

MODERN AND MEDIEVAL LANGUAGES TRIPOS Part IB and Part II

SPECIMEN PAPER

Paper Ge. 12

A SPECIAL PERIOD OR SUBJECT IN GERMAN LITERATURE,
THOUGHT, AND HISTORY:
HISTORY AND IDENTITY IN GERMANY, 1750 TO THE PRESENT

This paper is for Part IB and Part II candidates.

Answer THREE questions, ONE from Section A or B, and ONE from EACH of ANY TWO of the remaining sections (including A or B). Candidates may answer on both Section A and Section B, if they wish.

Candidates for this paper may NOT draw substantially on material from their dissertations or material which they have used or intend to use in another scheduled paper. Candidates may NOT draw substantially on the same material in more than ONE question on the same paper.

The term 'German', as used in this paper, should, where the context permits, be understood to include reference to the German-speaking territories in general.

STATIONERY REQUIREMENTS

20 Page Answer Book x 1
Rough work pad

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

None

**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**

SECTION A: THEORIES OF CULTURE, SOCIETY AND THE MEANING OF HISTORY (I)

1 'Herder's historical relativism is heavily qualified, in *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte*, by his own likes and dislikes with regard to past and present cultures.' Discuss.

2 'Kant's attempts, in his *Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht*, to reconcile natural causation with a higher purpose in history are contrived and unconvincing.' Discuss.

3 'Die Weltgeschichte stellt den Stufengang des Prinzips, dessen Gehalt das Bewußtsein der Freiheit ist, dar.' In the light of this quotation from the 'Einleitung' to Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of his approach to world history.

4 'Engels's *Die Entwicklung des Sozialismus von der Utopie zur Wissenschaft* is a political manifesto, misusing the language of science and philosophy to mobilise support for revolutionary change.' Discuss.

SECTION B: THEORIES OF CULTURE, SOCIETY AND THE MEANING OF HISTORY (II)

5 'As the attack of an irrationalist on rational scholarship, Nietzsche's *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben* has nothing to offer the serious student of history.' Discuss.

6 'Burckhardt's *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* are not so much a contribution to the philosophy of history as a protest against it.' Discuss.

7 'Although Spengler cultivates an air of Olympian detachment from the spectacle of human history, he plainly hopes that his predictions of supposedly inevitable decline will function as self-fulfilling prophecies.' Discuss with reference to Spengler's *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*.

8 'Meinecke's *Die deutsche Katastrophe* is a self-deluding tribute to the very values which made possible the catastrophe he bemoans.' Discuss.

SECTION C: THE RISE AND FALL OF GERMAN PHILHELLENISM, 1750-1945

9 Why did philhellenism become a 'cultural obsession' of the German *Bildungsbürgertum* between 1760 and 1820?

10 What prompted Burckhardt and Nietzsche to challenge the neo-classicist idealization of ancient Greece in the 1870s?

11 ‘The “uses” to which ancient Greece was put in the Third Reich represent a complete distortion, indeed a perversion of the legacy of German philhellenism.’ Discuss.

SECTION D: MYTH, MEMORY, AND HISTORY - THE INVENTION OF GERMAN TRADITIONS, c.1770-1945

12 Why did German writers of the *Sturm und Drang* and the Romantic period turn to the Middle Ages as a historical reference point for the construction of a national identity?

13 In what sense did Kleist’s *Hermannsschlacht* represent a radicalization and politicization of the myth of Arminius?

14 ‘The invention of Luther and the Reformation as symbols of German identity highlights the predominantly spiritual, emancipatory and cosmopolitan character of German nationalism in the nineteenth century.’ Discuss.

SECTION E: VÖLKISCH THOUGHT AND RACIAL IDEOLOGIES, c. 1800-1945

15 ‘The concept of *Volk* formulated by Fichte, Jahn and Arndt was still completely devoid of racial prejudice.’ Discuss.

16 ‘*Völkisch* thought in the last third of the nineteenth century had more to do with culture than with biology.’ Discuss with reference to the work of AT LEAST TWO *völkisch* writers.

17 ‘*Mein Kampf* reveals Hitler’s deep indebtedness to *völkisch* ideology.’ Discuss.

SECTION F: HISTORY AND IDENTITY IN GERMANY, 1945-2005

18 ‘The ways in which the Federal Republic of Germany dealt with its Nazi past before 1989 were linked with key features of its social and political development.’ Discuss.

19 'Anti-fascism in the German Democratic Republic claimed to confront the German past, yet it could never lead to true *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.' Discuss.

20 'Between 1990 and 2005 the Germans developed a more complex, yet also more balanced attitude to the Nazi past.' Discuss.

END OF PAPER