PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION FOR PART I OF THE ORIENTAL STUDIES TRIPOS

Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies

Friday 6 June 2008  13.30 – 16.30

ARP.4  INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Candidates should answer three questions, one from each section.

All questions carry equal marks.

Write your number not your name on the cover sheet of each Section booklet.

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS
20 Page Answer Book x 1
Rough Work Pad

You may not start to read the questions printed on the subsequent pages of this question paper until instructed that you may do so by the Invigilator.
SECTION A

1. Discuss some of the geographical factors that distinguish the Middle East and suggest how these may have shaped the history of the region.

2. Examine the rise and development of Shi'ism as both a political and religious aspect of early Islam.

3. Compare and contrast the incorporation of the Iranian and the Turkish (Central Asian) peoples into the Islamic world, both in terms of the processes involved, and their consequences.

SECTION B

4. What were the main bases on which Islamic law was founded? How different were the four dominant law schools in their view of these sources?

5. Discuss some of the different genres of poetic writing in Arabic and Persian, and the main themes that the poets were interested in.

6. Explore the role of the patronage of art and architecture in the culture of the Middle East. Give some examples of the forms this creativity took.

SECTION C

7. Why is the place of women in society such a live issue in the Middle East today?

8. What forms did the impact of the West take on Middle Eastern societies from the 18th century onwards?

9. What are the most important issues at stake in relations between ‘Islam’ and ‘the West’ at the present time, and how have they arisen?

END OF PAPER