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# Introduction

## Philology as linguistically informed cultural history

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The present volume collects ten studies that can be situated on the philological crossroads between literature and linguistics. Philological research has always been an integral part of Germanic language studies. Among other areas, English historical philology includes such time-honored subfields as dialectology and paleography (for an overview see, for instance, Laing et al. 1989; Hogg 2009; Laing & Lass 2009) and standardization (see, for instance, Stein & Tieken-Boon van Ostade 1993). It has also seen, since the 1980s, the emergence of newer subfields such as historical sociolinguistics, often with special attention to social networks (see, for instance, Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2017).

The viewpoint complementary to these themes, which is shared by all contributions in this volume, is a *sociohistorical* one. Specifically, the studies link various linguistic dimensions of lexis and morphology to the sociohistorical and cultural contexts of the time (especially those that are not at the core of social network research). Each paper pays particular attention to social 'labels' and attitudes (conservative, religious, ideological, endearing, or other), thereby focusing on the dynamic and historical dimension of these attitudes and labels. Changes in these are analyzed in order to explain linguistic changes that would otherwise be hard to account for. The wide range of linguistic phenomena covered demonstrates how this approach can shed new light on language change at all levels. The effect of changing attitudes on morphology is illustrated with the changes in word-clipping tendencies discussed by Minkova in Chapter 10. At the lexical level, attitudinal changes are exposed in the discussion by Boiché of Anglo-Saxon naming practices in Chapter 1, and the attraction of a new attitudinal layer is exemplified in Chapter 9 (by Hotta), which is on the increased association of prepositional variants in *-st* with the label 'archaic'. Suhr's examination of the visual dimension of early modern news pamphlets (Chapter 2) illustrates how changing attitudes may also affect the balance of extra-linguistic and linguistic features of a text.

Multiple layers of different attitudes are also important to understand linguistic change in the context of text reproduction. Rather than adhering to traditional philology (including its paleographical and dialectological dimensions), whose purpose has been the identification and characterization of the 'authoritative version', the present volume subscribes to the so-called 'new philology' or 'material philology' (Nichols 1997), which has been influential in literary philology for a while, but is less commonly adopted in linguistically oriented philology. This 'material philology' has decentralized the concept of 'original authorship' and, instead, has made the manuscript itself central. The chapters that deal with text reproduction in this volume all take this approach. In Chapter 4, Wallis discusses what the behavior of a copyist tells us about that copyist. While copyists attempt to faithfully render the exemplar they are copying, a copy is rarely if ever identical to its exemplar, and therefore consists of at least two layers of textuality: the layer contributed by the author and that contributed by the scribe. Each layer is meaningful and tells us something about the attitudes of its creator. Another example is Gather's analysis of congregational songs as early modern adaptations of older psalm translations (Chapter 7). Multiple layers may even be found in different editions of the same text, as is shown in Ruano-García's analysis of the dictionary of Americanisms (Chapter 8), which reveals how an editor deals with a changing view on what constitutes American English.

In addition to the sociohistorical perspective, (English) philological research is also being greatly affected by what is commonly referred to as 'Digital Humanities', an umbrella term that covers a wide range of methodologies, ranging from straightforward computer-assisted analysis of texts to powerful computer software to analyze and visualize enormous amounts of data. While the surge of Digital Humanities and Big Data is a welcome and highly relevant boost to the field of philology, it also constitutes a danger to the richness of the philological tradition. Large-scale quantitative analyses inherently run the risk of undervaluing differences in the data, and of losing sight of the underlying message of individual texts and authors. These potential risks do not mean that we should shy away from quantitative analysis. Ideally, both quantitative and qualitative analysis will be combined in a thoughtful way. The current volume explores such thoughtful combination. While it capitalizes on the hallmarks of traditional philological craftsmanship, the majority of its contributions combine this craftsmanship with the opportunities provided by computer-assisted text analysis.

Several of the papers embark on a quantitative analysis of semantic, pragmatic, or syntactic distinctions in historical texts, against this shared background of the texts' sociohistorical markup. While quantitative analysis is becoming more and more common, quantification still remains very much a non-trivial undertaking when investigating philological topics. The attention that is given in this volume

to quantification in the discussion of these philological topics is therefore a welcome complement to the qualitative interpretation of the data, which still forms the cornerstone of this volume. This attention includes exploratory quantitative analyses of topics that are particularly hard to quantify such as metaphor research (Alexander & Kay in Chapter 3), that simply have not yet received a quantitative treatment (Moessner on the legal genre in early English, Chapter 5), or that try to generalize over quantitative evidence from different syntactic domains (e.g. mood, tense, and person deixis; Nakayasu in Chapter 6). Other chapters are predominantly qualitative in nature, but raise important issues with regard to alternative quantitative approaches. For example, Wallis' analysis of scribe–exemplar relationships (Chapter 4) reveals that the dialect difference between the exemplar and the copy, with each dialect having its own set of distinctive phonological features, is a likely source of a scribe's confusion as manifested in unexpected interpretative alterations of his exemplar. Such differences are not yet fully taken into account in the recent surge of computational stylometric research trying to discriminate between copyist and author features (e.g. Kestemont & Van Dalen-Oskam 2010; Kestemont et al. 2015).

The volume is divided into three main parts, each focusing on a different perspective of the sociocultural dimensions of lexis and text. The first perspective, entitled *Conspicuous lexical choice in past societies*, focuses on how **meaning change is affected by a changing society**. The case studies depart from well-studied topics such as the impact of the Danish and Anglo-Norman invasions on the Old and Middle English (ME) language or the rise of prescriptivism in the English renaissance; rather, they discuss, *inter alia*, the social mobility of proper names independent of their owners, the effects of increased literacy on news headings, and the past habit of using the supernatural as a (metaphorical or literal?) excuse to account for undesirable situations.

The second part, which has been labeled *Historical layers in text and genre*, focuses on **how genres and text types may be enriched by the attitudes of their producers**. Analyses in this part start from the well-known assumption that genres and registers can only be identified by contrasting them with other genres (Biber & Conrad 2009): they compare various legal genres, or contrast non-fiction and fiction by the same author. Not only do genres differ among each other, but one can also not simply assume that they remain stable over time. The systematic study of how genres change and are affected (for instance, by register) is an area where much work remains to be done (see Biber & Gray 2013). All papers in this part reveal changes within genres over time, both genres that no longer exist today, such as congregational song, and genres that are still in use today. Within the category of characteristics that have been lost from certain genres, we may mention such unexpected ones as curse clauses in wills, the almost exclusively negative connotation

of the concept of *news* – admittedly, sensationalist news still sells well today – or the fact that medieval handbooks were often structured as dialogues.

The third part, *Lexis and morphology in a changing society*, reveals **how affective labels** such as ‘Americanism’, ‘archaicism’ (of certain prepositions ending in *-st*), or ‘sloppy language use’ (of foreclippings such as *minish* for *diminish*) **may become associated with formerly neutral vocabulary**. Specifically, the contributions to this part show how such labeling is in a way a by-product of more encompassing changes, respectively the emergence of an American identity (not merely linguistic but also cultural), the loss of the *-st* morpheme elsewhere in the English language (think of second-person singular verb agreement), or the decline of a monolithic Germanic stress constraint due to massive language contact with French.

The three following sections briefly introduce the contents of each part in turn.

### Conspicuous lexical choice in past societies

Part I contains three papers dealing with lexis. Each examines lexical choice as the coding of speakers’ subjective categorization of the outside world, and in particular of individuals and groups that are somehow perceived as special, and have accordingly received various ‘social labels’. Given the pre-secularized sociohistorical context of the papers, this special status persistently assumes a religious or spiritual dimension.

The first paper (BOICHÉ) reveals the sociocultural motivations underlying Old English names, which were as a rule much more meaningful than in today’s English-speaking world, where name-giving is more often motivated purely by a name’s euphonic qualities. One Anglo-Saxon onomastic morpheme, *ead-*, is analyzed in particular detail, and it is also compared to another (*wela-*) and similar morphemes in Greek and Slavic. Boiché provides evidence that the earliest attestations of the lexical element *ead* (*aud* in common Germanic) were independent uses as a name meaning “prosperity”, and were given to procure a bright future for the newborn. She argues that at this stage, this name was probably typical of the lower social stratum. Only later on, from the 5th century onwards, did it spread to gentry. This spread was triggered by *ead* being used as the first element in dithe-matic names, such as *Odovacar* “watchman of property”. *Ead*, subsequently, became very productive as the first element of such names. Boiché’s argument effectively suggests a fascinating relationship between the social mobility of a particular name and its changing morphological status, from being independent to becoming a bound morpheme in complex names.

The second paper (SUHR) examines the pragmatics of the textual and visual features of early modern sensationalist news titles dealing with monsters (i.e.

monstrous births), storms, and the devil. The analysis shows that some textual labels were preferred over others. Occurrences of *news*, with its clear emphasis on revealing the unknown, outnumbered *history*, a situation which persists to this day, and *relations* was favored over a label such as *account*. Yet regardless which label was used, textual labels were not generally typographically highlighted until the 1640s. Before that time the overall visual layout of the title page was a more important genre marker than textual labels. With regard to readership, sensationalist news pamphlets, unlike learned polemical pamphlets, had an increasingly wide audience consisting of growing numbers of newly semi-literate readers from all but the lowest levels of society. The developments in the conventionalization of textual labels – and its prevalence over the visual layout – can be tied in with increasing literacy and access to printed texts of these unlearned masses. Lexical and textual markup decisions in this case reflect the changing sociocultural situation of the audience.

The final paper of Part 1 (ALEXANDER & KAY) examines the sociocultural background of the metaphorical use of lexis referring to creatures from the spirit world in the past. Based on the large-scale analysis of metaphorical mappings, the authors observe that reference to the supernatural could have good (*angelic, heavenly*) or bad (*impish*) connotations, but that negative overtones are clearly predominant. They link this to the tendency of humans to appeal to supernatural interference to explain away their evils and misfortunes (think of devils, nightmares, elves, imps, etc.), but rarely to refer to their virtues and successes.<sup>1</sup> In addition to providing a quantitative analysis of metaphorical domains, still an underexplored methodology in metaphor research, Alexander & Kay's paper also argues that metaphorical mappings such as those from the supernatural to the human provide a conceptual challenge for metaphor research. In contemporary cognitive semantics, metaphor is generally treated as the mapping of a concrete source domain to a(n often more abstract) target domain. It could be argued though, that supernatural powers are more abstract than their 'metaphorical' human targets. But note that the abstract nature of the supernatural may be an anachronistic projection of our own worldview. Heaven, as the abode of God, for instance, may have been considered to be a physical place above our heads, and as such polysemous to its meaning of sky and equally concrete. In this view, speakers would have applied standard metaphorical strategies when calling a concrete place *heaven* (e.g. "like heaven"). In today's perspective, such a mapping would be unexpected, as it would be from more abstract to more concrete. Similarly, the concreteness of the supernatural concept of *incubus*

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1. This is an observation that nicely ties in with research on memory performance: people seem to remember their virtuous actions better than their immoral ones (e.g., Kouchakia & Ginob 2016).

“evil male spirit”, the source of metaphors on human diseases, may be derived from its being mentioned as an entity in medieval law. Cognitive semantics should therefore take into account the importance of the historical and sociocultural context in semantic networks. At the same time, this concreteness of the supernatural can hardly be equated with the palpable concreteness of the physical world. The concept of metaphor as conceived in contemporary cognitive semantics itself may be a historical one: its definition as being a similarity between a concrete source and a more abstract target makes use of a distinction (concrete–abstract) which itself only became entrenched in society in the 20th century. The authors propose to split up the concept of metaphor into a metaphorical world accepted as literal in some belief systems, and ‘pure’ metaphors.

### Historical layers in text and genre

The four papers in Part 2 center on the social and cultural dimensions at the level of the text and genre. In particular, they show that linguistic analysis – orthographic as well as semantic and syntactic – can provide a window on how the identity of texts and genres is tied to sociocultural attitudes towards the past.

The first paper (WALLIS) evaluates the layer of interventions added by scribe B1 of the Corpus Christi copy of *Bede* (CCCC 41), when he was faced with an exemplar that was written about 150 years before in a different dialect. One aspect that is particularly highlighted in this contribution is that the modernizations of scribes are not only interesting as evidence of diachronic change, but they may reveal much about the motivations, methods, and practices of the scribes who produced our surviving witnesses. This is in contrast to the majority of studies, which typically focus on what later transmission can reveal about lost archetypes and exemplars. Wallis shows that B1 is not the careless scribe he has sometimes been seen as (Grant 1989: 10). Instead, the nature of his interventions reflects the intelligent approach of a translator scribe who, even when faced with language too different from his own to be easily understood, pays due respect to his exemplar. Unfamiliar phrases and lexis are regularly replaced by West-Saxon alternatives. While these substitutions are not always successful, such as *Hibernia* “Ireland” for *hii* (the isle *Iona*), they clearly try to combine some of the original phonological shape with appropriate meaning. B1 also adopts some paleographical and morphological features of his exemplar, but only if they do not hamper the interpretation. Anglian double vowels are generally replaced by West-Saxon spelling conventions, except when they occur in words unknown to the scribe. B1’s careful consideration of what to change and what not to change demonstrates a deep commitment, where he uses all his resources to copy from a challenging and possibly at times illegible

exemplar, and skillfully tries to reconcile the old writings with the intuitions he has of his own language.

The second paper of Part 2, by MOESSNER, is a first quantitative analysis of the morphosyntax of Old English wills. It aims at complementing existing sociohistorical research, which has hypothesized that Old English wills are two-layered in that they combine an apparent but still emerging written mode with clear traces of their past origins of oral bequeathing (e.g. Danet & Bogoch 1994). In this respect, Old English wills can be expected to be less formal and less complex than their Present-day English (PDE) counterparts. Moessner's analysis confirms this expectation. Compared to PDE wills, Old English wills use significantly shorter sentences and have a lower average number of clauses per sentence. In addition, they hardly ever use the passive voice, whereas the passive accounts for a quarter of all verbal constructions in PDE wills. Another interesting feature of OE wills is the relatively low frequency of modal markers of obligation (in Old English *sceal* and the subjunctive); in contrast, *shall* is highly frequent in PDE wills. How this feature relates to the oral origins of wills is less clear, however, and definitely merits further research. In addition to this quantitative analysis of linguistic features, Moessner also draws attention to a number of other period-specific properties of the text structure of wills. Some of these further testify to the lower reliability of the written document, and reveal a different attitude of the Anglo-Saxon people to official documents. On the one hand, testators are aware of the future vulnerability of their wills and anticipate forgeries by including cursing formulae to discourage potential forgers. On the other hand, the common omission of witness lists in copies of wills suggests a different perception of what was considered a functional copy of an official document.

A different take on layers in text types is found in NAKAYASU's paper. Nakayasu analyzes the two medieval text types 'fiction' and 'handbook' examining work by Chaucer (*Canterbury tales* and *Astrolabe*). The paper explores to what extent different types of distal and proximal deictic elements – i.e. spatial and temporal items, and their extensions (e.g. argumentative uses of *now* and *then*) – cluster and function as layers that add structure to the extra-linguistic experiences the author has in mind, and how these distal and proximal clusters are employed in different ways across the two text types. For some clusters, such as the proximal *here* and *now*, in combination with the use of the historical present, the distribution over the two text types confirms what we know from previous studies. While the fictional text type has an overall higher rate of distal deixis, due to the narration of past events, a shift from a distal past tense to a proximal present in storytelling was already purposefully used in Chaucer's texts to decrease the psychological distance between the event in the remote past and the contemporary hearer. Some less established usages of deictic clusters can be observed as well: these might have

been motivated by concerns of linguistically signaling distance between speaker and hearer or between hearer and topic. Examples include a connection between imperatives and distal elements, when the narrator Chaucer is giving instructions to his son in the *Astrolabe*, or a religious contrast between God (distal deixis) and the world he created (proximal deixis). Nakayasu also suggests that modal deixis (the distancing use of past tense modal verbs such as *should*, *would*, etc.) may be functionally linked to deictic elements from the spatial and temporal domains into a unified type of spatio-temporal deixis. Her quantitative evidence supports such a connection between spatial and temporal deixis in Chaucer that is stronger than is typically assumed.

The final contribution in this section (GATHER) discusses the link between language use and different attitudes by means of a syntactic analysis of the Reformation genre of congregational song. Essentially the genre consists of songs on a Christian topic, which were usually part of a liturgical service. They make use of metrical and rhymed English poetry in stanzaic form. Not only does Gather define this historical genre for the first time, but she also draws attention to its specific syntactic preferences, how these preferences change as the genre itself changes, and how they differ from secular poetry. Specifically, Gather analyzes the phenomenon of argument shifting, i.e. the ‘improper’ placement of object, complement, or obligatory adverbial as compared to S(Aux)V(X), the unmarked word order from the 16th century onwards. Gather shows that argument shifting is significantly more common in congregational song than in secular poetry. In addition, the genre itself changes, and with it the type of argument shifting. Early congregational songs were often based on psalms, and shared with them a tendency to move object pronouns to medial position, before the main verb (S(Aux)OV), in particular because of metrical constraints. Later on, hymns predominated. The most common type of argument shifting in hymns was that of argument fronting (as in the title *A riddle to myself I am*), which was mostly used for reasons of emphasis. What is interesting is that, regardless of the different types of syntactic-poetic behavior, the genre as a whole consistently behaved in a more archaic fashion than did secular poetry. On this basis, Gather argues that non-standard word order is not merely a matter of poetic license, but instead reveals a deliberate conservative attitude to the genre related to religious tradition, which adds a historical layer onto the genre. Congregational song also shows more archaic behavior than other religious genres; it shares this conservative stance with a genre like prayer, which also belongs more to the ritualized side of religion.

## Lexis, morphology, and a changing society

Part 3 brings together a number of papers that show how a changing sociocultural situation may affect lexis and morphology.

The first paper (RUANO-GARCÍA) provides an enlightening discussion of how different editions of Bartlett's 19th-century *Dictionary of Americanisms* reflects changes in the status of and attitudes towards American English, which was at the time developing into a distinct variant of English. The first edition of Bartlett's dictionary contained many words that were also in use in England. To some extent, Bartlett seems to have included these because they were only used regionally in England, but were in general use in the United States. Mostly, however, their inclusion reflects the mixed purpose of the dictionary: instead of focusing on words that were unique to the US or had significantly different meanings, the first edition in effect was more of a list of words that did not belong to standard British English, and were in use in (some parts of) the US. As one reviewer of the dictionary pointed out, this may have served "as a good purpose in separating the language of coarseness from that of elegance" (Anonymous 1848: 328). While therefore useful, it was not a dictionary of Americanisms in the strict sense. The situation changed with subsequent editions. A decade after its first publication, Bartlett added a more explicit list of conditions for a word to be considered an Americanism. Accordingly, many words that were also around in England were removed from the dictionary, and still more words were removed in the 1877 edition. Other words were added, when there was reason to believe they behaved significantly differently in the United States than they did in the UK. The overall effect of the consecutive editions was that, with the final edition, the dictionary had truly become a dictionary of Americanisms. The various editions, then, reflect some interesting sociolinguistic processes, which cannot be easily separated. To some extent they may reflect actual changes in the status of some words (which were in the process of becoming obsolete in the UK, but thriving in the US, for instance). More importantly, they show the emergence of an awareness of a distinctively American idiom, not only in Bartlett's editorial practices, but also in the reviewers' reactions.

HOTTA, in the second paper, discusses the ebb and flow in the history of the variants of the prepositions *between*, *among*, and *amid*. His analysis reveals a remarkable parallelism in their development, which attests to their being a functionally coherent set. For all three, *-s*-forms (e.g. *amid[de]s*, based on the adverbial function of the genitive) became fashionable in ME, only to go out of fashion again and to be succeeded by *-st*-forms (*betwixt*, *amongst*, *amidst*), which became predominant in Early Modern English. From Late Modern English onwards, the *-st*-variant declined again, and the older forms, which had never been lost entirely, became most common again. Hotta draws attention to a variety of potential analogical associations

that may help explain this development. Apart from their similar function, it is argued that the *-st*-variant (even if the *-t* might have ultimately had a different origin) is an extension of the superlative ending on adjectives, with a similar intensifying function (*amid* “in the middle of” > *amidst* “right in the middle of”).<sup>2</sup> However, such a distinction in emphasis, if it existed, was quickly bleached, and other factors took over the competition between the base form and its extended variants. Hotta suggests that an important reason for the decline of *-st*-forms may have been a change in attitude within the speech community. While these *-st*-forms were unobtrusive in Early Modern English, the frequency of consonant clusters ending in *-st* dropped dramatically in the course of Modern English because of the gradual loss of the second-person pronoun *thou*. In combination with the overall increased effort required to pronounce such consonant clusters, their increasing uncommonness may have made language users perceive them as archaic and stylistically marked, hence to be used with care.

MINKOVA, finally, provides a diachronic perspective on clipping or shortening after it being neglected for nearly five decades. Yet shortening is an important process in word formation, which today is responsible for 9%–15% of all new words. Minkova considers it premature to dismiss it as a phenomenon outside any linguistic rules (as for instance claimed by Don 2014), and shows how such a view fails to take into account the historical dynamics of clippings. Rather than operating in a random fashion, it is shown that the phonological and morphological factors in clipping act differently in different periods. With the exception of proper nouns, which are largely left out of the discussion, it is revealed that premodern English clearly favored foreclippings (type *mend* < *amend*, *print* < *imprint*). Largely, they adhere to the typical constraints of Germanic stress patterns: only unstressed onsets are lost, and the resulting form almost always starts with a full onset, i.e. a consonant (so *vangelist* < *evangelist*, not *angelist*). From the 16th century onwards, the rate of foreclippings decreases, and they also change in nature, now also including the deletion of more than a single syllable (e.g. *university* > *versity*) or the deletion of a morpheme bearing primary stress (*turnpike* > *pike*). More importantly, from the 17th century onwards, back-clipping takes over (*con* < *contra*, *mob* < *mobile*). The demotion of foreclippings is also particularly obvious in the restoration of the input left-edge material in relatively short-lived forms such as in †*sturb* (> *disturb*) or †*spittle* (> *hospital*). Such restorations also attest to a broader familiarity with the source language. Indeed, the massive influx of Romance loans, which goes through

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2. This constitutes an interesting case of morphological analogy across parts of speech, a topic that has not yet received much attention in the literature on analogy as far as we (the editors) know. A similar phenomenon may be observed in the occasional use in Dutch of *temiddenst* “in the middle of”, *tussenst* “between”.

a second wave in Early Modern English, ultimately leads to the abandonment of the typical Germanic word stress pattern in English. When stress was no longer a reliable indicator of word boundaries, phonological form became more important as an identifier; hence back-clippings became the rule, as they retained the phonological form of the beginning of the word. Today, attestations of foreclipping have turned out to carry more social stigma as being 'lazy', while PDE backclippings are simply 'cute', 'playful', or 'in-group', but lack the stigma of ignorance or carelessness.

## Conclusion

The chapters collected here examine which structural features of lexis and text types are influenced by the sociocultural context. Together, they provide a varied window on the effect of historical versions of a dynamic society on the lexicon. Examining lexical and textual change in history from a sociocultural perspective teaches us a great deal – not just about the past, but it also makes us think about similar phenomena in the present, enhancing our knowledge about how universally human some of these phenomena are.

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