

ASIAN AND MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES TRIPOS PART 1B

Middle Eastern Studies

Wednesday 8 June 2011 09.00 – 12.00

MES.18 TOPICS IN HEBREW STUDIES

*Select **two** of the following three sections and answer **two** questions from each.*

All questions carry equal marks.

*Write your number **not** your name on the cover sheet of **each** answer book that you use.*

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

SECTION 1 (The Genesis Protohistory)

- 1 Discuss the relative importance of the concepts of 'word' and 'work' in the depiction of God as creator in Genesis 1.
- 2 **Either**
Compare and contrast the status and role of Adam in the two creation narratives in Genesis 1-2.
Or
How important is the theme of immortality in the Eden narrative?
- 3 'In Genesis 4 the tragedy of Genesis 3 is taken a stage further.' Discuss the depiction of Cain in the light of this statement.
- 4 Discuss the Genesis flood narrative in the context of the wider ancient Near Eastern flood traditions.

SECTION 2 (History of the Hebrew language)

- 5 After Hebrew ceased to be a spoken vernacular, in what ways did the language survive into later periods?
- 6 Describe the main linguistic features that distinguish Rabbinic Hebrew from Biblical Hebrew.
- 7 Describe the linguistic background of Modern Israeli Hebrew.
- 8 Describe the relationship of the modern Biblical reading traditions to those reflected by the medieval vocalization systems.

SECTION 3 (Modern Hebrew Literature and literary theory)

- 9 Discuss colonial issues in Theodor Herzl's 'Altneuland' ('The Old New Land').
- 10 Discuss Yizhar Smilansky's 'The Prisoner' as a critical and affirmative text.
- 11 Discuss political meanings in the theme of the 'mute Arab' in A. B. Yehoshua's 'Facing the Forest'.
- 12 Discuss the question of Arab writing in Hebrew, in the theoretical context of mimicry and resistance.

END OF PAPER