

David Scott-Macnab. ed. 2019. *A Sporting Lexicon of the Fifteenth Century: The 'J. B. Treatise'*, 2nd ed. (Medium Aevum Monographs 23.) Oxford: The Society for the Study of Medieval Languages and Literature. Pp. xvii + 379. ISBN 9780907570752.

Reviewed by ANDREW BREEZE, University of Navarre

Hearty congratulations on this volume are due to its editor, who teaches at North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa. He takes on one of the knottiest of medieval texts and sorts out its kinks. What he calls the *J. B. Treatise* is a miscellany of tracts (including jests and proverbs and lists of collective nouns) upon varied subjects (such as hunting, heraldry, wine, hounds, the carving of meat). Older authorities called it *The Book of Hawking, Hunting, and Blasing of Arms* or *The Book of St Albans* (where it was first printed in 1486); they further ascribed it to Dame Juliana Berners or Barnes (b. 1388?), Prioress of Sopwell, Hertfordshire. She is the Pope Joan of English Literature. Modern scholars believe that she never existed. (That does not prevent outdated feminists from writing on her even now as a 'pioneer female author'.)

The difficulty of his task was worsened by a second printed version (of 1496), with a treatise on angling added to it, and twenty-two early manuscripts. For the last may be mentioned a witness appearing since the editor published his first edition in 2003. The labour of dealing with variants (as also questions of scribal hands, sources, vocabulary, etymology) was one requiring a scholarly resolution and application of almost heroic proportions.

Dr Scott-Macnab has spent years looking at manuscripts and reference books to produce his edited text and notes upon falconry or heraldry or cooking. His reward is rich. By presenting information on subjects dear to fifteenth-century gentlemen, he offers glimpses of a world that is lost, especially for modern academics, almost none of whom knows anything about (for example) hunting. Much learned nonsense is the result. Here are two examples.

In Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, the expression 'bere the belle' (pp. iii, 198), applied to a debate of high-ranking ladies on the subject of love, is constantly misunderstood by editors. They refer it to sheep, asserting that the lady who speaks best of love resembles a bellwether, a (usually castrated) ram leading the flock and with a bell on its neck. Dr Scott-Macnab makes the correct interpretation clear. It is to a falcon, fastened to a small bell (often elaborate) in case it escaped its owner. Hence his quotation from Fr John Gerard (describing

a perilous mission to Elizabethan England) on the ‘bell tinkling’ of a ‘stray hawk’ as it flew around (p. 104). Scott-Macnab’s reference shows Chaucer’s allusion as one to pre-eminence of a noble falcon or lady (not an ignoble sheep, as Dr Barry Windeatt and others foolishly imagine).

Second, *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Its author had a passion for the chase, even including reference to the ‘brittling’ of a deer, when the slain beast was expertly dismembered by huntsmen. The literary intellectuals who edit the text almost invariably ignore this, making the author out as a monk or cleric or chaplain or Londoner instead of the Cheshire landowner which he (rather obviously) was. He is thus called a ‘cleric’ in ‘minor orders’ in *The Works of the ‘Gawain’ Poet*, ed. Myra Stokes & Ad Putter (London, 2004: xv). Reading *A Sporting Lexicon of the Fifteenth Century* cures one of this delusion. It is from the world of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, one of magnates and gentry who delighted in hunting, its stench and sweatiness notwithstanding.

These are two reasons why Dr Scott-Macnab’s edition is required reading for medievalists. Here are two more. It has miscellaneous lists which linger in the mind and inform us on popular learning, as (for example) with collective nouns: exaltations of larks, unkindnesses of ravens, prides of lions, skulks of foxes, eloquences of lawyers, blasts of hunters. Second, its catalogue of wines includes forms from Continental Europe, many still unidentified. Spaniards will be interested to read (pp. 158–159) of Robedore from Ribadeo (Lugo) or Bilbowe from Bilbao (Vizcaya) or Lepe from Lepe (Huelva); but what were the origins of Cavelence, Cherow, Rennca, Tromyn, Mownterose, Mamorant, Gemerant, Arphax, Cosderam, Cayser? Some of these obscure forms may conceal Spanish toponyms. So here is a job for researchers in Spain or beyond.

Dr Scott-Macnab’s book opens one’s eyes to the English country gentlemen and ladies who have read (sometimes written) much English poetry. With copious material on the food eaten, wine drunk, or jokes cracked after those men and women returned from business or horse and hound, he brings us altogether closer to their world.

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John M. Bowers. 2019. *Tolkien's Lost Chaucer*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Pp. xiv + 258. Hardback. ISBN 9780198842675. 30€.

Reviewed by JORGE L. BUENO ALONSO, University of Vigo

Our dear long-standing Selim member Tom Shippey (2014: 41) stated quite recently that “Tolkien’s conception of his professional role centered, not on criticism and interpretation, but on editing, with translation as a more personal by-product of his editorial work”. However, just by having a look at what Tolkien professionally edited, the number of his works is somewhat reduced and had different outcomes (Shippey 2014: 44). The story of Tolkien’s works has always been one of finished accomplishments and projects sketched on a constant process of revision and rewriting, of discarded notes and manuscripts stored and shelved for future use. Tolkien’s fiction has been enriched with a plethora of posthumous publications, edited mostly —but not only— by his son Christopher Tolkien, whose editorial task in curating and publishing his father’s works has been paramount to understand the complexity and depth of Tolkien’s *Legendarium*.

His non-fiction has also suffered from the same process of posthumous (re)discovery, as a simple gaze at the list of his academic publications well attest (Honegger 2014). Among those who share a combined passion for Tolkien’s works and medieval studies, all his translations and editions for in-class teaching at Oxford have always been something like the Holy Grail of Medieval *Tolkieniana*. His translation of *Beowulf* (Tolkien 2014) was a landmark on this unveiling of supposedly lost or incomplete sources, and other instances such as his expert take on *The Wanderer* or *The Battle of Maldon* —as recently analysed by Stuart D. Lee (2009, forthcoming)— exert a fascination on us Tolkienian medievalists that leave us craving for more, perhaps in the form of a single-volume edition of all his class-notes and scattered translations. Anyone wishing to accomplish this task knows it to be an *enta geweorc* indeed, considering the state of some of these Tolkienian manuscripts (Lee 2014). That is why we were all thrilled when, in the aforementioned study, Tom Shippey (2014: 44) made us aware of the discovery of what has always been considered Tolkien’s most famous abandoned project, the ‘Clarendon Chaucer’:

But while this present volume [Lee’s *Companion*] was in preparation, and thanks to the persistence of John M. Bowers, all Tolkien’s materials for this project have been rediscovered: page proofs corrected by Tolkien, notes by Tolkien, proofs of

Tolkien's glossary and notes on language, and testimonials for the 'Introduction' by Tolkien's co-editor George Gordon.

Five years after Shippey's announcement, Oxford University Press has finally published John M. Bowers' wonderful account of the history of how Tolkien's Clarendon Chaucer never came to be, was almost lost and thought to have been pulped, and was rediscovered in some archival boxes at OUP. All these materials are thoroughly analysed and commented with philological mastery by John M. Bowers in *Tolkien's Lost Chaucer*. Using his own analogy (p. 37), reading this book makes us feel like entering the archives of Minas Tirith to read Isildur's unread scroll on the Ring.<sup>1</sup>

The present volume is very adequately structured in eight sections, plus the customary list of illustrations, abbreviations, works cited, a couple of appendixes, and an index for cross-reference. The first section functions as an introductory chapter —“1. Prologue: Concerning Chaucer”, pp. 1–13—, where the author not only explains the different sections of the book with great clarity but also manages to tell his own personal story in relation to Tolkien in general and this very project in particular. This personal touch is most appreciated by this humble reviewer, as it clearly signals the author's credentials and enthusiasm to develop the project.

The core content as such begins with the next section —“2. Unexpected Journeys”, pp. 13–40—, where Bowers describes with precision the story of what we knew so far about the Clarendon Chaucer since it was first commissioned in the 1920s to its definitive closure by OUP in 1960. A final subsection contained in this chapter, titled (as several other sections), in a very Tolkienian fashion ‘The Shadow of the Past’, describes how these materials for Tolkien's Clarendon Chaucer came to light in 2012 in an Oxford basement. Bowers narrates this moment with a mixture of awe and reverence, shared indeed by the reader, that makes it feel like the written academic version of a YouTube unboxing video for its enthusiastic writing and academic rigour.

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<sup>1</sup> In FR II/2, Gandalf says: “And yet there lie in his hoards many records that few even of the lore-masters now can read, for their scripts and tongues have become dark to later men [...] there lies in Minas Tirith still, unread, I guess, by any save Saruman and myself since the kings failed, a scroll that Isildur made himself”. This well-known episode describes quite well the feeling of finding a lost source or text in an archive, the thrill of reading it as you have the formal qualifications to do it, leaving it at the archives where you found it after the consultation.

Before the found materials are dealt with, the next chapter —“3. Four Chaucerians: Walter W. Skeat, Kenneth Sisam, George S. Gordon, C. S. Lewis”, pp. 41–78— establishes a halt in the analysis by offering a depiction of the four scholars of medieval literature mentioned in the title, as they all played various roles to understand the history of Tolkien’s Clarendon Chaucer, which was meant to be released as *Selections from Chaucer’s Poetry and Prose*. Four independent sections follow devoted to each scholar and his role: Skeat, whose texts from a previous nineteenth-century edition were to be used to save time and money as the basis for the edition, and received severe criticism from Tolkien who wanted to add corrections and emendations; Sisam, Tolkien’s mentor, who commissioned Tolkien the glossary for his own Clarendon *Fourteenth Century Verse and Prose* (1921) and, as a result of this fruitful collaboration,<sup>2</sup> thought about him to have an important editorial role on the Chaucer volume; Gordon, set to be Tolkien’s collaborator in the volume with the task of writing the introductory materials, drafts of which appeared in the Clarendon Chaucer box; and Lewis, an expert medievalist, Chaucerian and long-lasting friend and supporter of Tolkien’s writings academic and fictional, who saw the need for better editions of Chaucerian materials and had for sure many conversations on the matter that infused Tolkien with eagerness.

The next section —“4. Tolkien as Editor: Text and Glossary”, pp. 79–104— begins with a very clear caveat (p. 79):

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<sup>2</sup> This *Middle English Vocabulary* Tolkien made for Sisam’s volume not only inspired Sisam’s confidence in him for future endeavors but also gave him access to Middle English Texts that were capital for Tolkien’s *Legendarium*. As Bowers (p. 55) indicates: “Glossary-making for *Verse and Prose* set the agenda for much of Tolkien’s later work starting with *Gawain* and gave him close knowledge of the Breton lay *Sir Orfeo* which served as his chief source for medieval fairy lore. Like the Wood-elves in *The Hobbit*, these fairies ventured into the forest but lived deep inside a mountain realm; like Bilbo reciting poetry for Lord Elrond’s court, Sir Orfeo performed songs for the Fairy King’s court. This indebtedness was typical of Tolkien’s imaginative economy. He wasted little. What he learned while glossing pieces for Sisam’s anthology—even from the short song *The Maid of the Moor*— would find their ways into his fantasy novels. The same would be true for his own editorial work on Chaucer”. One of the great merits of Bowers’ volume is that it is filled with references to the influence these medieval works exerted on his fiction.

As a study of editorial practices and lexicography, this chapter might be brain-numbingly dull for general readers, even for today's Chaucer specialists no longer routinely trained in textual criticism and historical linguistics,<sup>3</sup> if not for the fact that it allows us to watch Tolkien in his role as a scholar and catch glimpses of the future author of *The Lord of the Rings*.

Bowers is perhaps judging himself rather severely. The section delivers what it promises, a deep study of the text and glossary materials found in the box, but with a clear and amusing style. It is not an easy task to read over these materials, but Bowers manages to explain the content quite clearly (p. 81):

The mystery of the grey box begins to unfold. Tolkien used Proof 1, Copy 1 as his working copy and kept it for future reference. He transferred his edits to Copy 2 before sending it to Gordon and thence to Sisam. Proof 2, Copies 1 and 2 were sent to Tolkien who used both of them for recording minor changes. Proof 2, Copy 3 shows no tinkering by Tolkien and seems never to have been in his possession—which tallies with his letter to Davin.

After this, Bowers describes and analyses with great detail all those sets of galleys, proofs and copies and the glossary, by paying close attention to the editorial debates and lexicographical decisions Tolkien posed, his heavy corrections of Skeat's punctuation, editorial decisions and glossing—which sometimes, as in the case of the word 'aventure' (p. 99), led to wonderful reflections on Tolkien's themes and ideas influencing his fiction—, and his approach to glossary compilation.

The following section—"5. The Chaucerian Incubus: The Notes", pp. 105–186—is perhaps one of the most revealing in the book and reminds the reader of the commentary section of Tolkien's *Beowulf* (2014). Here Bowers revises the 160-page commentary Tolkien was instructed to shorten and was not able to do

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<sup>3</sup> This statement really constitutes a very sad truth in the academia of our times, where syllabi are reduced, subjects are cut to almost nothing, and whole sections on philological studies just vanish without a trace. Where they still survive medieval subjects do so in a very introductory and reduced way, no longer offering the degree of (post) graduate training in reading Old English and Middle English needed for textual criticism and analysis. To have a closer picture at what happened in the Spanish academia concerning Medieval Studies, readers can consult Bueno (2011). Though that piece covered the situation up to 2011, I am afraid that things have not improved in this last decade and that analysis and reflection is still valid.

so. Thanks to this impossibility, these notes, as Bowers states most correctly (p. 105), “have considerable value for revealing the range of [Tolkien’s] linguistic, historical and aesthetic engagements with Chaucer”. After explaining the state of the notes and his methodological approach to revise them (pp. 105–109), Bowers proceeds to describe in detail these wonderful mini-lectures in separate sections for the Chaucerian texts annotated: *The Romaunt of the Rose* (pp. 109–116), *Complainte unto Pité* (pp. 116–120), *The Book of the Duchess* (pp. 120–124), *The Parlement of Foules* (pp. 124–129), *The Former Age* (pp. 129–134), *Merciles Beauté* (pp. 134–135), *To Rosemounde* (p. 135), *Truth* (pp. 135–136), *Gentillesse* (pp. 136–137), *Lak of Stedfastnesse* (pp. 138–139), *Complaint to his Empty Purse* (pp. 139–143), *Boethius De Consolatione Philosophiae* (pp. 143–148), the Prologue to *The Legend of Good Women* (pp. 148–154), *The Legend of Cleopatra* (pp. 154–160), *The Astrolabe* (pp. 161–163), and the Prologue to *The Canterbury Tales* (pp. 163–186). The materials from the box end here, with just nine pages of notes on *The Reeve’s Tale*. It is precisely this issue what Bowers deals with in the next chapter of his volume (p. 186): “[Tolkien’s] faltering engagements with *The Reeve’s Tale* [which] elicited important responses from Tolkien as scholar and storyteller over the next two decades”.

Exploring those faltering engagements is the aim of this section —“6. Tolkien as a Chaucerian: *The Reeve’s Tale*”, pp. 187–222—, which begins with the thorough revision of those nine pages of notes (*The Reeve’s Tale* in the Clarendon Chaucer’, pp. 188–195) and the many editorial corrections and emendations he made on Skeat’s text, especially regarding dialectal issues. Precisely those issues on dialectology constitute the core of the next subsection (*Chaucer as a Philologist, The Reeve’s Tale*’, pp. 195–207), which draws on Tolkien’s famous 1934 [2008] paper of the same title; Bowers especially highlights the importance the paper had for Chaucerian criticism on language and Tolkien’s painstaking attempts at reconstructing an edition of the tale that signals dialectal marks, giving some instances of Tolkien’s restored text as compared with Skeat’s. Something similar takes place in the next subsection (*Oxford Summer Diversions 1939*’, pp. 207–216), which describes in detail Tolkien’s edited text of *The Reeve’s Tale* that was handed in during Tolkien’s performance of the tale in the summer festival that gives name to this subsection.<sup>4</sup> Though this text was already known, Bowers states quite surprisingly how this edition shows Tolkien’s constant process of reworking and

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<sup>4</sup> The programme and the text were reprinted in *Tolkien Studies* (2008), but these editorial issues were not mentioned.

correcting, as there are several differences between this *Reeve's Tale* and the one from 1934. How the tale remained central to Tolkien's attention and how it influenced his fiction is the core of the final subsection ('Flotsam and Jetsam', pp. 216–221). Bowers explains this fact quite convincingly with a load of textual evidence as he demonstrates how "Tolkien set about transforming Chaucer's story of two students fist-fighting in a bedroom to the far more heroic vision of two hobbits joining with the Entish army in an assault upon Isengard" (p. 217). A fascinating chapter indeed.

Next section follows the ending of the previous one —"7. Chaucer in Middle-earth", pp. 223–268—, as it goes deeper into the Chaucerian elements influencing Tolkien's world. Bowers states that "if readers have not previously detected *Troilus* and the *Canterbury Tales* in Tolkien's Middle-earth, it is because nobody was alert for noticing these ingredients" (p. 226). The whole chapter aims at correcting this by revising such influence in four richly documented subsections that range from the general biographic and thematic perspective ('Chaucer and Tolkien: Affinities', pp. 226–242, and 'Chaucer in the Soup', pp. 242–249) to the specific usage of given sources ('The Wife of Bath's Tale', pp. 249–254, and 'The Pardoner's Tale', pp. 254–267).

In a previous study, Bowers (2007) proposed Chaucer's son Thomas as the person responsible for posthumous publication of his father's unfinished *Canterbury Tales*, much as Christopher Tolkien took charge of his father's *Silmarillion* (p. 12). Bowers signals how "[both] authors had sons who served as literary executors sorting through their literary remains and overseeing posthumous publications" (p. 269) and traces in the final chapter of his study —"8. Coda: Fathers and Sons", pp. 269–278— how this pure coincidence in their biographies provides a fitting ending for the book. Bowers shows how Christopher's early philological work represented a warm-up exercise for future endeavours.

The book includes two appendixes that contain Tolkien's draft preface to his Notes (Appendix I, 'An Introduction on Language', pp. 279–282) and his description of Glossary contents (Appendix II, pp. 283–284). The complete list of works cited and the index close the volume (pp. 285–310).

When Tom Shippey announced Bower's discoveries, he then said (2014: 44) that "[m]uch of this material will no doubt eventually be published, but it will now inevitably function as a coda to Tolkien studies, not, as intended, a stimulus to Chaucer studies". After reading *Tolkien's Lost Chaucer* the reader has the overwhelming impression that this extraordinary volume will serve both fields of study alike. In the humble opinion of this reviewer, Bowers' book is not only



the best one of the year on Tolkienian matters<sup>5</sup> but it is also one of the best on Chaucer.<sup>6</sup> By combining both subjects Bowers has written one of the best volumes of the decade, especially for us medievalists who, as the author himself stated, are “potentially Tolkien’s best-equipped readers” (p. 9).

When Bower started his description of Tolkien’s work on *The Reeve’s Tale* (pp. 187–188) he stated that:

Tolkien had lamented in his 1927 *Year’s Work in English* that editors could only go so far in reconstructing a past poet’s original achievement: ‘It is of the nature of things that the skeleton lasts longest. Palaeontology rescues rather bones than flesh, it give us little information concerning the cry of the tyrannosaurus; the history of language recovers for us many word-forms whose full richness of tones and of meanings escapes us—it can hardly hope to drag back much of the syntax and the idiom of the lost past’. Unable as a philologist to give full voice to the lost past in deeds as well as words, Tolkien would seek this recovery in his fantasy writings.

Whether you are interested in Chaucer, Tolkien, Philology, or Literature, this book will serve you well. John M. Bowers’ monumental book demands from the reader a cross-disciplinary approach that exemplifies excellently well how in Tolkien studies any serious analysis requires elements from the different fields that build medieval studies as a discipline. If Tolkien himself did not separate his fiction from his academic work, we should follow his example and consider his works as a wonderful single but multifarious entity. Bowers has done so in this excellent volume.

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<sup>5</sup> In fact, Bowers was nominated for the Tolkien Society Awards 2020 in the category of Best Book, together with Cilli (2019) and Brennan Croft & Röttinger (2019). It was Cilli’s book the one that eventually won the prize. I still consider Bowers’ the best book of 2019, though, and I voted for him in consequence. To advance the list, I have no doubt that John Garth’s (2020) recent volume will be the best of this bizarre and pandemic 2020. Stuart D. Lee is currently writing a review due to appear in *Selima* 26 (2021).

<sup>6</sup> There is no discussion in considering Marion Turner’s (2019) impressive new take on Chaucer’s life the best book on Chaucer written last year. It will surely be one of the decade’s Chaucerian best volumes too.

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Rodrigo Pérez Lorigo. 2019. *Coordinación y Elipsis en Inglés Antiguo*. Oviedo: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Oviedo. Pp. 211. ISBN 9788416343812. 15.38€.

Reviewed by MARÍA JOSÉ ESTEVE RAMOS, Universitat Jaume I

Old English syntax is a deeply specialized field of research. Considering the studies of Mitchell (1964) or Allen (1980) and the more recent work by Taylor & Pintzuk (2014, 2015, 2018) or Pérez-Lorigo himself (2009), the study of Old English coordination and ellipsis has been the subject of different controversies. This publication is a product which reflects the outstanding long contribution of the author to the field of Old English syntax.

The structure of the book is deployed in six chapters. The main objective is to study the interaction of syntax, pragmatics, and mind processing in the study of order in Old English. It is fair to say that all the concepts are developed with great clarity and the accurate and wise handling of the examples makes it easy to follow, even when the subject gets deep into complex theoretical issues.

This present work aims at representing a step forward, challenging the traditional hypothesis dealing with the structural complexity of the Old English language, in which problems of language processing are considered the trigger of the Split Coordination structure. Data gathered in this analysis shows that communicative and pragmatic factors are more decisive in order to explain the Split Coordination in Old English than the structural complexity itself. Another conclusion is that style is a paramount factor affecting Split Coordination. Aspects such as authorship, genre, or literary style will show a direct impact in the use of this structure in the examples and data conducted hereby. This result seems to contradict traditional claims by authors such as Mitchell & Robinson (1964), which agree to the idea that Split Coordination is basically a structural, linguistic fact.

As we continue with the Introduction, the author makes a very intensive and thorough review about the state of the art related to the subject, as expected. Old English syntax has been studied following two different assumptions: the first is that it has structural and syntactic restrictions, and the second that it has a more pragmatic orientation controlled by communicative factors. Following the first assumption, an interesting debate related to the SOV-SVO order is explained. An interesting question that arises is related to the double-base hypothesis in which the two competing structures SOV-SVO would appear in the base of the language. Also, and together with the position of the

constituents, heaviness becomes another central aspect, as it is directly related to the structural complexity in the Old English word order. Although this will be developed further in Chapter 4, a brief introduction concerning the debate around these complex structures is introduced. This discussion will be central to the author, showing a real interest and painstaking work carried out with the data to demonstrate the main conclusions that can be read in Chapter 6. Following with the processing of heavy structures, the main idea is that these—especially those with heavy objects in preverbal position—could have been difficult to process, deriving in a series of adjustments—mainly by pushing the constituents to the right—that led to the change OV to VO in Middle English. One of the linguistic phenomena considered, ellipsis, could be fundamental to provide some relevant keys in order to better understand the grammatical nature of Old English. The potential of ellipsis as a method of diagnosis will help to establish new evidence about unsolved matters. Prof. Pérez-Lorido gives a very thorough state of the art in this section and writes that one of the major problems found in the revised literature is that studies are based mostly on theoretical reflections, which show little support on quantitative analysis and very limited corpora.

Gapping has been thoroughly studied from the varied linguistic perspectives (specially the generativist) and many of the discussions around this phenomenon are directly applicable to Old English. In this section, the author explores the idea that Old English speakers had a great capacity of memory storage in order to process the syntactic constituents presented in complex structures. This could allow them to store items (verbs in this case) with all the vivid lexical storage in their memory, so as to “download” the necessary ones when the communicative situation may demand them. The only requisite before activating them in the memory would be that these items should appear in the precedent discourse. An important aspect related to this idea is that this memory storage would be cumulative, in such a way that not only the verbal nucleus may be stored, but all the predicate elements of the first cluster would be recoverable at any time in the second part. This would not impede that other permitted elements may also appear in the second part with the objective of adding some relevant information. All this reflects the high capacity of processing and storing in the memory by the Old English speakers, something that had been systematically denied in the literature on Old English syntax. This idea is going to be fully developed in Chapters 4 and 5. The last part of the Introduction is the longest, providing an abundance of examples which is a highlight to the chapter.

Chapter 2 deals in depth with the theoretical framework. Generativism is probably the theoretical school that has better studied the processes of coordination and ellipsis. However, in this work the author uses an eclectic approach to have a broader perspective of the linguistic phenomena under study. In this chapter, we also find an introductory description of the corpus — comprising more than 530,000 words— and of the challenges of its compilation. Among those, when examples proved to be a challenge or difficult to interpret, the provided solution was to have them revised in the original copy (in case of translations), or also crossed comparison in the different manuscripts had to be undertaken. A theoretical model assumed by the author is the integrative model by Newmeyer (1998), which places linguistics within a neuro-psychological theory of the mind-brain, in which syntax and pragmatics interact within a system ruled by the general cognitive capacities. The fundamental objective of this work is therefore to study the interaction of the different modules of language in the Old English word order, stemming from data provided by coordination and elision. This aims at contributing to the debate about the underlying order of Old English, SVO, SOV, or both, from a new perspective. The work also aims at precisely defining the contexts of application of gapping and Split Coordination in Old English. Further, it aims at setting a division between early Old English and late Old English from a syntactic perspective. Finally, the work also contributes to bringing up evidence on the importance of authorship and the different genres and text types on the Old English syntax production. Concerning methodology, this chapter discusses different issues. The lack of living informants is one of them, as it is for any study involving historical texts. In order to accomplish this, the author will resort to the study of frequencies. Studying frequencies of a specific construction is considered hereby a good method of control in the acceptance of such structure, more so if the statistical treatment is based on a wide, representative, and varied corpus of texts of the language under study. Another important strategy is the comparative method. It is common to establish comparisons with other Germanic languages from the continent, such as Dutch and German, with which Old English is genetically related and with which it shares evident features. This comparison is undertaken in Chapter 4, after the comparison between Old and contemporary English being studied in Chapter 3. Also, the texts used for the study have been compared to their Latin counterparts and with the different versions of the same manuscript. Some other methodological problems may be related to punctuation. It was generally agreed that punctuation had a rhetorical function, but studies such as conducted by Calle-

Martín & Miranda-García (2005) have shown that a certain connection can be found between the syntactic order of some types of clauses and the punctuation marks used by the scribe of the Anglo-Saxon prose of the eleventh century.

Having revised the theoretical trends involved in the study, the author devotes a part of this chapter to reviewing the existing electronic corpora. These corpora are tagged, such as the *Brooklyn-Geneva-Amsterdam-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English* or the *York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose*. After describing them briefly, it is important to point out that the existing corpora were not appropriate for this type of study, nor were they available at the beginning of this investigation. In this way, the option selected was the manual search of information and examples based on existing editions. The corpus is formed by nine works in prose, copies or manuscript originals covering a time span that runs from the end of the ninth century to the beginning of the twelve century, also dividing the period into two, early (until the year 1000) and late Old English. Among those texts we find Wulfstan's *Homilies* or Ælfric's *Lives of Saints*, representing a variety of genres and text types. The selected material covers narrative, descriptive, and argumentative texts and also encompasses an appropriate diachronic time span. As to the date selected for the timeline of the texts, the author has rightfully considered the date of the available copy. This does not undermine —according to many experts— the significance of the examples thereof obtained, in relation to the validity of the linguistic structures. In the case of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, it has a special status as it is rightly considered a complex text; in fact, as the author states, “a multiple text”, a text which is the result of the sum of many texts.

Another interesting debate which is included in this section is if Old English syntax in texts which are copied from Latin is affected by the original, and therefore “contaminated” by Latin structures. It seems that there is consensus —says the author— that the majority of translations from Latin do not represent transliterations of the original, but that the translators copied the original with a good degree of freedom, producing original structures and going away from verbatim translations. Having reached this point, I do coincide with Prof. Pérez-Lorido in the estimation that the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is a crucial text in the corpus, and that the language reflected in this specific text, far from having any stylistic pretensions, would be very much reflecting real use of Old English syntactic structures.

We move to Chapter 3, where gapping is the main topic. This structure is generally characterised by the no-realization of the lexical part of the verb in coordinated structures with identical verbs. In this chapter the author examines

the phenomenon of gapping in contemporary English. Here we find reviews all the different studies that have tackled this issue, which started at/in the end of the 60s and the 70s. This section refers to those elliptical constructions of the corpus where the basic principle of Coordinate Structure Constraint of Schachter is not fulfilled. Gapping has generally been considered as a rule of orational scope but, after an extensive analysis based on examples extracted from the corpus, the author concludes that in Old English gapping may not be open to the same restrictions on adjacency that operate in contemporary English, behaving more as an anaphoric process. This fact points to —from the author's point of view— its pragmatic nature.

In the corpus gathered for this study, sixty-three out of the 258 examples of gapping (24.4%) correspond to the type defined as pragmatically controlled, in two cases: because they present ellipsis in coordinated non-adjacent structures, or in both, which is remarkable. This percentage is found in texts with a simple narrative style: the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and *Orosius*.

If Chapter 3 analyses contemporary English examples, in Chapter 4 we find an analysis of word order taking as a basis the Directionality Constraint by John R. Ross and comparing data from Old English with other occidental Germanic languages such as German or modern Dutch. We know that gapping operated forward and backward and the chapter discusses evidence from the corpus. From a diachronic point of view, percentages of presence of the verb in final position decrease when we pass from early Old English as in *Bede*, *Orosius*, *Boethius*, *Cura Pastoralis*, and *Parker Chronicle* with a 28.1 per cent, to late Old English, as in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, *Ælfric*, and Wulfstan's *Homilies* with a 10.5 per cent. The SVO pattern gives the results of a 71.8 per cent in early Old English switching to an 89.4 per cent in late Old English. These numbers coincide with other recent studies about the change SOV-SVO in English and suggest that there is a clear shift from SOV to SVO already within the Old English period.

Chapter 5 is devoted to Split Coordination, defined as a structure in which the first and second conjuncts of a coordinated sequence are separated by non-related material. This construction is one of the most characteristic of the syntax of Old English. Among other questions, this chapter studies heaviness and two associated concepts: length and complexity. The heavy subjects abound in the corpus and the author considers that the position of the structures may be relevant when interpreting emphasis. Heavy structures at the end are more emphatic. Another issue discussed in this section is the nature of the afterthought. Some works are highlighted, as the one carried out by Acuña-Fariña (1996), which emphasizes the pragmatic nature of the right-dislocation

phenomena, in which the afterthought is included. The majority of authors consider the afterthought as a process that goes beyond syntax, and which role or function is to complement, clarify, or add something to what has already been said in the sentence.

Among the different conclusions of the corpus examples and their analysis reached by the author, it can be said that the phenomenon of Split Coordination is very much conditioned by the style, at least as far as subjects is concerned. Split Coordination does not seem to essentially depend on the conditions about the structural size of the constituents, given that the data of the corpus show that sometimes light coordinated subjects are split and, on the contrary, long and heavy subjects remain together. The discursive relevance and the semantics of the elements involved in the coordination of the subjects in Old English seems to have much more importance in this process than the size of it. In this sense, the author says to have confirmed that Split Coordination of the subject in Old English was used consistently as a mechanism of organization of the discourse, allowing a hierarchy of the elements in communication, more important to the left, less important to the right. This is demonstrated by the distribution and relative incidence of this phenomenon in the different types of text in the corpus: in the narrative and analytical texts in the corpus, in which more clear and precise specification and sequencing of the participants in the action is needed. In these contexts, the presence of the split subjects is much higher.

The last chapter summarizes the general conclusions and begins with a reminder of the primary objective: the study of the interaction of syntax, pragmatics, and processing in the Old English word order.

These conclusions conform a radical revision of the concepts that had been handled until now in the analysis of Split Coordination in Old English. The author firmly states that Split Coordination is strongly conditioned by style. Questions such as authorship, genre, and literary style influence decisively in its occurrence. Heaviness does not play a relevant role in the generation of Split Coordination structures in Old English. We have already mentioned that coordinated and non-coordinated split subjects have approximately the same average in length. Also due to the fact that very light subjects quite often are split and, on the contrary, very complex subjects tend not to split very often. The author attempts to show that the split subject was used in Old English as a conscious mechanism of foregrounding and of organization of the discourse, allowing a hierarchic disposition of the elements in the communicative flux, which were disposed as more relevant (to the left) or less relevant (to the right).



This has a clear parallelism in the types of texts in the corpus: in the more analytical and narrative texts, in which it is necessary to clearly specify who are the participants of the action and place the facts in time more precisely, the incidence of Split Coordination of the subject is much higher than in the rest of the works in the corpus. As for the diachronic evolution, the author claims to have found clear percentual differences between early Old English and late Old English in the study of most of the processes considered in this research, which suggests a process of change in progress. In this sense, the presence of gapping pragmatically controlled shows higher evidence in early Old English (58.7%) than in late Old English (41.2%)

As already mentioned, the study of the corpus in the book shows that style, genre, and authorship may be determining factors in the generation of some syntactic structures in Old English and, therefore, these variables must necessarily be considered when making any statement about Old English syntax. As to the influence of Latin in the generation of these structures, the study and results from the corpus reinforce the theory that, in general, translations of Latin texts into Old English did not copy the syntactic structures of the original. The author concludes that the data obtained in this work reinforce the validity of ellipsis as a tool of linguistic diagnosis and its importance when verifying the different hypothesis about the nature of the languages, being either syntactic or pragmatic. This validates the primary objective of the book. This revision of Old English coordination and ellipsis structures is a very welcome contribution as it is rigorous, well-structured, and based on a good selection of Old English key texts, providing a balanced proportion between theory and practical examples.

This work is a must-read for all those interested in Old English syntax and linguistics in general. I am certain it will be a landmark for further academic publications on this subject, where Prof. Pérez-Lorido has excelled. He has provided the academic community with a rigorous work that we hope will encourage future historical linguists to pursue new endeavours.

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Dimitra Fimi & Thomas Honegger. eds. 2019. *Sub-creating Arda: World-Building in J. R. R. Tolkien's World, its Precursors, and its Legacies*. Zurich & Jena: Walking Tree Publishers. Pp. 401. ISBN 9783905703405. £40.

Reviewed by ADRIANA TABOADA GONZÁLEZ, University of Vigo

In a time in which streaming platforms seem to have the need to adapt every fantasy book ever written, the eternal question of how an author is able to (sub)create such worlds and the interest in the process behind those creations are becoming even more relevant amongst the general audience. This has opened up a space both for academics and people outside academia to explore the often-forgotten field of fantastic literature from new perspectives that diverge from those more traditional ones which would almost exclusively consider fantasy as

a children-only kind of literature. One of the authors whose work never ceases to enchant old and new readers is J. R. R. Tolkien, who keeps awakening their thirst for knowing everything that has to do with the creative process—or with anything they find relevant in the stories—thus allowing researchers to exploit the never-ending goldmine that the Tolkien Studies have become.

This, however, comes with a risk: there is a very fine line between works directed to the general audience and those directed to academics, the boundaries between which are getting narrower every day in fields such as that of fantastic literature. Researchers of the Tolkeniana, for instance, often find themselves navigating the dichotomy between work and pleasure through the Tolkien Societies around the globe and the events they organize to commemorate the author. These societies and events are a good chance for young scholars to make their debut presenting their works before a keen audience in a more relaxed atmosphere; on the other hand, they might work as a double-edged sword, for the majority of their members are interested in the author and his books merely as a hobby. A good example of this double-edge is the Oxonmoot, an event in which a programme of talks and papers, “some serious, others less so”,<sup>7</sup> take place at the very same time as craft rooms and workshops where one can learn how to make their own dwarf beard, among other skills.

For the last twenty-three years, Walking Tree Publishers have been offering their readers a Tolkien-based collection, Cormarë series, which counts to date with forty-four books covering different aspects of the author’s work, such as the role of music in the creation of Arda, its connections with religion, or its representation of Nature. The volume reviewed in these pages fits in this series as an analysis of the very basis of every invented world, that is, how it comes to *live*, using Tolkien’s world as a liaison between the more general aspects of sub-creation and world-building, and some specific examples outside of the Tolkenian sphere—indeed, Fimi & Honegger divide the twenty essays that comprise this volume into three “large categories” (theoretical aspects, Tolkien’s work, and other authors), even though the said division is only made explicit throughout their introduction (p. ii). Having included a second difference, this time regarding the board of advisors (“academic advisors” and “general readers”), the book seems to be another example of the already mentioned paradox that makes one wonder who the target audience might be between those very different groups, represented also in the list of contributors, that ranges from well-known scholars in the field (John Garth, Tom Shippey) to young

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<sup>7</sup> Personal communication with The Tolkien Society by email, 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020.

researchers and other writers whose careers are in principle far from the Tolkien studies. It goes without saying that belonging to any of these circles should not and does not have any implications over the quality of their work, but it does help blur the aforementioned line between them, especially when it comes to addressing the target readers.

As it can be foreseen through the title, *sub-creation* and *world-building* are the two main concepts that will shape the narrative of the volume, however similar or dissimilar each author considers them to be. For the editors, the former is directly related to the art of “creating a ‘Secondary World’ [...] as a natural artistic imitation of God’s demiurgic act in creating our Primary World” (p. i), while the latter focuses on the “harmony between the laws by which the new world has begun to exist”, as quoted from MacDonald’s “The Fantastic Imagination” (pp. 314–315). Considering Wolf’s *Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation* as a key piece of work in the field for the importance it gives to the “often paratextual” elements of world-building that go beyond the narrative (p. ii) —and not without a reason, for all the papers from the first category and most papers of the volume reference Wolf’s work— Fimi & Honegger give what they call the “pride of place for the opening paper” to Mark Wolf (“Concerning the “Sub” in “Subcreation”: The Act of Creating Under”, pp. 1–15), an essay that sets the general theoretical background for the rest of the compilation (p. ii).

Following Wolf’s path, although narrowing it down to Tolkien’s works and specific techniques, the next four essays set what can be considered as a second theoretical background of the book, each in its own way. Turner (“One Pair of Eyes: Focalisation and Worldbuilding”, pp. 17–29) and Brierly’s (“Worldbuilding Design Patterns in the Works of J. R. R. Tolkien”, pp. 93–116) contributions deal with two specific techniques of world-building: focalisation and design patterns. Turner provides a rather interesting analysis of the implications of focalisation as a “literary technique in the creation of a credible world that is unfamiliar” not only through *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of the Rings* but also in two historical novels by Sir Walter Scott, *Waverly* and *Rob Roy* (p. 28). The use of language and point of view of each character make it possible for the reader to place themselves in the Secondary World without much effort, what makes this resource fundamental for any narrative. On the other hand, Izzo (“Worldbuilding and Mythopoeia in Tolkien and post-Tolkienian Fantasy Literature”, pp. 31–55) and Makai (“Beyond Fantastic Self-indulgence: Aesthetic Limits to World-building”, pp. 57–92) stay in the more general picture of world-building and sub-creation, the former being the

one that serves as a bridge between Wolf's work and the rest, for he goes into more detail about Tolkien's own ways for both concepts, which for Izzo has managed to balance, and gives a rather exhaustive list of examples of post Tolkienian fantasy authors that fail to do the same.

One of the things that might impress the general audience about Tolkien is the number of biographical studies that have been published (Hammond & Scull 2000, Carpenter 2002, Garth 2004, McIlwaine 2018), including a detailed chronology by Scull & Hammond (2006) and a non-authorized biopic (Karukoski 2019). It should therefore not come as a surprise that one of the most remarkable essays of this volume is Garth's study of the role of music in Tolkien's Creation Myth ("Ilu's Music: The Creation of Tolkien's Creation Myth", pp. 117–151) and the debate he opens about the dates in which Arda was created for the first time, which was long believed to have been by the end of the First World War and instead he now argues it might have been created in 1917, since a new source of inspiration for *The Music of the Ainur* was found by "a very particular person with a very particular set of interests", Peter Gilliver (p. 129). The said source is *The Company of Heaven*, by Benjamin Britten's, in which the singing is "interspersed with spoken readings" in which, for instance, some paragraphs read almost exactly the same as Tolkien's work, what led Gilliver to think the author might have been working on a rewriting of the creation myth, the same way he had done with the story of Kullervo (p. 129).

The other compelling study of this category is Hausmann's "Lyrics on Lost Lands: Constructing Lost Places through Poetry in J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*" (pp. 261–284), in which she analyses the depth which poems can infuse to world-building using as an example three poems that mention the lost lands. These texts talk about a past history of Arda, which is new information not only for the readers but also for most of the characters in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, since "except for the Itsari and some of the High-Elves [...] they lack prior knowledge or even personal memory of these places" (p. 267). Moreover, these poems are far from mere decorations, since in them there is a new process of sub-creation, not by the poets but by the audiences, who create their own images of the lost lands based on the words of the few characters that actually hold memories about them (p. 268). This idea of the way in which references to the past of Arda help the readers, and even Tolkien, "connect the dots" (p. 179) within the history of Middle-earth is also explored in Vink's "Tolkien the Tinkerer: World-building versus Story-telling" (pp. 177–197).

The last essay that completes this second section is the one by Lothmann, Heilman & Hintzen, “*Then Smaug Spoke: On Constructing the Fantastic via Dialogue in Tolkien’s Story Cosmos*” (pp. 313–334), where they analyse the decisive role dialogues have in the world-building process not only in Tolkien’s works but in fantasy and fictional literature in general, classifying them into four types (bantering, personalising, story-propelling, and historizing), and ending in a rather positive note with expectations to continue their study by incorporating experimental methods such as eye-tracking to analyze the “different sets of reading behaviour” for each of the four dialogue types.

Within the third category readers can find a comparison of various authors, such as the Bröntes (Mann, “Artefacts and Immersion in the Worldbuilding of Tolkien and the Brontës”, pp. 335–358) or Swanwick (Shippey, “The Fäerie World of Michael Swanwick”, pp. 415–429) with Tolkien’s work. Higgins’s analysis of paratextual texts in Austin Tappan Wright, Ursula K. Le Guin, and Tolkien (“More than Narrative: The Role of Paratexts in the World-building of Austin Tappan Wright, J. R. R. Tolkien and Ursula K. Le Guin”, pp. 395–413) is the perfect practical example of the theoretical background provided in the first section; in it, Higgins studies the different ways in which the three authors elaborate their own worlds through the use not only of maps and appendices but also of invented languages, therefore creating worlds that “readers wanted to both visit and explore”, serving as a mediator between author and reader (p. 410). Larsen’s and Neubauer’s articles (“A Mythology for Poland: Andrzej Sapkowski’s *Witcher* Fantasy Series as a Tolkienian Subcreation”, pp. 371–394, and “Absence of gods vs. Absence of God: The Spiritual Landscapes of J. R. R. Tolkien’s Middle-earth and George R. R. Martin’s Westeros”, pp. 431–464, respectively) explore the worlds of the *Witcher*, by Andrzej Sapkowski, and *Game of Thrones*, by George R. R. Martin, two worlds than have been taken to the screens, the first one first as a videogame and recently as a Netflix adaptation of both the books and games, and the second one mainly as HBO’s goose that—used to—lay the golden eggs. If Larsen’s interest lies in a broader topic, namely if Sapkowski succeeded in creating a mythology for Poland, Neubauer tackles a more specific subject, comparing the way in which Tolkien and Martin reflect—or not—their Catholic background throughout the representation of different deities in their works.

One of the aims the editors claimed for this volume was to “illuminate hitherto neglected aspects of [Tolkien’s] sub-creation” (p. ii) and themes such as the application of an etnotopographic analysis to the peoples of Middle-earth, studied by Williams in “Mountain People in Middle-earth: Ecology and the

Primitive” (pp. 285–311), the way in which water shapes the narrative in Arda as described by Auer in “Sundering Seas and Watchers in the Water: Water as a Subversive Element in Middle-earth” (pp. 237–259), and Nagy’s new perspective of the use, or better put, and contrary to what most people might initially think of Middle-earth, *no-use* of magic in Tolkien (“On No Magic in Tolkien: Resisting the Representational Criteria of Realism”, pp. 153–175) certainly help to make of this volume a fine collection of original essays that offer new approaches to the field of Tolkien Studies. However, the inclusion of certain aspects such as how the author thought of his stories as dynamic (Nauman, “Composition as Exploration: Fictional Development in J. R. R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*”, pp. 199–216), the use of maps as key elements for the narration and creation of his texts (explained in previous works regarding Tolkien’s illustrative skills, such as in McIlwaine 2018 or Hammond & Scull 2000 [1995] and taken up by Behrooz in this volume in “Temporal Topographies: Mapping the Geological and Anthropological Effects of Time in J. R. R. Tolkien’s *Legendarium*”, pp. 217–236), or the enumeration of authors that may or may not have influenced Tolkien (Eden, “Sub-creation by any Other Name: The Artist and God in the Early Twentieth Century”, pp. 359–369), without really diving a bit deeper into those unquestionably engaging topics, makes one wonder yet again to what side has that fine line been crossed. Maybe the inclusion of works differing from the mainstream and providing examples of the presumable flaws (if any) within Tolkien’s sub-creation would have made this volume a more complete collection.

This volume has proven to be a great inviting reading for those less familiarized not with Tolkien’s works but with the bibliography about them, at the same time as including a few hidden gems that will make the wonders of those more experienced in the field. Finally, the inclusion of young researchers in the list of contributors gives, without a hint of doubt, a very much needed breeze of fresh air into the Tolkien Studies.

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Geoff Wilson. 2019. *Robin Hood – The New Evidence*. London: Austin Macauley Publishers Ltd. Pp. 236. ISBN 9781788484466.

Reviewed by JULIO RUBÉN VALDÉS MIYARES, University of Oviedo

Here is a rare volume among the many written about the most celebrated English outlaw in the course of time. Its author, a civil engineer by profession, adopts an unscholarly, down-to-earth approach that one might imagine closer to the mentality of Robin Hood himself, and quite removed from the historical and literary academia. This very English sort of empiricism is also more akin to a common-sense scientific view of the subject than the humanities usually are; and, most importantly, informed by the first-hand knowledge of someone who not just grew up watching Robin Hood movies (p. 11), like many generations have now been, but who, like Robin Hood, “in Barnsdale stood” literally, since the author’s own home and office has “a wide view over Barnsdale” (p. 13), the wooded area which, as his book amply demonstrates, was the hero’s abode and original setting of most of his activities, rather than Sherwood Forest.



The monograph consists of seven chapters plus ancient maps and a lavish collection of photographs of the locations and buildings which are carefully described in the text. An appendix incorporates an edition of *The Gest of Robin Hood*, the ballad on which the geographical, cultural, and historical analysis is mostly focused. The bibliographical references are scanty, and include popular handbooks such as Simon Schama's *History of Britain* or Roy Strong's *Story of Britain*, and just a few of the Robin Hood monographs, particularly J. C. Holt's classic history, whose views are significantly contested by Geoff Wilson. The geography, which is the most valuable aspect of this study, seems to be based on direct experience and analysis, interpretation of maps, and a couple of books on geography, Stamp's (whose publication date is variously given as 1946 on p. 12 and 1948 on p. 31) and Hindle's (2013).

Chapter 1, "The Quest", states that the aim of the book is to search some of the "other sources" for the "scanty" information that Holt found about Robin Hood (p. 15). Wilson initially admits that "it is true that he cannot be identified as a person" (p. 16), by which he means a historical personage, because the author later asserts that "he was a real, living, and well-known person" (p. 25). Wilson also asserts ironically that "the inclusion of no less than four Robin Hoods in the 2014 electoral roll for West Yorkshire is no evidence that the medieval outlaw is currently alive and well" (p. 17). However, one might add that the same can be said of the inclusion of various 'Robynhods' in medieval documents: they are no evidence that there was a historical Robin Hood in medieval England, as suggested by one of the influential Robin Hood books not referred to by the present one (Dobson & Taylor 1989: 12). After announcing the use of historical, topographical, and cartographic evidence to question Holt's "accepted 'truths'", this introductory chapter concludes by stating that the present book is unique in paying attention to two catastrophes in relation to Robin Hood's life: the Great Famine of 1315 and the Black Death of 1349. The references include a list of the four ancient maps to be used (Mathew Paris's, the Gough Map, Ogilvy's Atlas, and Jeffrey's Yorkshire map), and two historical Robin Hood studies besides Holt's: Bellamy's and Baldwin's.

Chapter 2, "Landscape", opens impressively by claiming that Robin's story begins in the Carboniferous period, and proceeds to explain how geological and climate changes shaped the area where the outlaw would live his exploits, up to the medieval delimitation and naming of the various geographical boundaries, and beyond, to their appearance in the latest 1/25,000 Ordnance Survey Explorer Map. The author posits personal experience as a source of topographical authority: "The description of the topography given here is based on living for

over forty years within three miles of Wentbridge and many hours walking in the area known as Barnsdale". His championing of Barnsdale comes up against widespread skepticism, for example, Knight's (1994: 29) statement that "Barnsdale in Yorkshire, though always cited as a Robin Hood terrain, because the *Gest* says so, is actually a good deal less secure than many might think as the real bases of some real Robin Hood. The most locally well-advised of the historical commentators, Dobson & Taylor, say it presents 'a baffling problem' (1976: 20). It was never much of a forest, nor was it ever royal, as is clearly the case in the *Gest*". Nor does Wilson refer to Pollard (2004), who argues that "no forest in England was an impenetrable wilderness" (2004: 58) and that, since "almost all the surviving English references to the stories of Robin Hood were by southern authors", Robin Hood's Stone, to which Wilson (p. 24) attaches much significance, "may equally have been named by travellers from the south, who were aware of the connection between the area and the fictional outlaw, or by locals proud of the legendary association" (2004: 64). However, a consistent picture of the *Gest* map begins to emerge through Wilson's accumulation of topographical details, for example in the description of the Sayles and the nearby Castle Hill, an ancient Iron Age settlement which surely could have become a strategic point for the outlaws (p. 28).

Chapter 3, "Medieval History", deals with the social context and historical individuals and circumstances, such as the Great Famine and subsequent rise in the cost of living which would have "led to a corresponding increase in crime and anti-social behaviour" (p. 37), a key economic factor which indeed few studies of Robin Hood ever mention. It is when the author selects actual details that his choice might be more controversial, as he points to the Robin Hood who took part in the Earl of Lancaster rebellion against Edward II, and also links him even more specifically to a five-roomed house in Wakefield which was confiscated to one of the rebels (p. 38). All this theory about Robin's identity is stated without taking into account any of the many controversies about such construal of facts. Finally, the chapter broaches more general topics, and therefore less controversial, such as the 14<sup>th</sup>-century religious crisis reflected in Robin's practically exclusive robbery of clergymen.

Chapter 4, "Maps and Routes", searches the oldest maps of the area for traces of the place names in the Robin Hood ballads. Therefore Chapter 5, "The Ballads", complements the road map with the identification of specific points along it. The author's spirit is asserted in leaving for "experts in medieval literature to analyse them [the ballads] in detail", and in concentrating instead on "such information as considered useful in establishing the true facts" (p. 66).

And those “true facts” are established with surprising confidence, especially in the identification of the knight whom Robin befriends, Sir Richard at the Lee, as Richard FitzAlan, and his “fayre castell” as Conisbrogh, as well as the “St Mary’s” in the *Gest* as a Norman church dedicated to St Mary Magdalene at Campsall in Barnsdale. It is suggested that Robin and his men would have collaborated in the 14<sup>th</sup>-century reform of that church, and further argued that this is where his grave might be, and not in Kirklees as the ballad has it. Three other early ballads are very briefly considered, but they are found to scarcely add anything to the accurate geography of the *Gest*.

Chapter 6, “Location”, is meant to expand on the facts about the already specified places, and so it does to some extent, though it tends to repeat much of what was established in the four previous chapters. For example, the ballad description of the castle says it is walled, “by the rode”, and Wilson suggests that this may be an allusion to a rood, i.e. an Anglo-Saxon cross (p. 74), which actually used to stand near the castle, and not a road, like Baldwin translates (p. 114), but, as Wilson admitted earlier (p. 84), the common formula might just have been added to suit the metre and rhyme with *wode*. Precisely this word (meaning a wooded area) is importantly distinguished from *forest*, which would refer to a royal forest (as in Sherwood) even if there were scarcely any trees: “forest’ in Medieval English referred to an area subject to forest laws and was in no way related to vegetation” (pp. 112–113). As Wilson’s previous geological and botanical contrast between Sherwood and Barnsdale proved, only the latter could really resemble the leafy “grene wode” where the outlaws hid. Where the book becomes most hesitant is with the number of “Merry Men” in Robin’s gang. This chapter mentions they numbered “up to 300 at various times and they [the ballads] also contain accounts of his men getting married” (p. 129), which, if one also counted children, would involve a population of one thousand hiding the forest, which would defy logic. However, the concluding chapter admits that only one later ballad (“Robin Hood and the Old Man”) mentions those three hundred (p. 45), and that, indeed, any high number “presents a problem when considering Robin’s activities as a highway robber” (p. 154).

The concluding chapter, “The Religious Outlaw” stresses particularly the hero’s anti-clerical stance, relating it to the famine and the religious crisis. The perceived abuses of the Church would move him to aim at taking their wealth, mostly obtained from tithes and rents, and redistribute it in the local community. It also adds some further insights and speculations. The wildest of them is the possible identification of Robin Hood with the mystic writer Richard Rolle, who led a hermit’s life at Hampole Priory, also in the Barnsdale

area, and who died of the plague, as our hero probably did according to this book.

All in all, *Robin Hood – The New Evidence*, is no mean contribution to the literature on the subject. As with other historical accounts of the legend, it tends to mix empiricism with imagination, but it does so in an exciting way, imbuing the old stories with new life, and dispelling some glaring mistakes of historians. But what makes it most special is its vivid local color, as the work of an author who persuades us that he has walked the paths Robin trod, and seen the vault of a church Robin may have helped rebuild (p. 84), where he might have got married (p. 128), and then was buried (p. 89). A precious guide for whoever may wish to follow Robin Hood's trail personally.

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