

EUROPEAN HISTORY SECTION II

(Suggested Writing Time-45 minutes)
Percent of Section II score-45

Directions: The following question is based on the accompanying 12 Documents . (Some of the documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.) Write your answer on the lined pages of the pink essay booklet.

This question is designed to test your ability to work with historical documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the sources of the documents and the authors' point of view.

1. Analyze the causes, responses and victims of the witchcraft persecutions of the late 15th through the 17th centuries.

Historical Background: The witch craze lasted in Europe from about 1480 to 1700. This was the period of the Protestant Reformation, the Catholic Counterreformation and the Scientific Revolution. The total number of accused witches who were tried exceeded over 100,000, of which over 90% were tortured and executed.



Document 1

"I confess all of my sins. Though my eyes have been put out with red-hot pokers and my sex has been violated by men and beasts, and my flesh has been torn and shredded from my body, I confess, I am a witch. The pain of my torture has shown me the error of my ways. I have eaten the flesh of Christain babies, I have participated in the Satanic orgies of the Prince of Darkness and allowed men and women to use my body for their pleasure, and I have brought harm on the animals of my community during this horrible time of droubt and famine To these crimes I confess and ask God's forgiveness."

Signed confession of Kristina Eissig

33-year old, unmarried

Licensed midwife

Land Court of Stegen in the Black Forest, Germany

burned at the stake, 1586

Document 2

"Since the witches are usually older women of a sad and depressed nature with small brains, there is no doubt the Devil easily captures their minds with illusions that so confuse these poor souls that they will confess to anything, especially under the horrific pain of torture. From consideration of their sex, age and limited intelligence, good Christians would be better to help these poor wretches then to throw them into the stinking torture-holes of our prisons."

Johan Wier

Belgian physician

from *De Praestigiis Daemonum*

1566

Document 3

"Innocent have I come to prison and innocent have I been tortured, for whoever comes into the witch prison must become a witch or be tortured until he invents something out of his head. 'I only tried to protect the innocent,' I said, but I was nailed to a board, my testicles crushed with pinchers, my flesh burned with scalding oil. When at last the executioner tired of my screams he said, 'Please sir, I beg of you. Confess something, true or not, for you and I can no longer endure the pain of this torture.' Keep this letter secret, dear child, for on the morrow I burn at the stake."

Letter of Johannes Junius

Mayor of Barnberg, Germany

addressed to his daughter, Hilda

1628

Document 4

"There was no doubt she was a witch. She wore her hair short like a man, she wore the clothes of a man. She was a spinster and well beyond the marrying age. All the animals of her village had died and there was plague in the region. She confessed to sleeping with other women, also witches and she was beautiful beyond belief. What other proof do the courts demand? Besides, if that was not enough, I have in my hand a sworn confession."

Karl Pfefferkom
Court appointed executioner
Eiger, Germany
1607

Document 5

"It is seldom that an old hag is brought to trial without a screaming mob behind her yelling for justice. 'She killed our animals and took our health,' they cry. 'We demand that her flesh burns and drips from her black and evil bones. Let her return to her father Satan,' they scream. What is a judge to do? The hags' innocence I can see, but they have all confessed their sins in writing. And if I say 'no' to the crowd, will I be next?"

Peter Meyer
Chief Justice of the courts
Basel, Switzerland
1682

Document 6

"Of course we know why a great number of witches come from the fragile sex. The first is that women are most often sexually aroused and easily tempted by men. The second is that women are weaker and more open to the voice of Satan. Men can resist His dark works and wishes. Look at their breasts, since she was formed from a bent rib and since through this defect she is a carnal and hot animal. Is it not just to burn the unmarried who tempt men with sexual adventure from their true nature?"

Kramer and Sprenger
two Dominican monks
Spier, Germany
from The Hammer of Witches
1484

Document 7

"Walpurga Hausmannin has with the use of the kind and gentle torture of tearing off her nails and breasts, confessed to the following: after she became a widow she cut corn for Hans Schlegel; with lewd speeches and little clothing she seduced Hans into lustful intercourse; she went over to the Dark Side after her husband's death, eating the roasted flesh of an innocent child; she killed children by sucking their blood from their bodies and making them sick; and after infecting the mayor with the black death, she suckled his blood, yet remained alive. Walpurga has lovely golden hair and lustful body of a goddess, yet she sleeps and lies with the Prince of Darkness. To these crimes she does confess."

Sworn testimony of Seka Kisha
Licensed midwife
29-year old; unmarried
Dillingen, Germany
burned at the stake, 1587

Document 8

"It has recently come to our ears that many persons, mostly women, heedless of their own salvation and forsaking the catholic faith, give themselves over to the devil. We therefore have ordered our inquisitors to use any and all methods deemed necessary, to extract confessions of wrongdoing from these fallen souls and to proceed to imprison and to punish the guilty. We do hereby-decree this wish by virtue of our apostolic authority, with His name of grace and mercy."

Pope Innocent VIII
from the "Witch Bull"
The Holy See, Rome-1484

Document 9

"Witches are the Devil's whores who suck his staff, steal milk, raise storms, bring illness and plagues and kill children in their cradles. The Devil is unable to do these things by himself without his whores and sorcerers and bitches who have gone astray, for Satan is the lord of this world, yet he cannot act without human help."

Martin Luther
father of the Protestant Reformation
Church Sermon
Würthberg, Germany
1522

Document 10

"The poor wretches and old hags we call witches are the lonely, the ugly and the outcast. The harm that befalls animals and people comes from natural causes that I have seen with my own eyes. They are the scapegoats of society and they are the ones who pay for our fears and ills."

Manfred Rohrbach
Court Physician of Erik von Steineck
from Witches and their Cure
Passau, Germany
1699

Document 11

Males and Females Executed in Southwestern Germany
1562-1684

Men=238=18%
Women=1,050=82%

From the Court Records of Freiburg in Breslau
Germany, 1688

Document 12

"Scripture tells us that there are not one, two or a hundred souls against us, but an army of foes who wage war against us. Indeed, a whole legion is said to have assailed one man (Luke: 8:30). We are therefore taught by these examples that we have to wage war against an infinite number of enemies, for Christ bears witness that once a demon has been cast out, he seeks another home and will return, again and again."

John Calvin
founder of the Protestant sect called "Calvinism"
from Institutes of the Christian Religion
Geneva, Switzerland
1536