

DENB 2407

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2007

COURSE II

A4 Old and Middle English Texts

TRINITY TERM 2007

Thursday 24 May 2007, 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) Æfter þære fyrde flota modgade,
 Rubenes sunu; randas bæron
 sæwicingas ofer sealtne mersc,
 manna menio, micel angetrum
 eode unforht. He his ealdordom
 synnum aswefede, þæt he siðor for
 on leofes last (him on leodsceare
 frumbearnes riht freobroðor oðþah,
 ead and æðelo); næs he earg swa þeah.
 Þær æfter him foron folca þryðum
 sunu Simeones, sweotum comon,
 þridde þeodmægen (þufas wundon
 ofer garfare) guðcyste onþrang
 deawig sceaftum.

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4 manna *Sievers*] man.

9 næs he earg *Irving*] he wæs gearu.

10 foron] *supplied by Sedgefield*.

b)
 He gesette þa æ eallum þam folce,
 þæt synd rihte lagu, hu men lybban sceoldon,
 and ænne God wurðian æfre mid geleafan,
 for þan ðe nan god nys þe ænige godcundnysse hæbbe
 buton se ana þe ealle þing gesceop.
 He worhte feala wundra on ðam westene þa,
 ac þæt folc wæs wiðerræde witodlice to oft,
 and to swyðe gegremedon þone soðan God.
 Moyses wunode on þam munte mid Gode
 feowertig daga on an, and þæt folc þa hwile
 worhton him god of golde agotenne.

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c) Þeose twa þinges, þet is, wa & scheome ifeiet to gederes, beoð Helyes
 hweoles þe weren furene, hit teleð, & beren him up to parais þer he liueð
 3etten. Fur is hat & read. I þe heate is understonden euch wa þet eileð flesch;
 scheome bi þe reade, ah wel mei duhen. Ha beoð her hweolinde, ase
 hweoles ouerturneð sone ne leasteð nane while. Þis ilke is ec bitacnet bi 5
 cherubines sweord biuore parais 3eten, þe wes of lei & hweolinde &
 turninde abuten. Ne kimeð nan in to parais bute þurh þis leitinde sweord
 þe wes hat & read, & in Helyes furene hweoles, þet is, þurh sar & þurh
 scheome þe overturneð tidliche ant agað sone. Ant nes Godes rode wið his
 deorewurðe blod irudet & ireadet forte schawin on him self þet pine & 10
 sorhe & sar schulden wið scheome beon iheowet? Nis hit iwrten bi him
 seolf, ... he wes buhsum his feader nawt ane to deað, ah to deað o rode?

d) 'Bot busk, burne, bi þi fayth, and bryng me to þe poynt.

Dele to me my destiné, and do hit out of honde,

For I schal stonde þe a strok, and start no more

Til þyn ax haue me hitte: haf here my trawþe.'

'Haf at þe þenne!' quop þa oper, and heuez hit alofte,

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And waytez as wroþely as he wode were.

He myntez at hym ma3tyly, bot not þe mon rynez,

Withhelde heterly his honde, er hit hurt my3t.

Gawayne grayþely hit bydez, and glent with no membre,

Bot stode styлле as þe ston, oþer a stubbe auþer

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þat rapeled is in roché grounde with rotez a hundreth.

þen myrly efte con he mele, þe mon in þe grene:

'So, now þou hatz þi hert holle, hitte me bihous.'

2. 'The journey of the Israelites across the Red Sea offered the poet of the Old English *Exodus* a model for reconciling the remembered pagan past of the Anglo-Saxons with their enduring Christian present' (NICHOLAS HOWE). Discuss.

OR, 'Surviving Old English verse texts, whatever the circumstances of their composition, are collaborative products whose scribes have not merely transmitted the texts but have actually taken part in shaping them' (KATHERINE O'BRIEN O'KEEFFE). Is this applicable to the Old English *Exodus*?

3. EITHER, 'This problematic evidence [of manuscript copies] is itself a salutary reminder of the difficulties of codicological interpretation of the reception of the prose or Ælfric's intentions' (CLARE LEES). Discuss.

OR, 'The selection and treatment of canonical authorities was crucial for Ælfric' (PETER CLEMOES). Discuss.

4. 'In a textual tradition of this kind, the traditional aim of critical editing, the reconstruction of "a single authorial intention", becomes problematic' (BELLA MILLETT). Discuss this comment on the *Ancrene Wisse*.

OR, 'The author's prime concern is not to prove but to move' (GEOFFREY SHEPHERD). Discuss.

5. EITHER, 'However much the poem may point outside the closed circle of romance to regnal collapse, its commitments to social reintegration are finally sustained, though only by extending the resources of chivalric romance' (JAMES SIMPSON). Discuss this comment on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

OR, 'I schal telle hit as-tit, as I in toun herede, with tonge'. To what extent should we question the *Gawain*-poet's claim to be retelling a familiar story?

OR, '*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* gains in interest when it is seen in the context of the other poems and episodes with which it is connected' (ELIZABETH BREWER). Discuss.

6. 'Just as readers of dictionaries no longer receive them like documents from Sinai, so too readers of texts must likewise accept editions as contingent documents' (PAUL SZARMACH). Discuss.

7. 'The study of a writer's sources has for two centuries been a widely accepted means of understanding the workings of his or her mind, for in selecting, reorganizing and modifying ideas from earlier writers, authors display their own particular cast of thought' (D.G. Scragg). Have you found this to be so in any of the texts set for this paper?