

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

**HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
2007-2008
COURSE II**

PAPER A1 ENGLISH LITERATURE 600-1100

TRINITY TERM 2008

Tuesday, 13 May 9.30 a.m.- 12.30 p.m.

Time allowed – Three hours

Answer *three* questions. You should pay careful attention in your answers to the precise terms of the quotations and questions.

***Do not* turn over until told that you may do so.**

Answer three questions. You should pay careful attention in your answers to the precise terms of the quotations and questions.

1. 'Old English poems belong to two archives simultaneously, orally based poetic tradition and Latin textual culture' (MARTIN IRVINE). Consider the implications of EITHER or BOTH of these 'archives' for our understanding of Old English poetry.

2. 'For our understanding of Anglo-Saxon culture, we should consider the extant texts of Old English poetry as treating issues of concern contemporary to the era of their manuscript production' (CAROL PASTERNAK). Discuss.

3. 'The careful critic must always read manuscripts, not poems' (ROY M. LIUZZA). How significant is the manuscript context of any Old English poem you have read?

4. EITHER 'It is not in the operations against Grendel, but in the humanities of the more leisurely interludes, the conversation of Beowulf and Hrothgar and such things, that the poet truly asserts his power' (W. P. KER). Discuss.

OR To what extent does a knowledge of the analogues to *Beowulf* enrich our understanding of the poem?

5. 'The warfare ethos consequent upon a continuity of very small kingdoms, one constantly in conflict with or threatened by another, exalts the warrior at the expense of the wise' (MICHAEL SWANTON). Discuss.

6. '*Genesis B* is a remarkable exception to the almost general mediocre standard of extant religious poetry in Old English' (ROSEMARY WOOLF). Discuss this claim for *Genesis B* and/or make a similar case for any other Old English religious poem.

7. 'A body of diction which was inherited from a Germanic, military and heroic past forced the poets to describe Christian characters inappropriately in terms belonging to the ideals of a warrior society' (CLAUDE SCHNEIDER). Discuss.

8. 'Cynewulf's motive in inserting his name, after all, was not pride in his work but a desire to be remembered in prayers; and, in spite of his undeniable authorship of four poems, it is fair to say that they give no clue as to his personality' (TOM SHIPPEY). Do any Old English poems provide evidence of a poetic 'personality'?

9. 'Hagiography is of all literary genres the least original, the most derivative and the most repetitive' (JOHN EDWARD DAMON). What can be said in favour of any one or more Old English saints' lives?

10. EITHER 'Far from a simple diversion or children's game, riddles probe and reflect the daily social life and identity of their makers and audience' (JOHN MILES FOLEY). Discuss.

OR 'In their style and form, the Exeter Book riddles are a quintessential example of the Anglo-Saxon *ars poetica*' (JOHN NILES). How far do you agree with this statement?

11. 'Unappealing, boring, authoritarian, unpoetic' (ELAINE TUTTLE HANSEN). Defend Old English didactic poetry from this charge.

12. 'To privilege and highlight the self-expressive elements of these poems is probably to misconstrue them, since the lyric speakers in them are generally anonymous, and little attempt is made to individualise them' (R. D. FULK AND C. M. CAIN). Evaluate this comment on the Old English Elegies.

13. 'Only recently has it been appreciated how finely tuned Aelfric's response to national events was, and how even sermons with no explicit reference to current events often have political implications' (JAMES W. EARL). Discuss.

14. 'Wulfstan was, above all, a man of practical morality. All of his activities reflected the dominant purpose of his career, which was the moral regeneration of the English nation' (RAACHEL JUROVICS). Discuss.

15. 'Alfred treats his source text not as something sacred and unalterable, but as something demanding great respect' (NICOLE GUENTHER DISCENZA). Discuss EITHER with reference to one or more of the Alfredian translations, OR with reference to any other Old English writer's use of source material.

16. 'The *Chronicle* and its verse had a rhetorical and political effect that the chroniclers were able to recognise, contribute to, and even turn to their own ends' (THOMAS BREDEHOFT). Discuss.

17. 'In the Germanic tradition women were not warriors and were not expected to behave like warriors when intimidated; but they *were* expected to display superior intelligence' (BRUCE MITCHELL). Discuss.

TURN OVER

18. 'Stories of origins, a desire to discover the beginnings of the world and of mankind are recurrent concerns to Anglo-Saxon poets' (FABIENNE MICHELET). Discuss.

19. 'Nec potuimus in ista translatione semper verbum ex verbo transferre, sed tamen sensum ex sensu, sicut invenimus in Sancta Scriptura, diligenter curavimus vertere simplici et aperta locutione quatinus proficiat audientibus' ('We have not been able in this translation always to translate word for word but, rather, we have taken care to translate diligently according to the sense, as we find it in Holy Scripture, in such simple and clear phrases as will profit our listeners') (AELFRIC). Discuss the strategies of translation shown EITHER by any Old English writer OR in any translation from Old English into modern English.

20. Write on ONE of the following with reference to Old English literature: landscape, miracles, the Bible, wisdom, allegory.