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NEGATIVE CONTRACTION AND OLD ENGLISH DIALECTS: EVIDENCE FROM GLOSSES AND PROSE PART II

3. Evidence from prose

We have seen in section 2 that the evidence from glosses indicates that uncontracted forms were indeed quite common in Anglian dialects of OE. In this section we will focus on evidence from prose texts. Levin's data indicated that the norm in prose texts (normally written in WS) is for contraction to be close to consistent. However, data from the YCOE will show that there are three notable exceptions: one determined by verb form, one determined by syntactic context and one by probable dialect origin of the text. It is of course the third of these that is of primary concern to us here, but I will first discuss the other two factors, especially since those factors will need to be taken into account later on; uncontracted forms in a text of probable Anglian origin tell us nothing if WS also had uncontracted forms in the case of that particular verb form or syntactic context. Section 3.1, then, focuses on negative contraction with present tense forms of *beon*, where we will see that person largely determines whether or not contraction occurs. The syntactic context that promotes the use of uncontracted forms is the topic of section 3.2. In section 3.3, we turn to the remainder of the data on *beon*, *habban*, *willan* and *witan* from the YCOE, and we will find that uncontracted forms predominantly occur in texts with known Anglian features. Finally, section 3.4 briefly discusses the data on *agan* found in the YCOE, and we will see that this verb does not appear to pattern with the other four verbs that are subject to negative contraction.

3.1. Morphological conditioning: present tense forms of beon

From our earlier discussion of the evidence found in glosses, it will be clear already that different forms of the verb *beon* do not necessarily behave in the same manner with respect to negative contraction. This was particularly clear in the case of the data from the Mercian glosses discussed in section 2.3. As discussed in the same section, more subtle distinctions were also seen in the Nbr data, but the pattern was unlike the one found for Mercian. It is worth checking, then, whether any forms of *beon* behave differently in WS as well. Notice that Campbell (1959: §354) simply gives the 3sg present tense contracted form *nis* without any added details on its occurrence, whereas contracted forms for the 1sg present form of *beon* are specifically identified as occurring in Nbr and Mercian texts, implying that contraction does not normally occur with this form in WS.[37] In this section, we will find that the data on negative contraction from the YCOE confirm that there are indeed marked differences between different present tense forms of *beon* in WS.

Let us first look at the data for 1sg *eom* and 2sg *eart*. The data are summarised in Table 11, below.

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[37] The contracted present plural form *naro(n)* is given as Nbr by Campbell, but this restriction does not tell us anything about the behaviour of different forms of *beon* in relation to negative contraction. Contraction with the present plural form of *beon* is simply not expected in WS because the relevant form that meets the phonological criteria for contraction, i.e. the ancestor of *are*, is Anglian (especially Nbr). There are very few instances of this particular plural present form of *beon* in the YCOE and even fewer negated ones, so it has been excluded from the data in section 3. I should note, however, that I have seen no uncontracted instances with this form in the YCOE, but there are some contracted forms in *Gregory's Dialogues (C)*. Manuscript O of this text has a form which could be uncontracted for one of these instances; see fn. 57. Such forms are not too surprising in view of the Mercian origin of the text, although they do indicate that Campbell's restriction of this particular contracted form to Nbr is too narrow.

Table 11. Negative contraction in 1sg/2sg pres. forms of *beon* (YCOE)[38, 39]

	1sg pres. *eom*		2sg pres. *eart*	
	contracted	uncontracted	contracted	uncontracted
Aelhom		2		
Aelive		2		2
Apollo				1
Bede				1
Benrul		1[40]		
Blick		1		1
Boeth			2[41]	3
Cathom1	1	3		3
Cathom2		12		2
Cura		1		
Chdrul				1
MargaC				1
MargaT		1		2
Mary		(1)		
NicodA		1		2
NicodC		1		1
Orosiu				1
Otest		1		
Solilo		2		2
Verhom		1	1	1
VerhomE				3
Wsgosp	4[42]	18		4
Total	**5**	**48**	**3**	**31**

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[38] The texts are referred to in this Table and following Tables by filename as in the YCOE minus the "co" prefix and extensions; details about the filenames and the texts contained in them can be found at http://www-users.york.ac.uk/~lang22/YCOE/info/YcoeTextFile.htm

[39] Three uncontracted forms (two 1sg forms in *Cura Pastoralis* and one 2sg form in *Boethius*) have been excluded because they occur in the syntactic context that promotes the use of uncontracted forms. One apparent instance from the *West Saxon Gospels* was excluded because *ne* involved an editorial emendation and was missing from the extant manuscripts. Two instances of uncontracted forms were not found in the base manuscript because of omissions in the text, and another manuscript was used to provide the relevant word(s) in the edition; these have been included in the Table (the instances in *Nicodemus C* and *Orosius*). The uncontracted 1sg form in *Mary of Egypt* is uncertain—the edition notes that *eom* is indistinct or uncertain—but has tentatively been included.

[40] One of the four extant witnesses (Oxford, Corpus Christi College 197, dating from the second half of the 10th century) has a contracted form here. Schröer (1964: 31) transcribes it as *ne om* rather than *neom* in the apparatus, but this is implausible since the form <om> is not found for the 1sg pres. form of *beon* elsewhere in the text (nor in the Dictionary of Old English Corpus for that matter), and there is nothing in the manuscript to force Schröer's analysis of the form.

[41] Both contracted forms in *Boethius* occur in the Cotton manuscript, i.e. the older of the two extant witnesses, so no doubt can be cast on them on the grounds of the date of the manuscript. The three uncontracted instances in this text, on the other hand, have been supplied from the 12th-century Bodleian manuscript according to Sedgefield's (1899) edition (used as the basis for this text in the YCOE).

[42] Only two contracted forms are found in the text of the *West Saxon Gospels* as given in the YCOE, which is based on Skeat (1871–1887), but two uncontracted forms found in that edition are given as contracted forms in a more recent edition of the text, i.e. Liuzza (1994). Both editions use the same base manuscript, and a check of a facsimile of the manuscript shows that it indeed has a contracted form in both of these cases, so the numbers in the Table have been adjusted accordingly.

As can be seen in Table 11, there are only five contracted forms with *eom* and three with *eart* in the YCOE. Compare this to 48 uncontracted forms for *eom* and 31 for *eart*. Clearly, non-contraction is the norm for these two forms, at least in the vast majority of texts. The only possible exceptions among the texts containing relevant forms are *Boethius* and the *Vercelli Homilies*; in these texts, non-contracted forms do not clearly predominate (at least in the case of *eart*), but the low numbers preclude firm conclusions. In the case of the other texts that contain contracted forms (1sg in both cases), uncontracted forms outnumber contracted ones. In addition, although the sole example in *Catholic Homilies* is found in the base manuscript, at least seven of the other manuscripts have uncontracted *ne eom*.[43] Also, no contracted 1sg or 2sg forms are found in any of Ælfric's other writings, so the contracted form in *Catholic Homilies* should almost certainly not be attributed to Ælfric.[44] In the *West Saxon Gospels*, on the other hand, there is much more fluctuation. The four instances of *neom* have *ne eom* in at least one other witness, but equally, four instances of the uncontracted forms in this text have a contracted variant in at least one of the extant manuscripts. Even when this has been taken into account, however, non-contraction remains the norm in this text. Still, contraction definitely appears to be an option here, at least in the case of the 1sg form, and it may even be that it was a comparatively common one in the original translation.

Interestingly, the rareness of contraction with these two forms of *beon* in the YCOE data contrasts with what we found for the Nbr *Lindisfarne* and *Durham Ritual* glosses. Although contraction appeared to be far less consistent in these glosses than it is in WS prose texts, there was no evidence that the 1sg and 2sg pres. forms resisted contraction (even if the evidence was very limited in the case of the 2sg form). On the contrary, if any form of *beon* resisted contraction in those two glosses, it was 3sg pres. *is*. Yet this is precisely the form for which contraction is most regular in the prose texts: *is* consistently contracts with *ne* in the YCOE, except in one specific syntactic construction which at least in some texts clearly encourages, or even requires, the use of the uncontracted form, as will be discussed in section 3.2. Outside of that construction, all 774 relevant 3sg pres. forms in the YCOE have negative contraction. (The numbers for individual files can be found in Appendix 1.) The Mercian glosses, like the Nbr ones, also had instances of contraction for the 1sg pres. form—there were no data on the 2sg form—although in this case 3sg *is* did contract almost consistently. In this context, it is worth pointing out that the contracted 2sg form in *Vercelli* is found in a homily which is thought on the grounds of linguistic evidence to derive from an Anglian source,[45] so it is possible that this particular contracted form goes back to an Anglian original.

I have no good solution to offer for why the 1sg and 2sg pres. forms of *beon* should have resisted negative contraction in WS varieties of OE while the 3sg pres. form of the same verb appears to be the most consistently contracted form. One fact which is no doubt relevant in this context, though, is that negative contraction with the 3sg pres. of 'be' is found widely in Indo-European languages, including non-Germanic ones, while negative contraction is not

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[43] Clemoes's (1997) edition does not note this type of variation in the apparatus of the text, so no information on this can be obtained from that source. The variant forms were found by searching the C11 database, which was compiled at the Manchester Centre for Anglo-Saxon Studies as part of an AHRB-funded project investigating script and spelling in 11th-century English manuscripts. It can be accessed at http://www.arts.manchester.ac.uk/mancass/C11database/. No contracted variants were listed for any witness other than the base manuscript, but the three 12th-century witnesses of the text are not included in the database, so the information on manuscript variants is incomplete.

[44] The C11 database does include one additional contracted form for the 2sg pres. of *beon* in a manuscript other than the base manuscript containing ÆCHom I, 2, 192.77. The manuscript concerned is Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 162, which is an early 11th-century manuscript. All five other witnesses included in the database have uncontracted forms, so again Ælfric is unlikely to be responsible for this contracted form.

[45] VercHom 1; see Wenisch (1979). The revised version of this homily found in VerhomE has an uncontracted form instead. The uncontracted 2sg form is also found in VercHom 1.

attested with any other verb forms/verbs in either Gothic or Old Saxon (Levin 1958: 492); according to Levin, only Old Frisian shares the relatively extensive development of negative contraction as found in OE. In other words, this particular contracted form presumably goes back to proto-Germanic and in all likelihood beyond, whereas the same does not appear to hold for the other relevant forms of 'be'. So given that *nis* appears to be the oldest contracted form, it is not surprising that it should be the most entrenched. But that merely shifts the problem further back in time. It does not explain why this particular form was affected well before any other. Equally, it does not account for the continued resistance of the 1sg/2sg pres. forms of 'be' to negative contraction in WS of all dialects, where the phenomenon is otherwise so regular.[46]

These data are also difficult to reconcile with López-Couso's (2002, 2006) suggestion that the high frequency of negative contraction she finds with *beon* in existential constructions might be linked to the "weak semantic weight of existential verbs, which makes them suitable candidates for the kind of reduction deriving from negative contraction" (López-Couso 2002). If weak semantic weight led to negative contraction, then why do *eom* and *eart* resist contraction in WS? After all, they are normally weak semantically as well. The differences between dialects would also be hard to account for.

To sum up, the YCOE data confirm that the 1sg and 2sg pres. forms *eom* and *eart* strongly resist contraction in WS. For the 3sg pres. form *is*, on the other hand, contraction is entirely consistent in all texts (even in those texts where non-contraction occurs), except where the syntactic construction favours non-contraction, as will be discussed in the next section. Clearly, then, the history of negative contraction with the 1sg/2sg pres. forms of BE is markedly different from that of *is*, as well as from the other verbs that allow negative contraction; contracted forms are rarely used in the dialect where otherwise negative contraction is near-consistent in OE, whereas they are used comparatively often in Anglian (at least in the case of the 1sg form), in spite of the fact that negative contraction appears to have been far less regular in those dialects overall.

Whatever the reason for the different behaviour of *eom*/*eart* on the one hand and *is* on the other, it will be clear that uncontracted 1sg and 2sg pres. forms of *beon* are uninformative when trying to assess whether there is any evidence in prose to support the claim that contraction was less frequent in Anglian than in WS. If anything, contracted forms are potentially more informative here given that the evidence from glosses indicates that contraction was actually more common in Anglian with these particular forms. The complete absence of variation with *nis* in YCOE data could be the result of a very strong tendency for WS scribes to reject uncontracted forms in this particular case, which might happen if *ne is* was regarded as completely ungrammatical in this dialect rather than very unusual but possible. Alternatively, given that the data in section 2.3 suggest that this form contracted almost consistently in Mercian as well, it could simply reflect a dearth of texts among the surviving material that derive

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[46] While the data on the various forms of *beon* raise questions on what may have motivated the sometimes radically different behaviour of those forms, the OE findings would help to explain why *nam* and *nart*/*nert* may have been more restricted in their geographical distribution in late ME than *nis*, as suggested by the data in *LALME* (McIntosh et al. 1986). However, Iyeiri (2001: 159-161, 164) notes that *nam* and *nart*/*nert* are actually attested in material from areas outside of those identified in *LALME*, so their distribution was not quite as limited as suggested by *LALME*. In addition, she points out that their apparent absence may at least in some cases simply reflect the absence of negated forms of the 1sg pres. form of BE in the relevant texts, so it is not clear that the occurrence of *nam* really was much more restricted geographically than other forms in ME. (The same is likely to be true for *nart*/*nert*.) Still, she acknowledges that there is some evidence to suggest that *nis* was more widely available than other forms, as for instance in the case of *Havelok*, which contains only three contracted forms, all involving *nis*. Data from the *Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English* (Laing & Lass 2007–) will hopefully tell us more about the extent to which morphological conditioning of negative contraction in the case of present tense forms of BE persisted into ME, but that is left for future research.

from a Nbr source as opposed to a Mercian one. Or it could be a combination of the two, of course. Either way, in view of the absence of uncontracted forms for the 3sg present (other than those that are the result of syntactic context) and suitable forms for the plural present tense, we can simply exclude the present tense forms of *beon* altogether when analysing the YCOE data further in section 3.3.

3.2. Syntactic conditioning: hu ne *questions*
As already mentioned, there is one syntactic context in which uncontracted forms may be found in cases where contraction is otherwise consistent. This context involves negative questions starting with *hu* (usually preceded by the interjection *la* in Ælfric's writings) which imply an affirmative answer, so that they effectively function as affirmative statements. An example of the construction is given in (8), below. López-Couso (2002), who refers to the construction as a "negative queclarative", also points out that this particular context inhibits the use of contracted forms. In this section, we will have a closer look at the construction in relation to negative contraction (or lack of it).

(8)   Hu ne is se ðonne yfelwillende &   yfelwyrcende ðe þone unscyldigan witnað?
        how not is he then   malicious   and evil-doing   who the innocent-one punishes
        Ða cwæð ic: Swa hit is swa ðu sægst.
        then said   I   so   it is as   you say
        "'Isn't then he who punishes the innocent person malicious and evil-doing?" Then I said: "It is as you say."' (Bo 38.122.23)

The first thing to indicate very clearly that negative contraction does not function normally in this construction is that non-contraction occurs with verb forms that otherwise contract consistently. We saw in the previous section that negative contraction is effectively consistent in the YCOE in the case of *is*. There *are* uncontracted forms with *is* in the corpus, including the one given in example (8), but all 16 instances—11 in *Boethius*, 3 in Ælfric's writings (2 in the *Catholic Homilies* and 1 in the *Supplementary Homilies*) and 1 in both *Cura Pastoralis* and *Soliloquies*—involve *hu ne* constructions.[47] This clearly shows that the syntactic context is responsible for the lack of contraction in these cases; with 774 instances of *nis* in the YCOE found in other contexts, it simply cannot be accidental that uncontracted forms occur exclusively in this low-frequency construction.

That conclusion is confirmed by the existence of some texts which have a significant number of uncontracted forms in this construction, but which do not have uncontracted forms of the verbs involved elsewhere: all 31 uncontracted forms found in *Boethius* as well as all 8 instances in *Soliloquies* are found in the *hu ne* construction. Details on the precise verbs/verb forms involved can be found in Table 12, below. (Any instances with *eom/eart* have been excluded from the data for obvious reasons.) The pattern is striking, and as far as these two texts are concerned, there can be no doubt that the construction strongly resists or even prohibits the use of contraction. As said, it is the only environment where non-contraction of *habban*, *willan*, *witan* and the relevant forms of *beon* is found in *Boethius* and *Soliloquies*. And notice that non-contraction is consistent here in these texts. Given that there are 344 contracted forms in *Boethius* and 106 in *Soliloquies*, this again simply cannot be due to chance. The *hu ne* context is infrequent in *Cura Pastoralis*, at least with verbs that may contract, but the two relevant instances found in the text (with *is* and a form of *willan* respectively) both

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[47] One of the instances in *Catholic Homilies* (ÆCHom II, 33, 252.106) involves use of the one found in *Cura Pastoralis* (CP 4.39.16) as its source, but there can be little doubt that Ælfric would have modified the form to a contracted one if he had had any problems with *ne is* in this context, so it has been included in the Table.

have uncontracted forms. There is only one further uncontracted form in this text as compared to 245 contracted forms. Moreover, that particular instance is problematic and should probably be dismissed (see section 3.3.1 for discussion). In other words, it looks as if non-contraction is completely regular for this construction in all three translations attributed to Alfred in spite of the fact that these texts otherwise consistently have negative contraction.

Table 12. Negative contraction in the *hu ne* construction in the YCOE

	is		*beon* (past)		*habban*		*willan*		*witan*	
	contr.	uncontr.	contr.	uncontr.	contr.	uncontr.	contr.	uncontr.	contr.	uncontr.
Alfred										
Boeth	–	11	–	5	–	2	–	1	–	12
Cura	–	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–
Solil	–	1	–	2	–	4	–	–	–	1
Ælfric										
Cathom1	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Cathom2	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Aelhom	–	1	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–
Temp	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
Other										
Otest	1	–	2	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Wsgosp	6	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–

Outside of these three Alfredian texts, there is one further instance in the YCOE of an uncontracted form in the *hu ne* construction in addition to the three instances of *is* in Ælfric's writings already mentioned, i.e. a case with a form of *habban* in Ælfric's translation of *Temporibus Anni*. In the case of Ælfric, however, things are not as clear-cut. As can be seen from Table 12, there are instances of contraction in this construction as well in his works: one with *habban* in the *Supplementary Homilies* and two with past tense forms of *beon* in the *Catholic Homilies*. This includes one case that is an exact parallel of the example without contraction in *Temporibus Anni*, with both examples clearly deriving from the same Latin source, explicitly given in the OE text in the case of the example from *Temporibus Anni*; see (9).[48] Even so, this syntactic context promotes the use of what is otherwise a vanishingly rare option. Non-contraction is hardly found elsewhere in Ælfric's writing—as we will see in the next section, the YCOE contains just one uncontracted form with a past tense form of *beon* in the *Lives of Saints*, one with *habban* in the *Supplementary Homilies* and one with the same verb in his *Letter to Wulfstan*—whereas here non-contraction is used in four out of seven cases.

(9) a. And he him andwyrde, La hu   næfð   se dæg twelf tida   on him?
        and he him answered   lo how not-has the day twelve of-periods in him
        'And he answered him: "Does not the day have twelve periods in it?"'

(ÆHom 6, 24)

    b. *Nonne XII. horę sunt diei?* La hû ne hæfð se dæg twelf tida?

(ÆTemp 6.22)

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[48] The difference is not the result of a significant time difference between the two base manuscripts involved. Ker assigns the base manuscript for (9a) to the beginning of the eleventh century and the one for (9b) to around the turn of the same century (Ker 1957: art. 38, art. 15), so the two are very close in time, with that for (9b) possibly being a bit earlier (but not necessarily).

Notice that an increased or regular use of non-contraction in this construction does not appear to be a feature of all OE texts. As can be seen from Table 12, the translation of the *Heptateuch* ('Otest')[49] and the *West Saxon Gospels* both consistently have contracted forms in this environment—three instances in the former text, six in the latter, all involving forms of *beon* (mostly *is*). In view of the low numbers for these texts, we can of course not exclude the possibility that non-contraction may have occurred in this construction in the varieties represented, but contraction was certainly normal and the data give us no grounds for claiming that negative contraction was behaving differently here than in other contexts in the case of these texts. This, together with the variation found in Ælfric's writing, indicates that it would be problematic to try and find a single analysis for the construction that completely rules out contraction. Still, this particular syntactic context is undeniably relevant to the presence or absence of negative contraction.

López-Couso (2002) suggests a functional or pragmatic account by pointing out that the markedness of non-contraction makes it suitable for use in emphatic contexts such as negative queclaratives. In that case, however, we would expect uncontracted forms to be used at least occasionally in other emphatic contexts too, and that does not seem to happen. Moreover, even among negative queclaratives it appears to be very specifically the construction with *hu* that has this property. In one section of *Boethius* there is a parallel use of *hwi*—indeed, Visser (1969: §1461) lists the example in (10) as if it were an example of the *hu ne* construction. The response given in (10) confirms that the construction is not a normal question; it functions as an assertion. Notice also that it is immediately followed by a parallel use of *hu ne*. Comparing the examples in (11) with those in (12) further serves to demonstrate that the two constructions seem to be equivalent in terms of function. Yet (10) and (11), where *hwi* is used, have contracted forms, whereas we have seen that negative contraction is not found in *Boethius* with *hu*, as the examples in (12) illustrate. (The *hu ne* construction in (10) does not involve a verb form that can contract, so non-contraction there is irrelevant.) We need to be cautious since none of these examples with *hwy* are found intact in the 10th-century Cotton manuscript, which means that we have to rely in part on evidence from the 12th-century Bodley manuscript. However, notice that *hwy* survives in Cotton in (11b), so the alternative construction is not confined to Bodley. The contracted form in (10) is also attested in Cotton, and although the preceding word is now lost in that manuscript, given the regularity with which non-contraction occurs with *hu ne* in this text, it seems highly likely that Cotton would also have had *hwi* here rather than *hu*. So the evidence is not ideal because of the fire damage to the Cotton manuscript, but what there is certainly suggests that, at least in *Boethius*, non-contraction is only used with *hu ne*, and not in an alternative equivalent construction.

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[49] The examples all occur in *Exodus* and *Deuteronomy*. No part of the translation of these two books has been attributed to Ælfric (see Pope 1967 and Clemoes 1959), so they should not be included in the data on Ælfric's use of negative contraction in this construction.

(10) *Hwi nære* ðu ðonne genog earm &   genog unhydig . . . þonne ðu oðer twega,
why not-were you then   enough poor and enough foolish   when you either of-two
oððe hæfdest þæt ðu noldes   oððe næfdest þæt ðu woldest? Ða andswarode
either had   that you not-wanted or   not-had that you wanted   then answered
Boetius &   cwæð: Eall me wæs swa swa ðu sædest. Ða cwæð se Wisdom:
Boethius and said   all   me was so   as you said   then said the wisdom
hu ne bið ælc mon   genog earm þæs   ðe he næfð, þonne hit hine lyst
how not is each person enough poor of-that that he not-has when   it   him pleases
habban? Þæt is soð, cwæð Beotius.
to-have that is true said   Boethius

'"Would you not be poor and foolish enough then . . . when you either had
what you did not want or did not have what you wanted?" Then Boethius answered
and said: "It was all to me as you said." Then Wisdom said: "Isn't everyone suffi-
ciently poor for what they do not have when it pleases them to have it?" "That is
true", said Boethius.'

(Bo 26.59.4; *Hwi* now missing in Cotton, but *nære* is present) [Visser §1461]

(11) a. *Hwi nis*   nu anweald to tellanne to sumum þara hehstena goda þisses
why not-is now power   to count   as one   of-the highest goods of-this
andweardan lifes? Hwæðer þæt nu   sie to talianne waclic &   unnyt
present   life   whether that now is to count   weakly and useless
ðætte nytwyrðost is eallra þissa woruldþinga, þæt is anweald?
that   most-useful is of-all these world-things that is power

'Isn't power now to be counted as one of the highest goods of this life?
Should that which is the most useful of all wordly things, i.e. power, now be
considered insignificant and useless?'

(Bo 24.56.6; both *Hwi* and *nis* now missing in Cotton)

b. *Hwy nis*   hit þonne on þy swiðe sweotol þæt þas   andweardan good ne
why not-is it   then   in that very clear   that these present   goods not
sint no þa soðan god, forðæmþe hi   ne magon sellan þæt hi   gehatað?
are not the true   goods because   they not can   give   that they promise
'Is it not very clear from that, then, that these present benefits are not true ben-
efits, because they are not able to give what they promise?'

(Bo 26.58.18; *Hwy* from Cotton, but *nis* now missing)

(12) a. *Hu ne is* se anweald þonne þær   nauht?
how not is the power   then   there nothing
'Is not power then nothing there?'

(Bo 16.37.13)

b. *Hu ne is* hit þær swiðe swiotol hu werelica   þas woruldsælða sint ...?
how not is it there very clear   how unsubstantial these world-blessings are
'Is it not very clear there how unsubstantial these worldly blessings are ...?'

(Bo 11.25.9)

The most likely explanation for the phenomenon is influence from Latin. As Mitchell
(1985: §1648) points out, the construction is "the equivalent of Latin *nonne* in negative nexus
questions which demand an affirmative answer". In non-Alfredian prose in particular, the
construction is frequently a translation of a Latin source that uses *nonne*; this includes the

cases with contraction.[50]   In glosses of Latin *hu ne* is often used as a gloss for *nonne* regardless of the position (or even presence) of the finite verb in the clause, so that it need not be adjacent to a verb in glosses; see the example in (13). *Hu ne nu* is also found as a gloss for *nonne*, underlining that no attempt is made to try and keep *ne* adjacent to a finite verb form; it is simply used as part of a gloss for *nonne*. This is especially clear in (14); *hu ne nu* is actually followed immediately by a finite verb in this example, which means that non-adjacency of *ne* and the verb could easily have been avoided by omitting *nu*.[51]

(13)   &   nu   hwæt ys anbid   min *hune*   drihtyn
         and now what is expectation my how-not lord
         et   nunc quê   est expectatio mea nonne   dominus
         'And what is my expectation now? (Is it) not the Lord?'

(PsGlC 38.8)

(14)   *Hunenu*   oncnawað þa   ðe wyrcað   unryhtwisnesse . . .
         how-not-now perceive   those   who perform   iniquity
         Nonne   cognoscent omnes qui   operantur iniquitatem
         'Don't those who perform iniquity perceive . . .?'

(PsGlD (Roeder) 52.5)

We may speculate, then, that the construction probably started out as a calque from Latin, with *hu ne* treated as a unit corresponding to *nonne*. In this case *ne* would initially not have been attached to the finite verb and therefore would have been unable to contract with it. However, *hu ne* was used at the beginning of a construction that takes the syntactic form of a direct question, so as a result of fronting of the finite verb in this context, the verb would nevertheless normally have ended up being adjacent to *ne* (except in word-by-word glosses, of course). This would have made the construction straightforwardly compatible with the properties of OE. It would also have enabled a reanalysis of the construction into one where *ne* no longer formed a unit with *hu*, but where it was attached to the finite verb instead. At that point, contraction would have become possible. Of course it is likely that the construction continued to allow non-contraction for some time afterwards as a remnant of its origin and/or because the older analysis continued to be available side by side with the new one. That would account for the variation we find in Ælfric's writings. The occasional use of a punctuation mark after *hu* and the occurrence of *hu la ne*, with the interjection *la* 'lo' intervening between *hu* and *ne* (against the more usual placement of *la* before *hu ne* in Ælfric's writings) also suggests that *hu ne* was no longer treated as a unit here, at least not consistently. See example (15), which has both a punctuation mark and *la* intervening between *hu* and *ne*.

(15)   Hu la. ne wurpe we þry cnihtas into ðam fyre?
         how lo not threw we three youths into the fire
         'Did we not throw three young men into the fire?'

(ÆCHom II, 1, 10.249)

[La. *Nonne tres viros misimus inmedio ignis conpeditos?* (Godden 2000: 354)]

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[50] Only the examples of the construction that involve verbs/verb forms potentially subject to negative contraction have been checked. For the instances found in Ælfric's writing, the source material was given in the editions of the OE text. The Latin text of *Lindisfarne* was used for the instances in the *West Saxon Gospels*. Any sources for the remaining instances were located through *Fontes Anglo-saxonici*.

[51] Other possible glosses for *nonne* include *ac ne* or *ahne* '(lit.) but not', typically used in Anglian glosses, about which much the same things can be said. All of these glosses may also be used for Latin *numquid*, which has a similar function, except that the expected answer is negative rather than positive.

Even if the construction was indeed a calque in origin, however, it is not the case that it was only used in very close translations of Latin. In the Alfredian texts in particular it appears to be used freely, with few of the examples corresponding to a Latin original containing *nonne* or a close equivalent. If anything, the use of the construction may have been more restricted in the later prose, where, as mentioned earlier, the construction more often than not *does* correspond to a Latin source with *nonne*. In other words, there is no neat diachronic pattern in this respect.

In conclusion, then, the *hu ne* construction clearly influences the occurrence of negative contraction. In Alfred's translations contraction appears to be blocked here, and it also promotes the use of uncontracted forms in Ælfric's writing. The reason for this probably lies in an origin of the construction as a calque from Latin.

Other than this specific construction, I have not noticed any indications of syntactic conditioning of negative contraction in the YCOE data.[52] As far as I can see, the only other factor influencing the occurrence of uncontracted forms is the text involved. It is not the case, however, that negative contraction is normally used either consistently or not at all in any given prose text as Blockley (2001: 189) claims. Moreover, in most cases the presence of uncontracted forms can almost certainly be ascribed to dialect origin, as we will see in the next section.

3.3. Further evidence for the importance of dialect

Now that we have identified the circumstances under which uncontracted forms are normal in WS, we can turn to the remainder of the data from the YCOE. The data from Anglian glosses discussed in section 2 gave us good grounds for believing that Levin's conclusion that negative contraction was less regular in Anglian dialects than in WS was essentially correct. In this section we explore to what extent data from prose support that conclusion.

As in section 2, the data have been restricted to finite verb forms. I should point out, though, that once again some non-finite forms with contraction are actually attested in the corpus, in this case two infinitival forms as well as nine (attributively used) present participles.[53] All forms (contracted or uncontracted) that involve *hu ne* have been excluded, as well as all present tense forms of *beon*.

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[52] López-Couso (2002, 2006) assumes that there is a link between negative contraction and existential constructions, but as it stands, this assumption is unsupported at least in relation to OE prose. She hypothesises that "the contracted form, especially the highly frequent *nis* (and variants), functioned in Early English as a kind of (semi-)grammaticalized marker of non-existence" (López-Couso 2006: 183). It is difficult to argue for any special status of negative contraction in relation to existential constructions, however, when contraction is consistent regardless of what construction the verb appears in. And this of course is precisely the case for *nis* in OE prose, except in the *hu ne* construction. The form *nis* might still be acting as a marker of non-existence in the OE data, but it would be unconnected to the use of contraction. As we will see in the next section, much the same holds for past tense forms of *beon* in fully WS prose texts. The texts that *do* have uncontracted forms normally also have uncontracted forms with some or all of *habban*, *willan* and *witan*. Any argument that the use of negative contraction has a specific function in relation to existential constructions in (some varieties of) OE would need to show that this is the case in those texts that have variation, but I can see no *prima facie* evidence for it—it certainly looks unlikely for *Lindisfarne*, which (unlike the YCOE data and Mercian data) *does* have a significant degree of variation in negative contraction with *is*, given that *is* actually contracts less often than other forms of *beon* in this text, which is the opposite of what might be expected in López-Couso's account. So I have not pursued it.

[53] The infinitives involved are one instance of *nyllan* (GD 1 (C) 9.61.18) and one dubious instance of *nabban* (ÆLet 3, 84) (the negation is redundant and the form is only found in one manuscript; the other two witnesses have *habban* instead). The attributively used present participles involve forms of *willan* (two instances: BenR 5.20.19 and GD 1 (H) 9.61.19) and *witan* (seven instances: ChrodR 1, 80.65, LS 8 (Eust) 47, GD 2 (H) 7.116.4, Lch I (Herb) 61.0, Lch I (Herb) 114.1, LS 28 (Neot) 128 and Num 22.34).

The discussion of these data is organised as follows. First we will look at the texts which are regarded as straightforwardly WS (section 3.3.1) to determine to what extent non-contraction is found in these. Section 3.3.2 moves on to texts with significant non-WS influence and/or whose dialect origins are less straightforward, to see whether uncontracted forms in such texts are likely to be the result of Anglian influence. We will then take a closer look at two of the texts containing a high number of uncontracted forms in sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.4: the *Vercelli Homilies* and the OE *Bede*. The former needs closer inspection because of the linguistic variation contained within it, and the latter because uncontracted forms are strikingly frequent in this text. A brief summary follows in section 3.3.5.

3.3.1. Uncontracted forms in straightforwardly West Saxon texts
This section concentrates on uncontracted forms found in texts whose dialect origin is undisputed as being WS. The numbers for the YCOE files belonging to this category that contain at least one uncontracted form are given in Table 13 below. (The numbers for all files in the YCOE which do not contain any uncontracted forms are listed in Appendix 2.) We will see that the number of texts and uncontracted forms involved in this category is very limited, and just one text (*Orosius*) gives evidence that non-contraction was anything other than vanishingly rare in WS outside of the contexts discussed in sections 3.1 and 3.2.

Table 13. Non-contraction in straightforwardly WS texts in the YCOE

| | *beon* (past) | | *habban* | | *willan* | | *witan* | |
	contr.	uncontr.	contr.	uncontr.	contr.	uncontr.	contr.	uncontr.
Alfred								
Cura	17	–	32	1	137	–	41	–
Ælfric								
Aelhom	33	–	41	1	84	–	22	–
Aelive	101	1	33	–	153	–	28	–
Lwstan2	3	–	4	1	8	–	2	–
Other								
Apollo	5	1	3	–	2	–	9	–
Orosiu	54	–	17	3	54	–	18	–

We will start with Ælfric, given that he is responsible for the largest corpus of work that can be attributed to a single author. Some uncontracted forms are found in his works. However, the YCOE data show that, once the 1sg/2sg pres. forms of *beon* and instances of *hu ne* have been excluded, they are highly exceptional. None are found in the *Catholic Homilies*, for example—hence their absence from Table 13—and only one each in the *Supplementary Homilies* (Aelhom), *Lives of Saints* (Aelive) and *Second Letter to Wulfstan* (Lwstan2). The instance in *Lives of Saints* (ÆLS (Eugenia) 78 *ne wæs*) survives in a single manuscript, so there is no further supporting evidence for this form. In the case of the example from the *Supplementary Homilies* (ÆHom 11, 385 *ne hæfdon*), all five other witnesses (including two dating roughly from the same time as the base manuscript) have a contracted form, making this instance dubious at best as a representation of Ælfric's language. Only the instance from the *Second Letter to Wulfstan* seems relatively secure, with three out of four manuscripts agreeing on an uncontracted form, and the disagreeing manuscript, with a contracted form, dates from the 12th century. But even here I should probably add a caution that the earliest surviving manuscript dates from the mid 11th century. It may also be worth pointing out that the instance, given in (16) below, involves a translation of one of the ten commandments, also given in its Latin form in the letter. This may have encouraged a very literal translation, alt-

hough admittedly it seems unlikely that Ælfric himself would have been tempted into anything closer to glossing than translating.

(16) . . . *Non habebis deos alienos coram me*; þæt is on englisc:
         not have   gods foreign before me   that is in English
      . . . ; ne hafa þu ællfremde godas ætforan me nateshwon.
            not have you foreign   gods before   me not-at-all
      ' . . . that is in English: . . . Do not have foreign gods before me to any extent.'

<div align="right">(ÆLet 3, 122)</div>

Uncontracted forms are also highly exceptional in the translations ascribed to Alfred. None are found in *Boethius* or *Soliloquies*. There is a single uncontracted form in *Cura Pastoralis* in the YCOE, given in (17), but notice that Sweet's edition of the text omits *ne*. An inspection of a facsimile of the manuscript reveals that *ne* is indeed present, but it is written above the line. Its absence from the edited text indicates that it is a non-contemporary addition, since it was the editor's policy to reject all late additions (Sweet 1871: viii).[54] The context clearly demands a negative form, as is also made clear by the corresponding Latin mentioned in Sweet's note, so the original translation is unlikely to have had non-negated *habbað*. Scribal error must be suspected. The exemplar may have had an uncontracted form, with a scribe accidentally omitting *ne*, or it may have had a contracted form, in which case a subsequent scribe wrote <h> for <n>. Given the absence of uncontracted forms elsewhere in the text, together with the testimony from Junius's transcript of the other contemporary witness (i.e. the now lost Cotton manuscript), which has a contracted form at this point, the balance of probability seems firmly on the side of a contracted form. In other words, it is entirely possible that negative contraction was completely regular in all three translations attributed to Alfred outside of the circumstances discussed in the previous two sections.

(17) & ðonne, ðonne hie hie [ne] habbað, dæges & niehtes hie fundiað to bigietenne
      and then   when they them not have   day and night   they strive   to obtain
      'and then, when they [do not] possess them, they strive day and night to obtain them'

<div align="right">(CP 18.127.20)</div>

In addition to the extreme rareness of uncontracted forms in material produced by Ælfric and Alfred, notice also that Wulfstan is missing from the Table; there are no relevant uncontracted forms in any of the texts attributed to him. Likewise for example the *Parker Chronicle* (ChronA), the *West Saxon Gospels* (Wsgosp) and the *Benedictine Rule* (Benrul). This all suggests that, if anything, Levin was underestimating the degree of consistency with which negative contraction occurred in WS; the uncontracted forms he found in his WS material mostly involve 1sg/2sg pres. forms of *beon* and/or instances of *hu ne*.

In view of this, the three uncontracted forms of *habban* in *Orosius* are unexpected. It is a 'core' WS text—as Bately (1980: xxxix) says, "the Lauderdale MS of the OE Orosius is one of the four manuscripts on which our idea of eWS [early WS] is based". Yet there is nothing to cast serious doubt on these forms (Or 1, 10.31.10 *ne hæfdon*, Or 3, 5.59.9 *ne hæfdon* and Or 4, 6.93.28 *ne hæfde*). Admittedly, there is manuscript variation in two of the instances, where one witness (a different one in each of the two cases) has a contracted form instead of an uncontracted one. But Bately (1980: xlix, liii) describes the language of the two 11th-century manuscripts involved as standard late WS and "mainly standard" late WS respectively, so in either of them it would not be surprising if a scribe had changed an uncon-

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[54] The form without negation is confirmed in the notes of the edition and contrasted with the Latin *desunt* 'lack' (Sweet 1871: 481), so the omission of *ne* is not a misprint.

tracted form to a contracted one. Given that the three uncontracted forms all occur in the Lauderdale manuscript and two of them are confirmed by another witness, I can see no reason to regard non-contraction of *habban* as anything other than a possible option in the language of *Orosius*, certainly in the variety represented by the Lauderdale manuscript.

Some Mercian or Nbr influence has been detected in the language of the Lauderdale manuscript of *Orosius*, but nothing to suggest a non-WS origin of the text according to Bately (1980: xxxix, lxxiv). It should be noted, however, that Kitson (1996) argues that the dialect of *Orosius* can be localised to north Wessex—the area around Bristol, to be precise. On the assumption that the likelihood of some 'Mercian' characteristics being found in varieties of WS increases the further north the location is, some more variation in the use of non-contraction would perhaps not be too surprising if Kitson is correct about this localisation.[55] A potential objection to this possible way of accounting for the data is that Kitson (1993) lo-calises Ælfric's language quite close to that of *Orosius*—if anything, slightly more northerly still within Wessex—so if we attribute the occurrence of uncontracted forms in *Orosius* to a north Wessex origin rather than to a local or individual peculiarity and if Kitson is right about both Ælfric and *Orosius*, the very high degree of consistency of contraction in Ælfric's writing might need some explaining. But such an explanation would not be difficult to find: either diachronic change or a feature adopted by Ælfric to conform to the late WS standard (at least in his written language) would be entirely plausible. So a north Wessex origin of *Orosius* remains a possible explanation for the uncontracted forms. I should stress, though, that it appears to be a verb-specific phenomenon: contraction is otherwise consistent in *Orosius*. If negative contraction was more variable in general, we would have expected a few uncontracted forms for *willan* and past tense forms of *beon* at least in view of the numbers involved. In addition, non-contraction is clearly a minority variant even in the case of *habban*, occurring in three out of twenty instances found in the text. In other words, while the pattern in *Orosius* may not look prototypically WS in that lack of negative contraction does not appear to be highly exceptional for one of the verbs involved, it is not radically different either.

That leaves one further uncontracted form in a text that is, as far as I know, straight-forwardly (late) WS: the one found in *Apollonius of Tyre* (ApT 7.2 *ne wæs*), a text surviving

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[55] This sits uncomfortably with Hogg's (2004a: 474) suggestion that "the original area of contraction was already slightly to the north-west of Wessex, in particular that it was most frequent and earliest in an area centred around Gloucestershire". However, the *LALME* data that Hogg's hypothesis is based on cannot be used in the way that he is using them. Hogg uses the *LALME* dot maps for all contracted forms of BE and WILL, respectively. The time lapse between the *LALME* data and the period Hogg is making claims about and that of collapsed data for all forms of BE are obviously problematic, as is the fact that information on negative contraction in *LALME* is restricted to the Southern part of the country. But there is an even bigger problem: the absence of contracted forms in certain areas of the South is in most cases due to the lack of relevant data. Especially in short documents it is entirely possible that there were simply no relevant forms in the text anyway, but in this case things go beyond the well-known 'absence of relevant forms' problem and the lack of a way of indicating this on the *LALME* maps. *LALME* is much more concerned with the spelling of contracted forms when found than with the presence or absence of negative contraction. For BE, uncontracted forms were simply not normally collected (only one form is listed in the *County Dictionary*). For WILL, on the other hand, uncontracted forms were "regularly recorded" (*LALME* vol. 3: xxi), but this included forms with NOT as well as those with NE. And the information in the *County Dictionary* shows that the 'uncontracted' forms of WILL in most cases involved NOT rather than NE. Forms with non-contraction of NE are limited to fourteen Linguistic Profiles (LPs), only five of which do not also list forms of WILL with negative contraction (and that could be due to low numbers rather than absence of contraction in some or all of those five cases). Most of these fourteen LPs are localised towards the northernish-easterly part of the area covered by the Southern data (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk, Essex, London and Middlesex), with the remaining three localised to Worcestershire (in the north-west of the relevant area), Somerset and Sussex. These data give no support for Hogg's suggestion. What Hogg is seeing is where contracted forms linger longest in spite of the advance of NOT and/or where the advance of NOT has progressed most quickly at the expense of NE (whether contracted or not). These are issues completely unrelated to the question of where the "original area" of negative contraction is to be localised.

in a single manuscript dating from the mid 11th century.[56] I do not think it is necessary to look for any special explanations for this form. Given that we are dealing with a single form, it can presumably be treated on a par with the very rare occurrences in Ælfric, i.e. evidence of a sporadic occurrence of uncontracted forms in WS.

3.3.2. Texts which are not purely or straightforwardly West Saxon
We have seen that with the exception of *Orosius*, uncontracted forms in purely WS material in the YCOE are extremely rare. We will now turn to the remaining texts in the YCOE with at least one uncontracted form, i.e. those which are not regarded as purely/straightforwardly WS. The numbers are given in Table 14, below. (Again, the data for the YCOE files not containing any uncontracted forms are listed in Appendix 2.) It will be clear that most uncontracted forms found in the YCOE are found in this set of texts, and we will see that Anglian influence is a plausible explanation for such forms in most cases.

Table 14. Non-contraction in the YCOE in texts that are not purely/straightforwardly WS

	beon (past)		*habban*		*willan*		*witan*	
	contr.	uncontr.	contr.	uncontr.	contr.	uncontr.	contr.	uncontr.
Alcuin	–	–	3	1	12	–	4	–
Alex	7	3	–	–	1	–	–	–
Bede	4	47	7	3	5	39	2	9
Blick	27	8	16	1	42	5	9	1
Chad	4	1	–	–	1	–	1	–
ChronD	12	–	3	–	18	2	2	2
ChronE	16	2	9	6	26	–	5	–
GregdC	103[57]	1	35	1	71	1	54	–
Lawaf	1	–	6	1	1	2	–	2
Lawine	2	–	5	–	6	1	2	–
MargaC	1	–	1	1	9	–	–	–
Mart2	1	2	2	–	3	–	1	–
Mart3	10[58]	2	3	–	19	1	2[59]	–
Marvel	–	–	–	–	–	1	–	–
NicodD	–	1	–	–	1	1	–	1
Verhom	23	13	13	4	44[60]	13	10	4
VerhomE	8	1	2	–	9	–	4	–
VerhomL	2	–	–	–	4	2	–	–

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[56] The form has been verified against a facsimile of the manuscript.

[57] Four instances of *næron* in ms. C of *Gregory's Dialogues* that are coded as past tense forms of *beon* in the YCOE have been excluded because the context clearly indicates that they are actually present tense (GD 1 (C) 12.90.31, GD 1 (C) 12.91.2, GD 2 (C) 38.177.14 and GDPref and 3 (C) 30.237.7). See also fn. 37, above. In the case of GD 2 (C) 38.177.14 manuscript O has the form <nearan>, which could (but need not) be an uncontracted form; in the other three cases, O agrees with C. I should add that the corresponding present plural form of *beon* without negation does not occur in ms. C of *Gregory's Dialogues*, suggesting that it was normally translated into a WS form in this version of the text (*æron is* found in ms. O, according to the *Dictionary of Old English* (Cameron et al. 2003)). The contracted forms may have escaped the scribe's notice precisely because they are identical to the plural past tense form of *beon* with negative contraction.

[58] In two instances, the other extant manuscript (C) has an uncontracted form instead. On the other hand, that same manuscript does not have the two uncontracted past tense forms of *beon* listed for Mart3 in the Table, using a contracted form in one case and omitting negation in the other.

[59] No uncontracted forms of *witan* were found in Mart3, but I happened to come across an uncontracted form in a manuscript other than the base manuscript while checking data against the edition of the text: Mart 5, OC19A.31.2294 *nænig mon wiste*, where ms. C has *ne wyste* for *wiste*.

[60] In one case, one of the witnesses has an uncontracted form: HomS 1 (ScraggVerc 5) 72 *noldon*, F *ne woldan*.

Three texts stand out from the Table in terms of the high number of uncontracted forms they contain: the OE *Bede*, the *Blickling Homilies* and the *Vercelli Homilies*. These are all three well-known cases of texts with marked Anglian characteristics in terms of language, and they are believed to derive from Anglian originals; see e.g. Miller (1890–98), Scragg (1973, 1992), Vleeskruyer (1953) and Wenisch (1979). No more needs to be said about the *Blickling Homilies*, but I will come back to both *Vercelli* and *Bede* in sections 3.3.3 and 3.3.4 respectively—*Bede* because of the remarkably high frequency of uncontracted forms, and *Vercelli* because it is a more complicated case than the other two, as its linguistic properties are not consistent across the manuscript.

In addition to these three texts, most other texts with a smaller number of uncontracted forms are likewise believed to go back to an Anglian source. Often the lower numbers have more to do with the number of relevant forms and/or the length of the text rather than necessarily with any rareness of uncontracted forms. According to its editor, the *Life of St. Chad* (Chad) is "remarkable for its generally faithful preservation of early West Mercian dialectal characteristics" (Vleeskruyer 1953: vii). An Anglian origin can likewise be hypothesised for the OE *Martyrology* (Mart1, Mart2, Mart3) on the grounds of the Anglian characteristics found in the language of the surviving copies of the text (Kotzor 1981: 400–402). The same holds for *Alexander's Letter to Aristotle* (Alex) and *Marvels of the East* (Marvel); see e.g. Vleeskruyer (1953: 55) and Wenisch (1979: 19, 79, 327). And according to Kastovsky (1992: 344), Schabram's (1965) study of vocabulary shows that the OE translation of Alcuin's *De virtutibus et vitiis* "is clearly of Anglian origin".[61]

The anonymous *Homily on the Harrowing of Hell* (NicodD) probably also derives from an Anglian source (Wenisch 1979: 327). According to Price (2004: ch. 7), though, the homily is likely to have been compiled from several sources. This means that it is possible that not all parts of the homily have an Anglian origin, even if some of it does. But even if this were the case, notice that we can find lexis associated with Anglian in the same sentence in two out of three instances of the uncontracted forms: the preposition *in* instead of *on* in (18a) and the indefinite pronoun *nænig* 'no one' in (18b).[62] The third instance (Nic (D) 43 *ne wile*) occurs in the same section of the homily as these two. Therefore it seems safe to assume that at least the part that contains the uncontracted forms goes back to an Anglian source.[63]

(18) a. . . . þæt he *ne wat* hwilc wæl him is gerenod in ðisse helle.
          that he not knows what slaughter him is prepared in this hell
          '. . . that he does not know what slaughter is prepared for him in this hell.'
          (Nic (D) 24)

      b. Hwæt, we witon þæt næfre ær *ne wæs* nænig to þæs þristig þæt . . .
          lo we know that never before not was none to that daring that
          'Lo, we know that no one was ever before so daring that . . .'
          (Nic (D) 34)

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[61] A late date of the surviving manuscript could of course also be a factor in some cases: *Chad* and *Alcuin* both survive only in 12th-century manuscripts.

[62] The use of the *-ig* suffix to form a deadjectival adjective in *þristig* in (18b) may also be an Anglian characteristic (Jordan 1906: 102–104), but according to Kastovsky (1992: 350) this feature needs to be investigated more fully before it can safely be accepted as Anglian.

[63] The other witness of the text has contracted forms for all three uncontracted instances, but these are probably the result of increased West-saxonisation in this version. This witness also tends to change other Anglian features to WS forms, including changing *in* to *on* and *nænig* to an alternative indefinite pronoun in the two cases just mentioned, but also for example changing unsyncopated forms more typical of Anglian, such as *sagaᴅ/sægeᴅ* 'says' and *hafaᴅ* 'has', to the syncopated forms (e.g. *sægᴅ*, *hæfᴅ*) more usually found in WS.

Gregory's Dialogues is another well-known case of a text with Anglian characteristics that go back to a Mercian original, so the presence of some uncontracted forms in this text is unremarkable. Indeed, it is the very small number of them that is the real surprise. This situation does not change much when we look at the manuscript which reputedly preserves the strongest Anglian component, i.e. ms. O (which is not used as base manuscript in the edition of the text). A check of the apparatus for all contracted forms in ms. C reveals at most a handful of additional instances of uncontracted forms in ms. O.[64] So in a clear majority of cases ms. O also has contracted forms. It is striking, however, that there are more than a few instances where ms. O has a non-negated verb form instead—this happens in 13 past tense forms of *beon*, 7 forms of *habban*, 1 instance of *witan* and 12 cases of *willan*. If Ingham (2006) is right that negative concord was less regular in Anglian dialects than in WS (and ms. O of *Gregory's Dialogues* is one of the texts he uses to support his argument), that could account for all but a few of these.[65] A WS scribe introducing negative concord in such instances would naturally have used a contracted form rather than an uncontracted one. So in that case the number of contracted forms would have been lower originally, even if the number of uncontracted forms may not have been much higher than in the extant manuscripts. However, by no means all or even most contracted forms could be ascribed to a failure of negative concord. According to Ingham, negative concord was variable rather than absent in Anglian, so the negative particle would not have been uniformly absent.[66] In addition, it simply would not apply to clauses that do not contain another negative element. Also, in the case of the *un-contracted* form of *beon* listed in the Table, O likewise omits *ne*, so it is not clear that O necessarily gives us the reading here that is closest to the Anglian original. Even when we take the possibility of variable negative concord in the original text into account, it would still leave the frequency of non-contraction relatively low as compared to some of the other texts of Anglian origin. And given the strength of the Anglian characteristics preserved in the text generally, it seems fairly unlikely that all of that could be ascribed to changes from uncontracted to contracted forms made by WS scribes. Not that this is a problem, of course. It simply suggests that there are likely to have been differences between varieties of Anglian. In some, non-contraction may have been very frequent, in others much less so. Indeed, in some it may have been absent altogether. This is in fact no more than we would expect to have been the case.

The presence of uncontracted forms in the *Peterborough Chronicle* (ChronE) also comes as no surprise. We have discussed this text to some extent in section 1 in relation to Levin's data, so we already know that the uncontracted forms in the *Peterborough Chronicle* are all found in the continuations and interpolations, which are written in an East Midland dia-

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[64] GDPref and 3 (C), 19.221.1 *nære*, O *ne wære*; possibly GDPref and 4 (C) 14.280.7 *næs*, O *no wæs* (depending on whether or not <no> is a variant of *ne* here); GD 1 (C), 10.80.32 *nylle*, O *ne wylle*; possibly GD 2 (C) 5.113.2 *nyste*, O *(ne) wiste* (with *ne* inserted above the line; the relevance of this instance depends on when the correction was made and by whom); GDPref and 4 (C) 2.262.24 *nyste*, O *ne wiste*.

[65] In two cases, the difference between C and O is not one of presence or absence of negative concord; in one it involves presence or absence of negation, while a rephrase is responsible for the second.

[66] In fact, Ingham (2006: 250) claims that the use of the negative particle is variable only when the negated indefinite precedes the verb; when it follows the verb, it is required. However, the absence of examples in his data without negative concord when the negated indefinite follows the verb is probably the result of low numbers rather than reflecting a genuine constraint. Note that there are three such cases among the 33 instances I found where O omits *ne* rather than having a contracted or uncontracted form: GD 2 (O) 116.3 *& sægde þæt he sylfa* **wære** _nænig gewita þæs mægenes_ 'and said that he himself was no accomplice in that miracle'; GDPref and 3 (O) 17.215.16 *... þæs subdiacones huse, þæt* **wæs** _noht_ *feor from þare cirican* '... the subdeacon's house, which was not far from the church'; GDPref and 4 (O) 44.333.9 *hit is gesæd, þæt under eorþan* **wære** _nænig_ *gemeded* ... 'it is said that none were encountered under the earth ...'. So it looks as if there is some variation even in this context, in which case we are dealing with a tendency rather than an absolute rule.

lect.[67] Not very much more needs to be said here about this text, especially since the data are more relevant to ME than to OE. However, there are some misleading statements based on Levin's statistics in Hogg (2004a) that require comment. Hogg claims that, with 69% negative contraction, the *Peterborough Chronicle* is arguably closer to the *Vespasian* gloss than to *Lindisfarne* (2004a: 462) and that the text has "a fair degree of contraction", which "sits oddly with the virtual lack of contraction in the two Norfolk texts" (2004a: 476). While these observations are technically correct, they are the result of collapsing data that should have been kept separate. From what has been said earlier, it should be clear already that contraction is consistent in the copied parts of the text, as Hogg is clearly aware in view of remarks made earlier on in the article (2004a: 461). So for the copied part, the language of which is essentially WS (even if copied by a non-WS scribe), the frequency of negative contraction is 100%. On the other hand, there are only three contracted forms in the interpolations and continuations, all involving forms of *willan*. That brings the overall rate of contraction in these parts down to just 11% (10% if the three instances of <na> with forms of *habban* mentioned in fn. 67 are included as uncontracted forms). That is actually quite close to the frequencies found for the Norfolk texts Hogg alludes to in the quotation just given: 5% for *Havelok* and 10% for *Genesis & Exodus* (see Hogg 2004a: 476). As far as individual verbs are concerned, this means no contraction in the case of *beon* and *habban*, against 12 and 9 uncontracted forms respectively (12 and 12 if the instances with <na> are included), no relevant data for *witan,* and 3 out of 7 forms (43%) with contraction for *willan*, one of which occurs in the formulaic expression *wolde he nolde he* 'whether he wanted to or not' (ChronE 1114.27). In short, unlike in the copied parts of the text, negative contraction is in fact highly restricted in the East Midland material contained within the *Peterborough Chronicle*. These data once again underline that forms in material copied from an exemplar written in a different dialect from that spoken by the scribe may be left unaltered, even when there are marked differences compared to the use and/or frequency of negative contraction in the scribe's own dialect.

Unlike the *Peterborough Chronicle*, the situation is not so clear for the other version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* that appears in Table 14. There are four uncontracted forms in manuscript D of the *Chronicle* (ChronD). The two uncontracted forms of *willan* occur in the penultimate entry, i.e. the one for 1079, and the two with *witan* also occur near the end of ChronD (the entries for the year 1057 and 1065, respectively). All the uncontracted forms found in ChronD, then, are in entries composed in the second half of the 11th century. According to the information given by Cubbin (1996: xlviii-l), the passages involved are all unique to this version of the *Chronicle*. From the early 1050s onwards ChronD was probably written up at intervals, in which case we are dealing with local compositions. Notice that several scribes are involved in the relevant entries, so the forms do not go back to a single individual. Although the overall numbers suggest that contracted forms predominate in ChronD, there are no relevant data for past tense forms of *beon* after the entry for 1035, nor for *habban* past the one for 1009, and all but one of the contracted forms for these two verbs are also found in one or more of the other extant versions of the *Chronicle*. The last contracted form of *willan* is found in the entry for 1066, and that for *witan* in the one for 1052, so in both cases the last contracted form precedes the first uncontracted form of the verb concerned. Both contracted forms of *witan* are again paralled in at least one other version of the *Chronicle*, as are all those for *willan* up to the entry for 1052. So *willan* is the only verb for which contract-

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[67] The YCOE does not include the continuations, which is the main reason for the difference in numbers in Table 14 as compared to Levin's data. (It *does* include the interpolations, however. Note that those from 1070–1121 are not marked as such in the current version of the YCOE.) In addition, I have not included the three instances of <na> immediately followed by a form of *habban*, all in interpolations/continuations, although it is likely that it is a variant spelling of *ne* here, so these could be included (as Levin appears to have done). That leaves just a discrepancy of two contracted forms; I suspect that Levin has included two instances of *næs* 'not, not at all'.

ed forms are documented in the part of ChronD that was not copied from another version of the *Chronicle*. The data are limited, but there must be a suspicion that lack of negative contraction was probably frequent in the dialect(s) of the scribes involved. Cubbin reaches the conclusion that ChronD was probably compiled at Worcester. There is also evidence of links with York. The language of the 11th-century entries, however, is characterised by Cubbin (1996: clii) as "predominantly normal Late West Saxon". Still, some potentially Anglian forms are identified by him, and given the probable Worcester origin, the presence of some Anglian features would not be too surprising. There is at least the possibility, then, that the uncontracted forms are the result of Anglian influence, although this is by no means certain. The relatively late date of composition could of course also be a factor.

The *Laws of Alfred and Ine* (Lawaf and Lawine) are also less than straightforward cases.[68, 69] While these texts are generally regarded as WS, there is a possibility of influence from other dialects through the use of earlier law codes, and Anglian influence can indeed be detected in the vocabulary (Wenisch 1979: 25–26, 53, 327). See e.g. Keynes & Lapidge (1983: 305, n.5), who say that traces of Mercian vocabulary "if they do not merely reflect some Mercian help with the drafting, may have arisen from the use of a vernacular code issued by Offa". As frequently pointed out in work on Alfred's law codes, the introduction to the *Laws of Alfred* certainly indicates that earlier law codes were indeed consulted and used, including those of the Mercian king Offa, which have unfortunately not survived.[70] Notice that four out of the five uncontracted forms in the *Laws of Alfred* are found in a single passage, given in (19) below. If this particular section derived from a non-WS source, then that would account for most of the uncontracted forms found in the text. However, I can see no specific indications for an Anglian source or Anglian influence in this passage other than the uncontracted forms, so there is no independent evidence for this. The same holds for the passages in which the remaining instances are found (LawAf 1, 19.2 *ne wiste* and LawIne 75 *ne wille*). As in the case of ChronD, then, it is possible that Anglian influence is responsible for the occurrence of uncontracted forms in these laws, but it is by no means certain. What *does* seem fairly certain, however, in view of the evidence from *Cura Pastoralis*, *Boethius* and *Soliloquies*, is that at least Alfred himself is unlikely to be responsible for the uncontracted forms.

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[68] The *Laws of Ine* only survive as an appendix to the *Laws of Alfred*, so I will deal with the two together.

[69] There is manuscript variation: only the instance of *ne wite* found in (19) below is confirmed by the other witnesses. However, I see no reason to doubt the testimony of the most authoritative witness—written in a hand dating from the mid 10th century (Ker 1957: art. 39)—for the other five forms, especially since we are dealing with a number of instances in the same manuscript and the contracted variants are found in manuscripts dating from the late 11th century or later. Also, the beginning of the contracted form found in another witness is written on an erasure in two cases (LawAf 1, 19.2 *ne wiste* and LawAf 1, 42.3 *ne hæbbe*), so these may be corrections from an uncontracted form. In addition, note that the instance of *ne wille* found in LawIne 75 also survives in part in the fire-damaged Otho manuscript: *wille* is legible, but not the words preceding it, suggesting that the form was uncontracted. In short, this set of uncontracted forms must be taken seriously.

[70] See Lawafel 49.9, especially *Ac ða ðe ic gemette awðer oððe on Ines dæge, mines mæges, oððe on Offan Mercna cyninges oððe on æþelbryhtes, . . . , þa ðe me ryhtoste ðuhton, ic þa heron gegaderode, & þa oðre forlet*. 'But those that I came across either from Ine's day(s), my kinsman, or Offa's, king of the Mercians or Ethelbert's . . . , those that seemed most just to me, I gathered herein, and omitted the others'.

(19)   Gif he ðonne þæs mægenes *ne hæbbe*, þæt he hine inne besitte, ride to þam aldormen, bidde hine fultumes; gif he him fultuman *ne wille*, ride to cyninge, ær he feohte. Eac swelce, gif mon becume on his gefan, & he hine ær hamfæstne *ne wite*, gif he wille his wæpen sellan, hine mon gehealde XXX nihta & hine his freondum gecyðe; gif he *ne wille* his wæpenu sellan, þonne mot he feohtan on hine.

   'If he then does not have that power, he should besiege him inside, ride to the alderman, ask him for help; if he does not want to help him, let him ride to the king before he fights. Likewise, if someone comes across his enemy and he does not know him as resident, if he is willing to surrender his weapon, one should hold him 30 nights and inform his friends; if he is not willing to surrender his weapons, then one is allowed to fight against him.'

                    (Lawaf 1, 42.3, 42.4)

  Finally, there is a single uncontracted form in the version of the *Life of St. Margaret* as found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 303 (MargaC). According to Clayton & Magennis (1994: 103–7), the language of the text is predominantly late WS, with little evidence for any Anglian influence, but it has Kentish features that probably derive from the scribe's exemplar. In addition, the text survives in a late manuscript (first half of the 12th century) and Clayton & Magennis suspect that the text "was composed not very long before the date of the manuscript" (1994: 106). The uncontracted form, then, may be Kentish rather than WS. In the absence of much evidence for the behaviour of negative contraction in Kentish during the OE period and with a question mark over its behaviour in ME, this is a fairly speculative explanation. But notice that the data from the gloss to *Eadwine's Canterbury Psalter* (section 2.4.4) lend at least some support to the idea that this uncontracted form might be Kentish. In addition, we are dealing with just a single form in a manuscript from the transitional period between OE and ME, and in a text that may well have been composed in that period, so probably not too much should be made of this example in relation to OE.

  We have seen, then, that there are a few potentially problematic cases of texts containing a number of uncontracted forms where Anglian influence is not certain (even if possible), but in most cases, the texts containing uncontracted forms have been independently identified as going back to an Anglian source. Given that there is little good evidence for regarding the occurrence of non-contraction in clearly WS texts as anything beyond sporadic, the uncontracted forms found in texts which are thought to have an Anglian origin were in all likelihood copied from the Anglian source. This is not to say that there must always be uncontracted forms in such texts, as the absence of for example *Bald's Leechbook* from Table 14 demonstrates. Uncontracted forms could have been edited out of an originally Anglian text completely by WS scribes and/or some varieties of Anglian may have had very frequent or even consistent contraction; *Gregory's Dialogues* gave us a case that came close to this. However, it is striking that there are very few texts listed in Appendix 2 that have both evidence of Anglian influence that goes beyond traces and a substantial number of contracted forms so that the absence of uncontracted forms is unlikely to have been accidental. In other words, the match between independent linguistic evidence for an Anglian source and the occurrence of uncontracted forms may not be perfect, but it is nevertheless very good. Equally, the evidence from *Orosius* (and possibly a few other texts) suggests that the situation is not completely black and white as far as WS is concerned. But the evidence from the YCOE is certainly consistent with, and lends additional support to, the claim that generally speaking, non-contraction occurs more freely in Anglian than in WS.

3.3.3. Variation within the Vercelli Homilies

A closer look at one of the texts that has a high number of uncontracted forms, the *Vercelli Homilies*, further strengthens the argument that uncontracted forms can usually be ascribed to an Anglian origin. As signalled above, the *Vercelli Homilies* are a complicated case given that the homilies vary widely in their linguistic properties, indicating that the Vercelli scribe normally copied his exemplars faithfully. According to Scragg (1973: 196) "It can easily be seen that no scribe interested in the normalization of language has ever copied the whole of the Vercelli Book material; for the most part, V copied mechanically, and in doing so pre-served invaluable linguistic material from his exemplars." Anglian features have been identi-fied for nearly all of these homilies—Wenisch (1979: 327) lists all of them as probably of Anglian origin except for Homily 20, which he apparently did not include in his study—but they are more pronounced in some than in others (Scragg 1973). Unsurprisingly, the distribu-tion of uncontracted forms is also not even across the manuscript. Table 15, below, gives the numbers broken down by homily.

Table 15. Uncontracted forms in the *Vercelli Homilies*

	beon (past)		*habban*		*willan*		*witan*	
	contr.	uncontr.	contr.	uncontr.	contr.	uncontr.	contr.	uncontr.
Homily 1	4	5	–	3	3	3	1	1
Homily 2	–	1	–	–	2	–	–	–
Homily 3	1	–	–	–	–	–	1	–
Homily 4	12	–	2	–	7	1	1	–
Homily 5	–	1	–	–	1	3	–	–
Homily 6	–	1	1	–	–	–	–	–
Homily 7	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
Homily 8	–	–	–	–	1	–	–	–
Homily 9	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–
Homily 10	–	–	1	–	12	–	1	–
Homily 11	–	–	–	1	–	–	–	–
Homily 12	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Homily 13	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Homily 14	–	–	2	–	4	–	1	–
Homily 15	–	–	1	–	2	2	–	1
Homily 16	1	1	–	–	–	–	–	1
Homily 17	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Homily 18	–	4	–	–	1	1	2	–
Homily 19	1	–	–	–	2	–	1	–
Homily 20	1	–	–	–	2	–	–	–
Homily 21	1	–	1	–	1	–	–	–
Homily 22	2	–	5	–	3	3	2	1

Scragg (1973) identifies several groups within the *Vercelli Homilies*. Homilies 15–18 have very marked Anglian characteristics. Scragg (1973: 202) states that "Spelling, accidence and vocabulary concur in identifying all four homilies as of Anglian, probably Mercian, origin, and the relative infrequency of late West Saxon features indicates late transmission into the West Saxon scribal tradition", concluding that the Vercelli scribe probably copied them from a Mercian homiliary. Notice that in the three of these four homilies that have rele-vant negated forms, uncontracted forms equal or outnumber contracted ones. Compare this to the group of homilies identified by Scragg (1973: 203–205) as having very significant late

WS influence, i.e. homilies 19–21, which contain no uncontracted forms.[71] There is also just a single uncontracted form (against nineteen contracted forms) in homilies 6–10, which according to Scragg (1973: 201) probably derive from "a collection of Anglian homilies assembled in the south-east . . . by a scribe who was not interested in excluding Anglian words or inflexions, but who did introduce his own spellings", suggesting that the scribe's alterations may have gone beyond orthography in the case of negative contraction, although of course we cannot exclude the possibility that the Anglian original already contained all the contracted forms. Homilies 11–14 have "linguistic and presentational affinities" with homilies 6–10 and may derive from the same exemplar, although this is not certain (Scragg 1973: 202). Again just a single uncontracted form is found in this group, but since only homily 14 has a reasonable number of relevant negated forms (all contracted) that does not actually tell us very much.[72]

The evidence from *Vercelli*, then, is not only consistent with the idea that the uncontracted forms usually derive from an Anglian source; there also seems to be some correlation between the degree of linguistic influence from southern scribes in the sets of homilies contained in the collection and the frequency of uncontracted forms in those homilies.

3.3.4. Negative contraction in the OE Bede

As will have been clear from Table 14, the data on negative contraction from *Bede* are very striking. I repeat the numbers from Table 14 in Table 16 below, with percentages added. Unlike in any other OE prose text, uncontracted forms predominate in *Bede* for all verbs involved except *habban*. Indeed, the data indicate that the frequency of non-contraction was even higher in this text than that suggested by any of the Anglian glosses. For that reason the data from *Bede* merit a closer inspection.

Table 16. Negative contraction in the OE *Bede*

	contracted	uncontracted	% uncontracted
beon (past)	4	47	92%
habban	7	3	30%
willan	5	39	89%
witan	2	9	82%

The OE *Bede* is of course a rather literal translation from Latin, but the high number of uncontracted forms cannot be blamed on Latin influence in this case; *willan* and *witan* contract infrequently while *habban* contracts comparatively often, whereas Latin influence would have led to increased use of contracted forms in the former case and increased use of uncontracted forms with the latter. Most of the uncontracted forms are confirmed by all extant witnesses, so they are very likely to go back to a common source, probably the original transla-

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[71] Scragg (1992: lxxi, fn. 2) states that these three homilies were "almost certainly composed and copied in Kent", so positing an Anglian origin for homilies 19 and 21 as Wenisch (1979) does is actually not uncontroversial. But note that Scragg himself mentions the use in this group of "distinctly Anglian vocabulary, especially in homily XXI" (1973: 203), and he suggests that this set of homilies may have been compiled from existing material rather than being (copies of) original compositions or translations.

[72] Scragg makes less specific claims for the remaining homilies, except that at least two more exemplars were used, i.e. for homilies 1–4 (which are not uniform linguistically) and homily 5, respectively, and that homily 22 may derive from yet another exemplar. If the evidence on syncope with present tense verb forms (Scragg 1992: lxvi–lxx, Scragg 1973: 199–200) is anything to go by, then homilies 1, 2 and 5 have stronger Anglian characteristics than homilies 3 and 4, which would fit the evidence on negative contraction. On the other hand, homily 22 has frequent syncope, so if we use syncope as an indicator, that homily has more forms without negative contraction than we might perhaps expect (even though they are still outnumbered by contracted forms). Just the frequency of syncope is not enough to base an argument on, however.

tion. There seems little doubt, then, that this text gives us evidence for a variety of Anglian in which negative contraction was infrequent.

Moreover, once we take into account manuscript variation as indicated in the variant readings given in Miller's edition of *Bede* (1890, 1898), we see that the frequency of contraction in the original text was probably even lower than the YCOE data suggest. For two of the contracted past tense forms of *beon*, all extant witnesses aside from the base manuscript have uncontracted forms, and for the other two instances, two manuscripts do so.[73] As for the five contracted forms of *willan*, only one case does not involve disagreement between manuscripts, and that instance only survives in two manuscripts which do not include the most authoritative witness (the Tanner *Bede*). In two of the cases with manuscript disagreement all other witnesses have non-contraction, in one case all other witnesses omit the negation before the verb, and two manuscripts have an uncontracted form in the final instance.[74] The two contracted forms of *witan* are confirmed by all extant witnesses, but they both occur in one particular passage which is missing from two of the surviving manuscripts, including Tanner.[75] The same passage also contains one of the contracted forms of *habban*. Another contracted form of *habban* likewise does not survive in Tanner, and although the adopted base manuscript for this part of the text has a contracted form, the other extant witness has an uncontracted form. The remaining five contracted forms of *habban*, however, are all attested in Tanner and are also found in the other extant witnesses.[76]

The indications are, then, that negative contraction was the exception for *willan*, *witan* and past tense forms of *beon* in the dialect of the original *Bede* translation. Indeed, given that the only three instances with these verbs/verb forms where there is no manuscript disagreement all involve passages that do not survive in the Tanner *Bede*, we may reasonably start wondering whether negative contraction was found with forms beginning with /w/ at all in the original version; if it was, it was very rare. As for *habban*, contraction was probably significantly more frequent than with the other verbs in the original translation. Of course we cannot be certain that WS scribes may not have been responsible for most or all of the contracted forms even in cases where all the manuscripts (including Tanner) agree, but there is at least no particular evidence to suggest that contraction was exceptional for *habban*. And given how frequently uncontracted forms are preserved in the surviving manuscripts in the case of the other verbs, it seems relatively unlikely that there would have been a much stronger tendency to change uncontracted forms of *habban* to contracted ones. But even if most or all of the contracted forms of *habban* indeed go back to the original translation, non-contraction was still reasonably frequent with this verb. While non-contraction was probably not categorical even in this variety, then, the evidence from *Bede* presents very strong evidence that in some varieties of Anglian negative contraction was highly constrained.

In spite of the remarkably high frequency of non-contraction in *Bede*, negative contraction is still regular in the case of *is*—as said before, this holds for all prose texts in the corpus—although even here there is some manuscript variation: in one case *ne is* is found in all manuscripts other than the base manuscript, and in another *ne is* is found in two of the witnesses.[77] But for the remaining 23 instances, all manuscripts agree on a contracted form. Whether the almost completely regular contraction in the case of *nis* in *Bede* is the result of a systematic rejection of *ne is* by WS scribes or whether contraction with this verb form was

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[73] Bede 1, 16.70.23 *næbre* and Bede 2, 1.96.34 *næs*; Bede 2, 3.104.32 *næs* and Bede 2, 8.120.14 *næbre*.

[74] BedePref 2.11 *nolde*; Bede 1, 14.60.7 *nellað* and Bede 5, 14.438.8 *nolde*; Bede 3, 3.162.13 *nolde*; Bede 5, 14.438.11 *nolde*.

[75] Bede 3, 14.206.3 *nyste* and Bede 3, 14.206.21 *nyste*.

[76] Bede 3, 14.206.8 *Næfde*; Bede 1, 1.28.19 *næfdon*; Bede 2, 5.112.16 *nabbað*, Bede 2, 8.122.20 *næfde*, Bede 3, 1.156.27 *næfde*, Bede 5, 11.416.2 *næfdan* and Bede 5, 12.420.13 *nefdan*.

[77] Bede 1, 16.74.23 *nis*; Bede 1, 16.78.33 *nis*.

simply the rule in the original version remains an open question. However, given how frequently other uncontracted forms have been preserved in the extant witnesses and how little manuscript variation there is with this particular form, we might be inclined to speculate that it is more likely to be the latter. The plausibility of this is increased by the fact that *Bede* is thought to derive from a Mercian source. Recall that the evidence from the Mercian glosses in section 2.3 indicated that contraction was also close to regular with *nis* in at least some varieties of Mercian, so a low frequency of *ne is* in the original *Bede* translation is entirely possible, even though non-contraction was the norm for most verbs/verb forms affected.

3.3.5. Summary

In this section we have seen that negative contraction with *habban*, *willan*, *witan* and past tense forms of *beon* is almost completely regular in straightforwardly WS texts in the YCOE. The one significant exception is *habban* in the case of *Orosius*, and even here contraction is clearly the norm. There are also a few cases of texts with uncontracted forms where Anglian influence is possible, but uncertain. However, in most cases uncontracted forms are found in texts which are believed to derive from an Anglian source, and it is not at all unusual to find uncontracted forms in such texts. In some cases, uncontracted forms are even frequent; the most extreme case of this is *Bede*, where the evidence raises the possibility that the original translation may not have had negative contraction with forms starting with /w/ at all. The conclusion that the uncontracted forms found in texts with a presumed Anglian source normally go back to the Anglian original and are a characteristic of Anglian is virtually inescapable. The data from prose, then, confirm that negative contraction was indeed a dialect criterion already in OE.

3.4. Agan

So far, we have focused exclusively on the four frequent verbs that allow negative contraction, i.e. *beon*, *habban*, *willan* and *witan*. In this section, we will have a brief look at the limited data in the YCOE concerning the remaining verb that may undergo negative contraction in OE, i.e. *agan* 'owe, own'. Interestingly, the pattern with this verb does not appear to be the same as that of the other four verbs. Table 17, below, gives the numbers for all files in the YCOE that contain any negated forms of *agan*. As can be seen, there are just five uncontracted forms. Two of these (the ones in Cura and CuraC) are the same example found in different manuscripts, so we are effectively dealing with four instances. None of these four uncontracted forms appear in the texts where we would most expect such forms to occur on the basis of what we found in the preceding section: only one of the four texts involved derives from an Anglian source, i.e. *Gregory's Dialogues*, and we saw in the preceding section that, although uncontracted forms were attested in that particular text, they were surprisingly infrequent.

Table 17. Negative contraction with *agan* in the YCOE

	contracted	uncontracted
Aelhom	1	–
Aelive	3	–
Benrul	1	1
Blick	1	–
Boeth	2	–
CanedgD	1	–
CanedgX	1	–
Cathom1	2	–
Cathom2	1	–
ChronA	1	–
Cura	–	1
CuraC	–	1
Dicts	1	–
GregdC	2	1
GregdH	1	–
InspolD	3	–
InspolX	2	–
Laece	2	–
Law1cn	4	–
Law2cn	1	–
Law5atr	1	–
Law6atr	1	–
Lawaf	4	–
Lawafint	1	–
Lawine	7	–
LwsigeXa	2	–
Orosiu	1	–
Prefgen	1	–
Sevensl	1	–
Solilo	–	1
Verhom	3	–
Wsgosp	1	–
Wulf	6	–
Total	**59**	**5**

Needless to say, the limited data do not help. Notice, for example, that no relevant forms (contracted or uncontracted) occur in *Bede*. Therefore we should not jump to conclusions too quickly. Even so, the fact that two of the four examples (CP 33.215.13/CP (Cotton) 33.214.13 *ne agon* and Solil 2, 64.16 *ne ahte*) occur in translations attributed to Alfred strongly suggests that failure of negative contraction with this verb was not unusual in early WS, or at least not in Alfred's writing, the more so given that there are no instances *with* contraction of this verb in either of the two texts involved. This is of course in sharp contrast to what we saw for the other four verbs in *Pastoral Care* and *Soliloquies*; once allowances had been made for factors favouring non-contraction, contraction was essentially regular with those. The fact that we nevertheless get uncontracted forms of *agan* in the only two relevant instances found in these two texts is a strong indication that its behaviour in relation to negative contraction is different. There *are* contracted forms of *agan* in the other translation attributed to

Alfred, i.e. *Boethius*, but only two of them (Bo 14.31.10 *nahtest* and Bo 39.124.5 *nah*) and for both we only have the 12th-century Bodley manuscript as a witness, in one case because Cotton is illegible or destroyed at this point, and in the other because the passage concerned is simply not found in Cotton. But even if we admit both of them as evidence for Alfred's usage—after all, *Soliloquies* also only survives in a 12th-century manuscript—uncontracted forms would still make up half of the very limited data set.

If non-contraction of *agan* was indeed common in the case of Alfred's language, then the uncontracted instance in *Gregory's Dialogues*, given in (20), is not necessarily an Anglian feature; it could equally well be an early WS or shared usage. Notice that ms. O of *Gregory's Dialogues* once again omits *ne* in the example concerned, so it may well be that the uncontracted form does not even go back to the original translation.[78] In other words, the uncontracted form of *agan* in *Gregory's Dialogues* need not be a modification made by an early WS scribe, but it certainly could be. And even if it was present in the original translation, there is no good reason to believe that it was a form characteristic of Anglian rather than early WS.

(20)   swilce hire se deoful næfre ænigne anweald *ne   ahte*.
         as-if   her the devil   never any   power   not possessed
         'as if the devil had never possessed any power over her.'

                                                                    (GD 1 (C) 10.74.24)

The last of the four texts in the YCOE containing an uncontracted form of *agan*, the OE translation of the *Benedictine Rule*, also does not have any marked Anglian features. The translation is attributed to Æthelwold, bishop of Winchester, who is believed to have been a central figure in the development of the late WS *Schriftsprache* (Gneuss 1972, Hofstetter 1988). This particular text does not yet conform fully to the Winchester standard (Gneuss 1972: 78–79, Hofstetter 1988: 152, 157), but its classification as WS seems beyond doubt.[79] Notice that, as in Alfred's translations, it consistently has contraction in the case of the other four verbs. However, all other late WS texts in the YCOE with relevant forms have contraction with *agan*, so it is not clear that non-contraction of *agan* was more common in late WS than non-contraction with the other verbs; it is possible that it was highly exceptional in late WS, in which case it would just be chance that there is one uncontracted form among the limited data on *agan*.[80] But if so, it is unexpected that all four other witnesses confirm the uncontracted form. If the form was very unusual, we might have expected some manuscript variation. Moreover, the other witnesses have a plural verb and subject rather than the singular forms found in the base manuscript (BenR 33.56.19 *he . . . ne age* 'he . . . should not own'; compare the unambiguously plural pronoun form *hi* or *hy* 'they' found in three of the other

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[78] The revised H version has *nahte*, but H is less likely to reflect the original than O or C.

[79] Ingham (2006: 249) nevertheless suggests the *Benedictine Rule* "may contain elements from heterogeneous dialectal provenance, as suggested by the presence of *nænig*". Notice, however, that according to Wenisch (1979: 327) occasional traces of Anglian are found even in texts written by Ælfric and Alfred. He classifies the *Benedictine Rule* as having traces of Anglian usage, and he suspects that the sporadic use of Anglian vocabulary in this text and a number of others is likely to be the result of influence from a Mercian-coloured Church language (Wenisch 1979: 327).

[80] There is actually another uncontracted form that is potentially relevant here. In the case of the contracted form found in *Dicts of Cato*, one of the three surviving witnesses has uncontracted *ne ah* instead of *nah* (Prov 1, 1.50). According to Cox (1972: 32), all three manuscripts are mainly written in standard late WS, although the existence of some non-WS forms suggests that a common source was written in another dialect (it is not clear whether this was Kentish or Mercian). So it is possible that the uncontracted variant form goes back to an Anglian or Kentish source, but this is by no means certain. For one thing, uncontracted forms of *agan* may well be WS as far as we can tell from the YCOE evidence, and for another, the hand involved dates from the first half of the 12th century (Cox 1972: 31), so the uncontracted form could be a 12th-century change.

witnesses and the plural verb form *agen* or *agan* in all four), so at least one scribe did not slavishly copy his exemplar at this point. It would be hard to explain why the form was not changed to a contracted one at the same time if there was any problem with an uncontracted form in the scribe's language. But even if non-contraction of *agan* may have been acceptable in late WS, the data show that it was still clearly a minority variant.

In short, then, three out of four uncontracted instances of *agan* in the YCOE occur in WS texts that consistently have contraction with the other four verbs. The remaining instance is found in a text where uncontracted forms are unusual with the other verbs in spite of the presence of marked Anglian characteristics, and it is possible that the form was introduced in the West-Saxonised version rather than going back to the Anglian original. In other words, there is no evidence that lack of contraction with *agan* is an Anglian feature. This is not to say that *agan* was always subject to negative contraction in Anglian; there simply is not enough evidence to make any reliable statements about the behaviour of *agan* relative to negative contraction in Anglian dialects. Non-contraction of *agan* may or may not have occurred in Anglian, and in view of the behaviour of the other verbs we might speculate that it probably did, but it was definitely not confined to Anglian dialects. The data indicate that it was probably a normal form in Alfred's language at least, suggesting that it may not have been unusual in early WS more generally. For late WS, contraction with *agan* looks like the norm, however, even if non-contraction is also attested.

4. Conclusion

The examination of the data from both glosses and prose carried out in this study confirms that Levin's conclusion about negative contraction in OE was essentially correct: generally speaking, negative contraction is regular in WS and much more variable in Anglian. However, it has also revealed that this generalisation is false in some of its detail. The data indicate that negative contraction is infrequent in WS in the case of the 1sg and 2sg present forms of *beon*, i.e. *eom* and *eart*. Given that the same is not true for at least the 1sg form in Anglian, in this particular case negative contraction was actually *less* regular in WS than in Anglian. It is possible that this holds for the 2sg form as well, but paucity of evidence for this form in the Anglian data prevents conclusions. In addition, the contracted form *nis* appears to have been as regular in some varieties of Mercian as in WS, or nearly so. Furthermore, uncontracted forms are frequently found in the *hu ne* construction in certain varieties of WS, notably in Alfred's and Ælfric's language. And it looks as if uncontracted forms were not unusual with *agan* in Alfred's writing at least (and by extension, quite possibly early WS more generally). They may likewise have been less problematic with that verb in late WS than uncontracted forms of other verbs, although there is little evidence to go on here.

Once allowances have been made for these various factors, however, negative contraction in the remainder of cases becomes even more consistent in straightforwardly WS material than Levin's data indicated. Also, in some varieties of Anglian non-contraction appears to have been much more frequent than his data suggested. Parts of *Lindisfarne* already suggested so, and the evidence from *Bede* proves the existence of at least one such variety. So in some cases the difference between WS and particular varieties of Anglian was much bigger than Levin's data indicated. Equally, there could be substantial differences in the frequency of non-contraction between varieties of Anglian. And according to the evidence presented here, there are other differences between the varieties of Anglian represented in the glosses. As said, contraction in the case of *nis* was all but regular in the Mercian data, but the same is definitely not true for the Nbr data; if anything, contraction with *is* was *less* frequent in those data than with the other forms of *beon*. Another difference between the two is that the Merci-

an data indicate that past tense forms of *beon* contracted significantly less frequently than other forms of *beon*, whereas again this is not the case for the Nbr data.

The discussion of the data from glosses has illustrated that such data need to be assessed very carefully before any conclusions can be drawn from them. Levin's conclusion may have remained largely intact in this particular case, but that does not mean he was right to draw it on the basis of the evidence he had. The fact that Hogg's claims based on similar evidence from glosses did not stand up to closer scrutiny further proves the dangers of using data from glosses without looking at them closely. Once appropriate care has been taken with data from glosses, however, this study also confirms that such evidence can be of value even in cases where influence from Latin could have had an impact on the data.

The data from the YCOE have shown that, despite the superficial lack of dialect variation, OE prose may preserve evidence on dialect features of the syntax of non-WS dialects. Negative contraction is highly regular in WS, and a change from an uncontracted to a contracted form involves a very local change—the unit involved is hardly above word-level. So there should have been a fair amount of pressure on WS non-*literatim* scribes to change such forms, plus it would have been very easy to do so even for a scribe copying in relatively small units. In spite of this, it seems that uncontracted forms were often preserved. This suggests that scribes are likely to have left structures intact in the case of syntactic properties that involved more variation within WS and/or larger units, even when there were noticeable, and possibly even very marked, differences as compared to the syntax of their own dialect. So if the variant was possible but relatively low-frequency in the scribe's own variety, scribes may have left the structure intact even if it occurred at a much higher frequency in the text they were copying. And if the units that a scribe used while copying were smaller than the construction involved, constructions may well have been preserved even if they were actually ungrammatical in the language of the scribe. Because of the extent of variation found in OE syntax together with the virtual absence of purely non-WS prose material, it will in most cases be very difficult or even impossible to identify what properties of syntax were subject to dialectal variation and in what way(s), but the present study shows that data from the OE prose corpus can at least sometimes be highly useful in the study of dialect features of syntax. It also indicates that for the purposes of research on OE syntax, the extant prose corpus may be considerably more heterogenous than it appears on the surface.

The evidence presented in this article also suggests that the development, spread and distribution of negative contraction was considerably more complex than can be handled by studies that rely exclusively on such broad distinctions as contracted/uncontracted and WS/Anglian or general statements like the one I started out with at the very beginning of this article, i.e. "As is well-known, the negative particle *ne* 'not' may contract in OE with a small group of verbs beginning with a vowel, /h/ or /w/". This will be clear for example from the differences between the various forms of *beon*, as well as the fact that these differences are not the same for different varieties of OE. To give another example, the evidence from *Bede* suggested that in some varieties negative contraction with /w/ did not occur or was very infrequent. And if we contrast *Orosius* and *Bede*, then we see that in the former *habban* appears to lag behind as compared to the other verbs in adopting negative contraction, whereas in the latter it appears to be leading. In addition, of course *agan* appears to lagging behind the other verbs in (some varieties of) early WS at least. All the indications are that the history and distribution of negative contraction is complex, with each verb (and verb form in the case of *beon*) having its own history, and it is not the case that WS is always ahead of the other dialects in adopting the contracted form. Why grammatical person should have been a factor in the case of *beon* is an open question. It is not clear precisely how the phonological properties of the verbs/forms involved fit into all this either. One form beginning with a vowel appears to be leading, at least in some varieties, yet others that meet the same phonological condition

on negative contraction resist contraction (e.g. *is* versus *eom*/*eart* and/or *agan* in WS). On the other hand, the data from *Bede* suggest that in certain cases verbs/forms falling into the same phonological category may well have acted as a class in resisting negative contraction. In short, generalisations about negative contraction like the one made by Levin or those usually found in the handbooks may be helpful in some respects, but it must be kept in mind that they are over-simplifications.

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Appendix 1

Instances of *nis* in the YCOE (excluding those found in *hu ne* constructions)

(These data have not been checked against printed editions.)

aelhom	50	exodusP	1	mart3	3
aelive	43	genesiC	1	mary	5
alcuin	3	gregdC	27	nicodA	8
apollo	3	gregdH	8	nicodC	2
bede	25	herbar	2	orosiu	1
benrul	7	inspolD	2	otest	22
blick	25	inspolX	6	prefsolilo	1
boeth	88	laece	4	rood	3
cathom1	127	law1cn	1	sevensl	4
cathom2	80	law2cn	1	solilo	16
chdrul	6	lawger	1	solsat1	2
christoph	2	lsigewZ	2	tempo	6
chronE	2	lwgeat	1	verhom	27
cura	18	lwsigeXa	4	verhomE	4
dicts	1	lwstan1	1	verhomL	3
docu2	1	lwstan2	2	wsgosp	87
eluc1	7	margaC	1	wulf	21
euphr	1	margaT	1		
eust	3	mart2	1		

Total number of forms: 774

Appendix 2

Contracted forms in YCOE files without uncontracted forms

These data have not been checked against printed editions. The information on dialect origin and/or influence has been taken from Wenisch (1979) where available. Texts are written in a WS dialect unless stated otherwise. Where the text is not included in Wenisch (1979), any information given by the editor of the text and/or in the YCOE documentation is given. Information on dialect in the YCOE documentation has been taken from the coding in the Helsinki Corpus (HKI), and is therefore not available for all texts. Codes like "WS/Anglian" indicate a mixed dialect; this particular code would mean that the text survives in a predominantly WS form but is believed to derive from an Anglian original or at least has indications

of significant Anglian influence. X as a dialect label in the HKI coding indicates "unknown". For further information about the HKI coding conventions, see Kytö (1996).

	beon (past)	*habban*	*willan*	*witan*	Wenisch (1979)
Alfred					occasional traces of Anglian influence
Boeth	54	99	46	57	
CuraC	1	4	–	1	
Solilo	11	14	17	48	
Prefcura	2	–	2	–	
Prefsolilo	–	–	–	–	
Ælfric					occasional traces of Anglian influence
Cathom1	94	64	145	28	
Cathom2	103	65	114	32	
Epigen	1	–	1	–	
Lsigef	1	–	–	–	
LsigewB	4	1	7	–	
LsigewZ	8	2	15	–	
Lwgeat	–	2	7	–	
LwsigeT	–	–	–	–	
LwsigeXa	–	3	5	–	
Lwstan1	4	5	5	–	
Prefcath1	3	2	2	–	
Prefcath2	–	–	–	–	
Prefgen	–	2	3	1	
Preflives	–	1	1	2	
Tempo	2	9	1	–	
VinceB	–	–	–	–	
(also parts of OTest)					
Wulfstan					occasional traces of Anglian influence
CanedgD	–	1	1	–	
CanedgX	1	2	1	–	
InspolD	–	–	2	–	
InspolX	–	1	13	–	
Law1cn	–	2	3	–	
Law2cn	2	5	5	2	
Law5atr	–	1	2	–	
Law6atr	–	1	2	–	
Wulf	15	10	36	7	
Adrian	1	1	–	–	traces of Anglian influence
August	–	–	–	–	not included
Benrul	–	13	20	2	traces of Anglian influence
Byrhtf	–	–	–	1	traces of Anglian influence
Chdrul	4	17	15	2	traces of Anglian influence
Christoph	1	–	–	–	confirmed to be of Anglian origin
ChronA	5	2	5	1	traces of Anglian influence
ChronC	13	3	12	2	traces of Anglian influence
Dicts	–	3	4	–	not included; indications of a possible non-WS origin (Cox 1972: 32)
Docu1 Ch 1482	–	–	3	–	not included; HKI coding: Kentish

Ch 1500	–	1	–	–	Kentish; traces of Anglian influence
Docu2 Ch 1445	1	–	–	1	not included; HKI coding: WS
Docu3 Ch 98	–	–	1	–	not included; HKI coding: Anglian Mercian/X
Ch 1447	–	3	1	–	not included; HKI coding: WS/X
Ch 1454	2	–	1	–	not included; HKI coding: WS/X
Ch 1458	–	–	1	–	not included; HKI coding: WS/X
Ch 1467	1	–	–	–	not included; HKI coding: WS/X
Ch 1487	–	–	1	–	not included; HKI coding: Anglian/X
Ch 1494	–	1	–	–	not included; HKI coding: WS/X
Ch 1503	–	–	1	–	not included; HKI coding: WS/X
Docu4	–	–	–	–	
Eluc1	–	3	3	–	not included; HKI coding: Kentish
Eluc2	–	–	2	–	not included
Euphr	3	1	7	5	Anglian influence
Eust	4	2	4	9	Anglian influence
ExodusP	1	2	1	–	not included; HKI coding: WS
GenesiC	6	8	4	6	not included; HKI coding: WS
GregdH	29	14	15	10	confirmed to be of Anglian origin
Herbar	–	2	3	–	traces of Anglian influence
James	1	–	2	–	not included
Lacnu	–	1	–	–	confirmed to be of Anglian origin
Laece	–	13	11	3	confirmed to be of Anglian origin
Lawafint	–	3	6	1	Anglian influence
Lawger	–	–	–	–	probably of Anglian origin according to initial information, although not listed in final summary
Lawnorthu	–	3	2	–	not included; HKI coding: WS/X
Lawwllad	–	–	2	–	not included; HKI coding: WS/X
Leofri	3	–	–	2	probably of Anglian origin
MargaT	–	1	3	–	probably of Anglian origin
Mart1	1	–	2	1	confirmed to be of Anglian origin
Mary	9	1	3	4	probably of Anglian origin
Neot	–	–	3	–	not included
NicodA	11	4	4	5	not listed among texts with any signs of Anglian origin or influence
NicodC	4	–	5	2	traces of Anglian influence
NicodE	1	–	2	1	not included
Otest	32	30	60	27	not listed among texts with any signs of Anglian origin or influence
Quadru	–	–	–	–	probably of Anglian origin
Rood	2	3	7	3	traces of Anglian influence
Sevensl	10	2	11	13	not included; no signs of Anglian influence (Magennis 1994: 16)
Solsat1	2	–	–	–	Anglian influence
Solsat2	–	–	–	–	probably of Anglian origin
Vinsal	3	1	3	1	not listed among texts with any signs of Anglian origin or influence
Wsgosp	47	77	40	62	traces of Anglian influence

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