

Hans Sauer, *Sun and Moon, Good and Evil, Come and Go: Studies in English Binomials from ca. 850 to 2008*, edited by Monika Kirner-Ludwig, Kerstin Majewski and Gaby Waxenberger, Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, Trier, 2024, 384 p.

The volume brings together several articles by the late Hans Sauer (1942-2022), specialist in Medieval English language and literature, the fondly remembered mentor of numerous German scholars. This volume was in the building stage on Sauer's workbench at the moment of his sudden passing. It was edited in a definitive form on the impulse of his wife, Gabriele Sauer, by the closest collaborators and former students, Monika Kirner-Ludwig, Kerstin Majewski and Gaby Waxenberger.

The work reflects one of the author's favorite research themes, binomial constructions, about which numerous case studies have been written. Putting together his many contributions on the subject, Hans Sauer wanted to produce both a history and an overview/catalog of this figure in English, ranging from Old English to contemporary English and taking into account all the texts edited or studied by the author. This project sees the daylight today as a collection of articles. The chronological order of the subject matter allows the reader a linear reading of the whole book. Conversely, the autonomy of the chapters makes the volume accessible to those with a selective interest in particular eras or texts, and each article contains a theoretical and terminological introduction. The first chapter is itself a theoretical introduction and general survey of binomial constructions in English.

The "history" begins with Old English literature, with texts such as *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle* (chapter II), some of the translations attributed to King Alfred (chapter III), the glosses to the Lindisfarne Gospels (chapter IV), and the two Old English versions of the *Theodulfi Capitula* (chapter V). These are followed by an analysis of the Middle English romance *Richard Coer de Lyon* (chapter VI), the last story from John Gower's *Confessio Amantis* (VII), a poem by Thomas Hoccleve (VIII), a fragment from Lydgate's *Troy Book* (IX), a hitherto unknown translation by Caxton from French, which remains in manuscript, *Ovid* (X), plus two late texts – *The Historye of the Patriarchs* and Peacock's *Donet* (XI). The following chapters deal with the Late Medieval and Early Modern period, and treat two translations of Boccaccio (XII), and an English astronomical treatise (XIII). The historical journey concludes with two recent English translations of the poem *Lotus Sutra* (XIV), from 1993 and 2008. Chapter XV is a very

useful summary of Hans Sauer's observations on binomial constructions, and can serve as an introductory lesson for readers unfamiliar with the subject. Finally, chapter XVI contains the list of binomial formulas in all the texts analyzed by the author, grouped according to the morphological class of the components – a very useful comparative tool for those who study the phenomenon in other texts, or even in other languages.

The volume as a whole also offers a comprehensive typology of binomial constructions, in the wake of the founding article of Sauer & Schwan (2017). The fundamental classification criterion is semantic: the author emphasizes that these constructions go far beyond the synonymy too long postulated by critics, as they also include relations of antonymy, complementarity, logical associations, etc. between the members of the figure. The order of the components is also important – indeed, irreversibility was the first feature used for defining the construction in modern English (Malkiel 1959). However, Hans Sauer's articles also consider flexible binomials, and analyze the criteria that determine one position or another in the structure: frequency, length, meaning, convention. It is observed that some forms persist and become frozen, while others transform over time. Also analyzed and catalogued are the stylistic and rhetorical functions that binomials can assume depending on the type of text (translation or original text, legal, theological or entertainment text, prose *vs* poetry); the structure and morphological composition of binomials; the etymological relationship between members (since sometimes binomials served as glosses for loan-words); and the way binomial constructions are formed in English: contact with Latin and French, in the case of ancient texts, or other sources of creation, such as mythology or religion, since sometimes these structures reflect concepts deeply rooted in the collective consciousness. This typology is summarized in Chapter XV, which also encapsulates the author's definitions of the figure, and recalls the many names scholars gave it.

The corpus is impressive in size, reflecting Sauer's long years of research and text editing. The examples discussed are numerous, and at the end of some articles there is also an *appendix* listing all the binomial constructions mentioned in the chapter. The bibliography is also extensive: primary sources for each chapter, dictionaries and glossaries used, and finally, critical studies. These include works on binomial structures, semantics, linguistic and literary history, and Old English translation culture. As the author confessed, the study cannot be categorized as *complete*, but the scholarly contribution is significant.

For linguists in particular, but also for scholars in the field of literature, translation or cultural studies, Hans Sauer's posthumous volume will be a reference, either as an introduction or as a

further study of a stylistic figure ubiquitous in English and in other European languages, ancient or modern. One can only hope that Hans Sauer's work will be an incentive for scholars to write similar, comprehensive studies on binomial constructions in other European languages as well.

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