

Art of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Empires

Discussion Question:

- Why might calligraphy be an important and popular aspect of art in Islam?

Calligraphy in Art

- Calligraphy is the most highly regarded and most fundamental element of Islamic art.
- The Qur'an was transmitted in Arabic, and the Arabic script has the potential for developing a variety of ornamental forms.
- Calligraphy is principally a means to transmit a text, albeit in a decorative form.



Art of the Ottoman Empire

Discussion Question:

- Drawing upon your knowledge of geography and history, what empires/cultures might have influenced the art of the Ottoman Empire?

Mehmed II

- Mehmed II conquered Constantinople and envisioned the city as the center of his growing world empire
- He drew from Turkic, Perso-Islamic, and Byzantine artistic styles.
- Ottoman, Iranian, and European artists and scholars flocked to Mehmed's court



<http://www.theottomans.org>

Ottoman Additions to the Hagia Sophia

- Mehmed II converted the Hagia Sophia into a mosque.
- Succeeding sultans added to the building.
 - Minarets and mausoleums were added.
 - In 1739, during the reign of Mahmud I, a madrasa, a library, and a kitchen to serve the poor were built.
 - In 1740 a fountain for ritual ablutions were built.



http://istanbulvisions.com/hagia_sophia.htm

Topkapi Palace

- Mehmed also commissioned the construction of Topkapi Palace, which was completed in 1478.
- It served as the administrative, educational and art center of the Empire for nearly four hundred years.



<http://www.onewayturkey.com/marmara-region-turkey/istanbul/topkapi-palace/>

Süleyman I (r. 1520-66)

- The age of Süleyman (r. 1520-66) witnessed the pinnacle of Ottoman art and culture.
- Hundreds of public buildings were designed and constructed throughout the Ottoman empire.
- He commissioned mosques, schools, hospices, and soup kitchens
- He also commissioned repairs and additions to major historical monuments.



<http://www.theottomans.org>

Late 15th & 16th Centuries

- Significant gains in architecture, calligraphy, manuscript painting, textiles, and ceramics occurred.
- There were major artistic and commercial centers outside of the capital.
 - Iznik was renowned for ceramics
 - Bursa for silks and textiles
 - Cairo for the production of carpets
 - Baghdad for manuscripts
 - Ottoman artistic tradition from this time can still be seen in monuments from the Balkans to the Caucasus, from Algeria to Baghdad, and from Crimea to Yemen.

Discussion Question:

- Nature motifs were an important part of art in the Gunpowder Empires. What aspects of nature might be found in Ottoman art?

Saz Style

- In the second half of the sixteenth century, saz style of painting developed.
- Named after the reed pen used to create the patterns.
- Known for feathery leaf patterns
- Characterized Ottoman art for many years, and is found in textiles, illumination, and architectural ornament.



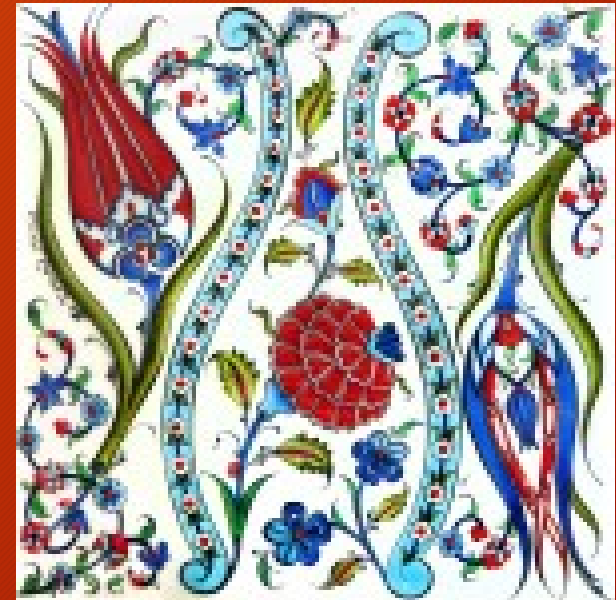
Blue Mosque

- The Sultan Ahmet Mosque, popularly known as the Blue Mosque, was completed in 1617 in Istanbul.
- Created by Sultan Ahmet I.
- Considered one of the last classical Ottoman structures.
- Traditional motifs on the tiles include cypress trees, tulips, roses, and fruits.
- The lavish use of tile decoration on the interior was a first in Imperial Ottoman mosque architecture.



Ahmed III (r. 1703–30)

- Under Ahmed III the arts revived.
- Ahmed's reign is also known as the Tulip Period.
 - This flower is reflected in a new style of floral decoration.
 - Replaced the *saz* style



<http://www.theottomans.org/> <http://www.ottomanempire1453.com/>

Ottoman Silk

- Ottoman silk textiles are among the most elegant textiles produced in the Islamic world.
- They are characterized by large-scale stylized motifs often highlighted by shimmering metallic threads.
- They are created from a range of woven techniques including satin and velvet.
- They were created for use inside the empire, as well as export to Europe and the Middle East.

Ottoman Textiles

Date: mid-16th century

Medium: Silk, metal wrapped thread



Date: second half 15th century

Medium: Silk, metal wrapped thread; cut and voided velvet, brocaded



http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tott/hd_tott.htm

Ottoman Textiles

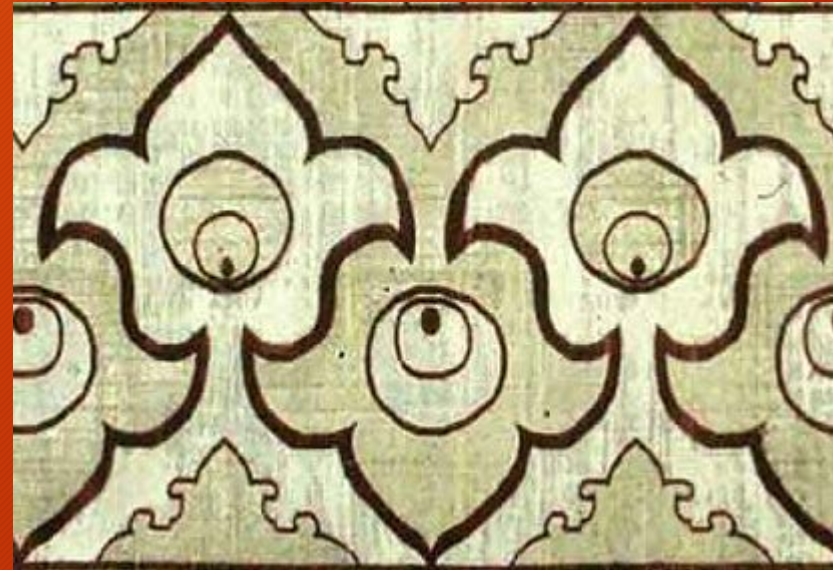
Date: ca. 1565–80

Medium: Silk, metal wrapped thread



http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tott/hd_tott.htm

**Velvet panel, Turkey 17th century.
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, no.
15-1300**



<http://www.tcoletribalrugs.com/article59Silk&Wool.html>

Art of the Safavid Empire

Discussion Question:

- The Safavids, like the Ottomans, were known for their silk industries. What are some products that the Safavids might have created out of silk?

Safavid Art

- In the arts, manuscript illustration was prominent during the Safavid Empire
- Textiles and carpets were made of luxury materials as furnishings for the court.
- In architecture, they commissioned mosques and palace complexes, restored major shrines, and contributed to sites of pilgrimage.

Shah 'Abbas (r. 1587-1629)

- His reign was a period of cultural florescence.
- In 1597-98, Shah 'Abbas transferred his capital to Isfahan, in southern Iran.
- The centerpiece of his capital was the new Maidan-i Shah, which was built initially for state ceremonies and sports.



<http://www.metmuseum.org/>

Shah 'Abbas (r. 1587–1629)

- Shah 'Abbas encouraged trade with Europe
- Silk was Iran's main export.
- Carpets and textiles were also important export items.
 - These were produced in workshops set up under state patronage in Isfahan and other cities.
- The art of painting continued to flourish, with single-page paintings and drawings becoming popular.



<http://www.metmuseum.org/>

Safavid Arts

- In pottery, imitations of ceramics from Turkey and of blue-and-white ware from China were especially popular.
- Carpet weaving was transformed from a craft practiced by nomads and peasants into a national industry.
- Fabrics were another major industry, both in silks, and in velvet.
- European imported works provided new technical techniques, which local artists combined with elements of traditional Persian painting.



http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tott/hd_tott.htm

Safavid Fashion

- Textiles showed contemporary Safavid dress, with men sporting turbans wound around a central oblong baton (*taj haydari*).
- Women are depicted wearing a small square kerchief (*chahar-qad*) at the crown of the head tied over longer flowing headscarves.
- Figures on textiles made from the early seventeenth century onward reflect the changing fashions, as the *taj haydari* was replaced by a wide, elliptical turban.

Date: mid-16th century

Medium: Silk, metal wrapped thread; cut and voided velvet <http://www.metmuseum.org/>



Safavid Motifs

- Popular scenes feature idealized pastimes such as hunting, falconry, or poetry reading in garden settings.
- Popular designs included stylized flowers with delicate drawings of deer, rabbits, and birds.
- Weaving incorporated gold or silver strips through colors that included pistachio green, salmon pink, alizarin, cream, and ochre.

Silk Fragment with a Rosebush, Bird, and Deer Pattern
Date: late 17th-early 18th century
Medium: Silk, silver- and gilded metal wrapped thread;
compound twill weave, brocaded



<http://www.metmuseum.org/>

Art of the Mughal Empire

Akbar (1556–1605)

- Akbar was the first great Mughal patron of the arts and commissioned various building projects
- He created the new capital city of Fatehpur Sikri, near Agra. It was completed in 1585 and included a residential palace
 - The construction reflected a combination of styles from Iran and Central Asia with indigenous traditions of Hindu and Muslim India.
- Although he is said to have been illiterate, Akbar commissioned numerous illustrated manuscripts that incorporated Persian, Indian, and even European elements.



Jahangir (r. 1605–27)

- Akbar's son Jahangir had strong artistic tastes, preferring a single painter to work on an image rather than the collaborative method of Akbar's time.
- He also encouraged careful plant and animal studies, and prized realistic portraiture.
- Jahangir commissioned literary works such as the *Razmnama* (a Persian translation of the Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata*)



<http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2011/c-welch-part-ii-l11227/lot.101.html>

- This picture is probably from one of Jahangir's leading painters.
- The Persian influence is strong.



Discussion Question:

- India's most recognizable building was built during the Mughal Empire. Can you name this architectural gem? What was the purpose of this building?

Shah Jahan (r. 1628-58)

- Shah Jahan is most celebrated for his architectural achievements, including the Taj Mahal.
- He commissioned this tomb for his wife after her death in 1631 and it took sixteen years to complete.
- After moving the capital from Agra to Delhi in 1648, Shah Jahan built a new city there, called Shahjahanabad, and a congregational mosque (1650-56), the largest in all of India.
- Paintings from his reign were characterized by formal portraits and courtly scenes, replacing the more wide-ranging and personal subject matter under Jahangir.



<https://www.flickr.com/photos/jeffroesmann/5674811425/>



"The Emperor Shah Jahan with his Son Dara Shikoh"

Artist: Painting by Nanha Calligrapher: Mir 'Ali Haravi (d. ca. 1550)

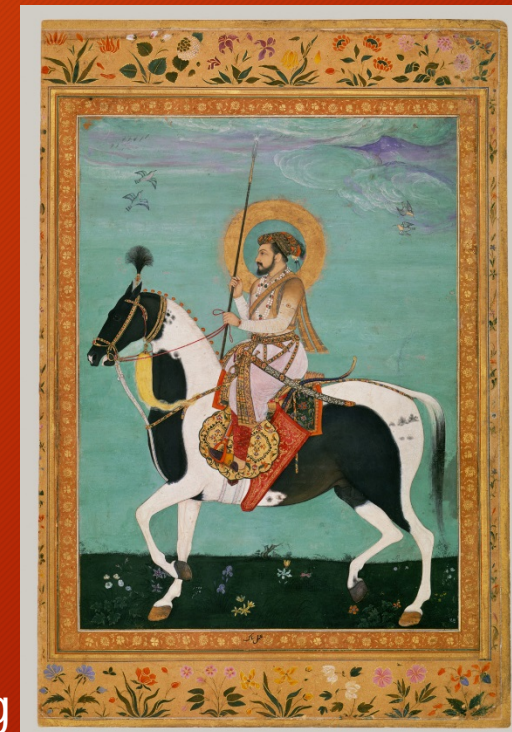
Medium: Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper



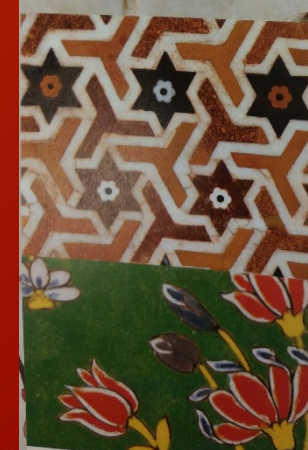
"Shah Jahan on Horseback"

Artist: Painting by Payag (Indian, active ca. 1591-1658)
Calligrapher: Mir 'Ali Haravi (d. ca. 1550)

Medium: Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold on paper



Mughal Motifs



Michell, George. "The Majesty of Mughal Decoration."

Decline of Mughal Arts

- Shah Jahan's son, Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707), held increasingly orthodox Sunni beliefs.
- His reign saw the decline of Mughal patronage of the arts.
- In 1680 he banned music and painting from his court.
- The emperors who followed him were too weak and the state too poor to support the production of lavish paintings and books as before.

Discussion Question:

- What are similarities in the art of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Empires?
- What are differences?

Ottoman Sources

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- Yalman, Suzan. "The Art of the Ottomans before 1600." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/otto1/hd_otto1.htm (October 2002).
- <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-islam/islamic-art-late-period/a/the-blue-mosque-sultan-ahmet-cami>
- http://www.lacma.org/islamic_art/lia.htm
- <http://www.hagiasophia.com/listingview.php?listingID=18>
- <http://topkapisarayi.gov.tr/en/history>

Safavid Sources

- Munroe, Nazanin Hedayat. "Silk Textiles from Safavid Iran, 1501-1722." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/safa_3/hd_safa_3.htm (May 2012). Sardar, Marika. "The Arts of Iran, 1600-1800." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/safa_2/hd_safa_2.htm (October 2003).
- Sardar, Marika. "The Arts of Iran, 1600-1800." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/safa_2/hd_safa_2.htm (October 2003).
- Yalman, Suzan. "The Art of the Safavids before 1600." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/safa/hd_safa.htm (October 2002).

Mughal Sources

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- Department of Islamic Art. "The Art of the Mughals before 1600." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/mugh/hd_mugh.htm (October 2002).
- Michell, George. "The Majesty of Mughal Decoration." New York: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2002.
- Sardar, Marika. "The Art of the Mughals after 1600." In *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000-. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/mugh_2/hd_mugh_2.htm (October 2003)

Art of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughal Empires

By Nicole Di Bernardo, West Bend West High School, Wisconsin

Lesson Overview:

In this lesson, students will learn about the art of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires. We will explore how arts in the empires evolved, and how they were influenced by other styles and cultures. Students will then be assigned one empire to create a graphic organizer in the motif of the empire's art. Within the created organizer, students will read the textbook and take notes on the social, political, religious, economic, technological, and environmental characteristics of the empire. The following class period students will be put into homogenous groups to share their organizers and add any missing information.

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will be able to analyze how art evolved over time in the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires.
- Students will be able to trace the influence of rulers and cultures on the art of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires.
- Students will be able to compare art of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires.
- Students will be able to create a note-taking device in the style of one of the Ottoman, Safavid, or Mughal empires.
- Students will practice taking notes in different formats.

Number of Class Periods:

1.5 class periods plus outside of class time for note-taking,

Course/Grade Level:

Advanced Placement World History/10th- 12th grade

Standards:

- B.12.3 Recall, select, and analyze significant historical periods and the relationships among them
- B.12.7 Identify major works of art and literature produced in the United States and elsewhere in the world and explain how they reflect the era in which they were created
- B.12.8 Recall, select, and explain the significance of important people, their work, and their ideas in the areas of political and intellectual leadership, inventions, discoveries, and the arts, within each major era of Wisconsin, United States, and world history
- D2.His.2.9-12. Analyze change and continuity in historical eras.
- D2.Geo.6.9-12. Evaluate the impact of human settlement activities on the environmental and cultural characteristics of specific places and regions.
- D2.Geo.7.9-12. Analyze the reciprocal nature of how historical events and the spatial diffusion of ideas, technologies, and cultural practices have influenced migration patterns and the distribution of human population.

Materials:

- PowerPoint on Art of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals
- Blank computer paper for students
- Colored pencils for students
- Textbooks (brought to class by students)

Procedures:

1. Use PowerPoint to give a lecture on the art of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires (PowerPoint will be posted in electronic format for students to review).
2. If there is time left in class, students may start their note taking and graphic organizer.
 - a. Students should be assigned one of the three empires for the graphic organizer (should be even groupings).
 - b. Students will read the textbook and take notes on the social, political, religious, economic, technological, and environmental characteristics of the empire.
 - c. Students are responsible for notes on all three empires, but only need to do a graphic organizer for one (students may take note for all three empires in this fashion if they choose).
3. Hand out computer paper for students to use for their graphic organizer
 - a. The organizer should be in the style of the assigned empire, but does not have to be an exact copy. Students may use the PowerPoint for ideas on common motifs.
 - b. The organizer should be colored.
4. The following class period, students will put into homogenous groups to share their organizers and add any missing information.

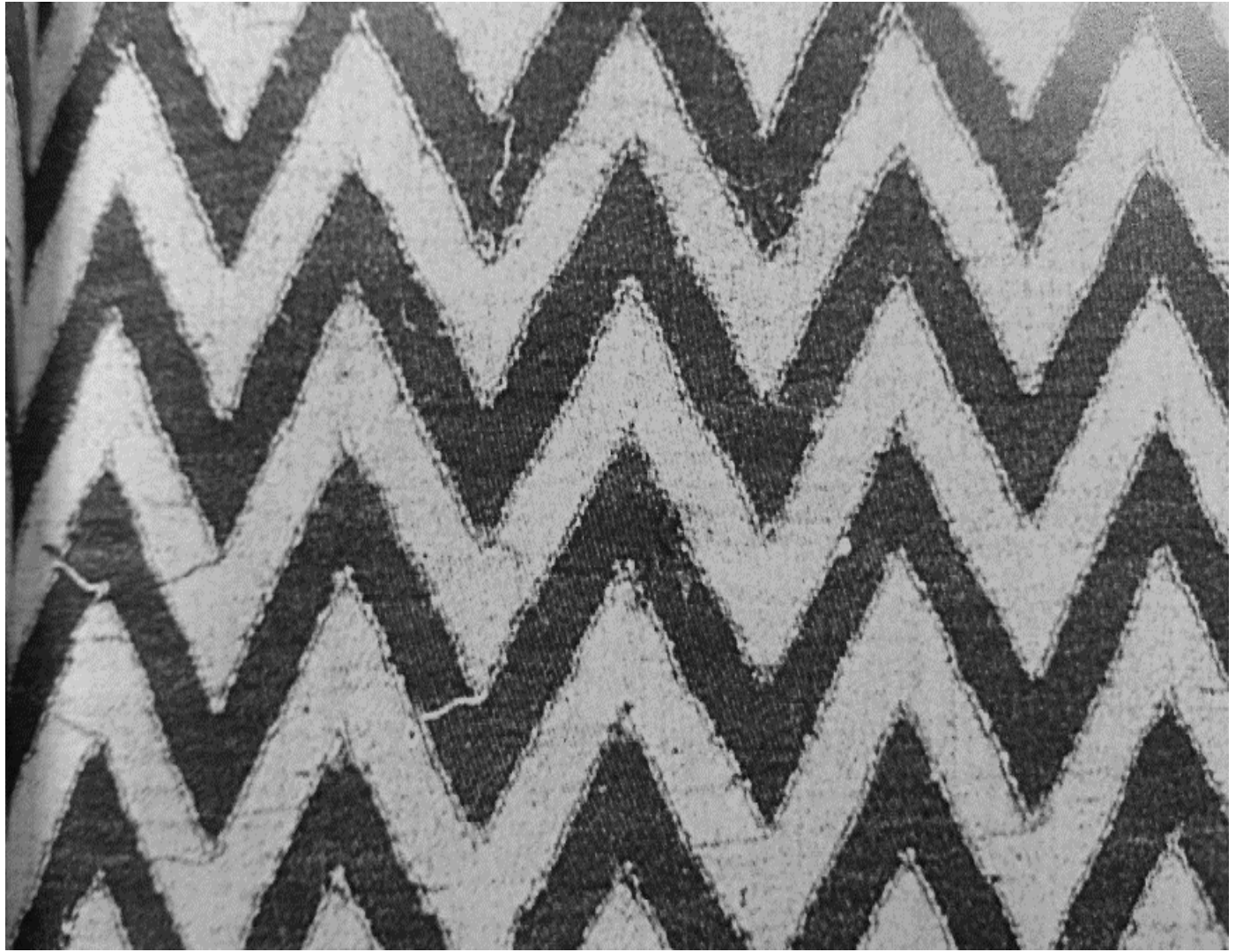
Assessment and Summary:

- Checking for understanding throughout PowerPoint presentation.
- Check notes for completion and for following specified format.
- Assess knowledge of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires through chapter and unit tests.

Text and Examples of Graphic Organizers, Worksheets, Synthesis Statements, Exit Cards, etc. that will be utilized by students during the lesson.

*Example of a graphic organizer in a Mughal motif on following page





Evaluating Sources through Travel Literature and Other Resources

By Nicole Di Bernardo, West Bend West High School, Wisconsin

Lesson Overview:

In this lesson, students will enhance their skills to comprehend, analyze, and assess the point of view (PoV) of historical sources in order to answer the essential question of “To what extent does a person’s background and perspective influence his/her viewpoint?”.

Lesson Objectives:

- Students will be able to analyze how point of view impacts the legitimacy, credibility, reliability, and pertinence of a source.
- Students will be able to distinguish between different points of view in varying sources.

Number of Class Periods:

One or Two 50-minute period(s)

Course/Grade Level:

Advanced Placement World History/ 10th- 12th Grades

Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6: Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.8: Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
- D2.His.3.9-12: Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.
- D2.His.4.9-12: Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.
- D2.His.6.9-12: Analyze the ways in which the perspectives of those writing history shaped the history that they produced.
- D2.His.8.9-12: Analyze how current interpretations of the past are limited by the extent to which available historical sources represent perspectives of people at the time.

- D2.His.11.9-12: Critique the usefulness of historical sources for a specific historical inquiry based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

Historical Background/Context:

Point of view (POV) looks at the perspective of the source. The point of view of a source attempts to analyze the perspective of the author. Many times students have difficulty understanding the content of the resource because they do not take into account the point of view of the author. This lesson would be implemented towards the beginning of the year (or a unit) to help students learn how to analyze and use sources.

Materials:

- Artifact worksheet for each group
- Source materials for each station (can run multiple sets of stations depending on class size)
- “Ticket out of the Door” slips for each student

Procedures:

1. Ask students the question “What is a source”? Have them discuss with an elbow partner.
 - a. Source- Some basic element containing information.
 - b. Sources- Remnants of past life that provide evidence on the society.
2. Talk about some different types of sources
 - a. Primary Source- Gives for the first time details about something.
 - i. Ask students to brainstorm some examples (letter, declaration).
Remember that these were written at the author’s present state of knowledge (ex. World is flat).
 - b. Secondary Source- Renders information that was first discussed elsewhere. It interprets and analyzes primary sources.
 - i. Ask student to brainstorm some examples (ex. Textbook)
3. Talk about some different types of primary sources
 - a. Historical remnants- direct evidence that are remains from a certain past that can testify to that past.
 - i. Ask students to brainstorm some examples (ex. Receipt)
 - b. Historical tradition- Created in order to record the event for posterity.
 - i. Ask students to brainstorm some examples (ex. Proclamation)
 - c. Correspondence- between internal administrators, or with outside figures
 - d. Narrative sources- examples could be local histories, general histories, religious literature, or travel literature.

4. Ask students why throughout history people would travel to far-off lands, and why they would write about their experiences.
 - a. Diplomats, ambassadors, discovery, spies, trade opportunities, missionaries, etc.
5. When evaluating these sources, there are several factors to take into consideration about the authors, their backgrounds, and their motivations. In groups of 2-3, students will travel to different stations to study various sources. Students will complete the accompanying questions on the artifact worksheet.
6. As a large group, review answers to the worksheet.
7. Students will individually complete their "Ticket out of the Door" and turn them in at the end of the lesson

Text of Document Excerpts/Source Materials with Citations

(See attached sheets for station source materials)

Station 1: language barriers and loss of meaning through translation. (Signs with mistranslated English)

Station 2: Different translations and interpretations (Qur'an 4:34)

Station 3: The traveler not understanding what he or she sees/ Comparing unfamiliar to familiar (Marco Polo's rhinoceros as a unicorn)

Station 4: Profession and background (al-Biruni: on the importance of the sciences)

Station 5: Using other sources as their own (Sir John Mandeville)

Station 6: Background of an author and religious POV (Ibn Battuta and travels in Mali)

Possible other stations if needed: Accounts written decades after travels, people defined as a group rather than individuals, accounts used to criticize their own homeland, accounts casting peoples in the role of the "noble savage"

Assessment and Summary:

- Checking for understanding with discussion questions listed in the above section.
- Students complete an exit slip answering the essential question, "To what extent does a person's background and perspective influence his/her viewpoint of the past?"
- In future lessons where primary and secondary sources are utilized, refer back to this lesson and check for retention and application.

Text and Examples of Graphic Organizers, Worksheets, Synthesis Statements, Exit Cards, etc. that will be utilized by students during the lesson.

Ticket out of the Door

Name: _____

Question of the Day:

To what extent does a person's background and perspective influence his/her viewpoint of the past?

Response:

Name _____

Evaluating Sources Station Worksheet

Station 1

1. After visiting this station, what should readers be aware of when reading sources that have been translated?

Station 2

2. After visiting this station, what do you notice about various translations and interpretations of the same Qur'an passage?

3. What could be the potential danger of translations and interpretations of historical sources?

Station 3

4. What animal do you think Marco Polo was actually describing when he referred to the unicorn?

5. To what extent does a Marco Polo's background and perspective influence his writing?

Station 4

6. To what extent does the author's background and profession influence his writing?
7. What are two other aspects of an author's background that could influence his writing?

Station 5

8. What is controversial about John Mandeville's account of his voyages?

Station 6

9. From Ibn Battuta's observances in his account of West Africa, what can you guess are three behaviors he would view as "normal"?
10. From Ibn Battuta's complaints in his account of West Africa, what can you guess are three behaviors he would view as "abnormal"?

Station 1



Image credits: imgur.com



Image credits: tinypic.com

Station 2

QUR'AN 4: 34: FOUR TRANSLATIONS

YUSUF ALI: Men are the protectors and maintainers of women, because Allah has given the one more (strength) than the other, and because they support them from their means. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part ye fear disloyalty and ill-conduct, admonish them (first), (Next), refuse to share their beds, (And last) beat them (lightly); but if they return to obedience, seek not against them Means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, great (above you all).

PICKTHAL: Men are in charge of women, because Allah hath made the one of them to excel the other, and because they spend of their property (for the support of women). So good women are the obedient, guarding in secret that which Allah hath guarded. As for those from whom ye fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart, and scourge them. Then if they obey you, seek not a way against them. Lo! Allah is ever High, Exalted, Great.

SHAKIR: Men are the maintainers of women because Allah has made some of them to excel others and because they spend out of their property; the good women are therefore obedient, guarding the unseen as Allah has guarded; and (as to) those on whose part you fear desertion, admonish them, and leave them alone in the sleeping-places and beat them; then if they obey you, do not seek a way against them; surely Allah is High, Great.

AHMED ALI: "Men are the support of women as God gives some more means than others, and because they spend of their wealth (to provide for them). So women who are virtuous are obedient to God and guard the hidden as God has guarded it. As for women you feel are averse, talk to them suavely; then leave them alone in bed (without molesting them) and go to bed with them (when they are willing). If they open out to you, do not seek an excuse for blaming them. Surely God is sublime and great."

(Source: *Al-Qur'an: A Contemporary Translation*, Princeton University Press, 1988: 78-79)

Station 3

Prologue

Great princes, emperors and kings, dukes and marquises, counts, knights and burgesses! and people of all degrees who desire to get knowledge of the various races of mankind and of the diversities of the sundry regions of the World, take this Book and cause it to be read to you. For ye shall find therein all kinds of wonderful things, and the divers histories of the Great Hermenia, and of Persia, and of the Land of the Tartars, and of India, and of many another country of which our book doth speak, particularly and in regular succession, according to the description of Messer Marco Polo, a wise and noble citizen of Venice, as he saw them with his own eyes... And we shall set down things seen as seen, and things heard as heard only, so that no jot of falsehood may mar the truth of our Book, and that all who shall read it or hear it read may put full faith in the truth of all its contents.

...When you quit the kingdom of Ferlec you enter upon that of Basma. This also is an independent kingdom, and the people have a language of their own; but they are just like beasts, without laws or religion. They call themselves subjects of the Great Kaan, but they pay him no tribute; indeed, they are so far away that his men could not go thither. Still all these islanders declare themselves to be his subjects, and sometimes they send him curiosities as presents. There are wild elephants in the country and numerous unicorns, which are very nearly as big. They have hair like that of a buffalo, feet like those of an elephant and a horn in the middle of the fore-head, which is black and very thick. They do no mischief, however, with the horn, but with the tongue alone; for this is covered all over with long and strong prickles [and when savage with anyone they crush him under their knees and then rasp him with their tongue]. The head resembles that of a wild boar, and they carry it ever bent towards the ground. They delight much to abide in mire and mud. 'Tis a passing ugly beast to look upon, and is not in the least like that which our stories tell of as being caught in the lap of a virgin; in fact, 'tis altogether different from what we fancied.

Source:

Classics of Science: Tales of Marco Polo

Source: The Science News-Letter, Vol. 13, No. 367 (Apr. 21, 1928), pp. 247-248

Published by: Society for Science & the Public

Stable URL:
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3904245>

Station 4

Introduction

Abu'l-Rayhan al-Biruni (973-c.1050) was born in a neighborhood near the outskirts of Kath, the capital of Khorezm at the time. He was a contemporary of the famed physician Ibn Sina, just seven years his senior, and an equally remarkable example of the vibrant scholarly environment in Islamic Central Asia at the time...The author begins his study by delivering a scathing critique of his lazy and ignorant contemporaries ...

[al- Biruni: On the Importance of the Sciences](#)

“...The rude and stubborn critic among them, who calls himself impartial, would listen to scientific discourses, but his persistent stubbornness ultimately reveals the meanness of his forbears. He would come forth with what he considers to be great wisdom, and say: ‘What is the benefit of these sciences?’ He does not know the virtue which distinguishes mankind from all sorts of the animal kind: it is knowledge, in general, which is pursued solely by man, and which is pursued for the sake of knowledge itself, because its acquisition is truly delightful, and is unlike the pleasures desirable from other pursuits. For the good cannot be brought forth, and evil cannot be avoided, except by knowledge, that what we seek and bring forth is the good, and that that which we avoid is evil.”

Source:

Scott C. Levi and Ron Sela, eds, *Islamic Central Asia: An Anthology of Historical Sources* (Bloomington, 2010).

Station 5

Passage from The Voyage and Travels of Sir John Mandeville, Knight

“...And because it has been a long time since there was a general passage over the sea and many people delight in hearing the said Holy Land spoken about and take pleasure in it, I John Mandeville, knight--although I am not worthy, born and raised in England in the town of St. Albans, who from there have crossed the sea in the year 1322 on Michaelmas Day and who have since been beyond the sea for a long time, and have seen and gone around many countries and many different provinces and many different regions and different islands and have passed through Turkey, Lesser and Greater Armenia, Tartary, Persia, Syria, Arabia, Upper and Lower Egypt, Libya, Chaldea, a great part of Ethiopia, Amazonia, Lesser and middle and a part of Greater India, and many different islands around India where there dwell many different peoples with diverse laws and diverse customs--“

Biography Excerpt of John Mandeville

“ **Sir John Mandeville**, (flourished 14th century) purported author of a collection of travelers’ tales from around the world, *The Voyage and Travels of Sir John Mandeville, Knight*, generally known as *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*. The tales are selections from the narratives of genuine travelers, embellished with Mandeville’s additions and described as his own adventures.

The actual author of the tales remains as uncertain as the existence of the English knight Sir John Mandeville himself. The book originated in French about 1356–57 and was soon translated into many languages, an English version appearing about 1375. The narrator Mandeville identifies himself as a knight of St. Albans. Incapacitated by arthritic gout, he has undertaken to stave off boredom by writing of his travels, which began on Michaelmas Day (September 29) 1322, and from which he returned in 1356... It is not certain whether the book’s true author ever traveled at all, since he selected his materials almost entirely from the encyclopaedias and travel books available to him, including those by William of Boldensele and Friar Odoric of Pordenone. The author enriched these itineraries with accounts of the history, customs, religions, and legends of the regions visited, culled from his remarkably wide reading, transforming and enlivening the originals by his literary skill and genuine creative imagination.”

Sources:

Higgins, Iain Macleod, ed. *The Book of John Mandeville: with Related Texts* (Cambridge, 2011).

Sir John Mandeville. (2016). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Mandeville>

Station 6

Ibn Battuta Travels in Mali

“When the ceremony was over I went forward and saluted Mansa Sulayman. The qadi, the preacher, and Ibn al-Faqih told him who I was, and he answered them in their tongue. They said to me, "The sultan says to you 'Give thanks to God,'" so I said, "Praise be to God and thanks under all circumstances." When I withdrew the [sultan's] hospitality gift was sent to me. It was taken first to the qadi's house, and the qadi sent it on with his men to Ibn al-Faqih's house. Ibn al-Faqih came hurrying out of his house barefooted, and entered my room saying, "Stand up; here comes the sultan's stuff and gift to you." So I stood up thinking--since he had called it "stuff"--that it consisted of robes of honour and money, and lo!, it was three cakes of bread, and a piece of beef fried in native oil, and a calabash of sour curds. When I saw this I burst out laughing, and thought it a most amazing thing that they could be so foolish and make so much of such a paltry matter.”

The negroes possess some admirable qualities. They are seldom unjust, and have a greater abhorrence of injustice than any other people. Their sultan shows no mercy to anyone who is guilty of the least act of it. There is complete security in their country. Neither traveller nor inhabitant in it has anything to fear from robbers or men of violence. They do not confiscate the property of any white man who dies in their country, even if it be uncounted wealth. On the contrary, they give it into the charge of some trustworthy person among the whites, until the rightful heir takes possession of it. They are careful to observe the hours of prayer, and assiduous in attending them in congregations, and in bringing up their children to them.

...Another of their good qualities is their habit of wearing clean white garments on Fridays. Even if a man has nothing but an old worn shirt, he washes it and cleans it, and wears it to the Friday service. Yet another is their zeal for learning the Koran by heart. They put their children in chains if they show any backwardness in memorizing it, and they are not set free until they have it by heart. I visited the qadi in his house on the day of the festival. His children were chained up, so I said to him, "Will you not let them loose?" He replied, "I shall not do so until they learn the Koran by heart."

Among their bad qualities are the following. The women servants, slave-girls, and young girls go about in front of everyone naked, without a stitch of clothing on them. Women go into the sultan's presence naked and without coverings, and his daughters also go about naked. Then there is their custom of putting dust and ashes on their heads, as a mark of respect, and the grotesque ceremonies we have described when the poets recite their verses. Another reprehensible practice among many of them is the eating of carrion, dogs, and asses.

Source:

Medieval Sourcebook: Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa* 1325-1354, tr. and ed. H. A. R. Gibb (London: Broadway House, 1929) from <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/source/1354-ibnbattuta.asp>

NEH Summer Institute, 2016
Central Asia in World History, Scott Levi at Ohio State University
Lisa Waligora
Clear Creek High School, League City, TX

Preliminary Idea:

Creating a variety of resources and activities that can bring the history and the peoples of the Central Asian Steppes into existing units and lessons for World History and Human Geography.

Courses:

World History and AP World History, 10th Grade

Human Geography, 9th Grade

- WH Units that aspects of Central Asia can easily fit into:
Nomads and Complex Societies, Trade Connecting Regions, i.e. the Silk Road, Mongols, Soviet Collectivization
- HuG Units that Central Asia can be used as part of case studies and examples:
Population and Migration, Traditional Culture and the Decay of, Religion, State Building, Political Boundaries, Agricultural Land Use, Industrial Land Use

Rationale:

Teachers of World History struggle with finding time to add new things to a curriculum already packed with 10,000 years and six continents. That often means we have a week to cover World War I, and a class period to cover African states other than Egypt. How can we add content to our courses? Another issue for me was my lack of knowledge regarding Central Asia. How can I add content beyond the Mongols, about a region I know very little about?

To that end, I have drafted a series of warm-up activities, writing assignments, discussion prompts and other tidbits teachers can insert into their curriculum more easily. All finished resources and activities can be found at www.waligoraneh.weebly.com

Preliminary Resources:

1. List: The participants of the 2016 NEH Institute: Central Asia in World History compiled a list of online resources that can be used by multiple disciplines and grade levels.
2. PowerPoint Warm-up Activities: I ask students to examine an image and put in writing what a brain automatically does when it see something new or different. I call this activity **DQC** and this is how I start every class. I show students an image and they must identify a set number (usually 3) of **D**etails, ask a certain number (such as 2) of **Q**uestions, and finally draft a **C**onclusion they can make based on what they see, know and now understand about the image, the region, and or the period the image illustrates. I only give students between 90 and 120 seconds to examine and write. Once that time is up I ask for kids to share, point out what they see and what they think. After we have gone through the DQC, I share what I know and understand about the piece. My AP

World History students are responsible for providing a DQC for the class several times a year.

3. Writing Assignments: Essay writing and Mini or full blown DBQ are not the only way to help students understand the importance of focused writing that uses evidence to support their thesis or point of view.
 - a. Arab Spring – a Look at 2 photo essays and projects about the Arab Spring movement that began in Tunisia and I know it has nothing to do with Central Asia but the sites were too wonderful to pass up.
 - b. Comparing Epic Monuments from Hammurabi's code, Darius I's Rock at Behsitun and the Steles in Orkhon Valley
 - c. Roles of Women Writing Precis requires students to examine both a primary and secondary text about marriages arranged between Chinese elite and populations along the Steppe. Students need to learn to write concise yet thoughtful summaries that contain evidence and substance.
4. Other Activities: These range from guided discussions to a study guide for an AP World History course specific to The world after World War I. My students use the Stearns, 7th edition.
 - a. Comparing the Roman Empire to the Mongol Khanates, includes notes for teachers from NEH Lecturer, Dr. Tim May
 - b. "When Does the Modern Age Begin?" Discussion of Historians choice of the date 1750 as the beginning of Modernity.
 - c. PowerPoint interactive notes about Steppe Nomads
 - d. PowerPoint interactive notes on Börte, Chinggis Khan's wife and Women on the Steppe.
 - e. Quantitative Decision Making. This activity helps students get out of their comfort zone and look at topics with emotion removed by assigning a value point system based on how it will cost the public economically, politically and socially.
5. Human Geography
 - a. Population & Migration: Most current Russian Population Pyramid with Map of Caucasus and Central Asia to discuss the life expectancy of Russian Males due to alcoholism, drug addiction, unemployment, etc. influx of immigrants and attitudes of Russians who don't want but need these workers...
 - b. Political Organizations 2.0: Rethinking and reinterpreting the idea of political organizations to include groups and alliances, especially among developing nations such as NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), UN (United Nations), SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization), EU (European Union), USSR (United Soviet Socialist Republics), Pacific Rim, Political organization and borders are not limited to states and nations, economies, alliances by trade and by political means is becoming a thing again, real-estate holdings overseas, educating young generations overseas.

- c. Gapminder: Focus on the Stans suing Gapminder – can compare to the big boys of Russia and China, etc.
- d. Enclaves and Exclaves exist in the Stans as well...especially between Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan <http://www.rferl.org/content/kyrgyzstan-tajikistan-exclaves-vorukh-tensions/25232311.html>
- e. Comparing Uzbek Mahallas to Chinese Hutongs and Peruvian house in – street space is more than a passage or in-between spaces, they are social, active, and become part of interaction, semi-private and need to show deference in body and space – greetings, social norms, and social authority – have interior courtyard which can hold animals and pens, gardens, social space, some have streams or gullies that pass through, multi-generational, variety of sizes and ages, design, etc. Going to call – there is no doorbell so you call out that means everyone at house and in fact all the neighbors know who is getting a visitor and often who that visitor is because people recognize voices. Marriages arranged – first sons/daughters married first. Married sons live with his parents until they establish and can find their own home. Last son is ultimogeniture – he and his family stays with parents and inherits house – as opposed to Primogeniture. Elders of Mahalla are seen as leaders of the neighborhood and most see the government and state in the same light – paternalistic.
- f. Ethnic Inquiry PowerPoint