

Wulpus Scriptieprijs Report 2022

The selection committee consisted of Christine Rauer, Bettelou Los and Marijke van der Wal. The selection criteria were the following:

- a) originality, theoretical level and scope;
- b) clarity of exposition;
- c) classification, analysis and discussion of the material;
- d) methodology;
- e) structural balance and lucidity of reporting.

Below a brief summary and evaluation of the three dissertations.

Amos van Baalen, 'After Ælfric: Tracing the Lexical Influence of Ælfric of Eynsham in Two Twelfth-Century English Texts' (MA dissertation)

The starting point of Amos van Baalen's dissertation is Elaine Treharne's claim that a specific twelfth-century text presents Ælfrician vocabulary. Using this and a second text as case studies, the author undertakes a detailed analysis of our potential criteria for identifying such specialised vocabulary. The result is a convincing rejection of the hypothesis that Ælfrician influence is detectable in the examined material. The author's approach to the transitional period between late Old and early Middle English is suitably cautious and open-minded. There is some excellent groundwork on twelfth-century text production, which succeeds in digesting the very extensive relevant secondary literature as well as testing the available research tools. The dissertation also manages to evaluate various categories and labels used in the *Dictionary of Old English*, presenting important preparatory work for further studies along the same lines. Far from only debunking one theory, the dissertation successfully puts forward a great number of alternative explanations and nuanced interpretations that could not have been arrived at before the data presented here were collected. This piece of research makes an important contribution to our knowledge of early medieval English vocabulary and language change.

Simon den Hertog, 'Samnode Wīde: A Glottometric Analysis of the Old English Dialects' (BA dissertation)

Simon den Hertog's dissertation tests recently developed methodology by applying it to a long-standing problem, namely that of the establishing more precise relationships between the various Old English dialects. The discussion begins with an analysis of previous dialectological theory, including critical analysis of the Tree Model and the Wave Model, outlining the various advantages and disadvantages of measuring interconnectedness. After investigating a variety of phonological and morphological criteria, the resulting conclusion points towards the existence of two large dialect blocs separated by the river Thames as a dialect boundary. The coverage of secondary literature and recent methodology seems exemplary here, resulting in a fair and detailed study of Historical Glottometry in all its aims and limitations. Proponents and critics of Historical Glottometry will certainly benefit from digesting this helpful contribution. Technical terms are used with clarity throughout, and the overall tone of the discussion is suitably cautious. This study should be seen as a stepping-stone to more extensive research undertaken by this author or others.

Elbert van Wijk, 'Nativi sermonis ubertate gloriatur: Taal en identiteit in Ostrogotisch Italië' (MA dissertation)

Elbert van Wijk's discussion shows that modern historians have tended to view Ostrogoths as migrants who were well integrated into the Roman world. One implication of such assimilation would be that spoken Gothic might have been no more than a highly restricted type of jargon, and that the surviving written Gothic would have been limited to a group of authors engaged in producing religious texts. The author probes into this hypothesis and the significance of the Gothic language for the Ostrogoths in Italy. Among the areas investigated are the Greek and Latin narrative traditions, Gothic loanword vocabulary in Latin and Germanic languages, and the linguistic situation of other Germanic tribes, such as the Vandals and Visigoths. The author shows convincingly that a culture of writing Gothic was an important part of a still thriving language community with its own linguistic and cultural identity. This dissertation succeeds in innovating across several disciplines, gaining fresh interpretations from this multi-disciplinary juxtaposition of points. While the disciplinary spread is exemplary, the author also does well not to overstate the cogency of his individual points, especially given the absence of reliable data in many areas. Although the dissertation is to some extent based on negative evidence and hypothesis, the author does a masterful job in assembling a positive argument. As he points out, it is the combined sum of potential evidence that clinches the point in this field of study. The dissertation makes an eminent contribution to our understanding of multilingual culture and identity in the late antique and early medieval Germanic past.

The members of the selection committee were greatly impressed by the high quality of the three dissertations. It is clear that all three make an important contribution to the field of Old Germanic Studies.

The selection committee have the great pleasure of awarding this year's prize to the work of Elbert van Wijk, 'Nativi sermonis ubertate gloriatur: Taal en identiteit in Ostrogotisch Italië'.