



FINAL PAPER

Due 13 December, 2013. 4:00 pm. My mailbox.

The aim of this paper is to prepare a teaching guide for a poem of your choice. Section 2 (Bibliography) will provide you with a general overview of your poem and major interpretations and cruxes. Section 1 (Edition) ensures that you are aware of all the linguistic issues involved in interpreting your poem. And Section 3 (Comments) will give you grist for a lecture.

1 EDITION. An edition is a standardized version of a poem or prose text. As you know, Medieval literature was copied by hand into manuscripts. Errors were common, as were variants. So, you need to ensure that you have a text that has been authenticated by a reputable editor. Unfortunately, textbooks sometimes modify a poem to make it easier for students. The standard edition of all Old English poems is the *Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records*, eds. Krapp and Dobbie, 5 vols. Each volume has a substantial and informative introduction, a list of textual problems (so you can see what's actually in the manuscript and what an editor has changed), and lots of comments on the grammar and contents of the poems. None of that is on-line. Use the ASPR in your paper. For ease of transcription, you can find them all at this link:

<http://www8.georgetown.edu/departments/medieval/labyrinth/library/oe/oe.html>

The Exeter Book is here:

<http://www8.georgetown.edu/departments/medieval/labyrinth/library/oe/exeter.html>

The Junius Manuscript is here:

<http://www8.georgetown.edu/departments/medieval/labyrinth/library/oe/junius.html>

Digitized manuscripts of many of the poems are available on-line or in the library. Check the [British Library](#) website and [Oxford Digitized Manuscripts](#).

2 BIBLIOGRAPHY. Gather a list of books and articles about your poem. The best first stop is Stanley Greenfield and Daniel Calder, *A New Critical History of Old English Literature* [PR173 .G73]; then check the bibliography at the [Old English Newsletter](#). The annual journal *Anglo-Saxon England* also has an excellent bibliography arranged by poem.

You can also find bibliographies on-line here: <http://bubl.ac.uk/docs/bibliog/biggam/>

Many of the articles you need will be available through JSTOR:

[<http://www.library.umass.edu/ndl/alpha/J>]

3 COMMENTS. Once you've read enough criticism about your poem, you'll get a sense of what the major themes and issues are. These themes and issues usually revolve around a word, phrase, or image. Those are good places to look for a passage to edit—they will provide lots of material to talk about. When you have thought sufficiently about your poem, then prepare the following notes:

A. A brief Kritikgeschichte—that's a paragraph or two describing what critics have been saying about your poem. What are the major issues?

B. You may also want to explore other translations of the poem into English. How did other translators deal with these issues? What words did they use? What grammatical assumptions did they make? You can find other translations in books and in literary anthologies.

C. Finally, note interesting facets of your poem word-by-word and image-by-image. You may want to make comments about the words and images as you go. Example:

“Nu sculon herigean heofenices Weard.” *Nu* ‘now’ is an adverb that calls our attention to the immediacy of prayer, that “we” must praise the Warden of Heaven now. *Sculon* ‘must’ is a first-person plural active verb lacking a subject. In some versions of this poem, the subject (*we*) is included. Note also the vowel harmonies of the first line: the first two words have an /u/ as their root vowel, while the last two words have as their root vowel a diphthong that begins with /e/.

NB. DICTIONARIES, ETC. *Clark-Hall* is a very good dictionary. You should also consult Bosworth-Toller, available at bosworthtoller.com and in the library [PE279 .B74]. If you can get access, the best is the Dictionary of Old English [DuBois CD-ROM 300].

Baker has a good bibliography, as do Greenfield & Calder. Marchand, WEMSK, has very good bibliographies on all aspects of medieval studies, including Old English.