



OXFORD UNIVERSITY

HISTORY APTITUDE TEST

November 2021

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Please read this page carefully, but do not open the question paper until told to do so.

A separate 8-page answer booklet is provided. Please check you have one.

Read the instructions on the answer booklet and complete the information requested in the spaces provided. Please write very clearly in black or dark blue pen.

Applicants for:

- **History**
- **Ancient and Modern History**
- **History and English**
- **History and Modern Languages**
- **History and Politics**
- **History and Economics**

You have **one hour** for this test. We recommend that you read the paper before beginning to write your answers. Spend about a third of your time on reading, thinking and planning, and the rest of the time writing.

If you find the text difficult and unfamiliar, don't worry: the exercise is intended to be challenging, but we hope you will also find it thought-provoking. There is no 'right' answer to the question: you will be judged on the quality of your argument, how clearly you make it and how effectively you support it. You should use your own words in answering the question.

This question paper consists of 4 printed pages and 4 blank pages



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NOTE: This test consists of one question based on a passage from a primary source. You do not need to know anything about the author of the passage or the context in which it was written beyond the information given here to answer the question. Candidates will not be rewarded for making use of outside knowledge.

The story below was dictated to James Bruyn Andrews by Madeleine Delicamp in Menton, on the French-Italian border, sometime in the 1870s or 1880s. Andrews was a rich American who had settled in the French Mediterranean resort of Menton for health reasons. He occupied himself recording the region's folklore and its distinct dialect – much closer to Italian than French. We know much less about Madeleine Delicamp: this text is the only evidence of her words and actions that has survived. She was probably a poor and illiterate Italian migrant who made a living by working on a farm. She told this tale in her dialect, and Andrews then translated it into English. It is a variant of a very widespread folktale: versions have been collected from across Asia, Africa and the two Americas, as well as Europe: in English it was normally known as 'Tom Thumb'. It was passed on largely by word-of-mouth, although print versions also circulated from the seventeenth century onwards. Storytelling was a common activity, and such stories were familiar to both adults and children at this time. While their contents could be fantastic, as in this example, they drew on the common experience of storytellers and their audiences, reflecting on relationships within the family, with neighbours and strangers, the natural and supernatural worlds, as well as on more everyday matters.

Question. What can we learn about the circumstances of Madeleine Delicamp's life, and her view of the world she inhabited, from the story below as recorded by Andrews?

PEQUELETOU.

One day a woman was boiling beans in a large cauldron. A widow came to her door and asked for alms.

"I am very poor myself, so can give you nothing."

"Not as poor as I am", replied the widow. "As you have something to cook, give me a little of what is in the cauldron, for I am dying of hunger."

"They are beans, and if I give you a plateful there will be so much the less for me."

Then the beggar said: "Well then, may they become as many children", and she went away.

The fire went out, and out of the cauldron came as many children as there were beans; they were quite tiny and swarmed about the woman crying out:

"Mother, mother, we are hungry."

"My husband will kill me if he sees this swarm; but I will get rid of them", said the woman to herself. She took a knife, seized one after another, cut off their heads with one stroke and threw them far away. In vain some of them tried to save themselves and hid behind boxes, in holes, in drawers or behind the broom; they were found and their heads were cut off. Then the woman thought there were no more, she began to make a tart. Whilst she worked, she exclaimed:

"If I had kept one he would have helped me now. I could send him to carry his father's dinner."

A little voice was heard saying:

"Mother, don't torment yourself, there is one left."

"Where are you? Come!"

"No", replied the little voice, "I am afraid; when you have got something ready I will come, not before."

When the tart was ready, the woman cut it in two; she put each in a separate basket with two bottles of wine. Then she said:

"Come, now."

From the keyhole appeared a little boy as big as a bean, who said:

"Mother, you'll call me Pequeletou and you will be satisfied with me."

Then she gave him the two baskets, saying: "The one with the bottle of white wine is for your father, the other is for you;" and after asking to be shown the right way Pequeletou went off.

When he had walked a long way he came to a little stream.

"How shall I get across?" he said to himself. Then he saw a shepherd and said: "Good shepherd, take me across; I will give you a good glass of white wine."

"Who is talking?" said the shepherd, "I see no one."

"Do I count for nothing?" replied the same voice.

He advanced and thought he saw two baskets walking alone. "Let whoever wants to pass come forward", cried the shepherd.

Pequeletou got up on the basket to make himself visible and the shepherd put him over to the other side of the stream. The same thing happened twice before he got to his father. Just as he got there he saw a heap of stones.

"I can never get across it", said Pequeletou, and he began to cry out: "Oh, my father, come and take me."

"Who calls me?" said the man, "I have no children."

"You have one, come and fetch me."

The man came and saw the two baskets. "But wherever is the child?"

"Look well and you will see me."

At last the father saw him and made him tell him everything.

"Father", said the child afterwards, "go and eat your dinner; I will watch for thieves", and he got into a little hole in the wall. A few moments afterwards three brigands appeared.

"Let us carry off these tools", said one of them.

But immediately Pequeletou began to cry out: "Father, oh, father, there are thieves here."

They looked to the right and the left and seeing no one said:

"Who can be watching us?"

The voice continued calling out: "Father, oh, father, there are thieves here."

"Let us wait", said the men, "and we will see."

Soon after Pequeletou's father came and they asked him who was watching them. The father replied by pointing to his son in the hole in the wall.

"Send him to us for a few days and you will be rich."

Pequeletou was obliged to go with them. On the way they said to him:

“We are going to steal a cow from that stable over there, and, as you are so small, you must manage it.”

When they got to the stable, Pequeletou went in by the keyhole and through it called: “There are oxen and cows; which must I take?” As he went on repeating these words, the master of the house heard and exclaimed:

“Thieves, thieves!”

The three men ran away, leaving Pequeletou at the mercy of the proprietor. The latter saw no one, but the voice kept on saying: “Which must I take, an ox or a cow?”

As the voice came from the keyhole, the master put his candle nearer to look.

“You will burn me”, said the same voice, “if you put the light any nearer.”

Then Pequeletou came out of his hiding-place and took refuge in the cows’ manger, and one of them, taking him for a bean, swallowed him.

While this happened the master came in, went round the stable and found nobody. However, the voice kept on calling out:

“Which must I take? an ox or a cow?”

“I cannot understand anything of all this”, said the farmer; “but it seems to me that the voice comes from this cow’s stomach; let us kill her and see.”

Nothing could be seen, but the same voice was heard repeating the same words. In cutting up the cow, a morsel was left outside the stable. A wolf passed by, swallowed it all, and Pequeletou with it.

While the wolf walked on, Pequeletou cried: “Catch the wolf, catch the wolf!” and the latter ran without ever stopping, thinking he was being pursued. The wolf was so exhausted that he fell down and died.

Then Pequeletou came out of his hiding-place and went back, running as hard as he could, to his parents and told them all his adventures, and made them promise that they would never abandon him or lend him to anyone again.

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