



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Thursday 26 May 2022 – 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 then 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 developments in the Mediterranean in the years from the death of Suleiman I in 1566 to the battle of Lepanto in 1571. **[30]**

Passage A

Pius V was very pleased by the formation of a Holy League to fight Islam. He cherished the vision of a great Christian crusade against the Infidel. He was forever chiding and chivvying the ambassadors of the Catholic powers. But in the opening years of his pontificate all he could get was evasive answers.

The papal overtures might have received a warmer welcome if the Ottoman threat had at that moment been acute. But the two or three years after Suleiman's death were years of a strange calm in the Mediterranean. The inner workings of Ottoman policy are unknown. The unexpected respite may have been caused by harvest failures, or it may have derived from more acute preoccupations elsewhere. It might explain why the Turks failed to help the Moriscos, losing an obvious opportunity for a decisive blow at Spain. There is talk of disagreement among Selim's advisers, but perhaps it was simply that the difficulties were too many and the distances too great. Moreover, the sultan's attention was turning back to the eastern Mediterranean and to areas at present dominated by the Portuguese. The Ottomans had long had their eyes on Cyprus whose conquest was seen as the essential prelude to an Ottoman thrust towards the south. The waning of French influence in Constantinople left the Venetians dangerously exposed, and by 1569 there was little to deter the sultan. That same year, Venice's arsenal blew up, and reports suggested that the major part of the Venetian fleet had been destroyed. With Spain's resources simultaneously stretched, the moment seemed ideal for an attempt against Cyprus.

Adapted from: J. H. Elliott, Europe Divided 1559–1598, published in 1974.

Passage B

[The accession of Selim] required fresh wars. Conquest was central to the sultanate. Only spectacular conquests could legitimise a sultan. But the Turks were quiet. The true sources of Ottoman policy were hidden from foreign powers. There were other forces at work in the Mediterranean in the years 1566–8: harvest failures and grain shortages, outbreaks of plague and famine.

At the same time the Ottomans were occupied with trouble further east. However, the Mediterranean was the centre of a vast arena of turmoil. Spain and the Ottomans had been sniping for thirty years. A decisive clash for control of the centre of the world still awaited. The underlying conditions were there: Selim's need for a confirming victory, the incendiary blasts of the new pope [Pius V]; the aggregation of resources among the two superpowers [Spain and the Ottomans]. It was only a matter of time before something triggered a headlong rush to war. In 1567 events in Spain started to quicken the pace. The Moriscos in Spain were buoyed up by the encouragement of Turkish intervention. This enabled Philip to grasp a strategic truth: until the Turk had been defeated in the central Mediterranean, Spain would always be under threat.

Moreover, by the late 1560s there were pressing dynastic and strategic reasons for the Ottomans to eliminate the Venetian colony of Cyprus so close to the Ottoman shore. Only a brilliant victory could bind the army to their less than charismatic sultan. Early forays in his reign in expanding the empire further east had come to nothing. [Cyprus] was a legitimate strategic problem. It lay uncomfortably within the Ottoman centre of influence, and when pirates captured the ship carrying the treasurer of Egypt in 1569, Selim's mind was finally made up. The island must be taken.

Adapted from: R. Crowley, Empires of the Sea, The Final Battle for the Mediterranean, 1521–1580, published in 2013.

SECTION B

Answer **TWO** of the following three questions.

- 2*** How important was the central political system in the government of the Ottoman state in the period from 1453 to 1606? [25]
- 3*** To what extent did those in the vassal states gain under Ottoman rule in the period from 1453 to 1606? [25]
- 4*** 'The most serious Ottoman threat to the rulers of Europe was the Franco-Ottoman alliance.' How far do you agree with this view of the period 1453 to 1606? [25]

END OF QUESTION PAPER

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