

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON

University of London

EXAMINATION FOR INTERNAL STUDENTS

For The Following Qualification:-

B.A.

Scand. Studs. SC3730: Sources For The Viking Age I

COURSE CODE : SCAN3730

UNIT VALUE : 0.50

DATE : 11-MAY-05

TIME : 14.30

TIME ALLOWED : 3 Hours

Answer **THREE** questions. All questions carry equal marks. A candidate may not in any answer cover the same ground as in an assessed essay. Avoid any duplication of material within this paper.

- (1) **EITHER:** (a) How appropriate is it for historians to consider Viking-Age runic inscriptions as written sources?
- OR:** (b) What can runic inscriptions tell us about ownership and dispersal of property in Viking-Age Scandinavia?
- (2) **EITHER:** (a) 'In the *Víkingavísur* of Sigvatr Þórðarson we have an account of [St Óláfr's] career before he became king of Norway which is one of the best historical documents transmitted to us by the Scandinavian North.' How far do you agree with this assessment of the historical worth of the *Víkingavísur*?
- OR:** (b) 'The strengths of skaldic poetry as a historical source far outweigh its limitations.' Discuss.
- (3) How much attention should a historian interested in Viking-Age social history pay to *Rígsþula*?
- (4) **EITHER:** (a) 'A triumph of verisimilitude over verity.' Discuss this view of *Heimskringla*.
- OR:** (b) To what extent do the writings of Snorri Sturluson provide a reliable account of pagan Scandinavian religion?
- (5) **EITHER:** (a) Consider the significance of authorial prefaces or prologues in understanding the intentions and methods of medieval Icelandic or Norwegian historians. Refer to at least two texts in your answer.
- OR** (b) 'Ari Þorgilsson's *Íslendingabók* is too biased to be considered a true record of Iceland's early history.' Discuss.
- (6) On the basis of your reading of medieval written sources, write an account of
- EITHER:** (a) The reign of Haraldr hárfagri
- OR:** (b) The conversion of Iceland to Christianity
- (7) On what grounds might we reject the *Íslendingasögur* as potential sources for the history of the Viking Age?
- (8) What did the term 'viking' mean to Scandinavians in the Middle Ages?
- (9) What was the nature of kingship in the Viking Age?

(10)

To which Old Norse sources would you refer if you were writing a history of the Viking expansion overseas?