A Grammar of Old English. Volume 2: Morphology

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A Grammar of Old English. Volume 2: Morphology
RICHARD M. HOGG AND R. D. FULK
416 pp., ISBN: 978-0-6311-3671-2, £80.00/€96.00

Anne, enne and ænne. Why does Old English have three forms for the accusative singular masculine of an (“one”)? Why does the plural of the neuter strong noun wundor (“miracle”) occasionally occur as wundra, rather than the expected wundru? And why do preterite forms of the weak class I verb timbrian (“to build”) sometimes follow the pattern of verbs belonging to weak class II? Every teacher of Old English has one: the overzealous student that questions every deviation from the simplified rules taught by introductory guides. In answering these and other questions of my own students over the past two semesters, Richard M. Hogg and R. D. Fulk’s A Grammar of Old English. Volume 2: Morphology has proved essential. With its clear style and exhaustive treatment of all things morphological, this is a reference work that belongs in every Old English teacher’s tool kit.

Volume 2: Morphology is the long-awaited companion of A Grammar of Old English. Volume 1: Phonology, published in 1992, and completes the two-volume overview by the late Richard Hogg of Old English sounds and grammatical forms. As the title suggests, this volume, which was revised and completed by Fulk, focuses on the morphological structure of Old English words.

The treatment of nominal morphology is divided into two chapters. The first chapter deals with earlier forms of Old English nouns and reconstructs the Proto-Germanic restructuring of the root-based inflexional system of Indo-European. The second chapter treats later forms and distinguishes between three major nominal declensions: the as-declension (stan~stanas “stone~stones”), the a-declension (gifu~gifa “gift~gifts”) and the an-declension (guma~guman “man~men”). For each of these declensions, Hogg and Fulk give the basic set of forms followed by a discussion of the allomorphic variants.

Subsequent chapters respectively treat adjectives, adverbs and numerals, pronouns and verbs. The structure of these later chapters is similar to that of the chapters on nouns: they start with the basic paradigm, followed by a reconstruction of earlier Proto-Germanic forms and, finally, an overview of the synchronic and diachronic allomorphic variations. These variations are often explained with reference to sound changes and dialects.
Being the first major Old English reference grammar to appear since Brunner (1965), Hogg and Fulk have tried to incorporate the scholarship on Old English morphology published over the past forty years. The attempt is certainly successful, but more recent approaches to phonology and morphology, such as those based on Optimality Theory, could not be included in *A Grammar of Old English* due to its rule-governed theoretical framework.

Nevertheless, Hogg and Fulk’s approach is neither traditional nor old-fashioned. For example, they make extensive use of the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*, a digital database which allows access to most extant texts in Old English, for insightful quantitative information—a feature which sets this grammar apart from earlier works on Old English, such as those published by Sievers (1898), Campbell (1959) and Brunner (1965).

Above all, *A Grammar of Old English. Volume 2: Morphology* definitely serves its purpose as a work of reference. Its paragraphs are numbered separately and the inclusion of indexes of words as well as of subjects makes the work easy to consult. These features, combined with the undisputed quality of its contents, make this volume the reference work of choice for all Old English scholars and their overly ambitious students.

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*Image, Text, and Religious Reform in Fifteenth-Century England*

SHANNON GAYK
Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2010
viii + 254 pp., ISBN: 978-0-5211-9080-0, £55.00

Shannon Gayk’s *Image, Text, and Religious Reform in Fifteenth-Century England* is a timely and detailed study of the complex relationship between religious images and English devotional texts written in the last pre-Reformation century. The book discusses not only the work of religious writers, such as John Capgrave and Reginald Pecock, but also that of Thomas Hoccleve and John Lydgate, whose works were generally more at home in secular domains.

The book’s five chapters address, in turn, the role of images in Lollard writings, Hoccleve’s *Series*, Lydgate’s religious poetry, Capgrave’s Saints’ Lives and chronicles, as well as Pecock’s works. Throughout *Image, Text, and Religious Reform* the image emerges both as a textual focus and as a theological concern. As Gayk shows how the works under discussion embrace, utilise, explicate, question and reject images, her unfolding argument charts the full extent of the heterodox religious landscape of late medieval English writing. Images emerge as textual battlefields and points of contact for the theological debates that would acquire an institutional dimension in the sixteenth century.