

Name _____

Class _____

Score _____

An Islamic Traveler Laments the Muslims' Indifference to Europe

Although most of the travelers and explorers in this era were Europeans who went to Africa, Asia, and the Americas, a few people from these lands visited Europe. One of these, Abu Taleb, was a scholar of Turkish and Persian descent whose family had settled in India. At the end of the 18th century, Abu Taleb traveled in Europe for three years and later wrote an account in Persian of his experiences there. Although his was one of the few firsthand sources of information about Europe available to Muslim scholars and leaders, Abu Taleb was deeply disturbed by the lack of interest shown by other Muslims in his observations and discoveries.

When I reflect on the want of energy and the indolent dispositions of my countrymen, and the many erroneous customs which exist in all Mohammedan countries and among all ranks of Mussulmans, I am fearful that my exertions [in writing down his experiences in Europe] will be thrown away. The great and the rich intoxicated with pride and luxury, and puffed up with the vanity of their possessions, consider universal science as comprehended in the circle of their own scanty acquirements and limited knowledge; while the poor and common people, from the want of leisure, and overpowered by the difficulty of procuring a livelihood, have not time to attend to his personal concerns, much less to form desires for the acquirement of

information of new discoveries and inventions, although such a person has been implanted by nature in every human breast, as an honour and an ornament to the species. I therefore despair of their reaping any fruit from my labours, being convinced that they will consider this book of no greater value than the volumes of tales and romances which they peruse merely to pass away their time, or are attracted thereto by the easiness of the style. It may consequently be concluded, that as they will find no pleasure in reading a work which contains a number of foreign names, treats on uncommon subjects, and alludes to other matters which cannot be understood at first glance, but require a little time for consideration, they will, under pretense of zeal for their religion, entirely abstain and refrain from perusing it.

QUESTIONS What reasons does Abu Taleb give for his fellow Muslims' indifference to his travel reports on Europe? What other factors can be added as a result of our study of long-standing Islamic attitudes toward Europe and conditions in the Ottoman Empire in this period? In what ways might the Muslims' neglect of events in Europe have hindered their efforts to cope with this expansive civilization in the centuries that followed? Were there Western counterparts to Abu Taleb in these centuries, and how were their accounts of distant lands received in Europe?

CCSS.ELA-Literacy .RH.11-12.1: Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

Honors Literature – World History

TASK: Read the following text carefully, making all appropriate notations. Identify SOAPStone, DIDLS, PERSIAN, and other information as evidence of your research and analysis of the piece of literature. Answer the related questions on notebook paper or on this document. You may use this information for any written essay on the piece. See the text at the very bottom of these notes.

TASK: Comprehension Questions

1. What reasons does Abu Taleb give for his fellow Muslim's indifference to his travel reports on Europe?
2. What other factors can be added as a result of our study of long-standing Islamic attitudes toward Europe and conditions in the Ottoman Empire in this period?
3. In what ways might the Muslim's neglect of events in Europe have hindered their efforts to cope with this expansive civilization in the centuries that followed?
4. Were there Western counterparts to Abu Taleb in these centuries, and how were their accounts of distant lands received in Europe?

Date:
TOPIC:

Analysis with Textual Evidence Chart

Members in the group:

HL Question Posed to the Group? (Vocab)	By Whom?	Paraphrase Text Passage	Explain/Conclude of Passage Meaning (Explicit/Inference)	Textual Evidence as support	Page #
1					
2					
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