

ORIENTAL STUDIES TRIPOS Part II

South Asian Studies

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Monday 8 June 2009      09.00 – 12.00

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**SA.22      MUGHAL EMPIRE**

*Candidates should answer **THREE** questions.*

*All questions carry **equal** weight.*

*Write your number **not** your name on the cover sheet of **each** Answer Book.*

**STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS**

*20 Page Answer Book x 1*

*Rough Work Pad*

**You may not start to read the questions  
printed on the subsequent pages of this  
question paper until instructed that you may  
do so by the Invigilator.**

1. 'In a world where lineage was nearly everything, the Mughal descendents of Timur could not, ideologically speaking, abandon their paramount claim to Central Asia no matter how firmly established in India they became' (Richard Foltz). Discuss.
2. In what ways can we gain a better historical perspective on the Mughal Empire by placing its history within the referential frames of the 'Early Modern'?
3. Considering that the *Baburnama* is only an autobiography of the Emperor Babur, why is it an important historical document for understanding Mughal rule?
4. Does the notion of a centralizing state adequately explain the history of Mughal rule in South Asia?
5. What were the innovative features of Sher Shah's administrative policies, and in what ways did they inform the rule of his successor, Akbar?
6. Discuss the ways in which Akbar could successfully establish an imperial ideology that allowed him to expand and consolidate his powers.
7. 'Mughal women were expected to be pious and virtuous, but that did not stop them serving as power brokers and political agents' (Asher and Talbot). Discuss.
8. Assess the importance of *Jehangirnama* as a historical document.
9. **Either:**(a) Did the architectural projects of the Mughal Emperors reflect their politics and ideologies of state-craft? Discuss with examples from the reigns of any one ruler.  
  
**Or:** (b) 'For the Mughals the meaning of a building was as important as its form' (Ebba Koch). Discuss this statement through one or more Mughal mausoleum complexes.
10. How did the Mughals adapt European influences within their works of art to reflect their own imperial ideologies?
11. 'The "Aligarh School" of historians reduce the complex Mughal political culture to its agrarian and fiscal aspects alone.' Discuss.
12. **Either:**(a) 'Aurangzeb's success in achieving the widest expansion of the Mughal Empire, rather than his Islamic policies, sowed the seeds of the Empire's subsequent undoing.' Discuss.  
  
**Or:** (b) 'Political reality rather than bigotry dictated the more Islamic nature of Aurangzeb's government.' Discuss.

13. Why do the European accounts of Mughal court and society need critical evaluations?
14. What were some of the causes for the declining fortunes of the Mughal Empire in the eighteenth century? Should we document this century as the 'fall of the Great Mughal dynasty'?
15. 'The Maratha "uprising" represented a resurgence of a Hindu state in the Deccan against Muslim rule.' Discuss.
16. What were the ways in which the Maratha polity changed with Shivaji's death? Did these changes allow for the consolidation of Maratha administration and power?
17. What historical significance would you ascribe to the Sikh rebellion against Mughal authority?
18. In what ways were the independent kingdoms of the Deccan Sultans different from their contemporary, the Mughal state?
19. Why were the warrior ascetics so influential within their contemporary seventeenth- and eighteenth-century societies?

**END OF PAPER**