the middle term." He recommends that the rulers and guardians of the model republic and virtuous city be trained in logic rather than mathematics. According to him, a ruler should have both wisdom and courage, which are necessary for governance and defense of the State. According to him the state can teach virtue through persuasion or coercion of its citizens. Persuasion is the more natural method, consisting of rhetorical, dialectical, and demonstrative methods; however, coercion may be required for those who are resistant to persuasion, such as state enemies.

◆ *Commentaries on Aristotle's work*

In addition to the commentaries on the works of Aristotle on philosophical and theological treatises, he also concerned himself with matters relating to Astronomy and Medicine. In his endeavor to reconcile his philosophy with the religion of Islam, he also distinguished different ways of understanding the *Quran* corresponding to different types of minds or to the different capacities of human minds. The mass of mankind is hardly able to conceive a reality transcending the level of the sensible or perceptible. Secondly there are minds which can grasp dialectical arguments leading to probable conclusions. Their requirements too are met by the *Quran*, when taken together with theology. Thirdly, minds which seek strict logical demonstrations and are capable of apprehending the truth in its natural essence. In his metaphysics he follows

Aristotle as faithfully as he could. The subject matter of metaphysics is being, which is the object of the intellect and intelligible. For him, as a Muslim, God is creator, drawing for the universe from non-existence to existence and uncovering it. He combines the recognition of empirical causal relations with the doctrine of the universal causality of God. His philosophical doctrines, the one which caused the most excitement in the academic world of western Christendom, was his interpretative development of Aristotle's account of the intellect in the third book of the 'De Anima'.

◆ *Book on medicine*

Ibn Rushd is regarded as the final and most influential Muslim philosopher, who inherited the tradition of Muslim philosophy in the west. He wrote more than 224 books on various subjects. His most important work is the medical encyclopedia known as *Al-Hawi fi al-Tibb*, known in Europe as *Liber Continens*. His books in medicine, philosophy and alchemy had greatly affected human civilisation, especially in Europe. Some authors considered him the greatest Arabic-Islamic physician and one of the most famous known to humanity. His influential commentaries and unique interpretations on Aristotle revived Western scholarly interest.

◆ *Epistemological influences*

Among Jewish thinkers, however, Ibn Rushd had a more positive impact. His thoughts on Aristotle and the relationship between philosophy and religion, particularly revelation, inspired a renewed interest in the interpretation of scripture and the Jewish religion. Key Jewish philosophers, such as Maimonides, Moses Narboni and Abraham ibn Ezra, became associated with Ibn Rushd in the West, even though they took Ibn Rushd's doctrines into novel directions. He became an example of how religions are dynamic and evolving traditions, often shaped by epistemological influences from other traditions.

#### 2.1.2.4 Omar Khayyam

Omar Khayyam was a Persian thinker known for his contributions to astronomy, philosophy and mathematics. One of the greatest works of Omar Khayyam was *Treatise on Demonstration of Problems of Algebra*. In this work he showed that a cubic equation can have more than one solution. He also showed how the intersections of conic sections such as parabolas and circles can be utilized to yield geometric solutions of cubic equations. Archimedes (Greek Mathematician) had actually started work in this field over a thousand years earlier, when he considered the specific

◆ *Treatise on Demonstration of Problems of Algebra*

problem of finding the ratio of the volume of one part of a sphere to another. Khayyam considered the problem in a more general, methodical way. Khayyam's solutions avoided negative coefficients and negative roots because negative numbers were not acknowledged in Islamic mathematics. Although Khayyam's achievement was magnificent, he was personally disappointed that he needed to utilise geometry to solve cubic equations – he had hoped to discover an algorithm using only algebra.

◆ *Established Mathematician*

*Treatise on Demonstration of Problems of Algebra* established Khayyam as a mathematician of the first rank, and his reputation spread quickly throughout Persia. Khayyam's work with cubics had convinced him that algebra and geometry were inextricably linked, and he cited 'Euclid's Elements' to support his claim. Khayyam's algebra was not based on the traditional system of letters and signs, but instead on words. Khayyam, while in Isfahan, demonstrated remarkable accuracy and precision in measuring the tropical year length.

◆ *Philosophical questions*

Omar Khayyam was well-grounded in Greek philosophy and a follower of Avicenna. He appears to have been a unique intellectual figure of his time. He is not a typical peripatetic philosopher, he was quite learned in Aristotelian philosophy and also composed several treatises in that tradition. The central questions which Khayyam discusses throughout his treatises can be categorised as

- ◆ The existence of God, his attribute and knowledge
- ◆ Gradation of being and the problem of multiplicity
- ◆ Existence of essence
- ◆ Theodicy
- ◆ Determinism and free will
- ◆ Subjects and predicate and attributes
- ◆ Eschatology

◆ *On God*

In the tradition of peripatetic, Khayyam refers to God as the necessary being. Khayyam's argument for the existence of God, what is traditionally referred to as the cosmological argument. Khayyam argues that the primary philosophical question is how to explain and distinguish between the multiplicity of existent beings, and three traditional theories in Islamic philosophy have been proposed to address this relationship.

The problem of evil which permeates all facets of Khayyam's thought is explored in both his 'Rubaiyats' and

◆ *Views on determinism*

his philosophical works. It is clear that Khayyam identifies evil with non-existence or absence. Khayyam's treatment of the problem of evil has become a prevalent theme. His views on necessity or determinism can be divided into three parts.

1. Universal cosmic determinism
2. Sociological-economic determinism
3. Ontological determinism

◆ *Ontological determinism*

Determinism, as discussed in Khayyam's philosophical thought, can only be understood within ontological frameworks. He argues that necessity is a command from God to attain happiness, while decision making is intentional and not deterministic. This view is rarely addressed by Muslim philosophers, who show little interest in social disparities. Khayyam advises helping one another in life to liberate from socio-economic determinism. Determinism represents a peripatetic and Neoplatonic perspective of Khayyamian thought, based on the idea that every existent being strives to attain a specific ontological status in the long chain of being and the scheme of emanation. Khayyam does not treat ontological determinism as a separate category, possibly because it is considered self-evident and a natural consequence of the theory of emanation. One challenging aspect of Khayyam's philosophical thought is his Aristotelian analysis of the relationship between the subject, predicate, and attributes, which he divides into essential and accidental parts. Isfaghani's article on Khayyam highlights 24 key principles that define Khayyam's ontological views, providing a comprehensive understanding of philosophical viewers.

## Summarised Overview

The Arabs, including Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, significantly contributed to the medieval world during the golden age of Islam. They established the *Bait -ul-Hikmah*, the house of wisdom, and translated books in Latin, Persian, and Greek. They developed the most advanced scientific method in West Asia, founded universities, introduced Arabic numerals, algebra, and made significant contributions to chemistry, medicine, surgery, optics, astronomy, and medicine. Ibn al-Haytham, known as the 'father of modern optics', started experiments in optics. Arabic scholarship flourished under the Umayyad dynasty, with Al Ma'mun's period being the zenith of rational and scientific learning.

Arab scholars made significant contributions to science, particularly in mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, and medicine. The Persian mathematician Ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi developed the concept of algorithm, while Arab mathematicians refined the number system and introduced decimal point notation. Albattari improved measurements of the sun and moon, translated Ptolemy's treatise into Arabic, and improved precision in earth's axis measurements. Arab chemists and alchemists founded modern chemistry, discovering new compounds and devising a more accurate calendar than the Gregorian calendar. Al Razi, a Persian physician, philosopher, and alchemist, lived during the Islamic golden age. He was a significant figure in medicine, writing on logic, astronomy, and grammar. He made significant contributions to neurology and neuroanatomy, including the classification of nerves and distinguishing smallpox from measles.

Avicenna was a prominent Arabian scientist and philosopher. He contributed significantly to the development of unani systems of medicine, also known as the Graeco-Arabic system of medicine. Avicenna is known for his contributions to mathematics, medicine, philosophy, and astronomy. His metaphysics, based on Aristotelian tradition and Neo-Platonic ideas, significantly influenced philosophy and theology. Ibn Rushd, an influential Islamic philosopher, physician, and judge, wrote on various subjects including philosophy, theology, medicine, astronomy, physics, and psychology. He outlined his views on the existence and nature of God, focusing on divine unity and the importance of knowledge, learning, and truth. Omar Khayyam, a prominent mathematician, established himself as a prominent figure in Persia with his *Treatise on Demonstration of Problems of Algebra*. Khayyam's philosophical questions included the existence of God, the progression of being, existence of essence, theodicy, determinism and free will, subjects and predicate and attributes, and eschatology.

## Assignments

1. Discuss the contributions of Al Razi to neurology and neuroanatomy.
2. Analyse and explain central questions raised by Omar Khayyam in his treatises.
3. Analyse the role of Avicenna in experimental medicine.
4. Describe the philosophy of Ibn Rushd.
5. Write briefly about the contributions of Arabia in the knowledge transmission during medieval period.

## Suggested Reading

1. Adamson, Peter, *Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, Cambridge university press, Cambridge, 2005.
2. Afnan, Soheil, *Avicenna: His Life and Works*, West port Conn, Greenwood press, 1980.
3. Ali, Muhammad, Khaldi, (Ed.), *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writing*, Cambridge university press, New York, 2005.
4. John, L. Esposito, and Emad El-Din Shahin, *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics*, OUP, USA, 2016.
5. Lassner, Jacob and Michel Booner, *Islam in the Middle Ages : The Origins and Shaping of Classical Islamic Civilizations*, Santa Barbara: Calif praeger, ABC-CLIO, 2010.

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1. El, Tayeb, Hibri, *Reinterpreting islamic historiography: Harun al- Rashid and the narrative of the Abbasid Caliphate*, Cambridge University press, New Delhi, 1999.
2. George N Atiyeh, *Al - Kindi :The philosopher of Arabs*, Kitab Bhavan, New Delhi, 1994.
3. Mehdi Aminrazavi, *The wine of wisdom: the life, poetry and philosophy of Omar Khayyam*, One World Publications, 2005.
4. Morewedge, Parviz, *Metaphysics of Avicenna*, Cambridge University press, New York,1973.

## Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



## Chinese Legacies

### Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful conclusion of this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ discuss the contributions during the Song Dynasty
- ◆ explain the important inventions of China
- ◆ analyse the impact of the invention of gunpowder and compass on the world

### Background

The Song dynasty marked China's second great "medieval" period. Despite capturing much of the Tang's glory, the Song dynasty suffered a blow in 1127 CE when the Jurchen steppe nomads took the Chinese capital, Kaifeng and established the capital at Hangzhou. Despite this, the Song Dynasty achieved incredible feats in science and technology. The Chinese considered the Song period as great as the Tang, and international trade and exchange of ideas continued to flourish, primarily through expanding networks of southern sea ports. In this unit we discussed the contributions of China to the world in the field of science and technology, especially gunpowder, printing, paper money and compass.

### Keywords

Tang Dynasty, Song Dynasty, Gun Powder, Compass, Printing, Paper Money



## Discussion

### ◆ *Nature of feudal society*

With the fall of the Tang Dynasty in 907 CE, there began a period of confusion and anarchy in China which lasted till 961 CE when under the Song Dynasty some degree of political unity was restored. The Song period of Chinese history was very remarkable for its brilliant achievements in the arts of peace, which shows that political weakness did not necessarily mean cultural decay. The Song Dynasty had to face peculiar difficulties throughout its period and it is all the more remarkable that it should have been of the same originality as that of the Tang. In the field of literature the period was undoubtedly rich in talents. It may not have been of the same originality as that of the Tang, but the lack was more than made up by the quality of its verse and prose; its poetry was musical and refined. During the Song dynasty, significant advancements were made in science and technology.

### 2.2.1 Gunpowder, Printing, Paper Money and Compass

#### 2.2.1.1 Gunpowder

### ◆ *Invention of Firearms*

Black powder, an explosive mixture of saltpeter, sulphur, and charcoal, is believed to have been an accidental discovery by alchemists during the Tang dynasty. Daoist scholars pursued chemical science, leading to the production of important compounds and chemicals like gunpowder. The earliest written record of gunpowder is the book written by Sun Simiao. During the Song dynasty, gunpowder technology was refined for military purposes, leading to the invention of various firearms. By 1000 CE, bombs and grenades were available to Song armies. Tang Fu, a Chinese military engineer, who designed and manufactured gunpowder arrows, which were donated to the emperor. In 1132 CE, a fire lance was introduced with gunpowder in a bamboo tube, projecting flames on enemies. In 1259 CE, a fire-spitting lance was enhanced with bullets. At the end of the dynasty, a primitive rocket weapon was invented using gunpowder to propel an arrow.

During the Song Dynasty, firearm weapons were manufactured in large quantities. Different organisations employed over 40,000 workers across eleven large workshops. On a daily basis, they produced 7,000 gunpowder arrows, 10,000 crossbow arrows, 3,000 barbed gunpowder packages,

◆ *Manufacturing of Gunpowder*

and 20,000 ordinary gunpowder packages. During the Tang dynasty, India and Iran were introduced to saltpeter, an essential ingredient in gunpowder production. During the Song Dynasty, gunpowder reached India and Iran. In 1255 CE, gunpowder was introduced to the Arab world and eventually spread to Europe via Spain. The Mongolian expeditionary forces introduced firearms into Central Asia, Middle East, and Europe during the Song and Yuan dynasties. Europeans learned gunpowder and firearms making techniques from the Arabs and began manufacturing their own guns in the fourteenth century.

### 2.2.1.2 Printing

◆ *Introduction of Woodblock Printing*

The Tang and Song dynasties made significant global innovations, including woodblock printing and movable type printing, which enabled widespread publishing of various texts and knowledge dissemination. Woodblock printing first appeared in China around 600 CE, likely inspired by bronze or stone seals and inked rubbings of inscribed texts. The process for woodblock printing on paper was perfected by the end of the Tang dynasty. This led to the development of a sophisticated paper industry with various specialised papers for various purposes.

◆ *Method of Woodblock printing*

Woodblock printing, a method of printing by carving wooden blocks of date or pear trees. Text was written on the paper, glued face-down to the block, and engraved with a knife. The block was then inked, covered with paper, and gently brushed over the engraved characters. Initially used for books on agriculture and medicine, it expanded to calendars, calligraphy, and auspicious charms. In 762 CE, the first commercially printed books were sold in Chang'an markets, and by 782 CE, printed papers were available as receipts for commercial transactions and tax payments.

◆ *Limitation of Woodblock Printing*

Woodblock printing was crucial in China for commercial transactions, but it was time-consuming. For instance, in 971 CE, monk Zhang Tuxin took twelve years to print the *Tripitaka*, a collection of Buddhist scriptures, using woodblocks. This led to the invention of moveable-type printing during the Song dynasty, overcoming the limitations of woodblock printing.

The invention of movable type printing, achieved around 1040 CE, was the most significant advance. This invention spread knowledge, with many books still being prized as technological marvels. Between 1041 CE and 1048 CE, Bi

◆ *Invention of Moveable Type Printing*

Sheng, a skilled woodblock printer, invented moveable-type printing. Shen Kuo, a scientist of the Song dynasty described the invention of moveable type in his book '*Dream Pool Essays*'. Bi Sheng created clay types for each linguistic character and fired them for hardness. A resin, wax, and paper ash mixture was placed on an iron box to hold the typeface with characters facing up. The wax mixture was heated, and the typeface was pressed down with a wood board to ensure levelness. The clay types were then inked, ready for printing like a woodblock.

◆ *Benefit of moveable printing*

The moveable-type printing process significantly reduced printing time from days to hours in China, but was not as efficient as it would be in Western Europe four hundred years later. Even after the invention of moveable type printing, woodblock type printing remained popular in China for centuries. The diffusion of Tang and Song printing technology throughout East Asia, the Middle East, and Western Europe significantly impacted world history.

### 2.2.1.3 Paper Money

◆ *Jiaozi as Paper money*

China has a long tradition of using metal, or paper as exchange media. The first paper money, *jiaozi*, appeared around 1010 CE during the Northern Song dynasty. Issued by private merchants in Sichuan province, it was converted to iron coins. After several suspensions, the Chinese government took over issuing *jiaozi* every three years, with each batch circulating for three years.

◆ *Circulation of paper money*

In 1105 CE, the Northern Song government introduced *Qianyin*, a paper money pegged to copper, iron, and state-monopolised commodities. It expanded from Sichuan to neighboring provinces. After the Song's retreat to South China in 1127 CE, the Southern Song regime issued *Guanzi* and *Huizi*, which were initially convertible to copper or iron coins but over-issued turned them into fiat money. The circulation of *Jiaozi*, *Qianyin*, and *Guanzi* remained regional, unlike the Yuan period when paper money circulated widely.

◆ *Circulation of money in North China*

During the Song dynasty, North China's frontier rulers Liao, Xixia, and Jin issued their own currencies, including copper and iron coins, paper money, and silver ingots. Although silver was not widely circulated, it became used in tax payments and market transactions. These monies were often over-issued or heavily debased to government expenditure, often due to warfare. The Mongols' victory over Jin and control of North China improved the situation.

◆ *Zhongtong Chao*

In 1234 CE, the Mongols defeated the Jin and conquered Northern China. Kublai Khan, the emperor of the Mongol Empire, issued the *Zhongtong chao*, pegged to silver, to replace circulating notes. This paper money economy replaced a chaotic system that mixed copper coins, iron coins, and silver ingots.

◆ *Expansion Under Kublai Khan*

In 1271 CE, Kublai Khan established Mongol dominance over Mongolia, China, and Korea, founding the Yuan Empire. The *Zhongtongchao*, the sole legal tender, was declared, and all other metallic currencies were abolished. The *Zhongtongchao* was denominated in 'wen' or 'guan', both units of copper coins. There were 10 denominations, ranging from 10 wen to 2 guan, with *Zhongtong Chao* 2 guan equal to 1 liang of silver. As the Yuan's territory expanded, the government increased the issue of *Zhongtong Chao* to withdraw the Southern Song's *Huizi*. Kublai Khan also started several wars to conquer Southeast Asia and Japan, leading to increased government expenditure on military campaigns and public constructions. The prudent monetary policy initially implemented by Kublai Khan gradually eased after 1271 CE, but prices grew considerably over the following years.

◆ *Different versions of paper money*

In 1287 CE, the Yuan government issued the *Zhiyuanchao* to address the depreciation of the *Zhongtongchao*. The *Zhiyuanchao* was five times of the old money's value and could be exchanged for silver at 1 liang of silver to 2 guan *Zhiyuanchao*. This led to an 80% discount on the *Zhongtong Chao*. The third paper money, the *Zhiyuachao*, was issued by Külüg in 1310 CE, but was abandoned after his sudden death. In 1311 CE, Ayurbarwada Khan restored the first and second paper money, *Zhongtongchao* and *Zhiyuanchao*, for the next 40 years. In 1352 CE, Toghon Temür issued the fourth and last version of Yuan's paper money, the *Zhizhengchao*.

◆ *Rejection of Paper Money*

With the fall of the empire, the new currency depreciated heavily. After 1356 CE, paper money was rejected by the people and drove out of circulation. When the Yuan government collapsed in 1368 CE, paper money was scrapped, and barter was observed in all prefectures.

◆ *Origin and development of Compass*

The earliest records of a spoon-shaped Compass, known as a "South-pointer," date back to the Han Dynasty (2nd century BCE to 2nd century CE). The Chinese Compass revolutionised navigation and influenced global maritime exploration. The Chinese also discovered the magnetic



properties of lodestones, magnetite-based stones, which attract iron objects and align with the Earth's magnetic field. The Chinese Compass can be traced back to the Warring States period (475-221 BCE), where the Chinese discovered these magnets.

◆ *South pointer*

The earliest Chinese literature reference to magnetism is in the writings of Wang Xu (4th Century BCE), who observed that lodestone attracts iron. The people of Zheng province used a "south-pointer" to know their position, possibly a reference to the industrious ancient Chinese scholars and inventors who realised the magnetised mineral's potential. Ancient Chinese texts, including *Lunheng*, contain numerous references of this mineral, stating that when a south-pointing spoon is thrown upon the ground, it comes to rest pointing at the south. The "spoon" refers to the ladle shape used to form lodestone, with a flat base and a short handle pointing towards the south. This earliest compass was called "south-governor" or "South Pointing Fish" in Ancient China.

◆ *Magnetic compass*

Shen Kuo, a Chinese polymath who lived during the Song Dynasty, is often credited with the development of the magnetic compass as a navigational aid, contributing significantly to fields such as astronomy, geology, engineering, mathematics, and navigation. Shen Kuo, in his influential work *Dream Pool Essays* (1088 CE), was the first to describe the magnetic needle compass for navigation. He discovered the concept of true north, based on magnetic declination towards the north pole, and experimented with suspended magnetic needles. This breakthrough marked a significant milestone in humanity's navigation journey.

◆ *Compass for navigational aid*

Shen Kuo refined the "south-pointing spoon" compass, recognising its potential for navigational purposes. He observed magnetism's properties and experimented with lodestone, finding that suspending it on silk or floating it in water allowed it to rotate freely and align with the Earth's magnetic field. This refined the compass into a fully functional navigational aid. Building on these findings, Shen Kuo developed an improved compass with a magnetised needle mounted on a pivot. This needle could rotate freely and consistently point to magnetic north. The compass was allowing sailors to plot their course precisely.

Shen Kuo's compass revolutionised Chinese navigation by providing a reliable method for determining cardinal directions. It was not only used in maritime navigation

◆ *Influence of Chinese Compass*

but also in surveying, cartography, and military strategies. Kuo's groundbreaking ideas on land surveying improved accuracy in mapping and measurement, making the compass a significant advancement in Chinese navigation. Shen Kuo's groundbreaking work significantly influenced Chinese scientific and technological advancements, laying the groundwork for future navigation advancements. His refinement of the Chinese compass, which shaped global exploration and geography, influenced generations of scholars and navigators in China and beyond.

◆ *Voyages of Zheng He*

In the 15th century, Chinese Admiral Zheng He led the "Treasure Voyages," a series of naval expeditions that reached Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. The compass was crucial in guiding these fleets, which were large "treasure ships" over 400 feet long. These voyages established China as a maritime superpower, facilitating the exchange of goods, knowledge, and culture, and bringing Asia and Europe together.

◆ *Revolutions in navigation*

The Chinese compass, along with other navigational advancements, was introduced to Europe in the 13th century and spread to the Arab world and Mediterranean civilisations. This knowledge revolutionised European navigation, leading to the 'Age of Discovery'. European explorers like Christopher Columbus and Ferdinand Magellan relied heavily on the compass during their voyages, leading to the exploration and colonisation of new continents.

◆ *Influence on Muslim world*

The Muslim medieval world also benefited greatly from the Chinese compass. Muslim scholars and navigators recognised its significance and adapted it to suit their needs. Muslim navigators and explorers, such as Ahmad ibn Mājid, utilised the Chinese compass extensively in their maritime journeys, relying on its magnetic properties to determine their direction accurately. Muslim scholars also incorporated compass usage into navigation manuals and treatises, providing detailed instructions on how to use the compass effectively for navigation. This led to increased confidence and precision in long-distance sea voyages, connecting distant regions and contributing to the growth of trade and cultural exchange.

## Summarised Overview

The fall of the Tang Dynasty in 907 CE led to confusion and anarchy in China until the Song Dynasty restored political unity in 961 CE. The Song period was notable for its peace-making achievements and the improvement of science and technology, including hydraulic engineering, chemical science, and biology. Black powder, a mixture of saltpeter, sulphur, and charcoal, was discovered by alchemists during the Tang dynasty. Daoist scholars refined gunpowder technology for military purposes, leading to the invention of firearms. Gunpowder reached India, Iran, and eventually Europe, with Europeans learning from Arabs. The Tang and Song dynasties introduced significant global innovations, including woodblock printing and movable type printing, which enabled widespread publishing of texts and knowledge dissemination. Woodblock printing, first introduced in China around 600 CE, expanded to calendars, calligraphy, and auspicious charms. The invention of moveable-type printing during the Song dynasty surpassed the limitations of woodblock printing, reducing printing time but not as efficiently as it would be in Western Europe.

China has a long history of using metal or paper as exchange media. The first paper money, *jiaozi*, appeared in 1010 CE during the Northern Song dynasty. The Chinese government introduced *Qianyin* in 1105 CE, which was pegged to copper, iron, and state-monopolised commodities. *Guanz and Huizi* were issued in 1127 CE, initially convertible to copper or iron coins but over-issued. The Mongols' victory over Jin in 1234 CE led to the *Zhongtong chao*, pegged to silver, replacing circulating notes, transforming China's paper money economy. In 1271 CE, Kublai Khan established the Yuan Empire, introducing the *Zhongtongchao* as the sole legal tender. The Yuan government issued various paper money, including the *Zhiyuanchao*, *Zhiyuachao*, and *Zhizhengchao*. However, the new currency depreciated heavily after the empire's collapse, leading to widespread bartering.

The Chinese Compass, a spoon-shaped navigational aid, dates back to the Han Dynasty and was influenced by the discovery of magnetism in lodestones. The earliest compass was called "south-governor" or "South Pointing Fish" in Ancient China. Shen Kuo developed the magnetic needle compass, a significant advancement in navigation. His work improved accuracy in mapping and measurement, influencing future navigation advancements and global exploration. Chinese Admiral Zheng He's "Treasure Voyages" established China as a maritime superpower, facilitating trade and cultural exchange. The Chinese compass, introduced to Europe in the 13th century, revolutionised European navigation, leading to the 'Age of Discovery.'

## Assignments

1. Discuss the factors that contributed to technological development of Medieval China.
2. Analyse how refinement of the Chinese compass influenced generations of scholars and navigators in China.
3. Examine the development of printing and paper money in China in the medieval period.
4. Evaluate the global impact of the Chinese invention of gunpowder and the compass.

## Suggested Reading

1. Daniel, Ari, "Levine, Court and Country: Discourses of Socio-Political Collaboration in Northern and Southern Song China", *The Medieval History Journal*, Vol.19, Issue.2, 2016.
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2. Needham, Joseph, *Science and Civilisation in China*, CUP, 1954.
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## European Legacies

### Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful conclusion of this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ describe the significance of Charlemagne in European history
- ◆ explain the diplomatic relations between Charlemagne and Harun al Rashid
- ◆ discuss importance of the Carolingian Renaissance
- ◆ examine the contributions of the universities in medieval Europe

### Background

The Western Roman empire came to an end due to the continuous invasions of the Germanic tribes. The territories of the Roman empire were captured by different nomadic tribes. The most important among them was Franks. The emperor, Charlemagne of the Carolingian dynasty saved Pope III, the spiritual head of the catholic church from the attack of the Lombards. As a token of gratitude, the Pope crowned him as the Holy Roman Emperor. As a brilliant ruler and military commander Charlemagne, who was also responsible for socio- economic, political and artistic reforms in the society. This unit explains Charlemagne, the Carolingian emperor, and his reforms, which had a significant impact on the Medieval world. This unit also discusses medieval universities and their impact on knowledge dissemination.

### Keywords

Charlemagne, Carolingian Renaissance, Count, Pope, Abbasid Caliphate, Medieval Universities



# Discussion

## 2.3.1 Charlemagne and Harun al Rashid

### 2.3.1.1 Charlemagne

#### ◆ *Establishment of Carolingian dynasty*

The Franks, led by a succession of powerful kings, established the first great empire of the Middle Ages, with the Carolingians being the most important dynasty, and Charlemagne as the central figure. Charlemagne, the first great European emperor after Rome's fall and a prominent figure with military conquests. He had strong diplomatic relations with the Roman Catholic Church and Baghdad caliphs. He united most of central and western Europe for the first time since the fall of the Roman Empire. His concept of Divine right of kings was very relevant.

#### ◆ *Military expeditions*

Charlemagne, a skilled warlord, expanded the Frontiers of the Frankish Empire through incremental warfare, focusing on specific goals and acquiring only the targeted areas, rather than sudden and large-scale annexations. In 778 CE, he led an expedition against Spain and the expedition proved unsuccessful. While retreating across the Pyrenees, the army's baggage train was ambushed and massacred by local Basque tribes, resulting in the expedition's failure. 'The Song of Roland,' one of the first great works of medieval literature, that portrayed his expedition against Muslims in Spain. During the Carolingian era, heavily armored horsemen emerged as the dominant force over infantry.

#### ◆ *Administration*

Charlemagne's administration foreshadowed elements of feudalism. The system of government was primarily based on hereditary monarchy, with the king holding absolute power. In practice, his empire included 300 administrative districts. Each was governed by a Count, a royal official, who represented royal authority in territorial units known as counties (pagi). Their responsibilities included administering justice, mobilising troops, collecting taxes, and maintaining peace. Charlemagne successfully maintained his Counts' loyalty through a system of personal envoys, known as 'missi dominici', or "messengers of the lord king," who circulated around his empire to monitor and address their concerns, thereby fostering a strong bond between the Counts and Charlemagne.

Charlemagne, a devout Christian, maintained a strong relationship with the Pope and the religious establishment.



◆ *Relationship with the Pope*

He built and restored numerous churches and ecclesiastical buildings, and encouraged his subjects to contribute a portion of their income to the Church. Charlemagne actively supported the Pope during an internal dispute in Rome. On Christmas Day of 800 CE, Pope Leo III personally crowned Charlemagne and bestowed the title “Charles Augustus, Emperor of the Romans” as a form of retaliation.

◆ *Most influential leader*

The act of a Christian Pope, who crowned a barbarian king and granted him a Roman title, bringing together the three strands of Roman history, demonstrates the powerful image of the Roman Empire on the European political landscape. Charlemagne became the most influential leader in Western Europe, receiving representatives and gifts from other kings. Even the Caliph of Baghdad, a more powerful ruler, sent gifts to acknowledge his status.

### 2.3.1.2 Harun al Rashid

◆ *Harun al Rashid*

At the peak of the Abbasid Caliphate’s geographical and political power, it was presided over by the Caliph Harun al Rashid, the fifth Abbasid Caliphate, one of the most famous of all Caliphs, resided in Baghdad. His reign was marked by political stability, economic prosperity and cultural harmony. In addition to that, he also expanded the Caliph’s territories, suppressing the rebellions in Egypt and other parts of the empire and strengthening the central government.

◆ *Diplomatic contact*

The Caliph Harun al Rashid was an exact contemporary of the most celebrated monarch, the Holy Roman Emperor and King of the Franks, Charlemagne, who resided in the city of Aachen, in the far west of modern-day Germany. The two monarchs were in diplomatic contact and exchanged delegations and gifts. Harun al-Rashid sent a delegation from Baghdad to the court of Charlemagne in Aachen along with the gift of a water clock.

◆ *Golden Age*

During this period the Abbasid Caliphate reached the height of its wealth and power and also began to experience the symptoms and stirrings of provincial autonomy. The Caliphate reached “the golden age” as Baghdad had become the wealthiest city in the world. He was also tutored in arts of politics and culture by Yahya al-Barmaki. The Caliphate was in good hands when Harun al Rashid came to power and appointed Yahya the Barmakid as his *Wazir*. Even though the territories were well administered, and the far western provinces began to disintegrate from the center, this development invited correspondence and exchanges of gifts

and ambassadors between Harun and Charlemagne to forge a strategy against their common enemies, the Umayyads and the Byzantines.

◆ *Status of women*

During Harun al-Rashid's period, Baghdad became a major cosmopolitan center in attracting poets, literates, musicians, singers and other entertainers, physicians, and translators. Harun's court was adorned with personalities such as the poet Abu Nuwas and the musician Ziryab. It is said that Ziryab perfected the *Oud*, the pear-shaped wooden instrument with six double strings, at the court of Harun. The stories found in 'The Thousand and One Nights', although composed and recorded centuries later, were loosely based on this vibrant period of Abbasid history. The social position of the women was also much better than that of any other Caliph's of the Abbasid period. Women seemed to have had a great deal of influence on Harun's court as well as the culture of the day. Harun's mother al-Khayzuran was instrumental in ensuring his succession to the power. Harun's wife Zubayda became a well known figure of public activities and public-works projects, such as the construction of a freshwater aqueduct to supply Makkah from twenty-five miles away.

◆ *Exchange of gifts as part of diplomacy*

The exchange of gifts was a vital part of medieval diplomacy, but it was not simply an exercise in courtesy and diplomatic necessities. The water clock, a complex piece of precision engineering, conveyed to Charlemagne an idea of the richness of the civilisation from where Harun al-Rashid came. It was a powerful statement that science in the Muslim world, Baghdad, was at the cutting-edge of innovations. Charlemagne, surrounded by scholars, would have recognised the significance of this message. Charlemagne was a brilliant military leader, diplomat, and statesman, expanding his empire and earning the friendship of the Abbasid Caliphate.

### 2.3.2 Carolingian Renaissance

◆ *Renaissance in literature*

The Carolingian Renaissance saw the flourishing of culture, literature, architecture, sculpture, and study in various fields. Charlemagne's vast conquest helped him to understand the learnings and cultures of other countries, which encouraged the provision of monastic schools. The Carolingian Renaissance began in the early eighth century with the rapprochement between the Franks and the papacy. Charlemagne secured a group of gifted academic men



to pursue an education policy, fostering the Carolingian Renaissance through literature. These men were passionate about learning, mutual intercourse, and knowledge, engaging in writing and discussions freely.

◆ *Commitment to Christianity*

Charlemagne was deeply committed to Christianity. For Charlemagne, Christianity was a source of intense public and social concern. The Christian religion was considered a significant force in his life, both individually and socially. Charlemagne made significant efforts to revive learning by mandating that every Bishop establish a school in their Cathedral. Charlemagne's Academy helped to revive the culture by returning to Christian and classical traditions. The academy's mission was to transform Charlemagne's court into "an Athens even more beautiful than the ancient one, since it was ennobled by the teachings of Christ." Charlemagne's motto was *Renovatio Romani Imperii* ("Restoration of the Roman Empire").

◆ *Intellectual activities*

Monastic schools were highly prestigious and influential from the eighth to eleventh centuries (800 CE-1050 CE), eventually transforming into universities for advanced studies, experimentation, and research. By 800 CE, Charlemagne ruled western territories of the old Roman Empire, except Africa, South Italy, Britain, and most of Spain. He reconstituted the political unity of the Western Roman Empire by widening the area of Christianity. The intellectual activity of the Carolingians produced a layer of European culture, emphasising the importance of learning for government and state prestige. Clergy wrote letters, treatises, and admonitions to kings, encouraging, exhorting, or chastising them, with evidence suggesting some kings took these pieces of advice seriously. Knowledge and piety were evident in Armagh, Iona, Jarrow, and York. Scholars in these islands had a strong knowledge of Latin and Hebrew, with Northumbria showing particular care for letters due to Roman and Irish influences.

◆ *Role of Alcuin in Palatine School*

Charlemagne's spiritual counselor, Alcuin, an Anglo-Latin poet, educator, and clerk, led the Palatine School established by Charlemagne at Aachen, introducing Anglo-Saxon humanism to western Europe. He was an important scholar in the Carolingian Renaissance, made significant reforms in Roman Catholic liturgy, and left over 300 Latin letters, providing valuable historical information. Alcuin spent his early years in Yorkshire, where he was a headmaster of the renowned Cathedral School of York. In 781 CE, he

met Charlemagne in Italy and accepted his invitation to Aachen, where he taught the leading Irish, English, and Italian scholars. The School became a hub for exchange of knowledge. Alcuin introduced English learning methods, systematised the curriculum, and encouraged the study of liberal arts for better understanding of spiritual doctrine.

◆ *Leading figure in the growth of Catholicism*

In 796 CE, he became abbot of the Abbey of St. Martin at Tours, where he encouraged the work of his monks on the Carolingian minuscule script, the ancestor of modern Roman typefaces. Alcuin, a prominent figure in the development of Roman Catholicism in western Europe, was primarily credited with revising the liturgy of the Frankish Church. He introduced the Irish Northumbrian custom of singing the creed, arranged votive masses, reviewed the 'Latin Vulgate' (Latin version of Bible), and wrote works on education, theology, and philosophy. Despite his leadership in church and state, Alcuin remained a deacon throughout the Middle Ages.

◆ *John Scottus Eriugena*

John Scottus Eriugena, an Irish philosopher, well versed in the liberal arts with good knowledge of Greek, brought unmatched erudition to the courts of Charlemagne. At the request of the emperor, he produced translations of the writings of Dionysius. In fact Eriugena's encyclopedic work '*De Divisione Nature*' influenced his contemporaries. Both because of this work and because of a work on the issue of free will and predestination, he has been subjected to ecclesiastical censure.

◆ *Revival of classical learning*

The Carolingian Renaissance was devoted to the revival of the classical learning and culture that occurred during the late eighth and ninth centuries. The Carolingian Renaissance centered around the revival of classical learning. The installation of Charlemagne to the Roman empire marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the world. The Carolingian Renaissance saved many of the ancient works from destruction and passed them down to posterity in its beautiful minuscule script. The Carolingian Renaissance became unique with its treatment of the human figure, their use of niello and chip carving technique.

The Carolingian Renaissance, a period of educational revival under Charlemagne and his successors, is widely regarded as the revival of western culture. During this period Frankish rulers supported the religious manuscripts and monastic studies and also attempted to standardise the



◆ *Educational development*

monastic practice and rules of life and also emphasised high moral educational standardisation for clergy. During the renaissance period education was attainable, it concentrated on liberal arts that is quadrivium and trivium, the first section emphasised on logic, grammar and rhetoric, the second one concentrated on arithmetic, astronomy, geometry and music.

◆ *Economic system*

Charlemagne had a significant role in determining the immediate economic future of Europe. The emperor abolished the monetary system based on gold and introduced a new system which was based upon pounds of silver. In earlier times he admitted the Jews on money lending but later money lending on interest was considered as sin according to Church law. In addition to that he also introduced certain other economic reforms such as direct control of prices and levies on certain goods and commodities.

◆ *Reform of Church*

Unlike his predecessors Charlemagne took interest in the reform movements of the church. His focus was mainly upon the strengthening of the church's power structure, advancing the skill and moral quality of the clergy, and improving the basic tenets of faith and morality. Then his authority extended over the church and the state. It maintained discipline among the clerics and controlled the ecclesiastical property and defined orthodox discipline. Charlemagne facilitated cultural enrichment and study of Classics, shaping scholasticism and enabling transformation of schools into universities through scholarship and promoting cultural enrichment.

◆ *Reason for the rise of Universities*

### **2.3.3 Medieval Universities**

In the twelfth century, Western Europe experienced significant social and intellectual changes, leading to a significant expansion of learned professions. During the medieval period, physicians were mostly Spanish Jews who studied under Arabian masters and served princes, bishops, and other wealthy patrons. Ordinary people relied on priests and monks for medical aid, and monkish medicine consisted of incantations and old wives' nostrums. As Arabian medicine gained knowledge, rich burghers demanded the services of professionals, who were skilled in new knowledge, leading to the creation of a caste of physicians. Old monastic and cathedral schools were not equipped to offer instructions in these new fields, leading to the rise of new universities.

◆ *Establishment of first University*

The revolutionary change in education and learning occurred during the time of Charlemagne. Later it was used as a society for the academicians. He realized the need and importance of education for the flourishing of his empire. He started the palace schools where he introduced curriculum, which later developed into official schools. However it is in the 12<sup>th</sup> century that we find a mushroom growth of universities in different parts of Europe. Italy is regarded as the 'home of universities' since a large number of universities flourished in the different parts of the Italian peninsula. There was no unanimity among scholars regarding the foundation of the first university. Salerno in southern Italy is considered by some as the first medieval university in the world, while certain others regard Bologna to be the earliest. Universities were the meeting centers of Greek, Arabic, Persian and Latin and Jewish learning.

◆ *University of Salerno*

University of Salerno was located in Italy, recognised as a medical school. Students from all over Europe were lured to it. It also produced extensive medical literature. It also provided practical and theoretical instruction to the learners. University of Salerno got much popularity by the success of physicians and surgeons in the treatment and cures of patients. In 1231CE the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II granted permission to operate it.

◆ *University of Bologna*

University of Bologna, Italy was founded in the eleventh century, almost concurrently with the establishment of El Azhar University in Cairo. University of Bologna was a prominent university, which influenced other institutions of the world. It also attracted students from all over the world, even from the wealthy sections of the society. Many new universities were soon established to offer higher learning to the middle class. Bologna grew to become a highly regarded canon and civil law school. The masters at Bologna organised into groups known as 'collegia', for the purpose of awarding degrees.

In the 12th century, English scholars like Adelard of Bath and John of Salisbury studied in France, achieving high distinction. In the late twelfth century, a group of these scholars returned to England and began lecturing at Oxford. Later, some Oxford scholars seceded and settled in Cambridge. Oxford and Cambridge were chosen as university towns due to their importance in education and ecclesiastical matters. Oxford University is the world's oldest English-speaking university. Although the exact date of its

◆ *University of Oxford and Cambridge*

origin is unknown, Oxford, which was not ruled by monastic institutions or the Catholic Church, was acknowledged as a hub of higher learning by 1170 CE. Oxford university was established after the style of the University of Paris. Theology, law, medicine, and the liberal arts were the first topics taught. Oxford is located next to the River Thames, 50 miles from London. By the mid-13th century, it had become second only to Paris University. The students at this university had some disagreements with the residents of Oxford. Some academics fled northeast to Cambridge. They founded a new university, Cambridge, in 1233CE.

◆ *Paris and other universities*

University of Paris was founded in 1257 CE which was sanctioned by Robert de Curzon, the papal legate. University of Paris, the most famous early European university, taught theology and philosophy. Mountpelier, a flourishing medical school, became a university early in the thirteenth century. The University of Toulouse was founded by papal authority in 1229 CE. In Spain the University of Salamanca was founded by royal authority in 1218 CE and is considered the oldest university in the Hispanic world. In the thirteenth century the University of Paris was undoubtedly the foremost university in the field of theology and speculative field of philosophy. The duration of each course was much longer than usual and students were admitted early.

◆ *Subjects of learning*

Some of the universities offered advanced topics including theology, law, medicine and philosophy. Many of the universities also provided practical sessions to the people, as per public requirement. The main areas of courses are relating to trivium, quadrivium, grammar, rhetoric, logic, astronomy, geography, and music. The higher education was mainly concentrated on the church and church related subjects, and the majority of the students were clergy.

◆ *Translation of Meno and Phaedo*

In the second half of the twelfth century and during the thirteenth century; many works were translated into Latin. The Christian theologians and philosophers of the Medieval period translated Greek writings into Latin. In the twelfth century James of Venice translated works of Aristotle directly from the Greek. In Sicily, Henricus Aristippus of Catania, translated the 'Meno and Phaedo' of Plato. This period also witnesses the translation of 'Euclid' and writings of Ptolemy.

In Spain a flourishing school of translators was established at Toledo by Archbishop Raymond. Gerard of Cremona, Dominic Gundisalvi and later Michael Scot were famous

◆ *Translation of Greek works*

translators of this period. The philosophical works written by Islamic and Jewish thinkers, such as Avicenna, Solomon Ibn Gabirol Avicbron, were translated into Latin, and also in Arabic. Aristotle's metaphysics was translated to Spanish from Greek. About 1240 CE Robert Grosseteste undertook the task of translating the Greek text 'Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs' into Latin.

## Summarised Overview

After the fall of the Roman Empire, Western Europe lacked an emperor with centralised administration for the next three centuries. Charlemagne united western and central Europe in the early middle ages, establishing the Carolingian empire. He became the first recognised emperor in western Europe, marking the beginning of the Carolingian renaissance, a period of cultural and intellectual activity within the western church.

Charlemagne, a ruler of the Carolingian Renaissance, was deeply committed to Christianity and sought to revive learning through monastic schools. Charlemagne's spiritual counselor, Alcuin, introduced Anglo-Saxon humanism to western Europe and made significant reforms in Roman Catholic liturgy. John Scottus Eriugena, an Irish scholar with good knowledge of Greek, brought erudition to the courts of Charles the Bald. The Carolingian Renaissance, a period of educational revival under Charlemagne, focused on the revival of classical learning and culture in the late eighth and ninth centuries. It emphasised logic, grammar, rhetoric, arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, music, and reading and learning for knowledge acquisition.

The Abbasid Caliphate, under Caliph Harun-al-Rashid, experienced political stability, economic prosperity, and cultural harmony during his reign. He expanded the Caliph's territories, suppressed rebellions in Egypt, and strengthened the central government. Harun-al-Rahid was a contemporary of Charlemagne, the Holy Roman Emperor and King of the Franks. The Caliphate reached its "golden age" with Baghdad becoming the world's wealthiest city. The Caliphate became a major cosmopolitan center, attracting poets, literates, musicians, singers, physicians, and translators. Women had a significant influence on Harun's court and culture.

In the 12th century, western Europe experienced significant social and intellectual changes, leading to the expansion of learned professions. The revolutionary change on education and learning came with the time of Charlemagne, who started the palace schools and introduced curriculum, which later developed into official schools. The main areas of higher education centered around the church and related subjects, with the majority of students being clergy. Salerno and Bologna are considered the first medieval universities. Universities were centers of learning



in Greek, Arabic, Persian, Latin, and Jewish languages. The University of Paris, the most famous early European university, taught theology and philosophy. Cambridge and Oxford, University of Toulouse, University of Salamanca were important universities offered advanced courses in theology, law, medicine, and philosophy, as well as practical courses.

## Assignments

1. Discuss the significance of the relationship between Charlemagne and Harun al Rashid.
2. Analyse the developments in various fields of culture, architecture literature and arts during the Carolingian Renaissance.
3. Examine the rise and development of Medieval Universities.

## Suggested Readings

1. Afnan, Soheil, *Avicenna: His Life and Works*, West port Conn, Greenwood press, 1980.
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1. Ali, Muhammad, Khaldi, (Ed.), *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writing*,
2. Cambridge University Press, New York, 2005.
3. Boissonnade, P, *Life and work in medieval Europe: The Evolution of Medieval Economy from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Century*, Harper and Row publications, New York, 1964.
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5. H. A. L. Fisher, *A History of Europe*, Omsons, New Delhi, 1997.



6. Rice, David, Talbot, and David Oates, *The Dawn of European Civilization: the Dark Ages*, McGraw- Hill, New York, 1965.
7. S. Gregory, Aldrete, *History of the Ancient World: A Global Perspective*, The Great Courses Publications, Virginia, 2011.
8. Z.N. Brooke, *History of Europe*, Methuen and Co., 1969.

### Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.



SGOU

# Religions and Religious Movements

**BLOCK-03**



# Christianity

## Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful conclusion of this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ examine the organisational structure of Christianity
- ◆ explain the emergence of papacy and its influence in medieval Europe
- ◆ define the monasticism and its characteristic features
- ◆ explore different monastic orders and its specialities

## Background

The emergence of Christianity as a new religion was a gradual process. Three centuries after the death of Jesus Christ, Christians were still a minority in the Roman Empire. Moreover, Roman officials suspected that Christians' beliefs made them disloyal. Therefore the Roman legislation frequently made Christianity illegal, and many Christians faced persecution and execution for openly expressing their faith. These persecutions came to an end when Constantine, the Roman Emperor, converted to Christianity and made it lawful in 313 CE. Christianity grew because of the attraction of Jesus's charismatic career, its message on individual spiritual salvation, its early members' sense of mission, and the strong bonds of community it inspired. Ultimately, Christianity's emergence proved the most significant development in Roman history.

## Keywords

Religion, Christianity, Papacy, Monasticism, Church, Investiture, Reformation

## Discussion

### ◆ *Organisational framework of Christianity*

During the first century, many Christians formed numerous congregations, recognising the need for a structured organisation to ensure the longevity of their newfound faith. Consequently, they appointed bishops as religious leaders vested with the authority to define correct doctrine and behaviour. This establishment of a hierarchical structure marked a pivotal development in the institution's organisation. Bishops ascended to their roles through the principle of apostolic succession, which presumed that Jesus' Apostles had appointed the first bishops as their successors, thereby imparting upon them the same authority bestowed upon the Apostles by Jesus. These bishops, in turn, appointed successors, continuing the lineage. While bishops held the authority to delineate orthodoxy from heresy, internal disagreements within the Christian community hindered their ability to enforce unity of belief. Initially, the occasional gatherings of bishops from various cities constituted the church's organisational framework. Today, this loosely structured organisation is commonly referred to as the early Catholic church, although disagreements among bishops persisted regarding correct beliefs and practices.

### ◆ *Roman Catholic Church*

#### **3.1.1 Papacy**

During the medieval period, the papacy emerged as a dominant institution, exerting considerable influence over the political, economic, and social landscape of Europe. With vast land holdings and extensive authority, the Church wields significant power. The papacy, as the office through which one man governed the Roman Catholic Church, stands as the oldest continuously existing institution in the Western world, tracing its history back to the Roman Empire. Amidst the upheavals caused by foreign invasions and the decline of the Roman Empire, the papacy remained resilient, maintaining its stature as a formidable institution.

### ◆ *Acceptance of Bishops*

According to Christian tradition, Jesus entrusted the Apostle Peter with the supreme responsibility of leading the church, thus making him the first Bishop of Rome, or Pope. Over time, the decisions made by the Roman bishops gained acceptance from bishops of other churches worldwide, elevating the bishop of Rome to a position of prominence within the Christian world. By the 4th and 5th centuries, the concept of the pope's primary or supreme importance

became solidified, with Pope Leo I playing a significant role in promoting Roman primacy during his tenure from 440 CE to 461 CE. Another influential figure in enhancing the papacy's significance was Pope Gregory I, who served from 590 CE to 604 CE.

◆ *Spread of Christianity*

During Pope Gregory I's papacy, Italy faced threats from the Lombards, yet he managed to protect Rome and organise its defence. He also revitalised missionary efforts, sending Augustine and others to spread Christianity in England, leading to the conversion of Anglo-Saxon rulers. Additionally, he oversaw the conversion of the Alani, a Germanic tribe in Spain. Pope Gregory I's contributions extended beyond missionary work; he was a prolific writer, known for his commentary on 'the Book of Job' titled "Moralia in Job." In his work, he employed allegory to explain biblical texts, shaping medieval biblical exegesis. He also expounded on the lives of saints and the miracles of God, further enriching classical learning during his time.

◆ *Corruption in Church practices*

One of Pope Gregory's notable works is the "Dialogues," which chronicles the lives of holy men in Italy and the miracles attributed to them. By the 10th century, various abuses and corrupt practices had infiltrated the church, including Simony – the buying and selling of sacraments and clerical offices for money and influence rather than based on merit. By the 10th century, the Church had become severely corrupt. In the 11th century, the papacy recognised this peril and embarked on a path of reform. During this period some popes acknowledged the necessity of instituting changes within the papacy to restore the integrity of the Church. This trend persisted into the time of Martin Luther. Appalled by the sale of ecclesiastical offices, Martin Luther embarked on a mission to combat these practices, a central aspect of the Reformation.

◆ *Reform in the Church*

The first of the important personalities to attempt a reform of papacy and Church was pope Leo IX. He travelled widely and issued decrees (royal orders or religious orders) ordering reforms in the Church and he was the first pope to make a wide use of papal legates. They were Pope's representatives dispatched to places outside and were mostly learned men and skilled diplomats who helped to enhance the power and prestige of the Pope. Under Pope Nicholas II, the Church started a movement towards liberty. He freed the papacy from the military dependency of the German empire (as a part of the holy Roman empire).

◆ *Lay Investiture*

Germany and Austria were a part of the Holy Roman empire. They were very closely related with the papacy. The Holy Roman empire was more a religious empire. It played a major role in all religious decisions and religious activities of Europe during this time and the Papacy depended on Germany for all its military needs. Pope Nicholas was the first to contempt the '**lay investiture**'. It was a ceremony connected with receiving churches or church officers from laymen. In 1059 CE, the Roman Council reformed the papal elections and defined its principles, which placed the process of papal election in the hands of the cardinals and thus limited the role of the Holy Roman Emperor. The election process initiated in 1059 CE continues to this day.

◆ *Pope's responsibilities*

The pinnacle of papal reforms occurred during the tenure of Pope Gregory VII. He asserted the absolute authority of the Pope, granting him the power to override decisions made by local bishops at his discretion. Additionally, Gregory VII espoused the belief that all Christian rulers were accountable to the Pope, particularly in matters of spirituality and significance, as it was the Pope's responsibility to guide them. He emphasised the superiority of religious authority over political authority, positioning the papacy above secular rulers.

◆ *Investiture Controversy*

During Gregory VII's papacy, the papacy engaged in a protracted conflict with the Holy Roman Empire, known as the **investiture controversy**. This struggle primarily revolved around the issue of lay interference in ecclesiastical affairs. Emperor Henry IV vehemently opposed the papal decree asserting freedom from lay interference, prompting Gregory to excommunicate him. Ultimately, Emperor Henry capitulated to the Pope's authority, thereby bolstering the power of the papacy. This controversy persisted until Gregory's death in 1085 CE.

◆ *Expansion of the church authority*

Pope Innocent III, a significant figure in the thirteenth century papacy, assumed leadership during a period of considerable challenges and controversies faced by the Church. He pursued a policy aimed at expanding the authority of the Church and the papacy, asserting that the state must defer to the Pope in matters pertaining to the rights, peace, and common welfare of Christians. In his efforts to combat heresy and reform Christian governance, he convened the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 CE.



◆ *Fourth Lateran Council*

During the Fourth Lateran Council, the **doctrine of transubstantiation** was affirmed, asserting that during the Eucharist, the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. Additionally, the Council reinforced the authority of the Catholic priests, emphasising their role in administering the sacraments. Various disciplinary issues were also addressed during the proceedings of the Lateran Council, reflecting Pope Innocent III's commitment to strengthening religious authority and promoting doctrinal unity within the Church.

◆ *Seven Sacraments*

It was determined that the seven sacraments were indispensable for salvation, encompassing various ceremonies throughout an individual's life—from birth to death—that required active involvement and guidance from the Church. These sacraments underscored the role of the Church as a religious institution in the lives of Christians, emphasising the Church's authority and influence in personal matters. The administration of these sacraments, overseen by Church authorities or priests, bound individuals to the Church. However, during the Reformation, Martin Luther contested the validity of the seven sacraments, arguing that only baptism and the holy communion were ordained by Jesus Christ in the Bible. He believed that the remaining sacraments were later additions by the clergy for their own benefit. The institution of the seven sacraments as compulsory practices was introduced in the thirteenth century during the pontificate of Pope Innocent III.

◆ *Qualifications for priesthood*

The Lateran Council played a pivotal role in defining the qualifications for priesthood and shaping various aspects of religious life, including priestly education, monastic practices, the veneration of relics, and other devotional activities. Pope Innocent III's leadership during this council elevated his status within the papal hierarchy.

◆ *Conflicts between Monarchs and papacy*

Another influential figure was Pope Boniface VIII, whose papacy coincided with a period of intense conflict between monarchs and the papacy. Kings, particularly Philip IV of France and Edward I of England, attempted to impose taxes on clergy, sparking tensions between secular and ecclesiastical authorities. European monarchs grew increasingly frustrated with the perceived overreach of papal authority into political matters, leading to frequent clashes between kings and popes.

The issues during Pope Boniface VIII's reign escalated when Philip IV of France and Edward I of England sought to

◆ *Issuing of Papal bull*

tax the clergy. In 1302 CE, Pope Boniface VIII issued a papal bull asserting his authority over Philip IV, warning of dire consequences if the king refused to submit. In retaliation, Philip IV had arrested Boniface VIII for prompting public outcry and a subsequent rescue of the pope by supporters. This incident heightened hostilities between the monarchy and the papacy. Pope Gregory IX, Boniface VIII's successor, pursued even more stringent measures to consolidate the power of the Church in response to ongoing challenges.

◆ *Compilation of Papal letters*

In 1234 CE, Pope Gregory IX published an authoritative compilation of papal letters that formed the basis of Canon law, serving as the medieval church's Constitution. Additionally, in 1231 CE, he established a specialised papal Court, known as the **papal inquisition**, tasked with investigating and punishing heresy. This inquisition Court became a prominent tool for papal persecution throughout the medieval and modern periods, including the era of the Reformation. Its primary aim was to probe anti-religious practices that were contrary to the beliefs of the Church and the pope, doling out severe punishments to dissenters.

◆ *Crowning of Charlemagne*

Another significant figure in medieval papacy was Pope Leo III, renowned for crowning Charlemagne as Emperor of the Romans, initiating the tradition of rulers being crowned by religious authorities. This act set a precedent that effectively placed political authority under the religious jurisdiction of the Pope. It's noteworthy that during the medieval period, religion held sway over the culture of Europe, exerting control over various aspects of life, property, and even the thoughts of the populace.

### 3.1.2 Monasticism

◆ *Living in solitary isolation*

Monasticism played a significant role in medieval Europe, representing the pinnacle of Christian asceticism, which emphasises the renunciation of worldly pleasures, particularly in matters of sex and food. The term "monk," derived from the Greek word "monos," meaning "single" or "solitary," encapsulates the essence of monasticism: individuals withdrawing from society to lead lives of rigorous self-denial, mirroring the suffering of Jesus and demonstrating their dedication to God, while praying for divine mercy upon the world. Initially, monks lived in solitary isolation, but they eventually formed communities to provide mutual support in their pursuit of ascetic holiness.



◆ *Characteristics of monasticism*

Monastic institutions were a distinctive feature of medieval society, with monasticism emerging in response to the anxieties of the third century but gaining prominence within Christianity by the fourth century. Originating in the East, monasticism attracted devout Christians who sought refuge in lives of continual prayer and seclusion. A notable characteristic of monasticism was its seclusion, as monks deliberately distanced themselves from worldly affairs to focus on prayer. Despite their withdrawal, they confessed to grappling with desires for earthly pleasures, often fixating on sumptuous food more frequently than on thoughts of sex.

◆ *St. Antony's devotion*

The earliest Christian ascetics appeared in Egypt during the late third century. The foremost figure among them was St. Antony of Egypt. Upon hearing a sermon inspired by Jesus's counsel to a wealthy youth to sell his possessions and aid the needy, Antony promptly relinquished all his wealth. He devoted his life to solitary worship in a desolate area, demonstrating his devotion through austere asceticism in the Egyptian desert.

◆ *Appeal of monasticism*

Early monks adhered to a regimen of self-mortification, embracing poverty and subjecting their bodies to extreme conditions in pursuit of God. Initially, they embraced self-flagellation, but over time, they transitioned to communal living and engaged in acts of service. Monasticism held appeal for various reasons, chiefly offering ordinary individuals a path to spiritual excellence and recognition. By becoming monks and enduring a life akin to martyrdom, they emulated Christ's sacrifice and substituted a martyr's death with a life devoted to God. While all monasteries enforced stringent discipline akin to military structures, they varied in the severity of their regulations and their degree of interaction with the outside world.

◆ *Discipline in monastic order*

St. Basil, who lived during the fourth century, encouraged the monks to discipline themselves by useful labour. He prohibited the monks from engaging in prolonged fasting or self-torture. He asked his monks to practice poverty in its most rigorous form (like fasting for a day). He wanted the monks to be in silent religious meditation for many hours a day.

◆ *Influence in Governance*

Monasteries played a pivotal role in early medieval society by extending their influence into governance. Wealthy families established monastic communities on their lands, with abbots often having close ties to prominent

lay individuals, overseeing the management of monastery resources and estates. Over time, these monastic institutions became integral parts of local communities.

◆ *Contributions to education*

Kings relied heavily on monastic lands for food supplies, frequently appropriating a portion of the monks' income to fund royal projects and meet the kingdom's needs. Monks, being among the few literate individuals of the period, held significant knowledge and learning. Some monks were highly educated, prioritising education within monastery libraries and schools. Scriptoria, or writing offices, were established within monasteries to produce manuscripts necessary for archiving and educational purposes, contributing to the preservation of literature.

◆ *Monasteries as sancturies*

Monasteries also served as sanctuaries for troubled individuals, with monks viewed as holy figures capable of invoking God's blessings and offering support to those in need. They were esteemed as resourceful problem-solvers and guardians of moral integrity, providing guidance and direction to society.

◆ *Multifaceted engagements*

Monastic orders made significant contributions to education, finance management, and the preservation of moral and ethical standards in society. They excelled in organising commercial endeavours, efficiently categorising portfolios and tasks. In essence, they served as potent agents of economic and cultural transformation in Europe. Their multifaceted engagements encompassed commercial activities, educational endeavours, religious practices, and the provision of moral guidance, demonstrating their comprehensive impact on society.

◆ *Cluny monastic order*

### 3.1.3 Monastic Orders

The Cluny monastic Order of Burgundy, founded in the tenth century (910 CE), initially fell under direct papal authority. However, by the eleventh and twelfth centuries, it burgeoned in power, establishing around 1,184 monasteries spanning from the British Isles to Palestine. Renowned for their elaborate religious services, the Cluny monks incorporated various opulent elements such as rich liturgy, and polyphonic choral music for underscoring the importance of music in their ceremonies.

St. Benedict of Italy is credited with bringing organisation to the monastic movement by establishing a community at Monte Cassino and devising a manual outlining rules

◆ *Benedictines*

and regulations for its members. His followers, known as Benedictines, focused on various aspects of monastic life, placing particular emphasis on manual labour. Unlike early monks who avoided worldly occupations, Benedictines actively engaged in agricultural pursuits, recognising idleness as detrimental to the soul. Consequently, the order encouraged its members to remain industrious. Notably, many labourers within the Benedictine Order eventually rose to become successful farmers and managers of vast estates across Europe.

◆ *Franciscan order*

Another significant order was the Franciscan Order, stemming from the earnest efforts of the medieval Church for spiritual renewal, notably spearheaded by Saint Francis of Assisi. Considered one of the greatest saints of the medieval period, Saint Francis lived during the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. A notable poet, he espoused the belief that true living is marked by joy. He advocated that if all creatures, including humans, acknowledged God's providence, they would respond with joy, fostering universal harmony in the world.

◆ *Order of Friars Minor*

Saint Francis of Assisi established the Order of Friars Minor, which grew to nearly 5,000 members and expanded from Germany to the Levant by the thirteenth century. By the century's end, they had become the largest Order within the Christian church. The Franciscans primarily targeted laymen in burgeoning towns, focusing on the emerging social classes inhabiting European urban centers. Saint Francis emphasised the importance of poverty and simplicity in a document known as the testament, which held significant sway over townsfolk, leading many to join specialised branches of the Order while remaining in the outside world.

◆ *Dominican Order*

Another notable monastic Order is the Dominican Order, which emerged in response to widespread discontent with corrupt clergy practices such as luxurious living and the denunciation of sacraments, the church sought to counter heresy by re-converting those who had strayed from the Christian faith. Priest Dominic emerged as one of the primary proponents of this reconversion effort. The Dominican Order, which he founded, embraced poverty and sustenance through begging, advocating a life of austerity. They prioritised education, serving as the intellectual arm of the medieval church. Notable figures such as St. Thomas Aquinas, a thirteenth-century philosopher, were members of this order. St. Thomas Aquinas is celebrated for his

philosophical contributions, particularly his renowned work, 'Summa Theologica,' which is viewed as a transitional phase between medieval and modern philosophy. The Dominicans, along with the Franciscans, actively engaged with townspeople to instill spirituality and bring them closer to Christianity.

◆ *Autonomy  
threatened  
Church's power*

The autonomy of monasteries posed a threat to the established power structure within the Church. Bishops were wary of devout members of their congregations opting to join monastic communities, as these individuals often redirected their donations away from local churches and towards their new monasteries. Additionally, monks challenged the authority of bishops by attaining their revered status through personal deeds rather than through the endorsement of church leaders. Despite these tensions, both bishops and monks shared a common spiritual objective, the pursuit of salvation and service to God. Monks served as intermediaries between humanity and the divine, seeking God's mercy for faithful believers.

## Summarised Overview

In the first century, Christians formed congregations and appointed bishops as religious leaders, establishing a hierarchical structure. However, internal disagreements hindered unity, leading to the early Catholic church, a loosely structured organisation. During the medieval period, the papacy was a dominant institution in Europe, with significant influence over political, economic, and social landscapes. The Roman Catholic Church, the oldest Western institution, was governed by Popes Leo I and Gregory I. Pope Gregory I spread Christianity, eradicated corruption, and ordered reforms. Pope Nicholas II freed the papacy from German dependency. Pope Gregory VII emphasised the Pope's authority. Pope Innocent III expanded Church authority, affirming transubstantiation and sacraments. Monasticism, a form of Christian asceticism, emerged in medieval Europe in response to anxieties, focusing on prayer, self-denial, poverty, and economic transformation. Monasteries also served as sanctuaries for troubled individuals and agents of economic and cultural transformation in Europe. The Cluny monastic Order of Burgundy, founded in the tenth century, expanded to 1,184 monasteries across the British Isles and Palestine. St. Benedict emphasised manual labour and agriculture, while the Franciscan Order focused on spiritual renewal and poverty. The Dominican Order emerged in response to corrupt clergy practices, embracing poverty and austerity.



## Assignments

1. Discuss how the monasteries influenced medieval Europe.
2. Describe the characteristic features of Christian monastic tradition.
3. Explain significance of the Investiture Controversy in medieval Europe, and how did it affect the power struggle between the papacy and secular rulers?
4. Discuss the characteristics and principles of the Benedictine Order, and how did it influence the development of monasticism in medieval Europe?

## Suggested Reading

1. Barry, Henry Boothby, *The Advantages and Disadvantages of the Feudal System*, Oxford Publishers, 1843.
2. Lassner, Jacob and Michel Booner, - *Islam in the Middle Ages : The Origins and Shaping of Classical Islamic Civilizations*, Santa Barbara: Calif praeger, ABC-CLIO, 2010.
3. MacCulloch, Diarmaid, *A History of Christianity: The First Three Thousand Years*, Penguin Books Ltd, 2010.
4. Richards, Jeffrey, *The Pope and the Papacy in the Early Middle Ages, 476-752*, Routledge, 2015.
5. Singman, Jeffrey, *Daily Life in Medieval Europe*, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1999.

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1. Backman.R. Clifford, *The Worlds of Medieval Europe*, Oxford University Press, 2003.
2. Farooqui, Amar, *Early Social Formation*, Manak Publications, New Delhi, 2022.
3. Langley, Andrew, *Eyewitness Medieval Life*, D.K Publishing, New York, 2011.
4. Sinha, Aravind, *Europe in Transition, From Feudalism to Industrialization*, Manohar Publications, 2016.



## Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU





## Islam

### Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful conclusion of this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ discuss the rise and growth of Islam
- ◆ examine the establishment of Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphate
- ◆ describe the administrative system under Abbasid Caliphate
- ◆ explain the reason for the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate

### Background

Islam quickly gained popularity in areas that had been the cradle of civilisations for centuries (Egypt and Iran). Islamic society not only inherited but also carried on the traditions of earlier communities, particularly in the Nile and Oxus basins. It inherited traditions from the ancient Babylonians, Egyptians, Hebrews, and Persians. Islam must be studied in the context of previous religious traditions. While Islamic civilisations incorporated many new features, they also included newer advancements within traditional practices. This unit will explore the emergence and spread of Islam and its impact on the Arab world. The emergence of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphate and its significance is also discussed here.

### Keywords

Islam, Prophet, Caliphate, Umayyad, Abbasid, Shi'a, Sunni



# Discussion

## 3.2.1 The Rise of Islam

### ◆ *Rise of Islam*

In the early seventh century, Islam emerged in Arabia, focusing on submission to one God, Allah. Muhammad recognised the one God of Jews and Christians and became known as the 'Messenger' or 'Prophet of Allah'. Invited by the people of Medina, in western Arabia, to come and act as a mediator in their disputes, Muhammad exercised the powers of both a religious and a secular leader. This dual role became the model for his successors, known as Caliphs. By the time Muhammad died in 632 CE, Muslims had begun to conquer Byzantine and Persian territories. They expanded eastward and westward, but daily life remained unchanged within the conquered territories.

### ◆ *Bedouins and their lifestyle*

In the seventh century, the vast deserts of the Arabian Peninsula were populated by both sedentary (settled) and nomadic peoples. The sedentary peoples, sometimes farmers, sometimes merchants and artisans, lived in oases. They far outnumbered the nomads, known as 'Bedouins', who herded livestock and raided one another for plunder, slaves, and women (men practiced polygamy – having more than one wife at a time). Their poetry, oral rather than written, expressed their esteem for honour, friendship, bravery, and love.

### ◆ *Mecca as a commercial and religious centre*

Islam began as a religion of the sedentary, but it soon found support and military strength among the nomads. It emerged in Mecca, an important commercial and religious centre, south of Madina. Mecca and Madina are situated in the central part of Western Arabia called Hijaz. Mecca was the home of the *Ka'ba*, a shrine that contained the images of many gods. It was a sacred place within which war and violence were prohibited. The tribe that dominated Mecca, the Quraysh, controlled access to the shrine, taxing the pilgrims who flocked there. Visitors, assured of their safety, bartered on the sacred grounds, transforming the plunder from raids into trade.

### 3.2.1.1 The Prophet Muhammad and the Faith of Islam

Muhammad, belonged to the Hashim clan of the Quraysh tribe, was born in Mecca. Orphaned at the age of six, he went to live with his uncle, Abu Talib, a leader of the Quraysh



◆ *Revelation of God - Qur'an*

tribe. Eventually, Muhammad became a trader and married Khadija, a rich widow and a successful businesswomen who traded with Syria and Palestine. Yet Muhammad sometimes left home to pray in a nearby cave, practising a type of piety similar to that of the early Christians. Muhammad began devoting much of his time to religious speculation, frequently withdrawing into the desert, and by 610 CE, he had come to believe that the Angel Gabriel had brought him special messages from Allah. This spiritual experience marked the beginning of his prophethood. He continued to receive these messages throughout his life, and they are later recorded in the *Qur'an*, Islam's sacred book. *Qur'an* means 'recitation'; each of the book's parts, called 'suras', was considered to be God's revelation as told to Muhammad by the Angel Gabriel, the very Gabriel of the Hebrew and Christian Bibles and then recited by Muhammad to others.

◆ *Tribal identity to Ummah*

The *Qur'an*, a religious text, begins with the *Fatihah*, praising God as the "lord sustainer of the worlds." It contains a legal and moral code for Muslims, emphasising the importance of family as the basic unit of society. Islam replaced the tribe's identity with the *Ummah*, a community of believers who share a belief in one God and religious practices. Islam had no priests or sacraments, but eventually had authoritative religious leaders who interpreted the *Qur'an* and related texts. The text emphasises individual belief in God and adherence to the *Qur'an*.

### 3.2.2 Growth of Islam

◆ *Conflict with Quraysh tribe*

Muhammad's wife was the first to believe in Muhammad's Prophethood and to believe in his religious ideas. As Muhammad preached the new faith, more people came to believe. His Meccan followers who accepted his religious ideas came to be known as 'Muslims', i.e., those who submitted to Allah. Muhammad's religion centered on uncompromising devotion to a single God, Allah. He emphasised the rejection of all other deities and the prohibition of idol worship. His aim was to unite Arab tribes under one belief, emphasising the equality and unity of those who embraced Allah and followed the Prophet. However, Muhammad's insistence on abandoning all other gods in favour of one drew him into conflict with prominent members of the Quraysh tribe, whose control over the *Ka'ba* had provided them with prestige and wealth. They insulted Muhammad and harassed his followers because they perceived him as a threat.

◆ *Hijrah to Madina*

As the circumstances grew increasingly difficult, Muhammad made the decision to leave Mecca for another settlement in the Hijaz region called Yathrib, situated roughly 200 miles north of Mecca. Yathrib was later renamed Madina, meaning 'the city'. In 622 CE, Muhammad and his followers migrated to Madina in an event known as the *Hijrah* in Arabic. This migration marked the beginning of the Islamic era, with the calendar starting from this significant year. The first converts from Mecca who migrated with the Prophet to Madina were referred to as the "emigrants" or *muhajirun*, while the locals of Madina who supported them were known as the "helpers" or *ansar*. These distinctions became significant in future political conflicts.

◆ *New political framework at Madina*

Muhammad established a new political framework during this time. Muhammad's role evolved beyond that of solely a religious leader; he became the leader of a budding state centered in Madina. He assumed the role of a lawgiver, establishing governance rules. His followers, particularly adult males, formed his armed forces. Alliances were forged with neighbouring tribes, and many embraced Islam and joined Muhammad's unified community and political entity. Raids remained a crucial source of revenue for the state, with a system devised to fairly distribute the booty. One-fifth of the booty were allocated directly to the Prophet, ensuring the state had its own financial resources. Furthermore, tribes under Muhammad's leadership were required to make regular voluntary contributions, which eventually evolved into a tax known as *zakat*, obligatory for all Muslims to pay to the state. *Zakat* was designed for redistribution, primarily benefiting the less fortunate members of the Muslim community.

◆ *Battle of Badr and Uhud*

Once Muhammad established an administrative system and army and formed alliances with Bedouin tribes, he initiated armed conflict against the Quraysh of Mecca. This included raids on Quraysh trading caravans passing near Madina, disrupting Meccan trade and leading the Quraysh to seek peace. One of such raids led to the Battle of Badr, which occurred in 624 CE near Medina. With less number of supporters at the Prophet's side, the Muslims won the battle. However, the Battle of Uhud, which occurred in 625 CE, presented a contrasting outcome. The Quraysh, seeking revenge for their defeat at Badr, launched a devastating counterattack that caught the Muslims off guard. This resulted in a significant setback for the Muslims, including the loss of several key companions of the Prophet.



◆ *Meccan Occupation*

Later, in 630, CE Muhammad successfully occupied Mecca, prompting its inhabitants to embrace Islam in large numbers. With the support of influential tribes like Quraysh and their allies such as the Thaqif of Taif, Muhammad swiftly solidified his authority across Arabia. The *Ka'ba* in Mecca became Islam's holiest sanctuary, cleansed of tribal idols, and housing the Islamic symbol, a black stone associated with Abraham. Muslims were directed to pray facing the *Ka'ba*, and the pilgrimage to it (*hajj*) was established as a central religious ritual. As the prestige of Islam grew, clans from other regions converted.

◆ *Religious obligations*

Muhammad introduced new religious obligations, including the *zakat*, a tax on possessions for alms, the fast of Ramadan, the *hajj*, a pilgrimage to Mecca, the *salat*, formal worship at least three times a day and the *Shahadah*, or profession of faith, which declares oneness of God's (*tawhid*) and accepts Muhammad as His messenger. These practices called the Five Pillars of Islam, were developed in the eighth and early ninth centuries.

◆ *Towards a state structure*

Muhammad passed away in 632, leaving behind a legacy of transforming tribal structures into a state that united numerous Arab tribes. By the time of his death, the vast majority of Bedouin tribes, particularly in regions like Hijaz and Najd, had recognised his leadership. Initially, the state's borders were not clearly defined, reflecting its composition primarily of nomadic tribes. Administration centered around Medina, with Mecca also playing a role, though territorial boundaries were vague. Despite this, the military strength of the state was substantial, demonstrated by Muhammad leading an army of 30,000 troops in an expedition towards Syria shortly before his death. It was in the decades following 632 that the Arab state began to take on a more concrete form.

◆ *Watt on widespread acceptance of Islam*

W. M. Watt's research sheds light on why Islam rapidly gained widespread acceptance among Arab tribes during its inception. Through his works such as *Muhammad at Mecca* and *Islam and the Integration of Society*, he examines the social dynamics of pre-Islamic Arab society, particularly focusing on the changes brought about by trade and the shift towards a settled lifestyle among some tribes. In particular, he highlights Mecca as a hub where significant societal changes occurred due to expanding commerce, leading to tensions and conflicts within society. The influx of wealth from trade and pilgrimages to Mecca did not equally benefit all members of society, exacerbating existing tribal tensions. Traditional

tribal structures, like that of the Quraysh, were ill-equipped to handle these new challenges. Similar transformations were occurring in other tribes involved in commercial exchanges, many of which were integrated into the Meccan system. Additionally, some tribes were beginning to engage in limited agriculture or were becoming influenced by settled societies outside of Arabia. Muhammad's message of unity addressed this social upheaval, offering Islam as a framework for state formation and providing tribes with a cohesive ideology to navigate these changes.

◆ *Scholarly discourse on the subject*

Watt's explanation has greatly impacted scholarly discourse on the subject in the late 1950s. The works such as Rodinson's *Mohammed* and Marshall Hodgson's *The Venture of Islam* were expanded upon Watt's ideas. However, some historians, like Patricia Crone, have challenged Watt's hypothesis, particularly his 'Meccan trade hypothesis.' Crone argues in her work *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* that Meccan trade was not as significant as Watt suggested. She contends that the trade mainly dealt with small-value goods and did not generate substantial wealth or disrupt traditional society to the extent proposed by Watt.

◆ *Patricia Crone's argument*

Crone asserts that traditional ways of life remained intact, with Meccans initially resisting Islam because of their preference for their traditional lifestyle. Furthermore, she argues that for Bedouin tribes, raiding and plundering were more beneficial for resource augmentation than trade. The appeal of Islam to these tribes lay in its 'legitimation of conquest' and its offering of a program for state formation through unification and conquest. In broader terms, Crone characterises early Islam as a 'nativist movement,' rooted in a deep attachment to Arabian culture and opposing foreign influences, particularly those introduced by Byzantine and Persian attempts to dominate Arabia. Nonetheless, Crone does concur with Watt that sedentarisation in some parts of Arabia necessitated the growth of state structures at the expense of tribal affiliations.

◆ *New political community*

### **3.2.3 The Caliphs- Muhammad's Successors**

Muhammad founded a new political community in Arabia, reorganising traditional Arab society by cutting across clan allegiances. He forged the Muslims into a formidable military force, and his successors, the caliphs, took the Byzantine and Persian worlds by storm. They quickly conquered Byzantine territory in Syria and Egypt, invaded the Sassanid Empire, and conquered Persia by 651



CE. In the last half of the seventh century and the beginning of the eighth century, Islamic warriors extended their sway westward to Spain and eastward to India. The widespread conquests were possible due to weakened empires, discontented Christians and Jews, and internal reasons for Islam's success.

◆ *Disputes over Caliph*

Arab fighters, inspired by *jihad*, were well-prepared and easily conquered, building garrison cities to secure victories. However, the Muslim community's solidarity was threatened by disputes over caliphs. The third caliph, Uthman, a Umayyad clan member and son-in-law of Muhammad, caused discontent among the inner circle and soldiers. They accused Uthman of favouritism and supported his rival, Ali, a member of the Hashim clan and husband of Muhammad's only surviving child, Fatimah. This led to a conflict over the succession of caliphs.

◆ *Faction between Umayyads and Ali's faction*

After Uthman's murder, a civil war broke out between the Umayyads and Ali's faction. The war ended when Ali was killed by his former supporters, and the caliphate remained in Umayyad hands from 661 CE to 750 CE. Despite defeat, Ali's memory persisted among Shi'ite Muslims, who saw him as a symbol of justice and righteousness. They remained faithful to Muhammad's dynasty, avoiding Sunni caliphs and awaited the arrival of the true leader, the *imam*, who could only come from Ali's house.

◆ *Sunnis and Shia*

### 3.2.3.1 Umayyad Caliphate

The civil war led to divisions within the Muslim community, with Sunnis accepting the succession of Muawiya and the historical sequence of Caliphs, and Shias believing Ali was the only rightful Caliph and his descendants should succeed him. The Shia emphasised the religious functions of the Caliphate and deplored its political compromises, while Sunnis circumscribed its religious role and were more tolerant of its political involvement. Kharijis believed the Caliphate should not be determined by descent but by the community of Muslims at large, with the Caliph holding his position only if he was sinless in his office. As these differences became increasingly religiously important, Sunnis, Shia, and Kharijis developed separate versions of Islam and formed distinct religious bodies within the Muslim community.

Mu'awiya (661 CE- 680 CE) aimed to reconstruct the authority and power of the Caliphate and address factionalism within the ruling elite. He transformed a coalition of Arab

◆ *Mu'awiya's reign*

tribes into a centralised monarchy, expanded the state's military and administrative powers, and created new moral and political grounds for loyalty. To satisfy tribal chiefs' interests, he resumed conquests in North Africa and eastern Iran. Mu'awiya maintained peace with the Byzantine empire to hold Syrian forces in reserve for internal policing. He sought to build revenues from private incomes, confiscated Byzantine and Sasanian crown lands, and investments in reclamation and irrigation. He emphasised the patriarchal aspects of the Caliphate, cloaked by traditional Arab virtues of conciliation, consultation, generosity, and respect for tribal tradition. Mu'awiya's reign was based on centralised state power, clientele ties, and his ability to exemplify the Arab tribal patriarch. Despite his rule, the causes of the first civil wars persisted.

◆ *Rise of Shi'ism*  
◆ *Second Arab civil war*

The Medinan aristocrats resented the Quraysh for usurping their place, leading to the rise of the Shi'a aristocrats who aimed to control the Caliphate. The second Arab civil war, lasting from 680 CE to 692 CE, was a complex conflict involving Arab aristocrats, factional rivalries, and sectarian religious rebellions. After Mu'awiya's death, his son Yazid fought against Meccan rivals led by Abdallah al Zubayr. Ali's son Husayn attempted to take up leadership but was intercepted and destroyed in Karbala. Husayn's death, along with his father's, divides Muslims more than any dispute over law, theology, or antipathy between tribes, races, and linguistic groups. Ali is the ancestor of Shi'ism, and Husayn is its martyr.

◆ *Challenges faced by the Umayyads*

The Umayyad Caliphate faced direct challenges during the civil war period, which was marked by factional fighting among Arab groups. The first factions were based on Islamic versus tribal loyalties, while new factions were formed through ad hoc alliances in insecure and changing societies. The Syrian tribal coalitions, which had been the mainstay of Mu'awiya's reign, divided into two warring factions called Yemen and Qays. The fighting spread to Iraq and Khurasan, where they were called Mudar and Tamirn, and Qays and Rabi'a. The Kharijis, who had repudiated 'Ali after the battle of Siffin, rebelled and formed small bands of between thirty and a hundred men. Each group was a terrorist band and a fanatical religious sect, held together by the belief that they were the only true Muslims and had religious justification for their rebellions. A group called Najda controlled a significant part of Arabia before being crushed.

◆ *Abd al-Malik*

The Umayyads eventually prevailed through force of arms, with Caliph 'Abd al-Malik (685 CE-705 CE) defeating his opponents. His successor, al-Walid (705 CE-715 CE.), faced endemic messianic religious opposition and tribal factionalism. To centralise political power, they resumed Arab conquests on a massive scale, using tribal migrations and annual campaigns. These wars were inspired by imperial ambitions and aimed for world domination, bringing North Africa, Spain, Transoxiana, and Sind into the Muslim empire. Abd al-Malik's domestic policy demilitarised Arabs in Iraq's garrison cities, replacing Iraqi soldiers in eastern campaigns with Syrian forces. A Syrian army policed Iraq from a new garrison town built at al-Wasit.

◆ *Reign of Umar II*

The Arabs of Kufa and Basra were treated as pensioned subjects of the empire they founded. Al-Hajjaj, the governor of Iraq, threatened to make heads roll, leading to forty years of internal peace. The administration of Abd al-Malik and al-Walid translated tax registers from Greek and Persian into Arabic, which was later used in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Khurasan. The Caliphs reorganised finances and proposed a major revision of taxation rules under Umar II (717 CE -720 CE). Caliph Hisham (724 CE -743 CE) tried to implement Umar's policies in Khurasan, Egypt, and Mesopotamia. The Umayyad administration developed an organisational identity, with a new generation of Arab-speaking clients coming to power by 700 CE. They formed the secretarial backbone of the Arab-Muslim empire until the tenth century. The court of Caliph was also reorganised in line with these administrative developments.

◆ *Caliphate transition*

The Caliphate transitioned from patriarchal rule to an imperial government, with a court chamberlain overseeing daily affairs and surrounded by officials such as chancery officers, royal seal officers, guards, and scribes. Important governorships were still held by Arab leaders, but the government was conducted by professional administrators. The administrative and military dimensions of later Umayyad statism were backed by a new ideological policy, shifting the focus from individual reigns to the state as an institution. During the reign of Abd al-Malik, the Caliphate began minting its own coins, replacing Byzantine and Sasanian money. This new system replaced Christian and Zoroastrian symbolism with gold and silver coins with Arabic script, symbolising the state's sovereignty and independence from previous empires. The state also emphasised its sovereignty through monumental constructions.

◆ *Inspirations from various places*

Under Abd al-Malik, Jerusalem was designated as a holy site for Islam, and the 'Dome of the Rock' was constructed on the site of the ancient Hebrew Temple. Under al-Walid, new mosques were built in Medina and Damascus, symbolising the Arabs' glory and the state's indispensability to Islam. However, the inspiration for these transformations was not purely Umayyad. The administrative apparatus in Syria and Egypt was Byzantine in origin, and Syrian military organisations followed Byzantine models. In Iraq, Arab administrators adopted the Sasanian pattern of administrative organisation, including the fourfold division of finance, military, correspondence, and chancellery services. The Umayyads borrowed Greek motifs and designs for their mosques and palaces, but transformed traditional motifs and provided new content. The statist ideology derived from previous empires but was characteristically Islamic.

### 3.2.3.2 Abbasid Caliphate

◆ *Establishment of Abbasid Caliphate*

In 750 CE, a coalition of Persians, Iraqis, and Shi'ites defeated the Umayyad dynasty at the Battle of the Great Zab River. The Umayyads, who centralised Muslim polity, faced a heavy price when a well-organised movement called dawa replaced them with the Abbasids in 750 CE. The Abbasids portrayed the Umayyad regime as evil and promised a restoration of the original Islam of the Prophet. This revolution led to changes in the dynasty, political structure, and culture of Islam. The Abbasid uprising occurred in Khurasan, eastern Iran, where a mixed Arab-Iranian population could be mobilised due to resentment towards Syrian dominance.

◆ *Arab influence declined*

The Umayyad regime in Khurasan was criticised for its promises of tax concessions and privileges, which were never fulfilled. Iranian Muslims, who were race-conscious Arabs, were eager to join any campaign to oust the Umayyads. The Abbasids, descendants of Abbas, gained support from dissident groups and promised a messiah from the Prophet's family to liberate them. Abu Muslim, an Iranian slave, defeated the last Umayyad caliph, Marwan. Under Abbasid rule, Arab influence declined, while Iranian culture's importance increased. They established their capital in Baghdad, reorganising the army and bureaucracy to ensure greater participation. The Abbasid rulers strengthened the religious status of the caliphate and patronised Islamic institutions and scholars. However, they were forced to retain the centralised nature of the state,

maintaining imperial architecture and court ceremonies. The regime, which took pride in bringing down the monarchy, found itself compelled to establish it again.

◆ *Establishment of new capital*

The new regime's first venture was the establishment of a new capital, a practice common among Middle Eastern rulers. The Assyrian empire built cities like Nineveh and Nimrud, while the Sasanians founded Ctesiphon. The Abbasids built Baghdad, strategically located between Iraq, Iran, and Syria, as their palace and administrative base. Baghdad quickly evolved from a military and administrative center to a major city, with the decision to build the 'City of Peace' (Madinat al-Salam) generating two large settlements in the area.

◆ *City of Baghdad*

Baghdad was a large Middle Eastern city, consisting of a metropolitan center and a conglomeration of districts on both sides of the Tigris River. It was a metropolitan center, with a population of between 300,000 and 500,000 in the ninth century. The city was ten times the size of Sasanian Ctesiphon and larger than all of the settled places in the Diyala region. It was larger than Constantinople, which had a population of 200,000, and any other Middle Eastern city until Istanbul in the sixteenth century. The original Baghdad was a three-part complex, with the troop settlement in al-Harbiya, the working populations in al-Karkh, and the administrative city, Madinat al-Salam. The decisions of the Caliphs to build additional palace residences and administrative complexes in the immediate vicinity stimulated the growth of additional quarters.

◆ *Commercial centre*

Baghdad, the largest city outside China, played a significant role in the formation of the Abbasid empire, society, and culture. As a capital city, it became a commercial hub for international trade and productive industries. The cosmopolitan population included Jews, Christians, Muslims, secret pagans, Persians, Iraqis, Arabs, Syrians, and Central Asians. Soldiers, officials, workers, and merchants from various regions settled in Baghdad. Basrans, notables, landowners, prisoners of war, scholars, and Nestorian Christians from various villages made Baghdad their home. Baghdad was the product of upheavals, popular movements, economic changes, and conversions of the preceding century. It became the home of a new Middle Eastern society, embracing Arab and non-Arab elements, integrated into a single society under the Arab empire and Islamic religion. It provided wealth and manpower to govern the empire and crystallised the culture that became Islamic civilisation.

## 3.2.4 Abbasid Administration

### 3.2.4.1 The Central administration

#### ◆ *Universal equality of Muslims*

The 'Abbasid dynasty established Baghdad to address the issues that had destroyed the Umayyad dynasty. They built effective governing institutions and gained political support from Arab Muslims, converts, and non-Muslim communities. The new dynasty had to secure loyalty and obedience for a rebel regime and justify itself in Muslim terms. To address these issues, the 'Abbasids swept away Arab caste supremacy and accepted the universal equality of Muslims. They embraced all Muslims as supporters, as Arab caste supremacy had lost its political meaning. A coalition regime, uniting Arab and non-Arab elements, was necessary to govern a Middle Eastern empire.

#### ◆ *Political support for Abbasid empire*

The spread of Arabic as a lingua franca, Islam's conversion, commercial expansion, and economic upheavals led to the recruitment of personnel and political support for the new regime in cities like Baghdad, allowing people to transition from their old lives to new careers. Empire no longer belonged to Arabs, but to all peoples who shared in Islam and the emerging political and cultural loyalties of a new cosmopolitan Middle Eastern society. They organised new armies and administrative cadres, abolishing the military privileges of Arabs and building up forces that were partly Arab but loyal to the dynasty, not tribal or caste interests.

#### ◆ *Social policy*

The Abbasids, who inherited the Umayyad administration, implemented a revolutionary social policy while maintaining its administrative and governmental precedents. They inherited the traditions and personnel of the Umayyad administration, with clientele ties to the Caliphs being the essence of government organisation. Initially, ministries were clerical staff, but the ad hoc, household character of the Caliphate was gradually replaced by a more rationalised form of administration.

The business of the government became more routinised and three types of services or bureaus (diwans) developed. The first was the chancery, the diwan al-rasail, the records and correspondence office. The second was the bureaus for tax collection, such as the diwan al-kharaj. Third, there were bureaus to pay the expenses of the Caliphs' armies, court, and pensioners; the army bureau, diwan al-jaysh, was the most important of these. As time passed, the business became more elaborate and specialised, with each function

◆ *Administration*

subdivided into a host of offices and divisions for auxiliary activities. The Caliphs also appointed qadis, or judges, to apply Muslim law to civil affairs of the Muslim population. Other judicial officials dealt with state-related issues, while customary law continued to be used in small communities. As the business of the government grew more specialised, the Caliphs' administrative structures became more intricate and specialised.

◆ *Important offices*

The Caliphs struggled to supervise the activities of the state due to the elaboration of functions and offices. To maintain responsiveness, they implemented internal bureaucratic checks. Financial affairs were monitored by the diwan al-zimma, which evolved into an independent budget bureau. Correspondence was handled by the diwan al-tawa for countersignature and seal keeper. The *mazalim*, the Caliphs, adjudicated fiscal and administrative problems in a special administrative court. The barid, the official messenger and information service, monitored the rest of the government. The office of the wazir was developed to coordinate, supervise, and check on the bureaucracy's operations. Wazir was originally applied to secretaries or administrators, whose powers varied according to their patrons' wishes.

◆ *Inclusive and tolerant*

The Barmakid family, originally a Buddhist priestly family, became prominent under the Caliphs al-Mahdi and Harun al-Rashid. They became generals and provincial governors, tutoring young princes. However, they were not chiefs of the entire administration and relied on the Caliphs' decisions. In 803 CE, Harun al-Rashid executed the leading members of the family. The *Wazir* became the chief of administration in the middle of the ninth century, controlling bureaucracy, nominating provincial officials, and sitting on the Al-mazalim court. The empire's central government was the nerve center, but provinces were not all governed in a bureaucratic manner. Control varied from highly centralised to loosely held suzerainty. The empire was tolerant and inclusive, not monolithic.

### 3.2.4.2 Provincial Government

The provinces directly controlled by the Caliphs were Iraq, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Syria, western Iran, and Khuzistan, which were physically closest to the capital. These provinces were organised to maximise obedience of the officials to the central government and ensure the remittance of tax revenues. The appointment of Governors were limited to short terms, and their careers were at the Caliphs' mercy. Powers of

◆ *Appointment of governors*

provincial government were often divided among several officials, with the governor being the military commander, another appointed by the central treasury for taxation and financial affairs, and another headed the judiciary. The *barid* was responsible for supervising all officials. However, the ideal of frequent rotation of governors, separation of civil and military powers, and inspection by the *barid* was difficult to implement. Governorships were often awarded in payment of political debts to warlords, generals, and royal family members, who had acquiesced in the Caliph's accession or succession plans.

◆ *Administration of regions outside directly administered*

The Caliphate controlled affiliated regions outside directly administered provinces, such as the Caspian highlands, Inner Asian provinces, and North Africa. In some peripheral provinces, the Caliphs appointed a supervising military governor and garrison to collect taxes and tributes. In others, local dynasties were confirmed as "governors of the Caliphs." For example, Khurasan came under the control of the Tahirid family, who paid substantial tributes without central government intervention. Transoxiana under the Samanids was governed similarly, with hereditary governors of Samarqand, Farghana, and Herat without further supervision.

### 3.2.4.3 Local Government

◆ *Tax collection*

Iraq and Egypt had a hierarchical local government structure, with districts called *kura*, *tassuj*, and *rustaq*. The *Rustaq* was the lowest unit, surrounded by villages. Similar structures were found in Khurasan and western Iran. Local government was organised for taxation, with surveys determining land cultivation, crops, and yield. Taxes were collected, local expenses deducted, and the surplus eventually reached Baghdad. Crown lands, including estates of Middle Eastern empires, church properties, and reclaimed wastelands, were not part of provincial tax administration. *Iqta*, or lands, were also excluded from provincial administration. *Iqta al-tamlík* was often ceded for agricultural investment, with a three-year grace period and reduced taxes. *Iqta' Istighlal* was a tax-farm where lands were assigned to individuals who paid a fixed amount to tax the peasantry. The assignee's benefit was the difference between the peasant's payment and the government's.

Grants to the 'Abbasid family, courtiers, officials, and military officers were made to pay off political debts, simplify administration, and reduce the need for collecting revenues



◆ *Problem with tax collection*

in provinces. These grants also reduced the need for surveys and records, allowing for more efficient administration. However, before the mid-9th century C.E, iqtas were assigned with restraint, as they were important concessions of state revenues and powers. Local administration and tax collection faced political problems, as the bureaucracy was limited by ignorance in villages. The state struggled to tax the peasantry without knowing who owned the land, produced, had money, and had land rights. This led to complications in land ownership, water rights, and other legal matters.

◆ *Arrangement for tax collection*

The state brought technical specialists, legal experts, judges, witnesses, and extortionists to villages for tax collection. However, fear and passive resistance were not enough to solve the issue. Local people, including family patriarchs, village headmen, and landowners, played a crucial role in the taxation process. In Iraq and Iran, dihqans included native elites, Arabs, village-dwelling landlords, grain merchants, and money changers. These notables played an intermediary role in the taxation process, handling negotiations, making deals on behalf of the peasants, and paying taxes. The arrangement suited everyone, as the state's presence in villages was crucial for effective tax collection.

◆ *Challenges for empire building*

### 3.2.5 Rebellion

The empire was established after decades of political struggle, relying on the forced subjection of dissident populations. In the Caspian region the rulers of Tabaristan and Daylam, in Inner Asia the semi-independent provinces of Kabul, Ushrusana and Farghana refused tribute or allegiance, obliging the Caliphs to send military expeditions to recover their suzerainty. However, by the reign of al-Ma'mun (813 CE- 833 CE), most of these areas were incorporated into the empire and their rulers and officials converted to Islam. The process of empire building was not smooth and uninterrupted.

◆ *Opposition to Abbasid regime*

After 8<sup>th</sup> century CE, North Africa shifted towards independence, with local ruling houses acknowledging the Caliphate's suzerainty. Arab opposition was significant, with the old military caste resisting the Abbasid settlement. Syrian Arabs rebelled in 760 CE and were defeated. In Egypt, the Abbasids established garrisons at al-Askar, provoking tribal fighting and rebellions. Bedouins in Syria, Arabia, Sistan, Kirman, Fars, Khurasan, and upper Mesopotamia rebelled against the government that restricted their autonomy. Bedouin rebels adopted Kharijism until the ninth century, then Shi'ism became the main expression of tribal opposition to

centralised government. Peasant villagers and mountaineers in Iran continued their opposition to the Abbasid regime.

◆ *Iranian rebellion*

Resistance to the Caliphate in Iran involved syncretistic sects blending Shi'ism and Mazdeism, originating from both Islam and Zoroastrianism. The first Iranian rebellion, led by Bihafarid, a peasant leader, spread in Khurasan in 747 CE-750 CE, advocating for a blend of Muslim ideas and ancient Ahura Mazda worship. The rebellion was suppressed by Abbasid governor Abu Muslim, at the request of Zoroastrian mobads, for it was a threat to the notables and to both Islamic and Zoroastrian beliefs.

◆ *Opposition from Shi'a*

Sunpadh led a rebellion in Nishapur, spreading to Rayy and Qum, and later in Herat, and Sistan. Shi'ism represented the most profound opposition to the Caliphate throughout the 'Abbasid empire. The Shi'a had supported the Abbasid movement before it rose to power, expecting one of 'Ali's heirs to succeed the Umayyads, but the Abbasids disappointed their hopes by seizing the Caliphate for themselves. Thus, in Basra, Kufa, Mecca, and Madina, the Shi'a sparked a number of minor rebellions.

◆ *Government organisation*

In the early tenth century, the Isma'ili movement, a Shi'i offshoot, led to a new wave of anti-Abbasid provincial resistance. The Abbasid empire was a vast regime governed by small communities, each led by notables, including headmen, landowners, and wealthy individuals. These notables were often allied to superiors and patrons with positions in provincial or central governments. Government organisation, communication and tax collection was bureaucratic in form, but the social mechanism that made the organisation work was the contacts between central officials and provincial elites.

◆ *Expectation of passive obedience*

The bureaucracy mobilised the skills and social influence of prominent persons throughout the empire and put these assets at the disposal of Baghdad. This system of alliances was justified as an expression of God's will. By God's will, expressed both in Muslim and in pre-Islamic Middle Eastern terms, the exalted person of the Caliph reigned in expectation of passive obedience from all his subjects. However, not all peoples and provinces of the empire would submit to the imperial order. Mountain peoples, semi-sedentary villagers, peasants, nomads, and segments of the town populations, including strata of the upper as well as the lower classes, refused to accept the system. They denied its legitimacy, and

rebelled against it, though they could not overthrow it. Nor could they be altogether repressed.

◆ *Constant opposition*

The Abbasid regime was locked into constant struggle with its opponents. The Abbasid government was bureaucratic, with central officials and provincial elites forming the social mechanism. The bureaucracy mobilised the skills and social influence of prominent individuals, allowing Baghdad to use these assets. This system was justified as an expression of God's will, expecting passive obedience from all subjects. However, not all peoples and provinces would submit, including mountain peoples, semi-sedentary villagers, peasants, nomads, and town populations. They refused to accept the system, denying its legitimacy and rebelling against it, leading to constant struggle with its opponents.

### 3.2.6 Decline of Abbasids

#### 3.2.6.1 Decline of Central Government

◆ *Conflict on succession*

During Harun al-Rashid's reign (786 CE -809 CE), succession issues became critical. Harun's son, al-Amin, was given the Caliphate and the governorship of Khurasan. After Harun's death, al-Amin attempted to replace his brother, leading to a civil war. Al-Amin was supported by the 'Abbasid army, while al-Ma'mun sought support from independent Khurasanian warlords. Al-Ma'mun defeated his brother and assumed the Caliphate in 813 CE, using a double policy to deal with his opponents and subjects. The Caliphate's goal was to restore legitimacy by manipulating Shi'i loyalties and *Mu'tazili* doctrines to gain control over religious affairs. However, this policy failed, denying the Caliphate significant popular support. To gain control, the Caliph relied on the support of a Khurasanian lord, Tahir, who was appointed governor of Khurasan and general of Abbasid forces. This arrangement, though useful, ultimately defeated the Caliph's goal of integrating provincial notables into the central government. The empire was now governed by an alliance between the Caliph and the most important provincial lord.

◆ *Creation of new military forces*

The Caliphs sought to counter the Tahirids' power and regain control of their provinces by creating new military forces. They introduced the systematic recruitment, training, and employment of slave soldiers, a significant innovation in Middle Eastern history. This institution would characterise many later Muslim regimes. The Caliphs drew inspiration from precedents for employing military forces from

peripheral regions and marginal populations, having relied on servile, client, and slave troops for personal bodyguards since Umayyad times.

The Abbasid military organisation implemented a new system of slave regiments, which strengthened the Caliphs' power. However, the Transoxiana and Turkish soldiers clashed with the Baghdadi populace and former Arab soldiers, leading to bloody clashes. Caliph al-Mu'tasim built a new capital, Samarra, to isolate troops from the masses. However, the new city created further difficulties, as the Caliphs became embroiled in rivalries among guard regiments. The Abbasid Empire experienced significant changes in administration between 861 CE and 870 CE. Officers took control of civilian bureaucrats, provincial governorships, and succession to the Caliphate. Regimental rivalries led to anarchy, with leading officers killed and troops falling into banditry. The use of slave armies further alienated the Caliphate from its populace. Changes in administrative organisation reduced the central government's capacity to control the empire, partly due to army interference and the rise of independent provincial powers.

◆ *Changes in administrative organisation*

In the Abbasid government, high-ranking officers employed their personal followers to perform their duties. To become an accountant or scribe, a young man had to enter the service of a master, live in their household, and become a dedicated personal servant. The bureaucracy became dominated by cliques and factions, whose main interest was to exploit office for private gain. By the late ninth century, the bureaucracy acted on behalf of the personal and factional interests of scribes, leading to the formation of two major factions, the Banu Furat and Banu Jarrah, each based on a wazir and their relatives and clients.

◆ *Cliques and factions*

The Banu Jarrah faction, primarily composed of Nestorian Christians or converts, gained power in the ninth century and influenced state policy. In 852 CE, al-Mutawakkil granted Christian freedom of religion, military service, and church construction, while also granting Nestorian Catholicos full jurisdiction over all Christians. However, these concessions were revoked. The Banu Furat faction, mainly Baghdadi Shi'a, gained control of the government service. Wazirs, appointed and removed by the Caliph, were in charge of administrative bureaus. They would exploit their offices, earn back bribes, and prepare for future hardships through frauds like padded payrolls, false bookkeeping, illegal speculations, and taking bribes.

◆ *Banu Jarrah and Banu Furat faction*



◆ *Tax farming*

The growth of large landed estates in Iraq and western Iran led to a decrease in areas under central administration, with the government dealing more with powerful local landowning notables who reduced the task of administration to collecting negotiated fees. The central government introduced tax farming in these areas, selling the right to collect taxes to tax-farmers, who were guaranteed a fixed revenue a year in advance. To make the arrangement work, strict inspection was essential. Tax-farming was not just a financial arrangement; it was a substitute form of administration, with tax-farmers agreeing to maintain local administration, meet government expenses, invest in irrigation, and support local police. Despite government inspectors trying to protect peasants from abuse, the local government displaced the basic apparatus of local administration, forfeiting control over the revenue-bearing countryside.

### 3.2.6.2 Provincial Autonomy and Disintegration

◆ *Transfer of power to Provincial government*

The central government's military and financial capacities declined, leading to the devolution of provincial powers to peripheral provinces and core provinces. Peripheral provinces, governed by tributary rulers, freed themselves from subordination to the empire, while core provinces became peripheral provinces under semi-independent governors. The devolution of provincial powers occurred in two ways: in some cases, Turkish guard officers usurped governorships and became independent, as seen in Egypt between 868 CE and 905 CE, where the Tulunid dynasty emerged. In other areas, governors weakened the central government's prerogatives, such as ceasing remitting tax revenues or negotiating fixed payments. The decline of central authority also allowed popular resistance to central control, as seen in Iraq's prolonged revolt of Zanj slave labourers.

◆ *Conflict with Saffarids*

In the mid-9th century, the Saffarids led a mass uprising in Sijistan, southeastern Iran, gaining control of Sijistan, Kirrnan, northern India, Khurasan, western Iran, and Iraq. Despite defeat in Iraq, the Caliphate recognised their control of Khurasan and western Iran. The Saffarid victory displaced older landowning and administrative elites. In 900 CE, the Samanid rulers of Transoxiana defeated the Saffarids. The Samanid victory was a significant victory for the Abbasids because the Samanids represented the same landowning and administrative notables who governed the Abbasid empire, and it restored cooperation between a major independent provincial dynasty and the Abbasid central government.

They also defeated the Tulunid dynasty in Egypt and Syria in 905 CE, but could not use these temporary victories to reorganise the empire due to bureaucracy disarray.

◆ *Shi'a's resistance to Abbasid empire*

In the early tenth century, Shi'ism emerged as the primary resistance to the Abbasid empire. Ismailism was spread in various regions, with the Isma'ili's mission adapted to the religious beliefs of the individuals being converted. The movement targeted all classes of the population, including peasants, Bedouins, villagers, Berbers, and upper-class individuals. The true teachings of the faith were not fully presented to everyone, and the Isma'ili religious-political agitation led to the Qarmatian movement, a series of rebellions.

◆ *Revolts in various regions*

Around 900 CE, peasant jacqueries in Iraq and Bedouin revolts in Syria and northeastern Arabia led to the formation of a Qarmatian state in Bahrain. The Qarmatians attacked Basra, Kufa, threatened Baghdad, cut pilgrimage routes, pillaged Mecca, and stole the *Ka'ba*. In North Africa, the Fatimid dynasty founded in 909 CE conquered all of North Africa and Egypt, claiming to be the rightful successors to the Prophet. They were followed by the Umayyad dynasty in Spain and other North African states, debasing the Abbasid dynasty's title and legitimacy. Shi'ism also inspired resistance to the Abbasids in Mesopotamia.

◆ *Amir al-umara*

In 864 CE, Shi'i refugees in Daylam declared their independence from the Caliphate. A Daylamite ruler conquered western Iran, but was killed in 937 CE, and his empire was inherited by Daylamite mercenaries led by the Buwayhid brothers. By 935 CE, the Caliphate lost control of most provinces except around Baghdad. To protect themselves, the Caliphs created the post of *Amir al-umara'* (general-in-chief) in 936 CE divested themselves of power. After a complex struggle, the Buwayhids took control of Baghdad in 945 CE.

◆ *Disintegration of the empire*

The Abbasid empire, which lasted until 1258 CE, was disintegrated into several independent provincial regimes, resulting in significant changes in society. The emergence of a slave military elite and the new *iqta* form of administration led to the transfer of power from old to new elites. The central government staff were increasingly composed of descendants of former scribes, and the bureaucracy became city-based. Bankers became politically important, and a merchant elite emerged as the mainstay of the central government. This led

to the destruction of provincial landowning notables who initially supported the Abbasid empire.

◆ *Decline of economy*

The rise of military warlords, a capital-city-based financial and administrative elite, and new land tenure forms like iqta' assignments and tax-farms led to a new elite in the countryside competing with provincial notables. This new class of large land controllers and landowners displaced small-scale landholders, resulting in extensive political and social changes and widespread economic regression. During the late ninth and early tenth centuries, Iraq's economy suffered due to neglect of irrigation and reclamation projects by the Caliphate. The Tigris region suffered severe damage from warfare, leading to depopulation and agricultural losses. The distribution of iqtas and tax-farms removed incentives for rural productivity. In southern Iraq, slave rebellions led to agricultural losses. Political instability and fiscal exploitation further ruined the countryside. International trade declined due to Qarmatian rebellions, disruptions in the Caliphate, and the Fatimid regime's promotion of an alternative route through the Red Sea and Cairo, further damaging Iraq's commercial prosperity.

◆ *Disintegration*

Mesopotamia, settled by Bedouins in the seventh century, faced economic decline due to pastoralist influence on agriculture. Peasants abandoned land due to raids and excessive taxation in the eighth century. Sedentary life declined in the ninth century under nomadic pressure, and the Hamdanid dynasty reinforced pastoral dominance over sedentary peoples. Egypt owed its decline to the exploitation of the peasantry, while Iran maintained high urban and agricultural development. The Abbasid empire's breakup was a political, social, and economic transformation. It replaced small states with a unified empire, with bureaucratic elites replaced by large-scale landowners and military lords. The empire's decline was exacerbated by economic decline, and its military, administrative, and cultural policies ultimately led to its collapse, resulting in the formation of a new Middle Eastern state and society.

### 3.2.7 Rise of Regional Kingdoms

The Abbasid state's strength declined in the ninth century due to declining control over distant provinces and conflicts between pro-Arab and pro-Iranian factions in the army and bureaucracy. In 810 CE, a civil war between supporters of Amin and Mamun, sons of caliph Harun al-Rashid, deepened factionalism and created a new power bloc of Turkish slave

◆ *Conflict between Shi'a and Sunni*

officers. Shi'a and Sunni orthodoxy competed for power, leading to the emergence of minor dynasties like the Tahirids, Samanids, and Tulunids. Abbasid power was limited to central Iraq and western Iran, and was lost in 969 CE, when the Buyids capture Baghdad. The Buyid rulers retained the Abbasid caliph as the symbolic head of their Sunni subjects, but did not abolish the caliphate.

◆ *Fatimids*

The Fatimids, an Ismaili subset of Shiism, claimed descent from the Prophet's daughter, Fatima, and were the sole rulers of Islam. They conquered Egypt in 969 CE and established the Fatimid caliphate. The rival dynasties patronised Shiite administrators, poets, and scholars. Between 950 CE and 1200 CE, Islamic society was united by common economic and cultural patterns, rather than a single political order or language. Unity was maintained through state separation, Persian as a high culture language, and intellectual dialogue.

◆ *Turkish sultanate*

Scholars, artists, and merchants freely moved within central Islamic lands, facilitating the circulation of ideas and manners. The Muslim population increased significantly, making Islam a distinct religion and cultural system. The rise of Turkish sultanates in the tenth and eleventh centuries added a third ethnic group to Arabs and Iranians. Turks, nomadic tribes from Central Asian steppes, gradually converted to Islam. They were skilled riders and warriors, entering Abbasid, Samanid, and administrations as slaves and soldiers, rising to high positions due to their loyalty and military abilities.

◆ *Ghaznavid sultanate*

The Ghaznavid sultanate, established by Alptagin in 961 CE and consolidated by Mahmud of Ghazni in 998-1030 CE, was a military dynasty with a professional army of Turks and Indians. Their center of power was in Khurasan and Afghanistan, and they saw the Abbasid caliphs as a source of legitimacy. Mahmud, the son of a slave, was eager to receive the title of Sultan from the caliph, who supported the Sunni Ghaznavid as a counterweight to Shiite power. The Seljuk Turks, led by brothers Tughril and Chaghri Beg, entered Turan as soldiers in the Samanids and Qara khanids' armies.

The Seljuks conquered Khurasan taking advantage of the disarray caused by Mahmud of Ghazni's death, and founded Nishapur as their first capital. They later moved into western Persia and Iraq, restoring Baghdad to Sunni dominance in 1037 CE in a significant move, the caliph, al-Qaim, bestowed Tughril Beg the title of Sultan, separating religious and

◆ *Reign of Seljuk brothers*

political authority. The Seljuk brothers, Tughril and Alp Arsalan, ruled together in accordance with tribal notions. Tughril died in 1064 CE, and his nephew, Alp Arsalan, expanded the Seljuks empire to Anatolia. From the 11th to 13th centuries, conflicts between European Christians and Arab states occurred. The Muslim world faced a significant threat from the Mongols in the 13th century, marking the last and decisive assault on settled civilisations.

### 3.2.8 Greek Influence

◆ *Influence of Greek culture*

Persian literature was influenced by Arabic writers, while Greek thought played a more complex role in Islamic civilisation. Greek culture, preserved and understood in the late Roman empire, was vastly varied. Plato's ideas were reflected in his political works and some of his dialogues. Aristotle's logical and scientific works, as well as his ethics and metaphysics, were widely known. However, the majority of the materials attributed to Aristotle and Plato were written centuries after their deaths, when they were reinterpreted in neo-Platonic terms as teachings on a path to spiritual salvation. The Greek heritage encompassed scientific and medical ideas of Galen, pseudo-science of Hellenistic world, alchemy, and semi-mystical ideas of neo-Pythagoreans and Hermetics. The Hellenistic literature transmission relies on ancient academies' survival.

◆ *Hellenistic thought and scientific studies*

Pagan schools, initially in Athens and Alexandria, were dispersed due to the Christianisation of the Roman empire. The Nestorian Church rescued the Athens school, sponsoring Greek works translation into Syriac in Edessa and Nasibin. In the sixth century, it was transferred to Jundishapur, a Sasanian royal city in Fars. In the sixth and seventh centuries, Hellenistic philosophical and scientific studies flourished under Persian and Indian religious and occult conceptions. The Jundishapur school, mainly Nestorian Christians, had a direct influence on Arab-Muslim thinkers. Alexandrian Hellenistic thought also influenced the emerging Islamic culture. The Alexandrian school moved to Antioch, Marw, and Harran, with some scholars being Nestorian Christians and other pagans. It moved to Baghdad in the late ninth and early tenth centuries.

Greek thought, influenced by church and royal patronage, was transferred to Abbasid Baghdad. Hellenistic thought gained attention from Muslims interested in theological questions. Debates between Muslims and Christians at the

◆ *Greek works translated to Arabic*

Umayyad Caliphs taught Muslim thinkers Graeco-Christian or Hellenistic vocabularies, rational argument, and literary methods. Scientific research in Baghdad followed, with Syriac and Greek works translated into Arabic at the Bayt al-Hikma, including Aristotle's logical treatises and Galen's works.

◆ *Translation of scientific works*

The Bayt al-Hikma, a mosque in Medina, had an astronomical observatory. By the mid-9th century, it was replaced by a school of translators led by Hunayn ibn Ishaq, who translated scientific works by Galen and philosophic and metaphysical works by Aristotle and Plato. This school of philologically competent editors created a body of translations and a spirit of critical inquiry, making philosophical studies in the Islamic era rigorous and exact. The most profound impact of Hellenistic culture on Islamic civilisation was in philosophy, which was a movement with a shared vocabulary and commitment to rational investigations, including logic, natural science, and metaphysics.

◆ *Hellenistic philosophy*

In the Muslim era, philosophers addressed theological issues like God's nature, prophecy, ethics, and the relationship between philosophy and scriptural revelation. They were not neutral but a form of religion, aiming for intellectual knowledge and soul reabsorption into the spiritual universe. Philosophical teachings differed from Islamic teachings on resurrection, punishment, world creation, and God's knowledge of universals and particulars. The ultimate goal was to integrate the human soul into the spiritual universe. Hellenistic philosophy, a heritage of rational reflection on metaphysical reality, the physical world, and human beings, challenged the Quranic revelation as a source of complete and infallible truth. The ninth-century philosopher al-Kindi believed in the Quran's primacy and faith over reason as the way to discover religious truths. He believed in the Prophet's superiority over philosophers in knowledge of the divine world and that reason could clarify and extend faith. However, he was not prepared to accept Platonic and Aristotelian opinions, such as belief in creation ex nihilo. Later Muslim philosophers (*Falasifa*) gave philosophy primacy as a means of finding truth and regarded Islam as an acceptable approximation.

Al-Farabi, a prominent figure in Islamic philosophy, posited a supreme, eternal being as the first cause of all things. He connected this supreme being to the world

◆ *Al-Farabi's views*

through a series of emanations, or intelligences, which shaped the spiritual world and the material world. The intellects at different levels mediated between God and the material world. Al-Farabi's view of the human condition was logically related to the universe, as the human being was formed by the spiritual intelligences while also being an object in the material world.

◆ *Developments in Science*

Al-Farabi valued Muhammad as a philosopher rather than a Prophet. Philosophers did not truly reconcile Greek thought with Islam; rather, they attempted to justify their acceptance of Greek thought in terms of Islam. They thought that Philosophy was a higher vision, superior to the revealed but inferior version of truth known as Islam. Greek heritage also included the pursuits of a cosmopolitan aristocracy, who were distant from Islamic religious and cultural trends. Muslim-era scientists demonstrated great talent for direct observation and experimentation, contributing to various fields such as astronomy, mathematics, medicine, chemistry, zoology, mineralogy, and meteorology. Occult sciences, such as alchemy, occult physics, optics, and neo-Pythagorean mathematics, were also cultivated, but focused on esoteric revelations rather than scientific appraisal of the universe.

◆ *Non-theistic spiritual and religious conviction*

Neo-Pythagorean numbers were symbols of a higher reality, aimed at transforming materials and discovering the hidden relation of the material and the immaterial world. In contrast to Islam, which prescribed obedience to the law and devotion to the *Quran*, occult sciences proposed a non-theistic spiritual and religious conviction, replacing Islamic teachings with a focus on knowledge beyond the physical world. Persian and Greek thought significantly influenced court circles by introducing the aristocratic self-cultivated ideal. This ideal required courtiers, administrators, and Caliphs to believe in God, be pious, and aware of the coming judgement. They also required them to be refined, cultivated, learned, and worldly gentlemen, knowledgeable in various sciences, literature, history, philosophy, and religion.

The aristocrat was expected to be gentlemanly, gracious, and sensitive to rank and honour, as well as competent in finance, letter writing, horsemanship, and technical administration. His cultivation included Islamic virtues but also a worldly refinement that justified his claim to power. Court literatures propagated a pre-Islamic concept of the ruler and the empire, with interest in secular aspects of Arabic literature, Persian *adab*, and Hellenistic philosophies

◆ *Court literature*

and sciences. These literatures provided an ethnic concept of political leadership, continuation of the heritage of ancient Middle Eastern kings, and a concept of the universe's structure as the ultimate justification for imperial rule. The patronage of these literatures implied that the Caliph, despite being a Muslim ruler, was legitimised by the non-Islamic heritage of the ancient Middle East.

## Summarised Overview

In the early seventh century, Islam emerged in Arabia, focusing on submission to one God. Prophet Muhammad, a polytheist, became the Prophet and mediator in disputes. Muslims, led by Caliphs, converted most of the Arabian Peninsula and conquered Byzantine and Persian territories. Islam began as a religion of sedentary peoples but gained support from nomads. Muhammad's commitment to monotheism led to conflict with the Quraysh tribe, who feared his followers. Muhammad's Hijra journey to Madina in 6<sup>th</sup> century CE marked a significant moment in the development of Islam. Despite facing threats, he gained followers and established the pattern for Islamic society. He introduced new religious obligations, such as the *zakat*, *Ramadan* fast, *hajj*, and *salat*. Muhammad also unified Arabic-speaking tribes, enhancing women's status, and promoting holy war against unbelievers.

Muhammad established a new political community in Arabia, transforming traditional Arab society. His caliphs, the Muslims, conquered Byzantine and Persian territories, expanding their influence to Spain and India. However, disputes over caliphs threatened their unity. After Uthman's murder, a civil war ensued, but Shi'ite Muslims remained loyal to Muhammad's dynasty. The Umayyad Dynasty, established in 661 CE, was the first Caliphate. They ruled effectively, crushing rebellions and expanding their empire. However, internal divisions and civil wars weakened their hold, leading to their overthrow in 750 CE. In 750 CE, with the help of Persians, Iraqis, and Shi'a destroyed the Umayyad dynasty in the Battle of the Great Zab River and established Abbasid Caliphate. The Abbasids initially ruled the Islamic empire in 750 CE. After ousting the Umayyad Dynasty, they retained spiritual supremacy until 1258 CE. However, cracks in the Arab-dominant framework arose after al-Ma'mun's death, leading to servitude to other parties. Later caliphs attempted to revive their strength. Persian literature was influenced by Arabic writers, while Greek thought played a more complex role in Islamic civilisation. Hellenistic thought gained attention from Muslims interested in theological questions, leading to the translation of Greek works into Arabic at the Bayt al-Hikma. Philosophers addressed theological issues like God's nature, prophecy, ethics, and the relationship between philosophy and scriptural revelation.

## Assignments

1. Examine the rise and growth of Islam. Discuss the role of Prophet Muhammed in the development of Islam.
2. Explain the challenges faced by the Abbasid Caliphate to establish their power. Analyse the reason for the disintegration of the Abbasid Caliphate.
3. Mention the significance of the reign of the Umayyad dynasty.
4. Briefly describe the administrative system under Abbasid Caliphate.
5. Analyse the Greek influence on Islamic civilisation.

## Suggested Reading

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1. Berkey, Jonathan P., *The Formation of Islam: Religion and Society in the Near East, 600–1800*, Cambridge University Press, 2002.
2. Crone, Patricia, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam*, Gorgias Press, 2015.
3. Farooqui, Amar, *Early Social Formations*, Manak Publications, New Delhi, 2019.
4. Hodgson, Marshall, *The Venture of Islam*, University of Chicago Press, 1977.



## Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU





# Abrahamic Religions Conflict and Resolution

## Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful conclusion of this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ examine the origin of Crusades
- ◆ explain the importance of holy place of Jerusalem
- ◆ define the formation of Crusade states and role of Knights Templars
- ◆ explore the impacts of crusades in medieval European society

## Background

From the perspective of Christendom, Islam had made startling advances across the Middle East, North Africa, and even into Europe. By the end of the seventh century, Muslims had taken over the Holy Lands. Under Abd al-Malik, fifth Ummayyid Caliph, Jerusalem was appropriated as a holy place for Islam, and the Dome of the Rock was built on the site of the ancient Hebrew Temple (Most sacred site in Judaism). The 'Dome of the Rock' had been built in Jerusalem to symbolize the Muslim appropriation of the sacred past of Judaism and Christianity. Jerusalem was an axis of communication between this world and the next. It became venerable to Muslims as part of their own prophetic history because Muhammad was believed to have ascended to heaven from Jerusalem. Refugees waged a literary and religious campaign about the merits of Jerusalem and the importance of  *Jihad*.

The construction of 'Dome of the Rock' signifies the political and religious appropriation of the past by a new faith embodied in a new empire. It asserted the sovereignty of the Caliph as the conqueror of old religions and empires and the benefactor of Islam. The 'Dome of the Rock' was built on the legendary site of Abraham's intended sacrifice of Ishmael, the favoured son in Muslim tradition, for the Muslims meant to forge a direct connection to the common ancestor of monotheism, thereby rendering Islam as venerable as the other religions. To appropriate and modify the Jewish temple area was to assert the primacy of Islam and its supersession of the previous monotheistic religions.

## Keywords

Pilgrimage, Jerusalem, Dome of the Rock, Crusades, Fatimid Caliphs



# Discussion

## 3.3.1 Origin of Crusades

### ◆ *Passion for Pilgrimage*

The Crusades had their origin in a general European counter-attack against Muslim powers in the Mediterranean. The Reconquista had begun in Spain; by 1085 CE Toledo was in Christian hands. In 1087 CE Pisa and Genoa destroyed Mahdiya, the political and commercial capital of the Muslim in North Africa. The Normans conquered Sicily between 1061 CE and 1091 CE and moved on to attack the Byzantine empire. Furthermore, the papacy was eager to reconcile the Greek and Western churches, and to support the Byzantine empire against the Seljuqs Turks. It wanted to establish new states under its auspices in the eastern Mediterranean in order to spread the influence of the Latin Church among Eastern Christian peoples. Alongside the political currents ran a strong passion for pilgrimage. The Saljuq invasions raised European anxieties about access to Jerusalem and generated a passionate desire to secure the holy city in Christian hands.

### ◆ *Administration of Holy Land*

By sea and by land European warriors set out for the east. Between 1099 CE and 1109 CE, they captured Edessa, Antioch, and Tripoli, and established the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Baldwin was the elected king of Jerusalem, ruling as a feudal lord with the support of the Knights Templar and Hospitallers. The Latin clergy took control of Christian administration in the holy land, but the Eastern Christian sects were not eliminated.

### ◆ *Phases of Muslim Counter attack*

The Muslim response to the Crusades was slow to develop, but when it did, it eventually led to the unification of Syria and Egypt into a single Muslim state. Gradually, however, Muslim counter-attack developed which may be described in three phases. From 1099 CE to 1146 CE was the phase of Mesopotamian leadership. The Atabegs of Mosul, who had nominal authority over Syria, wished to create their own small empire in Mesopotamia and northern Syria. In 1128 CE, a new governor of Mosul, Zengic seized Aleppo (Syria) in 1144 CE. He managed by chance to capture Edessa. When Zengi died in 1146 CE, however, Mosul and Aleppo were severed from each other to make independent principalities for his surviving sons. Throughout this period, the Mosul campaigns were not primarily directed against the Crusaders, but were aimed at winning territory from



either Muslim or Christian rulers whenever possible. In fact, Christian and Muslim princelings often allied to resist Zengi's encroachments.

◆ *Nur al-Din*

A second phase began with the succession of Nur al-Din (1146 CE-1174 CE) in Syria, who inherited Aleppo. Nur al-Din made the capture of Damascus his main goal. In 1147 CE, he helped relieve the siege of Damascus by the second Crusade. In 1147 CE, a local rebellion expelled the ruling Seljuks governors, and the populace of the city turned it over to him. This unexpected turn of events reveals the underground growth of a new Muslim communal and religious spirit, frankly anti-Christian and opposed to the Crusader presence.

◆ *Consolidation of power in Syria*

By the middle of the twelfth century this sentiment had become a popular force, and this helps to account for the surrender of Damascus to Nur al-Din, who was now seen as the Muslim prince who would redeem Jerusalem. In fact, the reign of Nur al-Din in Damascus from 1154 CE to 1174 CE did not concentrate upon the redemption of Jerusalem but upon the consolidation of his little kingdom in Syria. He made treaties with the Byzantines and the Latins, and concentrated upon the conquest of Mosul, which he took in 1170 CE, thus fulfilling a family ambition to reunite Syria and Mesopotamia; he also entered into the struggle for control of Egypt. Nur al-Din sent his general Shirkuh and Shirkuh's nephew Salah al-Din (Saladin) with Muslim forces to take control of Egypt in 1169 CE. In 1171 CE they removed the last of the Fatimid Caliphs, and established a Sunni regime. The histories of Egypt and Syria would be joined until the nineteenth century.

◆ *Advent of Saladin*

The advent of Saladin to the Sultanate of Egypt opened a third phase of the Muslim response to the Crusades. From Egypt, Saladin brought Syria and Mesopotamia into a unified Muslim state. In 1174 CE, he took Damascus; in 1183 CE, Aleppo; in 1186 CE, Mosul. He then defeated the Crusaders at the battle of Hattin (1187 CE) and brought an end to the Latin occupation of Jerusalem. At the siege of Acre (1192 CE), however, Saladin made a truce with Richard the Lion-Heart which allowed the crusading principalities to maintain their foothold on the coasts of Palestine and Syria.

## 3.3.2 Crusades

### 3.3.2.1 First Crusade(1096 CE –1099 CE)

#### ◆ *Entry of Seljuk Turks*

The events leading to the First Crusade began with the entry of the Seljuk Turks into Asia Minor, the Muslim world had splintered into numerous small states during the 900s. Weakened by disunity, those states were easy prey for the fierce Seljuk Turk Sunni muslims, inspired by religious zeal to take over both Islamic and infidel (unbeliever) regions. By the 1050s, the Seljuk Turks had captured Baghdad, subjugated the Abbasid Caliphate, and begun to threaten Byzantium.

#### ◆ *Battle of Manzikert*

The Byzantine Emperor Romanus IV took all the steps to avert the army attack of the Turks. Unable to muster Byzantine troops, Emperor Romanus had to rely on a mercenary army made up of Normans, Franks, Slavs, and even Turks. This motley force met the Seljuks at Manzikert in what is today Eastern Turkey. The Seljuks routed the Byzantine army and captured the Emperor. The battle of Manzikert (1071 CE) marked the end of Byzantine domination in the region. Gradually settling in Asia Minor, the Turks extended their control across the empire and beyond, all the way to Jerusalem, which had been under the Muslim control since the seventh century and most recently had been under the rule of the Shi'ite Fatimids.

#### ◆ *Appeal to Pope Urban II*

In 1095 CE, the Byzantine Emperor Alexius I (Alexius Comnenus) ( 1081 CE- 1118 CE) appealed for help to Pope Urban II, hoping to get new mercenary troops for a fresh offensive. Pope Urban II (1088 CE-1099 CE) chose to interpret the request in his own way, he offered an indulgence, the forgiveness of sins, to all who made the difficult trek to the Holy Land to fight against the Muslims. The pains of the trip would substitute for ordinary penance.

#### ◆ *Truce of God*

Certainly, Pope Urban II hoped to win Christian control of the Holy Land. He was also anxious to fulfil the goals of the 'Truce of God' by turning the crowd at Clermont into a peace militia dedicated to holy purposes. Finally, Pope Urban's call placed the papacy in a new position of leadership, one that complemented in a military arena the position the popes had gained in the church hierarchy.

Inspired by local preachers, men and women, rich and poor, young and old, lay people and clerics heeded Pope Urban's call to go on the First Crusade (1096 CE -1099 CE). Between 60,000 and 100,000 people abandoned their homes



◆ *Call for First Crusade*

and braved the rough journey to Jerusalem. They went to fight for God, to gain land and plunder, or to follow their lord. Although women were discouraged from going, some crusaders were accompanied by their wives. Other women went as servants; a few may have been fighters. Children and old people, not able to fight, made the cords for siege engines giant machines used to hurl stones at enemy's fortifications. Historians call these loosely affiliated groups the People's (or Peasants') Crusade.

◆ *Expedition under Peter the Hermit*

The armies of the First Crusade were organised not as one military force but rather as separate militias, each commanded by a different individual authorised by the pope. There were also irregular armies also participating in the Crusade. Some of the participants were peasants, others were knights. Pope Urban II commissioned Peter the Hermit to command a military expedition to Jerusalem. Inspired by the charismatic orator Peter the Hermit took off for the Holy Land via the Rhineland.

◆ *Pogroms of Jews*

The crusaders wanted to kill Jews, who, like the Muslims, did not accept Christ's divinity. By 1095 CE, three cities of the Rhineland, Speyer, Worms, and Mainz had especially large and flourishing Jewish populations with long-established relationships with the local bishops. The People's Crusade joined by local nobles, knights, and townspeople vented its fury against the Jews of the Rhineland. These Jews had to choose between conversion or death. Many Jews in Speyer found refuge in the bishop's castle, but at Worms and Mainz hundreds were massacred. Similar systematic persecutions of Jews took place a half century later, when the preaching of the Second Crusade led to new attacks on the Jews.

◆ *Capture of Nicea*

After they had vented their fury in the Rhineland, some members of the People's Crusade continued through Hungary to Constantinople, where the Byzantine Emperor Alexius Comnenus promptly shipped them to Asia Minor. They managed to defeat a Turkish army that attacked from nearby; then, surrounding Nicea and besieging it with catapults and other war machines, they took the city in 1097 CE. Most of the crusaders then went toward Antioch, which stood in the way of their conquest of Jerusalem, but one led his followers to Edessa, where they took over the city and its outlying area, creating the first of the crusader states. Meanwhile, the main body of crusaders took Antioch after a long stalemate. From Antioch, it was only a short march to Jerusalem. Quarrels among Muslim rulers eased the way. In

early June 1099 CE a large force of crusaders amassed before the walls of Jerusalem; they attacked, breaching the walls and entering the city.

◆ *Formation of States*

The main objective of the First Crusade was to wrest the Holy Land from the Muslims and subject it to Christian rule had now been accomplished. The leaders of the expedition did not give the conquered territories to Emperor Alexius but held on to them instead. By 1109 CE, they had carved out several tiny states in the Holy Land. Because these states were formed by conquest, they were treated as lordships. The rulers granted fiefs to their vassals, and some of these in turn gave portions of their holdings as fiefs to their own vassals.

◆ *The Knights Templars*

The first Crusade produced a new and militant kind of monasticism: the Knights Templar. The Templars vowed themselves to poverty and chastity. But unlike monks, the Templars, whose name came from their living quarters in the area of the former Jewish Temple at Jerusalem, devoted themselves to warfare. Their first mission – to protect the pilgrimage routes from Palestine to Jerusalem soon diversified. They manned the town garrisons of the crusader states, and they transported money from Europe to the Holy Land. In this way, the Order of the Templars became enormously wealthy (even though individual monks owned nothing), with branch “banks” in major cities across Europe.

### 3.3.2.2 The Second Crusade (1147 CE-1148 CE)

◆ *Fall of County of Edessa*

The presence of the Knights Templar did not prevent the Seljuks from taking the county of Edessa (A Crusader state) 1144 CE. This was the beginning of the slow but steady of the Crusader states. It sparked the Second Crusade (1147 CE-1149 CE), which attracted, for the first time, ruling monarchs to the cause: Louis VII of France and Emperor Conrad III in Germany. (The First Crusade had been led by counts and dukes.) St. Bernard, the charismatic and influential Cistercian abbot, was its tireless preacher. There was little organisation or planning going into the Second Crusade. The emperor at Byzantium was hardly involved. King Louis VII and Conrad had no strategy of their own. All the armies were crippled by the Turkish attacks. Furthermore, they largely acted at cross-purposes with the Christian rulers still in the Holy Land. At last, the leaders met at Acre (in Israel) and agreed to storm Damascus, which was under the Muslim control and a thorn in the side of the Christian king of Jerusalem. On July 24,

1148 CE, they were on the city's outskirts, but, encountering stiff resistance, they abandoned the after five days, suffering losses as they retreated. Thus the Second crusade ended in failure.

◆ *Divorce of Louis VII and Eleanor*

The Second Crusade had one decisive outcome. It led King Louis VII to divorce his wife, Eleanor, the heiress of Aquitaine. He was disappointed that she had provided him with a daughter but no son, and he suspected her of infidelity. After the pope "dissolved" their marriage that is, found it to have been uncanonical in the first place Eleanor promptly married Henry, count of Anjou and duke of Normandy. This marriage had far-reaching consequences, as we shall see, when Henry became King Henry II of England in 1154 CE.

### 3.3.2.3 Third Crusade (1189 CE- 1192 CE)

◆ *Conquest of Saladin*

The four decades after the failed attack on Damascus witnessed a gradual erosion of the strategic position of Outremer. By 1186 CE the Ayyubid Sultan, Saladin (1169 CE-1193 CE), surrounded the Outremer. The rhetoric of this new, cohesive Muslim power placed great emphasis on *jihād* (war against infidels). This coincided with Outremer's financial weakness, lack of western aid and a descent, in the kingdom of Jerusalem, into debilitation and political instability.

◆ *Battle of Hattin*

On 4 July 1187 CE Sultan Saladin annihilated the army of Jerusalem at the battle of Hattin in Galilee. Within a year almost all the Frankish ports and castles had surrendered or been captured; Jerusalem fell on 2 October 1187 CE. Resistance was reduced largely to Tyre, Tripoli, and Antioch. The response in the west was massive. By March 1188 CE, the kings of Germany, France, and England had taken the cross with many of their leading nobles. King William II of Sicily had sent a fleet to the east. Preaching and recruitment commenced and campaign strategies were carefully developed. A profit tax, known as the 'Saladin Tithe', had been instituted in France and the British Isles. In 1189 CE, King of Jerusalem, recently released from Saladin's captivity, began to besiege the vital port of Acre. For the next two years, this became the focal point of Christian military effort.

In May 1189 CE, Frederick Barbarossa, king of Germany and the Holy Roman Emperor, set out at the head of an army of 100,000 men. After successfully forcing a passage through



◆ *Frederick Barbossa*

the unhelpful Byzantine Empire and the hostile Turkish Anatolia, Frederick's crusade ended in tragedy when he drowned while trying to cross the River Saleph in Cilicia on 10 June 1190 C.E. Demoralised, his huge army disintegrated, only a small rump reaching Acre.

◆ *Philip II and Richard I*

Although English and French contingents began sailing eastwards in 1189 CE. King Philip II of France (1180 CE-1223 CE) and the new king of England, Richard I decided to travel together. Richard's skills as a general and administrator and his vast reserves of money soon elevated him to the central role in the crusade. In 1191 CE King Philip II sailed for Acre and Richard's larger forces were blown off course to Cyprus. With elements in his army being mistreated by its independent Greek ruler, Richard I took the opportunity to conquer the island in a lightning campaign in May. Cyprus remained in Christian hands until 1571 CE, Richard finally arrived at Acre on 6 June 1191 CE. After a further six weeks' hard pounding, the city surrendered. On 31 July 1191 CE Philip II abandoned the crusade.

◆ *Attack on Arsuf*

Richard I used force to try to frighten Sultan Saladin into restoring the kingdom of Jerusalem. The conflict was prolonged because neither side achieved sufficient military advantage to persuade the other to make acceptable concessions. On 7 September 1191 CE, Richard repulsed Saladin's attempt to drive the crusaders into the sea at Arsuf. Twice Richard with his troops reached at about twelve miles of Jerusalem only to withdraw each time, arguing he had insufficient men to take or keep the city. Richard unable to develop a scheme to attack Saladin's power base in Egypt, military stalemate dictated a diplomatic conclusion. The treaty of Jaffa(1192 CE) was signed between Sultan Sladin and King of England Richard.

◆ *Impact of Third crusade*

The treaty of Jaffa (1192 CE ) allowed access to Jerusalem for pilgrimage and freedom of movement between Muslim and Christian territories. Richard sailed from Acre and Saladin died less than six months later. While failing to recapture Jerusalem, the Third Crusade determined the pattern for later eastern crusades. Thereafter, support for the reconstituted kingdom of Jerusalem, which lasted until 1291 CE, came exclusively by sea.

### **3.3.2.4 Fourth Crusade(1202 CE- 1204 CE)**

The thin strip of Palestinian coast restored to Christian rule by the Third Crusade proved a commercially viable

◆ *Pope Innocent call for Lord's war*

base for a restored, if reduced, kingdom of Jerusalem over the following century, although the Holy City itself only returned to Christian rule between 1229 CE and 1244 CE. After recovering much of the coast, the Franks found protection in a sequence of truces with Saladin's heirs in Egypt and Syria. Until the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, western aid came largely on its own terms rather than in response to a specific crisis. The inception of the Fourth Crusade rested with Pope Innocent III (1198 CE–1216 CE) who envisaged all Christians as to some degree obliged to pursue the Lord's War. Pope Innocent regarded the recovery of the Holy Land as a central and urgent objective.

◆ *Eastern Expedition in 1198 CE*

Pope Innocent III proclaimed a new eastern expedition in August 1198 CE. By 1201 CE, Pope Innocent's call had been answered by a group of powerful northern French barons, including Count Baldwin of Flanders in the eastern Mediterranean. Egypt was chosen as the target of the expedition. The crusaders were forced to seek transport from Venice.

◆ *Conquest of Zara*

A deal was struck between the Fourth Crusade and the Doge of Venice to provide ship passage to the Holy Lands, thereby avoiding the arduous 2000-mile trek by land via Constantinople. Merely half of the necessary costs were available to the Crusaders when it came time to transfer a Crusader Army of 30000. The ever-helpful Doge proposed to let the Crusaders earn some of their passage by taking control of Zara, a rival trading city in Dalmatia. Zara was successfully captured by the Crusaders in November 1202 CE. Because Zara was a Christian city, it should be highlighted that the Crusaders did not have the support of the Pope for this action.

◆ *Leadership of Alexius*

By then, elements in the crusade and Venetian leadership were considering a further diversion to Constantinople in support of Alexius Angelus, son of the deposed Byzantine Emperor Isaac II. Young Alexius promised to subsidize the crusaders' attack on Egypt if they helped him take the Byzantine throne from his usurping uncle Alexius III. Many crusaders were disgusted by the plan and withdrew, but the leadership and the bulk of the army sailed with young Alexius and the Venetians to Constantinople, arriving in June 1203 CE.

The Crusaders grew angrier with Alexis for taking so long to fulfil his duties to them. After Alexius IV was assassinated in February 1204 CE by his rival Byzantines, the Crusaders

◆ *Capture of Constantinople*

captured Constantinople once more in April 1204 CE., this time robbing, plundering, and destroying everything in their way. The new Byzantine emperor was crowned as Baldwin, the count of Flanders. The capture of Constantinople was not an accident; it had been considered by every major expedition since 1147 CE. Successive popes had voiced disappointment at Greek failure to contribute to the recovery of the Holy Land.

### 3.3.2.5 The Fifth Crusade(1217 CE- 1221 CE)

◆ *The papal bull Quia Maior*

More than its predecessors, the Fifth Crusade reflected the institutionalisation of crusading in Christian society as envisaged by Innocent III. In the context of a wider process of semi-permanent evangelisation, crusading acted as one manifestation of Christian revivalism. The papal bull *Quia Maior* (1213 CE) issued by Pope Innocent II and extended access to the crusade remission of sins, the indulgence, to those who sent a proxy or provided a proportionate sum of money in redemption of their vow. The Fourth Lateran Council of the western Church authorised universal clerical taxation to support the cause. A massive and carefully orchestrated campaign of recruitment, propaganda, and finance produced a series of expeditions to the east between 1217 CE and 1229 CE. The bulk of recruits came from Germany, Central Europe, Italy, and the British Isles instead of France, the traditional heartland of Crusade enlistment. After early contingents landed at Acre in 1217-18, including one led by King Andrew of Hungary, the focus of military operations turned to Egypt when, in 1218 CE, the crusaders attacked Damietta, a port in the eastern Nile Delta. The city fell only after a difficult and costly siege in November 1219 CE.

◆ *Evacuation of Damietta*

Egyptian proposals to exchange Damietta for Jerusalem were rejected as improper and unworkable by a group led by the Cardinal Legate, Pelagius, whose control of the purse strings gave him considerable authority within the crusade army. The westerners refused to accept orders from the king of Jerusalem, John of Brienne (1210 CE- 1225 CE). However, the commander chosen by the pope, Frederick II of Germany (1211 CE- 1250 CE.), remained in Europe. In the summer of 1221 CE, to prevent the crusade disintegrating through inactivity, the Christian army moved south towards Cairo, only to be cut off by floods, harassed by the Egyptians, and forced to surrender on 30 August. Damietta was evacuated on 8 September 1221 CE. Recruiting continued almost unabated



despite the setback in Egypt. In 1277 CE, Frederick II finally embarked for the east, only to turn back immediately because of sudden and serious illness.

◆ *Attempts of Frederick II*

It is possible to argue that, out of all the Crusades, the Sixth Crusade was the most successful and unique. Frederick II, the Holy Roman Emperor took charge. Frederick withdrew from the Fifth Crusade due to illness, although he had previously intended to join. Frederick was excommunicated by Pope Gregory IX in 1227 CE, for breaking his Crusader oath, which he had signed during his coronation in 1220 CE. Exploiting the rivalries between the rulers of Egypt and Syria, in February 1229 CE, Frederick agreed a treaty with the sultan of Egypt that restored Jerusalem to the Franks. The city was to be open to all and the Haram al-Sharif, the Temple Mount, to remain under the Islamic religious authorities (not dissimilar to the arrangements in Jerusalem after 1967). However, unpopular for his high-handedness, when Frederick embarked for the west from Acre on 1 May 1229 CE, he was pelted with offal. With a brief interruption in 1240 CE, Jerusalem remained in Christian hands until captured by Khwarazmian raiders, Turkish freebooters in 1244 CE.

### 3.3.3 Impact of Crusades

◆ *Commercial revolution*

The success of the First Crusade was a mirage. The European toehold in the Middle East could not last long. Numerous new crusades were called, and eight major ones took place between the first in 1096 CE and the last at the end of the thirteenth century. But most Europeans were not willing to commit the vast resources and personnel that would have been necessary to maintain the crusader states, which fell to the Muslims permanently in 1291 CE. Although the crusades stimulated trade a bit, especially enhancing the prosperity of Italian cities like Venice, the commercial revolution would have happened without them. On the other hand, modern taxation systems may well have been stimulated by the machinery of revenue collection used to finance the crusades.

◆ *Growth of Trade*

The pope and the Western European kingdoms gained influence as one of the numerous consequences of the Crusades. Europeans also started trading with the Middle East. Trade grew when Western Europeans started to purchase items like sugar, lemons, and spices. Naturally, more trade resulted in a wider spread of cultures. Arab mathematics, medicine, art, and architecture were imparted to Crusaders and traders. Western European knowledge

grew because the Arabs were exceedingly advanced in science and mathematics.

◆ *Change in relation*

In the Middle East, the crusades worsened but did not cause Islamic disunity. Before the crusades, Muslims had a complex relationship with the Christians in their midst taxing but not persecuting them, allowing their churches to stand and be used, permitting pilgrims into Jerusalem to visit the holy sites of Christ. In many ways, the split between Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims was more serious than the rift between Muslims and Christians. The crusades, especially the conquest of Jerusalem, shocked and dismayed Muslims: "We have mingled blood with flowing tears," wrote one of their poets, "and there is no room left in us for pity".

◆ *Cultural Impacts*

The Crusades gave rise to some institutions of culture that we consider to be distinctly medieval. The nearly entirely illiterate Crusader knights quickly started identifying themselves with geometric patterns and insignia. Later on, this custom gave rise to an intricate system of coats of arms and heraldic symbols. During the Crusades, romantic and imaginative writing also flourished. Even though our impression of the Middle Ages is mostly that of stone castles, the Middle East contributed much of Europe's expertise in heavy stone masonry and the building of castles and stone cathedrals.

◆ *Religious conversion*

In medieval Islamic societies, Christians were regarded as the 'People of the Book' (*ahl al-kitab*) since they had their own scripture (the New Testament or *Injil*). Christians were granted safe conduct (*aman*) while venturing into Muslim states as merchants, pilgrims, ambassadors and travellers. These territories also included those which were once held by the Byzantine Empire, notably the Holy Land of Palestine. Normans, Hungarians and some Slavs had been converted to Christianity, and the Muslims alone remained as the main enemy.

◆ *Change in socio-economic organisations*

There was also a change in the social and economic organisation of western Europe in the eleventh century which contributed to the hostility between Christendom and the Islamic world. The clergy and the warrior class were making efforts to ensure political stability as well as economic growth based on agriculture and trade. The possibilities of military confrontation between competing feudal principalities and a return to economic organisation based on plunder were contained by the Peace of God

movement. All military violence was forbidden inside certain areas, near places of worship, during certain periods considered sacred in the Church's calendar, and against certain vulnerable social groups, such as churchmen and the common people. The Peace of God deflected the aggressive tendencies of feudal society away from the Christian world and towards the 'enemies' of God.

◆ *Anti-semitism*

Western Europeans did not entirely benefit from the Crusades. The Crusades had the negative consequence of encouraging Christians to murder Jews merely for being non-Christians. Anti-Semitism is the term for this hatred and persecution of Jews. In actuality, during and after the Crusades, there was a rise in religious intolerance. In the two centuries of the Crusades, Muslims killed thousands of Christians and Christians killed thousands of Muslims.

## Summarised Overview

In this unit we have discussed the Muslim invasion of Christian lands that led to the beginning of the crusades. The problematic position of Jerusalem which eventually led to the Crusades. The Crusades had their origin in a general European counter-attack against Muslim powers in the Mediterranean. The Muslim counter-attack developed which may be described in three phases. From 1099 CE to 1146. CE was the phase of Mesopotamian leadership. A second phase began with the succession of Nur al-Din (c. 1146-74) in Syria, who inherited Aleppo. The advent of Saladin to the Sultanate of Egypt opened a third phase of the Muslim response to the Crusades. Crusades were, in essence, military expeditions initiated by the medieval papacy to recapture the Holy lands from the Muslim control.

## Assignments

1. Briefly discuss the role of Nur al Din in the Crusades.
2. Discuss significance of the battle of Manzikert (1071 CE) and the end of Byzantine domination in the region.
3. Explain the course of crusades and its impacts in Christian world.
4. Discuss the institutionalisation of crusading in Christian society.

## Suggested Reading

1. Bennett, Judith, *Medieval Europe, A Short History*, Mc Graw Hill Publications, New York, 2011.
2. F.Thomas,Madden, *The Concise History of the Crusades*, Rowman Little field, New York, 2014.
3. Jones, Robert, *The Crusades : A Brief History(1095-1291)*, Georgia, 2004.

## Reference

1. Frankopan, Peter, *The Silk Roads, Bloomsbury*, London, 2015.
2. Hunt, Lynn, et.al., *The Making of the West Peoples and Cultures*, Macmillan Education, London, 2012.
3. Lapidus, Iran.M, *A History of Islamic Societies*, Cambridge University Press, 2014.
4. Tyer, Christopher, *The Crusades: A very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, NewYork, 2006.

### Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.



SGOU

# Trade and Commerce

**BLOCK-04**



## Routes and Networks

### Learning Outcomes

Upon the completion of the unit, the learner will be able to:

- ◆ identify the geographical extent and the significance of major medieval trade routes and networks
- ◆ evaluate the impact of the rise of Islam on the oceanic trade
- ◆ get familiarised with the role of prominent trading cities such as Venice and Florence in these trade networks
- ◆ understand the impact of medieval trade networks in the diffusion of ideas and cultures.

### Background

The medieval world witnessed an era of interconnectivity through expanding trade routes and networks that cut across geographical boundaries, promoting economic prosperity, cultural exchange and technological development. The key routes and networks such as the Indian Ocean trade network, the Silk Route and the Mediterranean trade routes had an important place in shaping the medieval economy. The most important development in the trading world was the rise of Islam towards the beginning of the seventh century. The rise of Islam made a large impact on oceanic trade not only in the Indian Ocean but also in the Mediterranean. During this period Muslims dominated the oceanic trade which continued for more than three centuries.

In the 13th century, a significant shift occurred in world trade that marked the end of the centuries of decline and isolation following the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The period witnessed a revival of commerce between Christian and Muslim territories, despite the ongoing conflicts. It revitalised the Mediterranean as a crucial link between Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. As Europe gradually recovered from the hardships of invasions and warfare, European merchants sought to exchange goods such as cloth and metalworks for luxurious silks, spices, and other exotic goods from regions including the Muslim world, the Byzantine Empire, China, and India. This trade not only stimulated economic growth but also facilitated cultural exchange and technological diffusion across distant lands.

In this unit, we will explore the significance of major trade routes and networks. Let us also discuss the developments that occurred in the trade system of the medieval world and how it changed the course of world history.



## Keywords

Medieval Trade, Indian Ocean Trade, Silk Road, Mediterranean trade, Maritime Trade

## Discussion

### 4.1.1 The Growth of Islam and Maritime Trade

Following the establishment of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century, dynastic rule was established throughout the region. Islam spread throughout Asia, Africa, and the Byzantine Empire. It had an impact on these regions' politics. The growth of Islam during the medieval period was one of the major events that greatly affected maritime trade. Arab and Muslim traders were crucial to the creation of the extensive trading network for many centuries. Actually, the Indian Ocean's coastal regions between East Africa and the China Sea were a hub of intense trade long before the Europeans arrived, with Muslim merchants and seamen holding the majority of these trade routes. The general direction and structure of the trade in the Indian Ocean are remarkably clear from the middle of the 7th century to the end of the 15th century. Transcontinental traffic stretched from South China all the way to the eastern Mediterranean.

#### ◆ *Rise of Islam*

The Byzantine Empire had trade connections with Slavic nations in the ninth century, and it progressively opened up the Russian markets. Byzantium was the epicenter for the production of high-end goods and was well-known for its trade in Constantinople's goods, which included silk goods and perfumes. The expansion of the trading network in Eastern Europe signified the ninth and tenth centuries. The Slavic lands were frequently visited by Arab merchants. Slave trade in furs, honey, wax, and slaves developed among the Slavic states of Moravia, Bohemia, Poland, and Russia. Russia became the major broker for trade and the clearinghouse for other Baltic and Slavic nations. Novgorod emerged as the principal hub for trade with the Baltic during the twelfth century. Fur, silver, and beeswax played significant roles in this trade.

#### ◆ *Trade in Eastern Europe*



◆ *Commercial movements*

In actuality, two significant commercial movements crossed the borders of continental Europe in the early medieval period : one occurred in the western Mediterranean and the Adriatic, and the other in the Baltic and North Sea. The Scandinavians dominated the latter, and their maritime explorations extended beyond the western hemisphere. Sweden, England, Scotland, and Ireland turned to Russia, while the Danes and Norwegians threw themselves on the Carolingian Empire. Scandinavians frequently traveled across the central Russian watershed in the ninth and tenth centuries on their way from the Baltic to the Black Sea and then on to Byzantium. The export of honey, furs, and slaves to the Near East was made possible in large part by these traders. They brought in textiles, metalwork, wine, and spices. As a result, the west had access to oriental luxury items like textiles, oil, and spices, and later on, the west received exports of iron, lumber, and slaves.

◆ *Trade activity in Western Europe*

The interregional trading activity at this time was concentrated around the periphery of Western Europe. The Frisians were the first intermediaries in North-Western European trade. Along the Rhine flowed their trade. They traded a variety of commodities. To pay for the wine and grain they had purchased, they hauled clothing and fish up the river. In the ninth and tenth centuries, travelers from the Baltic to the Black Sea and then on to Byzantium frequently traversed the watershed in central Russia. The export of honey, furs, and slaves to the Near East was made possible in large part by these traders. They brought in textiles, metalwork, wine, and spices. As a result, the west had access to oriental luxury items like silk, oil, and spices, and later on, the west received imports of iron, lumber, and slaves.

◆ *Trade in Low Countries*

Trade was also significant in the Low Countries region. Despite being the pioneers in the development of cloth manufacturing, the Flemish faced fierce competition from Brabant(Belgium) during the thirteenth century. It caused the Flanders to produce cloth of a distinctly average quality. Wool was imported from Spain and England to satisfy the expanding Mediterranean region's demand.

The Americas had vast trading networks during this period. Huron fur traders were significant in the Lawrence Valley fur trade. Mesoamerica engaged in extensive trade with, Silver and turquoise brought to Tenochtitlan (Mexico City) from New Mexico. In exchange, the Aztecs exchanged a variety of goods amassed from various locations. They acquired gold

◆ *Trade networks in Americas*

from Nicaragua, cacao from Honduras or El Salvador, gold from Costa Rica, jaguar pelts and honey from the Yucatan, chocolate from Chiapas, and rubber from Vera Cruz. The Mayan involved in the trade of upscale products like skins and leather goods. The very nature of commerce was altered when Spain and Portugal established colonial rule over this region in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

◆ *Trade networks of Venice*

### 4.1.2 Trade Through the Mediterranean

The expansion of Islam into the Mediterranean basin prevented some western Christians from traveling across the sea, but not all of them. By 1100 CE, Venice—already a formidable maritime force—had established her hegemony over the entirety of the eastern sea coast, which she claimed as her own and held for centuries. The Venetian merchant class began trading in Egypt in the 12th century, but they really began to encroach on Muslim territory in the 13th century. They were allowed trade privileges in both Egypt and Syria by the Ayyubid rulers of Egypt.

◆ *Legacy of crusades*

Despite the fact that there was a pause due to the Church's ban on trade with Egypt (following the Crusades), when the Mamluks took over from the Fatimids in the middle of the 13th century, they were given new rights. The Venetians established trade with Cyprus, Armenia, Persia, and the Black Sea region in the fourteenth century. (The king of Cyprus's renewed Crusade in the second half of the 14th century caused a setback in trade). The Venetian trade was limited to the coastal regions, from which Jewish and Muslim traders transported goods overland to the interior. The Italian towns gained mastery over the Mediterranean as the most important and enduring legacy of the Crusades.

◆ *Role of Italian traders*

Italian traders regularly sailed into Flanders and English harbors, bringing with them an endless array of oriental and Levantine goods. In the vast international markets of Central and Northern Europe, Italian traders interacted with men from the North, including Germans, Flemings, English, and French, on a much more frequent basis. Throughout the Medieval period, several centers gained prominence. Champagne in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Bruges in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, and Antwerp, Genoa, in the fifteenth century. These European traders traded Italian and Italian-borne goods for other commodities.

The primary trade routes in and out of northern Europe were dominated by northern hemisphere products, which



◆ *Trading goods*

were bulkier, more basic, and ultimately more essential than fine goods and luxuries. Food items and raw materials found their way into the Mediterranean trade from even further south. The necessities of life, on the other hand, accounted for nearly all of the trade in northern Europe. Long-distance trade provided the impetus for the development of medieval commerce in Europe. The goods traded in long distance trade were spices. European ships primarily sailed to Syria, where large quantities of spices were transported by caravans from Arabia, India, and Southeast Asia. But rice, oranges, apricots, figs, raisins, perfumes, medicines, and dyes were among the goods imported into Europe during the 13th century. Cotton was also added to these.

◆ *Venice and Florence*

Additionally, raw silk was imported at the close of the 12th century. The Italians provided the ports of the Levant with weapons and timber in exchange for all of these imports, and Venice received slaves for a certain period of time. However, woolen products quickly overtook other exports, with fabrics from Flanders and northern France replacing Italian fustians starting in the second half of the 12th century. Her wool exports, however, did not propel English shipping forward. These were mostly transported by continental ships, and by the thirteenth century, the Teutonic order had practically gained monopoly status. Therefore, it becomes evident that industrial products were far less common than agricultural and food commodities like spices, wine, corn, salt, fish, and wool if we look at the goods that supported maritime or international trade during the medieval period. The only product that led to a significant export was cloth, first from the Low Countries and then from Florence.

◆ *Intercontinental Trade*

### 4.1.3 Trade Network in East Asia

The four main products of Eastern Civilization that formed the basis of the medieval trade with Asia were silk, porcelain, sandalwood, and black pepper. These goods were traded for metal goods, incense, thoroughbred horses, ivory, and cotton textiles. In terms of trade with China, Persian Gulf ships were already making their way to Canton in the early eighth centuries to purchase Chinese silk textiles, among other goods. China considered the Arab world to be the largest retailer of valuable and diverse goods. Sumatra and Java also followed intercontinental trade. The three areas—Southern Arabia, the Persian Gulf, and Southeast Asia—remained the main hubs of pre-modern long-distance trade in luxury goods for more than a millennium because they were rich sources

of gemstones, pearls, incense, perfume, sandalwood, and spices.

◆ *Sources of luxury goods*

The Mongols conquest of China in 1280 CE strengthened maritime ties of China. Marco Polo (1298 CE) and Ibn Battuta (1377 CE) both tell us that the two city ports of Hangchow and Zaiton were thriving during this time. Ships plying the ocean crowded in Zaiton. From the Zaiton ships were loaded with pepper that could be sent for transshipment to Alexandria. Upon visiting the city in 1343–1446 CE, Ibn Battuta believed it to be the world's greatest port, with a volume of trade surpassing the commercial traffic of Quilon and Calicut in the Malabar coast.

#### 4.1.3.1 The Silk Route

◆ *Experiments of Ming in Economic relations*

The Ming dynasty's (1368 CE–1644 CE) economic policies in China had conflicting results for maritime trade. Yung-lo (1402–24 CE), the third Ming Emperor, attempted a novel approach in China's trade relations with the trading nations of the Indian Ocean. Between 1404 CE and 1433 CE, it took the form of an extremely ambitious and made series of seafaring expeditions, but these were eventually abandoned in 1433 CE. The ensuing Ming emperors were resolved to bar foreigners from China's seacoasts. They imposed an embargo on Chinese traders in their exports to foreign countries. Nonetheless, the Ming foreign trade persisted in a number of ways, chiefly via smuggling expeditions to the Philippines, Tongking, and Malacca.

◆ *Silk Road*

The most well-known historical trade route connecting the Roman Empire and China, the two greatest ancient civilisations, is the Silk Road. Beginning in the first century CE, silk was traded from China to the Roman Empire in exchange for wool, silver, and gold that came from Europe. The Silk Road not only promoted trade but also developed into an essential conduit for the dissemination of knowledge, technology, religion, and the arts. Its numerous trading hubs and significant hubs for intellectual exchange included Samarkand, which is now in modern-day Uzbekistan.

◆ *Travels in Silk Road*

In the Silk Road most traders travel along 4000 miles since it was uncommon for them to travel the entire distance. The Silk Road was abandoned when the Roman Empire collapsed in the fourth century CE. It was not used again until the Mongols brought it back into use in the thirteenth century. One of the first Europeans to travel to China was the Italian adventurer Marco-Polo, who traveled through the Silk Road in the thirteenth century.



#### 4.1.4 Trade Network in Indian Ocean

##### ◆ *New developments in Indian Ocean*

Nonetheless, from the end of the 10th century to the middle of the 15th century, there were significant shifts in the course of trade in the Indian Ocean. The Abbasid Caliphate's downfall and the Fatimids' ascent in Egypt caused the long-distance trade route to change from Baghdad and Damascus to Aden and Fustat. Gujarat was subjugated by the Turkish Sultans of Delhi in 1303–1404 CE, bringing Islamic social and political power to the coastal towns of India. Approximately concurrently, the Indonesian archipelago's coastal kingdoms and trading ports started to embrace Islam, a process of conversion that lasted for the following three centuries. Parallel to the changes occurring in the Christian half of the Mediterranean were these new developments in the Indian Ocean.

##### ◆ *Change and continuity*

India's maritime trade throughout the medieval period was distinguished by both continuity and change. Drugs, spices, Malabar teak wood, precious stones, and a wide range of other exotic luxuries were transported westward, just as they had in the past. Its exports to the Indian markets were mainly restricted to strategic war animals, spices, medications, rare items, toys, and exotic textiles. The growth of maritime activity in the eastern waters of the China Sea and the Indian Ocean brought about significant changes in the pattern of trade during the early medieval era. The trade of textile products expanded due to the presence of Indian traders in Southeast Asia in earlier centuries under strong Indian and Buddhist influence.

##### ◆ *Trade between India and Indonesia*

In terms of trade between India and Indonesia, Indonesian raw materials and spices played a significant role in the Indian Ocean trade. Muslim traders in the Indian Ocean controlled the majority of the trade with these communities in Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula. Muslims who came to settle on the Indonesian littoral were mostly from Gujarat. Bengal exported a significant amount of fabric to the Indonesian market.

##### ◆ *Arabian Sea Trade*

Additionally, there is proof that Indian traders traded with the Horn of Africa and that the Arab peninsula's communities relied largely on Indian imports. Nonetheless, a significant amount of the westerly trade was directed towards farther-off markets, specifically to Cairo and Old and New Hormuz, with the intention of being redirected towards farther-off overland markets in Iran, the West, Russia, and Central Asia.

◆ *Trade of staple foods*

In addition to the trade in luxury goods, novelties, and spices, a number of basic commodities were exchanged in order for the communities living along the Indian Ocean coast to survive. Among the basic goods produced in India, teak wood was exported for use in ships operating in the Arabian Sea and Persian Gulf due to its exceptional qualities for shipbuilding. Communities in the Persian Gulf, South Arabia, the Maldives Islands, and various other regions of the Malay Peninsula relied on the export of surplus grains, primarily rice, from coastal areas of India as a staple food. Cotton fabric and staple food grains were exported from Gujarat, Coromandel, and Bengal.

◆ *Exploration of Vasco da Gama*

#### 4.1.4.1 Portuguese Trade in the Indian Ocean

Regarding the primary imports into India coming from the west, it seems that nearly every port on the southern side of the Persian Gulf and the Hadramawt coast has been involved in the export of horses to India. A new era in the history of oceanic trade began with the discovery of a direct maritime route around the Cape of Good Hope that led to Asia. The Portuguese under Vasco da Gama signaled the start of a new oceanic trade era in medieval Europe. The Portuguese sought to control the trade with Asia by force in addition to trying to monopolise the supply of spices to Europe.

◆ *Necessary conditions for trade*

The Portuguese plan could not have succeeded without two things: first, a definite and total naval superiority over Asian shipping; and second, the construction of a few strategic outposts where men would be left in charge of the naval fleets' trading activities in the Indian Ocean, acting as strategic bases for the fleets. But the real foundation of the Portuguese maritime empire in the Indian Ocean region was not laid until Albuquerque captured Goa from the Bijapur Sultan in 1510 CE. Subsequently, Goa was established as the primary Portuguese administrative center in the East, and shortly after, in 1511 CE, Malacca was taken over by the Portuguese, who used it as their entry port into Southeast Asia and to dominate the region's sea routes.

◆ *Fort construction*

The Portuguese plan to build forts in strategic locations to control trade in the Indian Ocean was essentially accomplished in 1515 CE with the conquest of the port of Hormuz, which is located at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. That was not the end for the Portuguese. They built several more forts along the littoral of the Indian Ocean, including

some in East Africa, the Moluccas, and on the Indian coasts of Konkan and Malabar. In the end, they had a fleet of a hundred ships in the region in addition to a chain of about fifty forts and other fortified locations across the Indian Ocean.

◆ *Pepper trade*

Spices were undoubtedly the main item that the Portuguese were looking for in Asia, but pepper ranked first. In fact, pepper was the main aim of the Portuguese Asian trade in its early years, making up as much as 95% of the total Asian cargo in terms of physical goods and 85% in terms of value during the first two decades of the 16th century. The majority of the spices, including nutmeg and cloves, came from the Moluccas, while cinnamon from Sri Lanka. Pepper was primarily imported from Malabar, India.

#### 4.1.4.2 Cartaz System

◆ *Introduction of Cartaz system*

An important part of the Portuguese involvement during the 16th century was their attempt to regulate and tax trade that Asian merchants conducted in the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese had the biggest influence on trade with Asia through their cartaz system. The primary instrument for this was the passport, or cartaz with the support of armadas (naval fleet). The Estado da India's (the State of India; functioning on behalf of the Portuguese crown) policies benefited greatly from the inferior naval power of the Asian states.

◆ *Working of Cartaz system*

The Portuguese introduced a system known as cartaz, under which every Asian ship was obliged to take a cartaz or passport from the port under Portuguese control. It gave the ship permission to set out on a particular journey. The ports of call were also listed, and they usually involved stopping at a port under Portuguese authority to pay taxes before continuing on to their destination. A ship's crew would either be executed or sent to the galleys if one was discovered operating without a cartaz. Once more, a ship could be seized if it disobeyed the terms stated in it, even if it was carrying a cartaz. On the other hand, a cartaz only costs a very little amount.

#### 4.1.4.3 Qafila System

The Portuguese introduced the so-called qafila, or caravan system, on India's western coast in the latter part of the 16th century. The major goals of trade and commerce were to prevent Malabari pirate attacks on these ships and to ensure that ships carrying cartazes could not avoid

◆ *Qafila system*

calling at Portuguese-controlled ports and paying customs duties on their goods. The ships that operated between the designated points had to sail in a group under the escort of a Portuguese fleet under this arrangement. However, a lot of Indian traders were hesitant to sign up for the qafilas, call at Goa to pay customs fees, and engage in essentially coerced trade. The Portuguese escort fleet was therefore required to serve two purposes: first, to protect the merchant ships from pirates, and second, to make sure that none of them managed to trade outside of the Portuguese system.

◆ *Principal items of the Portuguese*

Though some other varieties were also exported in the early 16th century, pepper was the main spice that the Portuguese exported to Europe. Despite the Portuguese occupation of Malacca (1511 CE), the majority of the pepper was obtained from the Malabar region (and later from Kanara as well) on India's southwest coast. India consequently turned into the primary Asian trading hub for them. China and Japan were among the other Asian countries that only gained quantitative significance in the context of intra-Asian trade. The Portuguese also made an attempt to control the horse trade monopoly. Arab traders controlled a sizable portion of the horse trade prior to their arrival. The best horses came from Arabia and Persia, so these horses were imported from the Persian Gulf region.

◆ *Trade routes*

The longest and most opulent route was from Aden to Malacca via Gujarat or Malabar, where the goods entering the Red Sea included cotton, indigo, spices, and drugs. These are the main trade routes in the Indian Ocean and the important commodities traded at the turn of the 16th century. The European woollens, silk, and bullion made up the imports. Gujarat, which took most of the bullion, supplied the majority of the clothing and indigo. A portion of the pepper and cinnamon were imported from Sri Lanka and Malabar via Cochin. In exchange for pepper, mace, nutmeg and cloves from eastern Indonesia and silk and porcelain from China, Malacca received cloths from India and bullion from the Red Sea.

◆ *Trade goods*

An additional important sea route, controlled by the Gujaratis, carried gold, ebony, ivory, and slaves from East Africa in exchange for food, clothing, and beads. Horses, pearls, Persian silks, and carpets arrived via a different route from Hadramawt and the Persian Gulf via Hormuz. Bengal supplied food and clothing in the Bay of Bengal. Clothes

and yarns were exported by Coromandel. Precious stones and cinnamon were produced in Sri Lanka to the south, and precious stones and metals were exchanged for cloth in Pegu to the east.

◆ *Indian exports*

Due to their heavy reliance on Malacca, frequent trips to Sumatra, and close ties to the Javanese port of Grise, Indian traders remained a significant force in Southeast Asia at the end of the 15th century. A few things about India's exports to the markets in the Indian Ocean are noteworthy. First, of all the textiles that India exported in large quantities during this time, the vast majority were inexpensive, coarse piece goods that were exported throughout seaborne Asia and were used for daily wear. Second, a significant portion of India's exports were staple foods like rice, wheat, pulses, oil, and ghee (clarified butter), which was highly sought after in the Indian Ocean region. The main regions with excess grain were Bengal, Orissa, and the coast of Kanara. They provided food not only for the along the Indian coast, such as Malabar and occasionally Surat, but also for cities like Malacca, Hormuz, and Aden.

◆ *Characterisation of Indian Ocean trade*

Remarkably, part of J. C. Van Leur's argument about how the Indian Ocean trade was characterised in the early modern period is actually refuted by this evidence. Van Leur emphasised that luxury goods with high value but small quantities were exchanged in Asian trade. Meilink Roelofz, Ashin Das Gupta, M. N. Pearson, Sushil Chaudhury, and Michel Morineau, among others, have skillfully refuted this. Regarding exports, a great deal of mundane goods were also traded in addition to luxury items, and in fact, these made up the majority of India's exports.

#### **4.1.4.5 Influence of Portuguese Trade on Indian Overseas Trade**

◆ *Reorientation of Gujarat maritime trade*

There is little doubt that the Portuguese control of the Indian overseas trade in Gujarat had some effects, resulting in as it did in the reorientation of Gujarat's maritime trade in the 16th century. As we have seen earlier, at the turn of the trade and commerce in the Medieval world, Gujarati overseas trade stretched in two main directions: the Red Sea and Malacca. But in the next hundred years, the Red Sea became much more important than Southeast Asia.

Thus one of the major changes in the Indian Ocean in the 16th century was the increasing dominance of the Gujaratis in the Red Sea area while their trade in southeast Asia was

◆ *Portuguese contributions*

marked by a slide over the period. And the Portuguese contribution in these shifts can hardly be ignored. In fact, the Portuguese were not able to bring about radical changes in routes, products or productive techniques at any level. They could do nothing except divert trade in some goods and force the Indian traders to pay extra customs duties. The Portuguese system, at most, manipulated but could not transform.

◆ *Portuguese control in Malabar*

The Portuguese control in most parts of India was much less evident than in Gujarat so that the powerful Chettiyar merchants of Coromandel were hardly affected at all. Even in Malabar region where the Portuguese control was both tight and irksome, their control could often be circumvented. To W. H. Moreland, the advent of the Portuguese ushered a new era in the region. Van Leur, who emphasised that even in the 16th century, Asian maritime trade continued to be of vital importance. He argued that the Portuguese failed to control even the vital pepper and spice trade.

◆ *Volume of spice trade*

Reiterating Van Leur and Niels Steensgaard have shown that there was no dramatic increase in the volume of pepper and spice export by oceanic route to Europe before the export of these commodities by the Dutch and English East India companies in the early 17th century. Even more certainly more pepper was being carried by Gujarati ships from Acheh to the Red Sea at the end of the 16th century than was being taken by the Portuguese made through Cape to Lisbon. An estimate by L. F. Thomaz puts the Portuguese export of cloves to Europe over the whole of the 16th century at only one-tenth of the total production in Moluccas.

#### **4.1.5 Establishment of European Companies to India**

◆ *Expansion in overseas trade*

Indian overseas trade in the 17th and first half of the 18th century underwent a considerable expansion compared to the position in the 16th century. It is to be noted that the importance of the Red Sea trade for the Indian maritime trade remained a significant feature of the Indian Ocean during this period, to be modified thereafter in favour of a renewed emphasis on Chinese trade. India's foreign trade as a whole witnessed a tremendous growth in this period as a result of the tripartite participation of the Dutch, English and the French.

It was the vast market for spices in Europe and the high profit derived from it by the Portuguese that prompted the

◆ *Establishment of trading companies*

establishment of the English East India Company in 1600 CE and Dutch East India Company in 1602 CE. The French East India Company came into being later, only in 1664 CE. Among other European companies, the Ostend, Swedish and Danish companies began their trade only in the early 18th century and that too on a very modest scale. However, it was really the two giants, the Dutch and the English East India companies that accounted for an overwhelming proportion of trade through the 17th and first half of the 18th centuries.

## Summarised Overview

Oceanic trade in the medieval world gave rise to large scale interaction between Europe and Asia. The trading activities greatly influenced the society, economy and polity of these two regions. After the rise of Islam in the Arabian peninsula, for almost three hundred years, the maritime trade was dominated by Arab seamen and merchants. This trade was mainly responsible for uniting the two arteries of long distance trade between the Indian Ocean and Mediterranean. From around the 11th century onwards, the Europeans started to gradually replace Arabs as the dominant maritime traders. The early lead was taken by Italian merchants. Shortly, thereafter the Portuguese managed to emerge as the leaders in overseas trade. During this period India emerged as one of the important centres of maritime trade.

## Assignments

1. Discuss the role of Islam in shaping maritime trade during the medieval period.
2. Examine the patterns of maritime trade in the Indian Ocean during the medieval period.
3. Describe the role of Portuguese in oceanic trade and its influence on medieval Europe.
4. Explain the influence of silk route and its role in the dissemination of knowledge, technology, religion, and the arts in Europe.

## Suggested Reading

1. Conrad, Annenberg and Harry W. Pearson, (eds.), *Trade and Markets in the Early Empires*, The Free Press, New York, 1957.
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3. \_\_\_\_\_, *The New Silk Roads: The Present and Future of the World*, Bloomsbury paperbacks, 2018.
4. Mansura, Haider, (ed.), *The Silk Road: Trade, Caravanserais, Cultural Exchanges and Power Games*, Aryan Books International, 2014.
5. Mathew, K.S., *Mariners, Merchants and Oceans: Studies in Maritime History*, Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2023.

## Reference

1. Abu-Lughod, Janet L., *Before European Hegemony: The World System AD 1250- 1350*, OUP, USA, 1991.
2. Hodgson, Marshall, *Venture of Islam*, University of Chicago Press.
3. Polanyi, Karl., *The Great Transformations*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1990.

## Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.



SGOU



## Anti-Feudal Tendencies

### Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful conclusion of this unit, learners will be able to:

- ◆ analyse the perspectives of various scholars regarding the decline of feudalism
- ◆ discuss the development of various crafts in medieval world
- ◆ examine the emergence of urban centres in the medieval world

### Background

Revival and expansion of trade and consequent growth of towns has been conceived by some scholars as the dominant cause for the decline of feudalism. Level of technology, agricultural productivity, demographic changes and transformation of rural scenarios are some other issues which were considered important factors which contributed to the decline of feudalism in varying degrees. This Unit will explore the different perspectives of scholars regarding the decline of feudalism. It also examines craft manufacturing and emergence of the guild system. It also discusses the rise and growth of urban centres.

### Keywords

Feudalism, Craft, Guild, Urban Centres, Skilled Labour, Capitalism, Malthusian theory, World System theory

### Discussion

◆ *Feudal system*

The feudal system involved specific forms and structures, with obligations binding lords, vassals, and peasants. The governing principle was acknowledgement of obligation and fidelity to the lord. Fiefs were varying in size and public authority, with elaborate rules governing inheritance. Peasantry within a manor had stratification, with some enjoying rights and others subjugated. Cultivators were



subjected to heavy land tax and cesses. The institution of knights emerged to protect manors and suppress dissent. As we already discussed the feudalism and its features in the first block, here we examine the decline of feudalism.

◆ *Control over feudal lord*

Henry Martin argues that feudalism concealed weapons that could be used to control its own lords. When feudal lords became too assertive, kings sought control, with support from middle classes and freemen. These middle classes, including traders and businessmen, provided money for independent armies, helping to bring the nobles under control. The discovery of gunpowder and cannons also reduced lords' dependence on the kings and reduced their subjection.

◆ *Trade and commerce*

The growth in trade and commerce led to the liberation of serfs, contributing to the decline of feudalism. This growth led to the creation of new cities and towns, providing new work opportunities. Serfs could become freemen by staying away from their manors for more than a year, as per feudal laws. However, the rise in trade led to increased use of money and inflation, ultimately undermining the feudal order.

◆ *Crusades*

The Crusades significantly contributed to the decline of the feudal system by teaching Europeans the use of gunpowder from Muslims, which undermined the importance of feudal castles and made it impossible for feudal lords to defy kings. Many feudal lords died during the Crusades, forcing them to sell charters of liberties to towns they once controlled, resulting in more serfs gaining freedom. The Crusades also opened up trade between Europe and Constantinople and Alexandria, leading to the development of important cities. Merchants and artisans sought freedom from feudal lords, either purchasing it or obtaining it by force. Cities established their own armed militias and built high-turreted walls to protect themselves. The restoration of strategic points by the Crusades from the 11th century revived trade and contributed to the decline of feudalism.

Feudalism required significant manpower, but the Hundred Years' War between England and France in 1332 CE led to a military buildup, undermining the manorial system and increasing the value of commoners. The Great Famine struck Europe in the 14th century, causing millions of deaths and ending the period of growth and prosperity from the 11th to the 13th centuries. The Hundred Years' War ended with the Black Death, a bubonic plague that claimed

◆ *Black death*

a third of Western Europe's population. This led to declining agricultural output and a new challenge for feudalism, with labourers relocating to larger cities. The 14th century demographic crisis disrupted the manorial arrangement due to technological limitations in agricultural productivity, the Great Famine, and the Black Death, leading to a population crash. Favourite lords sought to expand production through warfare, demanding more tribute from serfs. Many serfs rebelled, moving to towns, buying land, or entering favorable contracts to repopulate their estates.

◆ *Political changes*

Feudalism was a coercive system that limited individual liberties, with ancient laws tying peasants to the land. However, over time, individual rights gained prominence, particularly in England. *The Magna Carta* and Edward I's parliamentary membership expanded legal rights, making agricultural servitude seem inexcusable. By the 1350s, war and disease reduced Europe's population, but peasant labor became valuable. Serfs were heavily taxed on wages, leading to revolts in various countries. Richard II promised to abolish serfdom, but it ultimately died out in the next century. The end of feudalism meant the end of feudalism itself, as Europe's manors could no longer function without a labor supply. As feudalism faded, it was replaced by early capitalist structures of the Renaissance. Landowners turned to privatized farming for profit, laborers demanded better wages and additional liberties, and urbanisation began, leading to the cosmopolitan worldview of the Renaissance.

◆ *Discussion on decline of feudalism by Henri Pirenne*

### 4.2.1 Theories Regarding the Decline of Feudalism

Belgian historian Henri Pirenne, in his 1920s and 30s books, *Medieval Cities: Their Origin and the Revival of Trade, Economic and Social History of Medieval Europe*; and *Mahomet and Charlemagne* emphasised the role of trade in the rise and decline of feudalism. He argued that long-distance trade, or "grand trade," was the driving force of flourishing civilisations, and its disruption halted the progress of civilisation. Pirenne's work highlights the importance of trade in medieval history. European civilisation in antiquity thrived on trade across the Mediterranean, serving as an economic engine and conduit for cultural exchange. However, the Muslim-Arab invasions in the seventh century disrupted trans-Mediterranean trade, leading to the capture of key sea entry points and control of Sardinia, causing the European economy to shift inwards and become ruralised. The economic equilibrium of the ancient



world was disrupted by the break-up of petty trade and the end of urban life, which relied on long-distance trade. This led to feudalism, which became dull. However, the Crusades in the eighth century liberated Europe, reviving 'Grand trade' and bringing urban centers back to life. This marked the beginning of the end of feudalism, as city life made a man free.

◆ *Trade/feudalism dichotomy*

Pirenne argued that feudalism and trade were completely opposed and could not coexist. This event marked a turning point in the understanding of European feudalism, inspiring historians to emulate and discuss it for many years. The feudalism/trade dichotomy had a significant impact beyond Europe, influencing the development of Indian feudalism and Near Eastern feudalism which closely followed its principles. Pirenne's thesis significantly influenced history-writing by expanding its scope to encompass society, focusing on specific causes to explain feudalism's rise and decline. This led to its questioning and eventual rejection, particularly its central thesis, the trade or feudalism dichotomy.

◆ *Dobb's view*

Maurice Dobb, a Marxist economic historian, challenged the thesis of the rise of capitalism by examining the decline of feudalism. In 1946, Dobb published *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, which emphasised the importance of trade in an economic system. Dobb argued that trade alone could not alter any economic system, as it could subsist with slavery, feudalism, capitalism, or any other. He referred to Frederick Engels' observation that the revival of trade in Eastern Europe in the 17th and 18th centuries led to the "second serfdom," which was considered the hallmark of feudalism. Dobb believed that trade and feudalism were compatible, as they were the hallmarks of feudalism.

◆ *Internal crisis*

Dobb's perception of the decline of West European feudalism was its internal crisis, a theory shared by Marxists. In the eleventh century, crusaders pushed Arabs back into the Near East, introducing them to Oriental luxuries like perfumes, silks, and spices. These crusaders turned traders and sold these items back to European aristocrats at high prices. This change altered the cultural and economic scenario, as the aristocracy became enamored with these luxuries and would pay any price. The longing for low volume high-value trade between Western Europe and the Middle East led to a crisis of resources at home. Landowners' incomes became inelastic due to plateauing land productivity due to low technology. As demands and expenditure increased,

incomes remained static. However, there was a way to raise resources by squeezing peasants further, as they were the primary producers of wealth in the agricultural economy.

◆ *Revival of cities*

Dobb shares Pirenne's concept of the revival of the city as a factor in the rise of Western Europe. However, he does not establish causal links between the city's rise and the rise of trade. Instead, he assumes that the city provided alternative employment opportunities for impoverished peasants, leading to class struggle as they fled the countryside to escape landlord demands. The feudal system was a three-way struggle between lords, serfs, and urban bourgeoisie. The lords were left helpless by the flight of impoverished peasants, leading to the collapse of feudalism. Trade played a minor role in the struggle, and the city and urban bourgeoisie aided in this decline.

◆ *Takahashi's view*

Dobb questioned the 'Pirennean feudalism' or trade dichotomy and instead established compatibility between the two. The publication of 'Studies in the Development of Capitalism' sparked an international debate, with Paul Sweezy, a prominent Marxist economist, generally supporting the Pirennean thesis and trade/feudalism incompatibility. Dobb responded, and other Marxist scholars, including Japanese historian Kohachiro Takahashi, introduced another perspective. Takahashi argued that capitalism did not emerge from feudalism through the rise of the bourgeoisie alone, but rather from the state, rather than the capitalist class, in Japan after the Meiji restoration.

◆ *Different view on decline of feudalism*

The debate on the decline of feudalism was published under the title 'The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism' in 1952. A new volume with the same title was edited by R.H. Hilton and published again in 1978. The central issue remained the role of trade and town in the decline of feudalism. John Merrington contributed to the new edition, addressing varying views about town and country in the transition to Capitalism. He did not support the view that town and trade were the chief agency of the dissolution of feudalism. The debate demonstrated that there was no single Marxist view and that Marxists could hold differences among themselves.

Guy Bois, French Marxist historian, also argued for the compatibility between trade and feudalism. Bois established a causal link between the two, though he was not directly involved in the debate and his book was first published in

◆ *Guy Bois's view*

French and later translated into English. In his book, 'The Transformation of the Year One Thousand: The Village of Lournand from Antiquity to Feudalism', the author examines a village in France during the transition from antiquity to feudalism. He argues that the development of trade in the village reinforced feudal ties rather than weakening them. The author does not follow Engels' lead and focuses on the land that formed the heart of feudalism around the 18th century.

◆ *Development of town*

During the debate on trade as the dissolvent of feudalism, participants often appeared divided on their views. Pirenne's opinion of the low level of technology and productivity of land and labour in medieval Europe was shared by Dobb, Hilton, and others. They also believed that the town was a critical element in the dissolution of feudalism and was external to the feudal system. Dobb assumes that urbanisation must have occurred and acted as a magnet for impoverished peasants as a source of sustenance and shelter. It is time to examine these propositions about 'low technology' and the town as the extraneous dissolvent of feudalism.

◆ *Neo-Malthusian explanation*

In the 1960s and 70s, a neo-Malthusian explanation of the decline of feudalism emerged. Malthus believed that natural resources could sustain a certain population, and when the population exceeded this, famines, pestilences, and wars occurred to bring the population back to the level. Historians like Emanuel Le Roy Ladurie argued that medieval Europe's growing population exceeded the sustainability level of agriculture, leading to the Black Death and famines, disrupting the equilibrium and leading to the transition to capitalism. This theory influenced the understanding of the decline of feudalism and the role of natural resources in human history.

◆ *Criticism of Malthusian theory*

The Malthusian theory, which explains the collapse of feudalism, has been criticised for its assumption that resources are inflexible and can only sustain a certain population level. Critics argue that resources can be enhanced through better technology and management, and the same amount of land can yield higher output with better cultivation methods. They argue that the assumption that population levels in medieval Europe exceeded agriculture's capacity is fallacious and distracts from social factors arising from social structure.

◆ *Robert Brenner's view*

In the 1970s and early 1980s, the British journal 'Past and Present' initiated a new debate on the transition to capitalism. In 1976, American historian Robert Brenner started a new debate with his essay 'Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe'. Brenner emphasised the superiority of classical Marxist methodology in analyzing history through class struggle, despite not directly discussing the decline of feudalism. The debate aimed to explain the different paths taken by Britain and France into the world of capitalism. The problem formulation in the article has a classic Marxist frame of reference. The debate following the article was not limited to Marxist historians, and disagreements were not bound by ideological loyalties. The entire set of papers was published in 1985.

## 4.2.2 Crafts and Guilds

### 4.2.2.1 Crafts

◆ *Geography of Medieval Europe*

Medieval Europe, spanning the 7th to 15th centuries, was diverse and underwent multiple changes, influencing craft production. Geographically, Europe had abundant arable land, natural resources like coal, iron, and water, and was situated in the middle of the land hemisphere, surrounded by water and connected by sea. However, climatic conditions varied across regions. Agriculture was the main source of income, but production varied across Europe. For example, Italy had scattered fertile land, while the Low Countries had an identical vegetation pattern.

◆ *Demographic changes*

Historians describe Europe's political and economic organisation as feudalism, with its coercive mechanism shaping rights and statuses differently across regions. Land and resources were the main income sources, and trading activities were part of it. By the eleventh century, demographic changes, urban growth, societal stratification, and political and religious structures influenced these changes. Carlo M. Cipolla in his analysis has explored factors of production based on input in Europe during Medieval times. He has listed labour, capital and natural resources under it. During the period under study demographic patterns were bound to affect availability of labour. The growth in population from the eleventh century meant that on the one hand there was demand for more commodities and on the other hand, labour was also available. In rural areas both skilled and unskilled labour was available and more women were employed as labour.

◆ *Growth of urban centres*

Urban centres grew alongside a rich consumer class, capital, and incentives for skilled artisans. Italy became a Renaissance center, with city-states attracting wealth and intellect. London was a hub for multiple craft activities, with a donative inscription from Edward III mentioning 27 crafts. In Germany, rulers initiated town establishment and monastic burghs developed around towns and rural districts. This growth was evident in Italy, where city-states became centers of Renaissance. Urban centers became hubs for trade, with local authorities granting privileges to traders and craftsmen. From the accession of Otto I of Saxony to Otto III's death (931CE-1002CE), Germany established twenty-nine new markets through privilege grants.

◆ *Technological development*

Carlo M. Cipolla explains that physical capital was created through the production of goods, with fixed capital being evident in mills. This investment was made possible by dominant individuals representing political, religious, and economic powers. Absolute monarchies in Spain, France, and England in the 15th century allowed for increased production and economic activity. Technological developments from the sixth century facilitated this process. Watermills and windmills were used to increase production, with evidence dating back to the third century. Europe's natural resources were abundant, enabling the expansion of agriculture, sheep rearing, and the textile industry. Spain, England, Italy, and the Low Countries, particularly England, exported wool initially. Water resources were crucial for trading, and the Thames river in England was a lifeline for trade and commerce. The 'Age of Discovery' also saw inter-regional connections. Mineral resources were also abundant, but their use through mining relied on technology and skills.

◆ *Development of craft*

During medieval Europe, numerous crafts flourished, utilising local and inter-local resources and employing multiple tools and technologies. While many flourished in rural areas, the majority of craft work concentrated in urban centers, highlighting the importance of local and inter-local resources in shaping production.

### **Textile Industry**

Cloth making in Europe dates back to the Roman Empire, with sheep rearing land producing cloth from every sheep-raised area. Woolen cloths were primarily produced due to weather conditions, with each region having unique features. Renaissance Italy developed dyeing and finishing skills,

◆ *Development of production of cloth*

while southern Italy established a large woolen industry using local wool. In the Low Countries, native raw materials were sourced from pastures of Artois, French Flanders, and Hainault, with madder from France for dyeing. Imported wool from England also played a role in the textile industry. The textile industry in England was widespread, with raw materials raised at home and weaving being the main household occupation. It was the first industry to be regulated by the state and had various growth stages, including domestic, guild, and factory systems. The industry experienced a decline in the 12th century, and the growth of the Flemish cloth industry was limited by the emergent English industry.

◆ *Technology used in textile industry*

Textile manufacture is one of the oldest crafts in societies, with various types of clothing produced worldwide for local consumption. In the medieval period, India was a major producer of cotton textiles, producing over 100 varieties and exporting large quantities to Asia and Europe. The textile industry used two methods for decorating fabrics: *batik*, a wax-protecting technique, and *patola*, a dyeing process where yarn is dyed before weaving. These techniques ensured the emergence of patterns on both sides of the fabric, making it a popular choice for local consumption.

◆ *Carpet making*

In the Arab world, combing was used for wool weaving, with cotton carded using a bow and done on a loom. Carpet making was a major craft in Central Asia and the Islamic World, with a vertically placed loom and undyed wool warp. Children working on carpets crouched on a plank, raised as the work progressed. Between each line of wool stitches, the left thread was passed, and the right side was stitched. The wool was then cut with a small knife held in the palm of the same hand. A worker guided the children about the design while they worked at great speed.

◆ *Weaving industry*

The weaving industry has a long history in Egypt and Nubia, with evidence of cotton use in Senegal flood plains during the tenth century. Cotton weaving was widespread in Ethiopia, and in the thirteenth century, narrow looms and spindle whorls were used. In China, spinning and weaving were done by housewives, with craftsmen working on silk production. Contact with Iran led to changes in woven motifs, with Tang patterns producing Sassanid motifs like pearl entrusting medallions. Under the Sung dynasty, brocaded silk woven with gold thread was produced. Chinese craftsmen also used ancient techniques of dry lacquers,

coating clay models with lacquer and creating designs using paste. This skill was also used in Japan.

◆ *Large scale manufacturing*

During the Middle Ages, European manufactures heavily relied on the production of textiles from wool, flax, hemp, silk, and cotton. Large scale manufacturing was prevalent in Italy, England, and Belgica, particularly in the region between the Somme and the Moselle. The woolen industry in Southern Italy employed skilled and unskilled workers, with sheep being raised on a large scale. Raw wool in coastal areas was filled, dyed, and finished, producing high-priced cloth. The production process involved pounded raw webs in a tronph, using water, soap, and fuller's earth to create compact unshrinkable cloth. The cloth was then washed and dried on a frame, resulting in the exact length of the original web.

◆ *Skill-based dyeing*

The woolen industry in Northern Italy expanded in the Po basin, producing items like gansape and blankets. The industry developed in the English Kingdoms and the Northeast part of the Carolingian Empire, with fine quality cloaks valued for their wool and color. The Viking people in the North Sea region fueled this industry, leading to small craftsmen organising around monasteries, cathedrals, and castles. Southern France's main clothing towns, St Omer, Douai Lillie, and Tournai, involved multiple stages of operations and involved specialised skill-based dyeing. Dyeing was separated into two distinct crafts: dyeing on wool and dyeing in red and other colors, carried out in large circular vats.

◆ *Development of new technology*

In the thirteenth century, local cloth manufacturers and Italian merchants began importing wool and finished cloths from other regions, leading to the development of the cloth-finishing industry. In Genoa, spearmen worked on northern cloths, while Lucca, known for its vermilion dyes, engaged in finishing cloths of Pyres. In England, the woollen industry was established in towns and villages, with innovations such as the fulling mill in the twelfth century. This mill replaced human labour with a tilt hammer system, using waterpower to complete the process. The bishop of Winchester setup these mills in 1209, and their location was determined by the presence of watercourses in rural England. Evidence suggests that almost all villages on both the Essex and Suffolk banks of the Stour built fulling mills. The widespread use of fulling mills in the fourteenth century determined their location.

◆ *Worstead*

In the thirteenth century, Norfolk produced high-quality light cloth using long wool, which required little milling and was used for house furnishings. Initially known as serge, it later became known as Worstead due to its production being primarily located in Worstead. Kermes, a mineral for red dye, was imported from Asia Minor, Spain, and Portugal, while Indigo, a blue dye, was imported from India.

◆ *Porcelain and ceramics*

### Pottery

Pottery making was a global household activity, fulfilling local needs. However, China developed porcelain and ceramics, becoming a significant foreign trade commodity. Under the Tang dynasty, white porcelain with a special coating was discovered. Porcelain is an earthenware made from clay heated and mixed with petuntse powder, resulting in a hard and brilliant material. Porcelain is a type of earthenware that is vitrified to become translucent.

◆ *High quality ceramic production*

The use of pottery was more prevalent in Asia. The entire Muslim world was home to firing workshops that produced high-quality ceramics. Potters used a potters' wheel with a sloping tray and a wooden axis supporting a disc-shaped wooden piece. The craftsman turned the lower wheel with their foot, allowing the tray to be carried around and over by its own weight. The baking process involved shaping pots and using various methods for clay and porcelain.

◆ *Mineral resources*

### Metallurgy

Medieval Europe was abundant in mineral resources, including precious metals like gold, silver, and iron. Mining was primarily used for agriculture, with little interest in other metals. However, after the third century, mining declined for other metals except iron. From the tenth century onwards, minerals were mined for political, military, economic, and cultural reasons. Rulers and nobles encouraged miners to search and mine resources, claiming share in the find. Otto I of Saxony granted monetary concessions for mining activities.

◆ *Metallurgists in Africa and India*

During the Middle Ages, Zimbabwe, after Nubia and West Africa, was the primary source of gold. Mines were established in the tenth century, and metal smelting was prevalent. Filigree work, widespread in North Africa and Andalusia, also reached Zimbabwe. Copper mining was also prevalent, with extraction techniques limited to pit digging and horizontal galleries. Iron ore mining and metal

extraction were widespread throughout medieval times. India's metallurgists utilised copper, bronze, iron, lead, tin, silver, and gold, with ironsmiths renowned for their intricate work, as seen in the Konark temple.

◆ *Iron and coal*

The demand for iron increased due to its use in manufacturing tools, weapons, ships, and Gothic buildings, leading to inter-regional transactions and small forges being established in various locations. This trend was evident in France, where natural resources like wood were depleted, prompting miners to relocate. During the thirteenth century, coal digging was prevalent in France, England, Scotland, and the Low Countries, with miners digging shallow pits and quarrying. Another method involved digging a widened cave with a base a few feet below the surface.

◆ *Shaft mining*

In the thirteenth century, Central Europe used shaft mining to obtain silver. The process involved puncturing a sloping field with pits, using primitive methods for water drainage, such as manual water extraction in leather buckets or digging trenches. In the fourteenth century, Adits were used in Bohemia, and machines driven by horses were used for water pumping.

◆ *Technology for smelting and refining metals*

New methods for smelting ores and refining metals were developed, using manual labour for washing, breaking, and crushing unrefined metal. Smelters used various equipment, including hearths, pots, ovens, and furnaces. Open hearths were used for refining ore with silver, followed by oxidation in cupelling hearths to remove lead. Bellows were used for further refinement. In the thirteenth century, water-driven wheels were installed at Trent's silver mines for moving hammers and bellows.

◆ *Use of furnaces*

In the succeeding century, three types of furnaces replaced old bloomer forges, with the most effective being the 'Stuckofen', widely used in Central Europe, eastern France, and the Alpine districts. This furnace, with a height of around ten feet and a circular quadrangular shaft, increased production. More powerful drainage engines and better ventilation methods were deployed, as seen in Hungary and Saxony. The water from the deepest pit was pumped in three flights, carried off down an adit, and rotated by a large horse-driven wheel. Animals were stationed along an inclined shaft, sloping and twisting like screws.

The blast furnace significantly increased the production of iron and bronze, which were compounds of tin and copper.

◆ *Production of iron and bronze*

Bronze was prepared using earth-fixed molds, and the heated liquid was poured into these molds. The same method was used for casting iron, where ore was kept in contact with carbon at high temperatures for a long time, resulting in cast iron that was used for tools, weapons, and armors.

◆ *Superior quality of iron production*

Since the thirteenth century, China has used charcoal as fuel for iron refining, resulting in continuous fire essential for metallurgy. The practice of 'co-lavation', dating back to the sixth century, involved mixing two types of iron and heating them continuously for days, resulting in the transfer of carbon and producing steel. Iron production in China, India, Spain, and Maghreb was of high quality. Steel production involved a lengthy process of cleansing soft iron, mixing Myrobalan with it, and melting it in a pot. This process took days, involving hammering and filing, and fine tempering using chemicals. The iron was then heated, treated, and cooled before being used for various manufacturing purposes.

◆ *Glass Industry*

### **Glass Production**

Glass, made from sand and wood, has been used in Europe since antiquity. It gained popularity in the 13th century for window decoration and was used in the construction of beautiful cathedrals in Italy, particularly Rome. The art of stained glass flourished between 1150 and 1500 CE, with German Monk Teophilus providing detailed information on the process. During the manufacturing stage, powdered metals were added to molten glass and liquid was flattened into sheets. A design was drawn on a board, stained glass pieces were assembled, fitted into lead cames, secured, and water-proofed. The panel was then stabilized with an iron frame and mounted on the window, ensuring the entire composition was water-proofed. Venice was the center of the fifteenth century glass industry, producing high-quality, brilliant stones and twisted glass rods using tank furnaces.

### **Ship Building**

The fifteenth century's 'Age of Discovery' was facilitated by technological innovations in ship manufacturing, with navigational tools and newly built ships playing a crucial role. Francois Couzet argues that maritime Europe was formed through technology exchange between Mediterranean, Atlantic, and Northern Sea regions. In the tenth century, coastal trade relied on cog ships built from the keel up, featuring a thick wooden skeleton for stability and cargo storage. The hull was connected with overlapping planks,

◆ *Technology of ship building*

nailed, and the bows, stern planks, and beams connected to the keel. The mast of a ship was a wooden log attached to the keel, with a horizontal beam holding the sail. The sail was a square piece, tied to the sides of the ship with ropes. The use of lateen sails became widespread in the North. The Portuguese Caravel building technique in 1430 CE enabled ship builders to build bigger, lighter ships with multiple masts carrying lateen sails. This method allowed ships to undertake long overseas journeys, expand trade, establish colonies, and increased rivalries between powerful states. The 'frame first' method was used to build ships.

#### 4.2.2.2 Guilds

◆ *Formation of craft guilds*

The regulation of production to ensure quality, quantity, required skills, working schedules, and competition necessitated the need for specific organisations. Christian fraternities, which have been in existence since the early days of Christianity, were formed due to the 'town economy' in Europe. Merchant guilds, which enjoyed political power, led the development, particularly in Italy. Craft guilds also emerged, established through royal charters and forming close relationships with local administration.

◆ *Role of craft guild*

These organisations aimed to ensure craft members were constituents, regulate production through apprentices, eliminate internal competition and litigation, and participate in charitable activities. They also had patron saints. They ensured manufacturing and production regulation through a well-defined mechanism, ensuring a strong connection to religion.

◆ *Characteristics of craft guild*

Craft Guilds were a system of trade unions that consisted of three classes: Masters, Journeymen, and Apprentices. The most distinctive feature of these guilds was the apprenticeship system, which provided training to those working with hands or minds. This practice existed in all parts of Europe, with its origins in London in the thirteenth century. Apprentices were required to undergo a certain tenure of apprenticeship, with the master responsible for training and providing boarding and lodging. Apprentices were also expected to show self-discipline, obedience, and fidelity to their master. The Guilds aimed for order rather than progress and stability rather than expansion, as noted by Lipson.

Master's apprentices were entitled to a specific number, with varying lengths from small tenure to seven years. Apprentices could be initiated at the age of eleven and

◆ *Female guilds*

could be employed as workmen or journeymen after the apprenticeship. There was scope for upward mobility if one could prove their craftsmanship. Few female Guilds existed, but they ensured quality product sales, prevented surplus goods from affecting prices, cared for members in distress, and helped the poor and old by building institutions. They were also involved in religious and educational activities, such as Christi Cambridge founding a college. As markets expanded, many craft Guilds were transformed into Livery companies in London.

◆ *Craft guilds in various regions of the world*

The organisation of crafts varied across different regions. In the Arab world, village craftsmen were householders, monitored and controlled by Umayyad caliphs. They were sent to required places, such as arsenals, imperial workshops, iron and salt mines. In China, craftsmen were employed in corporations under the Tang dynasty, which enjoyed autonomy. In Japan, craftsmen were organised in clans and worked in temples, occupying a position called the Za. By the end of the 12th century, the Za demanded monopolistic rights. In India, royal karkhanas were under the state's jurisdiction, employing a large number of artisans and craftsmen for the consumption of royal households or personal use.

◆ *Merchant guild*

Guilds, originating from German religious associations, provided an organisational basis for various European industries. Originating in the ninth century, guilds existed in the Carolingian empire. By the eleventh century, guilds were formed in cities, divided into merchant-member organisations and artisans' organisations, with different objectives. Merchant guilds aimed to boost profits by imposing strict working regulations and low salaries on workers. They held political power and used laws to defend their interests. They also regulated activities among merchants, known as guilds or Hanes in Germanic and caritas in Roman countries.

◆ *Factors affecting the working condition of artisans*

The working conditions of artisans in Europe were influenced by various factors, including the nature of production. Production was primarily organised at the household level, with small artisans possessing raw materials and tools for local needs. Specialist artisans, lay and ecclesiastical magnates, village craftsmen, and smiths with landed holdings also existed. Their surplus labour was used for rent in horseshoes and interregional ploughshare repairs, resulting in simple commodity production.

◆ *Putting out system*

Industrial craftsmen existed in urban communities before the thirteenth century, manufacturing commodities for sale. Monopolistic guilds emerged to meet the growing demand for interregional trade. A 'putting out system' emerged to increase production, with intermediaries providing raw materials and artisanal goods. This system allowed artisans to receive regular supply and pay the piece rate, while merchants had some control over quality. The middlemen, either merchants or master craftsmen, controlled the putting out system, gaining substantial profits. This system helped increase production, as artisans often worked at their own places with their own tools. In cases where raw materials were expensive or valuable, artisans could be asked to work at a designated place by the provider. The relationship between artisans and merchants was complex, and the putting out system played a crucial role in the production process.

◆ *Organisations for production*

In the medieval period, artisanal production involved various organisations. Simple production was carried out by individual artisans at their homes or shops, often moving between villages to make daily items and market them. Peasants were also involved in some areas, such as spinning yarn or working in mineral fields. Craftsmen employed hired labour or apprentices in small workplaces. Larger groups of skilled and unskilled individuals were involved in larger ventures like mining, shipbuilding, and construction. Large-scale engagement of artisans was also found in the production of arms or luxury items for state and royalty.

◆ *Specialisations*

Specialisations emerged in individual artisan production, such as textile production, where skilled craftsmen handle each stage separately. This includes carding, spinning, weaving, washing, and dyeing, forming distinct artisan groups for each activity.

### 4.2.3 Urban Centres

◆ *Views related to the growth of towns*

Marc Bloch in his work, *Feudal Society* and Georges Duby highlighted the significant changes in the countryside. This change was characterised by increased productivity, better food availability, and a growing population at lower societal levels. This growth led to a marketable surplus in the countryside, supporting a higher urban population than in the early medieval centuries. The growth of cities was organically linked to rural developments, rather than against it. The extent to which urban centers contributed to

the decline of feudalism remains debated, with historians like Pirenne, Dobb, and Sweezy highlighting the role. The 13th to 15th century saw significant growth in towns, yet they could only absorb about 10 percent of the population and their economic impact was not significant or decisive.

◆ *Exploitation of migrant populations*

Historians question the town's role in providing subsistence to fleeing rural populations, arguing that the countryside remained overpopulated and the number of large cities in Flanders (parts of the modern Belgium-Netherlands-Luxembourg area), the most advanced industrially and economically in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, placed an unnatural economic burden on the countryside. Historians have questioned the town's role in the economic liberation of peasants. First, when rural migrants' urban incomes increased, so did their cost of living. As a result, urban employment was not always beneficial to them economically and did not always serve as an effective 'pull factor'. The urban bourgeoisie exploited cheap rural labour in the countryside, where living costs and wages were lower and workers' guilds were absent. In villages, workers' entire families could be exploited through contractual labour, while in towns, workers worked alone with similar individuals.

◆ *Condition of peasantry*

In the fourteenth century, urban merchants moved industrial production to rural areas in Flanders and Western Europe, a phenomenon known as Proto-industrialisation (Pi) in the 1970s and 1980s. Peasants were forced to bring grains to cities in Flanders at cheap rates, leading to the later phase of feudalism in Europe where peasants fled to rural areas in search of better conditions. In the fourteenth century, West European peasants demanded free mobility and cities largely passively supported feudal lords in suppressing uprisings. Italian towns provided some freedom to peasants, but this was not general or lasting. Historian Guy Fourquin argues that cities were more oppressive than lords, using various means to lower living standards while granting peasants juridical freedom. L. Genicot also notes that cities were more likely to lower peasants' living standards.

While we are still involved with discussing the role of trade and the town in the dissolution of feudalism, we might take note of another perspective on the theme developed quietly, though emphatically, by a very distinguished French historian, Georges Duby, who bore no affinity with Marxism or with Pirenne. He took the debate away from the contours

◆ *View of Georges Duby*

set by Henri Pirenne, Maurice Dobb and others. It is significant that Duby never participated in these discussions himself; yet his own work, published in two books of great importance, 'Rural Economy and Country Life in the Medieval West' and 'Early Growth of European Economy', decisively altered the paradigm. Duby concentrated on the internal development in the sphere of land and labour through the medieval centuries in Western Europe and brought forth a picture of enormous dynamism. He did not seek out this dynamism in dramatic upheavals, but in the slow alterations in the labour process in the field in daily toil. This slow alteration, accumulated over centuries, completely transformed the rural scenario. One of the major driving forces of this change was the process of differentiation within the peasantry at the lower end of society as well as within the class of lords at the upper end.

◆ *Bailiffs*

The estates of the lords in the countryside were huge establishments comprising on an average 4000 acres, often running into 10,000 acres and more. The management of the cultivation, storage and disposal of the produce of these estates was left by the lords in the hands of bailiffs, provosts etc. who were themselves peasants of a slightly higher rank, for social values deterred the lords from engaging in these activities themselves. Gradually these bailiffs and provosts accumulated resources of their own through the operation of the lords' estates, for not all the grain collected from the demesne would go into the lord's hall and not all the money collected from the sale of these grains would be honestly passed on to the lord's treasury. By and by the bailiff themselves started taking parts of the estate 'on farm' from the lord for a year, two years and longer. 'On farm' or 'farming' here meant taking the responsibility for the cultivation of land on oneself by contracting to pay a fixed amount of either grain or money to the lord. The profit or loss from this contract would accrue to the bailiff, now the contractor or 'farmer'. The lord's right to collect tolls and taxes from his estate could similarly be taken 'on farm'.

◆ *Emergence of capitalist farmers*

On these 'farms', the bailiffs would employ wage labour, because they were not entitled to unpaid labour services of the serfs as the lords were, and they would cultivate the land with the sole purpose of selling the produce in the market for profit. Thus, profit motive and wage labour – characteristics of capitalist economy whether in agriculture or industry – began to make inroads into the feudal economic system. This was the emerging class of capitalist farmers or kulaks, the much maligned nouveau riche, short on the finesse of

feudal culture and long on showing off its newly acquired wealth, the butt of social ridicule, yet increasingly beginning to dominate the sphere of the economy. This happened over very long periods of time, extending over a couple of centuries.

◆ *Allods*

Two other segments of feudal society also helped in the process: the allods and the lower orders of the class of lords. The Allods, by cultivating their own lands with their own family labour and often selling the produce in the market, were a divergent element within the feudal economy. With the market both in the rural and urban areas increasingly determining the patterns of production in the countryside, the Allods were quick to attune production on their fields to crops that yielded the highest profits. This too turned them, especially the higher echelons among them into proto-capitalist producers, contrary to the feudal ethos.

◆ *Stratified class of lords*

The class of lords, previously viewed as a homogenous group, was also highly stratified, similar to the peasantry. While the higher levels were entitled to several rights of extraction of free services and goods from the peasants, the lower ones were not so endowed. They had the rights to their lands but not to the multifarious services. With labour becoming migrant and its wages rising, the smaller lords too were driven by resource crunch and were compelled by the developments to take to cultivation for the market by employing hired labour.

◆ *Commutation of labour services*

In this all-encompassing flux, one could expect several movements up and down. 'Commutation' of labour services that the serfs owed to the lords, i.e., purchase of freedom in return for lump sum payment to the lord, went some distance in helping some peasants too, now free to move to greener pastures or to rise above their station through sheer hard work, a few sagacious decisions and a little bit of luck. Other peasants, given their very small surviving power, were rendered resourceless by any one stroke of bad luck - a crop failure or the death of the draught animal or any other. Of course, these small peasants still had their labour to sell in the expanding labour market. In the class of lords too, not everyone made good in the market, to which they had to adjust to a new, unfamiliar situation.

This then was the general scenario of great dynamism, accumulated over slow developments stretched out in time in which everyone - or most - were progressing,

◆ *Social differentiation*

but some rising higher and faster than others. Sharp social differentiation was the net result and no class, old or new, was immune to its effects. This is also the scenario where new forms of economy and new classes were emerging which were to strike at the very foundations of feudalism. The decline of feudalism came not through an external push of trade or pull of cities, but through a process internal to the feudal economy. The decline was the result not of the static nature of feudalism but the very opposite, i.e., its own internal dynamism. The growth of trade and town is not an autonomous variable, but is integral to this dynamism.

◆ *Decline of serfdom*

The most important change brought about in the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Western Europe was the decline of serfdom and the freeing of the peasantry. But the transformation of rent from labour rent to cash rent did not mean that feudalism had ended. It only meant that the surplus labour power was now expressed and appropriated in terms of money. The shift from labour to cash rents was thus due to the different conjunctures of prices, wages and rents which prevailed at different times. The relations of production were still dominated by petty production, a characteristic of feudalism.

## Summarised Overview

The feudal system in Europe, lasting nearly five hundred years, initially had no structure and was centered on the Lord and Vassal bond. Over time, it evolved into hierarchical levels and new institutions. From the 7<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century, Europe experienced significant changes in agricultural production, technology, and feudalism. From the 14<sup>th</sup> century, feudalism began to decline. Scholars have different views on its decline, with some arguing that trade played a central role, while others believe it was due to internal crises and capitalist economy.

The medieval world saw extensive non-agricultural production, with textiles dominating, woollens dominated by Europe, silks by China, cotton textiles by India, and carpet weaving by Central Asia. Pottery, metalwork, and metalworking were prevalent worldwide. During this period, production organisation changed significantly, with artisanal production dominating most crafts. However, merchants took over control over raw material procurement and marketing, leading to specialization in various stages and operations, particularly in textile production. Guilds were formed to gain control in trades, while growing commercial activities increased production, benefiting the state, merchants, and larger craftsmen.

The medieval city's origins can be traced back to the revival of grand trade across Europe, but it remained extraneous to the feudal economy. The growth of cities was linked to developments in the countryside, leading to higher productivity, better food, and a growing population. However, the role of urban centers in the decline of feudalism remains debated.

## Assignments

1. Examine various theories proposed by the historians regarding the decline of Feudalism.
2. Analyse the factors that led to the emergence of guilds. What were the different types of guilds that existed in medieval Europe and how did they differ in terms of their organisation and activities?
3. What were the key techniques used in medieval metalworking and how did they evolve over time?
4. Discuss the emergence of towns in medieval Europe. Examine various theories regarding the emergence of towns.

## Suggested Reading

1. Anderson, Perry, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, Verso World History, 2013.
2. Aston, T.H. and C.H.E. Philpin, (Ed.), *The Brenner Debate: Agrarian Class Structure and Economic Development in Pre-Industrial Europe*, CUP, 2005.
3. Bloch, Marc, *Feudal Society*, Volume I and II, Aakar Books, 2017.
4. Duby, Georges, *The Early Growth of the European Economy: Warriors and Peasants from the Seventh to the Twelfth Century*, Ithaca, 1974.
5. \_\_\_\_\_, *The Three Orders: Feudal Society Imagined* University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1980
6. Pirenne, Henri, *Medieval Cities: Their Origins and the Revival of Trade*, Princeton, 1925.
7. Sweezy, Paul M., and R.H. Hilton., *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*, Guilford press, 2010.



## Reference

1. Dobb, Maurice, *Studies in the Development of Capitalism*, Routledge, 1965.
2. Mukhia, Harbans, "Maurice Dobb's Explanation of the Decline of Feudalism in Western Europe - A Critique", *The Indian Historical Review*, vol. 6, nos. 1- 2, July 1979-January 1980.
3. Phukan, Meenakshi, *Rise of the Modern West*, Trinity Press Pvt Ltd., 2012.
4. Rodney Hilton (Ed.), *The Transition from Feudalism to Capitalism*, Aakar Books, 2010.

### Space for Learner Engagement for Objective Questions

Learners are encouraged to develop objective questions based on the content in the paragraph as a sign of their comprehension of the content. The Learners may reflect on the recap bullets and relate their understanding with the narrative in order to frame objective questions from the given text. The University expects that 1 - 2 questions are developed for each paragraph. The space given below can be used for listing the questions.

SGOU



# Model Question Paper Sets

M21HS05DC, M21HS06DC, M21HS07DC, M21HS08DC



# SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

QP CODE: .....

Reg. No : .....

Name : .....

## SECOND SEMESTER M.A. HISTORY EXAMINATION

DISCIPLINE CORE - M21HS05DC

**HISTORICAL WRITINGS ON INDIA**

(CBCS - PG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

**MODEL QUESTION PAPER - SET 1**

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

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### SECTION A

*Answer any **ten** questions in a word or a sentence. Each question carries **one** mark.*

**(10X1 = 10 Marks)**

1. Who wrote the work 'Orientalism'?
2. Name the school of historical writing that criticised the Cambridge, Nationalist and Marxist scholars for neglecting the common people.
3. Who is known as the "Maker of Modern Western India"?
4. Who wrote the work 'Interpreting Indian History'?
5. Where was the 'Asiatic Society' established in 1784?
6. Who was an English Orientalist scholar, renowned for translating the 'Bhagavad Gita' into English?
7. Who wrote the work 'An Introduction to the Study of Indian History'?
8. Name the historical account of Kashmir authored by Kalhana.
9. What is the meaning of the term 'Tarikh'?

10. Name any two works of Romila Thapar.
11. Who was the editor of the first six volumes of the Subaltern Studies Series?
12. Name the school of history writing where social histories of women were highlighted.
13. Who was the chief editor for the Bharatiya Vidhya Bhavan's monumental eleven-volume work, 'The History and Culture of the Indian People'?
14. Name a unique form of historiography, gained prominence in the Mughal Period significantly influenced by Persian traditions.
15. Who was the author of the work 'Harshacharita'?

### SECTION B

*Answer any five questions in two or three sentences. Each question carries two marks.*

**(5X2 =10 Marks)**

16. Asiatic Society of Bengal
17. 'Ain -i- Akbari'
18. Features of 'Rajatarangini'
19. Archaeological Survey of India
20. Neo-Imperialist Approach
21. 'Baburnama'
22. Deciphering ancient Indian scripts
23. 'Tabaqat' forms of history writing
24. Theory of Oriental Despotism
25. Define the term 'subaltern'

## SECTION C

Answer any **five** questions in one paragraph. Each question carries **four** marks.

(5X4 = 20 Marks)

26. Mention the three distinct phases for the origin and growth of Indian feudalism according to R.S. Sharma?
27. Discuss James Mill's Periodization of Indian History.
28. Discuss the features of Buddhist historiography.
29. Evaluate the historical accuracy of 'Harshacharita'.
30. Write a brief note on Minhaj -us- Siraj Juzjani and his 'Tabaqat-i-Nasiri'.
31. Explain the features of feminist historiography.
32. Discuss the waves of writing Environmental History of India.
33. Analyse Abul Fazl's Idea of History.

## SECTION D

Answer any **three** questions in two pages. Each question carries **ten** marks.

(3X10 =30 Marks)

34. Critically analyse the role of Orientalists in rediscovering India's past.
35. Discuss the different postmodern perspectives in Indian historiography.
36. Explain the contributions of Subaltern historians to Indian historiography.
37. Discuss the nationalist response to colonial historiography.
38. Evaluate the contributions of leading Marxist historians to Indian historiography.
39. Discuss the course of Arab historiography.



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## SECOND SEMESTER M.A. HISTORY EXAMINATION

DISCIPLINE CORE - M21HS05DC

### HISTORICAL WRITINGS ON INDIA

(CBCS - PG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

### MODEL QUESTION PAPER - SET 2

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

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#### SECTION A

*Answer any **ten** questions in a word or a sentence. Each question carries **one** mark.*

**(10X1 = 10 Marks)**

1. Which historical chronicle is attributed to Ziauddin Barani?
2. What is the title of James Mill's significant work published in 1817?
3. Which medieval writing style is characterised by its chronological narrative?
4. In which year was the Asiatic Society of Bengal established?
5. Who was the author of 'Tarikh-i-Hind'?
6. How many Jataka tales are traditionally believed to exist?
7. Who authored the book 'Corporate Life in Ancient India'?
8. In which year did Alexander Cunningham assume the official role of Archaeological Surveyor for the Government of India?
9. When was K.M Panikar's book 'A Survey of Indian History' published?

10. Which section of society is the primary focus of Subaltern studies?
11. Who authored the book, 'The Age of the Nandas and Mauryas'?
12. In Romila Thapar's interpretation, what was the main cause of the collapse of the Mauryan empire?
13. What shift in focus occurred in the 1970s that gave importance to feminist studies, according to Tanika Sarkar?
14. Which shift in historiography is mentioned as crucial for Dalit historians, changing the perspective towards considering oral history as a source of history?
15. Which feminist historian is mentioned for her work on the critique of gender relations in colonial India, particularly through the study of Tarabai Shinde?

### SECTION B

*Answer any five questions in two or three sentences. Each question carries two marks.*

**(5X2 =10 Marks)**

16. K.N Panikar
17. 'Tarikh' forms of history writing
18. Subaltern School of Historiography
19. Dalit Historiography
20. 'Itihasa' and 'Purana' Tradition
21. Asiatic Society of Bengal
22. 'Akbarname'
23. Oriental Despotism
24. Jadunath Sarkar
25. Al-Biruni

## SECTION C

*Answer any five questions in one paragraph. Each question carries four marks.*

**(5X4 = 20 Marks)**

26. Briefly explain the critique of Subaltern Studies.
27. Discuss the historicity of the 'Mushakavamsa Kavya'.
28. Explain Ranajit Guha's view on the peasant revolts in India.
29. Discuss Edward Said's views on Orientalism.
30. Describe the significance of the establishment of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) towards uncovering India's historical heritage.
31. Analyse D. D. Kosambi's contributions in pioneering the Marxist interpretation of ancient Indian history.
32. Mention the role played by Uma Chakravarti towards writing gender history.
33. Differentiate between the 'Tabaqat' and 'Tarikh' forms of historical writing.

## SECTION D

*Answer any three questions in two pages. Each question carries ten marks.*

**(3X10 =30 Marks)**

34. Explain the relevance of Dalit and Feminist histories in the historical writings in India.
35. Examine the role played by British historians in chronicling medieval Indian history.
36. Outline the distinctive features that define Mughal historiography.
37. Critically examine James Mill's periodization of Indian history and evaluate its impact on Western perceptions of Indian civilization.
38. Discuss the origin of Nationalist historiography in India and the factors that contributed to its emergence.
39. Evaluate how Marxist historiography has influenced the development of historical writings on India.



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## SECOND SEMESTER M.A. HISTORY EXAMINATION

DISCIPLINE CORE - M21HS06DC

**HISTORY OF MODERN KERALA: PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES**

(CBCS - PG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

### MODEL QUESTION PAPER - SET 1

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

#### SECTION A

*Answer any **ten** questions in a word or a sentence. Each question carries **one** mark.*

**(10X1 = 10 Marks)**

1. In which year 'Pandrapattam Proclamation' was issued?
2. Who was 'Kolkar'?
3. Name the place where Velu Thampi Dalawa committed suicide.
4. Who was appointed as the Special Commissioner to study the Mappila Uprisings in the southern taluks of Malabar?
5. Who is the author of the book 'Modernity of Slavery'?
6. Who was the first LMS missionary in South Travancore?
7. Name any two works of Pandit Karuppan.
8. Which ruler was associated with the Temple Entry Proclamation in Travancore?
9. Ezhava Memorial was submitted to the Travancore ruler under the initiative of whom?
10. In which year was the Travancore Labour Association founded?
11. Name the struggle which raised the slogan "chathalum chethum koothali".

12. Name the agitation which led to the dismissal of the first Communist Ministry.
13. In which year Travancore- Cochin was integrated?
14. Mention any two parameters of 'Kerala Model Development'.
15. Who was the first Chief Minister of Thiru-Kochi?

### SECTION B

*Answer any **five** questions in two or three sentences. Each question carries **two** marks.*

**(5X2 =10 Marks)**

16. Logan's Report
17. Kurichiya Revolt
18. Herman Gundert
19. 'Smarthavicharam'
20. 'Uzhiyam'
21. Wagon Tragedy
22. Karivelloor Incident
23. 'Karshaka Sangham'
24. Liberation Struggle
25. Thiru-Kochi Integration

### SECTION C

*Answer any **five** questions in one paragraph. Each question carries **four** marks.*

**(5X4 = 20 Marks)**

26. Discuss the role of Paliyath Achan in the revolt of Velu Thampi Dalawa.
27. Analyse the impact of colonial intervention in Malabar.
28. Give an account of the Punnapra- Vayalar revolt.
29. Write a short note on 'People's Plan Programme'.

30. Explain the importance of Vaikom Satyagraha.
31. Point out the important features of 'Kerala Model Development'.
32. Analyse the political processes that led to the formation of Kerala in 1956.
33. Compare and contrast the land tenure system that existed in Travancore, Cochin and Malabar.

#### SECTION D

*Answer any **three** questions in two pages. Each question carries **ten** marks.*

**(3X10 =30 Marks)**

34. Assess the nature of the early resistance movement against British rule in Kerala.
35. Analyse the nature and character of Malabar Rebellion.
36. Critically analyse the reforms introduced by the first Communist Ministry in Kerala.
37. Evaluate the role of Ayyankali and Pandit Karuppan in the emancipation of oppressed classes.
38. Appraise the role of leftist ideology in the peasant movements of Kerala.
39. Explain the role of Christian Missionaries in the spreading of education in Kerala.



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## SECOND SEMESTER M.A HISTORY EXAMINATION

### DISCIPLINE CORE - M21HS06DC

### HISTORY OF MODERN KERALA: PROBLEMS AND PERSPECTIVES

(CBCS - PG)

2022-23 - Admission Onwards

### MODEL QUESTION PAPER - SET 2

Time: 3 Hours

Max Marks: 70

#### SECTION A

*Answer any **ten** questions in a word or a sentence. Each question carries **one** mark.*

**(10X1 = 10 Marks)**

1. In which year was Cochin State placed under the jurisdiction of the Madras Government?
2. Who issued the famous 'Kundara Proclamation' in 1809?
3. Who wrote the 'Malabar Manual'?
4. Who were the leaders of the Kurichya revolt?
5. Name two prominent Missionary groups that spread Western education in Kerala.
6. Who started the newspaper 'Swadesabhimani'?
7. Who were the leaders of the 'Vaikom Satyagraha'?
8. Which religious reformer is known as the 'Saint of Kuttanad'?
9. When was the 'Ezhava Memorial' submitted to the Maharaja of Travancore?
10. Under whose leadership was the 'Congress Socialist Party' formed?
11. Who proposed the idea of transforming Travancore State on the 'American Model'?
12. Who is known as 'Aikya Keralam Thampuran'?

13. What was the reason behind the dismissal of the first Communist Ministry in Kerala by the President of India?
14. Who introduced the Kerala Education Bill in 1957?
15. When was the first Assembly Election held in Kerala?

### SECTION B

*Answer any five questions in two or three sentences. Each question carries two marks.*

**(5X2 =10 Marks)**

16. 'Pandarapattom' Proclamation of 1865
17. William Logan
18. Herman Gundert
19. 'Uzhiyam'
20. Channar Agitation
21. 'Nivarthana' Agitation
22. Kayyur revolt
23. Ezhava Memorial
24. Travancore-Cochin Integration
25. 'Vimochana Samaram'

### SECTION C

*Answer any five questions in one paragraph. Each question carries four marks.*

**(5X4 = 20 Marks)**

26. Evaluate the reasons behind the Pazhassi revolts.
27. Analyse the nature of early resistance in Kerala against British domination.
28. Examine the peasant revolts in Kerala during the colonial period.
29. Write an account of the abolition of slavery in Travancore.
30. Assess the significance of the Punnapra -Vayalar uprising in the history of Kerala.
31. Explain the impact of land reforms in Kerala.
32. Enumerate the important parameters of 'Kerala Model Development'.
33. Briefly explain the People's Planning in Kerala.

## SECTION D

Answer any **three** questions in two pages. Each question carries **ten** marks.

**(3X10 =30 Marks)**

34. Critically examine the impact of colonial administrative policies on Malabar.
35. Analyse the impact of the educational activities of Christian missionaries in Kerala.
36. Discuss the role of anti-caste reformers in the emancipation of lower castes in Kerala.
37. Explain the struggles for responsible government in the princely states of Travancore and Cochin.
38. Evaluate the growth of the national movement in Malabar in the early twentieth century.
39. Elucidate the different stages that culminated in the formation of Kerala in 1956.



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SECOND SEMESTER M.A HISTORY EXAMINATION  
DISCIPLINE CORE - M21HS07DC  
SOCIETY AND CULTURE IN INDIAN HISTORY (1200 CE-1800 CE)  
MODEL QUESTION PAPER - SET 1

Maximum Marks: 70 Marks

Maximum Time: 3 Hours

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## SECTION A

Answer any **ten** questions in a word or a sentence. Each question carries **one** mark.

(10X1 = 10 Marks)

1. Which Sultan first used the title 'Ghazi'?
2. Who wrote 'Ain-i-Akbari'?
3. Who is known as the 'Pallava Bhanjana'?
4. What was the role of 'Sadr-us-Sudur'?
5. Who were the founders of the Vijayanagara State?
6. Who wrote 'Majma-ul-Bahrain'?
7. What do you know about the 'bhaibant system'?
8. What is called 'Qawwali'?
9. Where did Akbar construct 'Ibadat Khana'?
10. Which are the types of markets established by Alauddin Khalji?
11. Which Mughal ruler reinstated the 'Jizya' tax, which Akbar abolished?
12. Who authored 'Humayunnama'?
13. Which administrative department controlled financial affairs during Sher Shah's reign?
14. Who introduced token currency?
15. Which are the three types of taxes levied by Alauddin Khalji on peasants?

## SECTION B

Answer any **five** questions in two or three sentences. Each question carries **two** marks.

**(5X2 =10 Marks)**

16. Abul Fazl
17. Iqta system
18. Diwan-i-Insha
19. Muqaddam
20. Jauhar
21. Hundi
22. Paragana
23. 'Diwan-i-Amir-Kohi
24. Sarais
25. Nayankara system

## SECTION C

Answer any **five** questions in one paragraph. Each question carries **four** marks.

**(5X4 = 20 Marks)**

26. Concept of segmentary state
27. 'Dahsala' system
28. Currency system under Tughlaq
29. Mansabdari system
30. Market regulation of Alauddin Khalji
31. Medieval urbanisation
32. 'Sulh-i-kul'
33. Guru Nanak

## SECTION D

*Answer any **three** questions in two pages. Each question carries **ten** marks.*

**(3X10 =30 Marks)**

34. Describe the revenue administrative system of the Medieval period.
35. Explain the nature of inland and overseas trade in Medieval India.
36. Explain the evolution of the religious ideas of Akbar.
37. Explain the emergence of new castes and social stratification during the Medieval period.
38. Trace the growth of the Bhakti movement. Discuss the contributions of Bhakti saints to Indian culture.
39. Evaluate the nature of the state during the Medieval period.



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QP CODE: .....

Reg. No : .....

Name : .....

SECOND SEMESTER M.A HISTORY EXAMINATION  
DISCIPLINE CORE - M21HS07DC  
SOCIETY AND CULTURE IN INDIAN HISTORY (1200 CE-1800 CE)  
MODEL QUESTION PAPER - SET 2

Maximum Marks: 70 Marks

Maximum Time: 3 Hours

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## SECTION A

Answer any *ten* questions in a word or a sentence. Each question carries *one* mark.

(10X1 = 10 Marks)

1. Who wrote 'Tabaqat-i-Akbari'?
2. What do you mean by 'Chahalgani'?
3. Name any two cash crops cultivated in medieval India.
4. Which department handled the military affairs during the Sultanate period?
5. What is called 'Hundi'?
6. What do you understand by the term 'Sulh-i-Kul'?
7. What do you know about the 'Ayagar' system?
8. Who considered Vijayanagara to be a segmentary state'?
9. Which Sultan established 'Diwan-i-Amir-Kohi'?
10. Who is the author of 'Ramcharitmanas'?
11. Who are known as 'Kabirpanthis'?
12. Which Mughal ruler eliminated the 'Jizya' tax?
13. Which Sultan first used the title of 'Ghazi'?
14. What is called 'Qabuliyat'?
15. What is meant by 'Iqta' in the Delhi Sultanate?

## SECTION B

Answer any *five* questions in two or three sentences. Each question carries *two* marks.

(5X2 =10 Marks)

16. Jajmani system
17. Currency system under Tughlaq
18. Sadr-us-Sudur
19. Ijarah system
20. Madad-e-Maash
21. Baburnama
22. Theory of kingship
23. Tulsidas
24. Amir Khusro
25. Nagaram

## SECTION C

Answer any *five* questions in one paragraph. Each question carries *four* marks.

(5X4 = 20 Marks)

26. Nayankara system
27. Market reforms of Alauddin Khalji
28. 'Din-i-Ilahi'
29. Overseas trade during the Medieval period
30. 'Ain-i-Akbari'
31. Jagirdari system
32. Urbanisation in Medieval India
33. Role of ulema in Sultanate period

## SECTION D

Answer any **three** questions in two pages. Each question carries **ten** marks.

(3X10 =30 Marks)

34. Discuss the nature of the state during the Delhi Sultanate period.
35. Evaluate the importance of agricultural production in medieval society and economy.
36. Discuss the development of trade and commerce in Medieval India.
37. Describe the conditions of women during the medieval period.
38. Explain the evolution of the religious ideas of Akbar.
39. Discuss the influence of Sufism in religious reform during the medieval period.



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## SECOND SEMESTER M.A HISTORY EXAMINATION

### DISCIPLINE CORE - M21HS08DC

#### Selected Themes in the History of Medieval World

### MODEL QUESTION PAPER - SET 1

Maximum Marks: 70 Marks

Maximum Time: 3 Hours

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#### SECTION A

Answer any **ten** questions in a word or a sentence. Each question carries **one** mark.

(10X1 = 10 Marks)

1. What term refers to the historical period from the 5th to the 15th century in Europe?
2. Who challenged the idea of “natural slavery” during the 5th century?
3. Who founded the Kamakura Shogunate in Japan?
4. What mathematical concept did Ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi develop?
5. What system required Daimyos to alternate between the capital and their domains?
6. What term refers to the policy of isolationism in Japan during the Edo Period?
7. Who argued that philosophy and revelation in Islam cannot contradict each other?
8. What architectural style flourished during the medieval period, known for soaring spires and intricate designs?
9. In which century were the “Treasure Voyages” led by Chinese Admiral Zheng He?
10. What was the accidental discovery by alchemists during the Tang dynasty that led to significant military advancements during the Song dynasty?
11. Which Chinese polymath is credited with the development of the magnetic needle compass?

12. Which city became the wealthiest city in the world during the “golden age” of the Abbasid Caliphate?
13. What policy marked the end of Japan’s isolationist stance during the Tokugawa Shogunate?
14. What is Avicenna’s most famous work, considered an encyclopaedia of medicine?
15. Who is considered as the father of modern optics?

### SECTION B

*Answer any **five** questions in two or three sentences. Each question carries **two** marks.*

**(5X2 =10 Marks)**

16. Avicenna
17. Feudalism
18. Crusades
19. Charlemagne
20. Caliphate
21. Harun-al-Rashid
22. Silk Road
23. World Systems Theory
24. Monasticism
25. Guilds

### SECTION C

*Answer any **five** questions in one paragraph. Each question carries **four** marks.*

**(5X4 = 20 Marks)**

26. How did the introduction of paper money impact the economy during the Song and Yuan dynasties?
27. What were the key roles within the feudal pyramid in medieval Europe, and how did they interact with each other?
28. How did the growth of urban centers contribute to the decline of feudalism in medieval Europe?

29. Examine the impact of Greek culture on Islamic civilization.
30. Examine how the Crusades became institutionalized in Christian society.
31. How did Marc Bloch challenge traditional views of feudalism, and what was his approach to understanding the complexities of medieval social structures?
32. What were the main consequences of the policy of isolationism enforced by the Tokugawa Shogunate during the Edo Period?
33. Discuss the emergence of towns in medieval Europe. Examine various theories regarding the emergence of towns.

#### SECTION D

*Answer any **three** questions in two pages. Each question carries **ten** marks.*

**(3X10 =30 Marks)**

34. Discuss the role of technological innovations such as gunpowder, printing, and the compass during the Song Dynasty in shaping not only Chinese history but also their impact on global developments and exchanges during the medieval period.
35. What were the enduring effects of the Crusades on the political, social, and cultural landscapes of Europe, the Middle East, and beyond
36. Discuss the role of Arab scholars in the preservation and advancement of scientific knowledge during the medieval period
37. Critically evaluate the term 'Dark Age' and its historical origins during the Renaissance period.
38. Explore the diverse historical perspectives presented by scholars concerning the factors leading to the demise of Feudalism.
39. Evaluate the distribution of power within feudal Japanese society, examining the roles of the emperor, Shogun, Daimyos, and Samurai in shaping the social hierarchy and maintaining political stability. How did this power structure evolve over time?



# SREENARAYANAGURU OPEN UNIVERSITY

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## SECOND SEMESTER M.A HISTORY EXAMINATION

### DISCIPLINE CORE - M21HS08DC

#### Selected Themes in the History of Medieval World

### MODEL QUESTION PAPER - SET II

Maximum Marks: 70 Marks

Maximum Time: 3 Hours

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#### SECTION A

*Answer any ten questions in a word or a sentence. Each question carries one mark.*

(10X1 = 10 Marks)

1. What was the central economic unit in the manorial system of medieval Europe?
2. Who is credited with establishing the House of Wisdom?
3. Who challenged the idea of “natural slavery” in medieval Christian thought?
4. Which Persian mathematician is credited with developing the concept of algorithm?
5. What policy marked the end of Japan’s isolationist stance during the Tokugawa Shogunate?
6. What Chinese polymath is often associated with the refinement of the magnetic compass during the Song Dynasty?
7. What term refers to the policy of isolationism in Japan during the Edo Period?
8. Who argued that philosophy and revelation in Islam cannot contradict each other?
9. What architectural style flourished during the medieval period, known for soaring spires and intricate designs?
10. What was the first paper currency introduced during the Northern Song dynasty?
11. What marked the beginning of the Carolingian Renaissance?

12. What was the name of the treaty signed between Sultan Saladin and King Richard I of England?
13. Who is considered as the father of modern optics?
14. Who argued for the role of trade in the decline of feudalism?
15. What was the primary raw material used in the textile industry for cloth production in Medieval Europe?

#### SECTION B

Answer any **five** questions in two or three sentences. Each question carries **two** marks.

(5X2 =10 Marks)

16. Avicenna
17. Feudal Pyramid
18. Silk Road
19. Algebra
20. Saladin
21. Peace Military Code
22. Serfdom
23. Cartaz system
24. Investiture Controversy
25. Tax farming

#### SECTION C

Answer any **five** questions in one paragraph. Each question carries **four** marks.

(5X4 = 20 Marks)

26. What were the main components of gunpowder, and how did its invention impact military technology during the Song Dynasty?
27. How did the growth of urban centers contribute to the decline of feudalism in medieval Europe?
28. How did monasticism contribute to economic and cultural transformation in medieval Europe?
29. What were guilds, and how did they contribute to the decline of reliance on slave labour during the medieval period?

30. What were the primary reasons for the emergence of regional kingdoms during the Abbasid era?
31. What were some of the long-term consequences of the Crusades on European society and culture?
32. What were the primary motivations behind the establishment of the English and Dutch East India Companies in the 17th century?
33. What was the main criticism of the Malthusian theory regarding the collapse of feudalism?

#### SECTION D

*Answer any three questions in two pages. Each question carries ten marks.*

(3X10 =30 Marks)

34. Explain the role and impact of monastic orders such as the Benedictines, Franciscans, and Dominicans in medieval society, considering their spiritual, social, and educational contributions.
35. Discuss the role of Christianity in reshaping societal attitudes towards slavery during the medieval period, considering both its influence on anti-slavery sentiment and its potential contribution to the rise of feudalism.
36. Discuss the factors that contributed to the technological development of Medieval China, focusing on key innovations such as gunpowder, printing, paper money, and the compass.
37. Explore the diverse historical perspectives presented by scholars concerning the factors leading to the demise of Feudalism.
38. Discuss Henri Pirenne's perspective on the role of trade and Maurice Dobb's argument regarding internal crisis as primary causes of the decline of feudalism, and compare these views with other theories of feudal decline.
39. Describe the role of Portuguese in oceanic trade and their influence on medieval Europe.

സർവ്വകലാശാലാഗീതം

വിദ്യായാൽ സ്വതന്ത്രരാകണം  
വിശ്വപൗരരായി മാറണം  
ശ്രദ്ധപ്രസാദമായ് വിളങ്ങണം  
ഗുരുപ്രകാശമേ നയിക്കണേ

കുതിരുട്ടിൽ നിന്നു ഞങ്ങളെ  
സൂര്യവീഥിയിൽ തെളിക്കണം  
സ്നേഹദീപ്തിയായ് വിളങ്ങണം  
നീതിവൈജയന്തി പറണം

ശാസ്ത്രവ്യാപ്തിയെന്നുമേകണം  
ജാതിഭേദമാകെ മാറണം  
ബോധരശ്മിയിൽ തിളങ്ങുവാൻ  
ജ്ഞാനകേന്ദ്രമേ ജ്വലിക്കണേ

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# SELECTED THEMES IN THE HISTORY OF MEDIEVAL WORLD

COURSE CODE: M21HS08DC

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ISBN 978-81-966572-9-1



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