



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

**GCE**

**History A**

**Y309/01: Thematic study and historical interpretations: The  
ascendency of the Ottoman Empire 1453-1606**

A Level

**Mark Scheme for June 2023**

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This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which marks were awarded by examiners. It does not indicate the details of the discussions which took place at an examiners' meeting before marking commenced.

All examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the report on the examination.

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1. Make sure that you have accessed and completed the relevant training packages for on-screen marking: *scoris assessor Online Training*; *OCR Essential Guide to Marking*.
2. Make sure that you have read and understood the mark scheme and the question paper for this unit. These are posted on the RM Cambridge Assessment Support Portal <http://www.rm.com/support/ca>
3. Log-in to scoris and mark the **required number** of practice responses (“scripts”) and the **number of required** standardisation responses.

YOU MUST MARK 5 PRACTICE AND 6 STANDARDISATION RESPONSES BEFORE YOU CAN BE APPROVED TO MARK LIVE SCRIPTS.

## MARKING

1. Mark strictly to the mark scheme.
2. Marks awarded must relate directly to the marking criteria.
3. The schedule of dates is very important. It is essential that you meet the scoris 50% and 100% (traditional 40% Batch 1 and 100% Batch 2) deadlines. If you experience problems, you must contact your Team Leader (Supervisor) without delay.
4. If you are in any doubt about applying the mark scheme, consult your Team Leader by telephone or the scoris messaging system, or by email.

### 5. Crossed Out Responses

Where a candidate has crossed out a response and provided a clear alternative then the crossed out response is not marked. Where no alternative response has been provided, examiners may give candidates the benefit of the doubt and mark the crossed out response where legible.

### Rubric Error Responses – Optional Questions

Where candidates have a choice of question across a whole paper or a whole section and have provided more answers than required, then all responses are marked and the highest mark allowable within the rubric is given. Enter a mark for each question answered into RM assessor, which will select the highest mark from those awarded. (*The underlying assumption is that the candidate has penalised themselves by attempting more questions than necessary in the time allowed.*)

### Multiple Choice Question Responses

When a multiple choice question has only a single, correct response and a candidate provides two responses (even if one of these responses is correct), then no mark should be awarded (as it is not possible to determine which was the first response selected by the candidate).

*When a question requires candidates to select more than one option/multiple options, then local marking arrangements need to ensure consistency of approach.*

### **Contradictory Responses**

When a candidate provides contradictory responses, then no mark should be awarded, even if one of the answers is correct.

### **Short Answer Questions** (requiring only a list by way of a response, usually worth only **one mark per response**)

Where candidates are required to provide a set number of short answer responses then only the set number of responses should be marked. The response space should be marked from left to right on each line and then line by line until the required number of responses have been considered. The remaining responses should not then be marked. Examiners will have to apply judgement as to whether a 'second response' on a line is a development of the 'first response', rather than a separate, discrete response. *(The underlying assumption is that the candidate is attempting to hedge their bets and therefore getting undue benefit rather than engaging with the question and giving the most relevant/correct responses.)*

### **Short Answer Questions** (requiring a more developed response, worth **two or more marks**)

If the candidates are required to provide a description of, say, three items or factors and four items or factors are provided, then mark on a similar basis – that is downwards (as it is unlikely in this situation that a candidate will provide more than one response in each section of the response space.)

### **Longer Answer Questions** (requiring a developed response)

Where candidates have provided two (or more) responses to a medium or high tariff question which only required a single (developed) response and not crossed out the first response, then only the first response should be marked. Examiners will need to apply professional judgement as to whether the second (or a subsequent) response is a 'new start' or simply a poorly expressed continuation of the first response.

6. Always check the pages (and additional objects if present) at the end of the response in case any answers have been continued there. If the candidate has continued an answer there then add a tick to confirm that the work has been seen.
7. Award No Response (NR) if:
  - there is nothing written in the answer space

Award Zero '0' if:


- anything is written in the answer space and is not worthy of credit (this includes text and symbols).

Team Leaders must confirm the correct use of the NR button with their markers before live marking commences and should check this when reviewing scripts.

8. The scoris **comments box** is used by your team leader to explain the marking of the practice responses. Please refer to these comments when checking your practice responses. **Do not use the comments box for any other reason.**  
If you have any questions or comments for your team leader, use the phone, the scoris messaging system, or e-mail.
9. *Assistant Examiners will send a brief report on the performance of candidates to their Team Leader (Supervisor) via email by the end of the marking period. The report should contain notes on particular strengths displayed as well as common errors or weaknesses. Constructive criticism of the question paper/mark scheme is also appreciated.*
10. For answers marked by levels of response: Not applicable in F501
- To determine the level** – start at the highest level and work down until you reach the level that matches the answer
  - To determine the mark within the level**, consider the following:

Descriptor	Award mark
On the borderline of this level and the one below	At bottom of level
Just enough achievement on balance for this level	Above bottom and either below middle or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Meets the criteria but with some slight inconsistency	Above middle and either below top of level or at middle of level (depending on number of marks available)
Consistently meets the criteria for this level	At top of level

## 11. Annotations

Annotation	Meaning of annotation
<b>BP</b>	Blank Page
	Highlight
Off-page comment	
<b>A</b>	Assertion
<b>AN</b>	Analysis
<b>EVAL</b>	Evaluation
<b>EXP</b>	Explanation
<b>F</b>	Factor
<b>ILL</b>	Illustrates/Describes
<b>IRRL</b>	Irrelevant, a significant amount of material that does not answer the question
<b>J</b>	Judgement
<b>KU</b>	Knowledge and understanding
<b>P</b>	Provenance
<b>SC</b>	Simple comment
	Unclear
<b>V</b>	View
<b>S</b>	Synthesis
<b>E</b>	Continuity/Change

12. Subject Specific Marking Instructions

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
1	<p><b>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.</b></p> <p><b>In locating the Interpretations within the wider historical debate, answers might suggest</b> that Interpretation A argues that his death had little impact, his success was built on that of his father and decline came only later.</p> <p><b>In evaluating Interpretation A,</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Answers might argue that</b> Interpretation A is valid as Suleiman inherited a system of government and logistics designed to wage war and expand territory.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might argue that</b> Interpretation A is valid as the Ottomans did meet Western forces on equal terms with victories at Mohacs, Belgrade and in North Africa.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might argue that</b> Interpretation A is not valid as the empire reached such a size under Suleiman that it could not expand after his death.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might argue that</b> Interpretation A is not valid as the three rulers who followed Suleiman lacked his leadership skills and determination.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might argue that</b> Interpretation A is valid as there was still expansion in Iraq, the Caucasus Mountains, Cyprus and Tunis.</li> </ul> <p><b>In locating the Interpretations within the wider historical debate, answers might suggest</b> that</p>	30	<p>The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set.  <u><b>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</b></u></p> <p>The indicative content is intended to reflect the knowledge and understanding a candidate is likely to analyse and evaluate in order to arrive at a judgement in line with the question set.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No set answer is expected</li> <li>• At Level 5 and above answers will evaluate both interpretations, locating them within the wider historical debate about the issue and using their own knowledge, and reach a balanced judgement as to which they consider the most convincing about the issue in the question.</li> <li>• To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material.</li> <li>• Knowledge must not be credited in isolation, it should only be credited where it is used to analyse and evaluate the interpretations, in line with descriptions in the levels mark scheme</li> </ul>

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
	<p>Interpretation B argues that Suleiman's death did lead to a decline, seen clearly with Lepanto</p> <p><b>In evaluating Interpretation B,</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Answers might argue that</b> Interpretation B is valid as Selim II lacked the military skills of Suleiman.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might argue that</b> Interpretation B is valid as even after the defeat at Lepanto they were able to recover and dominate the Mediterranean.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might argue that</b> Interpretation B is valid as Lepanto was a turning point as it showed the Turks could be beaten and was the first naval defeat.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might argue that</b> Interpretation B is not valid as Don John was unable to follow up Lepanto and a naval battle the following year was draw.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might argue that</b> Interpretation B is not valid as the Ottomans were able to regroup after Lepanto and the Holy League did not threaten their rule in the Eastern Mediterranean.</li> </ul>		



Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
2*	<p><b>How important was the harem and the influence of the Sultan’s wives throughout the period from 1453 to 1606?</b></p> <p><b>In arguing that the harem and the influence of the Sultan’s wives was important,</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that if the Sultan was weak his position was usurped by the harem.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the growing importance of the Black Eunuchs, who were in charge of the harem, in the late sixteenth century.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the role of harem intrigues when the successor was a child.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> that Roxelana had plotted to get rid of the Grand Vizir Ibrahim and Sulieman’s son, Mustafa.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> that Roxelana had intrigued to further the career of her son-in- law, Rustem Pasha and Mehmed Sokollu, the last Vezir of Suleiman.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> that Roxelana moved the harem from isolation to the Topkapi Palace where they were more in touch with central government.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> that the personal and private access the harem had made them a powerful force in government.</li> </ul> <p><b>In arguing that the harem and the influence of the Sultan’s wives was limited,</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that the sultan was, at least in theory, an absolute ruler and that all land was his.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the strength of the sultans from 1453 to 1606 which limited the</li> </ul>	25	<p>The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set.</p> <p><b><u>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</u></b></p> <p>The indicative content is intended to reflect the knowledge and understanding a candidate is likely to analyse and evaluate in order to arrive at a judgement in line with the question set.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No set answer is expected</li> <li>• At higher levels answers might establish criteria against which to judge the importance of the key issue.</li> <li>• To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material.</li> <li>• Knowledge must not be credited in isolation, it should only be credited where it is used as the basis for analysis and evaluation, in line with descriptions in the levels mark scheme.</li> </ul>

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
3*	<p>influence of their wives and the harem, particularly the strength of Mehmed, Selim and Suleiman.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the influence of the state system, particularly the workings of the devshirme and timar.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the importance. of the Grand Vezir</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the role of the Divan.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the role of the Ulema.</li> </ul> <p><b>To what extent did the reasons for the expansion of the Ottoman Empire in the period from 1453 to 1606 remain the same?</b></p> <p><b>In arguing that the reasons remained the same:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that throughout the period the resources of the Empire were immense, and the state was organised for expansion with the janissaries, devshirme and timar systems.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the leadership of the Sultans; Mehmed, Selim and Suleiman.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the absence of an aristocracy that demanded to lead armies and society and share power.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> that promotion depended on merit not birth, which was highly effective in providing a well-led force.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the acquisition of Constantinople which became an administrative base, trade centre and could be used for further advances.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> that the Ottomans possessed a good system of communications.</li> </ul>	25	<p>The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set.  <b><u>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</u></b></p> <p>The indicative content is intended to reflect the knowledge and understanding a candidate is likely to analyse and evaluate in order to arrive at a judgement in line with the question set.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No set answer is expected</li> <li>• At higher levels answers might establish criteria against which to judge continuity or change.</li> <li>• To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material.</li> <li>• Knowledge must not be credited in isolation, it should only be credited where it is used as the basis for analysis and evaluation, in line with descriptions in the levels mark scheme.</li> </ul>

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the quality of the Ottoman army and its recruitment process.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the weakness of the opposition throughout the period.</li> </ul> <p><b>In arguing that reasons did not remain the same:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that even under weaker Sultans after Suleiman expansion still took place.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> that at times the Ottomans had an alliance with France which enabled expansion.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> that the Ottomans often faced a divided opposition, particularly Habsburg-Valois and Venice-Genoa, making expansion easier.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the divisions between Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the role and importance of Venice and its concerns over trade.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the divisions between emperor and Pope.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> the growing civil wars in Germany in the 1540s.</li> <li>• <b>Answers might consider</b> that the Ottomans tended to focus their expansion on one area at a time.</li> </ul>	<p>25</p>	

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
4*	<p><b>How far did provincial administration and society in the Ottoman vassal states change in the period from 1453 to 1606?</b></p> <p><b>In supporting the view that administration and society changed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that the timar system was not in place throughout the vassal states, used in the Balkans and Anatolia, but not North Africa or Syria.</li> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that the number of provinces increased to thirty-two.</li> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that the nature of sanjaks changes from being from the lower ranks of society before 1580 to being drawn from the palace or great households.</li> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that the timar system, for the recruitment of the cavalry, collapsed.</li> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that Slaves of the Porte policy changed.</li> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that the army was increasingly used to maintain control and suppress unrest.</li> </ul> <p><b>In arguing that administration and society did not change:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that the devshirme continued throughout the period, changing in the seventeenth century when free-born Moslems replaced ex-Christian slaves.</li> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that the janissaries remained the loyal fighting troops throughout the period.</li> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that the timar system was used throughout the period.</li> </ul>		<p>The indicative content lists features of the period studied that relate to the question set.</p> <p><b><u>Neither significance nor relative importance are attributed to the features listed.</u></b></p> <p>The indicative content is intended to reflect the knowledge and understanding a candidate is likely to analyse and evaluate in order to arrive at a judgement in line with the question set.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No set answer is expected</li> <li>• At higher levels answers might establish criteria against which to judge continuity and change.</li> <li>• To be valid, judgements must be supported by relevant and accurate material.</li> <li>• Knowledge must not be credited in isolation, it should only be credited where it is used as the basis for analysis and evaluation, in line with descriptions in the levels mark scheme.</li> </ul>

Question	Answer	Mark	Guidance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that there was a rigid class system.</li> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that there was a loss of freedom and status among the vassal states.</li> <li>• <b>It might be argued</b> that there was an acceptance and toleration of other differences in belief.</li> <li>• <b>It might be argued that</b> that there was suppression of Roman Catholicism for the nobility.</li> <li>• <b>It might be argued that</b> there was official recognition of the Orthodox Muslim religion.</li> <li>• <b>It might be argued that</b> it was a meritocratic society.</li> </ul>		

APPENDIX 1 – this contains a generic mark scheme grid

	<i>AO3: Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted.</i>
	<b>Generic mark scheme for Section A, Question 1: Interpretation [30]</b>
<b>Level 6</b> 26–30 marks	The answer has a very good focus on the question throughout. It has thorough and sustained evaluation of the interpretations, using detailed and accurate knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue, in order to produce a convincing and supported analysis of them in relation to the question.
<b>Level 5</b> 21–25 marks	The answer has a good focus on the question throughout. It has good evaluation of the interpretations, using relevant knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue, in order to produce a supported analysis of them in relation to the question.
<b>Level 4</b> 16–20 marks	The answer is mostly focused on the question. It has evaluation of the interpretations based on generally relevant knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue, in order to produce an analysis of them in relation to the question.
<b>Level 3</b> 11–15 marks	The answer is partially focused on the question. It has partial evaluation of the interpretations based on some knowledge of the historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue. There may be some use of information from one of the two interpretations to support the evaluation of the other, but the evaluation will not rely on this. There is a limited analysis of the interpretations in relation to the question.
<b>Level 2</b> 6–10 marks	The answer has a limited focus on the question. Parts of the answer are just description of the interpretations, with evaluation in relation to historical context and the wider historical debate around the issue being weak, and evaluation relying heavily on information drawn from the other interpretation. There is a very limited analysis of the interpretations in relation to the question.
<b>Level 1</b> 1–5 marks	The answer has some relevance to the topic, but not the specific question. The answer consists mostly of description of the interpretations with very limited evaluation based on very generalised knowledge of historical context and minimal or no reference to the wider historical debate. Analysis of the interpretations in relation to the question is either in the form of assertion or lacking.
0 marks	No evidence of understanding and no demonstration of any relevant knowledge.

	<i>AO1: Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.</i>
	<b>Generic mark scheme for Section B, Questions 2, 3 and 4: Essay [25]</b>
<b>Level 6</b> 21–25 marks	The answer has a very good focus on the question. Detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to reach a fully developed synthesis supporting a convincing and substantiated judgement. There is a well-developed and sustained line of reasoning which is coherent and logically structured. The information presented is entirely relevant and substantiated.
<b>Level 5</b> 17–20 marks	The answer has a good focus on the question. Generally accurate and detailed knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to reach a developed synthesis supporting a substantiated judgement. There is a well-developed line of reasoning which is clear and logically structured. The information presented is relevant and in the most part substantiated.
<b>Level 4</b> 13–16 marks	The answer is mostly focused on the question. Relevant knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and evaluate key features of the period studied in order to reach a synthesis supporting a reasonable judgement. There is a line of reasoning presented with some structure. The information presented is in the most-part relevant and supported by some evidence.
<b>Level 3</b> 9–12 marks	The answer has a partial focus on the question. Some relevant knowledge and understanding is used to analyse and explain key features of the period studied in order to attempt an undeveloped synthesis, which is linked to a judgement, though the supporting explanation may lack detail and clarity. The information has some relevance and is presented with limited structure. The information is supported by limited evidence.
<b>Level 2</b> 5–8 marks	The answer has only a limited focus on the question. Limited relevant knowledge and understanding is used to give a limited explanation and analysis of key features of the period studied. There is a judgement but this may not be clearly linked with the supporting explanation. The information has some relevance, but is communicated in an unstructured way. The information is supported by limited evidence and the relationship to the evidence may not be clear.
<b>Level 1</b> 1–4 marks	The answer has a limited focus on the topic, but not the specific question. The answer is largely descriptive, with only very generalised knowledge of the period studied being used to attempt basic explanation and very limited analysis. Judgements are unsupported and are not linked to analysis. Information presented is basic and may be ambiguous or unstructured. The information is supported by limited evidence.
0 marks	The answer contains no relevant information.

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