

Luther Commentary Guidance

Familiarise yourself *extremely* well with the *Sendbrief* & try to be able to identify whether the text is Print A or Print B.

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Version

A (Arabic numerals)

- Only A:
 - Reverse *r* (will not be visible in the transcription used in the exam)
 - Superscript *u̇* (doesn't indicate different pronunciation: just orthographic)
- Suggest A:
 - Use of abbreviations
 - Inconsistency of spelling
 - Widespread <y>, not <i>/<j>
 - Greater appearance of apocope

B (Roman numerals)

- Deudsch
- <end>, not <ent> like A
- Less common to have printer's ligature, indicating abbreviation, e.g. *verdeutsche̅*

Punctuation

Virgule (/)

- Most common punctuation mark: forerunner of NHG comma & often same function (i.e. syntactic break)
- But can also mark sentence break or provide emphasis (where there's nothing in NHG)
- Not yet a grammatical marker—variation in use in A & B

Full stop

- After abbreviations, some sentence breaks and always at the end of a paragraph

Capitalisation

- Proper names (on the whole)
- Emphasis
- Movements
- Collectives (*Eseln*)
- Works (*nomina sacra*)
- Not consistent

Phonology & Orthography

Orthographic contractions/abbreviations/printer's ligatures do not represent phonological loss, but serve to save space and keep the text well-justified

Consonants

- MHG short vowel can precede a single or geminate consonant. NHG has no geminates & short vowels may be indicated by following (orthographically) doubled consonant

- No double consonant for short vowels in monosyllables: spelling of consonant length is conservative, e.g. *mus~müsse*
- Double consonant often used finally to differentiate homophones/homographs rather than indicate length of preceding vowel
- Often missing where we would expect it in NHG, e.g. <himel>
- No graphemic distinction between *das* and *dass* (variation, e.g. *das~dʒ*)
- Distinction between /d/ & /t/ blurred in the period (cf. <deutsch>/<deudsch>): <d, t, dt> word-finally (often in same text)
- <th> down to Humanist influence
- Labiodental fricatives:
 - /f/ derived from Gmc */f/ (not */p/ via the 2nd Sound Shift) spelt <f>, <v>, <u>: <Frag, vnuerschempte> (N.B. <v>~<u> distinction: initial vs. medial)
 - /f/ < */p/ always <f> or <ff>
 - Is there an English cognate? This can tell you which kind of /f/:
father~Vater vs. *up~auff*
- *Auslautverhärtung* always spelt: <jugent>
- East Central German feature: initial *h* lost in unstressed syllable
- <mb> suggests assimilation of /b/ to /m/ has not yet happened

Vowels

- Umlaut of short /a/ almost always <e>, through both prints. Also long /a:/: <were> (Luther doesn't distinguish long & short /a/)
- MHG & beyond: varied spelling of *für*: <fur, for, für, vor>
- 'eNHG' Diphthongisation evident in spelling: <sey>, <auff>, <euch>
 - Variation in spelling, e.g. <reümeten> (pre-<âu, âw> spelling)
- 'eNHG' Monophthongisation fully reflected in B <ie> > /i:/, <uo> > /u:/ etc. B always uses <ie> spelling for /i:/, but monophthongisation is unevenly reflected in A: spells e.g. *sieben* <siben> to differentiate it, with <ie> used for the diphthong elsewhere (*sieben* never had a diphthong)
- Syncope/apocope: *frag* not *frage* (but variation: cf. *kennet* vs. *sagt*)
- Length: <widder> and <odder> (also spelt <wider>, <oder> but still short)—expect long
 - Also *ligen, tretten* where the vowel is long in NHG
- Enclitic *s* for *es*
- <w> used for *u* finally and intervocalically (e.g. *New, bawet*)
- Print A <y> widely used for /i/, B uses <i> & <j>, but does use <y> finally, e.g. <ey>
- Little use of *Dehnungs-h*, e.g. <sons>, not *Sohns*

Morphology

Verbs

- *ge-* still implies perfectivity, so do not get in verbs whose lexical meaning implies completed action (as in MHG), e.g. not *gekommen*, but rather *kommen*
 - e.g. <habens dennoch zu weilen nicht **funden**>
 - Later becomes marker of past participle and appears on most verbs (except inseparable etc.)
- *war* shows development from MHG /s/ *was* to /r/: /s~r/ alternation in strong verbs (SG vs. PL) analogically levelled out (here in favour of plural).

Nouns

- Always look out for weak feminines (MHG & survive into eNHG): *-en* in SG forms except NOM, e.g. <mit himel vnd **erden**>
- Proper nouns without proper German declensions, e.g. *Aristotelem*
- F.ACC.SG adjective ending had *-n* for Luther (not NHG): *die heiligen Schrift*
- No inflexion quite normal for Luther with *ihr* and possessive adjectives in NOM and ACC.
 - <eygen> a special case: almost all cases without inflexion
- Uninflected adjectives: In Luther, much freedom in NOM.SG of all genders and N.ACC.SG
- *Doctor* almost always *Doctores* in PL, but also *Doctor*
- Prefixed verbs not necessarily written together, e.g. <aus rotten>
- Luther *-e* in DAT.SG

Syntax

- Case differences, e.g. *gegen mir*
- Personal pronouns often omitted (necessary in NHG)
- Verbal bracket respected for most part, but not always: *Ausklammerung*
 - Finite verb in main clauses usually V2, rest of verbal bracket at the end
- Are subordinate clauses respected?
 - V2 word order often used (like in NHG) in ‘unintroduced’ subordinate clauses
 - eNHG verbal elements tend to occur in V-final position in subordinate clauses but auxiliaries are often preposed
- Uses inversion in conditional clauses much more extensively than NHG
- Word order at phrase level often stranger than at the sentence level
- Preceding dependent ‘Saxon’ genitive (characteristic of eNHG) is much more common
- Uses paratactic style: sequences of main clauses—lots of staccato sentences building to a more syntactically complex crescendo to make a point
- General looseness of syntax often commented on (likened to spoken German)
- Changes of construction mid-sentence (anacoluthon)
- Subjunctive is used as in NHG to suggest distance
- Increased use of perfect forms

Vocabulary

Whether words have changed or been lost from the lexicon, e.g. *bas* (*besser*), *metzen* (*strumpet*), *durft* meaning ‘need’ etc.

- *Dolmetzsch*: ‘translate’ to Luther, now interpreted more generally
- *Kunst*: knowledge/ability
- *Wohl*: certainty, not NHG adverbial meaning roughly/perhaps
- *Also*: reinforced *so* (*al* as intensifier)
- *Noch* can mean ‘nor’ without *weder*
- *Etwa* can have MHG sense of somewhere (contrasts with NHG ‘perhaps/for example’)

Register

- Mix of colloquial & learned
- Proverbs

- Insults abound
- Learned vocabulary, e.g. *Proelium*, *Kapitel*
- Latin & Latinate declension of names
- Bible quotes & references