SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2006

COURSE II

A4 Old and Middle English Texts

TRINITY TERM 2006

Wednesday 24 May, 9.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.

Time allowed - Three hours

Answer 1 question and *two* others. You may write on the same text in more than one answer, but you should not repeat material. You should pay careful attention in your answers to the precise terms of the quotations and questions.

Do not turn over until told to do so

Answer 1 question and two others. You may write on the same text in more than one answer, but you should not repeat material. You should pay careful attention in your answers to the precise terms of the quotations and questions.

- 1. Translate **three** of the following passages, and comment briefly on matters of textual and linguistic interest, and particularly on any words or phrases whose meaning is debatable.
- a) Þa him eorla mod ortrywe wearð. siððan hie gesawon of suðwegum fyrd Faraonis forð ongangan, eoferholt wegan, eored lixan garas trymedon, guð hwearfode, 5 blicon bordhreoðan, byman sungon bufas bunian, beod mearc tredan. Onhwæl þa on heofonum hyrnednebba (hreopon herefugolas, hilde grædige, deawigfedere) ofer drihtneum, 10 wonn wælceasega. Wulfas sungon atol æfenleoð ætes on wenan, carleasan deor, cwyldrof beodan on laðra last leodmægnes fyl.

4 eoferholt] MS ofer holt.

- 8-9 þa on heofonum hyrnednebba hreopon] MS on hwæl hwreopon
- b) Of Petrus scipe he lærde þæt folc on ðam lande, and us becom seo lar of Iudea lande, þurh þa halgan apostolas, þe ða hæðenan lærdon, and men to geleafan of ælcum lande gebigdon, and cyrican arerdon to Godes gesetnyssum 5 on his halgum þeowdome, swa swa hit man healt gyt on ðam godum folcum, þe Godes willan cepað; ac we healdað wace, her on Engla þeode, Godes gesetnyssa, þe he gesette to steore, and þam eallum to lare þe hine lufiað. 10
- c) Ne grapi hire nan to softeliche hire seoluen to bichearren. Ne schal ha for hire lif witen hire al cleane, ne halden riht hire chastete wið uten twa þinges, as seint Ailred þe abbat wrat to his suster. Þet an is pinsunge i flesch wið feasten, wið wecchen, wið disceplines, wið heard werunge, heard leohe, wið uuel, wið muchele swinkes: þe oþer is heorte þeawes deuociun, reowfulnesse, riht luue, eadmodnesse & uertuz oþre swucche. Me, sire, þu ondswerest me, suleð Godd his grace? Nis grace wil 3eoue? Mine leoue sustren, þah cleannesse of chastete ne beo nawt bune ed Godd, ah beo 3eoue of grace, vngraciuse stondeð þer to3eines & makieð ham unwurðe to halden se heh þing, þe nulleð swinc þeruore bliðeliche þolien.

d) Pe kny3t kachez his caple, and com to be lawe,
Li3tez doun luflyly, and at a lynde tachez
Pe rayne and his riche with a ro3e braunche.
Penne he bo3ez to be ber3e, aboute hit he walkez,
Debatande with hymself quat hit be my3t.
Hit hade a hole on be ende and on ayber syde,
And ouergrowen with gresse in glodes aywhere,
And al watz hol3 inwith, nobot an olde caue,
Or a creuisse of an olde cragge; he coube hit no3t deme
with spelle,

'We! Lorde,' quob be gentyle kny3t,
'Wheber bis be be grene chapelle?
Here my3t aboute mydny3t
be dele his matynnes telle!'

13 Here] he.

2. EITHER (a) 'No other Old English poem has such violent metaphors or so many new and startling kennings' (EDWARD IRVING). Discuss this comment on Exodus.

OR (b) 'The only critical judgement concerning the Old English Exodus which has not been

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debated is that it is an extraordinarily difficult poem' (JAMES EARL). Discuss.

- OR (c) How useful is it to see Exodus as an articulation of an Anglo-Saxon migration myth?
- 3. EITHER (a) 'hy on gedwyldum adreogað heora lif, swa swa þa Engliscan men doð þe to ðam Deniscum gebugað'. To what extent can Ælfric be seen as addressing specifically English and topical concerns in his writing?
- OR (b) To what extent does an understanding of Ælfric's sources enhance our sense of what he attempted or achieved?
- 4. EITHER (a) 'Nearly eight hundred years ago an anonymous cleric wrote by request a book for a small group of unknown women to whom he acted as spiritual director' (GEOFFREY SHEPHERD). Should we read such indications in the Ancrene Wisse as fact or fiction? OR (b) 'The anchoritic ideal may well call forth from us condemnation and revulsion. For does it not involve a perverse, unhealthy thwarting of natural impulse?' (HUGH WHITE). To what extent does the author of the Ancrene Wisse escape such criticisms, and how?
- 5. EITHER (a) 'The most puzzling, and hence the most variously interpreted, element in Sir Gawain is the double figure of the Green Knight-cum-Bertilak' (W.A. DAVENPORT). Discuss.
- OR (b) How does an awareness of the analogues and possible sources for the plot illuminate Sir Gawain?
- 6. 'Biblical interpretation and adaptation was one of the most productive and imaginative techniques in medieval literature'. To what extent do the set texts show this kind of imagination?

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- 7. What are the dangers and attractions of interpreting a medieval work in the light of *EITHER* the manuscript context *OR* modern notions of genre? You should answer with particular reference to the set texts.
- 8. In what ways can any ONE or MORE of the texts set for this paper be seen as stylistically idiosyncratic, or strikingly different in style from other works of their time written in the same form?
- 9. What challenges do the set texts pose to an editor, and why are they important? You may answer with reference to ONE or MORE of the set texts.

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