

DBQ Worksheet – Christian vs. Muslim Attitudes on Trade

Part 1 – Analyzing the Question

Prompt: Compare and contrast the attitudes of Christianity and Islam toward merchants and trade from the religions’ origins until about 1500. Are there indications of change over time in either case, or both?

Annotating:

1. Underline the ‘nouns’ in the prompt
2. Double Underline the ‘Proper nouns’ in the prompt
3. Circle the ‘verbs’ in the prompt
4. **Highlight** words you’re not familiar with and find the definition

Break down the question into smaller questions (Fill in the blanks):

1. What are the attitudes of Christians towards merchants and trade from 30CE to 1500CE?
2. What are the attitudes of _____ towards merchants and trade from _____CE to 1500CE?
3. How are these attitudes similar?
4. _____
5. Were there changes to these attitudes in Christians over time?
6. _____?

Prior Knowledge

What Do I Know About Christianity?	What Do I Know about Islam?

Part 2 – Analyzing the Documents

Use SOAPSTone on your given document:

Document #:	Source of Document:
What is the <u>subject</u> of the piece? (What is document about?)	
What is the <u>occasion</u> ? (Time/place/setting)	
Who is the <u>audience</u> ? (Who's reading?)	
What's the <u>purpose</u> ? (Why was this written?)	
Who's the <u>speaker</u> ? (Who's the narrator?)	
What's the <u>tone</u> ? (What's the attitude?)	

How is this document related to the question?

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Comparison Notes with Partner:

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Document 1 -

Source: Christian Bible, New Testament (Matthew), about 70 – 80 C.E.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

Document 2 –

Source: Muslim Qur'an, about 620 – 650 C.E.

O ye believers! devour not each other's property among yourselves unlawfully save that by mutual trading consent.

Woe to the cheaters! who, when they take measure of their dues from men, take it fully; and when they measure out to others or weigh out for them, they give less than is due.

And give full measure when you measure out and weigh with true balance. This is fair and better in the end.

If the two parties speak the truth and make it manifest, their transaction shall be blessed, and if they conceal and tell a lie, the blessing of their transaction shall be obliterated.

On the day of judgement, the honest, truthful Muslim merchant will take rank with the martyrs of the faith.

Vocabulary to Define:

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Document 3 –

Source: Reginald, monk of Durham, younger contemporary and colleague of St. Godric, The Life of Godric (A twelfth-century British merchant), written before St. Godric's death in 1170.

For this reason, aspiring to the merchant's trade, he began to follow the chapman's [peddler's] way of life, first learning how to gain in small bargains and things of insignificant price; and to gain from things of greater expense.

...he made great profit in all his bargains, and gathered much wealth in the sweat of his brow; for he sold... in one place the wares which he had bought elsewhere at a small price. [But later] he began to yearn for solitude, and hold his merchandise in less esteem than heretofore. [He] began to think of spending on charity, to God's honor and service, the goods which he had so laboriously acquired.

... Wherefore, that he might follow Christ the more freely, he sold all his possessions and distributed them among the poor. For above all things he coveted the life of a hermit.

Document 4 –

Source: Thomas Aquinas, leading Scholastic theologian, Summa Theologica, 1273.

It is written (Matthew vii. 12): *All things...whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them.* But no man wishes to buy a thing for more than its worth. Therefore no man should sell a thing to another man for more than its worth.

I answer that it is altogether sinful to have recourse to deceit in order to sell a thing for more than its just price, because this is to deceive one's neighbor so as to injure him. Hence Tully [Cicero, the Roman writer] says: *Contracts should be entirely free from double-dealing: the seller must not impose upon the bidder, nor the buyer against one that bids against him.*

Therefore if either the price exceed the quantity of the thing's worth, or conversely, the thing exceed the price, there is no longer the equality of justice: and consequently, to sell a thing for more than its worth, or to buy it for less than its worth, is in itself unjust and unlawful.

Now no man should sell what is not his, though he may charge for the loss he suffers.

Document 5 –

Source: Letters to and from Italian merchants in the fourteenth-century.

A. Letter from a merchant's mother

You know God has granted you to acquire great riches in this world, may He be praised; and you have borne, and are bearing, great burdens. Pray toil not so hard, only for the good of strangers; let some remembrance of you remain here and someone to pray God on your behalf. Crave not for all; you have already enough to suffice you!

C. Letter placing an order for English wool

You say you have writ to Venice to remit us 1000 ducats with which, in the name of God and profit, you would have us buy Cotswold wool. With God always before us, we will carry out your bidding.

Document 6 –

Source: Islamic court decision, Ankara, seventeenth century but representative of Turkish guild practices in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

[The content of this document] is that Şah Mehmed and Hacı Mehmed and others from the weavers' guild summoned [to court] Sakaoglu Nasuh from the said guild and said in complaint: "Whenever cotton yarn comes to [town], the aforementioned arrives, pays an extra price, and takes it from its owner, and the other weavers remain deprived [of cotton yarn]. As of old, when cotton yarn came, we all bought it together. The aforementioned has now acted contrary to the old custom; we do not agree to this." The aforementioned was warned emphatically that when cotton yarn comes once more he should not buy it alone, but rather that it should be distributed among all. Whereupon the aforementioned took it upon himself to behave in the manner said.