

DENB 2408

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

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HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE  
2006

COURSE II

A5 The History of the English Language to c. 1750

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TRINITY TERM 2006

Tuesday, 23 May 2006, 9.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Time allowed – Three hours

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Answer Question 1 and *two* others. You may use the same text in more than one answer, but you should not repeat material. In the course of your three answers you must show knowledge of two consecutive periods from those covered in the paper (Old English, Middle English to c.1500, early modern English c.1500-1750). You should pay careful attention in your answers to the precise terms of the question.

Do *not* turn over until told to do so

1. Either (a) Choose two of the passages (i) to (iv), and comment on the changes of language (inflection, syntax, vocabulary, word order, semantics, orthography, and phonology) between them;

Or (b) Choose two of the passages (v) to (viii), and comment on the language (inflection, syntax, vocabulary, word order, semantics, orthography, and phonology) of each, making such comparisons between the passages as seem useful:

(i)

Soðlice þa herodes wæs forðfaren. witodlice on swefne drihtnes engel ætywde iosepe on egyptum and þus cwæð; Aris and nim þæt cild and his modor and far on israhela land; Nu synd forðfarene. þe ðæs cildes sawle sohton; He aras ða and onfeng þæt cild and his modor; and com on israhela land; Ða he gehyrde þæt archelaus rixode on iudea þeode for ðæne herodem. he ondred þyder to farende. and on swefnum gemynegod he ferde on galileisce dælas. and he com þa and eardode on þære ceastre ðe is genemned nazareth; þæt wære gefylled þæt gecweden wæs þurh ðone witegan. forþam ðe he nazarenisc byð genemned; *Veni iohannes baptista*

On þam dagum com iohannes se fulluhtere. and bodode on þam westene iudee and cwæð; Doþ dædbote; soðlice genealæceð heofona rice; Ðis ys se be þam þe gecweden ys. þurh esaiað ðone witegan; Clypiendes stefn wæs on westene; gegearwiað drihtnes weg; doþ his siðas rihte; Se iohannes witodlice hæfde reaf of ol'u'enda hærum and fellenne gyrdel embe hys lendenu; and hys mete wæs gærstapan. and wudu hunig; Ða ferde to him hierosolimwaru. and eal iudea ðeod; and eal þæt rice wiðgeondan iordanen; and hi wæron gefullode on iordane fram him; and hi andettan hyra synna; Soðlice þa he geseh manega þæra sunderhalgena and þæra rihtwisendra to his fulluhte cumende. he cwæð to him; La næddrena cyn. hwa geswutelode eow to fleonne fram þan toweardan yrr; Eornostlice. doþ medemne weastm þære dædbote. and ne cweþað betwux eow. we habbað abraham us to fæder

#### Late West Saxon Gospels

(ii)

But whanne Eroude was deed, loo! the aungel of the Lord apperide to Joseph in sleep in Egipt, and seide, Ryse vp, and take the child and his modir, and go in to the lond of Israel; for thei that sougten the lijf of the chijld ben deed. Joseph roos, and took the child and his modir, and cam in to the loond of Israel. And he herde that Archilaus regnede in Judee for Eroude, his fadir, and dredde to go thidir. And he was warned in sleep, and wente in to the parties of Galilee; and cam, and dwelte in a citee, that ys clepid Nazareth, that it shulde be fulfillid, that was seid bi profetis, For he shal be clepid a Nazarey. In tho daies Joon Baptist cam, and prechide in the desert of Judee, and seide, Do 3e penaunce, for the kyngdom of heuenes shal neize. For this is he, of whom it is seid bi Ysaie, the prophete, seyinge, A vois of a crier in desert, Make 3e redi the weies of the Lord; make 3e riht the pathis of hym. And this Joon hadde clothing of camels heeris, and a girdil of skynne aboute hise leendis; and his mete was honysoukis, and hony of the wode. Thanne Jerusalem wente out to hym, and al Judee, and al the cuntre aboute Jordan; and thei weren waischun of hym in Jordan, and knowlechiden her synnes. But he siz manye of the Farysees and of Saduceis comynge to his baptyrm, and seide to hem, Generaciouns of eddris, who shewide to 3ou to fle fro the wraththe that is to come? Therfor do 3e worthi fruyte of penaunce, and nyle 3e seie with ynne 3ou, We han Abraham to fadir

Wycliffite Bible, Later Version

(iii)

When Herode was deed, Lo an angell off the lorde  
apered unto Joseph in egipite saynge: arise and take the  
chylde and his mother, and go in to the londe of Israhel.  
For they are deed which sought the chyldes deeth. Then  
5 he arose up, and toke the chylde and his mother, and cam  
into the londe of Israhel. But when he herde that Arche-  
laus did raygne in Jury, in the roume off hys father Herode,  
he was afrayde to goo thether, norwithstandynge after he  
was warned in hys slepe, he tourned asyde into the parties  
10 off galile, and went and dwelt in a cite called Nazareth, to  
ffulfill that which was spoken be the prophetes: He shalbe  
called of Nazareth.

In those dayes Jhon the baptiser cam and preached in the  
wildernes off iury sayng: Repent, the kyngdome of heven  
15 is at honde. This is he of whom it is spoken be the prophet  
Esay, which sayeth: The voyce off a cryer in wyldernes,  
prepare the lordes way, and make hys pathes strayght.

This Jhon had hys garment off camels heer, and a ger-  
dell off a skynne aboute his loynes. Hys meate was lo-  
custes, and wylde hony. Then went oute to hym  
20 Jerusalem, and all Jury, and all the region rounde aboute  
Jordan, and were baptised of hym in Jordan, knoledging  
their synnes.

When he sawe many off the pharises and off the sa-  
25 duces come to hys baptim, he sayde unto them: O genera-  
cion of vipers, who hath taught you to fle from the  
vengeaunce to come: brynge forth therefore the frutes be-  
longynge to repentaunce. And se that ye ons thynke not to  
saye in yourselves, we have Abraham to oure father.

Tyndale

(iv)

But when Herode was dead, behold, an Angel of the Lord appeareth in a dreame to  
Ioseph in Egypt, Saying, Arise, and take the yong childe and his mother, and goe into  
the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the yong childes life.

And he arose, and tooke the yong childe and his mother, and came into the land of  
5 Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reigne in Iudea in the roome of his father  
Herod, hee was afraid to goe thither: notwithstanding, beeing warned of God in a  
dreame, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee: And hee came and dwelt in a city  
called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophets, He  
shalbe called a Nazarene. In those daies came Iohn the Baptist, preaching in the  
10 wilderness of Iudea, And saying, Repent yee: for the kingdome of heauen is at hand.  
For this is he that was spoken of by the Prophet Esaias, saying The voyce of one  
crying in the wildernes, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And  
the same Iohn had his raiment of camels haire, and a leatherne girdle about his loynes,  
and his meate was locusts and wilde hony. Then went out to him Hierusalem, and all  
15 Iudea, and all the region round about Iordane, And were baptized of him in Iordane,  
confessing their sinnes. ¶ But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees  
come to his Baptisme, he said vnto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned  
you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance.  
And thinke not to say within your selues, Wee haue Abraham to our father:

King James Version

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TURN OVER

(v)

- ‘þa cwæð se Hælend þus to ðam halgan Petre:  
Ne ondræd þu ðe nan þing for ðissere dæde.  
þu fehst men heonan forð, swa swa þu fixas fenge.’  
Se Hælend gefrefrode swiðe fægere Petrum,  
5 for ðan þe he wel wyle eallum welwillendum,  
and sæde þæt he sceolde syððan men gefon;  
nu dyde ‘he’ eac swa be his Drihtnes wordum,  
þæt he manega menn mid his lare gefeng,  
and mid wundorlicum tacnum þe he geworhte on life,  
10 swa swa he ær gefeng fixas mid his nettum;  
and we gyt habbað his halgan lare mid us  
on Cristenum bocum, us sylfum to beternunge.  
‘Hy tugon þa to lande heora scipa ge’h’ladene,  
and hy ealle þing forleton, and folgodon swa Criste.’  
15 Crist geceas fisceras him sylfum to folgerum,  
ungelærede men, and hy forleton ealle þing,  
his lare folgiende, and him her on life,  
and hy syððan wurdon swa swiðe gelærede  
þæt eall se Cristendom on Cristes gelaðunge  
20 wearð þurh hy ah’ræ’red mid þæs Hælendes fultume;  
þam is wuldor and wurðmynt a to worolde, AMEN.

Ælfric

(vi)

- Des  
ilces geares wæs swa micel o’r’fswalm swa hit næfre ær ne wæs;  
on manne gemynd ofer eall Engleland: þet wæs on næt 7 on  
swin swa þet, on þa tun þa wæs tenn ploges oðer twelfe gangende,  
5 ne belæf þær noht an; 7 se man þa heafde twa hundred oðre  
ðre hundred swin, ne beleaf him noht an. þæræfter swulten þa  
hennefugeles. þa scyrte ða flescmete 7 se ceose 7 se butere.  
God hit bete þa his wille beð! 7 Se kyng Heanri com ham to  
Engleland toforen heruest æfter Sancte Petres messe þe firrer.  
10 Des ilces geares for se abbot Heanri toforen Eastren fram Burch  
ofer sæ to Normandi; 7 þær spreac mid þone kyng, 7 sæide him  
þet se abbot of Clunni heafde him beboden þet he scolde cumen  
to him 7 betæcen him þone abbotrice of Angeli, 7 siðþen he  
wolde cumen ham be his læfe. 7 Swa he ferde ham to his agen  
15 mynstre 7 þær wunode eall to Midsummer Dæi. 7 Des oðer dæies  
æfter Sancte Iohannis messedæi, cusen þa muneces abbot of  
hemself and brohten him into cyrce mid processionem; sungen  
“Te Deum Laudamus”, ringden þa belle, setten him on þes  
abbotes settle, diden him ealle hersumnesse swa swa hi scolden  
20 don here abbot. 7 Se eorl 7 ealle þa heafedmenn 7 þa muneces  
of þa mynstre flemden se oðer abbot Heanri ut ‘of’ þa mynstre.

(vii)

- This noble kyng is set upon his trone.  
This strange knyght is fet to hym ful soone,  
And on the daunce he gooth with Canacee.  
Heere is the revel and the jolitee  
5 That is nat able a dul man to devyse.  
He moste han knowen love and his servyse  
And been a feestlych man as fressh as May,  
That sholde yow devysen swich array.  
Who koude telle yow the forme of daunces  
10 So unkouth, and swiche fresshe contenaunces,  
Swich subtil lookyng and dissymulynge  
For drede of jalouse mennes aperceyvynge?  
No man but Launcelot, and he is deed.  
Therefore I passe of al this lustiheed;  
15 I sey namoore, but in this jolynesse  
I lete hem til men to the soper dresse.  
The styward bit the spices for to hye,  
And eek the wyn, in al this melodye.  
The usshers and the squiers been ygoon,  
20 The spices and the wyn is come anon.  
They ete and drynke, and whan this hadde an  
ende,  
Unto the temple, as reson was, they wende.  
The service doon, they soupen al by day.  
What nedeth yow rehercen hire array?  
25 Ech man woot wel that a kynges feeste  
Hath plentee to the meeste and to the leeste,  
And deyntees mo than been in my knowyng.  
At after-soper gooth this noble kyng  
To seen this hors of bras, with al a route  
30 Of lordes and of ladyes hym aboute.

Chaucer

(viii)

- They say that the *Cyclopes* (for their fiercenes & crueltie) were by *Iupiter* cast  
into hell, and there doomed to perpetuall imprisonment: but *Tellus* perswaded  
*Iupiter* that it would doe well, if being set at liberty, they were put to forge  
5 thunderboults, which being done accordingly, they became so painefull and  
industrious, as that day and night they continued hammering out in laborious  
diligence thunderboults and other instruments of terrour. In processe of time  
*Iupiter* hauing conceiued a displeasure against *Æsculapius* the sonne of *Apollo*  
for restoring a dead man to life by physicke; and concealing his dislike (because  
10 there was no iust cause of anger, the deed being pious and famous) secretly  
incens't the *Cyclopes* against him, who without delay slew him with a thunderbolt:  
In reuenge of which act; *Apollo* (*Iupiter* not prohibiting it) shotte them to death with  
his arrowes. This Fable may be applied to the proiects of Kings, who hauing  
cruell, bloody, & exacting Officers, do first punish and displace them, afterwards  
by the counsell of *Tellus*, that is of some base and ignoble person, and by the  
15 preuayling respect of profit they admit them into their places againe, that they  
may haue instruments in a readynes, if at any time there should need either  
seuerity of execution, or a cerbity of exaction. These seruile creatures being by  
nature cruell, and by their former fortune exasperated, and perceiuing well what is  
expected at their hands, doe shew themselues wonderfull officious in such kinde  
20 of employments but being too rash and precipitate in seeking countenance and  
creeping into fauour, doe sometimes take occasion from the secret becknings and  
ambiguous commandes of their Prince to performe some hatefull execution.

Bacon

2. 'The story of English is importantly not just the story of one language. The first thousand years of the tale of English in the British Isles are in some ways as much about language contact as about language continuity'. Assess the implications of an understanding of language contact for the history of English, making detailed reference to any ONE or TWO periods of the history of English covered by this paper.

3. 'Extant OE texts give us only an indication of contemporary formal language use, specifically in the written medium, and not a full picture of the OE speech community'. Discuss the implications of this statement for our knowledge of Old English.

4. 'The transition from early "West Saxon" to late "West Saxon" was not, of course, as abrupt or as clear-cut as these terms might suggest' (S. IRVINE). Discuss.

5. 'The major contribution of the Norman Conquest was to suppress standardized English before setting it free in infinite new variety' (D. BURNLEY). Is Middle English best characterised by its 'infinite new variety'?

6. 'The Peterborough Chronicle reveals the chaos of a language in flux'. Discuss.

7. 'It is in syntax that Middle English reveals its most far-reaching developments'. With reference to specific examples, assess the validity of this statement for language change in Middle English.

8. 'The English of the Chancery is merely one domain of usage; its significance in the process of standardization should not therefore be overemphasized'. Argue either for or against this proposition.

9. 'Lexical augmentation is governed by the notion of perceived if not always actual need'. Discuss with detailed reference to any one or more periods of English covered by this paper.

10. EITHER (a) 'Orthoepical analyses of English often raise more problems than they solve'. Do they? You may restrict your answer to one or two writers on the language.

OR (b) 'Systems of reformed spelling are, at best, of nebulous benefit'. Evaluate the principles and practice of any one or two systems of spelling reform.

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11. EITHER (a) 'The loss of grammatical gender in later English is one of the most difficult problems in English philology' (A. S. C. ROSS). Why ?

OR (b) 'By 1600, the English pronoun system had undergone a radical process of change'. Discuss with reference to any one or two periods covered by this paper.

12. 'By the early modern English period, the structure of the standard language was very close to its structure in the English of the present day'. (B. FENNELL). To what extent is it possible to agree with this claim? You may restrict your analysis to any one or two domains of usage.

13. 'Usage in the eighteenth century was to be subject to an unprecedented level of scrutiny, much of which found the language lacking in various respects'. Discuss.

14. 'The pretence of fixing a standard to the purity and perfection of any language is utterly vain and impertinent, because no language depending on arbitrary custom can ever be permanently the same' (B. MARTIN, 1749). Assess the validity of this statement, making detailed reference to any one or two periods covered by this paper.

15. EITHER (a) 'I knew very well what I was undertaking – and very well how to do it – and have done it very well' (SAMUEL JOHNSON). How would you assess Johnson's lexicographical achievements?

OR (b) 'One is tempted to regard the history of dictionaries as a process of accretion rather than evolution' (P. LONG). Discuss.

16. 'For every one person who speaks Standard English, there must be a hundred who do not, and another hundred who speak other varieties as well as the standard. Where is their story told?' (D. CRYSTAL). Make a case either for or against the study of dialect as part of the history of English, giving detailed reference to dialectal variation in any one or two periods covered by this paper.