

An abstract painting of a room corner, featuring thick brushstrokes in shades of orange, yellow, and teal. The composition is divided into geometric shapes, with a central square area in a vibrant orange-yellow hue. The overall texture is rough and expressive, with visible paint layers and brush marks.

EDITED BY

TERTTU

NEVALAINEN

ELIZABETH CLOSS

TRAUGOTT

≡ The Oxford Handbook of
**THE HISTORY
OF ENGLISH**

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THE HISTORY OF
ENGLISH

Edited by
TERTTU NEVALAINEN
and
ELIZABETH CLOSS TRAUGOTT

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PREFACE

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WHEN this handbook was commissioned three years ago, the idea was to produce a book consisting of around 25 chapters. This soon proved to be an underestimate for “a high-level scholarly volume reflecting the cutting-edge ‘state of the art’ in the field and developing a resource that will set the research agenda for the coming decade,” as Peter Ohlin envisioned its contents. Even the present 68 chapters introduce only a selection of the diverse developments in the field, and length considerations have meant that many details had to be sacrificed. We nevertheless hope that the volume will lead to a fuller appreciation of the main research trends and of the rich possibilities for further work at this time.

This volume would hardly have materialized had Elizabeth not responded in the affirmative to Terttu’s invitation to embark on the project in early 2009. Our partly complementary specializations in the history of English made it a great partnership. Our first brainstorming session took place in Helsinki in June 2009, when we drew up a wish list for the organization and contents of a new kind of handbook and thought of colleagues whom we could invite to join in the project.

Our heartfelt thanks go to all of the contributors for sharing our enthusiasm for this great opportunity to engage in rethinking the history of English. We owe special thanks to the section coordinators—Ricardo Bermúdez-Otero, Jonathan Culpeper, Mark Davies, Susan Fitzmaurice, Raymond Hickey, Roland Hinterhölzl, Ans van Kemenade, Thomas Kohnen, Bernd Kortmann, Christian Mair, Minna Nevala, Jeremy Smith, and Graeme Trousdale—for skillfully contextualizing and shaping their respective groups of chapters so as to highlight the major issues. We would also like to thank the contributors for acting as peer reviewers and giving invaluable feedback on each other’s chapters—and for revising their own with good grace.

Many colleagues outside the project also helped in the review process. We are indebted to Laurel Brinton, Fran Colman, Markku Filppula, Elly van Gelderen, Jonathan Hope, Donka Minkova, Arja Nurmi, Márton Sóskuthy, Dennis Preston, Theo Vennemann, and James Walker. Our thanks go to Mikko Hakala for checking the glossaries.

We are also grateful to Brian Hurley, Peter Ohlin, and Jennifer Vafidis in OUP’s New York office for their support and advice throughout the editing process and to the whole production team for the final outcome, especially Lynn Childress for her careful copyediting and Aaron Murray for coordinating the production process

with efficiency, understanding, and unfailing good humor. Last but not least, a person who deserves very special thanks is Sara Norja, one of only three people so far to read the entire volume and who preedited its contents with unfailing good humor and superb attention to detail. The project could not have been completed on time without her.

Terttu Nevalainen, Helsinki
Elizabeth Traugott, Palo Alto
April 2012

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ABBREVIATIONS

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AA(V)E	African American (Vernacular) English
Adv	adverb(ial)
AI	analyticity index
AmE	American English
ANOVA	analysis of variance
AP	adjective phrase
ASCII	American Standard Code for Information Interchange
ASJP	Automated Similarity Judgment Program
ASL	adult second language
AUX, Aux	auxiliary
BrE	British English
C	complementizer
C, c	consonant
CAR	clash-avoidance requirement
CDA	critical discourse analysis
CEC	Caribbean Creole English
CLD	contrastive left dislocation
CP	complementizer phrase
D, DET	determiner
DP	determiner phrase
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELT	English Language Teaching
EMC	electronically mediated communication
EModE	Early Modern English
ENL	English as a Native Language
ESL	English as a Second Language
F ₁	first formant
F ₂	second formant
F ₃	third formant
FocusP	focus phrase
FTF	fuzzy tree fragment
GA	General American
GEN	genitive
GVS	Great Vowel Shift
H	high (tone)

HCE	Hawai'i Creole English
HKE	Hong Kong English
HRT	high rising terminal
ICT	information and communication technology
IMPF	imperfective
IndE	Indian English
IP	inflection phrase
IPA	International Phonetic Alphabet
IS	information structure
L	low (tone)
L ₁	first language
L ₂	second language
LD	Levenshtein distance
LF	logical form
LME	Late Middle English
LMEFW	Late Middle English final weakening
LModE	Late Modern English
MASC	masculine
ME	Middle English
ModE	Modern English
NCS	Northern Cities Shift
NEG, Neg	negation
NegP	negative phrase
NP	noun phrase
NPI	negative polarity item
NSM	natural semantic metalanguage
NZE	New Zealand English
O	object
OE	Old English
OHG	Old High German
OI	Old Icelandic
ON	Old Norse
PC	political correctness
P/Cs	pidgins and creoles
PDE	Present-Day English
PF	phonological form
PGCH	performance-grammar correspondence hypothesis
PhP	prosodic phrase
PL	phrase level
PP	prepositional phrase
PRT	particle
RP	received pronunciation
S	subject; strong (syllable)
SEFW	Southern English fricative weakening

SG	singular
SgE	Singapore English
SI	syntheticity index
SL	stem level
SLA	second-language acquisition
SMS	short message service
SpecP	specifier phrase
SR	surface representation
TB	Tibeto-Burman
TL	target language
TP	tense phrase
UR	underlying representation
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
V, v	verb; vowel
VARD	variant spelling detector
V ₁	verb first
V ₂	verb second
V ₃	verb third
V _f , V _{fin}	finite verb
VNC	variability-based neighbor clustering
VP	verb phrase
W	weak (syllable)
WL	word level
XML	extensible markup language
X-SAMPA	Extended Speech Assessment Methods Phonetic Alphabet

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INTRODUCTION

RETHINKING AND EXTENDING APPROACHES TO THE HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

TERTTU NEVALAINEN AND
ELIZABETH CLOSS TRAUGOTT

1. BACKGROUND

In the last decade major shifts have occurred in linguistic research. Twentieth-century structuralism led to thinking in terms of discrete categories and modules of language, and of large, discrete steps in change. More recently, there has been a move toward thinking in terms of variation, gradience, interfaces between modules, and of microstep gradualness in change. This shift results in part from work on empirical data such as are provided by electronic corpora and by the study of processing and of frequency effects. It also results from dramatic increases in the availability of large electronic corpora and other digital databases, and from growing interest in comparative cross-linguistic analysis of linguistic structures, including those of varieties of English around the world.

1.1 Objectives

Our aim in the current volume is to take stock of some of the recent advances in the work on the history of English and varieties of English worldwide, thereby broadening and deepening our understanding of the history of English, and leading to ways of rethinking it. We intend to achieve this by, in broad terms, (1) bringing the past into a genuine dialogue with the present and (2) making more transparent the variety of conditions and processes, external and internal, that have been, and still are, instrumental in shaping the history of English.

The field of English historical linguistics has begun to pay attention to and attract researchers whose specializations range from statistical modeling and acoustic phonetics to present-day regional variation and language typology. These researchers conceptualize English as a system that is constantly emerging and unfolding and that can be analyzed on a variety of levels from micro to macro. Language change is observed at the macrolevel of the community. However, it starts with an individual speaker's linguistic innovation, which may or may not be picked up by others, but if it is picked up, it spreads in speaker interaction. James Milroy's (1992: 36) argument that "linguistic change is located in speaker-interaction and is negotiated between speakers in the course of interaction" has resonated well in domains of study as disparate as the supraregionalization of morphological and syntactic changes and the varying patterns of address forms between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries.

The volume represents a new line of cross-field and cross-theory rethinking based on collaborative work. Our approach emphasizes that English historical linguistics is based on theoretically informed empirical research. We do not privilege one theoretical perspective over another, since no one approach could serve the range of topic areas we cover. While some contributors assume a universal grammar and others assume a usage-based grammar, commonalities emerge in the arenas of methodology, especially the use of statistics, and of corpus data. Nor do we privilege modules of grammar or periods of the language, since we wish to represent current research, much of which breaks down traditional boundaries of research.

Our objective is not to cover the history of English in the conventional manner or even to be comprehensive within the limits of the topics we have selected. Indeed, it would be impossible to achieve a comprehensive account of ongoing work, since it is far-ranging and always expanding. Instead we seek to provide an overview of some of the chief trends in work aimed to develop diachronic accounts of the major influences, such as social change, language contact, and typological processes that have shaped, and continue to shape, the language and its varieties while at the same time highlighting recent and ongoing developments of Englishes. An undertaking of this sort, focusing on multiple and ongoing histories of English, was envisioned back in the early 1990s (cf. Rissanen et al. 1992) but has taken two decades to mature.

We seek also to fill in some gaps in most handbooks and textbooks to date, such as correlations between information structure, syntax, and prosody, comparison of

early English with early Germanic, or evidence of change in British and American English during the last fifty years. In sum, our aim is to celebrate the vitality of language change both over the centuries and under our very eyes, and the multiple contexts and processes through which language change happens, is speeded up, slowed down, or prevented altogether.

1.2 Rationale for organization

It is customary to think of the history of English in terms of periods and to organize this history either “horizontally” or “vertically” (see 3). The “horizontal approach” envisages English in terms of Old, Middle, Early Modern, and Present-Day English. “Core” areas of linguistic study such as syntax, morphology, phonology, lexis, and sometimes semantics are discussed within the period in question. The “vertical” approach, by contrast, typically explores changes through time within one core area (e.g. syntax). Both approaches assume two things: one is that linguistic domains are relatively modular and discrete, and the other is that periods are relatively fixed. Both of these assumptions are challenged in the present volume.

As Lass (2000) points out, periodization is always conventional, artificial, and subject to different interests, questions, and methods. He suggests a matrix of linguistic factors that may be used to show similarities and differences among texts, allowing for clusterings to emerge at various points in time. A more traditional approach to periods is to identify historical and cultural events, as in *The Cambridge History of the English Language* (Hogg 1992–2001). For example, the “beginning” of Middle English may be associated with the effects of the Norman Conquest in 1066 and the “beginning” of (Early) Modern English with the establishment of Caxton’s printing press in 1476. Compilers of electronic corpora have tended to assign texts to subperiods of between forty to a hundred years or more, depending on the data, but still using the main period divisions (cf. the Helsinki Corpus). However, close study of the emergence of particular linguistic structures using statistical methods may lead researchers to challenge periodizing practices that cross-cut those changes and to promote focus on time periods specific to those structures. Hence, the present volume is not organized according to broad-scale periods, nor does it take a stand on such periods. Many contributors have, however, used them, since broad-scale divisions are useful heuristics, provide guideposts, and allow cross-reference to other work.¹ We might say that ours is a “diagonal” approach across the nearly fifteen hundred years of historical record of English.

The present volume is also not organized according to linguistic modules. While some chapters focus on one linguistic domain, whether syntax or phonology,

1 The language codes contained in the Library of Congress International Standard ISO 639-2 date Old English to the period c. 450–1100 and Middle English to 1100–1500 (<http://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/>). No other historical periods of English have so far been “standardized” in this way.

others point to the need to consider continua between them (see especially Part IV). The second section of Part IV is specifically devoted to interfaces between information structure, syntax, and prosody.

Our rationale for organization is to highlight a selection of the major themes that are driving current research in areas of rapid expansion. Among them are the nature of the empirical record and some of the issues that arise in interpreting it, for example, how to address continua and gradualness. Other issues addressed are the nature of the major forces that impact change, among them social factors, including contact and language attitudes on the one hand and language-internal interfaces on the other.

2. THE STRUCTURE

There are four parts, each with two sections that either complement or supplement each other. Each part is introduced by a very brief guide that outlines its rationale, suggests points of contact across the sections, and identifies relevant resources available on the associated website.

Although individual chapters can stand alone, the sections are designed to be read as a whole. Each section was coordinated by one or two experts on the theme. The coordinators contributed to the conceptualization of the section and the selection of topics to be included. Their introductory chapters outline a range of issues that pertain to the domain in question, illustrate their own research on it, and point to how individual contributions fit within the larger research enterprise.

2.1 Part I: Rethinking evidence

One major consideration that runs throughout the volume is evidence. The first part concerns the transparency of how research into the history of English is carried out and an evaluation of how secure our knowledge of it is.

The first section, “Evidence” (coordinated by Susan Fitzmaurice and Jeremy Smith), focuses on the empirical evidence that historical linguists have at their disposal and looks into new methods and approaches for the treatment of evidence and witnesses for the history of English. How can we develop a multifaceted approach to the historical study of the language? How can our work be informed by approaches to existing and new sources of evidence conducted in other disciplines that adopt historical study? This is particularly important for sources before 1500 and whenever information from multiple sources is integrated to provide a contextualized account of a particular phenomenon, such as courtroom discourse. How are traditional approaches and methods challenged by the appearance of new sources of potential evidence? Some chapters in the section on evidence are

complemented by brief illustrative chapters that provide details of resources from coins to present-day changes in the pronunciation of vowels.

The second section, “Observing recent change through electronic corpora” (coordinated by Mark Davies), discusses charting recent change in ways that have become possible only now because of the availability of increasingly large electronic corpora. This section emphasizes how ongoing change can be accessed through evidence from several smaller and larger electronic corpora developed in the second half of the twentieth century and the first decade of this one, ranging from Brown to COCA, COHA, TIME, and the Web.² Databases that represented contemporary English language forty or fifty years ago date to the early 1960s. They have now been superseded by those that record the language of the 1990s or the first decade of the 2000s, inviting comparisons between “then” and “now” in British and American English.

Technological advances and the broadening evidence-base with its new methodologies have been instrumental in bridging the gap between synchrony and diachrony, and have changed the ways in which linguists now view methods and approaches relevant to the study of language history. With the availability of new textual resources, recent and ongoing work on the sociolinguistics and pragmatics of the past stages of English has also transformed historical linguists’ perceptions of the processes of language change. Issues that linguists who abstract over these processes should pay attention to include genre balance over time, data granularity, and accessibility of lower-frequency constructions (e.g. complementation). The notion of recent change also comprises the rise of new constructions, as well as the decline of recessive ones.

2.2 Part II: Issues in culture and society

The second part concerns external processes and mechanisms such as the impact of language contact and social change. These have been the object of a considerable amount of research over the last couple of decades. Part II also addresses diachronically less studied but vital domains such as the changing role of media over the centuries.

The first section, “Mass communication and technologies”, coordinated by Thomas Kohnen and Christian Mair, concerns practices of dissemination from Old English on. In the early period, which was oral, texts that have come down to us are necessarily written, but most were written to be “(re)performed” (e.g. wills and sermons). This section addresses the shifting importance of new technologies and media throughout the history of English and their impact on current varieties of English around the world. Print culture dominated the media landscape until recently and was a powerful agent of linguistic standardization, at least as far as the written language was concerned. Modern television and broadcast formats

² The corpora and databases referred to in this introduction and the rest of the chapters are listed at the end of the volume.

encourage informality, giving potentially worldwide exposure to previously local and marginal vernaculars. New digital media have, on the one hand, entrenched American English as the global reference standard, but, on the other hand, these very media are also effective agents in the global spread of vernacular features and of increasing cross-linguistic diversity.

The second section, “Sociocultural processes” (coordinated by Jonathan Culpeper and Minna Nevala), presents a select set of approaches to social, pragmatic, and cultural concepts and processes, as well as their definition and roles as both loci and agents of language variation and change over time. In their chapter, Culpeper and Nevala provide an overview of this very large field and argue that a comprehensive study of sociocultural processes is ideally interdisciplinary, comprising, as Jan Blommaert (2005: 3) puts it, “all forms of meaningful semiotic human activity seen in connection with social, cultural, and historical patterns and developments of use”. Culpeper and Nevala focus on a selection of these, including topics not taken up in the section (e.g. changing social structures), and highlight the complex use of language in interactions, which range from the microlevel of individuals to the macrolevel of groups of individuals. Considering research methods, they point out the varying extents to which historical texts present and represent contexts, and emphasize the dynamic dialectic relationship that holds language and social contexts together. The issues discussed by the contributors include democratization, changing politeness cultures, speaker attitudes, and language norms, political correctness, and the cultural concepts encoded in English over time.

2.3 Part III: Approaches from contact and typology

Of considerable interest in current research is the nature of English in comparison with other languages in the world. So is the effect of globalization on English and the Englishes that have developed as part of globalization. The third part focuses on these issues and the nature of English in contact with and in comparison to other languages.

The first section, “Language contact” (coordinated by Raymond Hickey), addresses the importance of the role of early contact in the development of English in England (especially the role of Celtic and Scandinavian languages in the Middle Ages) and in the rise of overseas varieties, both settler English in new dialect formation contexts such as North America and New Zealand, and second-language varieties of English in Africa and Southeast Asia. This is a topic that has received considerable attention in recent years (see 3) but has to date not been well integrated into works on the history of English.

Contact is a driving force for typological change. This is attested by changes in Middle English syntax (e.g. word-order changes), morphology (e.g. the preference for fixed stems and extensive borrowing of word-formation morphemes), and phonology (e.g. shifts in stress patterns). It is also attested by the structure of

present-day varieties of English around the world. The second section, “Typology and typological change”, coordinated by Bernd Kortmann, explores the various ways in which established and recent theories, concepts, and methods in language typology are relevant for researching language change in general and the history of Englishes in particular. It offers an evaluation of the relevance of diachronic typology and grammaticalization research for the study of the history of both standard and nonstandard varieties of English. Topics include syntheticity, analyticity, markedness, typological changes in the lexicon, and methodologies for measuring complexity in the history of morphosyntax, including that of contact varieties.

2.4 Part IV: Rethinking categories and modules

The fourth part highlights some internal developments that have not received their due in previous handbooks on the history of English, let alone textbooks: cycles and continua, and interfaces.

The first section, “Cycles and continua” (edited by Ricardo Bermúdez-Otero and Graeme Trousdale), addresses issues such as the architecture of grammar, discreteness versus continua, and hypotheses about unidirectionality in morphosyntactic and phonological change, and how they have played out in English. Such cycles and continua may be seen as bridging the boundaries between structure and use, and between different components of the grammar. In consequence, they raise fundamental questions about the nature of language and of linguistic change in general, and about the history of English in particular.

The second section, “Interfaces with information structure” (coordinated by Roland Hinterhölzl and Ans van Kemenade), addresses the question of how discourse requirements such as conveying new and given information interacted with syntax and prosody in restructuring the word order of earlier English, compared with changes in other Germanic languages. Contributors have been asked to address the effects of the interface between information structure, syntax, and prosody in left and right peripheries of the clause and to discuss whether the range of word-order variation and word-order change in English can receive new explanations in terms of this complex interaction. Further, can work on other Germanic languages inform these explanations for the older period? This line of work draws heavily on electronic corpora, recently tagged not only for syntactic structure but also for information status.

2.5 Glossary

A short glossary of terms that recur in the handbook appears at the end of the volume. A more extensive glossary is available on the associated website. The glossary for the most part defines terms that are used in more than one chapter and may not be widely known (e.g. “endonormativity”, the reliance on internal or local community norms of usage for shared language conventions in a speech community) or may have different interpretations in linguistic and nonlinguistic literature (e.g.

“annotation”, which is limited in this volume to the mark-up added to a machine-readable text to convey linguistic information).

2.6 The associated website

The associated website (<http://www.oup.com/us/ohhe>) is a repository of additional materials supplied by contributors ranging from links to Web-based resources, expanded notes, tools for corpus work, sound files, and maps. It is expected that the website will be updated and expanded over time just as the online chapters and the material appended to them will be revised and updated as part of the Oxford Research Reviews (ORR) initiative and the transition to a continuous-publishing model.

3. OTHER RESOURCES

The work represented in this volume is grounded in a vast body of earlier and ongoing research. The references, listed at the end of each chapter, provide a wealth of sources for further reading.

A handbook cannot be up to date or comprehensive, particularly when a field is expanding as fast as that of the history of English. Readers interested in other aspects of the explosion of work on the development of English and Englishes in recent years have a large set of resources mainly designed for the nonspecialist to draw on. Some resources are textbooks with extensive websites, most notably van Gelderen (2006). Others are handbooks, text corpora, databases, Web-based demonstrations, and tutorials of various kinds and on various platforms for diverse audiences ranging from professional linguists (e.g. Miura 2009–) to students (Hickey 2008–) and the wider public. In the more popular vein, YouTube, for example, offers a wide selection of videos, from the lighthearted *History of English in Ten Minutes* (2011) by Open University to the *History of English* (2011) by the British Council, originally published in 1943.

The large variety of digital resources created for the study of history can also benefit the study of the history of English. These include the BBC History home page, which allows those interested to explore, among other things, its timeline of British history (2011). Many other resources, such as archaeological findings, are mentioned in this handbook in the section on evidence.

A different type of resource are new research forums such as the International Society of the Linguistics of English, the objective of which is “to *promote the study of English Language*, that is, the study of the structure and history of standard and non-standard varieties of English, in terms of both form and function, at an international level”³ The formation of this society has largely gone hand in hand with the development of this volume.

3 See <http://www.isle-linguistics.org/index.asp>. Emphasis in the original.

Here we focus on recent handbooks on the history of English (see 3.1) and on recent digital resources (see 3.2) that have direct relevance to the contributions to this handbook.

3.1 Handbooks since 2000

There are two major multivolume handbooks on the history of English: the six-volume *Cambridge History of the English Language* (Hogg 1992–2001) and a two-volume compendium, the *HSK Historical Linguistics of English* (Bergs and Brinton 2012). These handbooks provide in-depth coverage of changes in what is traditionally considered the “core” of the history of a language, and knowledge of which is in some cases assumed by the contributors to the present volume: the changes in its structural makeup, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and lexis, and the dialects of a given period, beginning with Old English. This is the basic structure of the *Cambridge History of the English Language*, the organization of which is essentially “horizontal”, and each major chronological period is discussed in terms of linguistic domains such as phonology, morphology, and syntax. Separate volumes are, however, devoted to English over the last two centuries in Britain and overseas and North American English. Volume 1 of the *HSK Historical Linguistics of English*, edited by Bergs and Brinton, is devoted to the same “core” fields of research with additions such as pragmatics and discourse, and styles, registers, and text types. It, too, is “horizontal” in organization. The second volume includes, in addition to varieties of English and contact, substantial sections on “new perspectives” such as historical sociolinguistics, historical pragmatics, and on what might be called metainformation: teaching the history of English, historiography, literature, and music.

The essence of the *Cambridge History* appears in updated form in a one-volume compendium edited by Hogg and Denison (2006) but this time organized “vertically”. In another volume of similar scope that came out in the same year, Mugglestone (2006) again organizes the history of English “horizontally” according to period. A third handbook that also appeared in 2006, van Kemenade and Los, highlights innovative approaches to the history of the English language worldwide that reveal in a new light its variability in structure and use over time, space, and medium. It was one of the inspirations for the present volume. A more recent publication, edited by Momma and Matto (2008), combines both “horizontal” and “vertical” approaches. Its scope is broader than that of most other handbooks, since it also introduces different approaches to the history of English, ranging from “linguistics and etymology to the philosophy of language and literary history” (Momma and Matto 2008: cover). Some hundred pages are also devoted to diverse issues in Present-Day English such as the teaching of essay writing.

The growing interest in theoretical and descriptive work on varieties of English, which is reflected in Part III of this handbook, is evident in the number of published and forthcoming handbooks on the subject. Kortmann and Schneider (2004) have compiled a multimedia work organized according to phonology (vol. 1) and syntax and morphology (vol. 2). A second edition (2008) comprises four

volumes organized by geographic area. It contains short descriptions of the major linguistic features of a large number of varieties of English. Online resources provide sound recordings and interactive maps. Kachru, Kachru, and Nelson (2006) provide new interpretations of the changing identities of users across the “three circles” or diasporas, first Wales, Ireland, and Scotland; second, North America, Australia, and New Zealand; and third, South and East Asia; a fourth diaspora is world Englishes today. Kirkpatrick (2010) surveys the development of varieties in various regions, their functions and structure, and emphasizes that all varieties, including “standard” ones, are hybrid in origin. Both of these handbooks address globalization and also applications, for example, to pedagogy. Filppula, Klemola, and Sharma (forthcoming) contextualize World Englishes within the core concerns of theoretical linguistics. Lanehart, Bloomquist, and Green (forthcoming) focus on African American English—its structure, origin, use, and attitudes toward it.

3.2 Developing digital resources

The explosion of digital resources in recent years has made a wealth of older materials newly accessible and available, and produced new resources that were not imagined even fifty years ago. Just how foundational to work on the history of English they have become can be seen from the way in which they are referred to by almost all contributors.

The digital turn in the humanities gave rise to the International Computer Archive of Modern English (ICAME) in 1977, which became the International Computer Archive of Modern and Medieval English (with the same acronym) in 1996 in recognition of the work done on historical corpora. Now that electronic corpora and other digital resources have become mainstream, and represent a unifying rather than a divisive methodology in linguistics and philology, they are manifest in the context of the meetings of most professional organizations. The many historical corpora and databases referred to by the handbook contributors are listed at the end of the volume, complete with references to their home pages and/or to the Corpus Resource Database (CoRD), which gives more information about their contents and compilation principles.

The recent history of English can be studied using increasingly comprehensive and varied data sources. Contributions to the present volume make use of the megacorpora of contemporary and historical American English, COCA and COHA, illustrate the heuristic value of the Google Books Ngram Viewer, and show how the Web can be used as a corpus. Audio recordings are available in increasing proportions from the last one hundred years and are beginning to be used to bridge the gap between evidence for the written and oral modes of communication in histories of English. Both full chapters and short illustrative chapters in the present volume discuss the ways in which spoken records can shed light on sound change in progress. Contributors argue that access to the spoken language in history writing calls for serious rethinking of its impact on how language use and language change in general are studied and presented. Besides varied written and

spoken data sources, usage-based models of language variation and change benefit from experimental methods, as evidenced, for example, by Rosenbach (2002) and Bresnan and Ford (2010). Contributors to the present volume show how statistical modeling opens up new ways of approaching old issues such as periodization and the changing proportions of syntheticity and analyticity of English over time.

With the publication of the Early English Books Online (EEBO) and the Eighteenth-Century Collections Online (ECCO), comprehensive print resources are now available for the study of the period from the late fifteenth century to 1800. These databases will be even more useful when their full-text versions become available and can be accessed with corpus tools. One of the obstacles to the full exploitation of historical corpora is spelling variation, and new tools are being developed for automatic spelling normalization (e.g. Baron, Rayson, and Archer 2009). As contributors to this volume demonstrate, adding annotation to corpora also significantly increases the research uses to which they can be put. This work began with the York-Toronto-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English Prose (YCOE) and the Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpora of Historical English, which have been both tagged and parsed. Part-of-speech tagging is now commonplace even with large corpora such as COCA, COHA, and even the massive Google Books (American English) Corpus, but parsing has proved a bigger challenge with diachronic datasets that cover centuries.

Creating multimedia corpora is one of the current trends. A number of digital text editions available on the Internet contain an edited text and manuscript images of the originals. A case in point is *A London Provisioner's Chronicle, 1550–1563*, which also comes with a modernized spelling version (Bailey, Miller, and Moore 2006). Resources like this are being produced in various disciplines in the humanities, notably by literary scholars (e.g. the *Jane Austen's Fiction Manuscripts Digital Edition* project, 2011) and historians. Some of the handbook chapters refer to the richly contextualized online resources designed by historians that have become available in the last few years, among them the *Proceedings of the Old Bailey, 1674–1913* (*Old Bailey Online*) and *London Lives: 1690–1800*, which is an edition of 240,000 original manuscripts.

London Lives gives access to 3.35 million names alone; that is roughly the total number of words included in the Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus, which contains at least one copy of every surviving Old English text. But this is not the extent of the Anglo-Saxon linguistic record: three times as many texts survive in Latin as in English and are currently being developed into a digital corpus of their own (Timofeeva 2010). Parallel historical materials are discussed in this volume in the context of the comparison of Old English and Old High German.

The handbook chapters also illustrate the use of a large variety of digital resources besides classic text corpora. These range from Anglo-Saxon coins, which provide evidence spelling variation according to mony, to the combined use of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (2012) and the *Historical Thesaurus of English* (Kay et al. 2009), both of which appear online. Other historical online dictionaries include the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (2011), available from the Anglo-Norman

On-Line Hub, complete with a search facility of source texts. *Lexicons of Early Modern English* (LEME) (Lancashire 2011) provides online access to monolingual English dictionaries, bilingual and polyglot lexicons, and many other lexical treatises from the invention of printing to 1700.

Interactive websites have become an essential part of historical and dialect atlases. Those discussed in this volume range from A Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English (LAEME) and the Linguistic Atlas of the Middle and South Atlantic States (LAMSAS) to the multimedia reference tool that accompanies *A Handbook of Varieties of English* (Kortmann and Schneider 2004) and the open eWAVE resource, an interactive morphosyntactic database that maps 235 features from a dozen domains of grammar in 48 varieties of English (Kortmann and Lunkenheimer 2011). With a range of visualization tools available, it is now also possible to present both linguistic data and processes of language change in increasingly dynamic and visual terms (e.g. Hilpert 2011; Siirtola et al. 2011).

4. CONCLUSION

This handbook focuses on variation and change in English through time and space. It emphasizes English as a dynamic system and the convergence of interests among many researchers. We hope it will help researchers to rethink the history of English and approaches to change and also foster further work developing the lines of thought introduced here. Work on English has tended to lead the way for research on other languages, partly because of the sheer amount of data available due to the global spread of English in recent centuries and partly because of the current increase in its use as a lingua franca. We therefore hope that the present volume will also inspire rethinking of the histories of other languages.

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PART I

RETHINKING EVIDENCE

GUIDE TO PART I

How do we know what we know about the history of the English language? The first part of the handbook is concerned with the empirical basis on which research into the history of English is carried out and an evaluation of how secure our knowledge of it is.

The first section, coordinated by Susan Fitzmaurice and Jeremy Smith (1), examines the range of available materials and considers new approaches for the treatment of this evidence. Contributors evaluate the representativeness of textual sources from inscriptions, names, and manuscripts (Hough, 2) and the “edited truth” (Horobin, 4) to corpora (Kytö and Pahta, 9). Gries and Hilpert (10 and website) describe a new method of dividing diachronic corpus data into periods. Archer (11) considers multiple sources for investigating courtroom discourse and the linguistic evidence that can be gleaned from them (website). Sources for the study of sound change are introduced by Beal (5) and in the short illustrative chapters by Shaw (3) and Ritt, Anderson, Corrigan, and Hay (6.1–6.4). Coleman (7) discusses novel uses of dictionaries and thesauruses, and Kretzschmar and Stenroos (8 and website) compare surveys and atlases in historical and modern dialectology. A related topic, perceptual dialectology, is addressed by Montgomery (35 and website) in Part II.

The second section, introduced by Mark Davies (12), highlights recent and ongoing change as evidenced by corpora. Issues concern corpus size and genre balance, data granularity, and low-frequency constructions. Hundt and Leech (13 and website) use standard reference corpora to trace grammatical change in British and American English, and Bowie and Aarts (15) explore a parsed diachronic corpus of spoken BrE. Mukherjee and Schilk (14) combine a reference corpus (ICE) with other sources in their approach to New Englishes. Curzan (16) and Rudanko (17) discuss ongoing developments in AmE verb syntax using COCA and COHA. COHA also provides the data for Hilpert’s collostructional NP analysis (18 and website). Mair (19) evaluates the pros and cons of using the Web as a corpus.

Evidence is discussed from the perspective of mass communication in Part II and includes, for example, Biber and Gray’s findings on recent register change in AmE (24). The corpora and digital databases referred to in Part I (and throughout the volume) are listed in a separate index at the end of the volume. Sound clips accompany the Web appendices to Corrigan (6.3) and Price (26) in Part II.

Evidence

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CHAPTER 1

EVIDENCE FOR THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH

INTRODUCTION

SUSAN FITZMAURICE AND
JEREMY SMITH

1. WHAT IS EVIDENCE?

Historical linguistics is an empirical discipline (i.e. it depends on the analysis of data). However, the notion “data” is not unproblematic. Whereas a modern sociolinguist can select data for analysis guided by sophisticated statistical and sociological techniques, students of (say) earlier English need to make do with what data have survived the vagaries of time and chance. Until comparatively recently mechanical and/or electronic methods for recording speech were impossible. Past states of the English language can be accessed through techniques of linguistic reconstruction or through analysis of older writing-systems recorded in surviving texts, but both approaches present difficulties. Reconstructed forms of language are necessarily somewhat speculative, while texts in which older writing-systems survive are invariably partial, representing usages of comparatively small social groups.

There are, of course, comments by contemporary philologists; however, these individuals’ views are couched in terms very different from our own, and they had different concerns from those of their present-day equivalents. Thus Ælfric’s tenth-century Grammar was designed for the teaching of Latin, later medieval writers

tend to frustrating generality, and even the orthoepists, grammarians, and lexicographers of the Early Modern period sometimes focused on correctness rather than on description.

Data from the past therefore come down to us only partially, needing careful assessment; linguistic form relates to sociocultural function. In sum, texts need forensic analysis. To use an apt metaphor from courtroom procedure, texts are witnesses that require interrogation. Witnesses have their own perspectives on events, and it is important not to take the evidence they supply at face value.

Many of the writers in this section demonstrate these points, but it might be appropriate to offer here a short illustrative example. Alexander Gil's English edition of *Logonomia Anglica* (1621) is an important work on the English language, including a sophisticated (if unsuccessful) proposal for English spelling-reform. Gil is a founding figure in sociolinguistics, being the first linguist to engage with sophisticated notions such as hypercorrection in his discussion of the famous *Mopsae*, and he was clearly an excellent phonetician, being able to distinguish differences in pronunciation of considerable delicacy.

However, there are places where Gil's evidence is puzzling; one such place is when his discussion conflicts with those of others. Perhaps Gil's most accomplished predecessor was John Hart, who published several works on spelling in relation to sound (orthoepy): *The opening of the vnreasonable writing of our inglish tounge* (London, British Library, MS Royal 17.C.vii, 1551), *An Orthographie... Composed by I. H. Chester Heralt* (1569), and *A Methode of comfortable begining for all vnlearned... by I. H. Chester Heralt* (1570). Gil states categorically that Hart is mistaken to spell *of* as <ov> rather than, as Gil claims he prefers, <of> (for discussion, see Dobson 1968: 85).

Now the pronunciation of closed-class words with voiced fricatives seems to have been fairly well established by the Early Modern English period, the outcome of a combination of processes working together. It seems that there were reductions of stress in such words; as English continued its general development from synthesis to analysis in grammar (although see Szmreczanyi, 52), these words were increasingly predictable from context. Consequently, changes developed in such unstressed words from voiceless pronunciations with fortis articulation to voiced pronunciations with lenis (and thus less effortful) articulation (see Dobson 1968: 450–64). Thus *ov*, with <v> representing a voiced labiodental fricative (i.e. [ɒv]) would seem a plausible pronunciation by the time of Hart and Gil. Indeed on the very next page of his discussion Gil admits that “frequently... we say” *wid* (with, as his custom, <d> representing a voiced dental fricative) and *ov*, and that in writing <with, of> he is following conventional spelling. It seems therefore that Gil for this item is allowing customary spelling practices to distort his interpretation of a particular item.

Gil was a distinguished schoolmaster who influenced his pupils profoundly; one of his students was John Milton, the future poet. Gil's interest in spelling-reform may seem somewhat cranky to modern readers, but standardizing the vernacular and making it “copious” (i.e. elaborated), in the manner of Latin, was a current issue in advanced intellectual circles. In sum he was a perceptive man, yet interrogation of his evidence shows him in this instance at least to be an unreliable

witness. The criteria that modern scholars apply in the analysis of the evidence he supplies are comparable to those applied by lawyers in forensic analysis of witness statements: we seek corroboration from other sources.

The plausibility of a statement may also be assessed in the light of how present-day language works. A crucial insight for historical linguists is the “uniformitarian hypothesis”, the view that the linguistic behavior of human beings in the past is broadly comparable with that used by our contemporaries. To quote Suzanne Romaine, “the linguistic forces which operate today and are observable around us are not unlike those which have operated in the past. Sociolinguistically speaking, this means that there is no reason for claiming that language did not vary in the same patterned ways in the past as it has been observed to do today” (Romaine 1982: 122–23; see also Labov 1994: 21–23; Lass 1997: 25; Machan 2003: 12). Such variation is to be expected in all levels of spoken language conventionally distinguished (lexicon, grammar, and phonology) and is of course constrained: linguistic variants arise in a set of ways that can be categorized, and this categorization of “natural” variation has been a principal goal for linguists for many years (see Heggarty 2006: 187).

Of course, the uniformitarian hypothesis does not mean that we can simply transfer wholesale the methods of analysis used by (say) modern sociolinguists to the analysis of past data; the range of data is simply too impoverished in comparison with that available to the modern linguist. However, it is certainly possible—in the phrase made famous by William Labov—to use “the present to explain the past” (i.e. to assess the plausibility of a particular interpretation of a piece of data by comparing it with present-day usage) (see e.g. Labov 1978).

Another short example demonstrates the point. In the ninth century, a scribe named Farman supplied an interlinear Old English gloss to a manuscript of the Latin New Testament: the Rushworth Gospels. Scholars were long puzzled by Farman’s language; alongside forms such as *dæg* ‘day’, *wæs* ‘was’, to be expected in the dominant form of written Old English, West Saxon, there were also odd forms such as *wær* ‘man’, *þægn* ‘thane’. However, this behavior was eventually explained by R. J. Menner (1934). Farman, Menner argued, originally used not West Saxon but Old Mercian, a distinct variety in which ‘day’, ‘was’ appear as *deg*, *wes*, respectively; ‘man’ and ‘thane’ would appear as in West Saxon (i.e. *wer*, *þegn*). Farman, however, imitating West Saxon usage while not understanding its historical basis, not only replaced <e> in *deg*, *wes*, yielding *dæg*, *wæs*, but also extended the process so that <ae> appeared in *wær*, *þægn* as well. In modern sociolinguistic terms, Farman hyperadapted (see e.g. Milroy 1992; Alexander Gil’s *Mopsae* were also hyperadaptors); present attested behavior can be used to explain past usage.

The forensic skills required are those common both to lawyers and to historians, and the relationship between linguistics and history has recently become a matter for debate among historical linguists. Anne Curzan and Kimberly Emmons have recently made the following point:

Throughout this volume [of papers], we see an ongoing conversation at the heart of historical English linguistics: the question of evidence and historical

reconstruction. Robert Fulk puts it eloquently in his discussion of the oral nature of early English vernacular texts and the possibility, if not the necessity, of creating linguistic arguments based on unavailable evidence; ‘it raises’, he concludes, ‘profound questions about explanation in linguistics, most particularly whether the aim of historical linguistics should be to explain the data available or to analyze texts of earlier periods from a realistic historical perspective—that is, whether the primary allegiance of historical linguistics should be to linguistics or to history’. (Curzan and Emmons 2004: x; see also Fulk 2004)

Traditionally, historians explain by presenting plausible stories about the past; linguists describe through developing models that capture the characteristics of the language under analysis. However, a robust historical linguistics—sometimes described (arguably pejoratively) as a “hyphenated” form of linguistics—would seem to require the adoption of approaches common to both disciplines.

2. THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ENGLISH HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS

Distinguishing historical explanation and linguistic description has a basis in the historiography of English historical linguistics. We might, for instance, compare two classic nineteenth-century textbooks: Henry Sweet’s *Anglo-Saxon Primer* (1882) and Joseph and Elizabeth Wright’s *Old English Grammar* (1908). Both Sweet and Joseph Wright began their careers as neogrammarians (*Junggrammatiker*), in touch with the latest trends in advanced German philological scholarship, but they took very different approaches to the study of the earliest recorded state of English. Sweet offers a synchronic description of a particular variety, Early West Saxon, as the basis for further work; his Early West Saxon is an abstract scholarly construct that enables the student to grasp the “rules” of Old English (though Sweet does not use the term). The Wrights, by contrast, offered a historical survey of Old English, demonstrating the origins of the forms they describe. These two textbooks therefore exemplify the distinction Ferdinand de Saussure was to make between synchronic and diachronic approaches to the study of language.

Indeed, a survey of the historiography of English historical linguistics reveals—with occasional false starts—continuities rather than radical “paradigm shifts” in the study of the language. Synchronic description, complementing diachronic explanation, was for a while dominant, especially in American linguistics during the first half of the twentieth century, involving in particular the gathering of material on a wide range of languages for which there were no historical records (see further the valuable discussion in Andresen 1990). It also underpinned the development of modern dialectology and sociolinguistics as descriptive approaches to language. In these approaches empirical, data-focused traditions that had evolved

since the Enlightenment were linked to systematic approaches to data not necessarily involving a diachronic orientation (see Smith 2012).

Descriptive study revealed the existence of certain universal features of language (e.g. that all languages are made up of constituent grammars). This universal characteristic of human language was famously distinguished by Noam Chomsky in *Syntactic Structures* (1957), and in many of his subsequent publications, and has been confirmed by empirical observation. However, thorough-going Chomskyan linguistics has until recently never been particularly concerned with historical data (although see Part IV of this handbook). Indeed, it has been argued, the approach represents a departure from the data-focused, empirical methodologies adopted since the Early Modern period in favor of a rationalist approach proceeding from the acceptance of a set of a priori assumptions about the nature of the human mind; thus Chomskyan approaches are not taken further here.

In recent years, descriptive approaches to earlier states of the English language have become increasingly sophisticated, aided among other things by enhancements to empirical methodologies allowed by developments in information technology. For example, the appearance of machine-readable historical corpora based on primary resources has made it possible to envisage much more comprehensive descriptions than any yet accomplished; Merja Kytö and Päivi Pahta, both products of the “Helsinki School” that has done so much for the study of data-driven research in English historical linguistics, offer a discussion of historical corpora (9).

One consequence of invoking the methodological principles underpinning large-scale variationist research and applying them to the historical sociolinguistic investigation of language use in earlier periods is that principles of frequency and representativeness have become important criteria in evaluating results yielded in the scrutiny of this material. However, while sociolinguists studying present-day linguistic variation and change can take the richness of linguistic evidence for granted, it is harder for historical sociolinguists to be confident that the evidence for change in earlier periods will meet benchmarks of frequency and representativeness. To this end, borrowed methodologies have to be adapted to illuminate the findings, as well as the problems of historical investigation.

Dialectological methods for the collection and typological classification of present-day varieties have been applied to earlier periods of English for which the evidence of linguistic variation is fullest; the most significant, and certainly the most sophisticated, outcome to date has been the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (McIntosh, Samuels, and Benskin 1986, currently being revised for online presentation) and its online successor projects, such as the *Linguistic Atlas of Older Scots* (2011) and the *Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English* (2011). “Synchronic” dictionaries of earlier states of the English language, first called for by Sir William Craigie in 1919 (see Craigie 1931), have appeared, for example, the University of Michigan’s *Middle English Dictionary* (2001), now online, the ongoing *Toronto Dictionary of Old English* (2011), and major regional dictionaries, such as the *Scottish National Dictionary* and the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*, which together replace John Jamieson’s dictionary of 1808. These two dictionaries

of Scots have also been placed online, linked as the *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (2011). Such dictionaries draw upon data transmitted in primary texts (e.g. manuscripts and early printed books).

These essentially synchronic works are increasingly complemented by works with a diachronic dimension. The greatest product of nineteenth-century philology as applied to the English language and drawing directly on a great body of primary texts, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*; 2010), is now itself online, massively enhancing its functionality. The recent appearance, both online and in print, of the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* (*HTOED* = Kay et al. 2009), a notional classification of the complete historical lexicon, enables the reconstruction of complete semantic fields at different points of time in the history of English; the *Thesaurus* allows for the lexicological structure of an entire language (insofar, of course, as written records permit) to be reconstructed at various points in time. Taken in combination, the *OED* and the *HTOED* allow for changes in the lexicon to be mapped over time, allowing in turn for engagement with the explanatory role of functional selection in the history of English (see further e.g. Samuels 1972; for further discussion, see Smith 1996, especially chapter 7).

3. CASE STUDIES

In order to demonstrate the kinds of evidential problems raised and how they might be solved, two case studies are presented here. The first of these has to do with medieval evidence for the rise of the phonemic difference between voiced and voiceless fricatives.

3.1 Pre-1500: Evidence for the phonemicization of voiced and voiceless fricatives

Almost all varieties of Present-Day English make a phonemic distinction between voiced and voiceless fricatives (i.e. /θ/–/ð/, /f/–/v/, /s/–/z/, witnessed by the minimal pairs *thigh*–*thy*, *fat*–*vat*, *sue*–*zoo*. This distinction is an innovation in the history of English, which seems to have arisen in various ways, probably in combination. Southern varieties of English, for instance, seem to have had a long-established voicing of initial fricatives, which ultimately yielded the notorious “Mummerset” or “stage-dialect” usage and seems to have introduced into the standard language the near-pair of related forms *fox*–*vixen*. Low-stress lenis articulations of initial [θ] in determiners and pronouns seem to have yielded [ð] in *this*, *that*, *these*, *those*, *the*, *thou*, *thy*, and so on. Inflectional loss gave rise to the /s/–/z/ distinction in *house* (noun)–*house* (verb), since the contrast seems to have been allophonic

in Old English (i.e. voiceless in final position and voiced in medial position; cf. Old English *hūs*–*hūsan*). And the phonemic distinction between /f/ and /v/ also arose through the borrowing of French words into English, yielding such pairs as *fine*–*vine*.

It should be noted, though, that the voiced/voiceless contrast remains comparatively marginal in Present-Day English phonology. Minimal pairs are hard to find in some instances (the *thigh*–*thy* contrast requires the use of an archaic pronoun), and it is also noticeable that the reflection of the contrast in spelling is not consistent. Although <f>–<v> seems to be well established, <s>–<z> is less so. The letter <z> is used initially only in “exotic” borrowings into English (e.g. *zebra*, *zoo*) and is sometimes even replaced by other letters altogether (e.g. <x> in *xylophone*); medially it is optional (cf. variation between *criticise* and *criticize*), and in final position it is now archaic, replaced by <se> (see Carney 1994: 238). And <th> is used to map onto both voiced and voiceless sounds, with an additional <e> to indicate voicing in final position (e.g. *breath*, *breathe*). Only very rarely is a distinctive spelling adopted (i.e. <dh>, for /ð/), and then only in exotic words such as *sandhi* or in philologically inspired fiction (cf. the place-name *Caradhras* in Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings*).

The history of <z> presents interesting evidential problems (see further Smith 2000). Although, as just indicated, the letter is rarely used in the history of English, most authorities have noted a surge in its use, in Middle Kentish (i.e. the range of varieties that are assigned to the dialect of the county of Kent during the Middle English period).

The most important Middle Kentish text, generally regarded as prototypical of the variety, is a holograph manuscript of a work called the *Ayenbite of Inwyrt* (London, British Library, MS Arundel 57), written in the English of *his ozene hand* (‘of his own hand’) by Dan Michel of Northgate, precisely dated to 1340 and explicitly located in Canterbury: *of ane broper of þe cloystre of sa[yn]t austin of Canteburi* ‘of a brother of the cloister of St. Augustine of Canterbury’. Dan Michel, who seems to have been interested in spelling (he corrects the work carefully to ensure that his practices are consistent; see Gradon 1979: 10), regularly uses the letter <z> before vowels in native words that, in Old English, were written with <s> (e.g. *zenne* ‘sin’, *zelf* ‘self’, *zaule* ‘soul’). He also uses <z> in groups whose modern reflexes are *sw*- (e.g. *zuord* ‘sword’, *zute* ‘sweet’). However, he uses <s> in native words when followed by another consonant (e.g. *smal* ‘small’, *ston* ‘stone’), and in words of French or Latin origin (e.g. *sacrefice* ‘sacrifice’, *seculer* ‘layman’). He uses <s> and <z> medially in both native and French-derived words (e.g. *leazing/lyeasinge* ‘falsehood’ (derived from Old English), *hazard* ‘luck’, *desyr* ‘desire’ (both derived from French)).

Now, this use of <z> is an innovation in the Middle Kentish dialect. It does not appear in earlier Kentish texts, such as the thirteenth-century *Kentish Sermons*, except as a sporadic plural marker in exotic words such as *sergan*z (the plural of *sergant*; cf. Old French *serja(u)nt*); such forms are common in other dialects (cf. *s[er]uaunt*z ‘servants’ in Older Scots, with <3> used for final <z>).

Although it is almost certain that initial alveolar fricatives were pronounced voiced in southern dialects from an early period, there was no need to signal such voicing in spelling, since <s> would simply be interpreted as voiced in initial position (see Hogg 1992: 283–84); there was no change in the phonological system, and there would therefore be no need for a written symbol. It would seem that a distinction between <s> and <z> in writing only became needed in the Middle Kentish dialect when large numbers of French words were transferred into the local lexicon, resulting in a distinction in pronunciation between words derived from French (e.g. *somme* ‘sum (of money, etc.)’) and those derived from English (e.g. *zom* ‘some’).

There is good evidence that initial alveolar fricatives continued to be pronounced voiced in Kentish speech until at least the end of the nineteenth century (Wright 1905: 241). It seems to have still been in use in the transition from the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries, when Shakespeare used “the unnecessary letter” <z> to represent Kentish speech in *King Lear* (IV.vi) (e.g. *zwaggerd* ‘swaggered’). However, by contrast, the distinction between <s> and <z> in written Kentish did not last long. The letter <z> disappeared from texts that otherwise exhibited many distinctively Kentish features (e.g. documents associated with St. Laurence’s Hospital in Canterbury). It may be argued that this disappearance of distinction related to the integration of French vocabulary into the local lexicon, so that French-derived words were pronounced in a Kentish fashion. The need to sustain a <z>-spelling therefore disappeared, and <s> alone remained (see further Smith 2000: 411).

3.2 Post-1500: Evidence for multiple negation in the late eighteenth century

Post-1500 case studies may be used to highlight the complex ways in which the specific matter of historical and cultural contexts and technological circumstances affects the status of evidence and consequently the ways we approach and ascertain that evidence. Thus, the second half of the eighteenth century is a period marked by significant (external) intervention in the use and usage of the English language. Prescriptivist grammars provided the sources of the practical primers produced by schoolteachers and booksellers for use in schools and for self-instruction, respectively (Beal, Nocera, and Sturiale 2008; Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008). This corpus of linguistic metadiscourse effectively codifies the rules allegedly guaranteed to equip ambitious people who lacked the benefit of a classical education with the linguistic tools to write and speak English well enough to improve their lot. The variety and number of sources of what Beal (5) calls “direct evidence” of speakers’ attitudes toward and understanding of language usage in the form of prescriptive grammars and their practical digests proliferate in the period. At the same time, it becomes harder to find sources of “indirect evidence” of the range of vernacular styles practiced by speakers who have little formal literacy. Let us consider how

these different sources of evidence converge in the story of multiple negation in the late eighteenth century.

Corpus-based quantitative analysis of the distribution of multiple negation in personal letters (as represented by the Corpus of Early English Correspondence (CEEC) materials) in the first two decades of the seventeenth century reveals that single negation in simple clauses occurs almost universally (99 percent of the time), while single negation in coordinate constructions lags behind (65 percent) (Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg 2003: 71). This observation allows us to infer that the modern standard norm—single negation—was well established in written English more than a century before the heyday of the English normative tradition. Although multiple negation typically occurred in coordinate constructions and additive constructions containing *nor* or *neither*, often with negative nouns like *nothing*, they could occasionally occur with nonassertive indefinite expressions like *anything*. In contrast, single negation typically occurred with nonassertive indefinites (*any*, *ever*, *either*).

Multiple negation in coordinate sentences persists in vernacular styles of literate speakers in the first half of the eighteenth century. Indirect evidence appears in personal letters; for example, William Congreve writes to Thomas Keally thus:

- (1) No, Sir, **no** news, I thank you; **nor no** glimpse (Network of Eighteenth-Century English Texts (NEET), Congreve to Keally; cclet023).

Direct evidence appears in the form of the representation of sociolects of characters in prose narratives and dramas; for example, Congreve's *Way of the World* (1700) has the heroine Millamant use a double negative:

- (2) Nay, he has done nothing; he has only talk'd—Nay, he has said **nothing neither**; but he has contradicted every Thing that has been said.

Delariviere Manley also exhibits the construction in her 1709 *roman à clef*, *Atalantis*:

- (3) Seeing her cousin had left crying and was fallen into a profound revery, forgetting her late misfortune as if she had **not** been like to be ravished, **nor no** such thing had happened, she got up (singing a tune in the new opera) to adjust herself at a glass (NEET, gmess002.txt.)

Both of these registers—personal letters and literary discourse—have traditionally provided the source of representative language use in earlier periods as collected in corpora such as CEEC and A Representative Corpus of Historical English Registers (ARCHER). It is harder to find indirect evidence of the expression in these kinds of sources produced later in the century, suggesting that multiple negation recedes in the stylistic repertoire of literate speakers. At the same time, the extent of general public awareness of multiple negation as a shibboleth, based on less-educated usage, is evident in the metalanguage of the period. The grammar writers use the commonsense terms of logic to condemn negative concord; thus

Ann Fisher, in her *A New Grammar, with Exercises of Bad English: Or, an Easy Guide to Speaking and Writing the English Language Properly and Correctly* (1753: 120) asserts:

A Negative in *English* cannot be expressed by two Negatives; as, *it was not good for Nothing; I cannot eat none*, &c. such Expressions are Solecisms, which, instead of Negatives, make Affirmatives and signify as much; as, *it was good for Something; I can eat some*.

The appeal to logic appears in contexts other than normative grammars. Access to the vast databases of facsimile printed texts collected in the online collections Early English Books Online (EEBO) and Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO) opens up the possibility of discovering direct evidence in unexpected contexts. Accordingly, we find the aphorism (“two negatives an affirmative do make”) invoked to discuss language in a wide variety of printed texts in the second half of the eighteenth century. For example, the logical syllogism is alluded to (entirely speciously) in order to challenge a particular assertion in a 1756 pamphlet in which the writer is challenging his accuser’s claim that he is guilty of sodomy and pedophilia. The “quibble” is in fact a vigorous and emphatic denial of any association with Mr. Brown and Mr. Whitaker:

- (4) In the next paragraph he saves me the trouble of refuting him, because he has effectually done it himself. He first denies his lying in wait for me; yet immediately adds, “he joined those that did a little before I was taken;” and comes off with this quibble, “I was *not* in company with *neither* Mr. Brown *nor* Mr. Whitaker for many hours before, *nor* at the time you was apprehended.” Now, what is this, according to the common construction and propriety of every language, but to say, I was in company with *Brown*, &c. For two *negatives* make an *affirmative*. (Bradbury 1756)

Indirect evidence of the extent to which multiple negation survives in the vernacular of the lower classes in the second half of the eighteenth century is harder to find given the explicit suppression of variation in printed texts, on the one hand, and the unlikely existence of recorded spoken vernacular styles in printed texts, on the other. As a result, we have to scour materials collected and developed by experts in other fields for possible evidence.

One such resource is the online edition of the *Proceedings of the Old Bailey* (*Old Bailey Online*), which consists of the published reports of 197,745 felony trials held between 1674 and 1913 at the Old Bailey in London. Shoemaker (2008: 559), in a discussion of the reliability of the *Proceedings*, notes that they became a regular periodical, “with editions published eight times a year following each session of the court”. Despite the changing format, printers, and the varying degree to which the case for the defense and the reporting of acquittals were included in the periodical (Shoemaker 2008: 571), the fact that the *Proceedings* do include the verbatim reports of prisoners’ and witnesses’ statements, both in the form of depositions

and in cross-examinations, makes this a potentially invaluable source of evidence of spoken language (see further Archer, 11).

Indeed, the *Proceedings* yield ample indirect evidence for the persistence of multiple negation in coordinate constructions in the spoken language of the criminal classes and their victims. For example, one William Petty gave evidence against three men accused of violent theft in 1774, reporting his response to a demand for his valuables thus:

- (5) I said I had got **no** twenty guineas, **nor neither** would I give them any, for I was no such person, **nor** would I give them any thing; they made use of several oaths and bitter words, and I was much terrified (ref. t17740706-60; JOHN CLARKE, JOHN PULLEN, WILLIAM ROOKE, Theft > theft from a specified place, Violent Theft > highway robbery, July 6, 1774).

In 1780, William Harding, accused of highway robbery, denied the charge and declared in his defense that

- (6) I **never** saw the watch **nor** the man **neither** (t17800913-11: WILLIAM HARDING, Violent Theft > highway robbery, September 13 1780).

In 1787, Abraham Hitchin was questioned as a witness in the trial of Antonio Nesi, who was accused of stealing money from Hitchin and his brother. He answered a question about the type of lock using a construction that nicely illustrates the manner in which negators agree in different clauses in negative concord:

- (7) It is a tumbler lock; I took **none neither** that night **nor** the next day (t17870523-38; theft from a specified place, 23 May, 1787).

In each of these examples, the communicative function of denying a state of affairs affords a rich opportunity to test the extent to which multiple negation in coordinate constructions persists beyond the first half of the eighteenth century. While clearly indicative of the language of a rather limited speech community, namely, the community involved in and affected by felony crimes in London, this is nevertheless an important source of evidence of spoken-language styles in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Another newly accessible source of indirect evidence for the occurrence of multiple negation in the language of people in lower social strata with little or no education appears in the petitions written by unschooled writers seeking poor relief from parishes, again made available by historians. Shoemaker and his associates have made available a variety of documents and records that provide a clue to the lives of various communities in London's lower social strata (*London Lives: 1690 to 1800. Crime, Poverty, and Social Policy in the Metropolis*). Included in these documents are letters sent by petitioners to their parishes, seeking poor relief. Not only do these letters yield evidence of the linguistic practices of their writers, but they are also connected to other documents about their lives, providing the basis for constructing biographies.

Here is a transcription of a document of this sort, one of a series of letters written in 1758 by one Catherine Jones, a Welsh woman who lived in London at some time, to apply for poor relief. Her life is detailed in *London Lives*. The documents have records of her between 1757 and 1783. The letter includes a variety of negative expressions (in bold), including negative adverbs coupled with negative conjunctions in negative-concord constructions:

- (8) onored sir I Sent aletter amonth ago I haid **no** ansir I am very sorey to be so trubelsum to you but I **Canot** help it for I am in gret want of relivefi from my parch I have **no** wher els to mack my Compliments or i would **not** be So trubelsum to you **nor** the gentelmen of sent daians back Church **nor** anney wone eles but thers **non** having hier euey thing is at gret prise but watter thier is **none** knows what paines I do baer in my limes... (St. Dionis Backchurch Parish (London), Letters to Parish Officials Seeking Pauper Relief, 1758–59)

‘Honoured sir I sent a letter a month ago I had no answer I am very sorry to be so troublesome to you but I cannot help it for I am in great want of relief from my parish I have nowhere else to make my complaints or I would not be so troublesome to you nor the gentlemen of St. Dionis Backchurch nor anyone else but there is none having here everything is at great price but water there is no one knows what pains I do bear in my limbs...’

The grammar writers in the second half of the eighteenth century fix negation by rehearsing the formula for the construction of a negative sentence. The rule is routinely reproduced in the digests meant for practical instruction. For instance, a letter-writing manual produced in 1779, *The accomplished letter-writer; or, universal correspondent*, includes a “Compendious System of English Grammar”, directions for the use of address forms, and a “Table of Clerk-like contractions of words for despatch of business” (including abbreviations for terms like “debtor”, etc.) as supporting material for the necessary instructions for writing letters in all aspects of life. Instructions for forming negative sentences appear in two places: the first instruction appears in a comment on the utility of auxiliary *do*:

- (9) *Do* and *did* express Emphasis; as, *I do love you*, i.e. *I really love you*. They are also necessary in Negative sentences; as *I do not love a Liar* (1779: 30).

The second appears six pages later in a statement about the placement of *not*:

- (10) For example, The Negative Adverb *not* is always put after the Verb or Auxiliary; as, *He loves me not*; *He will not receive me* (1779: 36).

No connection is made between the comment on the obligatory use of *do* in a negative sentence and the comment on the negative adverb *not*. The attentive reader of the grammar might be confused by the appearance of the *do*-less negative, *he loves me not*, in light of the comment that *do* is “necessary in Negative sentences”. The

producer of this grammar digest has evidently collected bits and pieces for the compendium, from earlier grammars, as well as from more contemporary grammars.

The situation seems no better by the end of the century. In his *English grammatical exercises* of 1795, James Alderson reproduces the now old-fashioned *do*-less negative with *not* with a comment on the placement of the negative adverb after the verb when there is no auxiliary. This suggests either that he does not recognize the role of *do* as instrumental in constructing negative sentences or that the sources he has relied on for his grammar did not regard the use of *do* as obligatory in the formation of negation:

- (11) If the sentence be Negative, the adverb *not* is placed after the auxiliary; or after the verb when there is no auxiliary; as, “*Do not go*” or, “*go not*”.

Neither of these widely circulated texts addresses the issue of multiple negation. The fact that they do not might suggest that it does not appear to be salient for their writers except that their writers do not exhibit clear understanding or control of grammatical description. Such observations indicate that, depending upon where we look, we will gather very different perspectives on the history of multiple negation in English in the period we have come to associate with the suppression of variation and the prescription of usage.

More broadly, these case studies exemplify rather well the complexities involved in the interpretation of evidence. One of the biggest mistakes a historical linguist can make is to forget the nature of the texts being copied (i.e. the “philological” element in historical study). It is for that reason that much recent work has emphasized the need to reintegrate “modern” linguistics, with its focus on systems and structures, and “old-fashioned” philology, with its focus on texts (see famously Rissanen 1990).

4. THE CHAPTERS IN THIS SECTION

It will be quickly observed that the chapters in this section all engage with questions of assessment and of interpretation raised in these opening remarks. The new age of what is increasingly called “computational philology” allows scholars to trace the ebb and flow of language change much more closely and with greater delicacy than has been possible hitherto, engaging imaginatively with complex data. But there is one sense in which past scholarship does indeed continue to affect the present. There was much discussion a few years ago among literary Anglicists about the “new philology”, not of course recognizing that the original “new” (i.e. nineteenth-century) philology underpinned such enterprises as the *New English Dictionary* (later the *OED*) (see Aarsleff 1983 and references there cited). But just as the *OED* continues in its various formats and applications to invigorate linguistic enquiry, so the insights of past scholarship continue to form part of the scholarly dialogue. It is one of the pleasing characteristics of English historical linguistics—as in all

branches of historiography—that its practitioners do not (generally) see their role as to repudiate past scholarship but rather to engage with it. Just as the physical infrastructure of many modern British cities is underpinned by a Victorian inheritance, so are many features of our intellectual framework. However, just as the modern high-speed train represents a transmutation of the nineteenth-century steam locomotive, so the new philology has been transformed by the application of modern methods and approaches.

Scholars have studied the history of English seriously for many years. We have an established set of accepted labels for talking about, for example, the history of sounds: *i*-mutation, Middle English Open Syllable Lengthening, the Great Vowel Shift. Most of these labels were established during the period of neogrammarian theoretical dominance and in place by the appearance of the great *summas* of the subject: Richard Jordan's *Handbuch der mitttelenglische Grammatik* (1925), Karl Luick's *Historische Grammatik der englische Sprache* (1914), Eric Dobson's *English Pronunciation 1500–1700* (1957) (the first date of publication is given here, as opposed to that of later editions).

Insights from modern sociolinguistics and dialectology mean that we are aware that the history of English is not a march toward “standard southern British English” but rather the study of something much more dynamic, that is, in Roger Lass's evocative phrase, the history of “a population of variants moving through time” (1997: 45); engagement with the uniformitarian hypothesis means that we are aware that folk in the past, like ourselves, expressed themselves linguistically through variation. But these insights already underpin H. C. Wyld's *A History of Modern Colloquial English* (1936), and Joseph Wright's *English Dialect Grammar* (1905) drew upon the author's concern with the history of nonstandard usage, which he himself had pursued with his study of his own, retained Yorkshire usage, *A Grammar of the Dialect of Windhill* (1892). And it is noticeable that, even in recent major publications on the history of English sounds, scholars continue the dialogue with the neogrammarian past of their subject, for example, Richard Hogg's important *Grammar of Old English* (1992).

In short, is there anything new to say? As Eric Dobson notoriously said about Middle English Open Syllable Lengthening, “At this time of day no one can have much that is new to say about Middle English lengthening in open syllables” (1962: 124). However, a Google search on the acronym MEOSL alone, widely adopted as an abbreviation for the change in recent years, yields 3,420 hits, while a Google Scholar¹ search for MEOSL yields 114 citation sources, most since 1962. Like other classical sound changes, MEOSL has been unpacked as a diatopically varying and dynamic process of adjustment between “splits” and “mergers”. Our notion of how a sound change may be defined has been transformed into something much more complex: an emergent process (see Blevins 2004; Smith 2007).

The evidence is, therefore, that there is indeed much more to say, and the following chapters go toward proving that point. They harness resources gathered

1 See <http://scholar.google.com/>.

in new ways to offer novel insights. Students of the history of English may not, to modify Michael Halliday's famous statement (1987: 152), feel the need to "trample . . . on their predecessors", but that does not mean that they have ceased to make progress.

The materials presented by Carole Hough (2) and Philip Shaw (3) show how even now newly emerging data for the earliest forms of English are open for exploitation, while Joan Beal's (5) study confronts the issues that arise even when dealing with a period for which—a naïve reader might have thought—the evidence for English is much fuller and much less problematic. Editing has always been part of the philological enterprise—the *OED* was built upon the labors of the editors who worked for the Early English Text Society—and the problems of editing are the focus of Simon Horobin's (4) work.

The remaining chapters deal with resources and methods. Students of the history of English pronunciation have a major problem, of course: for the most part, they have to approach their subject indirectly. Until the end of the nineteenth century, there are no recordings of speech, and for that reason scholars depend on comments of contemporaries (often frustratingly vague) on the analysis of spelling or verse or on reconstruction, and none of these resources is problem-free. We have evidence, but interpreting that evidence is a challenging enterprise. Various scholars—Wendy Anderson (6.2), Dawn Archer (11), Karen Corrigan (6.3), Jennifer Hay (6.4), Nikolaus Ritt (6.1), and Philip Shaw (3)—investigate the harnessing of evidence for pronunciation, using new techniques of data gathering. William Kretzschmar and Merja Stenroos (8) look at the methods involved in collecting and presenting data in historical dialect atlases, Julie Coleman (7) looks at dictionaries and thesauri, while Merja Kytö and Päivi Pahta (9) offer a discussion of historical corpora. All these authors relate their discussion to wider theoretical considerations, and indeed some of the most exciting developments in the field demonstrate how very large bodies of data can be analyzed. Statistics, therefore, which have rather too often been a mystery for scholars in the humanities, will undoubtedly loom very large in future work; Stefan Gries and Martin Hilpert (10) show how statistical methods can be harnessed for new insights into historical data. Finally, Dawn Archer (11) offers an extended case study, illustrating the methods involved in the mining of evidence from large bodies of data.

What all these chapters have in common is a focus on the relationships among data, methodology, and theory. In the exciting new resources described in the chapters that follow we see the best of what might be called, rather clumsily, the new "new philology" (for the nineteenth-century "new philology", see Aarsleff (1983) and references there cited). The modern philologist is not a stamp collector, gathering data for presentation in a theory-neutral manner; rather, the focus is on the iterative engagement of theory with data: the amassing of data hitherto neglected and their mining for new theoretical insights, and the interpretation of data from new theoretical perspectives. This approach can be connected to what might be considered an emerging theoretical paradigm, although it has been explicitly related to notions dating back to J. R. Firth and before him to Ferdinand de Saussure: the

linguistics of speech, as William Kretzschmar has called it, whereby the focus of study is on *parole* rather than *langue*. Kretzschmar states elsewhere that “the linguistics of speech does not reject rules in favor of variation, or reject variation in favor of rules, but instead finds a place for each in how we might think about language” (2009: 3), and he points out that new technological developments—many of them described above—allow us to pursue these issues in a much more data-informed way. In short we are reminded constantly, in our engagement with evidence, that the study of the history of English is a “human science”, not an abstract set of formalisms.

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CHAPTER 2

EVIDENCE FROM SOURCES PRIOR TO 1500

CAROLE HOUGH

1. INTRODUCTION

Sources for the history of English before 1500 include inscriptions (runic and non-runic), manuscript texts (religious and secular), and onomastic data (personal names and place-names). None of these is representative. The epigraphical corpus depends on chance survivals and finds. Early manuscript production was concentrated in southern England and skewed toward the interests of ecclesiastical and secular administrations. Onomastic evidence is geographically more even but vulnerable to subsequent obfuscation.

The existing corpus of material in all three areas has been extended by further discoveries in recent years, while its evidential value has been reassessed through the application of new methodologies. As regards the first two, revisionist work has focused on the provenance, integrity, and interpretation of extant witnesses. The third has seen a broadening of focus from etymology to extralinguistic context, alongside a reappraisal of the relationship between onomasticon and lexicon.

2. INSCRIPTIONS

2.1 Evidence

The epigraphic corpus expands constantly as new material emerges through archaeological excavations and chance discoveries. Some finds are in the runic alphabet used for the early Germanic languages; others in the Roman alphabet used for Latin and later English inscriptions. Whereas Page (1973) listed 62 known Anglo-Saxon runic texts (excluding coin legends), more than 20 additions had come to light by the second edition (1999). Similarly with Anglo-Saxon nonrunic inscriptions, the 158 entries in Okasha (1971) have been updated by three supplements (1983, 1992, 2004), bringing the total to 240. Later discoveries include a biblical quotation in Latin on a gold strip within the Staffordshire Hoard of early Anglo-Saxon treasure unearthed in July 2009 and—from the opposite pole of the date range covered by this chapter—a late medieval inscription in English on the south aisle of Salisbury Cathedral uncovered in January 2010.

2.2 Methodology

As with all linguistic data, interpretation of epigraphic evidence depends on its location in space and time. Particular issues associated with inscriptions relate to the complexities presented by a variety of writing surfaces, including bone, ivory, leather, metal, stone, and wood, and by a range of artifacts from small items like boxes, coins, combs, gaming pieces, jewelry, and weapons to larger ones like buildings, grave markers, and standing crosses. Not all texts are complete or legible, since objects intended for practical use are vulnerable to damage, and those on open-air display are affected by weathering. Methodologies directed toward establishing geographical and temporal origins are therefore closely tied to the nature of individual witnesses.

2.2.1 Provenance

Geographical location is unproblematic for fixed objects such as the sundial at St. Gregory's Minster (Kirkdale), the standing cross at Ruthwell (southern Scotland), and Salisbury Cathedral. Many artifacts, however, are small and portable, making provenance difficult to establish. Location of the find may be relevant. The Alfred Jewel, inscribed *AELFRED MEC HEHT GEWYRCAN* 'Alfred ordered me to be made', was discovered near Athelney, a place associated with King Alfred (871–99). It is at least a striking coincidence that the Staffordshire Hoard was located near Hammerwich, one of the few place-names to refer to metalworking.¹

1 OE **hamor-wīc* 'building with a smithy'.

Other witnesses may have traveled considerable distances. A bone comb-case found at Lincoln with a runic inscription meaning ‘Porfastr made a good comb’ was probably imported from Denmark, and a silver cross-reliquary in Brussels Cathedral was exported from England. This is established by two lines of Old English verse followed by a dedication with three Anglo-Saxon personal names. In other instances, varieties of alphabet or types of graph may be diagnostic. Latin maker formulas on three similar leather scabbards found in Aachen, Dublin, and Trondheim are in Anglo-Saxon majuscules, while a silver brooch found at Penrith in Cumbria uses a Scandinavian *futhark* or rune-row of only 15 runes. The number of symbols within the *futhark* varied in different areas, as did the shape of individual runes such as **h**, long believed to have a single crossbar in Scandinavia but a double crossbar in England and Frisia. However, as people no less than objects are moveable, it is often uncertain whether different production techniques reflect foreign imports or itinerant carvers. Apparently produced in England is a bone gaming-piece with the runic inscription **raihan** ‘roe deer’ found at Caistor-by-Norwich, although the single-barred **h** suggests Scandinavian influence.

For witnesses inscribed with illustrations, as well as texts, style of decoration may be relevant. That of the Alfred Jewel is comparable to other objects from the West Saxon kingdom of King Alfred; that of the eighth-century whalebone box known as the Franks or Auzon Casket points to an origin in northern England. This type of evidence is not straightforward, as demonstrated by the long-running debate concerning the provenance of a fifth-century gold bracteate discovered at Undley, Suffolk, in 1981. Controversially attributed to the Schleswig-Holstein area on the basis of art historical and archaeological evidence, the weaknesses of the case are outlined by Parsons (1996: 146–48).

2.2.2 *Dating*

Some inscriptions can be dated on internal evidence. These include coins and memorial or dedication texts such as the Kirkdale sundial (1055–65) and the Deerhurst dedication stone (1056). The presence of datable objects within the same find may be indicative, while the Salisbury Cathedral inscription was discovered behind a monument to Henry Hyde erected soon after 1660.

Again, although archaeological and art historical evidence can help to date both runic and nonrunic inscriptions, it is seldom conclusive and is subject to revision. The cremation urn containing the Caistor bone, initially attributed to the fourth century, is now dated to the fifth. The iconography of the Alfred Jewel is consistent with the late ninth century, and an eleventh-century date suggested for the Aachen and Trondheim scabbards on the basis of decoration is supported by archaeological evidence for their Dublin counterpart. However, whereas current scholarship dates the Ruthwell Cross—a key witness for the early Northumbrian dialect of Old English—to the early eighth century, its interlace patterns and motifs have also been used to support arguments for the late seventh or late eighth.

Paleographical evidence is similarly problematic. The difficulty of dating epigraphical data is highlighted by differing expert opinions concerning the inscribed gold strip within the Staffordshire Hoard. Brown (2011) dates the insular majuscule to the seventh century; Okasha (2011) prefers the eighth.

2.3 Interpretation

Page's (1999: xi) comment that "newly found inscriptions do not simply expand the Anglo-Saxon runic corpus: they require us to modify our appraisal of it" highlights the fact that epigraphic data, like other types of source material discussed in this chapter, are cumulative, with interpretation depending on the overall weight of evidence rather than individual witnesses. Those bearing early runic texts suggest the direction of migration from the continent to Britain and testify to the language variety or varieties spoken by early Anglo-Saxon settlers. Runes are traditionally thought to have reached Britain from Frisia, but a growing body of evidence favors a Scandinavian origin. Taken in isolation, the single-barred **h** of the Caistor bone might be anomalous, the work of a single Scandinavian immigrant. Additional occurrences of the form in subsequent finds from eastern England, alongside further parallels with Scandinavian runic tradition, make that explanation less tenable. Other evidence, such as the extension of the original runic alphabet to include two additional vowel sounds in England and Frisia, supports the general view of Old English as a North Sea Germanic language related to Old Frisian and Old Saxon. However, it has been argued that instead of reaching England from Frisia, the extra runes may have originated in England and spread to Frisia. Since one of the earliest occurrences is on the Undley bracteate, it is even possible—if the bracteate is from the Schleswig-Holstein area—that the development may not be limited to the North Sea Germanic group but originated in Scandinavia.

The linguistic significance of epigraphic data depends on the relationship between writing systems and pronunciation. The development of the two extra runic symbols reflects sound changes in the prehistory of Old English, while items such as the Franks Casket and Ruthwell Cross display a hierarchy of languages and scripts that throws light on the interplay of Roman and Insular tradition. Indeed, an intriguing aspect of the Salisbury inscription is its use of English in an ecclesiastical context where most contemporary witnesses are in Latin. It is, however, debatable to what extent the texts reflect literacy in either language. Whether the people who commissioned and cut the carvings could read them is uncertain, and it is not always clear whether unusual graphs and spellings represent errors or a deliberate manipulation of script and layout. On the back panel of the Franks Casket, the shift from Old English in runes to Latin in the Roman alphabet is widely regarded as an error by a carver working from a Latin exemplar in Roman script but has recently been reinterpreted as deliberate code-switching. Arguing that the intention was to unite the different traditions, Klein (2009) also suggests that unusual spellings such

as *fugiant* ‘fleeing’ (Roman) and *afitatores* ‘inhabitants’ (runic) represent the carver’s pronunciation. According to one interpretation, then, such nonstandard forms show ignorance of Latin; according to another, they show that the local speech community was so familiar with Latin as to have developed its own pronunciation.

A direct correspondence between orthography and phonology may be compromised by various factors, including spelling regulation at a local or national level and practical constraints resulting from the size, shape, and texture of the carving surface. Recent research in both areas has focused particularly on coins, the topic of Shaw’s contribution to this volume.

3. MANUSCRIPTS

3.1 Evidence

This section includes anything written on parchment—or, from the thirteenth century onward, paper—whether in the form of individual leaves, booklets, or codices. New finds are much rarer than in the field of epigraphy. Some comprise folios detached from the manuscript to which they belonged, as with the leaf from a glossed Anglo-Saxon psalter discovered at Sonderhausen in northern Thuringia (Gneuss 1998). Others are hitherto undetected dry-point or scratched glosses, as with the names of members of the pre-Conquest community at Lichfield entered into the Gospels of St. Chad² during the tenth or eleventh century (Charles-Edwards and McKee 2008). A third type consists of late transcripts of lost originals, as with the cartulary of St. Albans abbey, copied during the seventeenth century by the Bollandists at Antwerp (Keynes 1993).

3.2 Methodology

Whereas inscriptions are often contemporary with the extant witness, manuscript texts may be much earlier. Apart from those preserved on single-sheet charters, many texts have been repeatedly recopied and sometimes translated from one language variety into another. Research therefore focuses on the relationship between the original text and the manuscript, attempting to establish the date and provenance of both, and the extent of scribal intervention.

3.2.1 Provenance

As with many inscriptions, manuscripts are portable; like carvers, scribes may move around. Except for texts localizable on internal evidence, a secure provenance

2 Lichfield, Cathedral Library, MS Lich. 1.

may be difficult to establish. The earliest copies of *Cædmon's Hymn*, in the Northumbrian dialect of Old English, are glosses to the Moore³ and St. Petersburg⁴ manuscripts of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, produced in 737 and 746. Since both glosses appear to have been written by the main scribes, dating and provenance are relatively unproblematic. A key witness to the Mercian dialect is the ninth-century gloss to the *Vespasian Psalter*,⁵ an eighth-century Canterbury manuscript. Current scholarship holds that the gloss was entered in Canterbury, but it remains uncertain whether it was copied from a Mercian original by a Kentish scribe or by a Mercian scribe working in Kent. Either scenario shows that geographical provenance is a separate issue from linguistic influence.

3.2.2 *Charter bounds*

Charters provide evidence for assessing the integrity of late copies, as they survive in reasonable numbers in single-sheet and cartulary versions. Although royal diplomas and other charters are characteristically in Latin, vernacular clauses setting out the boundaries of estates are among the earliest evidence for written English. About seventh-eighths are preserved only in cartularies and have previously been discounted as primary evidence. Revisionist work by Kitson (e.g. 1993, 1995, 2004) suggests that the corpus is internally consistent, making it possible to establish dialect isoglosses by mapping linguistic variables. The *Language of Landscape* project⁶ also tends to support the reliability of cartulary copies. Most recently, a sixteenth-century transcript of a 972 charter, apparently a copy of an extant original, has turned out to preserve a different version, with three otherwise unrecorded boundary clauses (Stokes 2008).

3.2.3 *Linguistic profiles*

The most detailed studies of medieval English dialects, *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (McIntosh, Samuels, and Benskin 1986) and its sister projects, *A Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English*⁷ and *A Linguistic Atlas of Older Scots*,⁸ make use of linguistic profiling. By using localizable manuscripts as anchor texts, a matrix of linguistic features is created, enabling previously unplaced manuscripts to be fitted into the relevant part of the map. A similar principle underpins Kitson's work on Old English charter boundaries, a source of closely localizable data used to identify a dialectal "fit" for individual texts such as the Old English *Orosius* (1996), as well as for groups of texts by authors, including Ælfric and Alfred (1993).

3 Cambridge, University Library, MS Kk 5.16.

4 Public Library, MS Lat. Q.v.1.18.

5 London, Cotton MS Vespasian A.i.

6 See <http://www.langscape.org.uk/>.

7 See <http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/laeme1/laeme1.html>.

8 See <http://www.lel.ed.ac.uk/ihd/laos1/laos1.html>.

3.2.4 *Scribal practice*

An important insight contributed by McIntosh, Samuels, and Benskin (1986) is that scribal practice varied between *literatim* copying, where an exemplar's spelling was reproduced letter by letter, and translation, where it was replaced by the scribe's own practice. *Literatim* copies are clearly the most reliable guide to the language of lost exemplars, while translated texts illustrate contemporary developments. The work of many scribes falls between the two, and the majority of Old English texts survive in mixed dialects. Although the *Vespasian Psalter* gloss is not original, its language is unusually consistent, suggesting that few if any copies have intervened.

This approach has been extended to paleography by my (2001) study of *Textus Roffensis*,⁹ a twelfth-century collection of Anglo-Saxon laws and charters drawn up by a single scribe. Comparison of the cartulary texts with extant originals shows that the deployment of variant letter-forms reflects the practice of different exemplars. Identifiable patterns also occur within, but not between, groups of laws, while archaic graphs occur mainly in early texts, including the only extant copy of seventh-century Kentish legislation. Further work is needed to establish the prevalence of a *literatim* approach to graphs, but my (2006) study of numbers in a range of pre- and post-Conquest manuscripts of Anglo-Saxon law shows that the deployment of numerals as opposed to words was similarly influenced by exemplars. Analysis of variant forms may therefore be a viable methodology through which to assess the level of reliance on sources and hence the integrity of extant texts.

Paleographical analysis also reveals manuscripts produced by the same scriptorium or scribe. Mooney (2006) has succeeded in identifying the scribe responsible for the earliest manuscripts of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Hengwrt¹⁰ and Ellesmere,¹¹ by comparing the hand with the oath and signature written by Adam Pinkhurst in the Scriveners' Company records around 1392.

3.2.5 *Authorship*

New ways of establishing authorship have been put forward. The canon of works attributed to King Alfred has been repeatedly revised since the twelfth century and potentially reduced to zero by Godden (2007). Citing the widespread tradition of writing in the name and voice of others, he draws attention to the critique of kingship running through part of the canon and to stylistic and linguistic differences between individual texts. As in previous studies, lexical analysis focuses on the distribution of synonyms for concepts such as 'rejoice' (*fægnian*, *blissian*, *gefeon*) and 'time' (*tid*, *tima*)—an approach facilitated for Old English by *A Thesaurus of Old English* (Roberts and Kay 1995) and for Middle and later English by the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* (HTOED) (Kay et al. 2009).

9 Rochester, Cathedral Library, A.3.5.

10 Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, MS Hengwrt 392 D.

11 San Marino, CA, Huntingdon Library, MS EL 26 C9.

The electronic Dictionary of Old English Corpus (DOEC) now makes it possible to apply techniques from corpus linguistics such as stylometric analysis, focusing not on deliberate word choices but on the habitual use of high-frequency function words such as *ac* ‘but’ and *and* ‘and’. This approach has been applied to the Alfredian canon in two studies that support a common authorship for some but not all of its components (Gill, Swartz, and Treschow 2007; Treschow, Gill, and Swartz 2009). The results are undermined by methodological flaws, including the conflation of homonyms, and a failure to allow for choices triggered by stylistic considerations or by the process of translation from Latin (Bately 2009: 192–96). However, the need for modifications to adapt the mode of analysis to Old and Middle English may not invalidate the underlying approach. In view of Godden’s argument that the texts emanate from different authors and time periods, it is striking that whereas Kitson (1993) locates Ælfric’s dialect fairly precisely, Alfred’s is less homogeneous.

3.2.6 *Structural analysis*

Principles of prose and verse composition have been reassessed. Howlett (e.g. 1997) argues controversially that biblical texts were composed on mathematical principles found in many Anglo-Saxon and medieval texts, including *Cædmon’s Hymn* and Æthelberht’s law code—the earliest of the Kentish legislation. In such cases, the level of conformity to established structures may serve as a guide to textual integrity.

3.3 Interpretation

The approaches outlined above impact on the understanding of Old and Middle English dialects. Potential witnesses to the Old Kentish and Northumbrian dialects include the Kentish laws and *Cædmon’s Hymn*. Both have controversially been claimed as back translations from Latin, the former by Lendinara (1997), the latter in an ongoing debate summarized by Cavill (2002). My (2001) analysis of letter-forms in the extant twelfth-century copy of the laws points to an early exemplar in English; Howlett’s (1997) analysis of structural parallelism in Æthelberht’s code and *Cædmon’s Hymn* confirms both as original English texts.

Knowledge of Early West Saxon is based on the Alfredian canon. Godden’s argument that the texts are by several authors undermines this and raises the possibility that some features regarded as Early West Saxon could actually be Mercian. The *Vespasian Psalter* gloss reflects a tradition of scholarship in Mercia prior to the educational program initiated by Alfred, and the consistent language of the gloss may testify to a Mercian standard language pre-dating the West Saxon standard.

Again the relationship between orthography and phonology is crucial to interpretation. The orthography of charters issued in Kent during and after the Mercian hegemony has been much discussed (e.g. Toon 1983; Lowe 2001;

Colman 2004). Controversial issues are whether orthographic developments in the charters reflect linguistic changes in the Kentish dialect or changes in spelling conventions. Work directed toward medieval writing systems has led to new understanding of scribal practice, illustrating flexibility in the mapping of sounds and symbols and explaining apparent errors in terms of writing praxis (Laing and Lass 2009).

4. NAMES

4.1 Evidence

Name evidence is preserved in both epigraphical and manuscript sources but presents special issues. Pre-Conquest material mainly comprises place-names and personal names; during the medieval period, the corpus is swelled by field names, street names, bynames, and early surnames.

New evidence is systematically being uncovered through ongoing place-name surveys for England, Scotland, and Northern Ireland, and personal name studies. The English Place-Name Survey (EPNS) began in 1924 as a county-by-county analysis of the toponymicon based on the collection and analysis of historical spellings. Similar approaches are adopted by the Northern Ireland Place-Name Project (1992–) and the Survey of Scottish Place-Names (Taylor 2006–). A database of Anglo-Saxon personal names has been assembled by the *Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England* project,¹² and personal names recorded in Scotland 1093–1286 are made available by the *Paradox of Medieval Scotland* project.¹³

4.2 Methodology

Place-names and personal names are created from meaningful elements, often predating the extant forms by centuries. Methodologies are directed toward identifying etymologies and assessing the evidential value for contemporary language. The recurrent defining or “generic” elements of compound place-names comprise a large dataset for comparative analysis; the more disparate qualifying elements preserve a wider range of linguistic information.¹⁴

The diachronic continuum makes it difficult to date names. Early onomastic scholarship focused on etymological roots of name elements, tracing them back to Old English and Old Norse. Closer attention is now paid to historical and

¹² See <http://www.pase.ac.uk/>.

¹³ See <http://www.poms.ac.uk/>.

¹⁴ Examples are Easton, Eaton, and Everton, all from the generic OE *tūn* ‘farmstead, village’. The qualifiers are OE *ēast* ‘east’, OE *ēa* ‘river’, and OE *eofor* ‘wild boar’.

linguistic context, with a resulting increase in names attributed to Middle English. A more nuanced approach is also taken to the synchronic continuum, distinguishing between language varieties such as Middle English and Older Scots.

A predominantly philological approach meant that onomastic research could be tackled as a desk job. The seminal dictionary of English place-names (Ekwall 1936–60) was prepared in Sweden, and other outstanding contributions were made by twentieth-century Swedish scholars. More emphasis is now placed on fieldwork. An approach developed by Gelling and Cole (2000) involves the systematic comparison of topographical place-name generics with landscape features. Thereby, differentiated meanings have been identified for elements previously regarded as synonyms.

Early place-name surveys focused on major settlement names in existence by the late Anglo-Saxon period. An increasing awareness of the linguistic significance of minor names has led to more extensive coverage of microtoponyms in later volumes of EPNS and other recent surveys.

Robust methodologies are being developed to interrogate onomastic datasets through statistical analysis. Groundbreaking studies have calculated the ratio between Old English and Old Norse personal names in the Domesday Book to establish the extent of Scandinavian influence in different English counties (Parsons 2002) and the ratio between generics of Old English and Old Norse origin in medieval field names to explore the Scandinavian contribution to Middle English dialectology (Parsons 2006).

4.3 Interpretation

Name evidence throws light on language varieties lacking written records or material remains, such as the East Anglian dialect of Old English (Sandred 2001). It also extends our knowledge of others. Many terms are recorded earliest or uniquely as name elements, particularly in areas of language poorly represented in epigraphic or written sources. Hough (2002b) brings together the evidence for Middle English, and insights into preliterate Scots are contributed by Scott (e.g. 2008a, 2008b). Again, new additions affect interpretation of the existing corpus. The Scots reflex of OE *pur* in the Fife place-name Pusk, with the generic *wic* ‘specialized farm’, is inconsistent with the translation of the same qualifier in English place-names as ‘bittern’ or ‘snipe’, leading to a reinterpretation ‘lamb’ for the whole group of names—English, as well as Scottish—in which it occurs (Hough 2002a).

Place-names and surnames are closely localizable, providing data for studies of word geography and for the *Survey of Middle English Dialects* (Kristensson 1967–2002). As names can be used without an understanding of semantic content, they are less subject than lexical items to orthographic standardization, so collections of historical spellings may offer a more reliable guide to phonology than other types of data.

However, the extent to which conclusions drawn from onomastic data can be extrapolated to other areas of language is uncertain. Differences between names

and words may lead to different phonological developments, and onomastic isoglosses are not identical to lexical isoglosses (see e.g. Hough 2009). Moreover, an assumption that name elements were drawn from contemporary lexis has been overturned. Divergencies in the pre-English period, with an onomasticon developing separately from the lexicon, were posited by Nicolaisen (1995) and are now widely accepted as regards place-name generics. Hough (2010) suggests that the divergencies also affected qualifying elements and continued through the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods into later stages of English.

5. CONCLUSION

The three source types discussed in this chapter are closely interrelated. Indeed, a more salient distinction may be between long texts, representing educated language, and short texts, whether written, inscribed, or onomastic. Okasha (2005) argues that short texts are closer to spoken language and more likely to exhibit code-mixing. All types contribute unique and important data. Used together, as in Fernández Cuesta, Rodríguez Ledesma, and Senra Silva's (2008) study of early northern English, they can inform robust conclusions.

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CHAPTER 3

COINS AS EVIDENCE

PHILIP A. SHAW

IN her contribution to this volume, Hough notes the possibilities of coin inscriptions as evidence for “spelling regulation at a local or national level” and for “practical constraints” affecting orthographic practice and its relationship with phonology. This brief chapter provides two very brief case studies illustrating such uses of coin inscriptions.

The digraph <cg> is commonly used in late Old English to represent the reflex of the Primitive Old English geminate *[gg]. The coinage of King Ecgberht of Kent (765–80 A.D.) (PASE “Ecgberht 9”), however, consistently spells his name <egcberht> (see, for instance, SCBI 1 no. 428, SCBI 2 nos. 382–83, SCBI 20 nos. 639–40, SCBI 36 no. 84, and also EMC 2001.0779 and 2001.0837)—and this use of <gc> appears to be the norm in single-sheet charters from southern ecclesiastical centers, with the exception of Christ Church, Canterbury (Table 1).

Christ Church, Canterbury, tends to use <cg>, in line with Worcester, except in S 155, where the three instances of <gc> spellings are all in Ecgberht of Kent’s name, in a confirmation of one of his grants by Coenwulf of Mercia. This is apparently a case of careful preservation in the confirmation of a spelling from the original grant. The coin inscriptions help us to interpret the manuscript evidence in this case, and both forms of evidence taken together suggest that <cg> as a representation of *[gg] may have spread to Christ Church, Canterbury, with Mercian influence on Kent in the later eighth century.

The “practical constraints” noted in Hough’s contribution arise from “the size, shape, and texture of the carving surface”. The practicalities of ensuring the integrity of a coinage may also have affected the correspondences between graphs and sounds. The coinage of Eadberht of Northumbria (737–58 A.D.) sometimes spells the first element of his name <ead> and sometimes <eot>. Leaving aside the differing representations of the vowel (on which, see Shaw 2008), the alternation between

Table 1. Spellings of the geminate *[gg] in pre-ninth-century single-sheet charters

Date of original	Date of extant copy	<cg>	<cgg>	<gc>	<gcg>	Archive	Kingdom	S no.
676x693	contemporary (s. viii ²)			(1)		Barking	Essex	1171
742	s. ix ¹	1			1	Christ Church, Canterbury (CCC)	Mercia	90
757	c. 800	1	1			? Malmesbury	Mercia	96
770	s. ix ⁱⁿ	1				Worcester	Hwicce	59
778	contemporary			2		Rochester	Kent	35
778	s. x ⁱⁿ			2		? Bedwyn	Wessex	264
785	contemporary		1			CCC	Mercia	123
787x796	contemporary			1		Selsey	Mercia	1184
793x796	contemporary	1				Worcester	Mercia	139
799	contemporary	1		3		CCC	Mercia	155

Note: These charters have been identified using Keynes (2005), and the “date of extant copy” column provides the latest date suggested therein. An eighth-century addition to S 1171 is indicated in parentheses. Superscript 1 indicates that the approximate dating is the first half of the century and superscript 2 the second half of the century. Superscript “in” indicates an approximate dating around the first quarter of the century. The spellings have been ascertained from the facsimiles in Cameron 1878–84, CLA 3, and CLA 4.

<d> and <t> is puzzling. The evidence of Anglo-Saxon *libri vitae* suggests that the /d/ of the name element *Ead-* is sometimes assimilated to a following unvoiced consonant, but clearly this cannot be the case in the name *Eadberht* (Shaw 2011). Given the care with which the various issues of Eadberht’s coinage were distinguished iconographically (Booth 1984: 74–78), it may be that we can interpret the varying spellings of his name as another tactic for distinguishing issues—a tactic that draws on a phonologically motivated spelling but applies it for practical reasons and without indicating a change in pronunciation (Shaw 2011).

The first of these examples provides evidence for orthographic change in progress, but also raises questions about the relationship between epigraphic and manuscript orthography, between the processes of minting and the writing practices of ecclesiastical centers. The second suggests that an orthographic variation that would be surprising if read as indicating phonological variation may reflect practical adaptation of orthographic practice.

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CHAPTER 4

EDITING EARLY ENGLISH TEXTS

SIMON HOROBIN

1. INTRODUCTION

It is a truism of historical linguistics that the only surviving evidence is in the form of written texts, but linguists often overlook the important implications this fact has for the kinds of texts upon which linguistic analysis relies. Written texts from the age before the introduction of printing in the fifteenth century were all handwritten, and as such their status as evidence is very different from that of texts produced during the print era.

Unless a linguist works exclusively with original documents, the texts under analysis will have been subjected to some form of editorial intervention. Before embarking on any kind of linguistic analysis, it is crucial to know what the evidence is upon which the edited text has been based and what kind of editorial intervention it has undergone. In this chapter we will examine the different editorial methods that are commonly applied to such texts and consider their significance for subsequent use of these texts for linguistic analysis.

2. TYPES OF EDITION

2.1 Diplomatic editions

The most useful type of edition for the historical linguist is the diplomatic edition. Diplomatic editions seek to represent the manuscript source as closely as

possible and are therefore designed for an advanced reader who is comfortable reading texts in such a format. A major difference between diplomatic editions and those intended for a wider audience is that where editors of texts for non-specialist readers tend to modernize spelling and render it consistent, diplomatic editors reproduce the spelling of the original witness. Despite this commitment to the close reproduction of the manuscript witness, diplomatic editors do tend to make certain interventions: introducing modern punctuation and expanding scribal abbreviations. Diplomatic editions generally represent a single manuscript of a particular work rather than producing a single text based upon a number of different manuscripts. A good example of the diplomatic edition is the series of diplomatic editions of the various manuscript witnesses to the early Middle English work *Ancrene Riwe/Wisse*, issued by the Early English Text Society (EETS) (Day 1952; Wilson 1954; Tolkien 1962; Mack and Zettersten 1963; Dobson 1972; Zettersten 1976; Zettersten and Diensberg 2000). Rather than commissioning a single, conflated edition of this complex text, the EETS has provided users with diplomatic editions of each of these important manuscripts, allowing readers to analyze them as witnesses in their own right and performing their own collations and comparisons. Because of their principle of fidelity to the manuscript witness, diplomatic editions are generally the most useful type of edition for the linguist, although because of the editorial tendency to introduce modern punctuation, expand abbreviations, and the necessity of altering the text's layout, the diplomatic edition will never fully replace consultation of the original manuscript, or a high-quality facsimile reproduction. One further problem with diplomatic editions is that editors tend to differ in the degree to which they consider it acceptable to interfere with the text they are editing. While modern editors will generally keep editorial intervention to a minimum, editions produced in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are often considerably more interventionist. The hazards of relying upon editions of this kind are apparent from errors made by Larry D. Benson in his attempt to reconstruct Chaucer's spelling practices from early manuscripts of the *Canterbury Tales*. Benson based his analysis upon transcripts of these manuscripts produced by the Chaucer Society in the nineteenth century but failed to notice that the editors had supplemented these transcripts by importing text from more complete copies (Benson 1992; Horobin 2003).

2.2 Best-text editions

Related to the diplomatic edition is the "best-text" edition, which bases its text closely upon the manuscript judged to contain the most accurate text of all surviving witnesses. Best-text editing differs from diplomatic editing in that an editor is free to correct or supplement the base text by drawing upon other editions where the base manuscript is lacking text or is manifestly inferior. The extent to which an editor modifies the base text will depend upon the audience for

which the edition is intended. Editions of popular works designed for a general or undergraduate readership are likely to involve modernization of spelling and the introduction of modern punctuation at the very least, while best-text editions intended for a more specialist readership may well preserve original spelling. Modernization of spelling might seem relatively unproblematic for students of historical syntax, but it presents major problems for those engaged in the study of historical dialectology or etymology. The most obvious advantage of this type of edition is that it presents a single text rather than a mixture of readings from a variety of witnesses and thus represents the language of a single scribe or printer rather than a mixture of forms derived from a variety of sources. A good example of a best-text edition is Norman F. Blake's (1980) edition of the *Canterbury Tales*. The *Canterbury Tales* survives in more than 50 complete manuscript copies that differ considerably in terms of the text they preserve, the ordering of the tales, their spelling, dialect, and grammar. Most editions of the work have tended to base their text upon the Ellesmere manuscript, an early copy with a relatively complete and intelligently arranged text, while drawing on other copies for material not in Ellesmere. Blake, however, chose to prioritize the earlier and more accurate Hengwrt manuscript, whose text is closer to Chaucer's presumed original in language and meter, and his edition reproduces this text with minimal intervention. This presents a radically different text of the *Canterbury Tales*, given that the Hengwrt manuscript lacks certain parts of the work and presents the tales in a unique arrangement. While Blake's edition did not win much support as a reading edition of the *Canterbury Tales*, it is a very useful basis for linguistic analysis given its rigorous reliance upon a single manuscript witness rather than a conflation of several witnesses.¹

2.3 Eclectic editions

The editorial method that can be most problematic for the historical linguist is what is known as "eclectic" or "open" editing. Instead of selecting and reproducing a single manuscript as a base text and making only limited interventions to its text, this method selects each reading on the basis of its individual merits, often subjectively determined, irrespective of its manuscript support. So, where the best-text editor sticks closely to the base manuscript unless it is manifestly in error, the eclectic editor frequently departs from the base manuscript in favor of readings from other sources. The principle that governs the selection of individual readings is known as *lectio difficilior*; that is, the editor identifies the more difficult reading, the one least likely to have arisen as a result of scribal error and therefore most likely to be authorial. Where other editorial methods place considerable weight upon manuscript attestation (i.e. the number of manuscripts that contain a par-

1 For discussion of the linguistic differences between the Hengwrt and Ellesmere manuscripts, see Horobin (2003).

ticular reading), eclectic editors place greater confidence in their own ability to determine the correct reading from a collection of erroneous ones.

An important example of this methodology is the Athlone edition of *Piers Plowman*, a text surviving in three authorial revisions and in a total of more than fifty manuscript witnesses. For his edition of the earliest recension of this text (the A version), George Kane (1960) established a methodology that would treat all variants as equal, irrespective of their manuscript support. A base text was selected for each edition, but the editors frequently corrected this with readings from other manuscripts. Where the best-text editor selects the base text on the grounds of textual accuracy, the eclectic editor may choose a base text on account of its completeness, or its linguistic consistency. Even more controversially, where the editors felt that none of the readings was the original reading, they frequently introduced a conjectural reading: one which the editors believed had given risen to the scribal versions now preserved in all extant manuscripts but which is not found in any surviving copy. An example of a conjectural reading introduced by the B text editors is *giltlees* at B Prologue 34, where all extant manuscripts read *synnelees*. This example also demonstrates the extent to which the editors were willing to emend the text on metrical grounds; *giltlees* allows alliteration with *geten*, *gold*, and *glee* elsewhere in the line, whereas *synnelees* does not (see extract quoted below). Understanding the principles behind editions produced in this way is crucial, as the texts are frequently a conflation of readings from a variety of witnesses. They cannot therefore be analyzed as representative of a single linguistic informant. While the Athlone editions offer texts of the three versions of *Piers Plowman* by William Langland, the dialects of the three texts differ radically because of the different manuscripts chosen as the base text for each edition. However, such texts should not be dismissed. Responsible eclectic editors will always indicate readings that are the result of editorial intervention, so that a careful reader can isolate readings from different manuscript sources. In the case of the Athlone editions, all variant readings are recorded in the critical apparatus, thereby enabling a reader to reconstruct the text of any of the manuscript witnesses. Such evidence is especially valuable for the study of historical lexicology, and editions like these are essential resources for the compilation of historical dictionaries like the *Middle English Dictionary* and the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and for the study of Middle English word geography.²

2.4 Electronic editions

It will be apparent from the preceding discussion that the most useful edition for a historical linguist is one involving the least editorial intervention. Editions of this kind are unfortunately rare, given that the basic function of an edition is to make a text accessible to a reader. The degree of editorial intervention that this

² For an analysis of lexical variation in the manuscripts of *Piers Plowman*, see Black Stenroos (2002). On the study of Middle English word geography, see Lewis (1994).

will involve depends upon the reader for whom the edition is intended. In many ways, the ideal text for a linguist is a manuscript, or perhaps a facsimile of a manuscript, which allows direct access to the text itself without any editorial interference. However, getting access to manuscripts can be a costly and time-consuming process, while the high production costs mean that few manuscripts have been reproduced in facsimile. On the other hand, the advent of manuscript digitization and the production of electronic editions of texts are transforming the availability of such resources. The advantages of electronic editions for historical linguists are enormous. Where print editions are necessarily restricted to reproducing a single text of a work designed for a specific audience, electronic editions can reproduce a text in multiple versions, catering for a variety of readers. A good example of this kind of edition is Murray McGillivray's edition of Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* (1999), which includes diplomatic editions of all three of the surviving manuscript copies, as well as the printed edition of 1532, alongside a critical edition of the poem intended for a student audience. In addition to these texts the CD-ROM edition includes digital images of each page of the manuscripts and printed book that contain the poem. This allows the user to compare the edited texts and transcriptions with the original manuscript itself to check their accuracy and to ensure that the linguistic analysis is based upon the text of the original and not that of an editor.

Electronic editions of this kind are becoming more common, especially of the works of Chaucer and Langland. The *Canterbury Tales* Project has published CD-ROM editions of individual parts of the work, covering the General Prologue, Miller's, Wife of Bath's, and Nun's Priest's Tales (Robinson 1996, 2004; Solopova 2000). Rather than privilege a single witness, or reduce the numerous witnesses to a single conflated text, these editions offer diplomatic transcriptions of all extant manuscript and pre-1500 printed witnesses to the work. While these transcriptions stick very closely to the manuscript text, preserving scribal punctuation and retaining abbreviation marks rather than expanding them, they still involve a degree of editorial intervention. For instance, rather than preserving allographic information, such as distinctions between long and short <s> or different forms of <r>, the *Canterbury Tales* Project editor simply merges these under the graphemes <s> and <r>.³ Interventions of this kind are of little consequence to the majority of linguists but have considerable ramifications for paleographers. Despite these caveats, these editions are hugely valuable for analyzing the language of individual scribal witnesses, as well as comparing scribal treatment of a single work across numerous extant manuscripts produced throughout the fifteenth century. In addition to these editions are two further CD-ROM editions issued by the *Canterbury Tales* Project, which focus on single witnesses. The first of these is a digital facsimile of the Hengwrt manuscript, complete with accompanying transcription of the full text of this manuscript, as well as that of the Ellesmere manuscript. The second full-text edition presents the two editions

3 For a discussion of some of the difficulties faced in producing diplomatic transcriptions for this project, see Pidd and Stubbs (1997).

of the *Canterbury Tales* issued by William Caxton (1476, 1482) (see Bordalejo 2003), providing valuable raw material for a study of the treatment of this text by England's first printer.

The *Piers Plowman* Electronic Archive differs from the *Canterbury Tales* Project in focusing exclusively on single-witness format editions, six of which have been released so far.⁴ While these are intended for an advanced scholarly audience, they do include a variety of different editions of each manuscript intended to be used for different functions. But perhaps the most revolutionary impact of electronic editions for the historical linguist is the ability for their texts to be searched automatically rather than having to rely on manual counting of particular linguistic features. This is a particularly important development for linguists engaged in quantitative analysis, where surveying large quantities of data is crucial to the success of the research project. The difference this technology has made to the study of historical dialectology is apparent by comparing the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, compiled and published in print format in 1986 (McIntosh, Samuels, and Benskin 1986) without the benefits of the new technology, with its daughter project, the *Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English*, which provides searchable transcripts of the relevant texts in electronic form via the Internet (Laing and Lass 2007).

3. A CASE STUDY: DIFFERENT EDITIONS OF *PIERS PLOWMAN*

In order to demonstrate the practical differences that these different kinds of edition can have upon the texts available for analysis, I want to finish by looking at a single example. The example I have chosen concerns three different editions of the B version of *Piers Plowman*, designed for different audiences and employing different editorial methodologies. The first extract is taken from the edition of a single manuscript of the B version, Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.15.17, presented in a diplomatic format closely representing the original manuscript and designed for an advanced user (Turville-Petre and Duggan 2000). The second extract is taken from the Athlone edition of the B version, edited by George Kane and E. T. Donaldson, an eclectic edition that uses the Trinity B.15.17 manuscript as its base manuscript (Kane and Donaldson 1988). The third and final extract is taken from A. V. C. Schmidt's Everyman edition of the poem, also based upon the Trinity manuscript but designed for a considerably wider audience comprising undergraduate students and general readers (Schmidt 1995).

4 For a description of this project and its ongoing program of publication, see <http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/seenet/piers/>.