

Part I, Paper 9

Insular Latin language and literature

CO-ORDINATOR: DR ROSALIND LOVE (on leave Easter Term 2012)

This course is devoted to the study of the Latin literature composed in the British Isles (Ireland, Wales, Anglo-Saxon England) during the period A.D. 400-1100. Latin was the language of the Church, its Scriptures and liturgy, and of its education system, and therefore all the peoples of the British Isles sought to express themselves in a variety of Latin literary forms. The aim of the course is to acquire some familiarity with the principal Insular Latin authors and texts, and to be able to situate them within the literary and historical context of early Insular Culture. The teaching is focused on a number of set texts, which are made available to students at the beginning of each year; the set texts are arranged by genre, and cover saints' Lives, classroom colloquies, letters, riddles, travel-writing, autobiography, dream-visions, octosyllabic narrative verse, and hymns.

University teaching consists of weekly lectures. In the Michaelmas term (first six weeks) these will follow a two-year cycle, alternating between a broadly chronological overview of Anglo-Latin literature, and the same for Celtic Latin literature (British Latin, Hiberno-Latin). In Lent term the lectures will cover literary genres and topics in Insular Latin as a whole, following the genre categories outlined above for the set-texts, with four lectures for first-year students and four for second-years.

The lectures are complemented by language and text-reading classes: For the first two terms, there will be twice-weekly classes offering basic grounding in Latin grammar, specifically aimed at those who have embarked upon the course with little or no previous knowledge of the Latin (called 'beginners Latin' in the *Lecture list*). These classes will continue once a week in the Easter Term (4 weeks). For those who already have familiarity with Latin there will be one class a week in all three terms, dedicated to working through the selected set texts, translating and commenting in detail. In the second year, text-reading classes continue once a week, with the previous years' beginners joining the group.

It should be stressed that students taking this paper will be expected to spend time in private study reading works cited in the bibliographies distributed at each lecture, and to devote a certain number of hours per week to beginner's Latin grammar exercises or to preparing texts for the translation classes. The lectures and classes will be further complemented by college supervisions (usually eight), which will be used to acquire practice at writing essays, and to cover in detail selected topics within the course.