

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, GALWAY  
OLLSCOIL NA hÉIREANN, GAILLIMH

Semester I Examinations, December 2000

German (B.A. Final Year)  
Middle High German II (GR 304; unit value: 1)

Professor M.McGowan  
Professor E.Bourke  
M. Shields

Time allowed: three hours  
Answer questions 1, 2 and 3

1. Translate the following extract into English prose.

In einem grâwen lebene  
ein heiliger mûnch was,  
der gerne von Got las,  
swaz er geschriben vant,  
der was Felix genant. [...]  
des nahtes selden er entslief,  
sîn herze ûf ze Gote rief  
unde sprach sîn gebet.

5

[*One day Felix reads in a book of the joys stored up in heaven, and praises God in thanks for them. But when he reads in scripture that no eye has seen them, nor ear heard such joys, and that no heart would be able to grasp them, his faith wavers and he begins to entertain doubts.*]

dô sante Got von himelrîch  
dar ein klein vogellîn,  
daz kûndet im die gaudîn  
diu in dem himel waere  
mit sange lobebaere.

10

(gaudîn = *Latin* gaudia, "heavenly joy")

sô rehte wûnneclîch ez sanc,  
daz der mûnch ûf spranc,  
daz buoch er zesamene slôz.  
sîn vrôude diu was sô grôz,  
daz er enweste, wâ er was;  
swaz er vrôuden ie gelas,  
daz dûhte in allez niht sîn,  
sô suoze sanc daz vogellîn.  
ez was wîz sam der snê;  
im enwurde nimmer wê,  
swer ez hôrte singen.  
tûsent harpfen klingen  
waeren niht sô suoze.

15

20

25

*Filled with longing, Felix tries to catch it, exclaiming*  
"dô ich dich hôrte unde sach,  
mich dûhte waerlîche,  
ich waere in himelrîche:  
Ôwê und ôwê!

30

sol ich gehoeren nimmer mê  
dînen lobelîchen sanc!"

*The monastery bell rings. Felix becomes anxious at being outside the monastery walls, and asks the porter to let him in.*

"lieber bruoder, lâzt mich in!"

– "wer sît ir?" – "ich bin  
ein mûnch, Fêlix genant,  
dem apte bin ich wolbekant."

35

– "wie sît ir her bekomen?  
daz het ich gerne vernomen,  
wan ich iuch nie mê gesach."  
der bruoder der sprach offenbâr:

40

"ich bin gewesen drîzec jâr  
in disem klôster al hie,  
daz ich iuch gesach nie.  
ich enweiz, trouwen, wer ir sît."

*The porter will not let him in. After much dispute, Felix's name is found in the monastery records and it becomes clear that he has been away for 100 years.*

(40%)

2. Comment on the following passage from Hartmann von Aue's *Erec* and on its significance for the story as a whole.

dô endete sich zestunt

6771

diu swaere spaehē

und diu vremde waehē

der er unz an den tac

mit ir âne sache pflac,

6775

daz er sie mit gruoze meit

sît er mit ir von hûse reit.

durch daz diu spaehē wart genomen,

des ist er an ein ende komen

und westez rehte âne wân.

6780

ez was durch versuochen getân

ob si im waere ein rehtez wîp.

nû hâte er ir lîp

ersichert genzlîchen wol,

als man daz golt sol

6785

liutern in der esse,

daz er nû reht wesse

daz er an ir haete

triuwe unde staete,

6790

unde daz si waere

ein wîp unwandelbaere.

Er druhte si an sîn bruste,

vil dicke er si kuste

vol minneclîchen

und bat die tugentrîchen,

6795

daz si wolde vergeben

als ungeselleclîchez leben

unde manege arebeit,

die si ûf der verte leit.

bezzerunge er ir gehiez

6800

(die er benamen wâr liez).

nû vergap si imz an der stat,

wan er sis vriuntlîchen bat.

(30%)

3. Answer either (a), (b), or (c).

- (a) Outlining the important stages in Erec's career, examine Hartmann's treatment of his hero.
- (b) It has been said of Hartmann's *Erec* "dass auch die negativen Seiten der adligen Lebensform in den Blick treten, wodurch die Dichtung an Wirklichkeitsgehalt gewinnt gegenüber dem utopischen Charakter des idealen Entwurfs." (Bumke) Show how the book depicts idealised figures behaving in ways that are sometimes programmatically exemplary, but sometimes realistic to the point of being anything but ideal. How does this affect our appreciation of Hartmann's character psychology, and what is the image of human nature that emerges?
- (c) Discuss any interpretative aspect of Hartmann's *Erec* that you find problematic and interesting.

(30%)