

OXFORD UNIVERSITY HISTORY APTITUDE TEST  
2013

(40 marks)

*The following passage is from an inventory, or list, detailing objects that were seized from a household of French Catholic missionaries residing in Baghdad during a raid by the authorities of the Ottoman Empire in 1701. At the time, Iraq was a part of the Ottoman Empire, and its population was predominately Muslim although there was also a small minority of Christians and Jews. The inventory below was compiled by one of the missionaries in Baghdad, and it was sent to the missionary headquarters in France. You do not need to know anything about eighteenth-century Iraq to answer the question below, and you should not provide information from other sources.*

1. A large chiming clock.
2. 8 watches of which six were left by deceased clerics in Baghdad, and two others deposited by merchants in exchange for 110 *piastres*.<sup>1</sup>
3. 2 large baskets filled with porcelain objects including two vases of great value.
4. 2 cases filled with surgical, medical, and mathematical instruments.
5. Books belonging to the two libraries of the household in Mosul, all of which had been transported to Baghdad when that mission was razed to the ground.
6. Provisions consisting of 150 *okas*<sup>2</sup> of oil; 40 *okas* of butter; more than 400 bushels of wheat; 150 *okas* of rice; 12 *okas* of pepper; 6 *okas* of cinnamon; 3 pounds of cloves; and 600 kernels of nutmeg.
7. An assortment of cooking utensils and crockery, many of which had been left by the people of this country as well as 'Franks'<sup>3</sup> passing through on their way back from India or Persia who preferred not to carry them on their journeys across the desert.
8. Furniture for 5 or 6 rooms for use by travelling Franks who have nowhere else to stay but with the Fathers.
9. Instruments for the apothecary including basins and heaters for the baths, a bowl of ambergris<sup>4</sup>, and other items necessary for the making of remedies.
10. 3 chests decorated in the Turkish fashion full of all sorts of precious remedies.
11. A few coins for daily expenses, no more than 20 or 30 *piastres*.
12. 6 good pieces of golden and silver fabric from the Indies donated for the decoration of the church.
13. A bundle of very fine cloth of this country, embroidered in gold, about 40 or so pieces.
14. A large chest full of very fine 'Indian', basic muslin, and some cotton fabric.
15. A large silver chalice<sup>5</sup> that we no longer use.
16. A considerable number of pearls, coral, and amber.
17. 11 medium-sized Turkish carpets, and 3 Persian carpets for use in the church.
18. 2 large paintings, about 15 feet high: one of the Virgin Mary and the other of King Louis XIV sent from Paris by the directors of the East India Company, along with two more of the same paintings in a medium size.
19. 6 large candles in the style of this country, each weighing 5 *okas*.
20. A provision of wax for the church, about 80 *okas*.
21. 6 large magnifying glasses left by those Fathers who passed away in this house.
22. A rifle and two pistols given by Mr Caré upon his return from India, where he had been sent by King Louis XIV.
23. A Turkish sword given by a priest, Fr Beauvilliers.

What does this extract reveal about the lives of missionaries in Iraq in this period?

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<sup>1</sup> A French unit of currency.

<sup>2</sup> An *oka* is an Ottoman unit of measurement equal to about 1.28 kilograms.

<sup>3</sup> The word 'Frank' was used in this period to refer to Europeans living in the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>4</sup> A solid, waxy substance used for perfumery or medicinal purposes.

<sup>5</sup> A chalice is a vessel, much like a goblet, used in Catholic religious ceremonies.