INSTRUCTOR RESOURCE MANUAL

for

*A History of the World in Seven Themes*

Volume One: to 1600

by

Stewart Gordon

*Contributions by:*

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**CHAPTER TWO**

**HONOR AND LOYALTY: BLOOD, ROBES, AND SALT**

CHAPTER 2

HONOR AND LOYALTY: BLOOD, ROBES, AND SALT

Thinking About the Big Picture

1. Compare how Gordon defines “loyalty” in pre-agricultural hunters and gatherers with “loyalty” after the development of agriculture.
2. In what ways did rulers create and maintain non-familial loyalties?
3. Using evidence from the life of Babur, discuss the key themes of blood, robes, and salt as they relate to honor and loyalty.
4. Compare pre-modern systems of loyalty with those of modern nation-states.

Points of View

1. At the beginning of the chapter Gordon states: “The key concept here is that in order to collect grain and taxes, loyalty was far less expensive than coercion.” Give a lecture in which you outline how rulers and governments utilize coercion to maintain stability, collect taxes and other resources through tribute. Examples could be used from Assyria, Rome, the Mongols, or other empires. After the lecture, have students consider whether loyalty is more important than utilizing methods of coercion. Resources: “States, State Transformation, and War” by Charles Tilly in *The Oxford Handbook of World History*, edited by Jerry H. Bentley.
2. Have students research the role of religion in urban-agrarian societies and consider the following: How might religion be used by rulers to maintain the loyalty of their subjects? How do your findings support or conflict with Gordon’s blood, robes, and salt argument? Students could discuss their findings in groups, on a discussion board, or as a written assignment.

In the Classroom

1. In a lecture, expand on the life of Babur with an emphasis on his Turco-Mongol heritage, the political situation in the region, warfare, and empire building. A particularly helpful reference is Dale, Stephen F. *The Garden of the Eight Paradises: Bābur and the Culture of Empire in Central Asia, Afghanistan and India* (1433-1530), Leiden: Brill, 2004.
2. Lecture on the history of the Mughal Empire with an emphasis on the changing fortunes of the empire under Humayun, Akbar, and Aurangzeb. Conclude the lecture by placing the Mughals within the context of the other “Gunpowder Empires;” the Ottomans and Safavids. Recommended resource: Streusand, Douglas E.. *Islamic Gunpowder Empires: Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals*, Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2010.
3. In a lecture examine the Medieval European concept of “homage.” Compare homage with Gordon’s discussion of blood, robes, and salt. Have students read and discuss oaths of fealty.
4. Gordon states, “Salt was a valuable commodity reserved for kings and nobles.” In a lecture, examine the relationship of salt to the state in the ancient and medieval periods. A very helpful reference would be Kurlansky, Mark. *Salt: A World History*, New York: Penguin, 2002.
5. Salt can also be used as a symbol of protest. Discuss the modern-day example of Gandhi’s salt march in 1930.
6. Gordon only briefly discusses loyalty in the Americas using the Incas as an example. In a lecture, expand on this by examining the theme in relation to Maya and Aztec rulers.
7. Online discussion board or group discussion in class: Have students discuss and share examples the concept of loyalty today. Suggest all the different ways loyalty can be expressed today. For example: loyalty to one’s country, loyalty to a political party, brand loyalty, or loyalty to a sports team. Have students share their findings.
8. When loyalty is lost. Lecture on ways that rulers can lose loyalty. Some examples: (1) China and the loss of the Mandate of Heaven. (2) Gordon’s example of Roman emperors and grain shipments from Egypt in Chapter 1. (3) 14th century CE revolts and rebellions in Europe.

Suggestions for Active Learning

1. Online: In addition to the *Babur-Nama*, Gordon uses other primary sources to support his argument about the importance of robes and salt in securing loyalty. Have students research and find additional visual or written sources that support Gordon’s argument. Students can post their findings in a discussion board and comment on other students’ posts. Be sure to emphasize to students the importance of properly citing their primary sources.
2. Gordon states, “Rulers discovered early that kinship alone did not produce sturdy bonds of loyalty.” Have students research the history of a particular royal line to establish the validity of this statement.
3. Gordon states, “Focus on the processes of loyalty makes it possible to compare how loyalty operated in different kingdoms, empires, and dynasties.” Have students research two kingdoms, empires, or dynasties and then write a comparative essay on the theme of loyalty.

Websites for Students to Explore

1. See more of the [Bhimbetka Rock Shelters](http://www.natgeotraveller.in/walking-into-the-past-bhimbetka-rock-shelters/).
2. Read additional excerpts from the *Babur-Nama* at the University of Washington’s [Silk Road Seattle](https://depts.washington.edu/silkroad/texts/babur/babur1.html) project.
3. See an example of Indian miniature painting from the [*Babur-Nama* at The MET](https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/451959).
4. Read Stewart Gordon’s article: [*Asia, Power, and Robes of Honor*](https://www.asianstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/asia-power-and-robes-of-honor.pdf) at the Association for Asian Studies website.
5. Read stories from *The Arabian Nights*, including Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves at [Project Gutenberg](https://www.gutenberg.org/files/20916/20916-h/20916-h.htm).