Horobin, Simon & Jeremy Smith (2002): An Introduction to Middle English. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, viii + 182 p. Price: paperback: £10.99, hardback: £35.

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Horobin and Smith divide their book, *An Introduction to Middle English,* into three main sections: an overall introduction to Middle English, a more in-depth look at the linguistic characteristics of the language of the period in question, and a discussion of the relationship between the study of these characteristics and the disciplines of historical linguistics and textual studies. Exercises, annotated suggestions for further reading and notes are provided at the end of the different chapters within the three sections, and an appendix with samples of Middle English texts, notes and glosses can be found at the back of the book along with a discussion of some of the exercises, a bibliography and a selective index.

It is assumed that many readers will have only a basic notion of linguistics and that they have had contact with Middle English through Chaucer's works only. At the same time, some people using the book may be working independently. For these reasons, the authors avoid extensive use of linguistic terminology and limit themselves to using commonly agreed-upon terms. Any new technical vocabulary is highlighted in bold type when it is used for the first time and these words are included in the index at the end of the book. In general, the explanations are very clear and often come with examples, but readers are expected to know the sound charts for the sections on phonology. In addition, people who have a weak background in literary theory will find that the attention paid to linguistic terminology has not been provided in the case of philological terms. Unfortunately, no glossary is provided at the back of the book, so readers must rely on the ample but somewhat distracting cross-references within the text and the index.

An interesting feature of *An Introduction to Middle English* is the range of student levels that it caters to. The authors rightly present their book as one for students in honors courses who have already taken a survey course in the history of the English language, but less-experienced readers will be able to handle much of the material thanks to the approach to linguistic terminology mentioned above and the preliminary sections to each of the chapters on the linguistic description of ME in the second section. Advanced students will appreciate the detailed explanations in the notes to each chapter and the third section, which contains Chapter 7: "Looking forward." This final chapter includes stimulating, albeit specialized, presentations first of language change and second of some of the difficulties involved in editing Middle English texts. Specifically, the first part of the chapter takes the ME determiners and third person pronouns as examples of language change within the shift in tendency from a synthetic language to an analytic one. The second section examines difficulties related to sound and spelling, lexis, and grammar that editors must face when working with manuscripts.

The book takes a new approach to presenting Middle English in that from the start it

gives readers an idea of what Middle English actually looked like. After short examples from *The Lord's Prayer* in the different periods of the history of the English language, there is an excerpt from the prologue to Chaucer's *Miller's Tale* with glossed words and phrases alongside it, followed by parallel sections from the prologue to *The Wife of Bath's Tale* with a discussion of variations between the two versions. This progressive introduction to the language of Middle English differs from other books that start with a social or historical background (Conde Silvestre & Hernandez Campoy, 1998), dialects (Mossé, 1952), and the sound system and spelling (Burrow & Turville-Petre, 1992). Another attempt at presenting the material in a novel way is the author's use of Chaucer's language forms as their point of reference. His usage is characterized throughout the book along with descriptions of the changes that took place from the Old English period. It must be pointed out at this point, however, that any gains from these two adaptations are minor.

The exercises at the end of the chapters tend to have three to five questions for discussion, such as "The analysis of writing-systems is a crucial piece of evidence for the reconstruction of sound-changes in ME. Discuss." (Chapter 4). The "Other questions" sections are more engaging because they contain practical exercises which require students to apply what they have learned, for example, by writing a ME phonemic transcription of a passage or looking up words in the OED or MED to find their history.

The appendix containing Middle English texts has short excerpts taken from commonly studied works such as the *Peterborough Chronicle*, *The Owl and the Nightingale*, *Ancrene Wisse* and *Ormulum*. However, parallel texts are provided for selections from *P iers Plowman* and *Cursor Mundi*, therefore providing students the possibility of analyzing texts from a different, more advanced perspective than other textbooks. The last sample, *The Equatorie of the Planetis*, is also a departure from other books in that it is a scientific text as opposed to a literary one. In this sense, the authors have made a start at bringing their selection in line with current interest in the editing of Middle English scientific and technical texts, described in Keiser (1998, 109). Nevertheless, a greater variety of text types might prove more attractive to this generation of university students.

In conclusion, *An Introduction to Middle English* is clearly an interesting addition to any collection of Middle English books and it is worth serious consideration as a textbook for advanced level courses for students studying towards English degrees. At the same time, it will serve as a worthwhile introduction for postgraduate students pursuing a specialization in this area. However, the drawbacks mentioned above must be born in mind when planning which sources to require in courses.

Notes

1. I would like to thank Dr. Francisco Alonso Almeida for encouraging me to write this review and for providing suggestions on how to improve it for publication.

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Among the many dictionaries and lexica of neologisms and foreign words, *A Dictionary of European Anglicisms* (DEA) edited by Manfred Görlach holds a significant place, being the first and the only one of its type. The dictionary records English borrowings in 16 European languages, among them Italian, French, Spanish and German.[1] As Rodriguez points out in the introduction to his *Nuevo diccionario de anglicismo*[2], as yet there are still no fixed, prescriptive criteria for compiling a dictionary of anglicisms in any specific language, or at least it is impossible to identify a set of universally shared and accepted rules. The reverse is true of other types of dictionaries –such as monolingual or bilingual dictionaries of the general language, where the reader usually has very specific expectations. Therefore, Görlach's endeavour of cataloguing anglicisms in 16 languages appears all the more exceptional.

Among the European languages, German is traditionally one of the most receptive towards borrowings from the English language, which now undoubtedly make up the largest part of all new words that have entered the language from the second half of the 20th century onwards, especially in the field of microeconomics and finance (management, information technology, new media), but also in general and colloquial German. The monumental dictionary of anglicisms by Carstensen and Busse (*Anglizismen-Wörterbuch*, 1993) is one of the main sources for English borrowings in German, and one of the reference works from which Görlach himself has drawn for his DEA. However, the most up-to-date lexicographic reference work both on foreign words and on anglicisms is the *Duden Fremdwörterbuch* (2001).

While the anglicisms list of the *Verein Deutsche Sprache*[3] or the *Wörterbuch der überflüssigen Anglizismen*[4] both reflect the radical purism of the authors and the institutions that have produced them, the DEA's selection does not imply a prescriptive or censorious attitude. The choice of the author to compile a dictionary in as many as 16 languages already excludes a "nationalistic" perspective. Its purpose is rather descriptive, in that it aims at reflecting, as objectively and accurately as possible, the globally widespread phenomenon