



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Wednesday 24 May 2023 – Morning

A Level History A

Y309/01 The Ascendancy of the Ottoman Empire 1453–1606

Time allowed: 2 hours 30 minutes



You must have:

- the OCR 12-page Answer Booklet

INSTRUCTIONS

- Use black ink.
- Write your answer to each question in the Answer Booklet. The question numbers must be clearly shown.
- Fill in the boxes on the front of the Answer Booklet.
- Answer the question in Section A and **any two** questions in Section B.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is **80**.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- Quality of extended response will be assessed in questions marked with an asterisk (*).
- This document has **4** pages.

ADVICE

- Read each question carefully before you start your answer.

SECTION A

Read the **two** passages and answer Question 1.

- 1 Evaluate the interpretations in **both** of the two passages and explain which you think is more convincing as an explanation of the impact on the Ottoman Empire of the death of Suleiman I in 1566. [30]

Passage A

When Suleiman died after a reign of nearly fifty years, he left a great sense of loss. Yet it must be asked whether his reputation is justified. Without the efforts of his father, Selim I, could Suleiman have achieved as much as he did? Suleiman's military conquests and legal achievements were all built on the back of his father's work. Selim's conquests of Egypt and Syria, and his defeat of the Persians, secured the eastern borders of the empire and made it possible for Suleiman to embark on a ghazi career in the Balkans and Mediterranean without fear of being attacked from the rear. Selim's capture of the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina paved the way for Suleiman to become protector of Islam, and the most important Moslem ruler. For Europeans, then and now, Suleiman was above all, the successful military leader. In that lay his greatness. For the contemporary Ottoman, the view of Suleiman's reign as the Golden Age derives partly from the fact that it was the last time that Ottoman armies were able to meet those of Christians on equal terms. The very length of his reign created an impression of political and economic stability.

Western historians still tend to choose a date for the beginning of the decline of the Ottoman empire soon after the death of Suleiman, or even a little earlier, on the grounds that signs of decline were already visible before 1566. Yet to most Europeans and to almost all Ottomans it was not apparent at the time that there was any decline in power or prestige until more than one hundred years later. Military action was continued in Europe by land and sea, and even increased in the Mediterranean, conflict with the Habsburgs was maintained and campaigns were mounted in the east.

Adapted from: A. Stiles, The Ottoman Empire 1450–1750, published in 1998.

Passage B

When Suleiman died in 1566 he was the master of a great empire stretching from the borders of Persia, Mesopotamia and Arabia, with an armed spearhead still pointed at the heart of Habsburg power and with a fleet able to dominate the Mediterranean; but he lacked the one thing necessary for ensuring the permanence of his power, a son worthy to govern such vast domains. This was in part his own fault for his wife, Roxelana, in an attempt to secure the throne for her incompetent son, Selim, had persuaded the sultan to agree to the deaths of his favourite minister and son. Meanwhile the Turkish empire fast approached the crisis of its existence. A great empire had arisen, reached its maximum of power under Suleiman the Magnificent and had passed into a slow but steady decline. Lepanto was the true signpost to the decline of Turkish power. It destroyed the legend of Turkish invincibility at sea and heralded a general slow decay, with its feeble Sultans and prevailing inefficiency.

Adapted from: V. H. H. Green, Renaissance and Reformation, published in 1975.

3**SECTION B**

Answer any **two** questions.

- 2*** How important was the harem and the influence of the Sultan's wives throughout the period from 1453 to 1606? **[25]**
- 3*** To what extent did the reasons for the expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the period from 1453 to 1606 remain the same? **[25]**
- 4*** How far did provincial administration and society in the Ottoman vassal states change in the period from 1453 to 1606? **[25]**

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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