THE HENRY SWEET SOCIETY for the history of linguistic ideas

NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 16 May 1991

IN MEMORIAM LESLIE SEIFFERT, 1934-1990

MANY OF OUR MEMBERS will have heard already the sad news of the untimely death of the first Chairman of the Henry Sweet Society at the end of last year. He was one of the original group whose conversation, reported on later pages of this number, led to the formation of the Society in the first place. From the outset, he took its interests to heart, and was most generous of his time in attending the Third and Fourth International Conferences on the History of the Language Sciences on our behalf. Illness prevented him from delivering a paper at the Fifth Conference in Galway, but he was able to read a paper earlier in 1990 at the Essen colloquium, and this paper, which is already printed, will be his last work.

He was also energetic as a member of his College and the University of Oxford, where his part in the establishment of Linguistics as part of the Modern Language course was invaluable. He was an indefatigable scholar who had much to offer in the field of German medieval and linguistic studies, and who found in the grammatical and lexical speculations of the later medieval and early modern period a rich and fascinating field of But he was also a scholar who often surprised his friends exploration. by the range and depth of his knowledge; one recent correspondent, now eminent in the field, has noted that he owes his first grounding in Old Norse, as a postgraduate student in Birmingham, to Leslie Seiffert: another remembers with gratitude personal encouragement he gave in research in Yiddish, and notes that he was instrumental in establishing the study of that language in Oxford on a firm basis. His knowledge and interests extended far beyond languages and linguistics; he was well informed on matters geographical, with a formidable collection of maps and atlases, and on matters historical, with a lively interest in the German past, but also in the history and legend of his native Australia.

A man of great modesty, and quiet friendly demeanour, he contributed greatly to the pleasantly informal atmosphere which characterized the Henry Sweet Society's Colloquia, and even those who met him only on those occasions will miss him greatly. He leaves a widow, and two children of university age, to all of whom our sympathies go out.

EDITORIAL

ALTHOUGH THERE has been no Colloquium of the Society since the last Newsletter appeared, this issue is surprisingly full. Much of it is taken up with a further list of acquisitions to the Henry Sweet Library. As in the previous issue, the attempt has been made to list individual articles in volumes of multiple authorship, in line with the practice of the Checklist issued last year, which is already beginning to look sadly out of date. The accretion is very largely due to the publication of the proceedings of ICHoLS IV (Trier, 1987), from which an earlier selection of papers has previously appeared. All these papers are clearly central to the interests of the Society. Meanwhile ICHoLS V has come and gone, and there have been several other gatherings of historians of linguists, notably in Germany and Italy.

The Society continues to be grateful to those scholars and publishers who so generously send us their articles and books; we have taken the opportunity in this issue of providing short notices of some of these, and hope to continue the practice in future issues. While the Society is building up its resources, the books noticed in the Newsletter are being deposited in the Henry Sweet Society Library, and we would be especially grateful to members who would be prepared to help by briefly reviewing books before they are added to the Society's collection.

It is gratifying, too, to be able to welcome so many new members to the Society, and we hope that they will find their association with their fellow-members rewarding and enjoyable. Some of them at least, we hope, will be able to join in our eighth colloquium, at Keble College, Oxford, in September 1991.

The one original scholarly contribution to this issue is derived from a paper read at our 1990 colloquium. As that colloquium was the last which our late Chairman attended, and as the author acknowledges his help in the work of which it forms a part, it is especially fitting here. It will, however, be a provisional memorial, for a collected volume of essays in honour of Leslie Seiffert is planned, and contributions are being invited in the fields of German language and the history of linguistics. the fields which link most closely his interests and those of the Society.

Paul Salmon

THE HENRY SWEET SOCIETY

A report on the first seven years

ON A HOT and sunny afternoon in August 1983, a group of friends met in the garden of 5 Rotha Field Road, North Oxford, to discuss matters of common professional interest. Every member of the group was engaged in linguistic research of some kind, ranging from aphasia to stylistics to Sanskrit, but they all shared one specific common interest in the history of their discipline, linguistics. They were concerned by the fact that most scholars researching on the history of linguistics (at least in the English-speaking world) were working in isolation, and would no doubt appreciate the opportunity of meeting fellow linguists with similar interests. The Society for French speakers, already established in Paris, did not, for linguistic and geographical reasons, entirely meet their needs.

The group therefore concluded that historians of linguistics in the English-speaking world would welcome the foundation of a Society to cater for their interests, and the hostess on that occasion was asked to take soundings among colleagues, in the first place in U.K. universities. By December it was clear that the project had met with considerable enthusiasm. A working party was then set up, which, at a foundation meeting in February 1984, transformed itself into an Executive Committee, with as its President Professor Robins, its Chairman Dr Seiffert, its Publications Secretary Dr Cram, and its Hon. Secretary Mrs V. Salmon. The first task of the Committee was to set about fund-raising, a project which was accomplished in two ways. First, the generosity of individual scholars led to the establishment of a category of Founder Member, based on loans or donations made to the Society. Secondly, the generosity of the publishers Longmans enabled us to acquire, at a substantial discount, the total stock of the series Classics in Linguistics. We have been able to offer these to our members at a very advantageous price, which nevertheless also enabled the Society itself to obtain some valuable funding.

The next undertaking of the Committee was to organize a colloquium; this was held at St Peter's College, Oxford, in September 1984, and thereafter a residential meeting was organized in Oxford for two years out of three, being replaced every third year by a one-day colloquium in London in spring, when ICHoLS was meeting in the autumn of the same year. The contacts between scholars fostered by these annual meetings

have been supported by the publication of two Newsletters yearly, each of which now contains some 30-40 pages.

Once the Society had been firmly established, some subsidiary projects One of the first was the acquisition of books and were undertaken. articles, generously donated by members, and their deposit in the library of Keble College, Oxford. The editor of the Newsletter at the time, Dr Nigel Smith, was a Fellow and Tutor of the College, the Hon. Secretary a lecturer, and Mrs Jean Robinson in charge of both the College and the HSS libraries. The association between the Society and several senior members of Keble led, in due course, to the arrangement which enables members of the Society to stay in College when visiting Oxford. arrangement has been much appreciated by several members, especially those in the Netherlands, Germany and Italy. A checklist of holdings in the HSS collection was published in June 1990 and distributed to members in good standing at that time. Additions will be listed in Newsletters, until it is possible to print a supplementary volume.

Another undertaking in which the Society has been actively engaged is the Renaissance Linguistics Archive, set up and organized under the direction of Professor Mirko Tavoni of Ferrara. At the outset, the Society was invited to take part in the collection of materials for publication, and was fortunately able to secure funding on two occasions from the British Academy. This paid for the services of a research assistant, working mainly on German and Scandinavian materials, and more especially those deposited in the library of the Germanic Institute in The Treasurer of the Society, Dr John Flood, is Deputy Director of the Institute, and was able to supervise this research. Professor Tavoni was also able to fund the cataloguing of Renaissance materials in the HSS collection under the direction of Kate Ward-Perkins and the Hon. Members of the Society have attended the RLA conferences, and Dr Flood has contributed to the editorial work of the Archive.

More recently, the Society has been invited to become a corporate member of the newly-established European Society for the Study of English, on the grounds that a substantial contribution to *The Year's Work in English Studies* is devoted to publications on the history of British linguistics. Since Vol. 64 (for 1983) this section has been written by two members of the Society, first by the Hon. Secretary, and later by Dr M. K. C. MacMahon, a member of the Executive Committee. ESSE is now organizing its first international conference at the University of East Anglia in September 1991, and a section is being planned on the

history of British linguistics, to which four members are contributing papers.

A pioneering conference on an interdisciplinary approach to the works of John Wilkins was held at St Peter's College in September 1990, organized by David Cram and David Harley under the auspices of the Society. This conference proved very successful in attracting scholars in various disciplines, especially linguistics, history, and theology; and at the Society's AGM, which was held during the meeting, members voted for a continuation of such interdisciplinary colloquia every third year, when ICHoLS was meeting. The topic of "Language and Nationalism" was suggested for a future meeting, and volunteers who would be willing to undertake the organization of such a conference would be very welcome.

Other projects under consideration, although currently in abeyance, include the establishment of a series of publications, possibly concentrating on the translation of important works of scholarship in languages with which English-speaking scholars are not always familiar. Alternatively, there is much scope for the publication of editions of English works listed in R. C. Alston's Bibliography of the English Language, 1500-1800, but currently available only in unedited facsimiles. At present there are problems both with manpower and with funding, but the possibility of publication remains a long-term aim.

Another project, unfortunately highly unlikely in the present state of the British economy, is the establishment of a small research centre, for which the collection of material in Keble may be seen as a preliminary step. This is an aim even more tentative than that of publication, but members who have any suggestions to offer are very welcome to submit them to the Hon. Secretary.

More successful has been an undertaking in an entirely different direction. At the suggestion of Dr Bruce Mitchell, a scholar who feels greatly indebted to the work of Henry Sweet, the Society has undertaken to restore Sweet's grave, in Wolvercote Cemetery, North Oxford. Since Sweet had no direct descendants, it is not surprising that the grave had fallen into disrepair. As a result of the great response to the Society's appeal, the gravestone and kerb have been restored. There is even enough in the fund to have flowers regularly planted in spring and autumn for several years to come.

With some 200 members, we can now look forward with confidence to the next seven years.

HSS Officers and Executive Committee

Owing to the death in December 1990 of our Chairman, Dr Leslie Seiffert, it became necessary to reorganize the Committee at very short notice.

A meeting was held on 18 January 1991, at which our retiring President, Professor R. H. Robins, kindly agreed to take over the duties of Chairman, and Professor Anna M. Davies to replace Professor Robins as President. Dr Vivien Law, who had already agreed to act as Conference Secretary, was confirmed in office by the Committee to replace the Hon. General Secretary, who had acted as Conference Secretary since October 1989.

Three ordinary members of the Committee had resigned, owing to the expiry of their term of office: Dr Eirian Davies, Dr David Cram, and Dr Nigel Smith. All three had given extremely valuable service to the Society: Dr Davies had acted as Conference Secretary for 1986, Dr Cram as Editor of Newsletters 1-5, and Dr Smith as Editor of Newsletters 6-8. David Cram had also assisted with arrangements for the 1989 Colloquium at Magdalen, and had organized, with David Harley, the Conference on John Wilkins held at St Peter's College in September 1990. The Secretary would like to express the gratitude of the Society for their wholehearted assistance, both as officers and as ordinary members of the Committee.

No nominations had been received from the membership for an ordinary member of the Committee before the last Annual General Meeting (cf. Newsletter 14, p. 1), and the Executive Committee therefore co-opted the following (their agreement having previously been ascertained):

- 1. Dr Laura Wright, Keble College, Oxford (proposed by Nigel Smith)
- Ms Anneli Luhtala, Åbo University and Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge (proposed by Vivien Law)
- Mr John Levitt, formerly Keele University and the Oxford Delegacy for External Studies (proposed by Vivian Salmon)

In accordance with the provisions of the Society's constitution they will serve until the next AGM, when they will be formally proposed to the membership for election to serve for three years from the 1991 AGM.

It was agreed that the Chairman, the Conference Secretary and Dr Wright would form a Conference Committee; Dr Wright (with the assistance of our Librarian, Mrs Jean Robinson) would be largely responsible for arrangements at Keble.

It would be appropriate at this point to thank Professor R. H. Robins and Professor Anna M. Davies very warmly indeed for the invaluable support they have given since the foundation of the Society, both as officers, in regularly attending Committee meetings, and as members of the Society, in their active participation in our conferences.

The Hon. General Secretary, having served since the foundation of the Society in 1984, wishes now to be relieved of office, and Dr Brigitte Nerlich has agreed to undertake the duties of Secretary for an initial period of one year, from the AGM 1991 to the AGM 1992. The Editor, Professor Paul Salmon, having produced Newsletters 9-16, also wishes to stand down, and Dr Andrew Wawn, of Leeds, has been elected to replace him. Dr Nerlich and Dr Wawn will take up office at the AGM in September 1991, and communications for the Hon. Secretary and the Editor should be addressed to them after 5 September as follows:

Dr Brigitte Nerlich,
Department of Linguistics, University of Nottingham, NG7 2RD
Dr Andrew Wawn,
School of English Studies, The University, Leeds, LS2 9JT

The Henry Sweet Memorial Appeal

Members of the Society have continued to show their admiration for Henry Sweet by making further contributions for the restoration and upkeep of his grave. Japanese members have been especially generous, having donated a further sum of £100, collected by the Phonetic Society of Japan, in addition to the total of £90 reported in Newsletter 15, pp. 2-3. The individual members who subscribed to this sum included Professors Hayashi and Tsubaki (second donations), and the following members of the Phonetic Society:

Masayuki Ono Takahiro Ichikawa Megumi Shimizu Hideo Okada Shin Kawakami

The organization of this special appeal was due to the efforts and initiative of Professor Kawakami, with assistance from Professor Tsubaki.

A further generous contribution has been made by an admirer of Sweet who is not a member of the Society. This is Professor Masafumi Masubuchi, who asked Dr Bruce Mitchell to pass his kind donation on to the Society.

The Committee would like to thank most warmly all those who have contributed so generously to the success of this appeal.

From the Seventh Annual Colloquium (April 1990)

IDEAS ON BIBLE TRANSLATION: Innovation in Yiddish in the Seventeenth Century

Two innovative Yiddish Bible Translations

In the second half of the seventeenth century, two Yiddish translations of the whole Old Testament, the first ever, appeared almost simultaneously in Amsterdam. They were by Jekuthiel ben Isaac Blitz (1678) and Joseph ben Alexander Witzenhausen (1679). Both translators tried to change the traditional Yiddish Bible translation technique.

The function of Bible translation

The Torah (Pentateuch), Psalms, and other selected portions of the Old Testament occupy a central position in Askenazic Jewish culture. Ever since Hebrew ceased to be the vernacular of the ancient Israelites, the new Jewish vernacular, be it Aramaic, Yiddish, or any other Jewish language, was employed on the one hand to teach Hebrew or, on the other, to explain the text.

The translations were a necessary expedient, especially for those who taught or studied the Pentateuch. Translations were a means of spreading the knowledge of the Torah among the people to enable them to understand the readings of the Torah during the synagogue services. We have to bear in mind that a great number of people, unlike the learned élite, did not read or understand Hebrew.

From the Middle Ages onward, Jewish communities in Europe regarded it as their task to fight ignorance and to ensure that Jewish law was observed. The attempts at eradicating Hebrew illiteracy were not completely successful. Translations of the Bible into the vernacular, Yiddish, could prevent the people's alienation from religious tradition and practices.

The Yiddish translation tradition

Because of its religious and educational aims, the Yiddish translation tradition is restricted to those sections of the Old Testament which have a place in the liturgy.

In the traditional oral system of translating the Pentateuch in primary education, the Hebrew text is read word for word, and after each word or group of words, its Yiddish translation is given. The groups of words are always small units, single words or words linked in a grammatical construction like the smikhut, the Hebrew construct, where the syntactic unit reflects a close semantic link. Thus, the basic unit of translation is not the sentence, but the word or the phrase. This method, with its emphasis on the word or the phrase and not on the greater unity of the sentence, generates a language with its own syntactic structure, reflecting the Hebrew word order. The inherent disparity of Hebrew, a Semitic language which is synthetic, and Yiddish, a Germanic language which is analytic by nature, poses several problems for the translator. result, traditional Yiddish Bible translations have a syntax which is far removed from that of spoken Yiddish or the literary Yiddish of other genres.

The conservatism of the oral translation tradition in Yiddish gave rise to a special vocabulary, the taytsh vocabulary. Jewish religious conservatism, with its special respect for the text of the Bible in which no letter or dot may be changed, led to an early canonization of the translation vocabulary, the taytsh verter ('translation words', sg. taytsh vort). The ignorance of many melandim ('teachers'), their lack of familiarity with Hebrew, may have contributed to this conservatism.

Criticism of the Yiddish tradition

Not only did Blitz and Witzenhausen produce the first-ever translations of the complete Hebrew Bible into Yiddish, they also tried to reform the translation technique itself. Their explicit criticism of the translation tradition and the aims for their own translations are expressed in the prefaces to their translations.

Blitz's criticism of earlier Yiddish translations and paraphrases of the Bible is mainly directed against drash ('homiletic extrapolation') being added to the original text. He described the aims of his own translation as follows:

[...] word for word from the Language of Holiness [= Hebrew] into the language of Ashkenaz [= Yiddish] and according to the nature of this language. But not like the Taytsh khumesh which has been translated word for word, from the Holy Tongue into the language of the Ashkenaz, but where he [= the translator] has forgotten to be faithful to the language of Ashkenaz. That is the reason why one cannot understand it (Preface of the translator, Blitz 1678:f.[vr]).

Blitz's main objection to traditional translation is that the translator slavishly follows the Hebrew text, translating it word for word even where this method of translation results in a Yiddish which is difficult or impossible to understand. Blitz's ideals for a Yiddish Bible translation consist of faithfulness to the Hebrew text, but not at the expense of the syntactic integrity of the Yiddish.

Witzenhausen is much more explicit in his criticism. He explains the pitfalls of the word-for-word translation technique.

Said the translator [this is a traditional Hebrew formula—M.J.A.]: Because it is known to every sensible person, that when one wants to translate something from one language into another, one cannot translate it directly word for word [...]. Therefore also, when someone wants to translate something, he must take care that he understands it well. And after that he translates it into the language into which he wants to translate it, in a pure, clear, beautiful language, according to the meaning of the words as if one tells a piece of news continuously [** in a narrative style], but not with the words in the wrong order, the last word first, as when a foreigner tries to speak Yiddish although he cannot properly do it (Preface of the translator, Witzenhausen 1679: f. [iv*]).

Witzenhausen's first point of criticism concerns the syntax of previous, "bad" translations. Like Blitz, he criticizes the technique of translating the text "word for word" without a good understanding of the meaning of the original text or regard for the result of this technique. A translation which is produced in this way can be difficult or impossible to understand because the syntax of the language of the original text is superimposed on the language of the translation.

The solution to this problem could be a translation technique which is faithful to the original text, but paraphrases the text wherever the translation language demands this. As Witzenhausen remarks, this causes problems when one translates the Bible. The Bible is a sacred text, and one cannot add or omit words.

For that matter, in another book one can add several words, to embellish the language with them, or so people can understand it well, which is impossible here in this book, because it [the translation] cannot be more than the literal translation of the verse, and absolutely not [a paraphrase] according to the homiletic explanation [...] (Preface of the translator, Witzenhausen 1679; f. [ivr]).

Witzenhausen stresses the need for precision, but also for clarity. This need for clarity calls for minor adaptation of the source text. Witzenhausen states that he has not left out any of the words in the Hebrew original (at least not on purpose: sometimes he leaves out words by mistake). However, he has to add words which are necessary in order to create a clear Yiddish text. He marked out these added words with square brackets, with the exception of the preposition fun of. Witzenhausen justifies not marking the added preposition fun on the grounds that it occurs too frequently and that others before him had likewise left it

unmarked (Preface of the translator, Witzenhausen 1679: f. [vr]). This is not an innovation on the part of Witzenhausen.

This special status of the preposition fun 'of' may be explained by the fact that it is impossible to translate the Hebrew construct without this preposition without using the archaic genitive or simple juxtaposition, a very unclear "construction" in Yiddish.

Witzenhausen states that some Hebrew words are not translated because the Hebrew word also exists in Yiddish (i.e. as part of the Semitic component in Yiddish). He criticizes the traditional manner of translating in kheyder, whereby the melamed translates every word according to the taytsh tradition, even when the Hebrew word is itself part of everyday Yiddish, and even when the traditional taytsh term is no longer in use in contemporary Yiddish.

This conscious intention to break with the traditional taytsh lexicon and this defence of the use of words from the Semitic component (= SC) in Yiddish indicate that Witzenhausen thought it necessary to defend these aspects of his translation technique. Even at the end of the seventeenth century, at a time when other works of religious literature with frequent use of SC words had proved to be popular, and when SC words were part of everyday Yiddish, there seems to be a need to defend and explain the use of SC words in a literal Yiddish Bible translation.

Programme for reform

Blitz's and Witzenhausen's criticism of the earlier translations indicates the way they wanted to reform the tradition. According to their own ideas, changes have to be sought in syntax ('word order'). In the case of Witzenhausen, changes are to be expected in lexicon as well, namely the incorporation of words from the Semitic component of Yiddish.

Had Blitz and Witzenhausen been influenced by German or Dutch Bible translations, one would expect that they would most likely have used Luther's translation or the Dutch Statenvertaling (1637). Luther's translation was the most popular and authoritative translation into High German, the Germanic language closest to Yiddish. The Statenvertaling was the most popular translation in the Netherlands and also had great authority. Moreover, the publishers may have influenced the translators in order that they might follow the example of the highly successful Statenvertaling.

Although neither author quotes German or Dutch Bible translations, there is an obvious parallel between their ideas and those of Luther and later Christian Bible translators. Analysis of the translations proves that they made use of Luther's German translation (Blitz) and the Dutch Statenvertaling (1637; Blitz and Witzenhausen) for their translation. They did, however, do the basic translation work by themselves and the lack of references to Christian Bible translation cannot just be explained by religious motivations. The need for a break with the medieval Yiddish translation

tradition was felt by the translators themselves and expressed in their own words.

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Queen Mary and Westfield College, London

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

John Wilkins's Essay (1668)

As reported in Newsletter 12 (May 1989), p. 37. the search is still in progress for copies of the Essay which might have been annotated by members of the revision committee. No such copy has yet been found, but Jean Archibald writes from Edinburgh calling attention to the offer for sale of a copy of which the ownership is of some interest. This is lot 999 of Sotheby's Sale Catalogue for 1 May 1991, a copy of the Essay which bears a bookplate of Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816). Such a work may seem out of place in the library of a dramatist, but there were two reasons why Sheridan might have been interested in the study of language, and in John Wilkins in particular.

Sheridan's father was the Irish "elocutionist" Thomas Sheridan (1719-1788), who moved from Dublin to England in 1770 and travelled to various parts of the United Kingdom teaching his audience how to pronounce English "correctly". (He even lectured in Edinburgh, where he was made a Freeman of the City). When Richard was only 11 his father published A dissertation on ... difficulties ... in learning the English tongue, with a scheme for an English grammar and dictionary (1762), and among Thomas's other works were A general dictionary of the English language (1780).

If Sheridan owed his interest in language to his father's influence, his interest in mathematics, on which Wilkins wrote a nmber of treatises, was aroused, or perhaps fostered, by a period of study in 1772-3 with a distinguished teacher, as a result of which, according to Sheridan's son Charles, the dramatist left six copybooks full of mathematical notes. Only two years after this period of study Sheridan's first play, The Rivals, was performed, and thereafter Shereidan's interest seems to have been confined to writing for the stage and to his duties as an M.P.

* For earlier notes on the Essay, cf. Newsletter Nos. 2 (pp. 22-3), 3 (pp. 9-10) and 7 (pp. 18-19).

Vivian Salmon, Oxford

The American Philosophical Society's Library

Members may care to note that the list of Sources for the History of Linguistics in the Manuscripts Department of the American Philosophical Society Library (see Newsletter 15, pp. 27-8) has been reproduced in full in the Archives et Documents de la Société d'Histoire et d'Épistémologie des Sciences du Langage (SHESL), seconde série, no. 3 (1990).

REPORTS OF CONFERENCES

Colloquium on Textbooks, Schools and Society

This Colloquium, organized by Christopher Stray, met at Newnham College, Cambridge, on Saturday 13 April 1991. Six papers were given; teaching manuals and methodologies in science, music and architecture from the sixteenth to the twentieth century were examined, and the circulation of textbooks by individuals and printing presses explored. Jennifer Monaghan's "The textbook as a commercial enterprise: Noah Webster and William McGuffey as promotors of their reading textbooks" was the paper which contained most material directly relevant to historians of linguistic ideas. However, the colloquium as a whole demonstrated in a lively and adventurous way how a study of methods of instruction and learning can provide common ground between the arts and sciences.

Edwina Burness, Boston University in London

Colloquium on Language and Style in Renaissance English

An experimental colloquium, organized by Sylvia Adamson and Susan Wright, took place at St Catherine's College, Cambridge, on Saturday 27 April 1991. The nine papers by new and established scholars represented in the main work in progress, and bore witness to an exciting range of approaches to linguistic and stylistic issues. There were discussions of Renaissance attitudes to translation in European languages and English, and to iconic forms, an examination of the implication of courtly love lexis, sociolinguistic analyses of Shakespearean texts and authorship problems, a diachronic treatment of topic-changers, and a consideration of varieties and stereotypes in written speech.

Anyone who would be interested in participating in a similar meeting is warmly invited to write to Sylvia Adamson, Faculty of English, 9 West Road, Cambridge CB3 9DP.

Edwina Burness, Boston University in London

Italy and Europe in Renaissance Linguistics: Comparisons and Relations Istituto di Studi Rinascimentali

This conference, organized by the Renaissance Linguistics Archive, in conjunction with SHESL and the HSS, was held in Palazzo Paradiso in Ferrara from 20 to 24 March. All papers had a comparative angle, and all aimed to show how Italian influences had been at work throughout Europe in the Renaissance. They spanned fourteen different themes: The Concept of Latin; the Study of Greek; Oriental Languages—Yiddish; Latin and the Vulgar Languages; Orthography and Printing: Questione della lingua and its Counterparts outside Italy; Grammar of the Vulgar Languages; Translations; the Teaching of Foreign Languages; Myths of Origin; Historical and Comparative Linguistics; Linguistics of the New World; and Semiotics.

The conference succeeded in avoiding the anachronism of conceiving of Europe as it is today—or at least as it was when the conference was being planned. Central and Eastern European topics were well covered, and the conference was attended by scholars from Eastern Europe.

Among the many interesting papers which came to my attention were those by Eckhard Kessler on Humanist linguistic thought as a scientific method; Silvio Rizzo on the teaching of Latin in the Humanist schools; W. K. Percival on the grammar of Nebrija and its use of Italian sources; Pierre Lardet on the functions of French and Italian translations of Aristotle's Rhetoric; G. Hassler on Luther's method of translation; N. Bingen on the teaching of Italian in francophone areas from 1500 to 1600; H. Goldblatt on the questione della lingua in the Slavonic world; S. Gensini on Leibniz and Humanist linguistic thought. The papers were given at three different sessions which ran concurrently, making it impossible to hear everything; occasionally two important papers clashed, although they had been arranged by theme. This was perhaps the least satisfactory aspect of an otherwise well functioning conference.

The Proceedings of the Conference will be published by the Istituto di Studi Rinascimentali.

Kristian Jensen, Oxford

[Editor's note: Dr Jensen himself read a paper, as did two of the Henry Sweet Society's officers, Dr J. L. Flood and Dr Vivien Law, and about a dozen other members of the Society.]

FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

ICHoLS VI

The next International Conference on the History of the Language Sciences will take place at Washington, D.C., from 20-24 August 1993.

It was suggested at a business meeting held in the course of the Renaissance Linguistics Conference at Ferrara in March 1991 that the Henry Sweet Society, in common with its two sister societies, should elect one of its members to represent it in the preparations for the next meeting. Previously, the Chairman of the Executive Committee, the late Dr Leslie Seiffert, has been invited, on an informal basis, to participate in the organization of ICHoLS.

The proposal to elect a representative will be placed on the agenda of the AGM at Keble on September 3rd or 4th, 1991. If you have any suggestions or comments to make in advance, please write to the Hon. Secretary (Mrs V. Salmon) at 5 Rotha Field Road, Oxford, OX2 8JJ.

Language Origins Society

The Seventh annual meeting will be held at Northern Illinois University on 18-20 July 1991.

Further information from Edward Callary, Coordinator LOS, English Department, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb II 60115, USA

ESSE

The European Society for the Study of English

As already announced in Newsletter 15 (p. 35), the inaugural conference of this Society will be held at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, from 4-8 September 1991, and will include a section on the history of English linguistic ideas.

The topics to be discussed will be as previously noted, but the paper on Robert Lowth and eighteenth-century grammar will now be given by Professor Carol Percy, of Toronto.

Members may care to note that there will be one or more papers in the section on Lexicography devoted to English dictionaries of the past. One paper will be given by Dr Edwina Burness on "The influence of lexicographical interest in English dialect words on school texts, c. 1670-1700"; the other by Dr Frits Stuurman (cf. Newsletter 15, p. 21-2), whose subject will be "On 'Grammar in the dictionary' (an assessment by antecedents and homologies)".

Further information from Dr Robert Clark, School of English and American Studies, The University of East Anglia, Norwich.

Studienkreis ,Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft'

The fourth Colloquium, organized in co-operation with the Seminar for Romance Languages of the Martin Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg, will be held at Halle an der Saale on Tuesday and Wednesday 17-18 September 1991.

The names of 28 participants, who include several members of the Henry Sweet Society, and the titles of some 15 papers have so far been announced. The majority of the papers are in German and on German themes, but there are some in English.

Further information from the organizers:

Klaus D. Dutz, Postfach 5725, D-4400 Münster, or

(including booking form) Gerda Hassler, Romanisches Seminar der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Halle/Saale.

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Arrangements are already being made for the fifth Colloquium of the Studienkreis, to be held at the Fryske Akademy. Leeuwarden, on Thursday and Friday 23-24 April 1992.

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"THE LONDON SCHOOL: THEN AND NOW"

A Conference in celebration of the birth of J. R. Firth, 1890-1960

will be held at the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London) on 20-21 June 1991.

Day 1: The Study of Meaning in Context Day 2: Phonology

Speakers will include R. H. Robins, Dan Sperber, Deirdre Wilson, Ruth Kempson, Frank Palmer, Natalie Waterson, John Kelly, Jonathan Kaye

NOTICES OF BOOKS RECEIVED

Werner Hüllen (ed.), Understanding the Historiography of Linguistics. Problems and Projects. Symposium at Essen, 23-25 November 1989. Münster: Nodus Publikationen, 1990. 344 pp. DM 59.00.

One of the main attractions of this book is the date of its publication. It is very rare indeed to see the proceedings of a conference made available so quickly to the participants and, more importantly, to those who could not participate. But in spite of speedy publication, this volume does not give the impression of being published in a hurry. It contains 23 papers (written either in English or German) by some of the leading historians of linguistics in Germany, the Netherlands and England. The quality of the papers varies from high to very high.

The distinctive feature of the book (apart from its date of publication) is the attempt to "pick up as many topical questions [in the history of linguistics] as can be found and, at the same time, to use their analysis for reflexions and deliberations on the methodology of the history of linguistics" (p. 10). Four papers are devoted to problems of linguistic historiography, eight use topical analyses as a vehicle for methodological reflexions, nine provide exemplary analyses, and two report on major research projects; there is, however, some overlap between these groups, and a common concern with principles.

The paper by R. H. Robins notes that the historian of linguistics has to find a balance between purely annalistic accounts and purely thematic ones, a distinction paralleled by the one drawn by Pierre Swiggers in discussing the relation between content and context-orientated linguistic historiogaphy (LH), which should be complementary, not opposed; he also examines the influence of philosophies of science (and "culture") on LH and the development and constitution of linguistic traditions, their origin and pace of evolution.

Peter Schmitter's paper on "Historiographie und Metahistoriographie" is largely an attempt to give some concise definitions of historiography and metahistoriography; in his view, historiographical work is always theory-dependent, that is to say, historians of linguistics cannot dispense with methodological questions and 'just write'... Metahistoriography comprises a necessary reflection upon the epistemological bases of historiography, the theory of historiography, an analysis of existing historiographical and metahistoriographical texts, and a methodology of historiography. This view is supplemented by Klaus Dutz's reflections on the relations between history and 'stories', between history and 'past', between history as event and history as account (Erzählung).

Fundamental considerations of the principles of LH are also prominent in some of the papers in the second group. Vivien Law deals with the history of morphology as an expression of a change in consciousness, and exemplifies her position by examining changing views on the word: in Greco-Roman antiquity the word was regarded as an organic whole, studied through the use of paradigms and substitution rules; in the medieval Judeo-Arab world it was regarded as composed of and decomposable into elements; in the 15th and 16th centuries both traditions came into contact, but only the discovery of Sanskrit in the 18th brought about a radical change in the Western view of the world through the importation of the concept 'root'. She goes on to propose an approach to LH which "can illumine, not just our own intellectual pedigree, or the specific ideas with which we, as linguists work, but which can tell us something which is relevant to us all as human beings" (p. 68), making LH part of a history of consciousness.

Hans-Josef Niederehe also discusses the relation between the history of science and the history of language(s), searching for historiographical clues in works on the history of language(s), as, for example, in Gregorio Mayáns y Siscár's 1737 Origines de la langua española. Niederehe advocates a combination of linguistics and history of language(s) as well as a collaboration between the history of language(s) and the history of science. Werner Hüllen deals with Bacon's views of language and the use of present-day terminology in LH. He distinguishes between two groups of words—those typical of Bacon and alien to us, and those typical of present-day linguists and alien to Bacon, and, arranging both in certain clusters or schemata, shows that "the specific method of analyzing historical texts with present-day language turns out to be the mapping of new schemata onto old ones" (p. 96). Wulf Oesterreicher pleads for a LH that should take into account results achieved in linguistics itself, such as those achieved in the study of spoken and written French and in linguistic varieties, and suggests a practical application in a re-evaluation of the conception of the language of the French revolution and its language policy.

The remaining papers in this group are also concerned more with individual issues rather than with general principles. In analysing the 18th century in general and Hamann in particular, Helmut Weiss paints a new image of both in which Hamann is seen as a thinker of the enlightenment, not against the enlightenment. A similar plea for rethinking informs Lia Formigari's appeal (formally part of the third group) to look for continuous philosophical traditions in linguistics behind the screen of the emergence and constitution of the historical-comparative tradition; it would, for example, be desirable to look beyond Herder, the author of the famous Abhandiung or the Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit and study his Metakritik. Johannes Roggenhofer examines the status of the ambiguous figure Lichtenberg in the history of "linguistics". Like Weiss, he argues in favour of a LH that would make the past available to the present. Two further papers in this section deal with Karl Philipp Moritz and Lady Victoria Welby; in both the plea is made that their work should be seen in the general cultural context of their time.

Wendy Ayres-Bennett notes two points of view in the study of 17th-century linguistics in France: usage versus reason, descriptivism versus prescriptivism, data-orientation versus theory-orientation. However, some writers, such as Ménage, resist this type of pigeon-holing. Again we are advised to avoid fragmentation, for example in treating Ménage in either the history of grammar or the history of lexicography.

Franz Josef Hausmann assesses the place of dictionary research in LH. Reviews of dictionaries written during the 16th and 17th centuries and articles published in the great encyclopædias, for example that on Dictionnaire by d'Alembert for the Encyclopédie, are objects for such a historiography. Noel Osselton's paper is an interesting and practical contribution to the history of lexicography, dealing with secondary documentation in the OED.

David Cram deals with the contribution of John Ray and Francis Willughby to universal language schemes, showing that these two scholars tried to tackle the problem of a universal language by a compilation of word-lists based on an a posteriori method, complementary to the a priori method for which the 17th century (Dalgarno and Wilkins) is famous. Leslie Seiffert presents Schottelius as one of the ancestors of a (still noticeable) movement which advocates purism in German; Schottelius aimed to establish a "theory of language usage as guarantor of truth and authority in language" (p. 241), Latin being adopted as the guiding hand in this appeal for a purification of the German language. Andreas Dörner and Gregor Meder report the discovery of an almost unknown gram-

mar by Johann Heinrich Ludwig Bauer (1773-1846), which in its indices opened up for them a universe of synchronic grammatography, hidden somewhere between Adelung and the historical comparative paradigm. Konrad Schröder shows that the teaching of English in Germany in the 18th century is based on clichés concerning certain fixed attributes or qualities of language. English is difficult, sound-wise, but easy on the level of grammar; it is expressive and vigorous—but it is not regarded as a world-language. Jan Noordegraaf presents an overview of the highlights in the history of general grammar in the Netherlands (hitherto neglected in LH) from the second half of the 17th century until the first decade of the 20th, then studies the self-image of Dutch linguists in the 19th century in relation to its European neighbours, and discusses some 19th and 20th-century writings on the history of (Dutch) linguistics.

The reports of work in progress are (1) Edeltraud Dobnig-Jülch's account of the virtues of the Bio-bibliographisches Handbuch der Grammatiker, initiated ten years ago by Herbert Brekle, discussing the disadvantages of earlier works of this kind; and (2) a presentation by Erika Hültenschmidt of a research project supported by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, and carried out at Bielefeld into Sprachwissenschaft in Frankreich und Deutschland 1800-1870. Entwicklung, Differenzierung, Transfer. The framework is that of 'Wissenschaftsforschung', i.e., an enquiry into the nature of a discipline; one of the main objectives is to study the cultural transfers between Germany and France.

And the moral of the stories? Avoid fragmentation in LH. Avoid a 'pure' LH and open it up to the history of language(s), linguistics itself and even anthropology. To quote Vivien Law (who quotes Arens): if by studying language we study ourselves, then by observing how our views on language have changed, we can gain a glimpse into our changing perceptions of ourselves.

Brigitte Nerlich, Nottingham

Peter Schmitter (ed.), Essays towards a History of Semantics. Münster: Nodus, 1990. 175 pp.

This is a collection from papers read at the Sixth Annual Colloquium of the Henry Sweet Society, held at Magdalen College, Oxford, on 13-15 September 1989. Its purpose is to present historical material on semantics, much of which may have been hitherto overlooked by linguists, especially when originally written under the ægis of mathematics, philosophy, theology, or law. The volume comprises six essays, presented in chronological order, ranging from Biblical and Ancient Greek thought on the relationship of word to object, to late medieval and early modern European preoccupations with meaning, translation and language development, and to the semantic work of modern linguists of the last two centuries.

Peter Schmitter ("From Homer to Plato: language, thought and reality in Ancient Greece") traces a development from an original perception of unity to the differentiation between language, thought and object. The authorities of the Old Testament, Homer, Hesiod, Heraclitus, Parmenides and Plato are examined; and from the inherent relationship between God and name detailed in the Old Testament the arbitrary and conventional nature of the relationship between object and thought is gradually perceived. Despite the very large timespan covered by this paper the material is clearly, in deed humorously, presented.

Vivian Salmon ("Some views on meaning in sixteenth-century England") presents Latin texts from Italy, Spain, England, Germany and France on

such subjects as the status and power of words, the problems of translation and the conveyance of meaning. These semantic considerations were originally written in philosophical, theological and legal treatises. The article looks briefly at the works of numerous contemporary thinkers, tracing the influence of the Platonic/Aristotelean debate on sixteenth-century semantic study. The main preoccupations are found to be the natural or conventional relationship between word and object, the Adamic language debate, and the existence of universals.

Anthony J. Klijnsmit ("Spinoza on the 'Imperfection of words') expounds the seventeenth-century Dutch philosopher's sometimes rather arcane thoughts on words by means of humorous fable and example. In a memorable story about a joyful Wee Beastie with a square soul, who could not leap for happiness because he did not know about the third dimension, Klijnsmit explains and simplifies for the linguist some of Spinoza's philosophical views, particularly those pertaining to the unreliability of words due to the fallibility of the human senses. Spinoza's theory of meaning discusses Biblical translation from Hebrew, and concludes that Hebrew is not divine, but an ordinary language like any other, and thus open to semantic change and mistranslation. There is liberal quotation from Spinoza's Latin text, with translation in English.

Emma Vorlat ("The Origin and development of language according to Monboddo") presents social and anthropological theory of the eighteenth century, and shows how this affected the contemporary theory of language. Missionaries and early anthropologists provided evidence, it was thought, for proto-societies. American Indians were considered to be in an early state of evolution, and hence provided a model for European linguistic development. He thought that orang-utans were early humans who had not yet developed speech. Monboddo's work is closely related to that of Rousseau, Condillac, Mandeville and Maupertuis, and hence provides a summa of eighteenth-century thinking about the origin of language.

Brigitte Nerlich ("From form to function") deals with the establishment of the discipline of semantics in the nineteenth century, which was not an easy accomplishment, as at first the subject was considered a topic of amusement, and books on semantics were read for general entertainment. Nerlich takes three case studies, the works of Bréal in France, Wegener in Germany and Gardiner in England, and considers their contribution to the field. All too briefly she outlines the history of English semantics, starting with John Locke's parallelism between words and ideas, leading on to Benjamin Humphrey Smart's sign theory, Lady Victoria Welsby's rediscovery of which influenced C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards.

Werner Hüllen ("Rudolf Hailig and Walther von Wartburg's Begriffs-system and its non-aceptance in German linguistics") has the task of describing the work of the present century, and he mentions all the major contributors to the subject of semantics. He begins with the Begriffssystem of Hallig and von Wartburg, a systematically organized list of concepts published in 1952. The background of conceptual dictionaries is investigated, and their work linked to that of their many predecessors. The lexical field theory of Jost Trier is described, and identified as one of the most influential semantic theories of the century. The change that took place in the fifties and sixties due to American structuralism usurped to some degree the theories of the semantic field and the conceptual dictionary, and a formalist approach was subsequently adopted. Hillen voices doubt as to whether this was entirely successful, and notes that the ethnographic and anthropological input so characteristic of early semantic thought has now been entirely lost, due, in part, to its propensity for fostering Nazi propaganda. The works of Ferdinand de Saussure, Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf are treated briefly.

Giulio Lepschy (ed.), Storia della linguistica. vols. I and II. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1990.

Konrad Koerner, Practicing Linguistic Historiography. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: Benjamins, 1989.

These two books in their different ways are evidence of the situation of the history of linguistics within the whole discipline of general linguistics. Its progress during the last twenty years has been phenomenal, with several textbooks, two specialist periodicals, three specialist societies, and regular courses at undergraduate and postgraduate levels in European and American universities.

The importance of the two books noticed here lies in the present needs of students and others who have mastered the general picture of the history of linguistics, stretching back 2000 years and into several different civilizations. Lepschy's Storia della linguistica, a three-volume publication of which volumes I and II have now appeared, brings together chapters on different periods and different aspects of the history of linguistics, written by specialist historians, who are able to fill in the enormously valuable details of periods and aspects that can only be outlined in a single author's single book.

Storia della linguistica, when complete, will comprise twelve chapters. The first volume (chapters 1-6) covers the various geographical areas wherein linguistics was systematically studied: China, India, the Near and Middle East in general, amongst the Hebrews, amongst the Arabs, and in Graeco-Latin Antiquity. Volumes II and III are more chronologically orientated: chapter 7 on Medieval linguistics, chapter 8 on Renaissance linguistics, chapter 9 on seventeenth and eighteenth-century linguistics; and in volume III (forthcoming), chapter 10 on nineteenth-century historical linguistics, chapter 11 on the present century, and chapter 12 on recent studies specifically related to Italian.

Koerner's volume has a different structure and purpose. Like its 1978 predecessor Towards a Historiography of Linguistics, it comprises a selection by the author of earlier articles. This is valuable for two reasons: in the first place we are enabled to survey the work and thinking of a single scholar over a number of years, and secondly, many articles first appearing in specialist periodicals may be accessible only with difficulty, if at all, to many interested readers, especially students of linguistics in institutions with restricted periodical libraries.

Koerner's present volume contains reprints of twenty-four articles published since his 1978 collection, and is divided into three parts: 1. Methods and models; 2. Tradition and transmission, and 3. Schools and scholars. These three broad topic headings would have enabled the author and editor to cover every period and region in the history of the subject. In fact, very properly in view of his own specialist contributions, he confines himself largely to the last two centuries, so that every linguist will find something of interest in his or her own field of research.

The two books noticed here are in a sense complementary, being planned and edited to serve different purposes. They are both part and evidence of the maturity of studies in the history of linguistics which has now been achieved.

Manfred Görlach, Studies in the History of the English Language. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1990 (Anglistische Forschungen, Heft 210). 223 pp. Hardback DM 130.00, paperback DM. 100.00

Although this volume is not concerned specifically with the history of linguistic ideas, it will be of considerable interest to many readers of this journal, for two reasons; first, one of the most substantial articles in the volume deals with processes of standardization in English, and in doing so, refers briefly to the contributions made by earlier linguistic scholars such as Hart, Gill, Jonson, Lowth, and Murray. Secondly, some of the papers discuss topics which will concern most linguists; in particular, the paper on the implications of the term 'Creole', which addresses controversial views expressed in the last decade on the propriety of applying this term to Middle English. Other papers which will be of unusual interest include an illuminating discussion of English and Scots vocabulary.

The collection consists of nine articles first published between 1978 and 1988, frequently subjected to extensive revision. They are of three kinds: (1) general surveys, either of original material such as renaissance English or of current projects, such as the compilation of corpora, in which Görlach examines and evaluates recent scholarship; (2) proposals for the filling of lacunae, especially in Middle English studies; (3) the results of the author's own research, set out, in particular, in various pie charts and other diagrams in the paper on the standardization of English. These are highly informative, presenting as they do a great deal of information in a concise and readily assimilated form. Other original research by Görlach is displayed in the articles on Scots, where the author is breaking ground which is relatively new to most historians of the English Language.

Görlach's assessments of scholarship in the history of English are not altogether favourable, but he himself does not call attention to what seems to be one of the major defects in such scholarship, i.e. it fails to distinguish clearly and consistently between the language of conversation and the written language of literary or technical prose. The former represents an interchange between two or more people who are reacting linguistically to one another in a given situation; written language is quite different in kind. Admittedly, it is hard to find examples of genuine conversation of the past, and one can only look at reports of trials and debates (which are often imperfectly represented), or at imitations of speech by the dramatist or novelist. Where a playwright is deliberately attempting to represent characters speaking in normal conversational English, this is probably the best evidence we can expect to find. Moreover, Görlach does not always draw a clear distinction between the language of prose and verse, the two being potentially very different in vocabulary, word-order, and possibly syntax.

Görlach provides a useful bibliography, with many detailed footnote references. The present writer has noticed, however, the occasional lapse. For example, a reference to p. 127 is placed beside an item in the bibliography which does not, in fact appear there.

In his preface, Görlach explains why he has assembled these papers in a single volume; first, he says, it is in order to document various facets of a scholar's activities; and secondly such a collection can indicate what developments have taken place in a given field over recent years. No such explanations are necessary, because most scholars, especially those who do not have easy access to photocopiers or to conference proceedings of limited distribution, will welcome a collection which does in fact make a coherent whole, and shows how the history of the English language can be discussed in the terms of modern linguistic scholarship.

Görlach makes two claims with which the present writer fully concurs; first, that the historical development of English is an exciting study, and secondly, that it is far from being exhausted. The author shows very clearly both what remains to be done, and also what needs to be done again; and if his tone is occasionally polemical, one can understand why he feels so strongly that so much research is still needed which is adequately detailed, reliable and professional in its approach.

Vivian Salmon, Oxford

R. H. Robins, A Short History of Linguistics. Third edition. London & New York: Longman, 1990. x + 271 pp.

There can be few members of this Society who have not had reason to be grateful to Professor Robins for what has now become a standard text in the history of linguistics; consequently, there is little need to repeat the encomia of earlier reviewers on its range (covering non-European as well as Western traditions), its lucidity, Robins's humane approach to the subject-matter, and the persuasive style in which it is written. But it is now ten years since the second edition appeared, and it is time for a critical survey of the enormous expansion of publication since 1979 in the history of linguistics.

The growth of active interest in this field is immediately obvious when the number of pages in the second and third editions is compared; there are 248 in the second compared to 271 in the third. The additional material consists of first, extensive supplementary notes and bibliographies at the end of each chapter; secondly, occasional explanatory comments inserted into the original text (for example, a note on p. 224 which makes it explicit, at this point, that Jakobson and Mathesius were members of the Prague Circle): and thirdly, major rewriting which includes reassessment (for example, at the beginning of the chapter on 'The Renaissance and after'), entirely new material, such as the survey of linguistics in the last decade, and the updating of earlier material, such as the treatment of the linguistics of the classical and medieval periods. A good illustration of the expansion of footnotes appears in no. 59 (2nd ed., no. 60 in the third), attached to chapter 2. The note in the second edition cites works published in 1816 and 1883 respectively, and comprises only 2½ lines; that in the third refers additionally to translations made in 1985 and 1987, and commentaries dated 1958, 1959, 1975, 1979 and 1986, occupying 16 lines. Additions to notes and bibliography after each chapter generally occupy between two and four pages; the list of works for further consultation appended to the introductory chapter is particularly impressive, being increased from nine to twenty-six entries in the latest edition.

Robins's Short History of Linguistics is valuable for four kinds of reader; first, for the linguist whose own research has been exclusively occupied with current developments and who has come to realise that it is rewarding and, indeed, exciting to discover the foundations on which his own work is ultimately based; secondly, the novice student of linguistics, who will find it helpful to discover the cultural antecedents of his own studies, which can sometimes seem all too lacking in humane interest; thirdly, the historian of philosophy, whose insights into his own discipline will be deepened by understanding the parallel developments in a sister discipline; and finally, the general reader, who is often totally unaware of the richness of the history of a subject now becoming an essential part of the humanities curriculum.

The author's account of recent contributions to linguistics is part of a chapter which will be perhaps most frequently consulted; it is refreshingly devoid of polemic, providing a sympathetic yet balanced account of

developments in transformational-generative grammar in the last decade, praising this approach for the insights it offers into the workings of language, but at the same time giving full credit, and extensive coverage, to alternative approaches to linguistics, in the work of J. R. Firth's pupils, such as M. A. K. Halliday, as well as the contributions to linguistics of Kenneth Pike and Sidney Lamb.

The text has been entirely reset, and the present edition (paperback only) is printed on paper of a better quality than earlier paperbacks, and is provided with a most attractive cover. It forms part of the series 'Longman Linguistics Library', of which the general editors are R. H. Robins and Martin Harris. It is essential reading for all historians of linguistics, and highly recommended to linguists of all persuasions.

Vivian Salmon, Oxford

Julie Tetel Andresen, Linguistics in America 1769-1924. A Critical History. London & New York: Routledge, 1990. vi + 308 pp. £35.00. (Routledge History of Linguistic Thought Series)

The preface and introduction to this work merit close study, because in them the author sets out, most persuasively and clearly, her views on the correct aproach to the historiography of linguistics. Admitting that most historians approach their subject with some degree of personal vision, and that they carry their investigations into those places which have been previously overlooked, she argues that the choice of what should be included in historiographical material is not given in advance, but reflects present concerns about the nature and study of language (p. 17). She has no hesitation in stating that she favours those approaches which emphasize language as a 'human and social-made historical product', and that foregrounding the social-made aspect of language has as many consequences for the theory of the brain as those theories of language with a more rationalist approach. A socio-political linguistic orientation is neither an afterthought in the history of American ideas on language, nor a sub-discipline, but 'has been in the center of the linguistic action from the very beginnings of language study in America'.

Andresen selects the period between 1769 and 1924 because the former date marks the foundation of the American Philosophical Society, and the latter the establishment of the journal Language; and much of the linguistic scholarship of this period is crucial to her argument that American linguistics was not simply subservient to a German-based study of Indo-European in institutions of the Old World, but was characterized by concerns unique to American culture. First was the interest in American Indian languages; secondly, the goal of establishing American English as an entity in its own right, worthy of 'défense et illustration', and thirdly, the development of a typical American approach to the study of language in general, in which she traces with some justification a surprising link between such disparate scholars as Noah Webster and Noam Chomsky. These three 'arcs of development', as she describes them, following Dell Hymes, are not separate strands of thought; she argues that they are intertwined with one another in the course of linguistic studies. As is pointed out in the title, this is not simply a record of who wrote what and when, but it is a critical survey, often correcting erroneous views promulgated by earlier historians of linguistics, such as Pedersen.

As this is a pioneering study, readers will no doubt appreciate a fairly detailed account of its content, a guide to which is provided in the chapter headings. The author subtitles her Preface "American Linguistics since circa 1925". The title is explanatory, although it does

not reveal what a valuable contribution she makes by listing and dating relevant Journals before the establishment of Language in 1925. This preface is followed by "An Introductory Essay: the Goals of Linguistic Historiography", in which the author postulates a set of challenges, assertions, and boundaries, which make her approach crystal clear. The remainder of the volume contains the following chapters: I. "In the Beginning (1769-1815): The Political Conception of Language"; II. "From Philadelphia to the Field: 1815-42"—these two chapters make up about half the volume; III. "The Institutionalization of American Linguistics 1842-94"; IV. "The Arcs of Development Separate: 1875-1900"; V. "The Search for Autonomy: 1900-24". These chapters are followed by detailed notes (pp. 255-273), a valuable bibliography (pp. 274-289) and indexes of (a) names and (b) subjects.

In a work which covers such a wide time-span, it would be impossible to cite every American scholar who evinced any interest in the study of language. Nevertheless, since she refers briefly to studies of language before 1769, perhaps a short note might have been included on the achievements of Cotton Mather (1663-1728), who is described in the Dictionary of National Biography as 'master of many languages, including Iroquois'. Rather more important was Jonathan Fisher (1768-1847), whose phonetic studies and collection of Penobscot vocabulary are not cited; and perhaps a sentence or two could have been spared for the applied linguist and inventor of the telephone, Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922, naturalized in 1874). Bell used his father's invention of Visible Speech (1863) in his teaching of the deaf, for which he became renowned in the United States, and which in turn inspired Henry Sweet to write his Handbook of Phonetics (1877).

It is worth noting that The Year's Work in English Studies has included, since 1984, a substantially expanded section on "The History of English Linguistics", which covers linguistic historiography written by English-speaking scholars, not simply scholars working in the U.K. Consequently, historians of American linguistics may find relevant material in this source.

This pioneering study will merit, and undoubtedly receive, detailed reviews in academic journals where space is less at a premium than here. The present reviewer can only draw attention, briefly, to the importance of this study, which will be both fascinating and illuminating for historians of Western linguistics, whether in the U.S.A. or elsewhere.

Vivian Salmon, Oxford

Roman Jakobson and Linda R. Waugh, Die Lautgestalt der Sprache. Unter Mitarbeit von Martha Taylor. [A translation, by Christine Shannon and Thomas F. Shannon of The Sound Shape of Language (1979)]. Berlin & New York: W. de Gruyter, 1990. xxiii + 337 pp.

This book is not an exposition of the principles of distinctive feature analysis—these were established by two key works of the 1950s (Preliminaries to Speech Analysis [1952] and Fundamentals of Language [1956])—in which Jakobson was the leading collaborator. The principles themselves go back further than that, to the activities of the Prague school, in which, again, Jakobson himself was a prominent figure; the essays translated here draw largely, though not exclusively, on these principles, and form a stimulating survey of vast areas of linguistic scholarship, which merit being set before a German-speaking public which might be daunted by the original English.

The only material in the volume which is not translated from The Sound Shape is a brief article on "Mark and Feature", which appeared in a Festschrift for a Japanese scholar. In it Jakobson defends the potentially confusing use of Merkmal for the feature itself (as opposed to 'distinktive Eigenschaft'), and merkmalhaft and merkmallos for 'marked' and 'unmarked'. The translators note that this may make for some difficulty in reading certain passages; but it is based on the observation that the presence of a feature is in binary opposition to its absence, a proposition for which Jakobson gracefully acknowledges an indebtedness to Hendrik Pos. The point is a valid one: merkmalhaft = '+ feature' and merkmallos = '- feature'; and once this is realised, it is the terms 'marked' and 'unmarked' which are misleading in this context, for elsewhere a 'marked' form is one which is set apart by position, stress or other means as specially prominent, whereas the presence or absence of a feature has no bearing on prominence..

The principle of distinctive features is shown to offer an explanation of the extent and probability of linguistic change, in that change of more than one feature at any one time makes for a disproportionate loss of intelligibility; this is evidenced not only by linguistic examples, but tellingly from literature, where Tolstoy is shown to have distorted real family names by only one feature in naming the characters of War and Peace, whereas changing two features (e.g. voicing and place of articulation) would have made the fictional names implausible to the Russian ear.

The first chapter of this book, by far the longest, ranges far more widely than a consideration of the way in which distinctive features work; it shows strong insights into the history of linguistics, where, inter alia, Henry Sweet is credited—though on the evidence of the OED he may, indeed, be antedated— with the first use of the term 'distinctive' in the sense understood by the proponents of distinctive feature analysis, i.e. significant as opposed to redundant (the "redundant" feature may of course become "significant" in another context). Besides this it goes into such topics as the laterality of hearing, a piece of neural physiology probably less familiar than the laterality of the control of speech, and at another point touches on universals. The chapter gives rather the impression of a series of brief, but extraordinarily fully documented observations, drawing on knowledge of a vast range of languages and linguistic phenomena, though they are, however, presented rather in the manner of ex cathedra statements.

The second chapter deals with the establishment of the basic components of speech, and the third is a review, rather than an exposition, of the principles of distinctive feature analysis. The fourth deals with the affective quality of sounds—synæsthesia. onomatopæia, taboo, the sound patterns of verse. All in all, the book is a very rich harvest of a lifetime's concern with language and its ways.

There is one rather disturbing matter of typographical presentation: it is, no doubt, a mark of the rapid progress of computer type-setting that no B was available for a book printed in Germany such a relatively short time ago. It would have been less disturbing for this reader if it had been replaced by ss throughout, rather than by β , which in the font used gives an unwelcome subliminal suggestion of italics, and draws attention on one occasion, even, to an incorrect use ('unzuverläßig').

Paul Salmon, Oxford

Saskia Daalder and Jan Noordegraaf (eds.), H. J. Pos (1898-1953), taalkundige en geëngageerd filosoof. Amsterdam: Huis aan de Drie Grachten, 1990.

Recent Newsletters have already reported the devoted service to the memory of H. J. Pos by the two editors of this volume, both in organizing a symposium to celebrate his work, and in furthering the investigation and evaluation of the papers he left behind. The book is both the product and the justification of the interest they have shown, for Posmay now be seen to have been a linguist of major importance who has been unjustly neglected, perhaps because many of his works were composed in a language which lies outside the mainstream of European scholarship, perhaps because of the very spread of his interests; for, besides being a linguist, he was a classical scholar and a philosopher and an active participant in political causes.

If the chief weight of his work is the product of an interaction between the philosopher and the linguist in him, this, too, is broadly manifested. In his earliest publication, he sided (independently) with Saussure in bringing the synchronic study of language to the forefront; but this is done on strong theoretical grounds. His thinking is conditioned by an awareness of the contribution of the subject (speaker, listener, reader) to the comprehension of the object (what is represented in speech or writing); knowledge of the object is thus an abstraction formed by the subject, and language is an active process of systematization. This process works on the one hand at the level of sounds, and on the other at the level of semantics. He distinguishes between a receptive and a productive linguistic ability (kennen and können), a distinction which resembles that between language as an activity that Pos in later work views grammar as a construct which facilitates comprehension, rather than as an end in itself, while syntax is seen as a means of progressive clarification, in which the individual word is conditioned by its context, seen as sequential ordering. This is attractive as a practical account of the process of understanding what is presented discursively—one which is, incidentally, adumbrated to some extent by Herder in his Metakritik, but, as it neglects hierarchy (the establishment of relationship by inflections), it does not illuminate the syntax of synthetic languages, which have to be paraphrased into analytic ones in which successivity is an essential feature. Nevertheless, Pos's ideas formed a basis on which later writers on syntax were able to build.

In other respects, too, Pos shows himself to be at least abreast of his age, and perhaps in advance of it. In particular, as one of the later articles in this book points out, he was personally acquainted with Bühler, whose Kundgabe, Auslösung and Darstellung reappear as the 'uitladende', 'uitwerkende' and 'mededelende' functions of language. He also established personal contacts with other linguists of the day through active participation in the various congresses held in the thirties, where he met, for example, members of the Prague school; and he is also acknowledged as having made an invaluable contribution to their phonological system.

Pos is probably more distinguished as a critic and communicator of ideas rather than as the founder of a distinctive school of linguistics. However, these ideas have not received until comparatively recently the attention they deserve, perhaps through the accident of the time in which they were formulated, the 1930s—including writings as late as 1938. This book is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of both the Dutch and the European contexts in which Pos wrote, as well as a useful and rich introduction to his own work.

Joyce Morris, The Morris-Montessori Word List. London: Compiled for the London Montessori Centre, 1990. xxi + 150 pp.

This book is of topical interest in view of recently expressed public concern about illiteracy in the pupils of schools in Britain, and controversy about the remedies for a most regrettable situation. It aims to provide a textbook to enable the beginner to come to terms with the way English is spelt and the relation of pronunciation to spelling.

The text itself is preceded by a statement of its aims and methods, couched in forthright but rather simplified terms. This presentation is highly appropriate for the most likely users of the book, young children and their teachers, though it is to be hoped that the latter will be given, in the course of their pædagogical training, some insight into the principles involved; those readers who wish to find their own way to the linguistic research on which the book is based will find reference to a fuller exposition by the author in *Reading*, 18 (1984).

The system adopted for the description of English sounds is known as 'Phonics 44', on the grounds that there are forty-four distinctive phonemes in English, 24 consonantal and 20 vocalic. The alphabet we normally use has 21 graphemes for consonants (of which three are redundant), but only five (+ <y>) for vowels. The disparity between the variety of sounds and the visual resources for representing them is commonly regarded as more acute in English than in other present-day languages, though it is not usually expressed with such statistical precision. Statistics show further that there are 396 possible combinations of graphemes; however, less than 10% of these are divergent, and of this 10%, very few are "hopelessly irregular" (like 'one'), most of the rest falling into such groups as those in which the vowel digraphs ea and ow correspond respectively to the vowel sounds in 'bread' and 'snow' rather than to those in 'sea' and clown'. This supports a claim that English spelling is a "reasonably reliable system based on both sound-to-spelling correspondence and on morphological principles".

Sound as these principles are, they are not what is to be taught, but they underpin a programme for teaching spelling patterns of progressively greater complexity, beginning with short vowels in CVC, CCVC and CVCC groups, and going on to consonant digraphs (<ng>, <nk>, <nk>, <eh>, etc.) in the context of short vowels, before tackling the more varied long vowels and diphthongs in their various consonantal contexts. A second part deals with polysyllables, and covers such points as the incidence of the double spelling of consonants before inflections. The presentation is concluded with lists of irregular words classified by spelling (ea-words, ow-words, etc.)

It is not to be expected that a book of this nature would have a historical dimension, but it will nevertheless be of interest to historians of linguistics who have investigated the development of literacy in earlier times. Spelling-books have a long history (see Ian Michael, *The Teaching of English*); the earliest ones prescribe drills for creating syllables, but, unlike the present eminently practical work, tend to burden the pupil with non-existent and sometimes tongue-twisting letter-groups.

It is for those who have an immediate involvement with the problems which this book is designed to address to judge its effectiveness in the classroom. It appears to involve a fair amount of learning and memorization, for the learner is unlikely to appreciate from the outset the principles underlying the complexities of English spelling: it may be supposed that those of us who are confident spellers may have internalized such rules for ourselves; but in the absence of such unconscious mastery of principles, familiarity with at least the more obvious regularities may give encouragement to the less fortunate to observe and remember the minority of irregularities.

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