



ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES TRIPOS, PART IB

Middle Eastern Studies

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Date

Time

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**MES. 17 THE FORMATION OF ISLAM**

Answer *three* questions.

All questions carry *equal* marks.

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

**STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS**

*20 Page Answer Book × 1*  
*Rough Work Pad*

**SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**

*None*

**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.**

Answer **three** of the following questions

- 1 Account for the development of Sunni legal *madhāhib* during the period *c.* 600–1050 CE.
- 2 Explain and account for the adequacy of the terms ‘Sunni’ and ‘Shia’ during the period *c.* 600–1050 CE.
- 3 Compare and contrast the Buyid and Samanid dynasties’ use of ‘Iranian’ heritage and their respective significance for the development of the Persian components of Islamic civilisation.
- 4 Discuss the significance of **either** *adab* **or** architecture as an expression of Muslim identity in the period *c.* 600–1050 CE.
- 5 How far did events of the fourth/tenth century reflect the gradual emaciation of the Abbasid caliphate? Give reasons for your answer.
- 6 Beyond the political history of rulers and their claims to legitimacy in the formative period of Islam, what alternative histories exist? Give examples.
- 7 To what extent can you distinguish a correlation between the growth of *tariqa* Sufism and the expansion of Turkish rule in the 11th to 12th centuries?
- 8 “Unfortunately, true Islam lasted for only a brief period after its inception. First the Umayyads and then the Abbasids inflicted all kinds of damage” (B. LEWIS, *Islam and revolution*, 1981). Discuss.

**END OF PAPER**