

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2003

COURSE II

Paper B2 Middle English Dialectology

Friday, 30 May 2003, 9.30 am – 12.30 pm

Time allowed – Three hours

Answer Question 1 and *two* others. You should pay attention in your answers to the precise terms of the questions.

Do *not* turn over until told that you may do so.

Answer Question 1 and *two* others. You should pay attention in your answers to the precise terms of the questions.

1 Discuss in detail the language of **one** of the following passages:

(a) Efne þan worde þa þe king seide
 He bræid hæȝe his sceld forn to his breosten,
 He igrap his spere longe, his hors he gon spurie.
 Neh alswa swiðe swa þe fuȝel flizeð
 5 Fuleden þan kinge fif and twenti þusend
 Wihtere monnen, wode under wepnen,
 Hælden to hulle mid hæhȝere strengðe
 And uppen Colgrime smiten mid swiðe smærte biten,
 And Grim heom þer hente and feolde þa Bruttes to grunde,
 10 I þan vormeste ræse fulle fif hundred
 Þat isæh Arður, aðelest kingen,
 And wrað him iwræððed wunder ane swiðe,
 And þus cleopien agon Arður þe hæhȝe man
 ‘War beo ȝe, Bruttes, balde mine beornes?’
 15 Her stondeð us biuoren ure ifan alle icoren,
 Go we mid isunde and legge we heom to grunde.’
 Arður igrap his sweord riht and he smat ænne Sexise cniht
 Þat þat sweord þat was swa god æt þan toþen atstod,
 And he smat enne oðer, þat was þas cnihtes broðer,
 20 Þat his halm and his hæfd halden to grunde,
 Þene þridde dunt he sone ȝaf and enne cniht atwa clæf
 Þa weoren Bruttes swiðe ibalded,
 And leiden o þan Sæxen læȝen swiðe stronge
 Mid heore speren longe and mid sweorede swiðe stronge

(b)

- When þe dawande day dryȝtyn con sende,
Þenne wakened þe wyȝ under wodbynde,
Loked alofte on þe lef þat lyled grene
Such a lefsel of lof never lede hade,
5 For hit watz brod at þe boȝem, boȝted on lofte,
Happed upon ayȝer half, a hous as hit were,
A nos on þe norȝ syde and nowhere non ellez,
Bot al schet in a schaze þat schaded ful cole
Þe gome glyȝt on þe grene graciouslye leves,
10 Þat ever wayved a wynde so wyȝe and so cole;
Þe schyre sunne hit umbeschon, þaȝ no schafte myȝt
Þe mountaunce of a lyttel mote upon þat man schyne
Þenne watz þe gome so glad of his gay logge,
Lys loltrande þerinne, lokande to toune,
15 So blyȝe of his wodbynde he balteres þerunder,
Þat of no diete þat day – þe devel haf¹ – he roȝt.
And ever he laȝed as he looked þe loge alle aboute,
And wysched hit were in his kyth þer he wony schulde,
On heȝe upon Effraym oper Ermonnes hillez.
20 ‘Iwysse, a worȝloker won to welde I never keped.’
And quen hit neȝed to naȝt, nappe hym bihoved;
He slydez on a sloumbe-slep sloghe under leves,
Whil God wayned a worme þat wrot upe þe rote,
And wyddered watz þe wodbynde bi þat þe wyȝe wakned

- (c) *Clericus* Þe Latyn ys boþe good and fayr Þarvore hyt neodeþ noht to han an Englysch translacion.
- Dominus* Þis reson ys worþy to be plunged yn a plod and leyð in pouþer of lewednes and of schame Hyt myȝte wel be þat þou makest þys reson
- 5 onlych in murthe and in game
- Clericus* Þe reson mot stonde bot hyt be assoyled
- Dominus* A blere-yȝed man, bote he were al blynd of wyt, myȝte yseo þe solucion of þis reson, and þey a were blynd a myȝte grope þe solucion, bote ȝef hys velyng hym faylede Vor ȝef þis reson were oȝt worþ, by such
- 10 manere argement me myȝt preove þat þe þre score and ten, and Aquila, Symachus, Theodocion, and he þat made þe vfte translacion, and Origenes were lewedlych occupyed whanne hy translated holy wryt out of Hebreu into Grw, and also þat Seint Jerom was lewedlych occupyed whanne he translated holy writ out of Hebreu ynto Latyn, vor þe Hebreu ys boþe
- 15 good and feyre and ywryte by inspiracion of þe Holy Gost. And al þeuse vor here translacions buþ hyȝlych ypreysed of al holy cherche. Þanne þe vorseyde lewed reson ys worþy to be pouþred, yleyd a water and ysouced. Also holy wryt in Latyn ys boþe good and fayr, and ȝet for to make a sermon of holy wryt al yn Latyn to men þat konneþ Englysch and no
- 20 Latyn hyt were a lewed dede; vor hy buþ nevere þe wyser vor þe Latyn bote hyt be told hem an Englysch what hyt ys to mene, and hyt may noȝt be told an Englysch what þe Latyn ys to mene withoute translacion out of Latyn in Englysch. Þanne hyt nedeþ to have an Englysch translacion And for to kepe hyt in muynde þat hyt be noȝt vorȝut, hyt ys betre þat such a
- 25 translacion be ymad and ywryte þan yseyd and noȝt ywryte And so þis vorseyde lewed reson scholde meeve no man þat haþ eny wyt to leve þe makynȝ of Englysch translacion.

- (d) Than thai without, in gret aray
 Pressit thair sow toward the wall;
 And thai within weill soyne gert call
 The engynour that takyne was,
 5 And gret manans till him mais,
 And swoir that he suld de, bot he
 Provit on the sow sic sutelté
 That he tofruschyt hir ilk deill,
 And he, that has persaut weill
 10 That the dede wes neir hym till,
 Bot gif he mycht fulfill thar will,
 Thocht that he all his mycht vald do:
 Bendit in gret hy than wes scho,
 And till the sow wes soyn evin set.
 15 In hye he gert draw the cleket,
 And smertly swappit out the stane,
 That evyn out our the sow is gane,
 And behynd hir a litill we
 It fell, and than thai cryit hye
 20 That war in hir. 'Furth to the wall,
 For dreidles it is ouris all.'
 The engynour than deliuerly
 Gert bend the gyne in full gret hy,
 And the stane smertly swappit out.
 25 It flaw out quhedirand with a rout,
 And fell richt evin befor the sow

2. **Either (a)** As Anglo-Saxon traditions died out, scribes began to develop local writing-systems, reworking conventions not only derived from Anglo-Saxon tradition but also Latin and French (Simon Horobin and Jeremy Smith). Discuss in the light of this comment the orthographic system of any **one** Middle English text or group of texts.

Or (b) To what extent does orthographic evidence enable us to determine developments in the Middle English period in respect **either** of vowel quantity in stressed syllables **or** of the vocalism of unstressed syllables?

3. The rhymes of *The Owl and the Nightingale* are of interest because, by the standards of early Middle English, the poet is generally regarded as very good, and it is an assumption sometimes made, though hardly ever expressed explicitly, that if the poet is good his rhymes should be good too (E.G. Stanley). Discuss the value of rhyme evidence for the dialectologist with reference to *The Owl and the Nightingale* **and/or** any other Middle English text(s).

4. **Either (a)** What are the principal linguistic arguments for locating the dialect of *Ancrene Wisse* and other 'AB' texts in the West Midlands?

Or (b) It has been said that establishing the dialect of the *Gawain*-poet is complicated by the fact that the scribal dialect is more homogeneous than that of the poet (H. N. Duggan). Discuss the relationship between scribal and authorial dialects in **either** the *Gawain*-manuscript **or any one** other Middle English text or group of texts.
5. What seem to be the characteristic features of the Kentish dialect in Middle English? Comment on the evidence on which your answer is based.
6. **Either (a)** Consider linguistic issues raised by the characterization of Barbour's *Bruce* as the earliest substantial literary composition in the lowland vernacular (R. James Goldstein)

Or (b) Give an account of some morphological **and/or** syntactic features helping to characterize northern dialects of Middle English.
7. Is syntax a matter about which the historical dialectologist of Middle English can have much to say?
8. **Either (a)** To what extent does the amount of vocabulary of French **or of** Scandinavian origin distinguish any **one** Middle English dialect? What other factors affect that amount?

Or (b) Discuss some of the problems that confront attempts to describe regional lexical variations in Middle English, and the success of any previous such attempts in overcoming the problems.
9. **Either (a)** All studies of Middle English dialectology face an intractable difficulty. the dialectologist, above all, wants to get at the spoken language of the time, whereas all he has to go on is written language of one kind or another. Discuss any part(s) of this comment.

Or (b) In what ways, if any, has sociolinguistic theory enriched our understanding of Middle English dialectology?

10. What features of the language of the following passage give indications of the date or place of origin of the manuscript text **and/or** the original?

In þe fourme of ane ern he is depeint, ase we ofte iseoth with e13e
For þe ern is swiftest of alle foules, and hext he may fleo,
For 3wane he is in þe lofte an he13h, þat herre ne may non beo,
3uyt he may here in þe grounde ane luttel worm iseo
5 Also he may so he13e fleo, and þe firmament so ne13h,
þat almest is wyngene brenneth 3wane he is so he13h.
Se Iohan, þat is þe fourme of ern, is godspelles wel he13e bigan
þareinne he tolde al is lif, þe 3wile he was on eorþ man.
His godspel is swiþe he13 iholde, ase wel ri3ht it is,
10 For mucche del of holi churche þerþoru3h iloked is.
Seint Iohan cudde þis godspel sone, and prechede it faste also;
3eot þare weren lufere men þat onde hadden þareto
On a tyme manie lufere men togadere heom hadden inome,
And to Seint Iohan þe ewangelist in grete wrathþe come,
15 And heten him wende forth with heom to heore maumates anon,
And anouri as forth with heom, oþur it scholde anoþur gon
'Beu freres,' quath þis holie man, 'ichulle segge eou a sothþ.
Ich habbe reuþe of eov in mine heorte, þat 3e nutez 3wat 3e dothþ.
Ichulle don eou chois of twey þingues, and þarof cheose 3e.
20 To gon with eou to eower temple, oþur 3e to churche with me.
3wane 3e to Godes churche comieth, 3if 3e þoru3 eower godes lawe
Mouwen make þe churche to falle, bilieue ichulle on heom fawe.
And 3if ich may bi eower temple bifore eower owene si3hte,
Bileueth on Ihesu Crist, ich rede, 3wane 3e iseothþ is mi3hte '
25 'We grauntiez wel,' þis oþure seiden, 'þou schalt furst biguynne
To cuyþe þine louerdes mi3hte, þe maistrie for to wynne '
To þe false temple huy wenden furst, and þo huy weren þarene13h alle
Seint Iohan bad heom stonde fer, þat huy ne weren offalle.
þo huy weren alle withdrawen afeor, Seint Iohan afeor stod
30 'Iseo 3e,' he seide, 'þis temple alle, þat 3e holdeth so guod?
Ich hote hire in mine Louerdes name þat heo falle anon,
þat 3e mowen þe soþe iseon bifore eou here echon '
Ne hadde he bote þat word iseid, þat heo ne ful up þe down,
Fram ende to oþur, al þis temple, with swiþe grislich soun