

ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES TRIPOS Part IB
Middle Eastern Studies

Monday 31 May 2010 09.00 – 12.00

MES.17 THE FORMATION OF ISLAM

Answer **three** questions. All questions carry equal marks.

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS

8 page Answer Book x 3
A 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

- 1 Discuss the Near Eastern background to the rise of Islam, paying particular attention to the pre-Islamic religious communities, and their relationships, if any, to the existing states and empires.
- 2 In what ways did the *amṣār* help consolidate Muslim conquest in the Middle East and North Africa?
- 3 Discuss the development of the classical theory of Islamic law, and al-Shāfi'ī's contribution to it, paying particular attention to the role of *ḥadīth*.
- 4 How did the translation movement impact upon cultural life in the 'Abbasid era?
- 5 Discuss the relations between Muslims and non-Muslims, especially Christians and Jews, in the first three centuries of Islam.
- 6 **Either:** What were the main characteristics of the Samanid period and what is its significance in Persian history?
Or: To what extent did the Umayyads of Cordoba attempt to be caliphs according to an eastern model?
- 7 Examine the period sometimes described as 'the Shī'ī century' with respect to **either** the Fatimids **or** the Buyids, **or** comparing the two. To what extent were the aspirations of political Shi'ism met by these dynasties?
- 8 **Either:** To what extent can the so-called 'Sunni revival' be credited to the Saljuq regime?
Or: In what ways were the objectives and legitimising tactics of the Saljuqs and the Almoravids comparable?

END OF PAPER