

Studies in the History of the English Language II



Topics in English Linguistics

45

Editors

Elizabeth Closs Traugott
Bernd Kortmann

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Studies in the History of the English Language II

Unfolding Conversations

Edited by

Anne Curzan

Kimberly Emmons

Mouton de Gruyter
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Foreword

The second biennial meeting of the Studies in the History of the English Language conference (abbreviated SHEL-2) was held at the University of Washington in Seattle in March of 2002. The conference series, which began at UCLA in 2000, originated in a desire to provide focus to and stimulate research in the field of historical English linguistics in North America. The papers in this volume, selected from the thirty papers presented at the conference, are a testament to the exciting and innovative research on the history of the English language happening in North America as well as the fascinating and productive conversations taking place among scholars in North America and in Europe.

This volume is structured, in fact, around the theme of conversation. As the history of English unfolds all around us in the dialects of English in North America and in Britain, as well as in the distinctive varieties of World English around the globe, the tradition of scholarly conversation about these linguistic developments continues among scholars past and present. New resources such as electronic corpora and recent theoretical models such as optimality theory change some of the terms of the discussion and open rich new domains for historical research and critical analysis. At the same time, the goals at the core of historical English linguistics remain constant, and modern scholars revisit long-standing questions about the development of the language with new data and fresh perspectives.

This volume witnesses conversations between new theories/methods and traditional fields such as phonology and syntax. It is also a conversation between the present and the past. As William Labov's uniformitarian principle articulates, our understanding of the mechanisms of current language change can critically inform our analysis of past language changes, on the assumption that historical forces of language change are the same – or operate in similar ways – to present forces of change. Donka Minkova and Lesley Milroy propose explanations for historical variability in initial [h] within this framework; Richard M. Hogg examines patterns of dialect variation for negative contraction in medieval English; Susan M. Fitzmaurice and Erik Smitterberg reconstruct possible social networks affecting the spread of progressive constructions. Betty Phillips' study of current dialect variation confirms a long-standing hypothesis about females being innovators – a finding similarly suggested in Fitzmaurice's study of language

change some two centuries earlier. Moving from the past toward the present, Geoffrey Russom and Olga Petrova demonstrate the ways in which an understanding of earlier periods – of Old English alliterative meter or Proto-Germanic Verner’s Law – can inform our understanding of later developments. Throughout the volume, scholars are negotiating the relationship between philology and linguistics, the complications of which are the more explicit focus of the first section of this volume.

This volume is arranged into four sections: Philology and linguistics, Text- and corpus-based studies, Constraint-based studies, and Dialectology. In the spirit of conversation, we have identified key articles to lead off each section and invited preeminent scholars in each subfield to respond to these articles. The lead authors then agreed to provide brief remarks as a means of pointing toward future inquiry. These conversations are, we believe, a productive feature of this volume; and, although they could have continued through several more exchanges, the limitations of our print media necessarily leave them unfinished. Each section of this volume includes a separate introduction, in which we have identified points of intersection among the articles contained in the section.

Throughout this volume, 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 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.” Richard Hogg, after describing the paucity of data for contracted forms, notes that “[s]ome locations may accidentally not furnish the necessary material.” Donka Minkova, recognizing the limits of what the written record can tell modern linguists about the spoken language, focuses specifically on alliteration, as a kind of textual evidence that may be able to speak beyond the written.

Richard W. Bailey and Ian Lancashire speak directly to the question of how texts – the “data” from which historians of the language work – are made publicly accessible and analyzed within the historical linguistic tradition. Other contributors discuss newly available records for analysis, from the nineteenth-century letters described by Michael Montgomery and Connie Eble to the corpus of eighteenth-century documents described by Fitz-

maurice. In addition to these new resources, some of the same central historical texts resurface in multiple articles, most obviously resources such as the *Oxford English Dictionary* and the *Middle English Dictionary*, in addition to the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, and central literary texts such as Chaucer's, *Sir Gawain*, and, as it happens, Henry Machyn's sixteenth-century *Day Book*.

The metaphor of folding involves bringing together the farthest points as part of a coherent whole. This volume spans topics and time periods from Proto-Germanic sound change to twenty-first century dialect variation, and methodologies from painstaking philological work with written texts to high-speed data gathering in computerized corpora. It is the richness of the intersections among these studies and approaches that makes history of English such an exciting field of study.

The SHEL-2 conference would not have been possible without the generous support of several sponsors at the University of Washington, in particular the Walter Chapin Simpson Center for the Humanities, the Department of English, the Department of Linguistics, the Graduate School, and the Office of the Provost. We would like to thank all of the more than 80 participants in the conference for the lively conversation they generated at the panels. We have many people to thank for their support of this volume. In particular, we would like to thank the series editors, Bernd Kormann and Elizabeth Traugott, for their ongoing interest in publishing these volumes of selected papers from the SHEL conferences; we are particularly grateful to Elizabeth Traugott for her detailed feedback and advice at every step of the process. Our thanks also to Birgit Sievert, our editor at Mouton de Gruyter, for all her energy and work in making this volume happen, and to Rizwan Ahmad, for his work on the index.

The papers in this volume all benefited enormously from the comments by outside anonymous reviewers, and we can only begin to repay them by listing them here. We would like to thank:

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All of the contributing authors to this volume have made it a pleasure to edit. We appreciate the intellectual energy that has gone into the writing and revising of these papers for and since the conference, and we have enjoyed participating in the conversations between authors and reviewers, as well as between authors and respondents. We look forward to continuing the conversations captured here at future SHEL conferences.

Anne Curzan
Kimberly Emmons

Section 1

Linguistics and philology

Introduction: Linguistics and philology

Anne Curzan and Kimberly Emmons

The note below the modern definition of *philology* in the *Oxford English Dictionary* captures much of the tension between “philology” and “linguistics” that the authors in this section address in various ways. The third definition of *philology* in the *OED* reads: “The study of the structure and development of language; the science of language; linguistics. Now usu. restricted to the study of the development of specific languages or language families, esp. research into phonological and morphological history based on written documents.” The editors then note: “This sense has never been current in the U.S. *Linguistics* is now the more usual term for the study of the structure of language, and, with qualifying adjective or adjective phrase, is replacing *philology* even in the restricted sense.” Philology has often been marginalized as the close study of the language of texts for the purpose of etymological, comparative, or stylistic research, isolated from current linguistic theory.

Donka Minkova, in “Philology, linguistics, and the history of [hw]~[w],” argues that combining the methodologies, theories, and insights of philology and linguistics is “both possible and desirable.” Recognizing that the definitions of both terms vary, Minkova notes the consistent association of philology with the study of written texts and modern linguistics with the study of speech. Any rigid distinction between gathering and recording data (philology) and rigorous theoretical work (linguistics), she asserts, is not a productive one. Philology without theory provides little illumination, and linguistic theory must account for all the available data. Any such rigid distinction also often breaks down in practice. English historical linguistics employs rigorous analysis of carefully collected and categorized data. And as Lesley Milroy points out in response to Minkova’s article, sociolinguistics, including the relatively new field of historical sociolinguistics, employs rigorous data collection.

Minkova also calls into question the clear distinction between the study of written and oral texts when working with medieval texts. Given the orality of medieval literary culture, written texts can provide modern language scholars with insights about the intuitions and speech of “native

speakers” of early varieties of the language. Specifically, alliteration can provide critical evidence about phonological developments. As a case study, Minkova draws on her expertise in medieval English alliteration, phonological theory, and historical sociolinguistics to examine the development of the [hw]~[w] merger in English. The evidence she provides about early spelling confusion dates the beginning of the merger back into the Old English period. The progression of the merger, however, was not linear, as the distinction was reintroduced in subsequent centuries, probably for social reasons. Minkova’s complex and original analysis of the available textual data draws on theoretical phonology and the effects of sonority hierarchies as well as on sociolinguistic theories for social triggers that could have influenced the reappearance of the innovative /w/.

In response, Lesley Milroy draws striking parallels between the development of [hw]~[w] as described by Minkova and data on other reported mergers from sociolinguistic research. Importantly, she notes that Minkova’s data, which suggests that the merger was variable, could be interpreted to mean that not all speakers underwent the merger in a given dialect area: commentators’ reports of the merger may not capture the casual pronunciation of many speakers. Milroy also correlates Minkova’s suggestion of the adoption of a northern form in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to morphosyntactic changes that followed a similar patterns, all of which may be related to demographic shifts in the period.

Alliteration may provide some of the more easily interpretable phonological data for historical sociolinguists. In “Why we should not believe in short diphthongs,” David L. White advises scholarly caution in assuming clear correspondences between written forms (specifically word spellings) and phonetic and phonological forms. White reopens a long-standing scholarly conversation about the existence of short diphthongs. Bringing together phonetic and phonological theory, White presents theoretical reasons to believe short diphthongs do not exist. White then uses a re-examination of the published data on short diphthongs, ranging over languages from Old Irish through Icelandic and Afrikaans to Ancient Greek, to argue that without convincing evidence of short diphthongs from other languages, living or dead, there is little justification for assuming short diphthongs in Old English. The graphic short diphthongs in Old English represent, instead, velarization. Without doubt, the conversation will continue with White’s call for evidence of short diphthongs in living languages and the questions he raises about how best to interpret spelling evidence.

The subsequent two articles focus on etymology and semantic change, traditional domains of philological research. Both articles demonstrate how a focus on spoken language and extralinguistic factors adds depth to the analysis of philological data. In “Extended forms (*Streckformen*) in English,” Anatoly Liberman’s detailed analysis of extended forms in English supports his introductory assertion that philologists know much about phonetics, morphology, and syntax. Infixation, a minor word formation process in English, blurs traditional lines between morphology and syntax, etymology and word formation. In pulling together evidence that has typically been marginalized as “arbitrary” and creating connections across centuries among similar types of words, Liberman finds patterns to the form of compounds with *-a-* and *-de-*. These extended forms are typically playful and slangy, exactly the kind of spoken and casual language that philologists and linguists cannot afford to ignore.

Ronald R. Butters and Jennifer Westerhaus, in “Linguistic change in words one owns,” examine an often overlooked yet rich field of semantic change, that of trademarks becoming generic. This process, sometimes known as genericide, can involve modern advertising and the courts directly in semantic change. When the courts decide what the public understands a word to mean, they affect the marketing that helps shape the public’s understanding of a word’s meaning. Speakers themselves become central in this process as the test for genericness must be what speakers believe a given word to mean. Lexicographic and philological evidence cannot be abstracted away from actual speakers, and social factors such as advertising and governmental intervention should be seen as natural and important influences on the semantic changes that this subset of words continues to undergo in the history of English.

As all of these articles demonstrate, “philology” and “linguistics,” by any traditional definition, are richly intertwined in English historical linguistics, as researchers interpret the rich array of available textual evidence for what it reveals about linguistic theory and about the development of the spoken and written language.

Philology, linguistics, and the history of [hw]~[w]¹

Donka Minkova

Boswell: 'Did you find, Sir, his conversation
to be of a superiour style?'

Johnson: 'Sir, in the conversation which I had
with him I had the best right to superiority,
for it was upon philology and literature.'

James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*

1. Overview

The integration of philology and linguistics is a central topic in the continuously “unfolding conversations” in English historical studies. The first part of my paper addresses the tension between the disciplines of philology and linguistics and argues against a strict division of labor as advocated by some researchers. A focus on the “orality” of medieval literary culture provides a new angle on the debate; for the historical linguist, “orality” is the valuable philological link to the “native speaker’s” intuitions of authors, scribes, and audiences. Phonological reconstruction should therefore be equally well informed by linguistic theory and by the largest available set of textual data. The second part of the study explores the consequences of recognizing the speaker’s “voice” in reconstructing the linguistic properties and the regional, social, and more recently, age- and gender-based opposition between aspirated and non-aspirated reflexes of Old English <hw->. The topic reinforces the need for a renewed defense of the inseparability of philology and linguistics.

2. The mongrel linguistic philologist, or how to hold with the hare and hunt with the hound

Were we to draw a metaphoric animal life map of our profession, the collective philologist would be of the *Lepus* family, a *hare*, a creature familiar with the secret warrens and burrows of medieval textual territory. The hare/philologist knows the old caves, coves, nooks and crannies of the

English language, has keen hearing, makes noise only when frightened or injured, and provides food and fur/texts and data for “higher order” mammals. The linguist is more like a member of the *Canis* family, a *hound*, fleet-footed, intent on new scents and sights, but not at home in the rough terrain and the arcana hiding in the labyrinths of philology. Each group has bred specimens of admirable purity and sterling quality and each group has distrusted the other and proclaimed its own achievements. In 1987 the late Cecily Clark, editor of the *Peterborough Chronicle* and a most distinguished onomastician, opened her presentation at ICEHL 5 with a feisty “I speak as a philologist.” Her defensiveness was not unusual: in the latter half of the twentieth century the prestige of philology declined rapidly, triggering reappraisals of the state of the discipline. The clever self-deprecatory title of Winters and Nathan’s (1992) paper – “First He Called Her a Philologist, and Then She Insulted Him” – reflects that same anxiety. The emphasis on linguistic modeling created a sense that philology was an old-fashioned enterprise and that its best days might be over. In 1982, surveying the philology/linguistics controversy, Koerner (1982: 404) wrote, sarcastically, that “The battle had been won in favor of ‘linguistics’ as the truly scientific discipline of the two, and only weaker minds could engage in the other field.”

Cecily Clark wanted to distance herself from *linguistics*. She described her kind of work as “linguistic archeology,” “a branch of history.” She wrote:

- (1) If one sees life as a ... seamless fabric in which language is woven together with politics, religion, economic developments and socio-cultural relationships, then all linguistic manifestations are ... capable of illuminating these other spheres, in the same measure as language is enriched, impoverished, reshaped by the contexts in which it is used. (Clark 1987: 65)

Nobody would then or now object to Clark’s appeal to position the study of place names in its appropriate historical context, yet her implicit polarization of philology vs. (formal) linguistics rankles: a brilliant practitioner of the former, she apparently felt that the latter was of no interest. This attitude may be easier to understand within onomastics, but when it covers areas of intense linguistic concern, such as syntax, the perceived gap is more puzzling. Many will remember the flurry of uncomplimentary exchanges following the publication of Bruce Mitchell’s monumental *Old English Syntax* in 1985. In response to the accusations by

the reviewers that his approach was “taxonomic,” Mitchell (1992: 97) wrote: “It will come as little surprise to at least some of my audience if I say that in my opinion modern linguistic techniques have so far done little to advance our knowledge of Old English syntax.” Inattention to the full range of available data in the early generative work did result in abstract linguistic accounts unacceptable to the well-informed philologist. Yet vigorous and illuminating theoretical work revealing the properties of English historical syntax has repeatedly refuted Mitchell’s condemnation. Still, if a scholar of Mitchell’s stature could be so negative about the discovery potential of linguistics, the rift between the two disciplines needs to be addressed.

In the United States it was the birth of the Linguistic Society of America in 1925 and the rise of structuralism that precipitated the confrontation between philologists and linguists.² The priority of linguistics appeared self-evident to some, as is clear from Whorf’s statement that “at the base of philology we must have linguistics.”³ With the explosion of generative linguistics, the theoretical study of language drifted away from “the surface.” Rules ruled, and modeling language in an elegant, economic, and coherent manner became a lofty intellectual goal while the parallel activity of data gathering and recording took a back seat as a more pedestrian enterprise. The breach was noticed early, and many outstanding scholars on both sides of the Atlantic set out to “heal” it – as Roger Lass described his goal in the preface to his famous (1969) *Anthology*. The relationship between philology and linguistics became the theme of important studies and whole volumes (see Koerner 1982; Fisiak 1990; Hogg 1994). All of them recommended a close partnership between philology and linguistics, and argued against the absurdity of philology without theory or theory without data, the senselessness of trying to separate the chicken from the egg, to use Hogg’s metaphor.

With the advent of “organized” historical linguistics on the international scene in the 1970s and the very successful conference series such as ICHL, and, for us, ICEHL and SHEL, the “partnership” appeared well established. The conference proceedings, the impressive *Cambridge History of the English Language*, dedicated publishers’ series and specialized journals bear witness to the vitality of a world-wide research program combining philological knowledge and linguistic thinking. The divide, though not chasmic, perseveres, however. As recently as 1998, Werner (1998: 164–165, 175–176) states that philology and linguistics “are not even as close as physics and chemistry but rather diverge like physics and history,” arguing that they pursue different objectives, have different contents, apply

different methods, and employ different procedures of concept formation. He further asserts that:⁴

- (2) Linguistics ... is a fully autonomous discipline, and its research is neither influenced nor controlled by philological considerations. (Werner 1998: 164–165)

I will take this statement as a rhetorical target that the paper argues against.

3. The many faces and phases of philology

As a brief look at the history of the branch of knowledge known as philology reveals, the discipline hasn't always been the hunted party, nor was it always defined as it is today. The first person on record who was honored as *philologus* was Eratosthenes of Cyrene, c. 3rd century B.C., head of the Hellenistic Library at Alexandria, known mostly as a great geographer and mathematician. His band of scholars, called “fatted fowls in a coop” by a contemporary, has been described as follows:

- (3) They [the philologists] had a carefree life: free meals, high salaries, no taxes to pay, very pleasant surroundings, good lodgings and servants. There was plenty of opportunity for quarreling with each other. (cited in Frank 1997: 486)

From covering every conceivable field of learning in ancient Greece, including geography, history, mathematics, and philosophy, philology in the Middle Ages became more narrowly humanistic. In English, the first recorded appearance of the word is in Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale*:

- (4) Hoold thou thy pees, thou poete Marcian,
That writest vs that ilke weddyng murie
Of hire *Philologie* and hym Mercurie,
And of the songs that the Muses songe (*MerT* ll. 1732–1735)

Philologie here is the “personification” of linguistic and literary knowledge (*MED*), the lady matched in matrimony to the god Mercury.⁵ To seventeenth-century men of letters, *philology* was a focus on human liberal studies.⁶ By the middle of the eighteenth century, the term, as used in England, was specialized to mean ‘the study of the structure and

development of language; the science of language; linguistics' (*OED*). In the post-Bloomfieldian scene in the United States, *philology* is richly polysemous in its use in academic circles. Nevertheless, as a survey reported in Winters and Nathan shows, there is a common denominator, and it is "the study of written texts" (1992: 363). Linking *linguistics* to *philology*, *Encyclopedia Britannica* also puts the written text as the primary target of philological study and describes the difference as follows:⁷

- (5) The *philologist* is concerned primarily with the historical development of languages as it is manifest in *written texts* and in the context of the associated literature and culture. The *linguist*, though he may be interested in written texts and in the development of languages through time, tends to give *priority to spoken languages* and to the problems of analyzing them as they operate at a given point in time. ("Philology" in *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, emphases DM)

4. The speaking hare: the text as a "native speaker"

As is clear from the previous sections, the autonomy of linguistics versus philology has been defined on the basis of *methodology* (procedures of concept formation), *cultural contextualization* of the data, and the *priority of the spoken language*. If these differences between philological and linguistic work were really intractable, one would perhaps be wise to accept the division of labor and just plod on. Such a pessimistic view is unjustified, however. In this section I want to argue that none of the differences should stand in the way of integrating the two disciplines.

Methodologically, philological research does not have to be characterized only as "attentiveness to minutiae ... a tolerance for pedantry, for the obscure, esoteric, and devious ..." (Frank 1997: 486). The kind of philology pursued by the community of English historical linguists, linguistic philology, selects its targets of study in a theoretically informed way. It employs the rigorous procedures of data classification and analysis mandated by other academic disciplines. Even if linguistic philology does not always draw on the latest formal devices that linguists use to model the properties of language in general, philological spadework is never blind prospecting. Both disciplines work towards recording and explaining *language*, and it is senseless to try to keep the empiricism of the philologist separate from the analyticity of the linguist.

Contextualization, Cecily Clark's concern, has not only been recognized as a necessary component of our work, but it has given us many remarkable insights into the causes and mechanisms of language change. All linguists involved in the historical study of English are philologists by her definition. For sociolinguists and the vigorous new area of historical pragmatics, contextualization *is* the methodology. With respect to conceptualization *and* contextualization, the breach between philologists and linguists has ceased to be an issue.

This still leaves an important aspect of the presumed disciplinary incompatibility unaccounted for: the *priority of the spoken language* as a hallmark of linguistic research. If philology is defined by its concern with the past stages of languages, preserved only in written form, how do we mend that particular fence? The point calls for elaboration: it touches on the presence of the "native speaker" in the texts that we are working with.⁸ Clearly, all diachronic language study up to the invention of sound recording has to depend on texts. Texts reach us after scribal and editorial gestation; they are "secondary" speech products. I have argued elsewhere (Minkova 2003: Ch. 1), however, that although the physical immediacy of speech is irretrievably lost for the historical linguist, many textual features can inform us about the properties of the spoken language as closely as any native speaker would.

One of the areas where the properties of speech are most reliably reflected is alliteration. In spite of the word's etymology, alliteration is a profoundly *oral* process; the selection of paired onsets can be argued to match closely the intuitions of speakers and scribes regarding phonological identity. Discussions of the "orality" of medieval literary culture have been quite divisive, usually along the lines of what constitutes formulaic language, a topic which cannot be addressed here.⁹ Instead, I want to highlight one particular aspect of poetic composition in early English which supports the idea of orality without reference to the formula. I have in mind the direct vocal, auditory nature of medieval verse production and transmission and the more general notion of "fit" between verse and the language in which verse is composed.

Very briefly, the argument has to do with the decidedly aural intent and effect of alliterative verse. Along with Fleischman (1990: 20) and the references she cites, I assume that throughout the Middle Ages "writing was dictated and reading was carried out *viva voce*." As Fleishman writes:

- (6) The term for writing as a method of composition [in the European Middle Ages] was *dictare*, whereas *scribere* generally referred only to the physical act of putting pen to parchment: these were different activities, carried out by different individuals. *Legere*, as late as the fifteenth century, normally entailed an oral articulation of the sounds being decoded. (Fleischman 1990: 20)

This view of writing entails an intervening orality even in instances of mechanical copying. While the origins of silent reading go back to the eleventh century, the recording of verse represents a special case.¹⁰ In verse, author and reader have to rely on the shared esthetic properties of rhythm and sonority, which would require an aural trace even in overtly “silent” reading. Alliteration is something that not just the poet and the audience hear, it is *also* the structural and mnemonic glue that anybody involved in the preservation of a piece of verse would have been aware of. Copyists are also readers, and in reading the text prior to recording it, they must have drawn on their intuitions – this is what is meant by saying that alliteration is a first-hand reflection of the native intuitions about linguistic similarity and identity. Matching words which begin with the same sound is a straightforward and simple task which both children and adults can engage in without special instruction. *Kith and kin, time and tide, people and places, gaggle of geese, sticks and stones* are collocations whose survival owes much to alliteration. Psycholinguistically and cognitively, alliteration is a natural byproduct of human language, an ideal and immediate link between speaker and text.

Thus, in spite of the fact that we work with “text” language, there are good reasons to assume that the evidence found in some forms of that language is a dependable source and target of linguistic study.¹¹ The “orality” of the composition and transmission of texts, the reliance on dictation and reading aloud, and the natural acoustic basis of alliteration justify its elevation to the status of primary source of information for reconstructing the features of the spoken language. Acknowledging that there are other problems ensuing from the distance between manuscript forms and the actual spoken forms, I will assume here that alliteration emulates the native speaker’s phonology accurately and that the implications of this “orality” deserve to be carried forward into the linguistic analysis. In alliterative verse the native speaker speaks to us, and we will do well to listen.¹²

5. Exploring the acoustic basis of alliteration: The story of /hw-/~/w-/

Thus much may serve by way of proem;
Proceed we therefore to our poem.

Jonathan Swift, *On his Death* 71 (1731)

The rhetoric in defense of the bond between philology and linguistics will profit from a concrete example of how the voice can be extracted from the text, and what one can “do” with that voice.¹³ An issue which provides the kind of bridge between the past and the present that a linguistic philologist would want to build is the history of OE <hw->, whose realization in Modern English varies between a simple /w-/ and an aspirated /hw-/ or /w̥/(/w̥/).¹⁴ In trying to show how the two disciplines bear on one another, I will address the status of the contrast between, e.g., *whet~wet*, *whine~wine* in present-day English, and the history of the OE /hw-/ cluster, and I will offer a linguistic interpretation of the new philological findings.

5.1. The schizophrenic <wh-> in Modern English

Even within one single variety of English, the one described as “Received Pronunciation,” or RP, the maintenance of the /hw-/~/w-/contrast varies depending on register and gender.¹⁵ Comparing the negative associations of eighteenth century [w-] pronunciation by Londoners to the attitude at the beginning of the twentieth century, Jespersen characterized the situation for RP as follows:

- (7) It [use of [w-]] is not, however, nowadays regarded as nearly so “bad” or “vulgar” as the omission of [h], and is, indeed, scarcely noticed by most people. In fact, a great many “good speakers” always pronounce [w] and look upon [hw] as harsh, or dialectal. In some schools, however, especially girls’ schools, [hw] is latterly insisted on. (Jespersen 1909: 374)

Gimson (1973: 217) refers to the voiceless labio-velar fricative /w̥/ as a variant found “amongst careful RP speakers and regularly in several regional types of speech, e.g. in Scottish English.... Among RP speakers, however – especially males – the use of /w̥/ as a phoneme has declined rapidly (though it is often taught as the correct form in verse-speaking).” Wells (1982: 228–229) describes the realization of the historical /hw-/ cluster in RP as “schizophrenic.” Within England, only Northumberland

preserves the contrast systematically to this day (Trudgill 1998: 40).¹⁶ Giner and Montgomery (2001: 350), investigating a late eighteenth-century *Daybook*, a document produced in Yorkshire, question the received view that the /hw-/ cluster was still used in northern England in the mid-nineteenth century.¹⁷ They found that “Variant spellings such as *whent* and *wich* suggest its [the *Daybook*’s] writer lacked initial aspiration and used what is the modern-day standard pronunciation in England /w/.” In Scotland /w/ is still often described as contrastive, but in Ireland there are signs that the /w/~/w-/ contrast is a recessive feature, gradually confined to more rural areas, with simple /w-/ usual in Belfast and other urban parts, as described in Wells (1982: 408–409, 446).

As for North American English, an interesting picture emerges from the dialect recordings of the last 100 years. Surveying the pronunciation of American English, Grandgent (1893: 277; 1895: 448) concluded that the reduction of the /hw-/ cluster was “comparatively rare.”¹⁸ One generation later, Kurath and McDavid’s *Pronunciation of English in the Atlantic States* (1961) recorded a wide-spread distinction between /hw/ and /w/ in *whale* and *wail*, *which* and *witch* in the North and the South, but not the Midland. The southern limit of the /hw/~/w/ distinction coincided almost completely with the lexical isogloss separating the North and North Midland through Pennsylvania. Another four decades later the situation has changed once again, making the simple voiced labio-velar approximant the dominant pronunciation. The 1997 map of the /hw/~/w/ distinction in the *Phonological Atlas of North America* makes this very clear.¹⁹

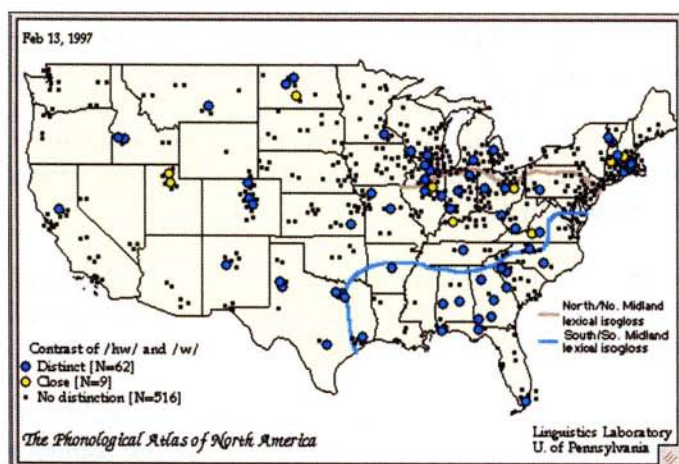


Figure 1. Contrast of /hw/ and /w/ from the *Phonological Atlas of North America*

The comment that accompanies the map is worth citing in full:

- (8) Since the LAMSAS data was gathered, the distinction has rapidly eroded. Map 8 shows only 71 of 587 speakers who maintain it. In this case, “Distinct” includes all those who were heard by the analyst as pronouncing the voiceless bilabial clearly (62 cases) or not quite clearly (9) cases. There were 3 individuals who thought that the pairs were different, but made no distinction in production; they were considered to be merged. (Cited from <http://www.ling.upenn.edu/phono_atlas/maps/Map8.html>)

This is the picture at the beginning of the twenty-first century. There is no clear regional pattern, and only 10–12% of the speakers preserve the contrast. “The extent to which /h/ has been preserved (or perhaps restored) as a spelling pronunciation remains to be established” (Montgomery 2001: 143). On the one hand, there are some remaining /w/ areas in Britain: partly Scotland, Wales, and Ireland; on the other, in the US, the survival of /w/ is in question. The general North American shift from /hw-/ to /w-/ is shared by Canadian English (Brinton and Fee 2001: 430). This kind of instability of the /w~/ /w/ contrast goes back to Old English, though the original proportions are reversed.

5.2. Old English /hw-/

In Old English, the sequence /hw-/ was unquestionably a bi-phonemic cluster, pairing with other <h-> initial clusters: <hr->, <hl->, <hn->. The evidence for that is both the comparative stability of the spelling and the way in which <hw-> initial words were treated in the poetry: <hw-> in fully stressed lexical items alliterates regularly on the initial consonants in the cluster, presumably [h-]²⁰:

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------------------|
| (9) | Ac se hw ita h elm / h afe lan werede ²¹ | <i>Beo</i> 1448 |
| | h ea h orn s cipe, / ofer h wæles eðel ²² | <i>Andreas</i> 274 |
| | H walas ðec h erigað, / and h eofon f ugolas ²³ | <i>Dan</i> 386 |

This is the predominant pattern of alliteration in Old English. There are, however, some early signs of occasional loss of the aspiration in the

cluster: some <h>-less spellings and unetymological <h> insertions are also found in Old English:

(10)

Manuscript form	Normalized form	Source
<wælweg>	<i>hwælweg</i>	<i>The Seafarer</i> l. 63
<wistle>	<i>hwistle</i>	<i>Bosworth & Toller</i> 1243
<naworn>	<i>nahwar</i>	<i>Vercelli Homilies</i> xxii
<awer>	<i>ahwær</i>	<i>Meters of Boethius</i> 14, 33
<ouana>	<i>ohwanan</i>	<i>Leiden Riddle</i> 8
<awþer>	<i>æghwæþer</i>	<i>Riddle</i> 88 27 ²⁴
<bilhwit>	<i>bilewit</i>	<i>Vercelli Homilies</i> xvi.113, 117

More revealing than the spellings of compounds in which, admittedly, the unaspirated form appears most often in the prosodically weak right-hand part, are alliterative matchings in (mostly) late Old English verse:

- (11) **hw**earfum **w**ræcmæg²⁵as. / **W**oð up astag²⁵ *Guthlac* 263
 þa **h**wile þe hi wæpna / **w**ealdan moston.²⁶ *Maldon* 83
weras <werig>ferhðe / **h**wearfum þringan²⁷ *Judith* 249
 wið ðy **h**witan attre / wið ðy **w**edenan attre²⁸ *Charms* 248
 and he þar **w**unode / ða **h**wile þe he lyfode²⁹ *Death of Alfred* 21

The examples in (11) suggest reduction and identification with /w-/. These are some of the earliest symptoms of the cluster's "schizophrenic" behavior.

5.3. Early Middle English: *Lazamon's Brut*

In Middle English the evidence for loss of contrastive aspiration and merger with the pre-existing /w-/ becomes increasingly solid. When alliterative verse composition re-emerges at the end of the twelfth century, the etymological /xw-/ or /hw-/ was already eligible for alliteration with /w-/ in both texts of *Lazamon's Brut*. The citations in (12) are from the more archaizing *Caligula* text; "O" means that the same alliterating pair is found also in *Otho*.³⁰

- (12) buten **whilc** þat þer at-wond; þurh wode bure 1084 (C, O)
 ðe walles of stone; þe duren of **whales** bone 182 (C, O)
whar ich mihte on wilderne; wurchen ænne castel. 7697 (C, O)
 Wið him warfte Brien; al his iweden. 15343 (C)³¹

The hypothesis that for *Lazamon* the simplification of the cluster was an option is reinforced by additional scribal evidence in the two surviving copies. First, numerous inverse spellings of etymologically /w/- initial words in the *Caligula* version support an assumption of merger:

- (13) Etymological <w-> spelled <wh-> in *Lazamon's Brut*:

i wh at 'went' (12784)	wh ingen 'wings' (14604)
i wh iten 'known' (7890)	wh it 'wight, man' (5757, 7974, 12911, etc.)
wh arð 'became' (2467)	wh it 'with' (2550, 2581, 2641, 12911, etc.)
wh at 'knew' (8572)	wh itere 'brave' (10658)
wh raðe 'wrathful' (9260)	wh reken 'revenge' (5392)

The examples in (13) suggest that the scribe was aware of the tradition of representing /w-/ with <wh->, but did not know which words merited that spelling. Compare the spellings in (13) to spellings elsewhere in the *MED*:

- (14) Early unetymological <wh-> for <w> in the *MED*:

<Rico le Whalsch>	'Welsh'	<i>Lay Subsidy Rolls</i> , Sussex (1296– 1332)
<Whettenhall>	'wet' + 'hall'	<i>The Place-Names of</i> <i>Cheshire</i> (1308)
<Wharam>	'weir' + 'home'	<i>EPNSoc. 52 (Dor.)</i> (1340)
<Ricardus Whasman>	'wash' + 'man'	<i>Feudal Aids 5</i> (1346)
<Ad. le Whaite>	'waiter'	<i>Thuresson ME Occup.</i> <i>Terms</i> (1349)
<William Whaykrylle>	'waker'	<i>Reaney Dict. Br. Sur-</i> <i>names</i> (1374)
<Whaltham>	'wald' + 'home'	<i>The Place-Names of</i> <i>Essex</i> (1376)

Conversely, etymological <hw>-initial words are commonly rendered as a simple <w->: *wær* 'where,' *wat*, *wæt* 'what,' *wile* 'while, time,' *wanene*, *wonene* 'whence,' *wenne* 'when,' *wite* 'white,' *wulc* 'which,' *wuder*, *woder* 'whether' are spellings in *Caligula*. It should be noted that while <wh-> and <w-> spellings alternate in the *Caligula* manuscript, *all* etymological /hw-/ items are spelled <w-> in the *Otho* copy.

In view of the research history of this issue, I want to emphasize specially the *variety* of lexical items in which the reduction is attested. The spelling evidence includes not only the <wh-> interrogatives, which would be predictable "leaders" in this development, but also fully stressed historical /hw-/ words:

(15) <i>warf</i> 'turning' (C)	OE <i>hwearf</i> (1036)
<i>wærf</i> 'crowd' (C)	OE <i>hwearf</i> (8727)
<i>wate</i> 'swift' (O)	OE <i>hwæt</i> (7137)
<i>wuruen</i> 'attacked' (C)	OE <i>hweorfan</i> (9139)
<i>wile</i> 'time, while' (C, O)	OE <i>hwile</i> (115, 174, 336, 456, etc.)
<i>wite</i> 'white' (C, O)	OE <i>hwit</i> (594)
<i>iwet</i> 'sharpened' (O)	OE <i>hwettan</i> (15263)

Again, the practice of the two scribes is confirmed independently by spellings found elsewhere in the twelfth- through early thirteenth-century records:³²

(16) Early <w-> spellings for etymological /wh-/ in the *MED*:

<Wetacra>	'wheat-'	1177, <i>Reaney Dict.Br. Surnames</i> 378
<Werfton>	'wharf-'	1202, <i>Ekwall Dict.EPN</i> 487
<Weruelthun>	'whorl-'	1189–1199, <i>EPNSoc.</i> 5 (N Riding Yks.)
<Wicherche>	'white-'	1166, <i>EPNSoc.</i> 8 (Dev.) 247
<Wluedale>	'wheel-'	c1192, <i>EPNSoc.</i> 31 (West Riding Yks.) 67

The type of alliterative evidence referred to in (12), the spellings that the two *Lazamon's Brut* scribes used in copying the original, and the independent early evidence provided by place and personal names reinforce each other to strengthen the case for an early reduction of the etymological cluster /hw-/, at least for some varieties of English spoken in the South West. The presence of reduced variants of /hw-/ continued throughout the Middle English period.

5.4. Fourteenth-century evidence of /hw-/ reduction

The reduction of /hw-/ started in the south at about the same time that the other /h-/ initial clusters began to be simplified. Judging both from alliteration and from the present-day state of the opposition, this particular change did not occur or was delayed in the northern dialects. In verse, the more northern compositions, as, e.g., *The Wars of Alexander*, allow /hw-/ to be matched both to /h-/ and to /w-/ , and even to etymological /kw-/ , as in (17a)–(17c):

- (17) a. *3e behald me sa hogely quareon is 3our mynd* Wars 269
Of þe quilke he hopid in his hert sumquat to knawe Wars 679
- b. *For now vs wantis in a qwirre as þe quele turnes* Wars 1980
And sone þe wachemen without quen þai him þare sawe Wars 5290
- c. *Quirris furth all in quite of qualite as aungels* Wars 1679
For h[i]m was quartirs of qwete vmqwile out of nombre Wars 4640

The poet's language, as reconstructed on the basis of the alliterative practice, reflects both familiarity with the southern dialects and the survival of the initial segment "in parts of the North and North Midlands ... [as] a very strongly aspirated /xw-/" (Duggan and Turville-Petre 1989: xxxvii).

The Parlement of the Thre Ages is another poem which illustrates the uncertainty of the realization of the etymological <hw-> in dialectally mixed texts. The original dialect of the poem is "the central or southern part of the West Riding of Yorkshire"³³ but influences from the East and South Midlands are recognizable in the way the etymological <hw-> cluster is treated in alliteration:

(18) *The Parlement of the Thre Ages*:

- And quopes³⁴ thaym to the querrye that quelled hym to the dethe (233)
 And he ne wiste in alle this werlde where he was bycomen (507)
 And his techynges will bene trowede whills the werlde standes, (604)

For comparison, the *Gawain* poet, located topographically between *Lazamon* and the *Wars* poet, also allows alliteration between reflexes of Old English <hw-> and /w/;³⁵

- (19) *Be fyrst word þat he warp, 'Wher is', he sayd, SGGK 224*
Whettez his whyte tuschez; with hym þen irked SGGK 1573
What! hit wharred and whette, as water at a mulne; SGGK 2203
And wyth quettyng awharf, er he wolde lyzt; SGGK 2220

The matching of etymological /hw-/ to /kw-/ (<qu-, quu-, qw->) in northern texts reflects an important cluster development in the history of English. In Northumbrian the etymological cluster /kw-/ was unstable and its first element was spirantized to [χ-]; in the same dialect area the realization of the Germanic */χw-/ was probably [xw-]. The two clusters merged, most likely as the result of substratum-induced sound-substitution in the speech of the indigenous British Celts (Laker 2002).³⁶ That northern pairing is therefore quite separate from the despirantization of the cluster in other varieties of Middle English.

Moving further to the south, we find that like *Lazamon*, *Langland*, whose dialect is also that of the South West Midlands, regularly pairs fully stressed <wh-> words with /w-/: *while* 'time,' *whiten* 'whiten,' *the whyes* 'the whys, causes,' etc.³⁷

(20) *Piers Plowman* (B-Text):

- "Whit wyn of Oseye and wyn of Gascoigne (P.229)
 For to werche thi wille the while thow myght laste (3.028)
 Wowes do whiten and wyndowes glazen (3.061)
 Now awaketh Wrathe, with two white eighen (5.133)
 "For to werche by thi wordes the while my lif dureth (6.056)
 And wepen whan I sholde slepe, though whete breed me faille (7.121)
 For alle that wilneth to wite the whyes of God almighty (10.124)
 And thus thorough wiles of his wit and a whit dowve (15.407)

Similarly, in *William of Palerne* <hw->, commonly spelled also <w->, alliterates on /w-/:

(21) *William of Palerne*.³⁸

- Sche awayted wel þe white bere-skinnes (*Will* 1710)
 Whilum þei went on alle four, as dop wilde bestes (*Will* 1788)
 Whanne þe wite beres wist, þat were in þe quarrer (*Will* 2401)

Notice, in the same text, the inverse spelling for *wait*, comparable to the spelling of *warm* in Langland's *Piers Plowman*:

- (22) He went to an heiz weie to whayte sum happes (*Will* 1885)
 And wiþ wharme³⁹ water at his eyghen wasshen hem after (*PPl.B*
 15.192)

Leaving the realm of tightly structured alliterative verse makes it harder to establish the continuity of the merger, but some fifteenth-century spelling evidence certainly exists. The forms <wiche>/<weche> for 'which' are frequent alternatives in the 1384–1425 records of London English; there are 12 such instances listed in Chambers and Daunt (1931: 379). One of the texts where the merger is well attested, *The Brewers' First Book*, includes an inverse spelling of *with* as <whith> at l. 816 for the year 1423. Other fifteenth-century spellings indicative of merger found in the *MED* are cited in (23) and (24):

- (23) 15th century <w-> spellings for <wh-> in the *MED*:

<walle>, <wale> 'whale' ⁴⁰	<wethyr> 'whether' ⁴¹
<waloill> 'whale oil' ⁴²	<wetston> 'whetstone' ⁴³
<warff> 'wharf' ⁴⁴	<wile> 'while'(n.) ⁴⁵
<way> 'whey' ⁴⁶	<wyght> 'white' ⁴⁷
<werle> 'whirl' ⁴⁸	<wyne> 'whin' ⁴⁹
<weth-floure> 'wheat-flour' ⁵⁰	<wytstare> 'bleach' ⁵¹

- (24) 15th century <wh-> spellings for <w-> in the *MED*⁵⁰

<whanse> 'vanish' c1450 ⁵³	<whater> 'water' c. 1475 ⁵⁴
<whante> 'want' 1475 ⁵⁵	<whawys> 'waves' a1500 ⁵⁶
(felle-) <whare> 'ware' c1475 ⁵⁷	<whaxmaker> 'wax-maker' a1500 ⁵⁸
<whas> 'wash' a1500 ⁵⁹	<wheith> 'weighs' c1469 ⁶⁰
<whitheouten> 'without' c1400 ⁶¹	<why> 'wight' a 1475 ⁶²
<whilwh> 'willow' a1475 ⁶³	<whale> 'wall'(MED)

That takes us to the end of the fifteenth century. At that point the identification of the etymological /hw-/ with /w-/ is a fact in large areas of the South and the Southwest. Unlike other regional features, such as the clerk's vowels and the third person plural pronouns in Chaucer's *Reeve's*

Tale, there seems to be no association, negative or otherwise, between “provincialism” and either /w-/ or /hw-/; those kinds of associations developed later.

Although the alliterative data I have presented are new in this context, the recognition of the merger is not. The assumption regarding the history of the cluster is that <hw->, re-spelled <wh-> in Middle English, was lost first in the South and the SE Midlands and popularly certainly also in London (Jordan-Crook 1934/1974: 178–179). This dating is based on spelling evidence in *The Peterborough Chronicle* (1132 ff.), *The Aenbite of Inwyt*, *Poema Morale*, *Vices and Virtues*, *Trinity College Homilies*, etc. Turning to the profiles in the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Medieval English* (LALME, McIntosh et al. 1986), we find confirmation of the merger too. Volume 4 lists 97 <wa-> spellings for *what* (278), shown on Map 1091.

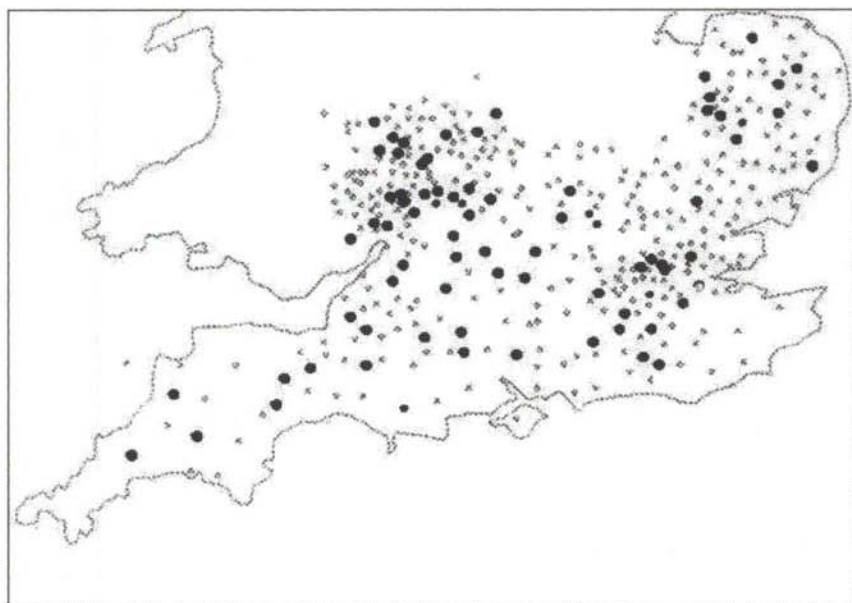


Figure 2. WHAT: wa- forms (LALME Map 1091)

LALME lists also 62 instances of <wh-> used as a reverse spelling for <w-> as in <whas> ‘was,’ <whe> ‘we,’ <whit> ‘with.’ These spellings are distributed all over the south, with somewhat higher density in Essex (x9), Somerset (x6), Suffolk and Gloucestershire (x5), Berkshire and

Warwickshire (x4), etc. Similarly convincing is the distribution of *while* forms with <w-> (Map 253 below), and the overall w + V spellings for <wh> (Map 274):⁶⁴

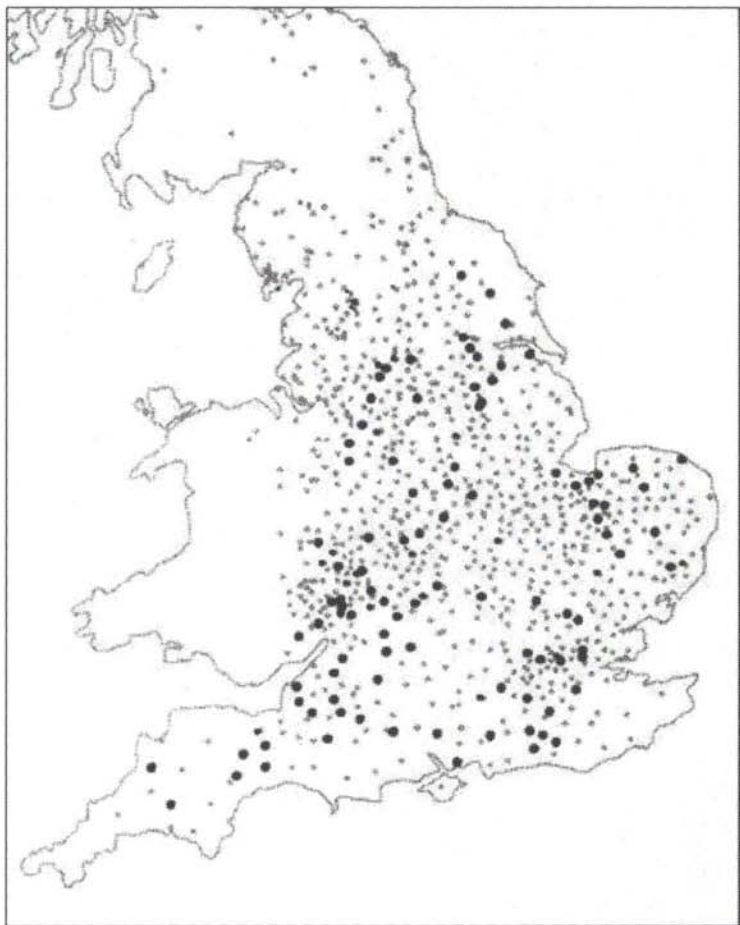


Figure 3. WHILE conj: form with initial w + V (LALME Map 253)

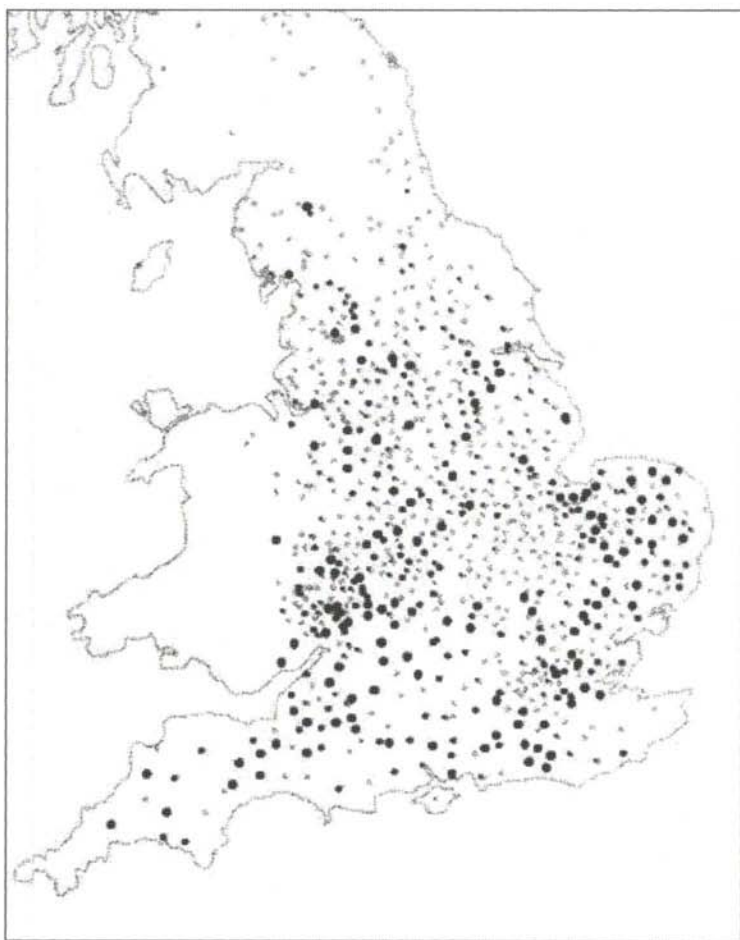


Figure 4. WH-: w + V (LALME Map 274)

Further references to <wh> reduction in Middle English are found, among others, in Luick (1914–1940), Sievers-Brunner (1942 [1965]), and Harris (1954), whose dissertation is the most vigorous defense of the idea of early merger of /hw-/ and /w-/.⁶⁵

Thus, there is quite solid evidence of merged pronunciations from early Middle English onwards. The continuous existence of that merger has, however, also been dismissed.

- (25) There is sporadic /x/-loss in ME, but spellings like *wich* for *which*, etc. are rare before the sixteenth century, and then common only in prosodically weak words. The first good evidence for general loss appears to be Jones (1701: 118); *what*, *when* etc. sounded *wat*, *wen*, etc. by some. (Lass 1999: 123–124)

Lass is in good company. He echoes Jespersen (1909: 374), Wyld (1936: 311–312), and Dobson (1957, II: 974–975). These scholars base their conclusions on orthoepistic evidence. Dobson assumes phonemically distinctive /hw/ or /w/ because most of his sources, e.g. Smith (1513–1577), Hart (d. 1574), the Northerner Tonkis (17th c.), Robinson (17th c.), Gil (1565–1635), etc. retain the aspirated sound. Note, however, that Bullokar (c. 1530–c.1590) and Laneham (16th c.), who belonged to “much the same social class” – Laneham was a London merchant – (Dobson 1957: 93), show [w-] in *where*, *whether*. Both were learned and well-connected men; Laneham’s spelling is characterized as representing “everyday informal speech” (Dobson 1957: 89). Reviewing Dobson, Matthews (1959: 362) pointed out that it is very likely that the orthoepists did not recognize “advanced pronunciations,” assuming, erroneously, that [w-] was “advanced” rather than a continuation of the Middle English situation. Matthews must be right, however, that the lack of contrast between /hw-/ and /w-/ must have been more widespread among educated speakers than the orthoepists were indicating. The history of socially marked variants can be difficult to reconstruct, but we do have records of “everyday” English that show reduction through the sixteenth century. Thus, the Londoner Henry Machyn in his (1556–1557) journal writes <warff> for *wharf*, <wyche> for *which*, but he writes <whyt> both for *white* and for *with*, and <whent> for *went*.

- (26) Henry Machyn ‘s *Journal* (1556–1557):⁶⁶

<warff>	‘wharf’	<wher>	‘were’
<wyche>	‘which’	<whent>	‘went’
		<whyt>	‘with’
		<Whyth>	‘(Isle of) Wight’

Surprisingly, Dobson (1957: 974) attributes the pronunciation [w-] only to “sources which are influenced by vulgar or dialectal speech.” He lists homophones, some of which are cited in (27), but dismisses them because “the best” homophone lists do not show <wh->:<w-> pairings.

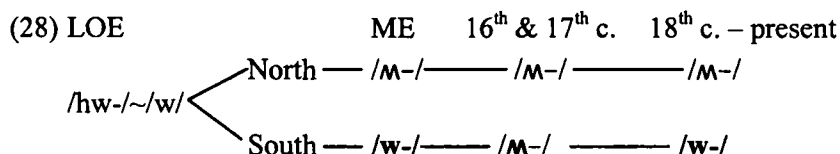
(27) Homophones (partial, from Dobson 1957: 974):

<i>whither-whether-weather</i>	(Price, Fox and Hookes, Brown)
<i>wheel-wheel-weal</i>	(Young, Coles's <i>Eng.-Lat. Dict.</i>)
<i>wey-way</i>	(Strong, Cooper)
<i>white-weight</i>	(Cocker)
<i>wey-weigh</i>	(Brown)
<i>wheat-whet-wet</i>	(Brown, anonymous manuscript list)
<i>while-wile</i>	(Brown)
<i>whine-wine</i>	(Brown)

Dobson, it appears, glossed over the fact that the merger must have been more widespread in everyday speech than his “best” orthoepists indicate. The point on which I differ from the canon and even its critics is that the merger is not an eighteenth-century “development” or “innovation” or “advanced pronunciation.” Rather, as I have tried to document here, it is a genuine continuation of a change that has been around since Old English times and survived robustly into Early Modern and Modern English. Does that allow us to discard the orthoepistic testimony completely? Briefly, the answer is no.

5.5. The /hw-/:/w-/ mergers and unmergers in the South

The scholarly opinion that a /hw-/~w-/ contrast was a feature of highly educated language in the sixteenth and seventeenth century (MacMahon 1998: 467–468; Lass 1999: 123–124) is probably unchallengeable. Schematically, the picture outlined in the literature, based on upper-class records, looks like this:



This is an odd historical situation: how did the non-vulgar speakers of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century southern English know *which* was *which*? How real was the un-merger of /m-/ and /w-/?⁶⁷ They had merged for the alliterative poets and scribes, yet the authorities on early Modern English pronunciation do not acknowledge a merger until after the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The documentation of the evidence in the preceding sections makes it clear that the merged /w-/ pronunciation had a continuous uninterrupted lineage in everyday spoken southern English from OE to this day. At the same time, neighboring regional, and probably social, varieties maintained the contrast. An un-merger, to the extent that it occurred, should be seen as a reinforcement of one of the familiar variants which started as a highly localized, group- or social network- specific phenomenon. It was not the case that the “educated” adopted a lower class feature during and after the eighteenth century, but that earlier that same subsection of the population favored a distinction which had not been historically dominant in that variety. The “novelty” was not a matter of merger of /hw-/ and /w-/ in the eighteenth century; the innovation was that southern speakers in the sixteenth and seventeenth century rejected a socially neutral merged pronunciation in favor of a prestigious one. For those speakers the change was a matter of externally triggered split of /w-/ into orthographically defined entities. Three factors enabled the un-merger: spelling, word frequency, and, possibly, a shift in the sociolinguistic status of the northern pronunciation in some circles in the south during the sixteenth and especially the seventeenth century.

The first point has been adumbrated: seventeenth-century orthoepistic testimony on the status of the opposition comes from highly educated writers for whom spelling is a major guide to “correctness.” This association between spelling and prestigious pronunciation continued into the twentieth century as witnessed by the observations in Jespersen and Gimson cited above. The graphic convention <wh> must have been quite remarkable in itself. In 1619 even an ardent spelling reformer like Alexander Gill, the High Master of St. Paul’s School and a flogger of schoolboys, wrote: “*wh* will solely from bad habit retain its force in *what*, *wheðer* ‘whether,’ and the like.”⁶⁸ A factor working in collusion with spelling would be the high frequency of some <wh> words – the visual image of the question words would be a powerful model even for the semi-literate. Thus, the insistence on contrastive /w-/~/m-/ would have found a receptive audience in people with social and intellectual ambitions; after all, the distinction corresponding to the orthography was recommended by highly regarded contemporary educators.

Finally, a speculation which I cannot defend, but which appears worth pursuing is that in the first half of the seventeenth century northern and Scots pronunciation may have enjoyed prestige in certain circles and would thus have had an effect on the fate of the cluster. Throughout the late sixteenth and the seventeenth century, the political and therefore linguistic contacts of southern speakers with the north and Scotland were intense.

Queen Elizabeth I was educated under the tutorship of Roger Ascham, a Yorkshire man. It is possible that King James I (1603–1625) and his immediate circle of Scottish favorites provided the model that educators welcomed and socially aspiring speakers followed. Though their army was routed by Oliver Cromwell in 1651, 10,000 Scots marched into England under the leadership of Charles II – such exposure to the aspired pronunciation, augmented by the spelling, may have contributed to the construction of /hw-/ as a rather prominent cultural shibboleth.

These are suggestions that deserve further investigation and discussion, yet the aggregate of the arguments from spelling, word frequency, and dialect mixture makes a post-fifteenth century “unmerger” probable only for a particular social group – the educated southerners. Further, the revival of /hw-/ may perhaps be connected with the density of Puritans/Protestants in East Anglia, a social group that put a great deal of emphasis on literacy, and a group that was also the emerging “high prestige” section of the population.⁶⁹ This suggestion, which I can not investigate further here, is plausible for two reasons. First, according to the *OED*, the spellings <qu-, quu-, qw-> for OE <hw-> were first attested in East Anglian texts (once in the *Bestiary*, <qual> ‘whale’; regularly, but not exclusively in *Genesis* and *Exodus*). It persisted as a feature of East Anglian spelling into the fifteenth century as in the *Paston Letters* and the works of John Metham, suggesting strength of /hw-/ in the area. Second, a connection between the Puritans’ interest in literacy and /hw-/ would account for the strength of the aspired pronunciation in the early stages of American English.

An additional argument for considering /hw-/ the “innovative” early modern form comes from a group of onomatopoeic words whose histories also suggest that when /hw-/ was reintroduced, the etymological lines were blurred, as one would expect in such cases:

(29)

ModE form	Source	First <wh-> spelling (<i>OED</i>)
whap	wap ‘bark’	1650
wheeze	weeze ‘ooze’	1591
whiff	weffe ‘vapor’	1591
whisk	‘wysk/visk’	1577

The same process is illustrated by two more recent borrowings in English: *whangee* from Chinese and *whidah*, both of them with /hw-/.

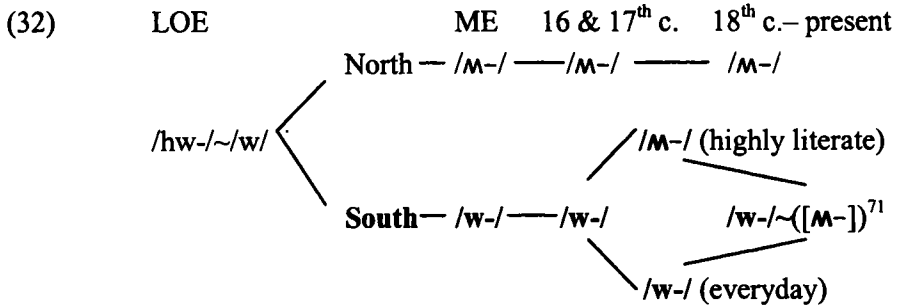
(30) <i>whangee</i> ‘a bamboo cane’	<wangee>	1790
	<wanghee>	1813
	<whangee>	1836
<i>whidah</i> ‘widow-bird’	<i>Ouidah/Widah</i> ⁷⁰	1783

The sets in (29) and (30) fit an assumption of /hw-/ as a literacy- and prestige-based innovation since the acquisition of aspiration is a phonologically marked option (see below). It can occur only under pragmatic conditions powerful enough to offset the phonetic expectations. The probable scenario, again, is not one of continuous distinctiveness of /m-/~/w-/ in the south; sections 4.1–4.4 showed this to be untenable. Rather, during the Renaissance and after, some speakers began to favor a dialectally external contrast under the influence of spelling and education. The zeal with which the /w-/ onset in lower class, illiterate pronunciation, was decried, can be read clearly off John Walker’s entry on <h>:

- (31) This letter <h> is often sunk after *w*, particularly in the Capital, where we do not find the least distinction of sound between *while* and *wile*, *whet* and *wet*, *where* and *wear*. Trifling as this difference may appear at first sight, it tends greatly to weaken and impoverish the pronunciation, as well as sometimes to confound words of a very different meaning. The Saxons, as Dr. Lowth observes, placed the *h* before the *w*, as *hwat*: and this is certainly its true place: for, in the pronunciation of all words beginning with *wh*, we ought to breathe forcibly before we pronounce the *w*...and then we shall avoid that feeble, cockney pronunciation, which is so disagreeable to a correct ear. (John Walker, 1791/1831: 53, emphases DM)

The presumed eighteenth-century loss of contrast is then simply a continuation and survival of a robust historical variant stigmatized by the orthoepists and the educators.

This reconstruction avoids the need for positing a full-scale historical unmerger. The revised picture is shown in (32):



6. Causation, directionality, markedness

... every image of the past that is not recognized by the present
as one of its own concerns threatens to disappear irretrievably.

Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*

The next step will be to see how this philologically enriched position affects the linguistic analysis of /hw-/ reduction in the history of English.

The cluster /hw-/ in Old English was a member of a set of /h-/ initial clusters, the other members of the set being /hl-/ , /hr-/ , hn-/ . The other /h-/ initial clusters did not survive beyond 1300.⁷² This poses an interesting linguistic question: what made /hw-/ more resistant to change in the North?

The history of /hw-/ reduction in English has been a central test case for theoretical phonology. It has been used as an argument in favor of the role of the strength relations between the first and the second segment in the onset, thus Vennemann (1988), Lutz (1991), Suzuki (1996), and within a different framework but still with reference to sonority ranking, Anderson (2001), all of whom assume a post-1700 date of the merger of /hw-/ with /w-/ . In principle, the different sonorities of the second segments in the clusters can be expected to affect the rate of reduction of the /h-/ in them (Sievers 1901: §527). Following that principle, Vennemann (1988: 18) formulated a Head Law which states that “Good syllable heads [according to the Head Law] are those with a continual drop of Consonantal Strength from the beginning toward, and including, the nucleus.” The prediction based on the sonority of the second elements is shown in (33):

- (33) /hw-/ >> /hr-/ >> /hl-/ >> /hn-/
 best
➔
 worst

This leads Lutz (1991: 34–35, 45–47) to the assertion that /hw-/ survived uninterrupted in the south until the eighteenth century, at the cost of rejecting the scribal evidence for early simplification of /hw-/. Chronological precedence or lag for any of the changes may be hard to establish (Minkova 2002: Ch.7), but alliteration suggests that quite contrary to the prediction in (33), it was the /hr-/ and the /hw-/ clusters which were subject to incipient simplification in Old English; tentatively, they would be the “leaders” in the reduction process. If the causal connection between the sonority profile of the /hC-/ onsets and the chronology of their reduction in the South is thus discredited, we still have to establish the rationale for the divergent developments in the North and in the South. Briefly,⁷³ the two input realizations of this cluster are [xM -] or [hw-], as in (34):

- (34)
- | | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| | LOE <hw-> | |
| | [xM-] | [hw-] |
| | <hwita> : hafelan | <hwitan> : wedenan |
| | <hwæles> : hama | <hwearfum> : weras |
| | | |
| <i>Middle English</i> | [hM-]/[M-] | [w-] |
| <i>Modern English</i> | [M-]/[hM-] | [w-] |

The allophonic variation would have been largely context-free, though [hw-] is more likely under low stress. In [xM-], the fricative-approximant cluster involves a sharp rise in sonority after the fricative, sufficient to keep it perceptually separate from the following approximant. This cluster survives into Middle and Modern English in Scotland and Northumberland where the exact feature specification of the etymological <hw-> is unimportant; the sequence [hM-]/[xM-], or the singleton [M-] are allophonic.⁷⁴

In [hw-], the cluster is perceptually well-formed, but its first consonant is not easily separable and distinct because it has only a laryngeal specification; all its other features are derived from the neighboring sounds.

Due to the non-specificity of the /h-/, the maintenance of phonemic contrast between /hw-/ and a simple /w-/ becomes problematic, especially in unstressed words, a significant portion of the <hw-> words in Old English.

This approach refers to the quality of the initial segment and its coarticulation with the following consonant. A crucial assumption here is the variable pronunciation of <h->. I assume, in agreement with a tradition in the literature, convincingly defended in Milroy (1983, 1992: 198–200), that in the South /h-/ lost its pharyngeal friction properties and acquired its modern quality quite early, as early as the twelfth to thirteenth century. Seen from the point of view of /h-/ dropping, the historical simplification of the cluster rests on the similarity between two onsets: /hw-/ and /w-/. This is represented in (35) where the double-pointed arrows indicate a relation of similarity, and the delta symbol Δ stands for the difference between the values of the entities enclosed in parentheses:

(35) Southern [h-] loss (homophony between *whine-wine*):

$$\Delta (\text{hw-} \leftrightarrow \text{w-}) \approx \Delta (\emptyset\text{w-} \leftrightarrow \text{w-})$$

Read: since /h-/ is confusable with \emptyset , the difference between the cohesive /hw-/ and the singleton /w-/ is non-existent or minimal; the loss of the initial aspirate is minimally damaging. Loss of /h-/ may have been influenced by the high frequency of prosodically weak interrogative <wh-> words, and possibly by the fact that /h-/ clusters were phonotactically alien to speakers of Anglo-Norman after the Conquest.

In the north, the coarticulation of a strong velar fricative results in devoicing of the second segment. The cluster is non-cohesive and both of its parts are potentially confusable with other sounds. Perceptually, the transition between the fricative and the approximant in [xw̥-] would be similar to the transition between the onset and the following vowel in /xV-/, especially given favorable conditions regarding confusability of [w̥] with a following (back) vowel. This is the direction taken by clusters which preserve only the initial element:

(36) [w] loss (development of *who, whose, whom, whoop* ~ *hoop*):

$$\Delta (\text{x w̥-} \leftrightarrow \text{xV-}) < \Delta (\text{x w̥-} \leftrightarrow \text{wV-})$$

Read: the difference between [x w̥-] and, e.g. [xu-] is smaller than between [x w̥-] and [w]. In this option it is [w̥] that is in a vulnerable position because it is more confusable with its adjacent segment to the right than the

initial consonant in the cluster. This is the similarity that underlies the development of [x-]/[h-] realizations of OE <hw-> words, the type represented by *who*, *whose*, *whom*.⁷⁵ The inverse phenomenon is illustrated by the history of words such as *whoop*~*hoop*.⁷⁶ The tendency to dismantle the cluster by abandoning the approximant has been regarded as an anomaly by previous scholars, e.g. Luick (1914–1940 [1964]: 971), Jordan-Crook (1934 [1974]: 155). Within a theory of similarity of outputs, adopted here, we can bring *who*, *whose*, *whom* in the fold of “accountable” changes.

The North represents the third option:

(37) Northern / (h) w/ preservation (*whine* *wine*)

([hw̥-] ~ [w̥-] ↔ w-) > Δ (hw- ↔ w-)

Read: the difference between one of the voiceless realizations in the north, [xw̥-], [hw̥-], or [w̥-] and the voiced [w-], is larger than the difference between [hw-] ↔ [w-]. This difference must have been reinforced by the continuing Celtic-based substitution of [kw-] by [χw-] well into Middle English, as indicated by Laker (2002: 195). The internal differences between the allophones are irrelevant; even a monosegmental [w̥-] is sufficiently distinct from [w-] to prevent confusion. This distinctiveness translates into a sustained phonemic contrast throughout the history of some varieties of English.

A theory which accounts for the change or stability of a segment with reference to a mental map of similarities and contrasts (Steriade 2001) motivates all three scenarios. The ongoing variability in the pronunciation of the earlier <hw-> cluster can be handled phonologically within a theory that takes account of gradient output similarity. Ultimately, the motivation for the enormously long chronological span over which “undigested” change spreads, may be sought in the fact that there is no very clear preference between the various solutions to an initial <hw->. Nevertheless, as documented in section 4.1, the overall picture of the developments of OE <hw-> to present-day English reveals, cumulatively, a trend away from the bisegmental/aspirated realization. This agrees with the fixed global hierarchy of articulatory effort established independently, as in Boersma (1998: 390–392). In that hierarchy, aspirated consonants are the most effortful of all consonants because “making an active glottal opening gesture is more difficult than the precision needed for a continuant.”

- (38) /hw-/ → /w-/ (unmarked)
 /w-/ → /hw-/([w-])⁷⁷ (marked)

In that hierarchy of markedness, historically, the directionality of change would be from /hw-/ to /w-/, but the reverse change would require additional triggers. Such were the external triggers discussed in 4.5.

7. Final remarks

A hundred years ago the collocation *linguistics* and *philology* would have been considered tautological. Today *philology* is claimed or disclaimed by many areas of humanistic scholarship.⁷⁸ Along with *linguistic geography*, *linguistic anthropology*, *linguistic philosophy*, and *linguistic psychology*, the term *linguistic philology* is an important historical discipline with strong links to theoretical linguistics. This paper is an attempt to show that holding with the philologists and hunting with the linguists is a good research strategy.

Drawing on new philological resources, I have argued that the merger of /hw-/ and /w-/ has characterized everyday speech in some southern varieties of British English since late OE. The re-development of a contrast for some southern speakers in the sixteenth and seventeenth century was motivated by external factors such as literacy, prestige, dialect borrowing, and word frequency. The philological facts provide good testing material for a surface-oriented, functionalist theory of phonological change based on principles currently explored by Optimality Theory. By adding alliterative data to the history of one specific sound change, I hope to have shown how philological work can serve theory and, in turn, how theory can revitalize philology. Combining philology and linguistics is both possible and desirable.

Notes

1. This paper started out as a talk entitled "On running with the philologists and hunting with the linguists," written for SHEL-2 in March 2002. I thank Anne Curzan and the University of Washington sponsors for inviting me to Seattle and for providing the forum for its presentation and discussion. I am grateful to Richard W. Bailey and David White for helpful questions and comments at SHEL-2. My thanks are also due to two reviewers whose meticulous and insightful critiques made me reconsider some statements, and especially to

Frances McSparran, whose expertise and keen eye were invaluable in sorting out the *Lazamon* details. The shortcomings in the published product remain entirely my responsibility.

2. See Winters and Nathan (1992: 352), Koerner (1982: 404–406), Bailey (2002), Cerquiglini (1999), Desmet et al. (1999). The former two sources refer to Bloomfield's remark in his book *Language* (1933: 512, note 2.1) where he writes: "It is important to distinguish between *philology* (German *Philologie*, French *philologie*) and *linguistics* (German *Sprachwissenschaft*, French *linguistique*), since the two have little in common."
3. The full citation is "As the major linguistic difficulties are conquered, the study becomes more and more philological; that is to say, subject matter, cultural data, and history play an increasing role ... This is philology. But at the base of philology we must have linguistics" (B. L. Whorf in *Ann. Rep. Board of Regents Smithsonian Inst.* 1941 (1942): 502, cited in the *OED*).
4. The paper differentiates, in German, between *Sprachwissenschaft*, which is a sub-discipline of philology, and *Linguistik*, which is an autonomous science.
5. Of the five citations under *philologie* in the *MED*, four are from works by Lydgate (15th c.), with the same meaning. The word is found also in Robert Henryson's *The Testament of Cresseid* at line 216 (1480).
6. "Philology properly is Terse and Polite Learning, *melior literature* ... But we take it in the larger notion, as inclusive of all human liberal Studies" (Fuller, *Worthies* I. (1662: 26), cited in the *OED*).
7. From "Philology" in *EB Online* <<http://search.eb.com/bol/topic?eu=61229&sctn=1>> [Accessed 2 February 2002].
8. I am grateful to Nigel Vincent, whose plenary talk on the "native speaker" in historical linguistics at ICHL-15 in Melbourne in 2001 sharpened my thinking on this issue and prompted me to look into Fleischman's important work.
9. For a good recent discussion and additional references, see e.g., Orchard (1997), who also underlines the importance of recognizing the *aural* effects even in the old prose, not just in verse. Schaefer (1997) is a convincing defense of "orality" from a variety of different angles, including formulaicness.
10. Paul Saenger has made a persuasive case for the connection between silent reading and word separation in writing. In his account (1997: 260–263), which refers among others to the innovations in library architecture and furnishing – a dramatic change from the monastic carrels separated by walls – silent reading was beginning to be the normal practice towards the end of the thirteenth century and by the fourteenth century scholastic texts presupposed silent reading. This does not mean, however, that "silent oral reading" was not involved in the verse recording, where it is very likely that the scribes would engage in muffled articulation and inaudible mumbling.
11. Fleischman (1990) differentiates between live languages, dead languages, "text" languages, and "textualized" languages. A "text" language is a language reconstructed entirely on the basis of texts and commentaries, no

testable and replicable “live” records. By definition, then, all “text” languages are also “dead” languages, though the relation is not reciprocal – some dead languages are reconstructed on the basis of comparative data, without reference to existing material texts. A “textualized” language – the term is attributed to Walter Ong, see Fleischman (1990: 24, fn. 16) – is a language acquired entirely through the use of writing. Even if spoken, such as language, like Latin after c. 700–800, would be measured against the written text, or as Fleischman puts it, “the text controlled the voice.” Crucially, in text languages, the voice controls the text.

12. The sentiment is a paraphrase of Orchard (1997: 120), who concluded his essay on the oral tradition of the Anglo-Saxons with an injunction: “sometimes Anglo-Saxon books can speak, and we would do well to listen.”
13. Some of the data and arguments used in this article are presented also in Minkova (2003: Ch.7). This paper expands the original data base, including current dialect information, proposes a more concrete time-line of the reduction of the /hw-/ clusters, and includes new observations on the sociolinguistic underpinnings of the reintroduction and maintenance of the aspirated variant in the south.
14. In the IPA the “inverted w” ([ʍ]) is used both for the voiceless rounded labio-velar approximant, and the corresponding fricative (Pullum and Ladusaw 1986: 164). I follow Ladefoged and Maddieson (1996: 326) in treating /ʍ/ as a non-fricative, i.e. an approximant, in the dialects in English where it is contrastive. This makes it identical to the sound transcribed as a <w> with an under-ring ([w̥]); the two symbols are used interchangeably here, i.e. /ʍ/ [=w̥/].
15. The *OED* defines Received Pronunciation (RP) as “the pronunciation of that variety of British English widely considered to be least regional, being originally that used by educated speakers in southern England.”
16. An anonymous reviewer remarks that “As far as I know it [the *wine/whine* contrast] has now gone from Northumberland, and although it was stable in urban Scotland thirty years ago, it is recessive there too now. I do not think it is around in Ireland except possibly in pretty remote rural dialects.”
17. The “received” view is attributed to Ellis ([1889] 1968) and Wright’s *English Dialect Grammar* (1905).
18. Cited in MacMahon (1998: 468).
19. The map is one of the sample maps (#8), made available on the home page of the TELSUR (TELEphone SURvey) project conducted by William Labov and his associates at the Linguistics Laboratory at the University of Pennsylvania (<<http://www.ling.upenn.edu/phonoatlas/>>). I am grateful to the TELSUR researchers for allowing public access to their findings on the /hw~/~w/ contrast.
20. The letter <w> is a modern convention, see Hogg (1992: 42).
21. ‘but the white helm / head guarded’
22. ‘high horned (beaked) ship / over the whale’s dominion’
23. ‘whales hear you / and heavenly birds’

24. The same form is found also in *Headings to Psalms* [0048 (30.5)].
25. 'with the band of people, evil spirits / clamor was raised' *Guthlac* is an early composition, probably late eighth or ninth century (Fulk 1992: 400–402).
26. 'as long as they their weapons / could wield.' also *Maldon* 272.
27. 'evil people / pressed in crowds.'
28. 'with white poison / with wicked poison.' The five manuscripts which contain *The Metrical Charms* are from the tenth and eleventh century (*ASPR* Vol.VI: cxxx–cxxxvii).
29. 'and he lived there / for as long as he was alive.' *The Death of Alfred* is dated 1036.
30. According to the current consensus the original composition is dated c. 1185–1225. The two copies, (*C*)*aligula* (British Museum Ms. Cotton Caligula A.IX, North West Worcestershire) and (*O*)*tho* (British Museum Ms. Cotton Otho C.XIII, South West Midlands) show evidence from the second half of the thirteenth century, c. 1280–1300. I am grateful to Frances McSparran for, among other things, sorting out the latest dating and disentangling the on-line lineation problems for me.
31. OE *hwerfan* 'to change'
32. I am recording only the earliest attestations, irrespective of their dialectal provenance. The fact that they are all onomastic is a separate issue and beside the point here. What matters is that the reduction occurs in the first, stressed element of compounds. McSparran (1986: 24) refers to "frequent" <w-> spellings for /hw-/ in the six northern counties and Lincolnshire recorded by Kristensson (1967: 211–215, 246).
33. See Offord (1959 [1967]: xxvi). After 1974 the West Riding was distributed administratively among parts of the areas of Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire, and West Yorkshire and parts of four counties: North Yorkshire, Cumbria, Lancashire, and Humberside); and the City (and County) of York. The date of the original is uncertain. It is estimated between 1352 and about 1390, with a date before 1370 being "more probable" (Offord, op. cit: xxxvi).
34. 'whoops' < OE *hwopian* 'to threaten.'
35. My examples are collected from the electronic version of *SGGK* made available through the Electronic Text Center, University of Virginia Library; the edition scanned is *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, 2nd ed. edited by J. R. R. Tolkien and E. V. Gordon, revised by Norman Davis: Clarendon Press Oxford 1967. Further examples of <wh->:/w-/ alliteration from *SGGK* and *Purity, Patience, and Pearl* are cited in Oakden (1930[1968]: 78).
36. The merger is evidenced by PDE reflexes of the cluster /kw-/ in e.g. OE *cwicu*, 'quick' as /hw-/ and /w-/ in Northumberland, Cumberland, and Yorkshire. Laker (2002) makes a convincing case for attributing the change to the fact that Welsh lacks /kw-/ and /hw-/ , but has a cluster similar to /χw-/.
37. Langland (c. 1330–1400) is supposed to have been born somewhere in the region of the Malvern Hills, in Worcestershire. References in *Piers Plowman*

suggest that he knew London and Westminster as well as Shropshire, and he may have been a cleric in minor orders in London.

38. The manuscript is dated 1350–1375 by the *MED*. It combines West Midland and Eastern, possibly Norfolk dialectal features (Bunt 1985: 75).
39. [vr. warne; C vr. wharme]
40. *MED*: a1425 *Medulla (Stmh A.1.10) 9a/a: Balena: a whale [Cnt: walle]. The spelling <wale> is found at *GRom.*(Glo 22) 763/22, a1500. The abbreviations follow the *MED*.
41. ?a1475 Ludus C.(Vsp D.8) 57/189.
42. *MED*, dated 1435–1436 in *Heath Grocers* 418.
43. a1500 Add.37075 Gloss (Add 37075) 12/67a.
44. The *Paston Letters*, entry for 1459, 3.154.
45. This particular spelling is found in a1450 Lordyngis leue (Bod 48) 468. The *MED* cites many other <w-> spellings for *while* (n.).
46. c1450 Hrl.Cook.Bk.(2) (Hrl 4016) 73.
47. c1475 Wisd.(Folg V.a.354) p.114. Also <wyt(te)>, *OED* spellings from 1297, 1381, 1537 etc.
48. c1450 ?C.d'Orl. Poems (Hrl 682) 168/5026.
49. a1425 Roy.17.C.17 Nominale (Roy 17.C.17) 643/32.
50. ?c1450 *Stockh.PRecipes* (Stockh 10.90) 67/9.
51. (1440) PParv.(Hrl 221) 39.
52. Among the later inverted spellings in the *OED* we find <whrechedly> 'wrechedly' (1560), <whallabee> 'wallaby' (1843), etc.
53. *Capgr. St.Kath.*(Arun 396) 1.487.
54. *Rwl.Prov.*(Rwl D.328) p.124.
55. Stonor 1.158.
56. (*Tan* 407) 36.
57. (c1399): *Mum & S.*(1) (Cmb Ll.4.14) 3.150.
58. *Mayer Nominale* (Mayer) 688/22.
59. *Ld.Cook.Recipes* (LdMisc 553) 112.
60. Plumpton Let. 21.
61. Who-so loueth endeles (Sim).
62. Ludus C.(Vsp D.8).
63. a1475(?a1430) Lydg. Pilgr.(Vit C.13) 15178.
64. See also Map 563 (*whether* forms beginning with simple w) and Map 574 for *whither* forms beginning with simple w.
65. See e.g. Luick (1914–1940: §704), Harris (1954: 56–60), and Sievers-Brunner (1942 [1965]: §217). Harris (1954) is the most thorough and convincing advocate of early simplification of /hw-/. He recognized the possibility of coexistence of the new /w-/ with /hw-/ already in late Old English; citing considerable scribal evidence, he concluded that by the 13th c. the simple form was more common (1954: 56–60). Harris does not address the evidence of the *Caligula* text of *Lazamon's Brut*, restricting his comments to the pervasive <w-> of the *Otho* manuscript.

66. Some frequencies of occurrence, kindly provided to me by Richard W. Bailey, are as follows: <wharf> 7: <warff> 13, <went> 5 : <whent> 166, <whyche> 2 : <wyche> 190.
67. Similar questions were posed recently by Raymond Hickey at his presentation at ICEHL 12, Glasgow, August 2002. In his paper “Mergers, near-mergers and phonological interpretation,” he pointed out the inconclusiveness of arguments for “de-merging,” using data from the history of vowel mergers and the merger of /v/ and /w/ to [β] in eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century southern British English. Reassuringly, his cases of “de-merging” are as problematic as the case discussed here.
68. Cited from Alexander Gill’s *Logonomia Anglica*, Part II. Translation by Robin C. Alston. Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiskell, p. 98.
69. I am grateful to David White (p.c.) for this suggestion.
70. *Ouidah/Widah* is a port in Southern Benin.
71. The alternating sign indicates continuous usage of the variant [ɱ-] into the nineteenth and even twentieth century, see MacMahon (1998: 467–468), who cites Montgomery (1910: 13–14) as describing the use of /ɱ-/ as “restricted to females.”
72. The history of the other clusters is covered in detail in Minkova (2003: Ch.7).
73. For details see Minkova (2003: Ch. 7), which also addresses the reasons for the earlier simplification of /hr-/ , /hl-/ , and /hn-/ than of /hw-/ in the North.
74. The exact dating and the lexical and regional distribution of the change of [x-] > [h-] is complex; it is a necessary transitional realization in areas where the phoneticians assert [ɱ-] today. On the interpretation of <wh-> as a monophonemic or bi-phonemic sequence see Hickey (1984).
75. This scenario is applicable to other changes in English: OE *swulc* > ModE *such*, OE *twa* > ModE *two*, the ongoing post-coronal /ju/ > /u/ simplification which started in EMod English and keeps expanding, e.g. *rude*, *chew*, *suit*, *lute*, and American southern pronunciation of *Tuesday*, *news*, etc.
76. See also the relationship of *hurlpool*, *hurlwind*, *hurtleberry* to *whirlpool*, *whirlwind*, *whortleberry*, etc., and of *thwack*, *thwang* to *whack*, *whang*, in the *OED*. The <wh-> in *whip* is unetymological – according to the *OED* the word was borrowed from the Dutch *wippe*, *wip*, in the 14th century. Similarly, the dialectal *whap* ‘a blow, an instant’ is from ME *wappen* v. (*MED*).
77. A line of analysis which cannot be pursued here is suggested by the unmarkedness of [w] as compared to its voiced counterpart. This prompts the possibility that actual realization of the <wh-> in the South that was introduced by the educators was a monophonemic [w], and not a bi-phonemic, or doubly-gestured aspirated /hw/.
78. Although “New Philology” is *not* what this paper is about, it should be pointed out that literary scholarship is also indebted to this discipline. Here the words of C. S. Lewis are still valid: “Those who ignore the relation of [Modern] English to Anglo-Saxon as a ‘merely philological fact’ irrelevant to