AET2
Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Tripos, Part II

Monday 01 June 2015 9 to 12.00 pm

Paper MES37

History of the pre-modern Middle East: Iran under the Safavids

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 booklet
Rough Work Pad

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS TO BE SUPPLIED FOR THIS EXAMINATION

None

You may not start to read the questions printed on the subsequent pages of this question paper until instructed to do so.
Answer three of the following questions

1. What were the sources of legitimacy on which Shah Isma'il and his advisors drew to establish the Safavid dynasty in the early 16th century?

2. Assessment the achievements and legacy of Shah Tahmasp by the end of his long reign.

3. To what extent can the decline of the Safavid Empire during the 17th century be attributed to economic factors?

4. What were the competing trends of religious thought in the reigns of Shah Safi and Shah ‘Abbas II and how were they resolved by the end of the 18th century?

5. How do you account for the difference between Persia’s relations with the Mughals and the Ottomans in the Safavid period?

6. “When Shah ‘Abbas laid out the Maidan-i Naqsh-i Jahan, he meant it to be the symbol of a new state… When Shah Sultan Husain constructed the Sultani Madrasa, he meant it to represent the triumph of Shi’ite Islam.” (Blake, Half the World, p. xviii). Comment on this view of the role of architecture in defining the evolution of the Safavid state.

7. What were the chief developments in the arts of Iran in the Safavid period and how closely can you link these to changes in politics and society?

8. Identify the main types of written sources available for the study of the Safavid period and assess their respective characteristics.

END OF PAPER