John Considine. *Sixteenth-Century English Dictionaries*. 2022, xiv+482 pages. ISBN 978-0-1988-3228-7 (Hardback). Oxford: Oxford University Press. Price £90.00.

This volume is the first in the trilogy *Dictionaries in the English-speaking World, 1500–1800* published by Oxford University Press. The titles of the three volumes in this series — all written by John Considine — are rather straightforward: *Sixteenth-century English Dictionaries*, *Seventeenth-century English Dictionaries*, and *Eighteenth-century English Dictionaries*. Each of the three books examines the lexicographical landscape of one century as their titles indicate. In a previous work, Considine divides the development of English lexicography into four phases, and he calls the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a 'prologue' (2020: 90). He expands this 'prologue' into a book-length study, in which lexicographical works and traditions of the sixteenth century play a major role, but those of the fifteenth century and earlier periods are inevitably and necessarily mentioned.

Chapter 1 'The medieval inheritance' brings up the curtain on medieval lexicography with a range of lexicographical works available in the British Isles at the beginning of the sixteenth century — though most of them were compiled in or before the fifteenth century. 'The medieval inheritance' includes a collection of Latin wordlists in the library at Syon Abbey; some very early English glosses in Latin dictionaries and further copies that formed the *Medulla grammatice* tradition; the *Catholicon Anglicum* and the *Promptorium parvulorum*, which reversed the *Medulla* tradition and provided Latin equivalents to the English headwords; and representatives of the native Irish and Welsh lexicographical traditions.

Chapter 2 turns from incunabular glossarial manuscripts to 'The first printed dictionaries of English, French, and Latin', in which the medieval traditions were largely maintained. The first English wordlists can be found in the booklets printed by William Caxton, and the circulation of these and related wordlists reflects 'a late fifteenth-century enjoyment of linguistic ornament … and the needs of a fraction of late fifteenth-century English society' (p. 28). This chapter also reveals how the publication of different editions of the *Promptorium parvulorum* and the *Ortus vocabulorum* was involved in the competition between Wynkyn de Worde and Richard Pynson, the two leading printers in early sixteenth-century England. In the rest of the chapter, Considine mentions various smaller and specialized wordlists, including pedagogical, medical, and herbal ones.

Chapter 3 starts with John Palsgrave's *Lesclarcissement de la langue francoyse*, the first large lexicographical work compiled in the sixteenth century, introducing French grammar but written in English. The sense of using English as a metalanguage was widely developed since the 1520s, with four more examples discussed in this chapter: John Rastell's *Exposiciones terminorum legum Anglorum* (c. 1523) combined legal French and English, though the latter was put in a secondary position as a translation of the former; Nicholas Udall's *Floures*

for Latine spekynge (1534) furnished Latin drama phrases (in roman type) with idiomatic English translations (in black letter); two thin books by William Turner, namely *Libellus de re herbaria nouus* (1538) and *Names of herbes* (1548), pioneeringly used English to explain English names of plants; *Breuiary of helthe* (1547) by Andrew Boorde was within an ace of being the earliest medical dictionary with English as its defining language, because it provided too much encyclopaedic information. Strictly speaking, none of 'Palsgrave and some contemporaries' mentioned in Chapters 3 can be treated as dictionaries, but they do contain some features of dictionaries and valuable lexical information.

As a matter of fact, the word 'dictionary' in English has never appeared to define a type of scholarly work until 1538, when 'The *Dictionary* of Sir Thomas Elyot' (the subject of Chapter 4) was published. Elyot's *Dictionary* is an abridged translation of Ambrogio Calepino's *Dictionarium*, an alphabetized, comprehensive, and humanistic dictionary of Latin (also mentioned in Chapter 1). Considine suggests that Elyot's remarkable achievement of English lexicography was 'to carry out this demanding and very useful translation project quickly and accurately, and to see the results into print' (p. 85; see also Stein 2014 for a book-length study on Elyot). All of Elyot's books, including the *Dictionary* of 1538, the 1542 and 1545 editions with the new title *Bibliotheca Eliotae: Eliotis librarie*, and successive editions in 1548, 1552, 1559 published after Elyot's death, were printed by Thomas Berthelet. The same printer ensured continuity in printing. For example, Berthelet set the Latin words in roman type and the English in black letter for Elyot's *Dictionary*, just as he had done for Udall's *Floures* in 1534; he also used the same ornamental title page border for all editions as a marketing strategy, though Considine notices a subtle difference, that is, only the 1545, 1548, and 1552 editions had a hand-coloured border (for more information on typography in sixteenth-century English dictionaries, see Stein 2017).

The next two chapters introduce a diversity of multilingual and bilingual dictionaries. All of the 'Polyglot dictionaries' discussed in Chapter 5 included English text but followed different continental European traditions. Some notable examples are: the thematically arranged *Sex linguarum dictionarius* (1537) in the *Introito e porta* tradition; *Colloques ou dialogues avec un dictionaire en six langues* (1576) in the Barlement tradition, having an alphabetical wordlist after dialogues; the subject-ordered *Nomenclator* (1567) of Hadrianus Junius; and polyglot dictionaries in the Calepino tradition, which frequently gave English words with equivalents in other languages, ancient and modern.

Chapter 6 gives an account of 'Bilingual dictionaries of vernacular languages in the 1540s and 1550s'. To begin with, William Salesbury's *A dictionary in Englyshe and Welsh* (1547), with over 7000 entries, was the one and only dictionary of Welsh printed in the sixteenth century, and also the first book-length dictionary of English and another vernacular language. *Principal rules of the Italian grammer, with a dictionarie for the better vnderstandyng of Boccace, Petrarcha, and Dante* (1550), also by a Welshman called William Thomas, was said to be 'the first bilingual English dictionary to respond to the bilingual lexicography

of the continental European Renaissance' (p. 123). Short wordlists in other languages, such as Spanish, Breton, Romani, and Taino, are briefly discussed in the latter part of Chapter 6, and they indeed widened the scope of English lexicography.

Chapter 7 is concerned with 'Latin dictionaries of the 1550s', most of which were for pedagogical use and thus in a size appropriate for schoolboys — smaller than weighty folios but larger than polyglots. A noteworthy feature of this chapter is that the mid-16th-century dictionaries discussed are cross-referenced to other parts of the book. For instance, further editions of Jean Véron's *Dictionariolum puerorum* (1552), Richard Howlet's *Abcedarium Anglicolatinum* (1552), and John Withals' *Shorte dictionarie for yonge begynners* (1553) will be discussed in Chapter 10; Laurence Nowell's annotations on Howlet's *Abcedarium* can be found in Chapter 15; the whole story of John Barrett's *Alvearie* (1574) will be told in Chapter 10, but the 1550s was when the seeds of this dictionary germinated.

As illustrated in Chapter 4, Elyot had trodden a path to Latin–English lexicography, but as time went by discontinuities occurred in the series of editions. Chapter 8 focuses exclusively on 'The *Thesaurus* of Thomas Cooper' — the first English book under the title *Thesaurus* — its disputed authorship, its copious material, its mixed reputation, and in particular, the contrast between the 1559 *Bibliotheca* and the 1565 *Thesaurus*.

In Chapter 9, Considine returns to the subject of vernacular dictionaries after an interval of two chapters, which also indicates a lull in the vernacular dictionary market. It was not until 1570 that a batch of dictionaries of vernacular languages came onto the market, including those of French, of Irish, of Spanish, of Russian, and of exotic languages of the New World, Africa, the Arctic, the Caribbean, and South East Asia. All of the 'Elizabethan dictionaries of vernacular languages before Florio' mentioned in Chapter 9 narrate the adventures of 'the discovery by Anglophones of the linguistic diversity of the world' (p. 203).

In Chapter 10, Considine continues the story by giving an account of new, revised, or translated versions of the works which originated in the 1550s. The 'Dictionaries of Latin from 1565 to 1580' in this chapter include: four editions of Withals's *Shorte dictionarie* since 1568, printed by Thomas Purfoote and edited by Lewys Evans; Peter Levins's *Manipulus vocabulorum* (1570); John Higgins's revision turning Howlet's *Abcedarium* into a triglot; John Barrett's first edition of *Alvearie* (1574), in which he used the so-called 'box rules' to make the dictionary 'readable', 'harmonious', and 'distinctive' (p. 224); a new edition of Véron's *Dictionariolum* by Ralph Waddington published in 1575; an English-language version of Simon Pelgrom's *Synonymorum sylua* (1580); and the second edition of Barrett's *Alvearie* by Abraham Fleming (1580). These lexicographical works, together with the ones discussed in Chapter 9, present the readers with a fuller picture of Elizabethan lexicography.

Chapters 11–13 deal with dictionaries in the last several decades of the

sixteenth century. The last fragment of the story of Latin dictionaries in the six-teenth-century Isles can be found in Chapter 11, accompanied by a brief account of Greek dictionaries from 1581 onwards. New editions of Hadrianus Junius's *Lexicon Graecolatinum* and *Nomenclator* were undertaken by Edward Grant and John Higgins respectively, while Abraham Fleming provided a new index to the latter. Recognized to be 'the first professional lexicographer in England' twice in the book (pp. 229, 258), Fleming's lexicographical publications — remarkably done within six years — include the indexing of the Higgins–Junius *Nomenclator*, as well as the making of Barrett's *Alvearie*, Guillaume Morel's *Verborum Latinorum*, Withals's *Shorte dictionarie*, and Waddington's version of Véron's *Dictionariolum*. The 1580s also saw a major change in England's dictionary publishing. Presses at universities were established and began to take a share of the dictionary market. Thomas Thomas's Latin–English *Dictionarium linguae Latinae et Anglicanae* (1587) was attributed to Cambridge, while its English–Latin counterpart, John Rider's *Bibliotheca scholastica* (1589), was an Oxford book.

The following chapter is concerned with 'Wordlists with Hebrew, Arabic, and Armenian'. Wordlists of these so-called 'learned languages' were rarely published in the Isles in the first half of the sixteenth century, 'a century when most of the wordlists undertaken in the Isles were directed at an insular readership' (p. 297). Whereas several Armenian and Hebrew dictionaries are touched on in this chapter, dictionaries of Arabic were not published in the sixteenth century, for instance William Bedwell's dictionary work remained in manuscript.

The story of the sixteenth-century dictionaries of English with vernacular languages come to an end in Chapter 13. Two remarkable examples given here are 'The dictionaries of Florio and Minsheu'. The Italian–English *Worlde of wordes* of John Florio and the Spanish–English *Dictionarie in Spanish and English* of John Minsheu are remarkable in their size — both of them comprised over 40,000 entries. It can be concluded from chapters 6, 9, and 13 that English speakers of the sixteenth century had access to a wide range of dictionaries of the major European vernaculars. In comparison, wordlists of some minor European languages available to them were fewer and shorter, and those of some exotic languages had not been developed into the form of dictionaries yet.

Each of the final three chapters examines kinds of wordlists produced for specific purposes. Chapter 14 is devoted to 'Specialized wordlists of English after the 1530s', which appeared as glossaries appended to the books of specific subjects. Therefore this chapter is both chronological and subject-ordered: it begins with glossaries of medical vocabularies, which were 'in many ways at the vanguard of English dictionary-making in the mid to late sixteenth century' (Tyrkkö 2011, as cited in Considine 2022: 330); legal wordlists; followed by those of rhetorical terms, geometrical and cosmographical terms, proper names, cant words; then the vocabularies of logic, herb-lore, hunting and war; and finally glossarial entries for the realia of ancient Rome.

The ultimate two chapters turn to wordlists made for non-technical words.

Chapter 15 looks at 'Lists of old words', to some extent indicating the sixteenth-century speakers' interest in older varieties of English, i.e. Old English and (early and late) Middle English. Laurence Nowell and John Joscelyn were the leading figures in 'Saxon' lexicography. Wordlists which included late Middle English, in particular Chaucerian glossaries, were among the early sources of English historical lexicography. Chapter 16 then provides a detailed overview of 'Lists of hard words, and of words in general use'. The first part of this chapter mainly focuses on the production of lists of hard words, appearing in the Isles in an attempt to support English readers of the Bible and other Christian texts. The second focus of Chapter 16 is on a variety of general wordlists for special purposes: for children learning, for spelling reform, for secret writing, and for poetic composition.

Although it is not clearly stated in this volume, the order of the chapters can be worked out. The whole volume is primarily chronological, and the relevant dictionaries are thematically arranged and discussed together. This may lead to the fragmentation of chapters, especially in the middle part of the book. For instance, chapters 4, 7, 8, 10, and 11 tell a coherent story of Latin dictionaries in the Isles, but other chapters distract readers from this topic for a while. Likewise, Withals's *Shorte dictionarie* and its later editions are scattered in different parts of the volume, as is the case in chapters 7, 10, and 11. Even within a single chapter, this kind of interruption can be detected, for example, the discussion on the two editions of Barrett's *Alvearie* in Chapter 10 is temporarily broken off by looking at several other dictionaries. Causing confusion and discontinuity, however, is only part of such an arrangement of chapters. On the other hand, more creative alternatives can be offered to readers. A similar approach can be found in *The Cambridge World History of Lexicography* (2019), edited by the same author, which allows readers to search through the book in at least three ways.

On the whole, this is a thoughtfully structured and well-written monograph as a 'prologue' to the fascinating history of lexicographical works. Considine's book not only tells us the story of dictionaries, but also the story of people. In almost all chapters, there are biographical notes about those dictionary related people, including but not limited to lexicographers, printers, publishers, translators, and readers. Also frequently occurring in many chapters are the references to the sequel to this volume. As Considine reveals in the current volume, an enlarged edition of the *Shorte dictionarie*, the revised *Riders dictionarie*, more publications by Sturtevant, and Bedwell's Arabic dictionary, will be discussed in his *Seventeenth-century English Dictionaries*. Readers will certainly be looking forward to reading the second volume in the series.

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