R E V I E W S

Ilse Depraetere and Chad Langford *Advanced English grammar: A linguistic approach*. London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2012. Pp. 376. ISBN 978-144-114931-2

Thomas E. Payne *Understanding English grammar*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. 452. ISBN 978-0-521-76329-5 hardback, ISBN 978-0-521-75711-9 paperback

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Advanced English grammar: A linguistic approach (hereafter *AEG*) and *Understanding English grammar* (*UEG*) are welcome additions to the long list of introductory texts on English grammar currently on the market. While they cover the same topics found in other texts, they do so in an original manner that distinguishes them from many of the current texts available. *AEG* narrows the range of grammatical constructions that are covered and as a result provides a more detailed treatment than other texts of the constructions that are discussed. *UEG* bases its discussion on cognitive and communicative approaches to language study, resulting in a very different conceptualization of how grammar should be presented.

Advanced English grammar: a linguistic approach

AEG grew out of the authors' frustration with using available introductory texts on English grammar in a grammar course that they regularly teach to non-native speakers of English coming from a diverse range of majors. They felt that such an audience needed a text that provided more advanced discussions of grammar on a more limited range of topics, and that avoided the tendency of many texts to be 'overwhelming in their completeness' without providing students with information on 'what was and was not essential in their quest to learn English' (p. vii). Thus, this text covers a more limited range of topics than most comparable texts, with a focus on nouns and verbs and associated structures (e.g. verb complements) and semantic notions (e.g. tense and aspect). There is also a short concluding chapter on discourse.

The book opens with a brief chapter, 'Getting started: forms and functions', that first draws the distinction between such notions as prescriptive and descriptive approaches to language study and the difference between grammatical and ungrammatical structures. Grammatical sentences like **I don't have no time to waste* (p. 3) are given an asterisk throughout the book not because they violate rules of English syntax but because

such constructions are not part of standard English – the main focus of the book. The remainder of the chapter provides an overview of the various levels of linguistic structure that can be studied: the word, phrase, clause and sentence. Examples are given of linguistic constructions fitting into each level. For instance, word classes and phrases are presented in sections discussing the various parts of speech (e.g. adjectives, nouns, conjunctions, prepositions) and how the major word classes serve as headwords in phrases (e.g. adjective phrases and noun phrases). The section on phrases draws the distinction between form and function, showing, for instance, how a noun phrase can have various functions within a sentence: subject, direct/indirect object, or subject/object complement. The form/function distinction becomes important in the final section, since an imperative sentence is defined as containing a verb preceded by an implied subject.

The next two chapters form the core of the book because they focus on the two structures that constitute the main emphasis in the book: verbs and nouns. However, this is not to suggest that these structures are simply described individually. Instead, the authors draw upon many different structures and processes that are closely related to verbs and nouns (e.g. verb complementation and subject–verb agreement). This runs counter to the approach taken in many student grammars, which often have discrete chapters providing primarily taxonomic descriptions of various grammatical categories. The approach taken in *AEG* has the benefit of presenting differing grammatical categories as an integrated system.

For instance, in chapter 2, 'The verb and its complements', after a very brief overview of the differences between lexical and auxiliary verbs, the authors describe their usage in a range of differing structures, and the roles that they play in negation, question formation and contraction. The discussion here is quite detailed: the section on question formation focuses not just on *wh-* and *yes/no* questions but on echo questions and tag questions as well. Verb complementation receives full treatment too. The examples below are introduced to illustrate that individual verbs have different patterns of transitivity:

(1) (a) Sarah *handed* Brian the parcel.
     (b) *Sarah *handed* Brian.
     (c) *Sarah *handed* the parcel.

(2) (a) Brian *bought* Sarah a present.
     (b) *Brian *bought* Sarah.
     (c) He *bought* a present. (p. 42)

While *hand* can only be ditransitive (1a), *buy* can be either ditransitive (2a) or transitive (2c). And in discussing restrictions such as these, various sentence functions are introduced (e.g. direct and indirect object). The chapter continues with a discussion of the various forms that verb complements can contain (e.g. noun phrases, prepositional phrases and clausal complements). In the section on clausal complements, the authors illustrate how certain verbs and their meanings dictate whether a *to*-infinitive or *-ing* clause is used. With verbs of permission, such as *allow*, use of the *-ing* clause indicates

'an implicit, general Subject', whereas the *to*-infinite form 'renders the Subject of the verbal *to*-complement explicit' (p. 55).

(3) (a) We do not *allow* smoking on campus.
    (b) I don't *allow* my children to smoke at all.

The chapter ends with a very detailed discussion of passivization, focusing on the formation of passives, the semantic roles (e.g. agent and experiencer) occurring in passive and corresponding active sentences, the role of passives in discourse, and the relationship between complementation patterns in active and passive clauses.

Chapter 3 ('The noun and the noun phrase') employs a pattern of organization that is similar to chapter 2, beginning with a description of the types of nouns occurring in English and then expanding the scope of discussion to include various constructions (e.g. relative clauses) occurring as parts of noun phrases. Following a discussion of count and non-count nouns, the authors describe determiners, with an emphasis on the semantic considerations determining the use of definite, indefinite and zero articles. Articles are a particularly difficult topic to cover in an introductory text of this nature, but the discussion is greatly facilitated with an initial description of non-generic (specific and non-specific) and generic reference. This background information makes clear that in an example such as *I've got a new computer*, the indefinite article marks the NP as specific as the subject of the sentence actually possesses an actual computer, but non-specific in *I want/need a new computer* because the computer is not actually possessed (p. 95). Various constructions occurring as elements within the noun phrase are also considered, including quantifiers, demonstratives and possessives. The section on possessives considers both determiners (e.g. *my*, *her*, *his*) and possession on nouns (e.g. *the student's book*). The remaining sections focus on modifiers (both adjectives modifying nouns and relative clauses) and subject–verb agreement.

Chapters 4 ('Aspect and tense') and 5 ('Modals and modality') expand upon notions related to verbs. Although the authors distinguish tense from aspect in chapter 4, the chapter opens with a list of verb forms (p. 137) illustrating eight tenses in English. For instance, a verb such as *talked* indicates the past tense, *had talked* the past perfect tense. At first glance, this latter classification seems to confuse tense and aspect (e.g. past tense marked on *had*, and perfective aspect indicated by *have* + past participle). But the authors soon clarify their system of classification, noting that 'Aspect and tense necessarily function together' (p. 139), a point made very clearly throughout the chapter. For instance, in the section on aspect, the semantic notions of 'ongoingness' and 'limited duration' are introduced to illustrate two possible meanings of the progressive (pp. 144f). Thus, *She's **working** on her thesis this summer* marks an ongoing activity (p. 144), while *I rushed over to the platform, where the train **was** just **arriving*** indicates an activity of limited duration because once the train arrives, the activity is over (p. 146). The section on tense includes various semantic categorizations 'used to communicate temporal information about situations' (p. 152). A sentence such as *He **works** at his father's company* indicates 'a situation in the present time-sphere' (p. 154). In

contrast, a sentence such as *My favourite uncle **died** in 2011* marks a 'past time-sphere' (p. 158). The past tense can combine with various progressive and perfective verb forms to indicate differing durations of time occurring in the past, present or future. The sentence *I was hoping you could stay* (p. 161) marks an event in the present, while *I've painted the kitchen walls yellow* marks an Accomplishment, an event with 'an endpoint inherent in the situation' (p. 166). Throughout the chapter, various figures with timelines are included to provide visual representations of the time frames under discussion. The discussion in the chapter is detailed and well-presented, providing one of the better discussions of tense and aspect available in an introductory text.

Chapter 5 on modal verbs and modality contains a similarly detailed treatment of these topics. The authors work from a fairly basic notion of modality, stating that modal sentences are 'sentences that do not represent situations as facts' (p. 195). They briefly describe central modals (e.g. *can*, *will*), lexical modals (e.g. *need to* and *have to*) and constructions such as *ought to* and *be able to* that they note are difficult to classify. They then discuss the structure of a modal sentence, which contains an element of modality (possibility and necessity) and a proposition, which they define as 'what is left of the sentence when the modality is taken away' (p. 199). The bulk of the chapter is devoted to presenting the various modal constructions expressing epistemic and non-epistemic meanings. Extensive examples are given of constructions expressing these meanings, including not just the particular uses of modal verbs expressing these meanings but related constructions as well. For instance, in the section on epistemic meaning, examples of sentence negation, such as *He **can't** be at home* (p. 203), are discussed to illustrate that judgments of probability can involve not just the likelihood of something being true but its unlikelihood as well. In both sections, copious examples are given to illustrate the semantic categories under discussion. In discussing non-epistemic possibility/impossibility (pp. 212–16), the authors do not simply describe the use of *can* and *may* to express permission, but other types of permission as well, such as the 'absence of permission' in *No, you **may not** sit at the table with the grown-ups. Sit with the other children, please* (p. 213). The chapter closes with a discussion of the uses of *shall* and *may*, noting, for instance, that they not only express possibility or necessity but future time as well, plus an overview of the subjunctive in English.

The final chapter in the book, chapter 6 'Discourse', examines language use beyond the level of the sentence. It is relatively brief (ten pages in length) and focuses mainly on the notion of cohesion, describing first what the authors term 'grammatical markers of cohesion' (pp. 241f) such as constructions expressing anaphoric and cataphoric reference, and various lexical markers of cohesion (pp. 244f), including subordinators (e.g. *before* and *after*) and markers of transition (e.g. *therefore* and *in addition*).

The book also contains an extensive number of exercises for each of the chapters as well as an appendix on irregular verbs. Answers to the exercises can be obtained on a companion website for the book: www.bloomsbury.com/us/advanced-english-grammar-9781441149312/

In *Advanced English grammar,* Depraetere and Langford quite effectively accomplish the goals they had in writing the book: by narrowing their focus to a select group of linguistic constructions, they are able to describe the topics they covered in a much more detailed manner than comparable books. Moreover, they succeed in elevating the discussion to a much higher level than other texts because they are able to discuss each topic in considerable depth. Of course, this approach does have its limitations. Undoubtedly, instructors considering adopting the text for use in their classes may not want, for instance, extensive discussions of topics such as tense, aspect and modality, and desire a more comprehensive (but briefer) discussion of a broader range of grammatical constructions. Nevertheless, this is one of the better books on English grammar for students that currently exists on the market.

Understanding English grammar

Although Thomas E. Payne discusses most of the topics in *Advanced English grammar* in *UEG*, his treatment of grammar is much broader in scope, covering all of the major grammatical categories. But like *AEG*, he does not take a conventional approach to presenting grammar, grounding his discussion in theories of language focusing on 'human cognition, communication, and culture' (p. xii). His text is student-oriented too, but directed more at individuals studying to teach English as a second or foreign language. Examples included in the text are for the most part not invented but taken from both linguistic corpora and other sources of authentic data. The book is divided into fifteen chapters, most averaging about twenty pages in length.

The book opens with an introduction as well as two chapters (chapter 1, 'History', and chapter 2, 'Typology') that introduce readers to basic linguistic concepts, provide an overview of the historical development of English, and list examples of typological features that languages share. For instance, pronouns in Korean and English are compared (pp. 8–9) to illustrate how languages have different 'conceptual categories': Korean has formal and informal first- and second-person pronouns; English does not. Larsen-Freeman's (1997) notion of form, meaning and use is described to make the important point that '"learning grammar"' is not just a matter of learning arbitrary, boring, and unconnected rules, but rather it is learning how to accurately, clearly, and fluently express meaning in particular contexts' (p. 17). In chapter 1, a brief overview of the history of English is provided to show how Modern English has had influences from various languages (e.g. Celtic, Anglo-Saxon, Scandinavian and Latin). Chapter 2 introduces the notion of language typology to demonstrate how the particular features that languages possess can be classified into three general classes: morphological typology (the continuum from isolating to polysynthetic languages), constituent order typology (variations in word order) and lexical typology (how languages express notions such as causation).

The next four chapters focus on various features of English words. In chapter 3 ('The lexicon'), the elements of the lexicon are first considered, with a discussion of competing views of exactly which constructions should be included within the lexicon.

Narrow views include only individual lexical items such as the base forms of verbs, plus verb inflections; broader views 'admit all kinds of morphological and syntactic patterns' (p. 59), such as prepositional phrases. The discussion here is fairly challenging, as distinctions are described that are fairly theoretical in nature. For instance, it is noted that in more expansive views of the lexicon, the pattern PREPOSITIONAL PHRASE –> PREPOSITION + NOUN PHRASE 'expresses meaning and therefore should be considered a memorized lexical item' (p. 59). However, an actual prepositional phrase, such as *in the house*, would not be in the lexicon. One wonders whether students would be able to conceptualize this distinction. The remainder of the chapter describes such topics as word formation, the difference between 'full lexical words' and 'grammatical functors' (p. 66) (i.e. content and function words) and word classes (e.g. nouns, verbs, adverbs, etc.). Chapter 4 ('Morphology – the shapes of words') provides a description of basic morphological concepts, such as bound and free morphemes, affixation, derivational/inflectional morphology and compounding.

The next two chapters are more semantically based. Chapter 5 ('Participant reference') explores how lexical 'meaning' can be studied. The first section describes how speakers make sense of words through associations between form, meaning and use. A word such as *slide*, for instance, only makes sense once the speaker combines very general internal knowledge of this word ('something moving linearly against something else') with its use in some kind of context, as when the sentence *the slide is sticky* is used to describe a trombone (p. 108). The chapter continues with a detailed treatment of nouns and pronouns, describing the forms of each and the various semantic classes into which they can be classified. Nouns are described as 'relatively simple morphologically' (p. 109), with many irregular forms (e.g. *mouse/mice, ox/oxen*) characterized as 'weakly suppletive' (p. 110) and originating as earlier Germanic forms or borrowings from Latin or Greek. Many of the traditional classes of nouns are listed and illustrated, such as proper/common, countable/non-countable and collective. The personal pronouns (e.g. personal, interrogative, indefinite) are likewise described in detail.

Chapter 6 ('Actions, states, and processes') focuses primarily on the semantic relations existing between words in a clause. Traditional semantic roles are introduced, such as agent and patient, plus subtypes such as location and direction. Thus, in *Waldo ate beans*, *Waldo* is the agent; in *It was the wind that formed those rocks*, *wind* is a force (p. 137). The chapter concludes with a brief description of the five forms of English verbs (bare, *-s*, past tense, past participle and present participle), the distinction between transitive and intransitive verbs, and examples of different types of phrasal verbs.

Four chapters focus on various syntactic matters. Chapter 7 ('Basic concepts in English syntax') describes general syntactic notions, opening with a description of what a constituent is and how syntax is both linear (the order of constituents) and hierarchical (the grouping of constituents). Not only are syntactic categories such as noun, verb, noun phrase and verb phrase described but their usage is contextualized within various linguistic theories. For instance, the symbol S is noted as originating 'In earlier versions of Generative Grammar . . . as a mnemonic for "Sentence"'

(p. 165). Numerous syntactic concepts are covered in the chapter, including heads of phrases, grammatical relations (e.g. subject, direct object, indirect object), constituent structure, coordination and tree structures. Chapter 8 ('Advanced concepts in English syntax') is exactly what the title suggests: a description of more theoretically oriented syntactic concepts, specifically the DP (determiner phrase), GP (genitive phrase) and IP (inflection phrase) hypotheses. These are concepts taken from generative grammar that are introduced because of their relevance to teaching English language learners: 'they highlight the importance of Determiners in the nominal system and inflection in the verbal system'. While this claim certainly has merit, the highly theoretical nature of the chapter will certainly prove challenging to many students.

Chapter 9 ('Complementation') deals with structures that are closely associated with heads and serve to 'complete' the phrases in which they occur (p. 205). Among the structures treated are subject complements and object complements, which are described in terms of the verbs with which they occur and the particular semantic relationship they exhibit with the subject. Subject complements with the verb *be* mark relationships such as EQUATION, *The venue for the meeting is **the Roxburghe Hotel***, or ATTRBUTION, *You're so **young*** (p. 208). Object complements, which are related to direct objects occurring with various kinds of transitive verbs, mark relationships such as PROPER INCLUSION, *They called him **a dunce** at school*, or EQUATION, *Consider this **your initiation into the Camden family*** (p. 216). Chapter 10 ('Modification') is contrasted with complementation because while complements are very closely integrated with the head of a phrase, modifiers are optional and thus more loosely connected to the heads with which they are associated. The first two sections focus on modification in noun phrases and predicates. Within noun phrases, predeterminers (following Huddleston & Pullum *et al.* 2002: 433–6) are considered modifiers. Thus, *all* in *Nearly **all** my friends were down the pit* is considered a predeterminer modifier as is *both* in ***Both** my parents smoke* (p. 229). Other types of modifiers include prenominal adjectives, as in *He is an **utter** fool* (p. 236); certain kinds of adverbs in adjective phrases, such as *very* in *a **very** big dog* (p. 237); and post-nominal modifiers, such as *present* in *Those members **present** refused to select a candidate* (p. 241). The last section deals with modification as it occurs in the predicate of a sentence. For instance, in the sentence *He fell in the living room*, the prepositional phrase *in the living room* is treated as a modifier because like other modifiers it is optional and in this case 'add[s] information to the basic Predicate *fell*' (p. 244).

Three chapters cover various facets of the English verbal system. Chapter 11 ('Auxiliaries and the "black hole" of English syntax') focuses on auxiliary verbs: plain modal auxiliaries (e.g. *can* and *may*), semi-auxiliaries (e.g. *have to* and *ought to*), and *do*, *have* and *be*. The 'black hole' in the title of the chapter refers to the process over time for main verbs to become auxiliary verbs. For instance, the verb *will* originated as a lexical verb expressing futurity, as in *Nor that I **will** [meaning 'want' or 'be willing to'] to bother his messenger without his knowledge* (p. 259). *Will* is now fully an auxiliary verb. The chapter then covers the various uses of auxiliary verbs in

such constructions as negated clauses as well as *yes/no*, *wh-* and tag questions. There is also a rather detailed discussion (pp. 261–74) of why copular *be* (e.g. *She **is** a doctor*) behaves similarly to auxiliary *be* (*She **is** waiting*). As a consequence, all instances of *be*, it is argued, should be classified as auxiliary verbs – a classification in line with Huddleston & Pullum et al.'s (2002: 103–4) system of auxiliary verbs.

Chapter 12 ('Time and reality') describes tense, aspect and mode in English with a focus on form and meaning. Tense in English is expressed with three forms (past, present and future) that indicate 'relative time . . . in relation to a reference point, usually the moment the clause is spoken, i.e. "now"' (p. 280). The various forms express various time frames in the past and the present. For instance, the present tense verb in *His ears **are** huge* marks a STATE taking place 'now', while the past tense verb in *It **was** rather short notice* also marks a STATE but one taking place in the past (p. 281). In contrast, aspect marks a temporal sequence that unlike tense 'is not anchored relative to a particular point in time' (p. 285). Aspect is then described in terms of three temporal sequences: perfect, perfective and imperfective. The perfect 'describes a currently relevant *state* that results from the situation (normally an action) expressed by the verb', as in *He has come from Houston*; it 'asserts a state, and only incidentally an action', thus distinguishing it from the perfective aspect, which 'primarily expresses actions themselves' (p. 288).

As a distinct class of aspect, the perfect is problematic. Unlike the other two aspects, the perfect applies to only one aspect type: what is traditionally called the present perfect. The other aspects, as figure 12.3 illustrates (p. 295), have many different forms and sub-classifications. For instance, the perfective aspect is divided into five different semantic classes, including inceptive aspect, which marks the beginning of some kind of activity (*She began to work*), and completive aspect, which indicates the end of some activity (*She finished working*) (p. 289). The imperfective aspect is divided into four semantic classes, including progressive aspect, which marks 'ongoing, dynamic processes' (*He is writing letters*) (p. 291), and habitual aspect, which indicates an activity occurring on a regular basis (*Waldo walks to school*) (p. 293). Compared to the perfective and imperfective aspects, the perfect is a very ad hoc type of aspect. The one example cited as part of this class (see previous paragraph) could easily be classified as an instance of perfective aspect. Following the discussion of aspect is a short section (pp. 296–300) focusing on epistemic and deontic modality.

Chapter 13 ('Voice and valence') describes constructions that provide differing perspectives on how the activities in a clause are portrayed. Valence theory focuses on how semantically and grammatically participants and arguments are presented in a clause, and how adjustments in these presentations 'adjust the argument structure frame in which a world discourse situation is presented' (p. 303). For instance, the verb *eat* will always have 'two participants – something that eats and something that gets eaten', but clauses containing *eat* need only have one overt argument, as in *Calvin already ate*, in which what is consumed is either 'not known or is unimportant for the communicative task at hand' (p. 303). Constructions in clauses in the active and passive voices have different communicative effects. The passive (rather than active) voice 'is

used in communicative contexts where a controller [i.e. agent] is deperspectivized, or downplayed' (p. 313).

The final two chapters cover topics related to the structure of clauses. Chapter 14 ('Clause combining') describes not just the form of various types of finite and non-finite subordinate clauses but their functions as well. For instance, in the section on clausal subjects, it is noted that the sentence *That Lord Oberon trod on his toe stunned the Duke of Wimple* is less common than the equivalent *It stunned the Duke of Wimple that Lord Oberon trod on his toe* because in English so-called '"heavy" constructions' (p. 335) are placed at the end of the clause. Other clause-types discussed include adverbial clauses, conditional clauses and relative clauses. There is also a short section on coordination, which is contrasted with subordination. Chapter 15 ('Pragmatic grounding and pragmatically marked constructions') focuses on the role that context plays in influencing how speakers use language. One section discusses how varying 'pragmatic statuses' (p. 359) affect linguistic choices. Speakers will choose to use a definite noun phrase or a proper noun only if they believe that the hearer can identify the referent. Various grammatical devices, such as sentence stress, help focus particular parts of a clause. Thus, if someone asks the question *Who did Barack invite?*, the response to the question will contain stress on the individual who was invited: *He invited **Jacques*** (p. 368). Other topics described in the chapter include topicalization, negation and speech act theory.

All chapters in the text conclude with a brief summary in the form of a list of key terms covered in the chapter, suggestions for further reading and exercises. Some chapters link the topics covered to issues of language learning and acquisition. Chapter 3 on the lexicon cautions against having students memorize long lists of decontextualized vocabulary items, an activity that is 'of little value in developing one's personal lexicon of a language' (p. 77). Instead, words are acquired through need and use. Chapter 11 on auxiliaries contains a section describing the pedagogical value of teaching all forms of the verb *be* (even lexical *be*, as in *She is absent*) as auxiliaries, building upon a linguistic argument advanced in the chapter. More brief 'applied' discussions such as these would have greatly enhanced the book by establishing a closer connection between theory and pedagogy.

Understanding English grammar effectively covers all of the major grammatical constructions of English. Because of its cognitive and communicative orientation, grammar is presented in new and original ways: not simply as a taxonomy of linguistic forms, but as forms organized around basic linguistic notions. Thus, clause functions such as subject and object complements are presented in a chapter (chapter 9, 'Complementation') focusing more generally on the notion of complementation than in a chapter that simply lists and classifies all the clause functions (e.g. subject, direct/indirect object, verb). The book will definitely challenge students (and some instructors as well), as the presentation draws upon many different theoretical concepts in its presentation of grammar. For instance, chapter 8 ('Advanced concepts in English syntax') explores in considerable detail the GP, DP and IP hypotheses as articulated in Minimalist Theory. In chapter 11 ('Auxiliaries . . .'), considerable detail is devoted to

the argument (mentioned earlier) that *be* is always an auxiliary: copular and auxiliary *be* have similar distributions. The advantage of this approach is that it impresses upon students that studying grammar is not simply a matter of rote learning: of memorizing definitions of nouns, verbs, prepositions, etc. Instead, studying grammar is a matter of critical thinking: of looking for evidence to justify the categorizations that result. This is a sound pedagogical strategy followed throughout the text.

Conclusions

In *Advanced English grammar: A linguistic approach*, Depraetere and Langford offer instructors a text that provides a focused and detailed discussion of nominal and verbal constructions in English and various related constructions with which they occur. In *Understanding English grammar*, Payne presents a broader view of grammar, contextualizing discussions of grammatical constructions in human cognition and communication. Both texts provide up-to-date treatments of English grammar that draw upon contemporary linguistic theory. They not only discuss grammar but provide students with exercises that will enable them to apply what they have learned. In sum, the two texts add considerably to the many choices that instructors currently have in choosing student-oriented grammars for the courses they are teaching.

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Laurie Bauer, **Rochelle Lieber & Ingo Plag** *The Oxford reference guide to English morphology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. 704. ISBN 978-0-19-957926-6.

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