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**Review of the Book: Hans Sauer
and Piotr P. Chruszczewski (eds.) *Mostly Medieval:
In Memory of Jacek Fisiak* (= *Beyond Language 5*).
San Diego, CA 2020: Æ Academic Publishing.
ISBN: 978-1-68346-186-9, 568 pages**

Abstract

This article is a review of a Gedenkschrift intended to memorise Jacek Fisiak, a well-known Polish professor of English who died in 2019. It presents an overview of the contributions to this volume, which is divided into six “Parts,” each of which focuses on a particular aspect connected to his person or academic work. The articles in this book cover a large number of fields, ranging from individual recollections through topics on historical English up to the modern day. It is concluded that this publication is a suitable way to posthumously honour a particularly productive and beloved scholar.

Keywords: Gedenkschrift, Old English, Middle English, medievalism, linguistics

On 3 June 2019, the academic world lost one of the most prolific scholars of English linguistics and philology at the age of 83: Jacek Fisiak. His sad passing happened merely a month before the 24th Triennial Conference of the International Association of University Professors of English at Poznań, an organisation and place he is closely linked with; he was a former IAUPE president and held a professorship at Adam Mickiewicz University for many years, making the English Department (now the English Faculty) one of the most respected institutions in the field, both in Poland and beyond. Fisiak was also known to many personally, e.g. by being a member of numerous academic societies and organisations, and by acting as visiting professor at several universities worldwide. For these reasons a large number of fellow scholars readily agreed to contribute to a Gedenkschrift in his honour. As his work in the field of English studies was so extensive and wide-ranging, the book has been divided into six “Parts”, the four central of which are dedicated to those academic areas he was particularly interested in. All six Parts are conveniently visually demarcated by preceding them with blue leaves that contain the respective title on the recto

and that are easily noticeable on the edges of the book. The publication is prefaced by a brief section with acknowledgments and an introduction explaining the structure of the volume. It also contains some pictures of Fisiak himself, both on the front cover, back cover (including the flap) and in the main text (pp. v, 37, 536).

Part I is dedicated to the person Fisiak. It begins with a brief overview of his life and career before providing a complete list of his academic publications as well as previous volumes published in his honour. The fact that this list extends over no less than fifteen pages demonstrates the remarkable productivity of this scholar. The following section, called “personal memoirs”, begins with a moving contribution by his widow **Liliana Sikorska** and also contains five more tributes, namely by his close friend **Tomasz P. Krzeszowski** and four former students of his who had also become particularly attached to him: **Aleksander Szwedek**, **Katarzyna Dziubalska-Kolaczyk**, **Piotr Gąsiorowski** and **Adam Jeziński**. These are of a varying length, in the range between one and thirteen pages; with the exception of the shortest one, they are bilingual, being written in Polish alongside a facing English translation. All recollections show what a remarkable impact Fisiak had on their lives and careers. The first Part concludes with a longer article (41 pages) by **Joanna Esquibel**, in which she follows the history of the semantic field “mentor” alongside “counsellor” and “adviser” all the way back to the Old English period, discussing words like *ræd* and *wita* including some derivations and compounds. Thematically, it therefore fits into a Part specifically devoted to Fisiak himself while also preparing the reader for the following chapters, which feature more academic studies. The article also contains three helpful figures tracing some key terms, based on information from the *Historical Thesaurus of English (HTE)*, the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary (HTOED)* and the *Thesaurus of Old English (TOE)*, as well as two tables and numerous text passages, compiled or quoted from various sources.

The second Part is devoted to Old and Middle English literature. There are six contributions that are evenly split between three focussing on Old English and three dealing with the Middle English period, though this subdivision is not indicated in the Table of Contents. The first study by **Rory McTurk** reappraises Alistair Campbell’s (1962) distinction between ten types of parallelism found in Old English poetry. He illustrates these with the help of 24 examples from *Beowulf*, for which he had already provided a comprehensive list of occurrences for the first type, namely the “balanced parallel” (McTurk 2006). Particular attention is paid to the second type, the “partial parallel”, and its problem of certain identification, which would ultimately presuppose the compilation of all balanced parallels in the Old English poetic corpus. *Beowulf* is also the subject of **Andrzej Wicher**’s contribution, which examines its connection to fairy tales. He shows parallels to three tales in particular before discussing three previous scholarly approaches towards its roots within the folk-tale tradition (Kennedy 1978; Chambers 1921; Lawrence 1928). Further attention is paid to J. R. R. Tolkien’s (2014) experimental reconstruction of an underlying folk tale as well as the incorporation of such material in Robert Zemeckis’ film version within a Christian context, as novelised by Caitlín R. Kiernan (2007). The following article by **Andrew Breeze** on the Old English *Orosius* concentrates on a particularly fitting text for a book memorising Fisiak seeing that one of his earliest studies also dealt with it (Fisiak 1962). With only eleven pages, three of which contain references, it is the shortest one in this Part. After a brief recollection of a particular personal meeting with Fisiak and stressing the connection between *Orosius*’ text and Poland, Breeze discusses the possible origin of its Old English translator. After discussing several academic views and in line with some

of his own previous articles he makes a convincing case for a scholar from Cornwall who dictated the text to a West Saxon scribe.

The second half of Part II contains three articles on Middle English texts. Once more, the first two of these deal with verse. **Letizia Vezzosi** examines French and Norse loanwords in the alliterative poem *Saint Erkenwald*, for which she also provides some brief information on the manuscript, date and dialect as well as a synopsis. Her main focus concerning lexical borrowings from the languages in question is on certain themes, such as Christianity, as well as on their rhetorical function, in particular when they occur as binomials. In fact, binomials alongside multinomials are also the subject of **Hans Sauer's** contribution, who analyses such cases in Thomas Hoccleve's abbreviated translation of Christine de Pizan's *Epistre au dieu d'amours* with regard to formal aspects, etymology, semantic relations, element sequence and formulaicity. All occurrences are conveniently listed and grouped into word classes within an appendix. Some brief comments on later translations of Hoccleve's version are also given. The final text treated in this Part is Thomas Malory's *Le Morte Darthur*. **Barbara Kowalik** bases her analysis on René Girard's (2008) model of "mimetic desire" and examines how it is reflected in the text, for example with regard to instances of unrequited love as well as its appearance within its prominent love triangles. Of all six articles in Part II it is therefore the one closest to a purely literary study, whereas the others are more located in the philological tradition.

Part III contains the largest number of contributions with no less than eight. It might therefore also reflect Fisiak's most beloved interests, which were in Old and Middle English language as well as historical linguistics. Though not explicitly done so in the text, this Part might be subdivided into two major areas, comprising four articles dealing with more general language historical or regional aspects, followed by another four on specific linguistic categories or case studies. In the second chapter of her recent monograph on Jamaican Creole Proverbs, **Aleksandra Knapik** had already presented a framework of phenomena associated with contact linguistics (Knapik 2019: 12–37). Her contribution here gives a good overview of some particularly important elements of language contact and causes of language change, including scholarly observations and the notion of language ecology, thereby providing a readable introduction to various relevant concepts and perspectives within the field. Language relationship is the subject of **Katarzyna Buczek's** contribution, which focuses on the controversy of a suggested common proto-language for Old English and Old Frisian, called Anglo-Frisian. With no less than 30 pages it is the longest article in the book after Joanna Esquibel's contribution in Part I. This is no surprise giving the large number of comments on the topic. Three figures of suggested West Germanic language family trees, ten tables of phonological and morphological features as well as nineteen linguistic example cases including thirteen runic illustrations demonstrate the complexity and difficulty of this issue. Staying in the Germanic territory, **Piotr P. Chruszczewski** focuses on speech and discourse communities in Viking Age Scandinavia, as already addressed in a previous monograph of his (Chruszczewski 2006: 51–57, 69–75). His article is divided into two sections, focussing first on more general observations regarding socialising patterns and developments of local communities, and second on the communication of Scandinavians with those speaking other languages, for example in connection with the Viking expansion across Europe. Seeing that East Anglia was also a region of Scandinavian settlement, **Peter Trudgill's** survey of this dialect area is a suitable study to follow. After a brief introduction it is divided into both an Old English and a Middle English section, both of which he characterises, also paying attention to the distinction between Northern and Southern East Anglia. Given the scarce evidence for Old English,

the Middle English part is more detailed in that some linguistic features are discussed within individual sections, such as the treatment of Old English *hw-* and the occurrence of 3rd person singular *-t*. However, arguments for an Old English dialect of East Anglian can certainly be made, as has been done by no one less than Fisiak (2001).

A link between Old English and Middle English is also provided by **Piotr Gašiorowski**, whose contribution is the first one in this book to focus on one of the building blocks of language, in this case phonology. He analyses the complex process of the phonemicisation of the Old English voiced fricatives [v], [ð] and [z] in Middle English and stresses the extent of French influence as well as the slow and non-parallel development from these allophones into phonemes, thereby substantiating an earlier study by Donka Minkova (2011). **Janusz Malak**'s article deals with morphology in that it examines possible reasons for inflectional loss, as observable during the Middle English period. He draws up two main scenarios, called "intrasystemic" and "extrasystemic", which suggest underlying phonological developments and the result of language contact respectively, and concludes that the likeliest origins may be traced back to the descendants of Anglo-Scandinavian intermarriages. The study also contains four figures, three of which are maps, as well as four inflectional tables. Both morphology and Old Norse are also the subject of **Rafał Molencki**'s contribution, who examines Middle English derivations containing the root *hap-*. Though there is an Old English cognate, it is generally words containing the Old Norse root, such as *happy* or *happen*, that have become dominant, also replacing Old English synonyms, as he illustrates in no less than 82 brief text passages. The final article in Part III deals with syntax. **Jerzy Nykiel** analyses the subordinator *so that*, which introduces clauses of either result or purpose. Based on Middle English evidence showing ambiguity he concludes that it must first have been grammaticalised in the function of result before it could also be employed for the further function of purpose.

With only two contributions Part IV is the shortest one. It bridges the gap between medieval English studies and modern philology by focussing on the adaptation of past texts or language features in the modern world. The article by **Magdalena Kizeweter** and **Anna Wojtyś** deals with *Two Noble Kinsmen*, a play collaboratively written by William Shakespeare and John Fletcher. There are only two, very recent translations of it into Polish, the first of which is by one of the authors of this study (Wojtyś 2017) and the other one is an as yet unpublished shortened version by Radosław Pacocha. While the first translation stays rather close to the original, the second one is intralingual in that it adapts that translation rather than being based directly on Shakespeare and Fletcher. With the help of 28 text passages, which alternate between facing comparisons of the original and Wojtyś' translation, and individual corresponding passages from Pacocha's adaptation, the authors demonstrate the relevance of the *Skopostheorie*, which takes into account the intended audience for which such translations or adaptations are produced, such as younger theatre viewers. The article ends with a selection of photographs from the 2016 Polish premiere of the play condensed into a single illustration. A rather different kind of modern approaches to earlier material is provided by **Dominika Buchowska**, who examines the use of medievalism in a magazine issued from 1907–1922 called *The New Age*, a publication to which she had already dedicated a monograph (Buchowska 2019). Though modernist in nature the journal shows that the incorporation of medieval ideas within its articles is not necessarily a contradiction but useful in the promotion of discussion and prevention of neglecting valuable inspirations that would get lost by rejecting all things past.

Part V combines various aspects of Modern English including contrastive studies and translation studies. With five articles it is the last Part to feature more than one contribution. The first three of these

rely closely on electronic resources. No less than three authors are responsible for the first study, namely **Radosław Dylewski**, **Magdalena Bator** and **Joanna Rabęda**. Drawing on the *Private Voices* project database and reassessing an earlier study by one of the authors (Dylewski 2018), they examine the use of 3rd person singular -s in the verb *remain* within closing formulas of four thousand private letters written during the American Civil War with regard to the preceding occurrence or absence of a 1st person pronoun, as in “but remain(s)”. The authors provide lots of illustrative material within fifteen quotations, ten tables and four figures but are careful in their conclusions due to the as yet unfinished database with its current focus on Southern evidence. Another collaborative article is provided by **Katarzyna Dziubalska-Kołodziej** and **Dawid Pietrala**. It presents a free online tool devised by them in collaboration with Grzegorz Aperiński called *NAD* [= *Net Auditory Distance*] *Phonotactic Calculator* (Dziubalska-Kołodziej, Pietrala & Aperiński 2014), which can compute the preferability of consonant clusters in currently seven languages including English and Polish. With the help of twelve figures, four of which are screenshots, they explain the underlying principles of this resource and how it can be used by researchers. The following contribution also pays attention to both English and Polish; **Barbara Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk** builds on an earlier study of hers which was published in a previous *Festschrift* dedicated to Fisiak (Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk 2000). It examines a selection of medio-passive and reflexive constructions, first in English and subsequently with regard to corresponding cases in Polish on the basis of material found in the bilingual *Paralela* database; of the 51 illustrative examples from various corpora, sixteen are taken from this resource. The study concludes with the presentation of a canonical event model showing three types of de-transitivisation in both languages.

Alicja Witalisz is more reserved regarding certain functions of current electronic resources, namely in cases where they are used for the automatic identification of loan translations. She lists a number of linguistic and non-linguistic factors that need to be taken into account in this process and gives examples involving several languages. Some problems regarding various terminologies and typologies for loan translations as well as some suggestions for potential further research in this field are also addressed. The final academic study in this volume is by **Aleksander Szwedek**, whose contribution is a slightly altered reprint of an article published in 2017. It focuses on neutral as opposed to other types of stress within a sentence, such as emphatic, and argues that in such cases it is the information value of the noun that is responsible for stress placement: if it contains new information it carries the stress itself, otherwise the stress falls on the last meaningful lexical item within a sentence. In order to substantiate this claim, examples are given from not just English, but also from Polish and German.

Part VI consists solely of a 24-line poem in six stanzas by **Thomas P. Krzeszowski**, which faces a full-page colour photograph of Fisiak wearing an academic gown. It bears the title “*The Fisiak: A Travesty from William Blake*” and is a reprint from an earlier *Festschrift* issued in 2006 in celebration of his 70th birthday, though it is not indicated as such, even if the date of 5 February 2006 is provided. Regrettably, there is no further background information about this little piece, in particular on which of William Blake’s travesties it is based, namely *The Tyger* (1794). Still, it is a wonderful way to end the main text of the volume and demonstrates that Fisiak certainly had a sense of humour. Finally, there are notes on the 28 contributors in alphabetical order, followed by an index.

Generally, one can say that this *Gedenkschrift* is a fitting way to honour the memory of Fisiak. It contains several touching personal recollections as well as a large number of studies from various fields of interest which he would surely have appreciated reading. The only point of criticism that may be raised

concerns the uneven number of contributions within the academic Parts, ranging from merely two in Part IV until no less than eight in Part III. The longer Parts could also have been subdivided, so that articles from closely related areas might be spotted more easily, such as into an Old English and a Middle English section in Part II. But these small quibbles should not distract from the fact that a lot of effort has gone into compiling so many interesting studies for this volume, which is an appropriate means to commemorate the legacy of an academic who will be dearly missed by both friends and colleagues alike.

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