



AET2

Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Tripos, Part II

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Monday 01 June 2015 9 to 12.00 pm

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**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 16<sup>th</sup> 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 of 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**

Page 2 of 2