

PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION FOR PART I OF THE HISTORICAL TRIPOS

Tuesday 21 April 2015

9 to 12

Paper 2

BRITISH POLITICAL HISTORY, 380–1100

*Answer **three** questions.**Write your **number** (not your **name**) on the cover-sheet of each answer booklet.***STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS***20 Page Answer Book x 1**Rough Work Pad*

**You may not start to read the questions
printed on the subsequent pages of this
question paper until instructed that you
may do so by the Invigilator**

- 1 What can we know about the political structures of the fifth and sixth centuries in Britain?
- 2 'Were it not for archaeological evidence, our knowledge of the origins of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms would be a good deal poorer.' Discuss with reference to **two or more** Anglo-Saxon kingdoms.
- 3 For whom and with what purpose was Bede writing his *Ecclesiastical History*?
- 4 How far can the period c. 650 to c. 750 be described as Northumbria's 'Golden Age' in political as well as cultural terms?
- 5 How different was the role of early medieval Irish kings from that of Anglo-Saxon kings?
- 6 Examine the character of the 'Mercian Supremacy' of the eighth century.
- 7 Describe the nature of the relationship between Wessex and Mercia in the ninth century.
- 8 'Charters only speak when spoken to, and they will not talk to strangers.' Discuss.
- 9 'The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle and Asser's *Life of King Alfred* cannot be understood except in relation to the political background against which each work was produced.' Discuss.
- 10 If you were to write a biography of King Æthelstan what would be its main themes?
- 11 At what point may we truly speak of the 'kingdom of the English'?
- 12 To what extent was King Edgar's support of the monastic reform movement motivated purely by political exigencies?
- 13 Was the governance of Æthelred II wholly unsuccessful?
- 14 How important was the use of the written word in the running of late Anglo-Saxon government?
- 15 To what extent did vikings have an impact on political structures in the British Isles in the tenth and eleventh centuries?
- 16 In what ways did Cnut secure his conquest of Anglo-Saxon England?
- 17 How politically prominent were queens in Anglo-Saxon England?
- 18 'Anglo-Saxon law-codes, while useful for the study of government, reveal little more than royal aspirations.' Discuss.

19 In what ways can the evidence of coinage be used by an historian of Anglo-Saxon kingship and government?

20 How important was the House of Godwine in English politics from *c.* 1020 to 1066?

21 What impact did the Norman Conquest have on political structures and modes of governance in England?

END OF PAPER