

ORIENTAL STUDIES TRIPOS Part II

South Asian Studies

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Monday 9 June 2008      09.00 – 12.00

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**SA.22      MUGHAL EMPIRE**

*Candidates should answer **three** questions.*

*All questions are of **equal** value.*

*Write your number **not** your name on the cover sheet of **each** Section booklet.*

**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. Does the notion of a centralizing state adequately explain the history of the Mughal rule of South Asia?
2. Compared to earlier schemes of periodisation, why does the 'Early Modern' promise a more suitable frame of reference for the Mughal Empire?
3. **Either:** (a) In what ways did the consciousness of their Timurid ancestry shape the policies of the first seven Mughal emperors?  
**Or:** (b) Explain why we cannot review the rule of the 'Great' Mughal emperors in isolation from their neighbours in Central and West Asia.
4. Assess the importance of the *Baburnama* as a source of Mughal history.
5. In what ways do Sher Shah's architectural and public works projects inform us of his administration and rule?
6. How was Akbar successfully able to consolidate his power and authority despite his initially weak position as Emperor?
7. In what ways does the architecture of Fatehpur Sikri reflect upon Akbar's policies and theories of governance?
8. Discuss the ways in which Mughal paintings reveal the politics, aspirations and self-perceptions of the Mughal emperors.
9. 'Mughal tombs were more than buildings to house the dead' (Asher and Talbot). Discuss.
10. 'Condemned by some as a religious zealot and praised by others as an upholder of Islam, Aurangzeb and his religious policies are among the most misunderstood of all Mughal history' (Catherine Asher). Discuss.
11. 'The "Aligarh School" of historians reduce the complex Mughal political culture to its agrarian and fiscal aspects alone.' Discuss.
12. How accurate are the European accounts of Mughal court and society?
13. In what ways were the independent kingdoms of the Deccan Sultans different from their contemporary, the Mughal state?

14. 'Persian became a crucial vehicle for the mode and idiom of politics that Mughal rule attempted to propagate' (Muzaffar Alam). Discuss.
15. How did the Mughals adapt European influences within their works of art to reflect their own imperial ideologies?
16. **Either:**(a) Is there any merit in viewing Shivaji's challenge to Aurangzeb's authority as an uprising of a Hindu war-lord against the tyranny of his Muslim sovereign?
- Or:** (b) 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. Explain why the 'fall of the Mughal Empire' is an inadequate theme for understanding eighteenth century India?
18. Why did the Sikhs rebel against Mughal authority? What historical significance would you attach to their rebellion?
19. Do you agree that the warrior ascetics exercised considerable influence within seventeenth- and eighteenth-century societies? Justify your answer.
20. What criticism can you offer to the idea that the eighteenth century was a period of intra-imperial chaos and anarchy within the Mughal State?

**END OF PAPER**