UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

Admissions Testing Service

ANGLO-SAXON, NORSE AND CELTIC ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT

SPECIMEN PAPER 60 minutes

SECTION 2

Candidate number	A						Centre number					

	d	d		m	m		y	y	y	y
Date of Birth			–			–				

First name(s)	

Surname / Family Name	

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Please read these instructions carefully, but do not open the question paper until you are told that you may do so. This paper is Section 2 of 2.

This question paper requires you to read a single passage and answer a related question.

You should write your answer in the space provided in this question paper. Please complete this section in **black pen**.

You can use the blank inside front cover for rough working or notes, but no extra paper is allowed. Only answers in the space indicated in the paper will be marked.

Dictionaries and calculators may NOT be used.

Please wait to be told you may begin before turning this page

This question paper consists of 12 printed pages and 1 blank page

PV6

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This page is intentionally left blank for your rough working or notes.

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The poem below has been translated from Old English. It comes from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, a year-by-year account that is generally in prose. There is no expectation that you will have seen the poem before, or that you will know about its context.

Read the poem and write an essay in the space provided in response to **one** of the following:

1. **How could an historian approach this poem as a source for the history of Anglo-Saxon England?**
2. **With reference to this poem, discuss the uses that a literary scholar could make of a poem on a historical topic.**

Your answer will be assessed taking into account your ability to construct a reasoned argument, using relevant evidence as appropriate from the text, footnotes and introductory information.

Candidates attempting **Question 1** might include, among other things, consideration of the author's perspective, and how that may have affected his presentation of events. Candidates attempting **Question 2** might include, among other things, discussion of the form and structure of the text, and its themes.

Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, A.D. 937

This was the year when Athelstan,[1] king
Of Wessex,[2] prince among earls and patron
Of heroes, and his noble brother, Edmund,[3]
Hacked a lifelong glory from a battle
Near Brunanburh.[4] They shattered the phalanx 5
Their swords splintered the linden shields,
And the sons of Edward followed their father,[5]
Proved the blood they had tested in battle
Before, defending their land and their homes
Against every invader. The enemy ran, 10
All the Scots and the shipborne Vikings,
Ran or drowned in blood, dropped
To a landlocked fate as the glorious sun
Went gliding over the earth like a candle
In God's broad palm, blowing sublimely 15
Across the sky and dipping calmly
To darkness and night. The dead lay piled
Where the spears had left them, Vikings and Scots,
Tired, now, of the struggle, and wanting
Only to rest. All the battle 20
Became the Wessex cavalry endlessly
Hunting a broken enemy, their honed
And sparkling blades striking home
In fugitives' backs. No Mercian[6] refused

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[1] King Athelstan ruled from 924 until his death in 939.
[2] Wessex was an Anglo-Saxon kingdom in the south of England. Its capital was Winchester (Hampshire).
[3] Athelstan's half-brother, Edmund, became king in 939 and ruled until his death in 946.
[4] The location has not been conclusively identified. One popular suggestion is Bromborough on the Wirral peninsula (Merseyside).
[5] King Edward the Elder ruled from 899 until his death in 924.
[6] Mercia was an Anglo-Saxon kingdom in the English Midlands. By this time it was under the control of the Wessex kings.

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To aim his sword at any man 25
Who'd shared a sail with Anlaf,[7] shipped
Himself across a stormy sea
To a bloody port. Five young princes
Pitched their beds on the battleground

And would never awake, and seven of Anlaf's 30
Earls, and a host of invaders, Viking
And Scottish. Anlaf himself fought
His way to the prow of a ship, he
And a tiny band, forced to flee;
They pressed to sea on a dull brown tide 35
That floated the king to safety. Nor
Did the old one, Constantine,[8] trailing
Defeat behind him all the way North,
Find exultation following his steps
Or boasts on his lips; he left his kinsmen 40
And friends scattered over the field,
Butchered to silence, and abandoned his son
On the heaps of the slain, an untried soldier
Cut into failure. No, the crafty
Grey-beard had no need to be vain, and no more 45
Had Anlaf: watching their wreck of an army
Nothing welled up into laughter
Or pride that, after amusing themselves
With Edward's sons, they'd proved that they
And theirs were England's best for the job 50
Of battle, the crashing of standards, the thrust
Of spears, the cut and slash of dagger
And sword. They fled in their mail-clad ships,
The blood-stained Northmen, over a deep and noisy
Sea to Dublin, back again 55
To Ireland, ashamed, disgraced. But those ashes
Of defeat were the sweetest taste of victory
In the brothers' mouths, Wessex king
And Wessex prince, returning home
Together. They left a gift of dismembered 60
Corpses to the horny beak of the black-plumaged
Raven, and the grey-feathered eagle, splashed white
On his tail, to the greedy war-hawk and the grey-flanked
Forest wolf, a feast of carcasses
For lovers of carrion meat. No carnage 65
Had ever been bloodier, in any battle
Fought anywhere on this island, say the books
Of the old philosophers, not since the Angles
And Saxons[9] arrived in England out of

[7] *Anlaf* is a rendering of the name *Óláfr*. Óláfr Guðrøðsson was a king of Scandinavian origin. He ruled Dublin (934–41) and York (939–41).
[8] Constantín mac Áeda was king of Scots from around 900 until his retirement in 943. He died in 952.
[9] The Angles and Saxons were component groups of the Anglo-Saxons.

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The East, brave men trying a broad 70
And dangerous sea, daring warriors
Who swept away the Britons,[10] seized
The land and made it theirs alone.

[10] The Britons were Brittonic-speakers (speakers of a language akin to modern Welsh). By this time they were based in Wales, Cornwall, Brittany and the northern kingdom of Cumbria.

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Write your answer in the space below

Question answered ☐

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