

**K.H. van Dalen-Oskam, K.A.C. Depuydt, W.J.J. Pijnenburg and T.H. Schoonheim** (Editors). *Dictionaries of Medieval Germanic Languages: A Survey of Current Lexicographical Projects. Selected Proceedings of the International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, 4-7 July 1994, 1997*, viii + 197 pp. ISBN 2-503-50601-1. Turnhout: Brepols. E-mail: publishers@brepols.com. Price: Belgian f1613.

From 4 to 7 July 1994 the University of Leeds hosted the first International Medieval Congress. Three sessions were dedicated to "Dictionaries of Medieval Languages". They dealt with the following themes: "Projects", in which several dictionary projects were presented, "Historical Background", which focuses on the importance of extensive knowledge of the historical background when working on a dictionary of a medieval language, and "Scribes and Scholars", elaborating on the philological problems a lexicographer encounters when working with old handwritten source material and its editions.

When preparing the papers presented at this congress for publication the editors tried, according to the introduction, to give a complete survey of the current lexicographic projects on Medieval Germanic Languages by urging the editors of the different dictionaries to write an overview of their projects for this volume. The first part therefore contains a description of the twelve projects: three on the Middle Dutch language (one of which also covers Early Modern Dutch), five on Old or Middle English, one on Middle High German and three on Old Norse or Old Norwegian.

Each overview gives information on the dictionary (the title, editors, institute and address), the contents of the dictionary (the type, subject/corpus), described period and area, and an example of an entry), the project and planning (a short history, the (planned) year of publication and the form of publication), and details on lexicographic tools and methods (the hard- and software). The information makes a comparison of the projects and their working procedures, and the types of dictionary and their social and cultural backgrounds possible. At the same time it suggests special aspects of historical lexicography such as the preparation of a corpus and delimiting the period and area.

The second part comprises seven papers which can be classified into three groups. With the exception of Tanneke Schoonheim's paper "The *Vroegmiddelnederlands Woordenboek* and the Computer" which describes how the computer has been applied in the compilation of the Dictionary for Early Middle Dutch, the other six papers deal with specific problems and problem areas encountered in historical lexicography regarding the earlier forms of a language: (a) aspects of determining the language period and area to be treated, (b) acquiring knowledge of the historical, cultural and social background of the treated period, and (c) preparing and interpreting texts used for source material. The only paper discussing (a) is "On the Preparation of a Dictionary of Middle Norwegian" by Erik Simensen. "The Importance of Legal History for Old Fri-

sian Lexicography" by Oebele Vries, "Encyclopaedic Aspects of the Historical Dictionary" by Jeffrey L. Singman, and "Identification of the Veins and Arteries in Middle English Literature" by James M. Girsch, all deal with (b). The two papers treating (c) are "The Lexicographer's Dilemma: Handling Mistranslations, Misconstruings and Paronomasia in Source Texts" by Elizabeth S. Girsch and "Lexicography and Philology" by Karina van Dalen-Oskam and Katrien Depuydt.

The most informative part of the work is the first, dealing with the different lexicographic projects. Unfortunately not all the projects approached for a contribution, seem to have responded so that it does not contain a complete overview of all the projects in progress. The selected papers in the second part of the book, although interesting, mostly deal with such specific problems and problem areas that, when reading them, only a few general outlines can be constructed for solving these problems and handling these problem areas. Nevertheless, they do make one aware of the directions in which to search for solutions when these problems and problem areas are encountered in historical lexicography.

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