

REVIEW

Mostly medieval: In memory of Jacek Fisiak. By Hans Sauer & Piotr P. Chruszczewski (eds.). Academic Publishing, 2020. Pp. xii + 555.

Reviewed by Michiko Ogura (Professor Emeritus Chiba University)

A handsome, massive volume has been published in memory of Jacek Fisiak, a famous and influential scholar of historical linguistics, chiefly medieval English. The book contains *anything* about Jacek Fisiak and the results of his teachings. In *Acknowledgements and introduction*, the organization of the book is explained: “Part I sketches Jacek Fisiak’s biography and provides a list of his numerous publications, and gives some personal memoirs by his wife, by colleagues and friends; Part II contains articles that deal with Old and Middle English literature; Part III has articles that discuss aspects of the history of English and of historical linguistics; Part IV centers on Medievalism and the rendering of a Shakespeare drama for a production on the contemporary Polish stage; Part V assembles studies dealing with Modern English contrastive studies, and translation studies” (pp. xi–xii), and Part VI is an epilogue. There is an additional explanation about the overlapping of the contributions in Part II and III, but we all understand that literary studies and linguistic approaches cannot be divided clearly in the medieval period. Since the present reviewer’s knowledge is limited, only a few contributions will be introduced in the following.

Part I, 4. “MENTOR in academia: The master in title and reality” by Joanna Esquibel (pp. 54–94) is a throughgoing study of the use of the word “mentor” in contrast with other titles used in the history. Consulting such dictionaries as *OED*, *MED*, *TOE*, *HTOED*, *DOEC*, and many more, the author tries to define “mentor” as well as “teacher”, “master”, “doctor”, “professor”, “scholar”, etc., also referring to Old English *wita*, *ræs* and *ge-beaht* together with compounds, and using glosses so as to show which Latin words had been translated to give influences on the semantic development of “mentor”. This study is quite appropriate for a person like Jacek Fisiak, who was not just a teacher, a professor, or a scholar, but should be called a real “mentor”.

In Part II, Hans Sauer writes on “Medieval multitasking: Hoccleve translates Christine de Pizan and imitates Chaucer, for example his binomials” (pp. 175–202). It seems one of the typical topics for medievalists to compare English, French, and Latin works through translations and translating skills. Two words combined with *and/or* may have various semantic relations like synonymy (e.g., *labour and trauaille*), antonymy (e.g., *bad or good*), and complementarity (e.g., *treewe and iust*), and *MED* definitions with full quotations are helpful for the study of loan words as well as native ones. Frequency (i.e., to be a formulaic set) and word order (i.e., one of the two of a binomial to be put into a rhyming position), and the imitating use of Chaucerian expressions are also investigated. As the author has established his own criteria of defining binomials of nouns, adjectives, and verbs, the Appendix (“Binomials and multinomials in Hoccleve’s *Epistre de Cupide*”) is instructive for other medievalists who study this stylistic feature in other works as well.

In Part III, Peter Trudgill discusses “East Anglia as an Old English and Middle English dialect area” (pp. 294–304). As the author himself says, Old English dialects are traditionally divided into four groups: Northumbrian, Mercian, West Saxon, and Kentish. But when we see the diversity of English dialects historically, we cannot ignore the Norfolk-Suffolk area, even though the written pieces of works were scarce. Through the spelling evidence the author lists some phonetic features which are considered as East Anglian. He properly quotes Fisiak (2001), and this article can be even more noticeable when compared with Brown & Farr (2001).

Articles on Modern English show how Jacek Fisiak have brought up students of historical linguistics and corpus linguistics. Readers of this memorial volume will find how Jacek Fisiak taught students, discussed academic issues with friends and colleagues, and made a considerable contribution to the field of medieval study.

REFERENCES

- Brown, Michelle P. & Carol A. Farr (eds.). 2001. *Mercia: An Anglo-Saxon kingdom in Europe*. Leicester University Press & Continuum.
- Fisiak, Jacek. 2001. Old East Anglian: A problem in Old English dialectology. In Jacek Fisiak & Peter Trudgill (eds.), *East Anglian English*, D. S. Brewer. 18–38.