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ABSTRACTS

CRISTIANO BROCCIAS, 'The *as*-copular construction in Middle English',
Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology 7 (2015), pp. 1-31.

This paper aims to investigate the status of an important but neglected subordinator, namely *as*, in Middle English. In Present-Day English, *as* is usually treated as a synonym of *while* and *when*, although important differences exist between them. In particular, *as* is not usually found in copular constructions (e.g. *as you are here* for *while you are here*). By contrast, the corpus evidence gathered for this study shows that Middle English *as*, including its variants, exhibits more flexibility in that it is found more frequently than its contemporary counterpart in copular constructions with prepositional phrases (e.g. *as he was in the water* for *while he was in the water*) and even adjectival phrases (e.g. *as she was busy* for *while she was busy*), especially in close proximity with a temporal noun (e.g. *on a night as he was in his prayers*). It is argued that *as* underwent a process of expansion from an essentially Old English correlative meaning which, however, came to halt because of a variety of reasons, such as the disappearance of the variant with a temporal noun and the replacement of the prepositional progressive construction with a truly progressive construction (e.g. *as he was in waiting* with *as he was waiting*).

CLAUDIA DI SCIACCA, 'Battling the devil: St Margaret in the early Middle English *Seinte Margarete*',
Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology 7 (2015), pp. 33-79

St Margaret of Antioch was one of the most popular female saints in medieval England and a considerable number of both Latin and vernacular versions of her legend originated or circulated in England from the Old English Martyrology up to Caxton's *Golden Legend*. The most salient feature of St Margaret's life has been pinpointed in the scene in which the imprisoned saint has two subsequent encounters with the devil, first in the shape of a dragon, secondly in the shape of a small black demon. This paper will focus on the crucial scene of the dragon's swallowing of the saint in *Seinte Margarete*, an early 13th-century alliterative prose life from the Katherine Group. *Seinte Margarete* re-enacts the familiar narrative of the virgin martyr in a pronounced emotional way, in that, while the narrative follows quite closely the Latin antecedent, the sensorial and impressionistic elements of the source-text are emphasised. By a close contrastive analysis of the Middle English text, its putative Latin antecedents, and the two Old English versions of the Life of St Margaret, this essay proposes to highlight the dynamic tension between conservation and innovation in the

(self-)representation of the saint as well as outlining the emergence of new paradigms of sanctity in Anglo-Norman England.

ROGER LASS, 'Chains of permission: 'eo' in *Layamon A*, Hand B', *Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology* 7 (2015), pp. 81-88.

There is a tendency among modern historians, even specialists in Middle English, to misconstrue the theoretical foundations of many early orthographical systems, and to see 'chaos' or 'disorder' where what is in fact being presented is a kind of writing that is not based on any 'emic' system, but on one that is rather handled better with a non-biunique and complexly variable kind of system. I choose one here that can be based on the Latin notion of *littera*, which any scribe would have known from his training in Latin. In this case I distinguish between 'economical' and 'prodigal' Middle English orthographies, i.e. those which tend toward univocal representation (one or more likely a few graphs per phonological unit) and those which allow often extravagantly multi-vocal representations. The ability to do this is based on a totally non-modern but tightly logical theory of representation, which has been called in a series of works by Margaret Laing and myself since the 1990s 'litteral substitution'. I show in this paper what economical and prodigal systems are like, and then, using one example, show why in a 13th-century South-West Midland text, where the expectation is that Old English 'a' will be represented either as 'o' or 'a', it can also, in the same word, be represented as 'eo'. There is a tight logic behind this, which then allows more complex but rule governed variation, e.g. where words with Old English 'o' can also be spelled with 'a', and words with Old English 'u' can also be spelled with 'eo'. This is not chaos or disorder, but a tightly rule-governed if alien because non-modern orthographic logic.

PATRIZIA LENDINARA, 'The glossary in ms Cambridge, St John's College, E.17 and Middle English Lexicography', *Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology* 7 (2015), pp. 89-140.

The only bilingual item of ms. Cambridge, St John's College, E.17 is a short glossary with French lemmata and English interpretamenta, copied in the upper part of f. 126r. The Middle English entries feature a number of rare words, including a few hapax legomena. In other instances, that of the St John's glossary is the first occurrence of the word ever attested in Middle English. Hence, the little studied glossary reveals itself to be a treasure-trove for the lexicographer. Moreover, whereas the number of borrowings from French is limited to two words, the glossary contains several loanwords from Old Norse. This feature might help locate the glossary, whose origin, as well as that of the entire codex, is unknown.

ELISA MASTROMATTEO, '*On esterne day in þe dawing* (Cambridge University Library, ms Dd. 1.1, ff. 30r-32v): critical edition', *Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology* 7 (2015), pp. 141-162.

The present work follows on from Pickering's paper concerning a 268-line poem he calls *Story of the Resurrection*, which examines an error in *The Index of Middle English Verse*, where the text is considered one of the two copies of a reworking of the so-called *Resurrectio Christi*, part of the *Southern Passion*. It is in fact the only copy of a Resurrection poem, which Pickering attributes to a 14th-century South-East Midland dialect and he claims that it was probably composed in the early part of the century. The present paper intends to discuss Pickering's work and presents a new critical edition of the anonymous and untitled poem which begins *On Esterne day in þe dawing*. Palaeographical evidence will confirm Pickering's dating of the manuscript to the first half of the

15th century, while linguistic elements will point to the turn of the 14th century and, in line with the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, to the Isle of Ely, East Midlands, for the dialect in which the text was written. Stylistic features will reveal an original poet who cannot be identified with Richard Rolle of Hampole.

KJETIL V. THENGS, 'Compactness of expression in Middle English legal documents', *Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology* 7 (2015), pp. 163-181.

This is a study of opening and closing formulae in Middle English legal documents. Legal documents have sometimes been overlooked in syntactic study because of their repetitive and formulaic nature. However, legal language must be conservative in its lexical and syntactic choices in order to avoid ambiguity in the communication of information; at the same time, its very specific functions also make it innovative, especially in the formative period when vernacular models are being developed for legal genres. Judging by the documents in the *Northwest Midland Document Corpus*, vernacular documents are highly formulaic in the 15th and early 16th centuries, and also seem to have been prone to changes of phrasing in the common clauses. In particular, the present material shows a clear diachronic change in the formulae relating to the authentication and witnessing of the documents. The development of two main types of formulae are included in the study: (1) a change from 'this x bears witness that' to 'this x witnesses that', and (2) a change from 'in witness of the which thing' to 'in witness whereof'. Both types of formulae seem to undergo what Rissanen refers to as "compactness of expression"; noting in particular the tendency in legal language to favour compound adverbs such as *thereof*. Much in line with Österman's findings for these compounds, the study shows a clear preference for compound adverbs in the later part of the period studied, that is, in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. Interestingly, the changes seem to happen at different paces in the three main counties included in the study: Cheshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire.

LETIZIA VEZZOSI, 'Reciprocal strategies in Middle English', *Filologia Germanica – Germanic Philology* 7 (2015), pp. 183-211.

In Present-Day English mutual situations are encoded either with lexical reciprocals or with reciprocal markers (*each other*). This was not the state of affairs in Middle English, which encodes mutual situation by means of both syntactic and morphological or clitic markers. The present paper will describe the inventory of morphological and syntactic devices of the Middle English reciprocal system in terms of semantic or syntactic constraints of usage, in order to shed light on its change into the typologically different Present-Day English reciprocal system. This development can be indeed explained in terms of a general restructuring of co-reference (reflexive and reciprocal) marking which took place in the course of the Middle English period.