

DENB 2A07

SECOND PUBLIC EXAMINATION

---

HONOUR SCHOOL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE 2008

COURSE II

A4 Old and Middle English Texts [Old Regs]

---

TRINITY TERM 2008

Thursday, 22 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)

Heofonbeacen astah

- æfena gehwam, oðer wundor,  
 syllic æfter sunnan setlrade beheold,  
 ofer leodwerum lige scinan,  
 5 byrnende beam. Blace stodon  
 ofer sceotendum scire leoman,  
 scinon scyldhreoðan; scædo swiðredon,  
 neowle nihtscuwan neah ne mihton  
 heolstor ahydan. Heofoncandel barn;  
 10 niwe nihtweard nyde sceolde  
 wician ofer weredum, þy læs him westengryre,  
 har hæðbroga, holmegum wederum  
 on ferclamme ferhð getwæfde.

7. *sceado Thorpe*] *sceaðo*

12. *hæðbroga Cosijn*] *hæð*

13. *on ferclamme Kluge*] *ofer clamme; getwæfde Dietrich*] *getwæf*

(b)

- Adam geswencan on þam earde,  
 þa hwile þe he þæt lytle bebod mid geleafan geheold.  
 Eft, þa þa he agylt hæfde, and Godes bebod tobræc,  
 þa forleas he þa gesælpa, and on geswincum leofode,  
 5 swa þæt hine [biton lys] bealdlice and flean,  
 þone þe ær ne dorste se draca furþon hreppan.  
 He moste þa warnian wið wæter and wið fyr,  
 and behealdan wærlice þæt he hearde ne feolle,  
<sup>a</sup> and mid agenum geswince him ætes tilian;  
 10 and þa gecyndelican good þe him God on gesceop,  
 he moste þa healdan, gif he hi habban wolde,  
 mid mycelre gymene, swa swa gyt doð þa góóðan,  
 þe mid geswince healdað hi sylfe wið leahtras.

1. *geswencan GL; geswincan Un (wrongly).* 3. *agylt*] *sic CLSW;*  
*agylt(e) R.* 4. *geswicum G.* 5. *biton lys CLSW; lys biton R.*  
 6. *forþon LS.* 7. *reppan S; hrepan L.* 7. *warnian*] *hine warnian S; hine*  
*warnigean L.* 8. *he*] *om. Un (wrongly).* 9. *agenum*] *his agenum L.*  
*geswynce G.* 10. *ætas W.* 11. *-lice L.* 11. *healden W.* 12. *gif*  
*he hi habban wolde after gymene S.* 12. *mycelre*] *mycele W.*

(c)

3ef þi  
luue nis nawt to geouene, ah wult þet me bugge hire—  
buggen hire ? Oðer wið oðer luue, oðer wið sumhwæt  
elles, me suleð wel luue—& swa me ah to sulle luue &  
5 for na þing elles. 3ef þin is swa to sullen, ich habbe  
iboht hire wið luue ouer alle opre ; for of þe fowr measte  
luuen ich habbe icud toward te þe measte of ham alle.  
3ef þu seist þu nult nawt leote þron se liht chap, ah  
wult zette mare, nempne hwæt hit schule beon, sete  
10 feor o þi luue. Þu ne schalt seggen se muchel þet ich  
nule geoue mare. Wult tu castles, kinedomes, wult tu  
wealden al þe world ? Ich chulle do þe betere—makie  
þe wið al þis cwen of heoueriche.

(d)

The hapel heldet hym fro, and on his ax rested,  
Sette þe schaft vpon schore, and to þe scharp lened,  
And loked to þe leude þat on þe launde zede,  
How þat dozty, dredles, deruely þer stondez  
5 Armed, ful aylez: in hert hit hym lykez.  
þenn he melez muryly wyth a much steuen,  
And wyth a rynkande rurde he to þe renk sayde:  
'Bolde burne, on þis bent be not so gryndel.  
No mon here vnmanerly þe mysboden habbez,  
10 Ne kyð bot as couenaunde at kynges kort schaped.  
I hyzt þe a strok and þou hit hatz, halde þe wel payed;  
I relece þe of þe remnaunt of ryztes alle oper.  
Iif I deliuer had bene, a boffet paraunter  
I coupe wrope loker haf waret, to þe haf wrozt anger.

7 rynkande] *Napier; MS. rykande*

9 habbez] *habbe*

14 anger] *doubtful, ger perhaps legible*

TURN OVER

2. 'Scholars have seen different things in *Ancrene Wisse*; it resembles an ascetic treatise...devotional prose...penitential literature...medieval sermon...consolation literature...a manual of the spiritual life. What is less clear is how, if it is all these things, *Ancrene Wisse* is a rule'.

EITHER (a) Which genre do you think *Ancrene Wisse* belongs to?

OR (b) In what ways are questions of genre illuminating or problematic for the study of any one or more of the set texts?

3. '[Ælfric] sometimes treats his authorities with such freedom that, quite apart from personal comments and topical applications, his work approaches original composition.'

Consider this quotation, either in relation to Ælfric's use of sources, or in relation to the use of sources and/or analogues of any one of more of the set texts.

4. One critic has described *Exodus* as 'highly sophisticated in a conscious striving for effect'. Discuss what is distinctive in the style of *Exodus* or any other of the set texts.

5. 'The total number of different words in *Gawain and the Green Knight* is approximately 2,650'. What is the significance of the linguistic variety of *Gawain and the Green Knight* and/or any one other set text?

6. 'Questions such as 'by whom' and 'for whom' are sentimental questions, unlikely to have any importance to scholarship'.

How useful do you find questions of authorship and/or audience for your reading of any one or more of the set texts?

7. What does a knowledge of either the manuscript history and/or the manuscript context of any one of the set texts contribute to our understanding of that text?

8. If you were editing any one of the set texts what kinds of challenges do you think you would face as an editor?