

Medieval Poet: Geoffrey Chaucer

The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale, editor James Winny

Explore how attitudes towards marriage are presented in *The Wife of Bath's Prologue and Tale*, by referring to lines 35-52 and **one** other passage of similar length.

You must discuss relevant contextual factors.

(Total for Question = 30 marks)

Extract 1.

Lo, heere, the wise king, daun Salomon;
I trowe he hadde wives mo than oon.
As wolde God it were leueful unto me
To be refreshed half so ofte as he!
Which yifte of God hadde he for alle his wives!
40 No man hath swich that in this world alive is.
God woot, this noble king, as to my wit,
The firste night had many a mirie fit
With ech of hem, so wel was him on live.
Yblessed be God that I have wedded five!
Welcome the sixte, whan that euer he shal.
For sothe, I wol nat kepe me chaast in al.
Whan myn housbonde is fro the world ygon,
Som Cristen man shal wedde me anon,
For thanne, th'apostle seith that I am free
50 To wedde, a Goddes half, where it liketh me.
He seith that to be wedded is no sinne;
Bet is to be wedded than to brinne.

Extract 2

Chese now,' quod she, 'oon of these thinges tweye
1220 To han me foul and old til that I deye,
And be to yow a trewe, humble wyf,
And nevere yow displese in al my lyf;
Or elles ye wol han me yong and fair,
And take youre aventure of the repair
That shal be to youre hous by cause of me,
Or in som oother place, may wel be.
Now chese yourselven, wheither that yow liketh.'
This knight aviseth him and sore siketh,
But atte laste he seyde in this manere:
1230 'My lady and my love, and wyf so deere,
I put me in youre wise governance;
Cheseth youreself which may be moost plesance,
And moost honour to yow and me also.
I do no fors the wheither of the two;
For as yow liketh, it suffiseth me.'
