

AET0
Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Tripos, Part IA

Easter 2021

Paper MES6

Introduction to the history and culture of the Middle East

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

The **word limit** for each question is **1500** words.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS TO BE SUPPLIED FOR THIS EXAMINATION

Student declaration form

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Answers may be written by hand in **black ink** or typed.

If written by hand, upload your answers as a scan or image file.

If typed, upload them in a document, such as a Word document or PDF.

Files should be saved as MES6_[your number].

Write your number **not** your name as well as the paper code (MES6) on each page of your submission.

Upload a completed student declaration form as a separate file.

RESOURCES PERMITTED FOR THIS EXAMINATION

Your exam answers must be entirely your own new and original work, with any quotations clearly marked as such. You may use your own notes and any primary or secondary sources in preparing your answers if you wish to do so.

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

Answer **three** of the questions below.

1. There is broad scholarly consensus that Christianity long ago departed from its Jewish roots. Taking into account lectures and readings of the class, summarise and account for this departure.
2. On the basis of a selection from the primary texts that were assigned for reading, discuss the nature of the relationship between God and Israel as it is conceived in the Bible.
3. Discuss the key aspects relevant to the historical and religious transition from Biblical Israel to Rabbinic Judaism.
4. What does it mean to describe Islam as a 'late antique' religion?
5. What problems and opportunities do the sources available for the origins of Islam present for historical analysis?
6. Characterize the cultural and political relationship between center and periphery in the Islamic empire, with reference to the Umayyad (661-750), early Abbasid (750-861), and later Abbasid (861-1258) periods. Include Spain in your discussion.
7. Why did Persian language and culture survive the Arab conquest of Iran?
8. Discuss, with reference to the documents of the Cairo Genizah, how *dhimmī* status affected the Jewish communities of medieval Egypt and Palestine.

END OF PAPER