

AET2

Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Tripos, Part II

This is a three hour examination

Paper MES39

Special subject in the pre-modern Middle East: Islamic Cities and Muslim Kings? Monarchy, Legitimacy and Urbanism in the Medieval and Early Modern Islamic World

All candidates MUST answer Question 1 and two questions chosen from Questions 2-9. All questions carry equal marks.

*Each of your three answers should be a **maximum of 1200 words**.*

*Write your number **not** your name as well as the paper code (MES39) on each page of your submission.*

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS TO BE SUPPLIED FOR THIS EXAMINATION

Student declaration form

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Type your answers and upload them in a document, such as a Word document or PDF.

Files should be saved as MES39_[your number].

Upload a completed student declaration form as a separate file.

The exam will begin as soon as you open the file containing the questions. Once begun you will have three hours to complete the exam.

All candidates *MUST* answer Question 1 and *two* questions chosen from Questions 2-9. All questions carry *equal* marks.

1. All candidates must answer this question. Choose **three** from the following eight text extracts and images and write a historical commentary on **each** of your **three** chosen images and/or extracts. (Higher resolution versions of the images are available in the image booklet.)

a. (Andrew Shiva/Wikipedia/CC BY-SA 4.0)



- b. According to al-Mada'ini, Abarwiz brought from al-Daylam 4,000 men who acted as his servants and escort, which position they held until the Arab invasion. They then took part in the battle of al-Qadisiyyah under Rustam. When Rustam was killed and the Magians were defeated, they withdrew, saying, "We are different from those others (i.e. the Arabs); we have no refuge, and have already left a bad impression on the Muslims. Let us then adopt their faith, and we will be strengthened by them." Having deserted to the Muslim camp, Sa'd wanted to know the cause; and al-Mughirah ibn Shu'bah asked them about it. Thus, they presented their case, saying, "We will adopt your faith." Al-Mughirah came back to Sa'd and told him about it. Sa'd promised them security; and they accepted Islam. They witnessed the conquest of al-Mada'in under Sa'd and the conquest of Jalula; after which they returned to Kufa where they settled with the Muslims.

al-Balādhurī, Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā (d. c. 900). *The Origins of the Islamic State (Futūḥ al-Buldān)*. Trans. P. K. Hitti. New York: Columbia University, 1916, I: 441-42.

c.



- d. The great mosque of Seville, known as the Mosque of ‘Adabbas, had become too small for the population and they prayed in its surrounding plazas and courtyards and in the parts of the market adjacent [to the mosque] which distanced them from the call signalling the obligation [of prayer], so perhaps their prayer was rendered unacceptable. The ambitions of their kings and princes in the preceding ages had not extended at all to endeavours to expand [the mosque] or add to it because they were so addicted to fighting each other for power and so inclined to the error of civil strife, and Muslims without protection neglected to lay things in store for the hereafter, until God Most High reunited Islam with this glorious call to oneness (*tawḥīd*) after indifference and this caliph, the Imam Commander of the Faithful son of the Commander of the Faithful, Abī’l-Ya‘qūb, son of the Caliph and Commander of the Faithful – may God be satisfied with them – with whom the caliphate has reached its summit, and learning and religion have achieved the greatest sublimity.

‘Abd al-Malik Ibn Ṣāhib al-Salāh, *Ta’rīkh al-Mann bi’l-Imāma* (1979), 474-9.

- e. In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. This is a madrasa of the great and honourable Lady ‘Ismat al-Dīn Sitt al-Shām, the mother of Husām al-Dīn, the daughter of Ayyūb ibn Shādī, may God have mercy upon her and her parents. This is a *waqf* for *fuqahā’* and *mutafaqqiḥa* from among the adherents of Imām al-Shāfi‘ī, may God be pleased with him. The property endowed for it and for them and for [everything] pertaining to that [consists of] the whole of the village known as B-z-y-na; the whole portion, equal to 11 and a half *sahms* from among 24 *sahms*, of the whole of the farm known as Jarmānā; the whole portion, equal to 14 and one seventh *sahms* from among 24 *sahms*, of the village known as al-T-y-na; a half of the village known as Mujaydal al-Suwaydā’; and the whole of the village known as Mujaydal al-Qarya, and that in the year ...8.

Reconstructed summary of the foundation deed (*waqfiya*; *kitāb al-waqf*) of the Damascene al-Shāmīya al-Juwwānīya Madrasa, established at the beginning of the 13th century by a sister of Salāh al-Dīn, the prominent Ayyubid Princess, ‘Ismat al-Dīn Sitt al-Shām (d. 616/1220).

- f. As for the convents which they call *khawāniq*, they are many and are used by the Sufis. They are elaborately decorated palaces, with water flowing to all their parts forming the most agreeable sight one could see. The members of this order of Sufis are the kings of those parts, for God has sufficed them of the goods and favours of the world, and freed them from thoughts of winning their livelihood that they might apply them to His worship, lodging them in palaces that remind them of the palaces of heaven. Those happy ones of them who have received God's help, enjoy, by His grace, the favours of this world and the next. They follow a noble path, and their social conduct is admirable. The style of their ritual in worship is remarkable, and excellent is their custom of assembling to listen to impassioned (dance) music.

Ibn Jubayr (d. 1217), *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*, trans. R. Broadhurst, London: Jonathan Cape, 1952, 297.

- g. The people are of a number which cannot be counted; if you estimate it at one million it would not be too much, nor can you say it is less. If they pitched their tents together in the land they would fill all vacant spaces, and if their armies came even into a wide territory the plain would be too narrow for them. And in raiding, plundering, and slaughtering settled populations and inflicting upon them all kinds of cruelty they are an astounding example, and in this they follow the custom of the Bedouin Arabs.

This king Timur is one of the greatest and mightiest of kings. Some attribute to him knowledge, others consider him a Shi'ite because they note his preference for the members of the Ahl al-Bayt (family of the Prophet); still others attribute to him the employment of magic and sorcery, but in all this there is nothing but rumor. It is simply that he is highly intelligent and very perspicacious, addicted to debate and argumentation about what he knows and also about what he does not know.

Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406), *Kitāb al-'Ibar*, cited in Walter J. Fischel, *Ibn Khaldun and Tamerlane* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1952), 29-47.

h.



Answer **two** questions from questions 2-9 below.

2. Compare and contrast the role of urban centres in the legitimacy activities of the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphs (c.650–c.820 CE).
3. What does the material evidence from Samarra suggest about changes in Abbasid political culture?
4. Why did the Fatimids found Cairo?
5. **EITHER** What do the distinguishing features of Almoravid and Almohad cities tell us about the different claims to power of these dynasties? **OR** Why did the urban patrons of the Berber empires reference the cities and architecture of other states in their building programmes?
6. Discuss the social and political role of Ayyubid citadels in the urban life of Syro-Egyptian cities.
7. Discuss the influence of Mamluk *waqfs* on urbanism and architecture between the 13th and 15th centuries with reference to **at least one** of Cairo, Damascus, and Aleppo.
8. Why were gardens so important in late medieval and early modern Islamic palaces? Explain with reference to examples from **at least two** of the Timurid, Safavid, Ottoman and Mughal dynasties.
9. Explain the variety of ways in which the idea of the 'Islamic city' has been used and contested in the scholarship of the 20th and 21st centuries.

END OF PAPER