

## **DBQ: POST-CLASSICAL MUSLIM CITIES**

### **DIRECTIONS**

The following question is based on the accompanying documents. (The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise). The question is designed to test your ability to work with and understand historical documents. Write an essay that:

- Has relevant thesis and supports that thesis with evidence from the documents.
- Uses all of the documents.
- Analyzes the documents by grouping them in as many appropriate ways as possible and does not simply summarize the documents individually.
- Takes into account both the sources of the documents and the authors' points of view.

### **ESSAY PROMPT**

Analyze the roles played by cities and urban areas in Muslim society during the post-classical age. What additional documents would help analyze the role of Muslim cities in the post-classical age?

### **HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The most notable feature of post-classical period was the growth of towns and cities within the vast region governed by Islam. Many older cities such as Jerusalem, Alexandria, Damascus, and Samarkand continued to flourish under Muslim rule. And Muslim conquerors and rulers founded many new ones including Fez, Tunis, Cairo, Baghdad, Bursa, Isfahan, and Nishapur.

## DOCUMENT 1

Source: Ibn Jubayr, Spanish Muslim traveler and geographer, 1184 CE

Damascus is the paradise of the east and the rising place of its radiant beauty. We found it adorned with flowers of fragrant plants, displaying silk-brocaded garments in the form of gardens. The position it holds for Arabs and Bedouin in the realm of beauty is firmly established. The city was highly honored when Allah gave refuge to the Messiah and his Mother (Muslims believe Jesus and Mary sought refuge in Damascus) on an 'elevated spot, secure and abundant in water' (*Sura 23:52*). In fact wherever you look in your gaze, by Allah, they told the truth who said, "If Paradise be on earth, Damascus must be it; if it is in Heaven, Damascus can parallel and match it.

## DOCUMENT 2

Source: Al-Hijari, Andalusian (Spanish Muslim of Arab origin) historian, from his writings, 1188 CE

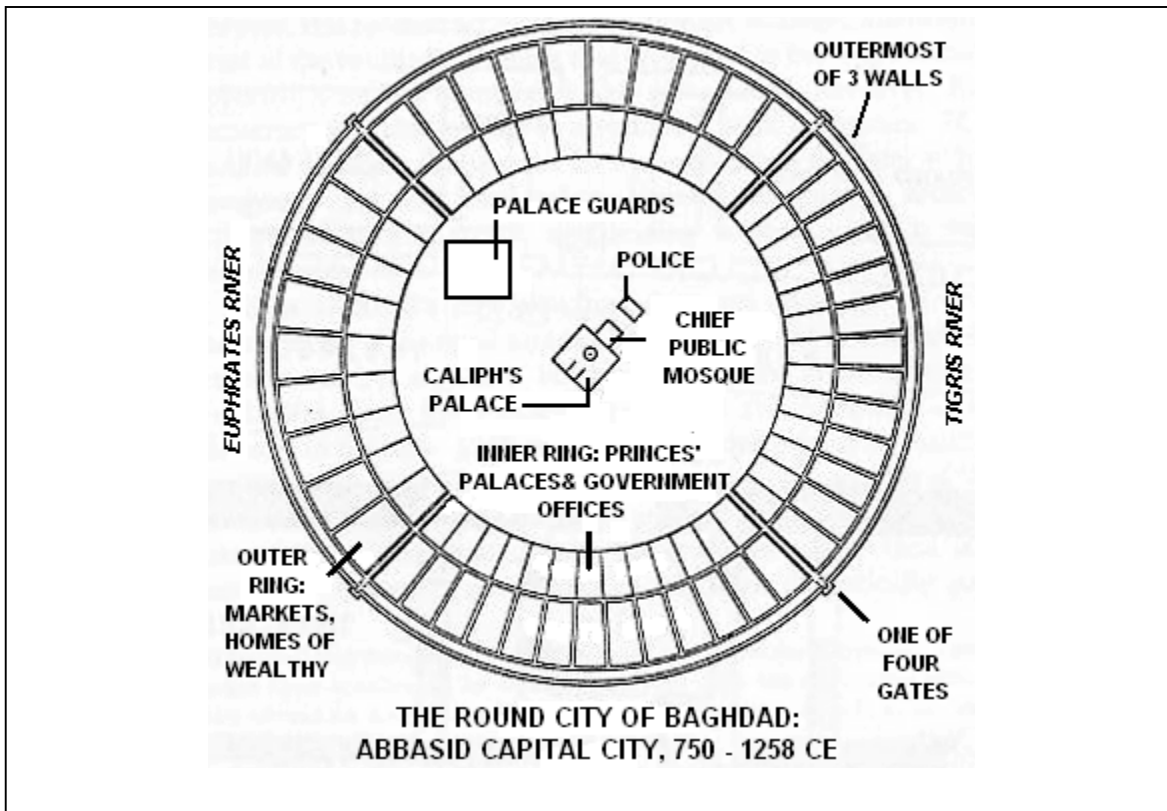
Cordoba after the Arab conquest of the Iberian Peninsula became the ultimate goal of the land, headquarters of the army, mother of all towns, seat of the virtuous and pious, and abode of the people of intellect and learning. Under the Umayyads, it served as the throne of the caliphate, heart of the entire region, cupola of Islam, and home of the imam (religious leader). Unto it flocked seekers of science and poetry, for it was a resort of the noble and a mine of the learned. In it book writers vied with warriors, and nobility mingled with military. From its horizon rose stars for the world, notables for the age. In it were composed exquisite books and issued unsurpassed writings. The explanation of the superiority of the Cordobans over all others past and present lies in the fact that the city's climate is one of research and investigation in the variety of sciences and literature.

### DOCUMENT 3

Source: Nasier – e – Khusraw, Persian Muslim traveler and Ismaili spy, his report on to his superiors on Cairo, mid-11 century CE.

I estimated that there were no less than twenty thousand shops in Cairo, all of which belong to the Sultan Saladin. There is no end of caravansaries (hotels with stables for caravans), bath houses, and other public buildings including numerous palaces, public mosques, and barracks – all property of the Sultan for no one owns any property except house and what he himself builds. I heard in Cairo that there are eight thousand buildings belonging to the sultan that are leased out and where the rent is collected monthly. In the midst of Cairo are gardens watered by wells. Waterwheels have been constructed to irrigate the gardens. There are trees planted and pleasure parks built even on the roofs.

### DOCUMENT 4

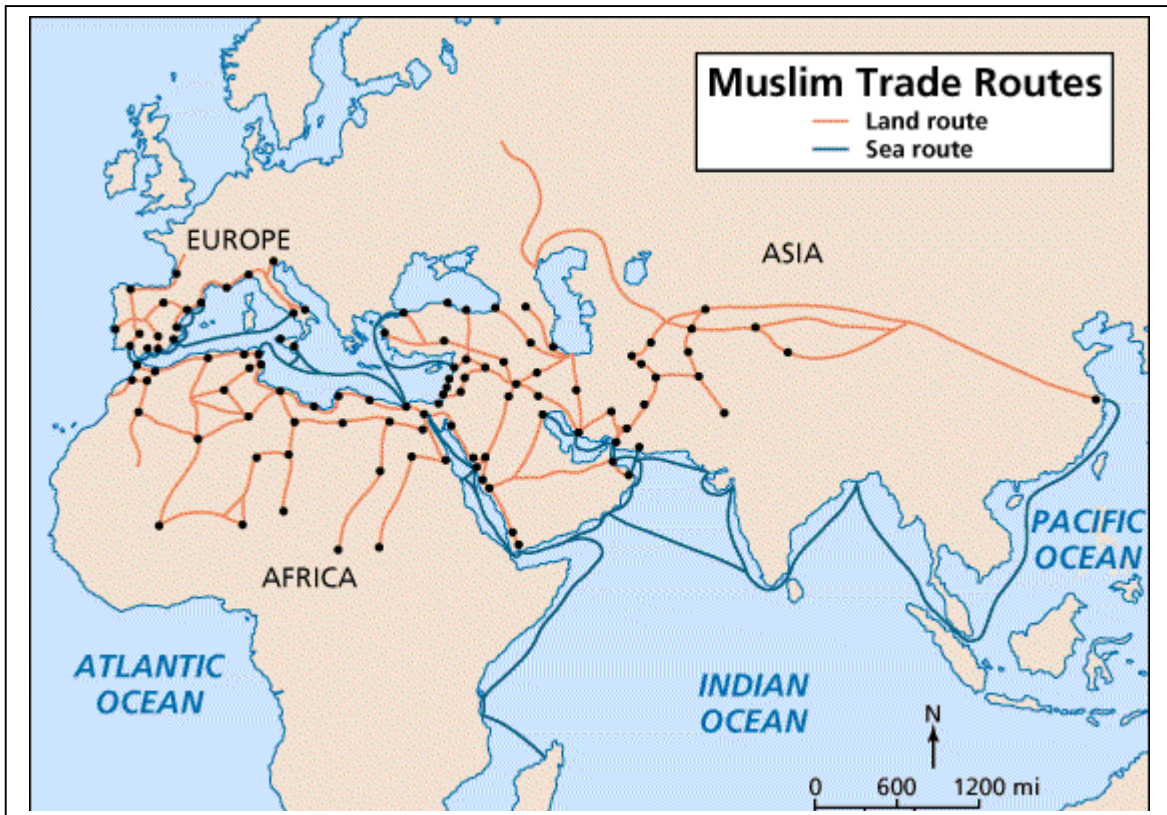


## DOCUMENT 5

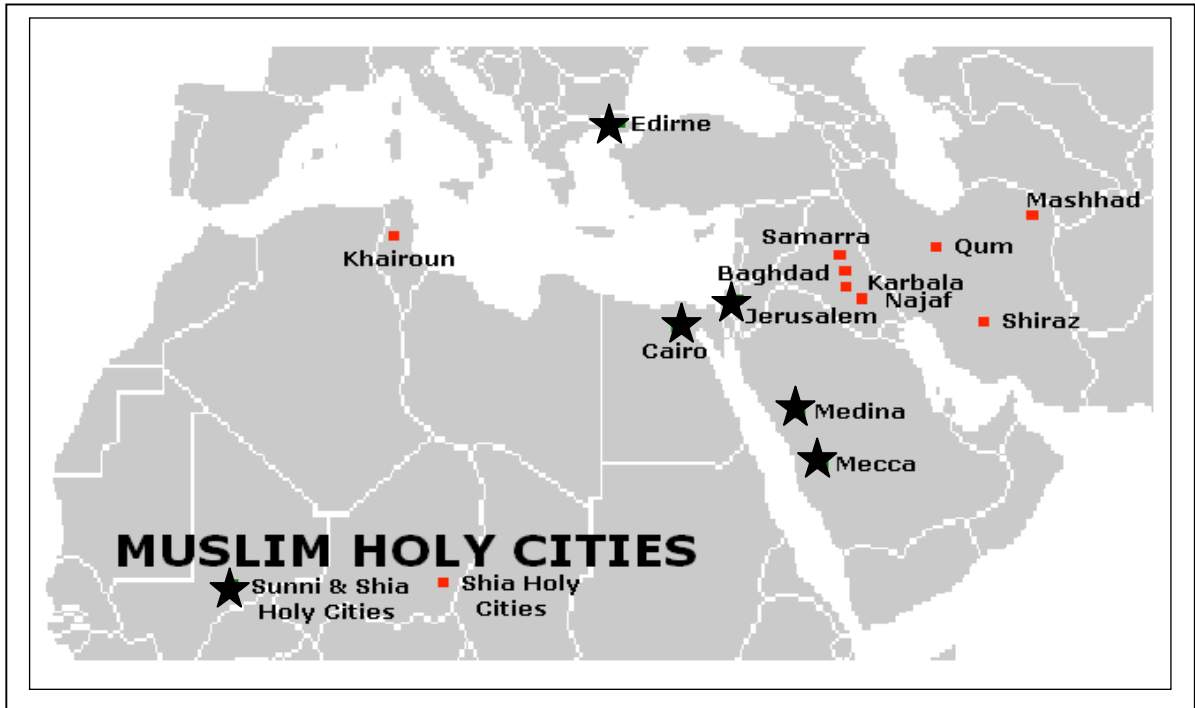
Source: Marco Polo, Italian merchant, from his travel journal, *The Travels of Marco Polo*, published in 1299, about the city of Tabriz, c. 1275 CE

Tabriz is a large and very noble city belonging to the province of Azerbaijan, which contains many other cities and fortified places but this is the most eminent and most populous. The inhabitants support themselves principally from commerce and manufactures, which consist of various kinds of silk, some of them interwoven with gold, and of high price. It is so advantageously situated for trade that merchants from India, from Baghdad, Mosul, and Hormuz, as well as different parts of Europe, come to purchase and to sell. The merchants concerned by foreign commerce acquire considerable wealth, but the inhabitants in general are poor. They consist of a mixture of various nations and sects, Nestorians, Armenians, Jacobites, Georgians, Persians (Zoroastrians), and the followers of Muhammad, who form the bulk of the population.

## DOCUMENT 6



## DOCUMENT 7



## DOCUMENT 8

Source: Al-Ya'qubi, Arab historian and geographer whose *Kitab al-buldan* was the first scientific treatment of historical geography produced by the Arab culture, 872 CE

Caliph Abd al-Malik (692 CE) forbade the people of Syria to make the pilgrimage [to Mecca], because Abdullah ibn Zubayr, his rival and enemy tended to seize on them during the pilgrimage and force them to pay him allegiance. But the people murmured threats, saying "How do you forbid us to make the pilgrimage to God's house, seeing that God commanded us to make the pilgrimage. But the caliph answered them, "Has not Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri [the historian who knew many of the Companions of the Prophet] told you how the Muhammad said 'Men shall journey to but three mosques, the Holy Shrine (at Mecca), my mosque (at Medina) and the mosque of the Holy City (of Jerusalem).'" So Jerusalem is now appointed to you as a place of worship in place of the Holy Shrine of Mecca. And this Rock, of which it is reported that the Apostle of God set his foot when he ascended into heaven, shall be to you in the place of the Ka'ba.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Philip K. Hitti, *Capital Cities of Arab Islam* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973), page 83 – 84.
2. Hitti, page 162.
3. Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, *Islam: A 1000 Years of Faith and Power* (New York: TV Books, L.L.C., 2000), pages 116 – 117.
4. F. E. Peters, “*The Holy House: The Muslims Come to Jerusalem*” from Jerusalem (Accessed September 10, 2005); [Information service on-line]; available at <http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~fisher/hst372/readings/peters2.html>
5. Marco Polo, *The Travels of Marco Polo* (New York: Dorset Press, 1987), page 47 – 48.
6. Muir, Sir William. *The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline, and Fall*. Revised edition by T. H. Weir. (Edinburgh, Scotland: John Grant, 1924) (Accessed September 8, 2005); [Information service on-line]; available [www.answering-islam.org/Books/Muir/Caliphate](http://www.answering-islam.org/Books/Muir/Caliphate)
7. Bernard Lewis, *Islam from the Prophet Muhammad to the Capture of Constantinople, volume II: Religion and Society* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1974), pages 78 – 81.
8. “Muslim Trade Routes” from *World History: The Human Journey* (New York: Holt, Reinhardt, and Winston, 2003) (Accessed May 30, 2006); [Information service on-line]; available from GO.HRW.COM, The Social Studies Home Page <http://go.hrw.com/hrw.nd/arbiter/pRedirect?project=hrwonline&siteId=308&pageId=1236>