

A BOOK OF MIDDLE ENGLISH

THIRD EDITION

J. A. Burrow
and
Thorlac Turville-Petre

Contents

List of Illustrations	ix
Preface to the Third Edition	xi
Abbreviations	xii

PART ONE

1 Introducing Middle English	3
1.1 The Period	3
<i>1.1.1 From Old to Middle English</i> 3 <i>1.1.2 From Middle to Modern English</i> 4	
1.2 Varieties of Middle English	5
<i>1.2.1 Regional Dialects</i> 5 <i>1.2.2 Early and Late Middle English</i> 8 <i>1.2.3 Spelling</i> 8	
2 Pronouncing Middle English	9
2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 Vowels	10
<i>2.2.1 The Long Vowels</i> 10 <i>2.2.2 The Short Vowels</i> 11	
<i>2.2.3 Unstressed Final -e</i> 11 <i>2.2.4 The Diphthongs</i> 12	
2.3 Consonants	12
2.4 Stress	13
3 Vocabulary	14
3.1 Introduction	14
3.2 Scandinavian	14
3.3 English, French and Latin	15
3.4 Latin Loan-Words	17
3.5 French Loan-Words	18
4 Inflections	19
4.1 Introduction	19
<i>4.1.1 The Inflectional System</i> 19 <i>4.1.2 Loss of Inflectional Endings</i> 19	
4.2 Nouns	20
<i>4.2.1 Introduction</i> 20 <i>4.2.2 Noun Inflections: Early Southern Texts</i> 21 <i>4.2.3 Developments in Noun Inflections</i> 22	

	<i>4.2.4 Genitive Singular Without Ending</i>	23	<i>4.2.5 Unchanged Plurals</i>	23
	<i>4.2.6 Mutated Plurals</i>	23		
4.3	Pronouns and Articles			24
	<i>4.3.1 Forms of the Personal Pronouns</i>	24	<i>4.3.2 First and Second Person Pronouns</i>	24
	<i>4.3.3 Third Person Pronouns: Masculine and Neuter Singular</i>	25	<i>4.3.4 Third Person Pronouns: Feminine Singular</i>	25
	<i>4.3.5 Third Person Pronouns: Plural</i>	26		
	<i>4.3.6 The Definite Article</i>	26	<i>4.3.7 Demonstratives</i>	27
	<i>4.3.8 The Indefinite Article</i>	27		
4.4	Adjectives and Adverbs			27
	<i>4.4.1 Definite and Indefinite Inflections</i>	27	<i>4.4.2 Inflections for Case</i>	28
	<i>4.4.3 Comparison of Adjectives</i>	29	<i>4.4.4 Comparison of Adverbs</i>	29
4.5	Verbs			30
	<i>4.5.1 Introduction</i>	30	<i>4.5.2 Present Tense</i>	30
	<i>4.5.3 Past Tense and Past Participle</i>	32	<i>4.5.4 Past of Weak Verbs</i>	32
	<i>4.5.5 The Verbs 'Have' and 'Say'</i>	33	<i>4.5.6 Past of Strong Verbs</i>	34
	<i>4.5.7 Irregular Verbs</i>	35	<i>4.5.8 The Verb 'To Be'</i>	36
5	Syntax			38
5.1	Gender			38
5.2	Number			38
5.3	Use of Cases			39
	<i>5.3.1 Nominative and Accusative</i>	39	<i>5.3.2 Genitive</i>	39
	<i>5.3.3 Dative</i>	40		
5.4	Pronouns and Articles			41
	<i>5.4.1 Pou and ze</i>	41	<i>5.4.2 Non-expression of Personal Pronouns</i>	41
	<i>5.4.3 Man</i>	42	<i>5.4.4 Self</i>	42
	<i>5.4.5 Reflexive Pronouns</i>	42	<i>5.4.6 Relative Pronouns</i>	43
	<i>5.4.7 The Articles</i>	44		
5.5	Adjectives and Adverbs			44
	<i>5.5.1 Position</i>	44	<i>5.5.2 Comparatives and Superlatives</i>	44
	<i>5.5.3 Adjectives as Nouns</i>	45		
5.6	Verbs			45
	<i>5.6.1 Use of Present Tense</i>	45	<i>5.6.2 Use of Past Tense</i>	45
	<i>5.6.3 Auxiliaries of the Past</i>	46	<i>5.6.4 Auxiliaries of the Future: shall and will</i>	46
	<i>5.6.5 The Infinitive</i>	47		
	<i>5.6.6 The Subjunctive</i>	48	<i>5.6.7 The Imperative</i>	50
	<i>5.6.8 Impersonal Verbs</i>	50	<i>5.6.9 Verbs of Motion</i>	51
	<i>5.6.10 The Passive</i>	51		
5.7	Negation			52
5.8	Questions			52

5.9	Word-Order	53
5.9.1	<i>Inversion</i>	53
5.9.2	<i>The Object</i>	54
5.9.3	<i>Prepositions</i>	54
5.9.4	<i>Relative Clauses</i>	54
5.9.5	<i>Adverbial Phrases</i>	54
5.9.6	<i>Verb in Final Position</i>	55
5.10	Recapitulation and Anticipation	55
6	Metre	56
6.1	Introduction	56
6.2	Rhymed Verse	56
6.3	Alliterative Verse	59
6.4	Lazamon's <i>Brut</i>	61
7	From Manuscript to Printed Text	62
8	Select Bibliography	65
8.1	Bibliographies and Indexes	65
8.2	Language Studies	65
8.3	General Studies of the Literature	67
8.4	Studies of Particular Genres	69
8.5	Historical and Social Studies	70

PART TWO: PROSE AND VERSE TEXTS

Note on Treatment of Texts	74
1 <i>The Peterborough Chronicle</i> 1137	75
2 <i>The Owl and the Nightingale</i>	81
3 Lazamon: <i>Brut</i>	96
4 <i>Ancrene Wisse</i>	106
5 <i>Sir Orfeo</i>	112
6 <i>The Cloud of Unknowing</i>	132
7 William Langland: <i>Piers Plowman</i>	141
8 <i>Patience</i>	162
9 <i>Sir Gawain and the Green Knight</i>	182
10 <i>Pearl</i>	202
11 <i>St Erkenwald</i>	221
12 John Trevisa: <i>Dialogue between a Lord and a Clerk</i>	235
13 John Gower: <i>Confessio Amantis</i>	243
14 Lyrics	255

15	The York Play of the Crucifixion	272
16	Geoffrey Chaucer: <i>The Parliament of Fowls</i>	283
17	Geoffrey Chaucer: <i>Troilus and Criseyde</i>	309
18	Geoffrey Chaucer: <i>The Canterbury Tales</i>	327
18a	The Reeve's Tale	328
18b	The Prioress's Tale	346
	Textual Notes	356
	Glossary	363