The Year in Review

It’s that time of year when a tree must lose its leaves on earth, the branches mourn,¹ and the TOEBI Newsletter must arrive. It has been an exciting year, with the announcement of our new president (by unanimous decision), Prof. Susan Irvine (UCL). ‘I am delighted to become the new president of TOEBI,’ writes Susan. ‘I have always found it to be a welcoming and supportive group, enthusiastically promoting the teaching of such a rich and diverse subject. Please let me know of any ideas you may have to help TOEBI develop further or branch out in new directions.’

There are other changes, too. Francis Leneghan (Oxford) has joined the committee; Margaret Tedford (QUB) was elected as postgraduate representative; and Thijs Porck (Leiden) has taken on the role of webmaster (see p. 13 for information about website updates he has made already).

We are delighted to have received so many book reviews this year, from both postgraduate students and established scholars, as well as articles on the teaching of Old English in North America and the Netherlands. In addition, we have updates about research projects, collaborative interdisciplinary efforts, and conferences. We have also included, at the suggestion of the TOEBI Committee, summaries of several papers from the 2017 conference in Cork (see pp. 3–5). With heartfelt thanks to all our contributors, we hope that you enjoy this year’s newsletter.

Susan Irvine, incoming TOEBI president

¹ beam sceal on eordan leafum ilpan, leomu gnornian (Maxims 1).

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The Leiden University Old English ColloQuest

The Leiden University Old English ColloQuest is a digital, dynamic edition that adapts to each individual learner to offer an appropriate level of challenge. In particular, the type and frequency of the glosses are determined by diagnostic questions, which allows for effective adaptation to the learning needs of an individual user. As such, each user is challenged at an appropriate level. This unique tool for teaching and studying Old English is now available online, for free.

Drawing Inspiration from Old English Glosses

As anyone who has made a student edition of a text knows, there are various aspects to consider when it comes to providing glosses: Where should a gloss be placed? What information should be included in the gloss itself? And how complete and consistent should the textual apparatus be? These questions, which lie at the heart of our project, are not new. Indeed, they find a parallel in the Anglo-Saxon world; the 200 or so surviving Anglo-Saxon manuscripts with glosses exhibit a great variety of didactic glossing methods.

The most frequently attested way of glossing is through a simple word-for-word interlinear translation, as found in the Vespasian Psalter. But not every glossator was satisfied with providing just one translation for each...
Aldred’s gloss to *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, for instance, features ‘multiple glosses’, which provide a number of semantic alternatives. Some Anglo-Saxon glossators also included syntactical information; in the Lambeth Psalter, for example, an extra line of glossing in the form of dots underneath the Latin text helps the reader make sense of the word order. These different glossing methods accommodated different learning situations.

While some types of glosses thus provide more guidance than merely a word-for-word translation, other types prove more challenging for their readers. The so-called scratched glosses are a case in point. These are written without ink and many are only visible if you look at the manuscript from a certain angle.

Scratched glosses in particular have been associated with language teaching; Scott Gwara has hypothesized that they were designed to be visible to the teacher but not the student. But, of course, the students themselves could decide to tilt the manuscript in order to see the gloss; in other words, this practice could be viewed as representing a very early form of adaptive glossing.

In producing our digital text edition, we have drawn inspiration from these medieval glossing practices. Using digital tools, we have designed the glosses in our edition to adapt to the needs of the individual user. As a result, our glosses provide more grammatical...
cal information for those who need it, and less for those who require more of a challenge. The latter group also need to click on individual words to make the glosses visible – our digital version of a manuscript tilt.

**The Structure of the Leiden University Old English ColloQuest**

Our digital learning edition is based on Ælfric’s *Colloquy*. The *Colloquy* seemed like the perfect choice since, like our edition, Ælfric’s text was created for language teaching and its Latin original was supplied with Old English glosses.

The edition, which was designed using the e-learning platform Storyline 360, adapts after each pre-determined section of text—about three lines of Old English. After a learner has read one section of text, built-in sets of questions evaluate both comprehension and grammatical understanding of the text in order to identify how much glossing is suitable for the learner. The user then receives instant feedback with strategies for understanding the grammar and structure of the text.

A typical set contains three multiple-choice questions. Three correct answers result in less glossing information in the next section of text. Two correct answers result in the same amount of information, and one or no correct answers result in more glossing information.² In particular, answers determine

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² The set of questions for the first section works differ-
the number of visible layers of glossing. The ColloQuest glosses are formatted as interlinear glosses with three layers: 1) the semantic gloss 2) grammatical information that is independent of the word’s function in the sentence and 3) occurrence-specific information. Layers appear or disappear based on a user’s abilities.

The final version of the ColloQuest contains fifteen sections of text and is available in two formats:

‘Clerk’ version of The Leiden University Old English ColloQuest

A fun way to test and improve your skills in Old English, with grammatical feedback. Recommended for those who have anywhere from a basic to advanced understanding of Old English grammar. This version is available here: [http://www.hum2.leidenuniv.nl/ECOLe/Colloquest/story_html5.html](http://www.hum2.leidenuniv.nl/ECOLe/Colloquest/story_html5.html)

‘Oblate’ version of The Leiden University Old English ColloQuest

A fun reading experience for anyone, without grammatical feedback. Recommended for those who have no or limited experience with Old English. This version is available here: [http://www.hum2.leidenuniv.nl/ECOLe/Colloquest-NF/story_html5.html](http://www.hum2.leidenuniv.nl/ECOLe/Colloquest-NF/story_html5.html)

Acknowledgement

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Figure 5: The same section of text with different amounts of glossing information for different users.
More Information
If you would like to know more about The Leiden University Old English ColloQuest, feel free to contact Krista A. Murchison (k.a.murchison@hum.leidenuniv.nl) and/or Thijs Porck (m.h.porck@hum.leidenuniv.nl).

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N/EMICS 2018: ‘Down There: Uncovering the Infernal in the Early Middle Ages’

Conference Report

The Northern / Early Medieval Interdisciplinary Conference Series (N/EMICS) aims to bring together students and researchers from various backgrounds and institutions to promote interdisciplinary dialogue and collaboration, share methodologies, and discuss new ideas and interpretations of the early medieval period. The series has been running for nearly ten years, with a total of seventeen conferences held at institutions including University College London, York, Canterbury Christ Church and Ruhr-Universität Bochum, with these in turn producing six publications between them. One of this year’s conferences took place at UCL on 8 and 9 June, and was co-organised by myself, Dr Mike Bintley (Canterbury Christ Church), Karel Fraaije (UCL), and Dana Key (UCL) and generously supported by UCL’s Octagon Small Grants Fund. The title of this event was ‘Down There: Uncovering the Infernal in the Early Middle Ages’. The organisers invited new perspectives on the representation, significance, and development of Hell and other underworlds in the late antique and early medieval period, and encouraged papers presenting new readings of the infernal, its features, creatures, and iconographies, seeking to interrogate Hell’s origins and shifting role in medieval Christian doctrine.

Central to the ethos of N/EMICS is the importance of creating a welcoming atmosphere for graduate students to present their research (often for the first time). Panels are deliberately made up of mixtures of MAs, PhDs, and ECRs, as well as established academics. Conference badges avoid titles, only including names, institutions, and pronouns. There is less of a formal question-and-answer session at the end of each panel, but more a free-flowing and extended discussion between speakers, chairs, and the audience, providing some fascinating insights and constructive criticism on the papers presented. And

Seeking Contributions
- articles on teaching methods & resources
- articles about teaching OE in countries outside the UK and Ireland
- book reviews
- new book announcements
- reports on conferences
- photos related to OE, AS Studies, and its teaching
- announcements of upcoming events and conferences

To contribute, please contact the editors.