Matteo Tarsi. *Loanwords and Native Words in Old and Middle Icelandic. A Study in the History and Dynamics of the Icelandic Medieval Lexicon, from the Twelfth Century to 1550*. Brepols: Turnhout 2022. 329 pages.

This volume provides an in-depth study of the history and dynamics of the Icelandic medieval lexicon, achieved through the analysis of word pairs consisting of loanwords and native words that coexist or compete across a variety of textual contexts. As stated by Tarsi (p. 27): "The research hypothesis underlying the study is that the interplay between loanwords and endogenous words is rooted in the period anteceding linguistic purism, and that such a phenomenon, which is common cross-linguistically, must have arisen primarily due to lexical needs, including coining semantically transparent words for new concepts." The reference period ranges from the first written attestations (ca. 1150) to the publication of the first printed book in Icelandic, Oddur Gottskálksson's Translation of the New Testament (1540). This is basically the same period covered by *A Dictionary of Old Norse Prose* (ONP), with the sole exception of the addition of Oddur Gottskálksson's work to the corpus, which seems to be the main reason for including the relatively uncommon concept of 'Middle Icelandic'.

The Introduction places the work into the frame of linguistic studies concerning loanwords, thus stating the terminology used in their classification. The theoretical framework of the study is based on Gusmani's extensive work on linguistic interference, with Betz (1959) providing a model for the analysis and terminology employed. As the title suggests, Tarsi distinguishes between lexemes of foreign origin (loanwords) and endogenous (native) lexemes. Each of the two groupings is further divided into categories. The term loanword (with its synonyms loan and borrowing) encompasses both words which are adapted to Icelandic on the phonological and/or morphological level, and integral loans, i.e. words which are not integrated. Among the native words three typologies are distinguished: calques (semantic and structural), neoformations (native coinages) and inherited lexemes. Two more terms used in the text fall outside of this taxonomy, but are

included because they represent a foreign influence: nonce borrowing, or casual, e.g. a foreign word which occurs in its original form followed by its native synonym (e.g. *aurum – gull*), and scribal abbreviation (e.g. *magister*, *dominus*, *spiritus sanctus*), which has a dubious status, as it can represent a foreign word, but it can also be used by the Icelandic scribes in accordance with the Latin scribal practice to replace a frequently occurring native word in order to save space.

For the purposes of this study – and in contrast to ONP's practice, which refers to the oldest manuscript attestations – Tarsi operates with the presumed date of composition of the examined prose texts. Nevertheless, for each entry the work in which we find the earliest attestation of a word is indicated in abbreviated form according to *The Skaldic Project* (SkP) and ONP convention for poetry and prose respectively.

The corpus consists of 40 texts or selections of texts, representative of all prose literature, distinguished into 10 literary genres: 1) religious texts, 2) law texts and *diplomata*, 3) treatises, 4) historiographical texts, 5) hagiographical texts, 6) sagas of the Icelanders, 7) kings' sagas, 8) translated chivalric sagas, 9) indigenous chivalric sagas and 10) legendary sagas.

The bulk of the analysis consists of eight chapters: chapters 1–7 are each devoted to one of the first seven literary genres, while the last three genres are grouped together in Chapter 8: 'Chivalric and Legendary Sagas'. Each chapter presents a selection of texts, for each of which an overview of the text transmission is provided, followed by an analysis of the word pairs. These pairs are listed alphabetically (according to the loanword in the pair) in a table alongside information about their occurrences, and are classified and commented on in the text. The analysis is the most important part of the work and offers an impressive amount of information. It provides the etymology, provenance and meaning of every term, as well as a hypothesis about the lexical motivation for the borrowing of loanwords and a classification of the endogenous words according to a tripartite taxonomy: calques (structural and semantic), neoformations and inherited lexemes (p. 261). Using criteria like the chronological gap occurring between the first attestations of the loanword and the endogenous word a hypothesis is made to determine which of the two "arose first in the lexicon". A paragraph devoted to comparative analysis and conclusions is included at the end of each chapter, with a twofold structure: 'Intrastemmatic analysis' and 'Dynamics in the use of loanwords and endogenous words'. The Conclusions chapter presents the general results and includes useful tables, such as a list of the semantic fields mentioned in the text. Readers may have found it helpful to have more

information about the criteria used to select these specific categories, which are very comprehensive but, for obvious reasons, cannot be exhaustive.

As the content description hopefully made clear, the text is structured quite systematically, which is both its strength and its weakness. As the book aims to contrast loanwords and native words, it seems natural to compare word pairs and analyse each genre separately. The author adopts a broad definition of word pairs, considering a wide range of instances where loanwords and native words coexist or compete. This phenomenon can manifest in three ways: 1) Simple word alternation, where words occur within the same text or as variant readings in different versions of the text (intrastemmatic variation); 2) Explicative insertions; 3) Synonymic dittologies, or proper word pairs, where two synonyms occur together connected by and/or.

The broad meaning of the concept of word pairs, together with the choice of the separate analysis of works belonging to different genres, gives rise to repetitions in the case of relatively common word combinations. This problem is in part solved by making wide use of internal references, which inevitably makes the text more laborious to read. Furthermore, many common terms, or terms with a wide range of synonyms, could have benefitted from a semantic analysis grouping them in more than two at a time. Just to mention a few examples: *dýflissa – myrkvastofa* (pp. 59-60) vs. *fangelsi – myrkvastofa* (p. 73) vs. *fangelsi/prísund – myrkvastofa* (p. 194); *dominus – dróttinn* (p. 50) vs. *herra – dróttinn* (pp. 74–75) vs. *lávarður – drottinn* (p. 99); *djǫfull – andskoti/fjándi/óvinr* (pp. 48–49) vs. *djǫfull – fjándi/óhreinn andi* (p. 216).

Typically, some of the neologisms presented in the text are hapaxes which have been created for the purpose of explaining (or glossing) a specific Latin concept. In the word pair *prefatia – formál/forgildi* an explanation is given for the word *forgildi*, which is only found in the *Messuskýringar*, both in the Icelandic and the Norwegian versions of the *Homily Book*. Here follows a quote from the Icelandic version (de Leeuw van Weenen 1993: 55v–56r): "Prefatia þýþesc formál eþa forgillde. þuiat sú bón er sem bue huge vara til enar ǿzto bónar er efter feʀ í lága sǫngenom." As is also stated in Table 1.1 (p. 48): "The text is based on Honorius Augustodunensis' *Gemma animæ*. However, this word pair arises in the Icelandic text as the Icelandic term is an explicative insertion for Med. Lat. *præfatia*". Tarsi considers *forgildi* a synonym or alternative to *formál*, referring both terms to *prefatia* (p. 53). This interpretation doesn't seem to take into account the full context of the sentence and the Latin parallel (Migne 1854: 576–577): "Præfatio dicitur prælocutio scilicet sequentis Canonis. Hæc etiam dicitur *præparatio*, quia

mentes nostras ad mysterium Christi præparat." In the light of the Latin, *formál* is to be considered a rendering of *prælocutio*, while the neologism *forgildi* could refer to *præparatio* in the meaning 'what comes before/prepares for the Canon'. It could have been created to explain the fact that *præfatio* is the preface to the following Canon (*sequentis Canonis*), i.e. the Eucharistic prayer (Old Norse *lágasǫngr*). This preface is also called 'preparation', because the mind prepares for the mystery of Christ (i.e. the Eucharist).

The work makes extensive use of the ONP, drawing on features such as headwords and interpretations, and providing commentary on several of its entries. However, there are some points to note. As an early example of the efforts made to adapt the native language "to accommodate foreign cultural influence" Tarsi quotes one of the relatively few examples of interlinear glosses in Old Norse, i.e. the one found in the *Icelandic Homily Book* (35v) "where the word *leviaþan* 'Leviathan' is glossed with *miðgarðsormr* (see Marchand 1975)" (p. 46). Tarsi doesn't quote and comment on the fact that the interlinear gloss is lemmatised as the hapax *miðgarðarormr* in ONP and de Leeuw van Weenen (2004: 108). Moreover, in the analysis of the lexical pair *sagittarius* – *skyti/skytidýr* (p. 170), the term *skytidýr* is considered a *hapax* that is "nowhere to be found in the reference dictionaries" (p. 170). The term is found in one of the encyclopaedic texts edited in the collection *Rímtǫl*, the second volume of *Alfrœði Íslenzk* (Beckman & Kålund 1914–1916: 245), and the context is as follows: "þvi er skyti dyr aptr markat, at sol gengr i þvi marki ofan verdu ena lęgztu lute sins hrings". Tarsi omits to mention that this example is quoted in ONP, which lemmatises the word as *skyti*, based on a different interpretation of the following words *dýr aftr* as 'the animal in its back part'. Regardless of Tarsi's disagreement with this interpretation, it would have been desirable to problematise it.

Regarding the choice of works representing each genre, the author provides a motivation for their selection and undoubtedly must be credited for having analysed a very consistent and representative corpus of texts. As one would expect, the phenomenon of the alternation between loanwords/foreign words and native words is more widespread in religious and learned texts (such as treatises), where authors faced the challenge of translating specific, technical content from other languages into their own. As previously mentioned, the material is very consistent, but it could by no means be exhaustive. However, including a representative of the hagiographical sagas that were translated or adapted from Latin sources, such as the Sagas of the Apostles and the Sagas of Saints, in the selection would probably have

provided examples of lexical pairs representing additional semantic fields. For instance, the field of magic.

Overall, Tarsi's work is a valuable and inspiring study. Its linguistic-philological approach makes it relevant to a wide range of users, who can focus on specific words and meanings for further research. Its current structure makes it a highly informative reference tool on the development of the Icelandic lexicon in the context of other European languages. However, organising the lexical material differently might have reduced the need for internal references more effectively. Furthermore, despite the significant amount of data presented in the text, many useful tables organised according to different criteria are only accessible as online appendices (https://doi.org/10.1484/A.20178893), as including them in the volume would have made it too large. As a potential development, it would be useful to make the material available in a searchable database. This would allow users to access and organise the material using their own query criteria and enable the author to supplement the data with additional examples.

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ONP = *Ordbog over det norrøne prosasprog* <onp.ku.dk>

SkP = *The Skaldic Project* <https://skaldic.org/m.php?p=skaldic>

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