

EN1210

University of Warwick

Summer Examinations 2015

Medieval to Renaissance

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Time allowed: 3 hours plus 15 minutes reading time.

First-year students should answer questions 1-4, in 3 hours.

Honours-level students, and whole-year visiting students taking the module at Honours level, should answer questions 1 and 2, in 1 ½ hours.

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1. Translate the following passage into modern English prose. (12 marks)  
(approx. 20 mins)

'Lo, lord,' quoth the lede, and the lace hondeled,  
'This is the bende of this blame I bere in my nek;  
This is the lothe and the losse that I laght have  
Of cowardise and covetyse that I have caght thare;  
This is the token of untrauthe that I am tan inne,  
And I mot nedes hit were while I may last.  
For none may hyden his harme bot unhap ne may hitte,  
For there hit ones is tached twynne wil hit never.'  
The kyng comfortes the knight, and all the court als,  
Laghen loude therat and lovelyly acorden  
That lordes and ledes that longed to the Table,  
Uch burn of the brotherhede, a bauderyk schulde have,  
A bende abelef him aboute of a bryght grene,  
And that for sake of that segge in sute to were.

From *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

*bende*: sash, heraldic device

*lothe*: injury

*laght*: past participle of *lach*, take

*harme*: guilt

*hitte*: befall

*abelef*: slantwise

*in sute*: to match

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2. Write a critical commentary on ONE of the following passages. (24 marks)

(approx. 40 mins)

- a) “Now John,” quod Nicholas, “I wol nat lye;  
I have yfounde in myn astrologye,  
As I have looked in the moone bright,  
That now a Monday next, at quarter nyght,  
Shal falle a reyn, and that so wilde and wood  
That half so greet was nevere Noes flood.  
This world,” he seyde, “in lasse than an hour  
Shal al be dreynt, so hidous is the shour.  
Thus shal mankynde drenche, and lese hir lyf.”  
This carpenter answerde, “Allas, my wyf!  
And shal she drenche? Allas, myn Alisoun!”  
For sorwe of this he fil almoost adoun,  
And seyde, “Is ther no remedie in this cas?”  
“Why, yis, for Gode,” quod hende Nicholas,  
“If thou wolt werken after loore and reed.  
Thou mayst nat werken after thyn owene heed;  
For thus seith Salomon, that was ful trewe:  
‘Werk al by conseil, and thou shalt nat rewe.’  
And if thou werken wolt by good conseil,  
I undertake, withouten mast and seyl,  
Yet shal I saven hire and thee and me.  
Hastow nat herd hou saved was Noe,  
Whan thatoure Lord hadde warned hym biforn  
That al the world with water sholde be lorn?”  
“Yis,” quod this Carpenter, “ful yoore ago.”  
“Hastou nat herd,” quod Nicholas, “also  
The sorwe of Noe with his felaweshipe,  
Er that he myghte gete his wyf to shipe?  
Hym hadde be levere, I dar wel undertake,  
At thilke tyme, than alle his wetheres blake  
That she hadde had a ship hirself allone.

from Chaucer, *The Miller’s Tale*

*quarter nyght*: quarter of the way through the night

*loore and reed*: learning and advice

*rewe*: be sorry

*lorn*: lost

*levere*: rather

*wetheres*: sheep

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b) 5

Those hours, that with gentle work did frame  
The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,  
Will play the tyrants with the very same,  
And that un-fair which fairly doth excel:  
For never-resting Time leads summer on  
To hideous winter, and confounds him there,  
Sap checked with frost and lusty leaves quite gone,  
Beauty o'er-snowed and bareness everywhere.  
Then, were not summer's distillation left  
A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,  
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,  
Nor it nor no remembrance what it was.  
But flowers distilled, though they with winter meet,  
Lose but their show; their substance still lives sweet.

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Then let not winter's ragged hand deface  
In thee thy summer ere thou be distilled:  
Make sweet some vial; treasure thou some place  
With beauty's treasure ere it be self-killed:  
That use is not forbidden usury  
Which happies those that pay the willing loan;  
That's for thyself to breed another thee,  
Or ten times happier be it ten for one:  
Ten times thyself were happier than thou art,  
If ten of thine ten times refigured thee.  
Then what could death do if thou shouldst depart,  
Leaving thee living in posterity?  
Be not self-willed, for thou art much too fair  
To be death's conquest and make worms thine heir.

from Shakespeare, *Sonnets*

*frame*: make, construct

*un-fair*: deprive of fairness or beauty

*distillation*: the product of distillation: a scent

*substance*: essential character

*vial*: a container for perfume

*That use is not ... willing loan*: that practice of lending money out for interest is not forbidden where those who pay the loan happily consent to it

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- c) “For-wearied with my sports, I did alight  
From loftie steed, and downe to sleepe me layd;  
The verdant gras my couch did goodly dight,  
And pillow was my helmet faire displayd:  
Whiles every sence the humour sweet embayd,  
And slombring soft my hart did steale away,  
Me seemèd, by my side a royall Mayd  
Her daintie limbes full softly down did lay:  
So faire a creature yet saw never sunny day.

“Most goodly glee and lovely blandishment  
She to me made, and bad me love her deare,  
For dearely sure her love was to me bent,  
As when just time expired should appeare.  
But whether dreames delude, or true it were,  
Was never hart so ravisht with delight,  
Ne living man like words did ever heare,  
As she to me delivered all that night;  
And at her parting said, She Queene of Faeries hight.

“When I awoke, and found her place devoyd,  
And nought but pressèd gras, where she had lyen,  
I sorrowed all so much, as earst I joyd,  
And washèd all her place with watry eyen.  
From that day forth I loved that face divine;  
From that day forth I cast in carefull mind,  
To seeke her out with labour, and long tyne,  
And never vovd to rest, till her I find,  
Nine monethes I seeke in vaine yet ni’ll that vow unbind.”

from Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, Book 1, canto 9

*For-wearied*: utterly wearied

*dight*: make

*the humour sweet embayd*: the dew of sleep pervaded

*glee*: entertainment

*blandishment*: compliment

*just time expired*: a fitting length of time having passed

*hight*: was called

*devoyd*: empty

*earst*: previously

*cast*: resolved

*tyne*: hardship

*ni’ll*: will not

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d) O none but gods have power their love to hide:  
 Affection by the count'nance is descried.  
 The light of hidden fire itself discovers,  
 And love that is concealed betrays poor lovers.  
 His secret flame apparently was seen;  
 Leander's father knew where he had been,  
 And for the same mildly rebuked his son,  
 Thinking to quench the sparkles new begun.  
 But love, resisted once, grows passionate,  
 And nothing more than counsel lovers hate.  
 For as a hot, proud horse highly disdains  
 To have his head controlled, but breaks the reins,  
 Spits forth the ringled bit, and with his hooves  
 Checks the submissive ground; so he that loves,  
 The more he is restrained, the worse he fares.  
 What is it now but mad Leander dares?  
 "O Hero, Hero!" thus he cried full oft,  
 And then he got him to a rock aloft,  
 Where, having spied her tower, long stared he on't  
 And prayed the narrow toiling Hellespont  
 To part in twain, that he might come and go;  
 But still the rising billows answered "No!"  
 With that he stripped him to the ivory skin,  
 And crying, "Love, I come!" leapt lively in.  
 Whereas the sapphire-visaged god grew proud,  
 And made his capering Triton sound aloud;  
 Imagining that Ganimed, displeased,  
 Had left the heavens, therefore on him seized.  
 Leander strived; the waves about him wound  
 And pulled him to the bottom, where the ground  
 Was strewed with pearl, and in low coral groves  
 Sweet singing mermaids sported with their loves  
 On heaps of heavy gold and took great pleasure  
 To spurn in careless sort the shipwrack treasure;  
 For here the stately azure palace stood  
 Where kingly Neptune and his train abode.  
 The lusty god embraced him, called him love,  
 And swore he never should return to Jove.

from Marlowe, *Hero and Leander*.

*descried*: revealed

*ringled*: with rings at the end

*checks*: stamps

*sapphire-visaged god*: Neptune

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*Triton*: subordinate sea-god who blew on a conch shell

*Ganymed*: Ganymede, a beautiful boy taken by Jove to be his cupbearer

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3. Write an essay in answer to ONE of the following questions. (32 marks) (1 hr)

Do NOT write an answer on a text on which you have already commented in question 2.

- a) To what extent, and in what ways, is *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* a comic poem?
  - b) 'Each time Bertilak appears there is a narrowing of focus and loss of omniscience' (Larry D. Benson, adapted). Discuss the use of multiple perspectives in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.
  - c) How far do Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* express genuine medieval concerns about sexual conduct and marital relations? Explore at least TWO tales in your answer.
  - d) Explore the use made of biblical stories and examples, and the attitude taken toward them, in TWO or more *Canterbury Prologues* and/or *Tales*.
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4. Write an essay in answer to ONE of the following questions. (32 marks) (1 hr)

Do NOT write an answer on a text on which you have already commented in question 2.

- a) 'I'd rather be truthful than correct' (Thomas More). In what sense can the largely fictional *Utopia* be considered 'truthful'?
- b) 'And I mine own and yours no more' (*Madam, withouten many words*). How convincing do you find Wyatt's declarations of independence?
- c) 'You that poor Petrarch's long-deceased woes / With new-born sighs and denizened wit do sing' (Sidney, sonnet 15). Discuss Sidney's interaction with poetic tradition in *Astrophil and Stella*.
- d) 'So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, / So long lives this, and this gives life to thee' (Shakespeare, Sonnet 18). What do Shakespeare's sonnets have to say about the powers and limitations of poetry? Please answer with reference to at least 3 sonnets.

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- e) 'The question is, whether the feigned image of poetry or the regular instruction of philosophy hath the more force in teaching' (*Defense of Poesy*). Are you persuaded by Sidney's defence of poetry?
  - f) Spenser wrote his 'Letter of the Authors' 'as well for avoyding of gealous opinions and misconstructions, as also for your better light in reading thereof'. In what ways can *The Faerie Queene* be viewed as a dramatization of the difficulties of reading and interpretation?
  - g) 'Venus is trying to confine Adonis within a woman's world of words, comfort, and pleasure, while he seeks initiation into a man's world of deeds, competition, and danger' (Coppélia Kahn). How do *Hero and Leander* and/or *Venus and Adonis* comment upon and play with conventional gender roles?
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End