A Student's Guide to Middle English

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A Student's Guide to Middle English

O. M u t t

Third Edition

TARTU 1986

Kinnitatud filoloogiateaduskonna nõukogus
28. oktoobril 1985.a.

Retsenseerinud E. Sau

PREFACE

The present guide to Middle English is meant to be
a sequel to our "Introduction to Old English" (Tartu 1962).
Both booklets have been compiled primarily to serve as
study aids for students of English at higher schools in
the Estonian S.S.R.

This handbook is largely a transcript of lectures on
Middle English that I have had the privilege of deliver-
ing to full-time and correspondence students of English
language and literature at Tartu State University since
1951. In view of recent changes in the syllabus, the pre-
sent booklet covers somewhat more ground than is absolute-
ly necessary. This applies mainly to the paradigms of de-
clensions and conjugations, the section on dialects, etc.
It is my hope, nevertheless, that the more serious student
will derive some profit from this extra material, and that
he will, moreover, be encouraged to undertake some addi-
tional reading on his own. It is with the latter contin-
gency in mind that a short select bibliography has been
appended.

I am grateful to Assistant Professor J. Silvet for
a number of corrections and useful suggestions made in the
manuscript. Thanks are also due to my colleagues J. Tuldava
and O. Haas who offered valuable constructive criticism.
Needless to say, the deficiencies remaining in this first
edition are the result of my own inadvertence.

December 1965

O. Mutt

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1 ME = Middle English

List of Figures

Abbreviations

a., adj.	=	adjective
ab.	=	about
acc.	=	accusative
adv.	=	adverb
an.	=	anomalous
AE	=	American English
art.	=	article
attr.	=	attributive
Baugh	=	A. C. Baugh, A History of the English Language, (New York 1957)
BE	=	British English
c.	=	circa, about
cent.	=	century
cf.	=	compare
Ch.	=	Chaucer
CME	=	Central Middle English
cnj.	=	conjunction
comp.	=	comparative
d.	=	died, deceased
dat.	=	dative
dial.	=	dialect(al)
E.	=	English

2.

ed.	=	edition, edited by
EME	=	Early Middle English
EMoE	=	Early Modern English
esp.	=	especially
Est.	=	Estonian
f.	=	feminine
fr.	=	from
gen.	=	genitive
Gmc.	=	Germanic
Gk.	=	Greek
Gt.	=	Gothic
G+V	=	M. A. Ganshina and N. M. Vasilevskaya, English Grammar. 9th ed. revised (Moscow 1964)
GVS	=	Great Vowel Shift
i.	=	intransitive
IE	=	Indo-European
Ilyish	=	Б. А. Ильиш, История английского языка (Москва 1958[4])
inf.	=	infinitive
IOE	=	O. Mutt, An Introduction to Old English (Tartu 1962)
L.	=	Latin
lg(s).	=	language(s)
lit.	=	literally
LME	=	Late Middle English
m.	=	masculine

ME	= Middle English
MoE	= Modern English
MoFr	= Modern French
MoGer	= Modern High German
MoIt	= Modern Italian
MoRuss	= Modern Russian
MoSw	= Modern Swedish
MS(S).	= manuscript(s)
n.	= neuter
N.	= Northern (dialect form)
nom.	= nominative
num.	= numeral
obj.	= objective
OE	= Old English
OFr	= Old French
OGmc	= Old Germanic
OHG	= Old High German
OSc	= Old Scandinavian
p.	= person
part.	= participle
pere.	= personal
pl.	= plural
poss.	= possessive
pp.	= past participle
prep.	= preposition

pres.	=	present
Pres. E.	=	Present-day English
prn.	=	pronoun
pron.	=	pronunciation
Proto-Gmc	=	Proto-Germanic
pt.	=	preterite
S.	=	Southern (dialect form)
s.	=	substantive
sbj.	=	subjunctive
Sc.	=	Scandinavian
Scot.	=	Scottish
Selections	=	Selections from Old, Middle and Early Modern English. Compiled by O. Mutt (Tartu 1963)
sg.	=	singular
StE	=	Standard English
str.	=	strong
Sw.	=	Swedish
tr.	=	transitive
usu.	=	usually
v.	=	verb
w.	=	weak
W.	=	Western (dialect form)

Signs and Special Letters

>   'changed to'   or   'became'

<   'changed from'   or   'derived from'

[]   enclose phonetic transcription

•   indicates a reconstructed or hypothetical form

‾   above a vowel indicates that the latter is long
      (as in wīs, fīve)

˘   above a vowel indicates that the latter is short
      (as in wĭsdom, fĭfth)

The following special characters are occasionally
used in writing ME words:

$\bar{\rm e}$ = [ɛ:]   long open 'e' as in ME clēne, tēçhen

$\bar{\rm e}$ = [e:]   long close 'e' as in ME dēd, slēpen

$\bar{\rm o}$ = [ɔ:]   long open 'o' as in ME stōn, cōte

$\bar{\rm o}$ = [o:]   long close 'o' as in ME mōne, spōn

Note. – A single straight underscore in the text
indicates the ME form of a word (e.g. clēne), a dotted
underscore – the MoE form (e.g. clean) . OE forms have
no underscoring.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

1. General Introductory Remarks

M i d d l e E n g l i s h (= ME[1]) is the term used to
denote the English language during the stage of its develop-
ment between the Old English (= OE) and Modern English (MoE)
periods.

The ME period is usually delimited as extending from
the early 12th to the end of the 15th century, i.e. from ap-
proximately 1100 to 1500. This coincides roughly with the
span of time separating the Norman Conquest from the estab-
lishment of an absolute monarchy in England (the end of the
Wars of the Roses). ME can be described as the lg. of the
English people at the time of their emergence and consoli-
dation as a nationality (= rahvas, народность).

The dates dividing ME and the other periods in the
history of English are arbitrary and only convenient refer-
ence points It should be emphasized that they do not indi-
cate any break in the process of continuous evolution. De-
spite some inevitable overlapping it is possible, however,
to recognize certain broad characteristics and special de-
velopments that took place within each of the periods.[2]

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[1] For a full list of the abbreviations used in this hand-
book see p. x.

[2] A brief survey of the principal features of the various
periods in the history of English may be found in our
"Introduction to Old English" (Tartu 1962), pp. 1-3.

Phonologically speaking - the ME period is a period of levelled endings, all unstressed vowels being levelled under the neutral [ə]-sound represented in spelling by e (cf. OE stānas, nosu, drīfan and ME stōnes 'stones', nōse 'nose', drīven 'drive').

The principal grammatical features of ME are: (a) the relatively rapid disintegration of the old inflections (especially in the nominal parts of speech, i.e. the noun, adjective and pronoun), (b) the establishment of a more-or-less rigid word-order, (c) the rise and spread of various analytical forms and constructions.

The vocabulary of ME adopted large numbers of Scandinavian, French and Latin loanwords.

The ME period is commonly subdivided into Early ME (= EME 1100-1250), ME of the Second Period or Central ME (= CME 1250-1400), and Late ME (= LME 1400-1500).

In EME the old inflections are retained to a considerable extent; the vowels a, o, u pass into e in inflected endings; there is much confusion in the dialect forms used; Scandinavian words appear in the vocabulary.

In CME a large part of the old inflections disappear; French words enter the language in large numbers; the Scandinavian and French elements are assimilated in the vocabulary; the great confusion of dialect continues.

LME is marked by the increasing prevalence of a literary standard form of the language based on the East Midland (London) dialect; the final unstressed e is lost in pronunciation.

2. Historical Background to the ME Period

The Scandinavian raids on England that began at the end of the 8th century led to a series of large-scale invasions in the following centuries. In 1014, Svein, king of Denmark drove Ethelred, the English king into exile and seized the

English throne. He was succeeded in the same year by his
son Knut (Canute) and for the next quarter of a century
England was ruled by Danish kings. The settlement of large
numbers of Scandinavians in England resulted in an exten-
sive Scandinavian influence on the language. The linguistic
effects of the Scandinavian invasions made themselves felt
mainly in the 11th-13th centuries (see below, p. 18 ff.).

Ethelred had fled to Normandy together with his Norman
wife. In 1042 his son, Edward the Confessor, returned to
the English throne. While in Normandy, Edward had come under
Norman influence which he tried to introduce into England.
Moreover, he even promised the succession to the throne to
his cousin William, duke of Normandy.

However, after Edward's death, in 1066 the English
nobles recognized Harold, earl of Wessex, as king. William
of Normandy immediately laid claim to the English crown. In
the battle of Hastings (Senlac) on October 14, 1066, the
English army was defeated and Harold was killed. The Norman
Conquest which followed affected the whole subsequent his-
tory of England and had a profound influence on the develop-
ment of the English language (see below, p. 24 ff.). William
of Normandy was henceforth known as the Conqueror.

The Conquest hastened the development of feudalism in
England. Notable changes took place in the administrative
and judicial systems. The first English survey and census
in the Domesday Book was completed in 1086. William and his
successors sought to consolidate royal supremacy over the
feudal lords and the church. In their struggle with the bar-
ons and the bishops the Anglo-Norman kings found support
among the townsfolk and landless knights. The authority of
the crown was strengthened by the extension under Henry II
Plantagenet (1154-89) of the English possessions in France.
The second half of the 12th century also saw the beginning
of the conquest of Ireland. Under John Lackland (1199-1216)
most of the French lands were lost, including Normandy

3.

(1204). John quarrelled with the church and the English barons. The arbitrary arrests, taxation, and other abuses of his reign led to a struggle between John and the feudal lords. This conflict culminated in the granting of the Magna Carta by John in 1215. The charter guaranteed certain rights and privileges, both personal and commercial to the barons (and also to the commons who had supported them against the king). The establishment of the first parliament (1265) in the reign of Henry III was an event of great importance. In the late 13th and 14th centuries parliament acquired the rights to vote subsidies and approve laws. It was thus that a limited monarchy came into being in England.

The Hundred Years' War (1337–1453) for the recovery of the French lands lost by John and for control over industrially developed Flanders was begun by Edward III. The war resulted in the loss of all English possessions on the continent except Calais. The condition of the serfs in the countryside became quite unbearable when monetary taxes were introduced in addition to all the manorial obligations. It became more and more obvious that serf labour was unproductive in comparison with hired labour. The prolonged wars with their attendant heavy taxation and suffering, prolonged droughts and famine, the ravages of the Black Death that swept over Europe in 1348–49, increasing feudal exploitation (the very unpopular Statute of Labourers, etc.) and the corruption of the church gave rise to widespread discontent among the masses of the population. This unrest came to a head in the great peasant uprising of 1381, known after its leader as Wat Tyler's Rebellion. The Lollards, a sect who were religious as well as economic reformers and followers of John Wycliffe, played an important part in the rising as they clamoured for the abolition of all differences of rank, status and property (e.g. one of their leaders John Ball preached a kind of primitive socialism from the old text: "When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?").

Although the rising was ruthlessly suppressed, it dealt a serious blow to feudalism, from which the latter never recovered fully. Owing to economic causes serfdom continued to decline all through the latter years of the 14th century and grew obsolete in the 15th. The manorial system was already doomed. The rent-paying tenant farmers, who had begun to appear after the Black Death, gradually superseded the relatively unproductive villeins as the normal type of peasantry. Villein-service and other manorial obligations were increasingly replaced by monetary rent.

The development of trade and industry led to a growth in the importance of new social strata which were later to become the bourgeoisie. These were the merchants and artisans in the towns and the gentry (i.e. small and middle landowners) in the countryside. The latter supplied the grain and wool that were the staple commodities of the time. England gradually became an economic unit: The increasing economic integration of the country was accompanied by political and linguistic centralisation.

There was an obvious need for a common standard form of the language understood by and acceptable to people in different parts of the country. It was towards the end of the 14th and in the 15th century that the East Midland type of English (particularly the dialect of the metropolis London) won recognition and began to develop into a standard form of the language. The choice of this form of English by Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400) and several other contemporary writers (J. Wycliffe, J. Gower, etc.) encouraged the spread of upper-class London English.

The constant rivalry among the feudal aristocracy frequently broke into actual fighting. This and widespread looting by bands of soldiers in the service of warring factions or returning from the prolonged war in France seriously hindered the normal development of commerce. It was in the interest of the rising commercial and manufacturing

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classes to have a strong central government capable of putting an end to the incessant civil strife and of ensuring law, order and prosperity. As a result of the Wars of the Roses, a series of civil wars between the rival houses of Lancaster and York (1455-1485), the old nobility was largely destroyed and its influence declined. An important check on the power of the king was removed. The Lancastrian heir Henry VII who married Elizabeth, the Yorkist heiress, founded the Tudor dynasty (1485-1603) and became an almost absolute king. The absolute monarchy was consolidated under Henry VIII (1509-47) and the other Tudor sovereigns at a time when capitalist relations began to develop.

In the first volume of his "Capital" K. Marx has vividly described the process of enclosures that began at this time and which was the basis of the so-called primary accumulation of capital in England. The enclosure or fencing in of common fields and other commons (i.e. land hitherto used in common by the village or community as a whole) had for its chief object the conversion of arable land into pasture for the sake of sheep-breeding. The growth of towns and of foreign commerce supplied markets for wool. The process of enclosures was accompanied by much injustice and hardship. As a result of the enclosures, large numbers of expropriated peasants were driven off the land. Most of them drifted into the towns and provided cheap labour for the rapidly developing industry and thus became the foundation of England's proletariat. Many others became homeless vagrants and beggars, against whom a series of savage laws were issued (1530, 1536, 1547, 1572, etc.). The resistance of the peasants to the enclosures was brutally suppressed (e.g. Robert Ket's rising in 1549).

The Reformation that followed the break with the Catholic church in the 1530s brought about the dissolution of the monasteries and the confiscation of church land and other property. This and the establishment of the Church of

England subordinated to the king further consolidated the position of the monarchy and of the trading and manufacturing sections of society. Many estates that formerly belonged to the monasteries now passed into the hands of a new bourgeois type of landowning aristocracy (the gentry).

The gradual emergence of a young and vigorous capitalist nation in the 16th century created more favourable conditions for the development of literature, science and the arts. The strife and turmoil of the 15th century had distracted attention from such matters. For about a century and a half after the death of Chaucer England had no great national poet. The general standard of literature was relatively low. Much of the poetry of the 15th cent. was written in emulation of Chaucer. Writers like J. Lydgate and Th. Occleve are not negligible, though admittedly overshadowed by their great predecessor. Judged by its influence, the greatest prose work of the 15th cent. was the Morte d'Arthur (1469-70) of Th. Malory. A landmark in cultural history is the introduction of printing by William Caxton in the 1470s (the first book printed in English, "The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye" came out in 1474 or 1475). It was towards the close of the 15th century that the Revival of Learning, the Renaissance, appeared belatedly in England. A small but brilliant group of scholars was associated with the movement at the turn of the century and in the first decades of the 16th (W. Grocyn, Th. Linacre, Th. More, Th. Elyot, R. Ascham, J. Cheke). The writers of the first half of the 16th century include J. Skelton, Th. Wyatt and H. Surrey. The way was being prepared for an unprecedented outburst of literature expressing the youthfulness and vigour of the young English nation in the latter half of the century (E. Spenser, F. Bacon, Chr. Marlowe, B. Jonson, W. Shakespeare, etc.).

Although dialectal differences continued well into the 17th-18th centuries, it is true, nevertheless, that by the

end of the 15th century a fairly uniform type of E. based
on that of London was written and probably spoken by the
upper classes in the large area covered by the Midlands.
The same type of language was familiar to and partly used
in writing by well-to-do people in most other regions of
England.

3. Dialects and Literary Records of the ME Period

A. The ME Dialects

The general impression that one receives from EME and
CME texts is that of the great variety of dialectal forms
used in writing at the time. Anybody who wrote E. at all in
the EME period seems to have written more or less as he
spoke. The language differed almost from county to county
(sometimes there were even noticeable variations between
different parts of the same county). Owing to considerable
overlapping it is difficult to decide how many dialectal
divisions should be recognized and how to mark off their
respective boundaries. It is customary to distinguish the
following four principal dialects (more correctly dialect
groups) in ME: the Northern, East Midland, West Midland and
Southern.

The Northern and Midland dialects of ME are the direct
descendants of the two principal branches of OE Anglian
dialects, i.e. Northumbrian and Mercian, respectively. The
ME Southern dialects go back to OE Saxon (> ME South-
western subgroup) and Kentish (> ME Southeastern subgroup,
represented chiefly by ME Kentish). The connection between
the OE and ME dialects can be represented schematically as
follows:

```
OE                                          ME
_____

                                          Northern
              Northumbrian
Anglian:                                
              Mercian
                                          Midland

Saxon
                                          Southern
Kentish
```
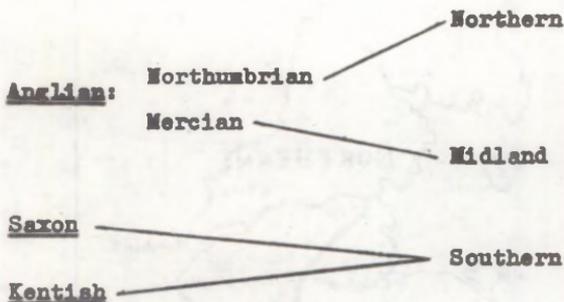
Generally speaking, the ME Northern dialects are con-
servative in phonetical development, but are characterized
by a thorough disintegration of the original OE inflection-
al system (i.e. most ME grammatical changes occurred in the
Northern dialects).

The Southern dialects are, on the contrary, conserva-
tive as regards grammatical development (i.e. they retain
most of the old inflections), but they have undergone exten-
sive phonetic changes.

The Midland dialects occupy an intermediate position
between the preceding two groups both territorially and
linguistically.

The accompanying map (see Fig. 1) shows the territo-
rial distribution of the major ME dialects. As can be seen,
the Northern dialects were spoken as far south as the Humber.
The East Midland and West Midland dialects together covered
the area between the Humber and the Thames, while the South-
ern dialects occupied the district south of the Thames and
most of Gloucestershire.

Fig.1. The dialect groups of Middle English

The peculiarities that distinguish these ME dialects are numerous and include matters of inflection, pronunciation and vocabulary. It will suffice for our purpose to list a few of these differences.

The following table presents the equivalents of some)E grammatical features in the various ME dialects (note .he new forms in the Northern ME column and the relative conservatism of the Southern dialects aq compared with the Midland dialect):

Inflections and Forms	Old English	Middle English			
		Northern	Midland	Southern	
				Southwestern	Kentish
1. 3rd p. sg. pres. indic.	-eþ	-es	-eþ -eth	-eþ	-eþ
2. Pl. pres. indic.	-aþ	-es	-en	-eþ -iþ	-eþ
3. Pres. Participle	-ende	-ande	-ende	-inde	-inde
4. Pl. pres. indic. of the verb 'be'	beoþ (Wessex)	aren	are(n) ben	beþ beoþ	bieþ
5. Verbal prefix ge-	ge-	-	i-	i-,y-	i-,y-
6. 3rd p. sg. fem. pers. prn.	hēo	sho	she	heo	hi
7. 3rd p. pl. pers. prn.	hīe hiera him	thai thair tham	he þei here þeir hem þem	hi, ha here hem,heom	hi,heo here hem

A similar variety of forms is characteristic of the phonological systems of the different dialects. Thus the OE sound y became i in Northern ME, u in the Southwestern dialect and e in Kentish. The following table shows the sources of the present-day spelling and pronunciation of some words containing the sound (and letter) y in OE:

4.

Old English	Middle English			Modern English
	Northern (also East Mid-land)	Southwestern (also West Mid-land)	Kentish	
y	i	u	e	
hyll	hill	hull	hell	hill
myrige	mirie	murie	merie	merry ['meri]
byldan	bilden	bulden	belden	build [bild]
byrgan	birien	burien	berien	bury ['beri]
yfel	ifel	uvel	evil	evil ['i:vl]

As can be seen from this table, the present-day StE spelling and pronunciation of hill are both of Northern origin. The spelling and pronunciation of merry both go back to Kentish. In the case of build, the spelling is South-western but the pronunciation, Northern. The spelling of bury is Southwestern whereas the verb is pronounced in the Kentish manner. The word evil, however, has a Kentish spelling with a pronunciation that goes back to a Northern dia-lect variant.

The study of E. dialects is fascinating in itself and extremely useful for the advanced student. Many irregulari-ties and inconsistencies in the grammatical structure, pho-nological system and vocabulary of Standard BE and the other standard forms of E. today can be explained with the help of historical and contemporary dialectology. The E. dialects are rapidly dying out. The best-known earlier sur-veys of the E. dialects are those by A. J. Ellis (1889) and

J. Wright ("The English Dialect Dictionary", 6 vols., 1896-1905).

A very comprehensive and interesting investigation has recently been undertaken by a team of research workers headed by Prof. H. Orton of Leeds University. The preparatory stage lasted from 1946-1960. The first results of this survey have now been published ("Survey of English Dialects", Vols. 1-2, Leeds 1962). In addition to its other merits, the survey is a rich source of material for the historical study of the E. language.

The whole question of ME dialects,too, is now being subjected to rigorous scrutiny by a team of researchers under Prof. Angus McIntosh at Edinburgh University. The results of this research may lead to a fundamental revision of hitherto accepted views on the distribution and classification of ME dialects.

B. ME Literary Records

The following is a partial list of ME literary records that are of particular interest from the linguistic point of view. For the sake of convenience the items have been arranged chronologically under the three subdivisions of the ME period. The most essential facts concerning individual works have been given, including dates and references to the dialect of the original version. An asterisk before a title or name means that the item thus marked is dealt with at greater length in our "Selections from Old, Middle and Early Modern English" (Tartu 1963).

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Title	Date	Dialect

1. Early Middle English (1100-1250)

(a) Layamon's "Brut"   1205   Southwest Midland

    (long fabulous chronicle in
verse of British history;
based in part on an Anglo-
Norman work by Wace)

(b) The Ormulum   c.1200   Northeast Midland

    (series of homilies by the
monk Orm or Ormin; impor-
tant for its systematic
orthography which consist-
ently indicates whether
vowels are short or long)

(c) The Ancren Riwle   c.1225   Southwestern

    ("Rule of the Anchorites",
a book of advice written
for three ladies who wished
to live a religious life,
without, however, becoming
nuns)

(d) The Owl and the Nightingale   early 13th century   mixture of Midland and Southern

    (the most famous of a large
number of fables and stories,
copied or translated from
the French)

Title	Date	Dialect
(e) Book of the Genesis and Exodus (metrical paraphrase of parts of the Old Testament)	1240	East Midland

2. Central Middle English (1250-1400)

Title	Date	Dialect
(a) *Proclamation of King Henry III (first extensive official document in English after 1066)	1258	London Midland
(b) English imitations of Norman- French romances, e.g. "King Horn", "Havelock the Dane", etc.	end 13th cent. - beginning 14th cent.	mixture of Midland and Southern
(c) Lengthy rhymed chronicles, e.g. those of *Robert of Gloucester and Robert Mannyng	c.1300 - beginning 14th cent.	Southern East Midland
(d) Cursor Mundi (a rhymed series of biblical and other legends; the first major ME work in the Northern dialect)	beginning 14th cent.	Northern
(e) The Pricke of Conscience (a religious treatise by the hermit Richard Rolle of Hampole)	1340	Northern

Title	Date	Dialect
(f) *The Vision of Piers the Plow-man (satirical allegory usually ascribed to William Langland; exists in three versions)	1360-77	West Midland
(g) *The Translation by John Trevisa of R. Higden's "Polychronicon"	1387	Southwest Midland
(h) The work of *Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400), e.g. "The Canter-bury Tales", "Troilus and Cres-sida", "The Legend of Good Women", etc.	second half of the 14th century	East Midland
(i) The English writings of John Gower (1330-1408), e.g. "Confessio Amantis", etc.	-"-	East Midland
(j) J. Wycliffe's translation of the bible (the first complete English version: widely read and copied, the work had an important influence on the development of English prose)	1384	East Midland

3. Late Middle English (1400-1500)

(a) The verse of Th. Occleve (or Hocoleve; 1370?-1454?) and John Lydgate (1373?-1450?)	end 14th cent. – beginning 15th cent.	East Midland

Title	Date	Dialect
(b) John Capgrave's "Chronicle of England"	c.1463	East Midland

(John Capgrave 1393-1463;
conservative clergyman. His
writings were numerous, the
majority in Latin. The "Chronicle"
starts from the "Creation of the
World" and ends abruptly with
1417)

(c) Th. Malory's "Morte d'Arthur"	1469-70	East Midland

(a collection of stories about
Arthur and the knights of the
Round Table; told in a simple
and vivid style; the work was
a source of inspiration for
many later writers)

(d) The work of *Will. Caxton (c.1422-1491)	second half of the 15th cent.	East Midland

(merchant, editor, translator;
introduced printing to England;
printed the first E. book "The
Recuyell of the Historyes of
Troye" in 1474 or 1475)

Chapter 2

EARLY AND CENTRAL MIDDLE ENGLISH

1. The Scandinavian Influence

The Scandinavian raids and invasions of the 9th and
10th centuries led to the settlement of large numbers of
Danes and Norwegians in Ireland, Scotland and Northern Eng-
land. Some indication of the extent of this settlement may
be had from the fact that more than 1400 place-names in Eng-
land (on the territory of the former so-called Danelaw) are
of Scandinavian origin. In some districts of northern and
eastern England such names constitute up to 75 per cent of
the total (e.g. in parts of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire).
The most distinctive Scandinavian element is the ending -by
meaning 'village', as in Derby and Whitby, but there are
many other Scandinavian endings, like -beck 'brook', in
Troutbeck, Birkbeck; -thorp 'village', in Thorpe, Althorp;
-ness 'promontory, headland', in Inverness, Fife Ness, etc.
The Scandinavian influence is also reflected in peculiari-
ties of local government and legal procedure (e.g. the three
administrative divisions of Yorkshire, the North, East and
West Ridings < OSc þridjungr 'a third part'; the Tynwald
or legislature of the Isle of Man < OSc þingvöllr 'as-
sembly field').

The Scandinavians settled in groups in concentrated
centres. In the 10th century and later the relations of the

Scandinavians and their Anglo-Saxon neighbours were not uni-
formly hostile. There were numerous intermarriages and it
was but a question of time until the Scandinavian communi-
ties were absorbed into the general mass of the E. popula-
tion. The amalgamation of the two peoples was greatly facil-
itated by the close kinship that existed between them. Al-
though the OSc dialects belonged to a different branch of
the Germanic languages (North Germanic), there were striking
similarities between them and the Old English dialects. There
were hundreds of common stems in the vocabulary as well as
numerous similarities in grammatical structure (the strong
and weak declensions of nouns and adjectives; seven classes
of strong verbs, 3-4 classes of weak verbs; several inflec-
tional endings were identical, e.g. -um in the dat. pl.,
-a in the gen. pl., etc.). Consequently the two peoples had
little trouble in understanding one another and bilingualism
was widespread. The result was the integration of OSc with
OE and especially EME. It is interesting to note that modi-
fied varieties of OSc continued to be spoken in remote parts
of Scotland until the 17th century.

We shall next review the Scandinavian influence on EME
vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar.

A. Scandinavian Influence on the Vocabulary

It has been estimated that the Sc. element in the E.
vocabulary amounts to 650-900 words (considerably more in
the regional dialects of northern England and Scotland).
Most of these Sc. words are first recorded in the literary
language of the 11th-13th centuries. Many of them were prob-
ably used even earlier in the spoken language. It is often
difficult to ascertain the precise extent of the OSc contri-
bution to the vocabulary of ME because of the great similar-
ity of the language. Very often it was only a sound or an
ending that was different, e.g.

5.

OE		OSc
fisc	'fish'	fiskr
fōt	'foot'	fōtr
mōdor	'mother'	mōþer
sunu	'son'	sunr
hāl	'whole, hale'	heill
lytel	'little'	litell
gōd	'good'	gōdr
bīdan	'wait'	bīþa
grīpan	'grip'	grīpa

In many cases it would be impossible to say whether a word is of OE or OSc origin if we had no records of E. before the Scandinavian invasions began.

Among the earliest Sc. loanwords in E. are (1) nouns, such as husband, fellow, anger, leg, sky, skull, wing, seat, root, dirt; (2) adjectives: low, flat, odd, wrong, ill, sly, rotten, weak; (3) verbs: call, get, take, die, scream, crawl, cast.

Of the numerous Sc. words connected with government and legal terminology only law (cf. by-law) and thrall have survived (all the rest were superseded by French words after the Norman Conquest).

Relation of Borrowed and Native Words

In the conditions of LOE and EME society where the Scandinavians mixed freely with their Anglo-Saxon neighbours and where bilingualism was a common phenomenon, E. and Sc. words were often used side by side. The survival of one or the other was frequently a matter of chance.

Thus, in many cases the Sc. word eventually replaced the native E. one, e.g. OE niman 'take', weorpan 'throw', clipian 'call', ēagþȳrel 'window' were replaced by the ME

tāken (< OSc taka), casten (< OSc kasta), callen (< OSc kalla), windowe (< OSc vindauga). –

In other cases the original meaning of the native word changed owing to Sc. influence, e.g. OE dwellan 'wander, roam, linger' came to mean 'to live' as a result of the influence of the OSc dwelja; CE plōh 'a plot (measure) of land (ab. 100 acres)' acquired the meaning of 'a plough' under the influence of OSc plōgr.

In a number of other cases both the native E. and the borrowed Sc. words were retained with a difference in meaning, e.g. MoE starve, whole, hide, shirt, shatter and the Sc. loanwords die, hale, skin, skirt, scatter.

It should be pointed out that as a result of the intimate mingling of the two languages E. borrowed many elemental words expressing important everyday notions. Such words have become part and parcel of the E. vocabulary.

The Sc. element in the northern and eastern dialects of E. is very conspicuous. Hundreds of Sc. words unknown in Standard E. are used in everyday dialect speech (e.g. toom 'empty', laik 'to play', nowt 'cattle', big 'to build', fell 'hill', tarn 'small lake). J. M. Wright's "English Dialect Dictionary" (1896–1905) contains 1,154 simple (i.e. non-compound) words beginning with sk- or sc-.

B. Scandinavian Influence on Pronunciation

In doublets such as skirt – shirt, scatter – shatter, screech – striek, etc., the backlingual [k] sound is evidence that the word is of Sc. origin. On the whole, the combination [sk] occurs almost exclusively in Sc. loanwords (e.g. skiff, skill, skull, sky, scrape, whisk). Consequently, words containing the spelling sh pronounced [ʃ] e.g. ship, shall, fish) go back to OE words.

Similarly the 'hard' pronunciation of g as [g] in give, get, gate, gift, etc. is of Sc. origin (cf.: OE ġiefan,

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-getan, gēat, gift which would normally have developed an
initial medio-lingual sonant [j] as in yet, yield, year). The
MoE egg likewise goes back to an OSc pronunciation and not
to the OE ǣg. The OE sweostor produced ME suster (e.g. in
Chaucer), the parallel form sister (probably < OSc systir)
comes into use in the 15th century.

C. Scandinavian Influence on Grammar

Further evidence of the intimate mingling of the two
languages may be found in the fact that the Sc. words that
made their way into E. were not confined to nouns, adjectives
and verbs, but extended to some pronouns, prepositions, ad-
verbs, conjunctions and even a part of the verb to be. Such
parts of speech are not often transferred from one langu·
to another.

The pers. prns. they, their and them are Scandi᷈ ᴠian
(cf. OE hīe, hiera, him which could in their weak ME forms
be more easily confused with forms of the singular: hē (m.
nom.), hire (f. gen.), etc.

The words same and both, although not primarily pronouns,
have pronominal uses and the latter are usually regarded as
being of Sc. origin (cf. OE ylc 'same' and ǣgþer 'both').

The preposition till was formerly widely used in the
sense of (up) to (besides having its present temporal mean-
ing).

The conjunction though goes back to the OSc equivalent
of OE þēah.

The Sc. adverbs in E. include aloft, athwart, aye,'ever'

The present plural form are of the verb to be undoubted-
ly owes its spread in the Northern dialects (and later through-
out England) to the influence of the Scandinavians.

It is possible that OSc had an influence on the develop-
ment of various other features of LOE-EME morphology and
syntax. Such an influence has been seen in (1) the spread of

the -s of the 3rd pers. sing. pres. indicative on analogy
with OSc where the 2nd and 3rd pers. sing. forms coincided,
(2) the extensive use of verbs with post-verbal particles
(adverb-prepositions) of the type take up, - down, - in, -
off, etc.,(3) the omission of the relative prn. that in re-
lative clauses, (4) the disappearance of weorþan in passive
constructions, etc.

Despite a large amount of research the relations of OSc
and LOE-EME in the field of grammar remain obscure. Most
anglicists agree that the contacts between the two languages
accelerated certain developments in E. The Sc. dialects prob-
ably had a stimulating indirect influence on various tenden-
cies in E. A manifestation of this subtle indirect influence
may perhaps be seen in the relatively rapid disappearance of
inflections and the development of various analytic features
in the north of England (the part occupied the longest by
Scandinavians). In many words the OE and OSc dialects dif-
fered mainly in their inflectional elements. The body of the
word was so nearly the same in the two languages that only
the endings would hinder mutual comprehension. Among the
mixed population which existed in the Danelaw these endings
must have led to considerable confusion. Hence they tended
gradually to become obscured and were finally lost. There is
no doubt that OE had analytic tendencies before the Scandi-
navians ever came to England and English would have lost its
inflections even if there had been no Sc. invasion. On the
other hand, there seems likewise to be no doubt that the
conditions prevailing in the Danelaw strengthened and accel-
erated such analytic tendencies, helped them to spread to
other parts of England, and thus contributed ultimately to
bring about numerous changes in ME grammar.

2. The Norman Conquest and Its Influence

The Norman Conquest was an event which affected the whole subsequent history of England and the E. lg. The Conquest was a long process covering many years after the battle of Hastings (Senlac) in 1066. There were numerous uprisings that were severely suppressed and as a result of which most of the old English nobility were wiped out, their lands confiscated and handed over to Norman barons. Practically all the leading offices of state, earldoms, bishoprics, abbacies, estates passed into the hands of Normans. The social order also changed as the Normans introduced a more advanced form of feudalism.

The army of William the Conqueror consisted of some ten to fifteen thousand men. The flow of Normans into Britain continued throughout the reign of William (1066-1087) and for about two centuries thereafter (till the beginning of the 13th century when England lost most of her territories on the Continent). It has been estimated that a total of about 200,000 Normans settled in Britain during this period

Fig. 2. Part of the Bayeux Tapestry depicting the battle of Hastings.

(the population of England at the time being roughly two
million).

As a result of the Conquest French became the language
of the court, the administration, and the upper classes in
general while Latin was used in the church and the schools.
Although E. was shut out of political life and education,
it remained the language of the masses of the population.
It is reasonable to assume that there was much bilingualism
in EME days as at least some Norman barons learnt the lan-
guage of their peasants while people of English descent as-
piring to rise in the social scale had to acquire French.

The domination of French in political, social and cul-
tural life lasted till the middle or second half of the 14th
century. The process by which E. came to its own was a slow
and gradual one which will be outlined in another section of
this handbook (see p. 79).

Little seems to have been written in E. during the first
hundred years after the coming of the Normans. No single E.
dialect was dominant after West Saxon lost its supremacy at
the end of the 11th century. E. became a neglected language
and was left without any standards of correctness. This had
important consequences because E. was thus deprived of the
conservative influence of literary traditions which may
otherwise have retarded the relatively rapid changes and
general disintegration of the inflectional system which took
place in the ME period.

When writing in E. was resumed in the late 12th and
early 13th centuries, there is a confusion of dialect forms
(see above, p. 8 ff.). The influence of French also makes
itself felt at an early date. The existence of two languages
in England (one of the people in general, the other that of
the feudal aristocracy and other sections of the ruling clas-
ses) provided an interesting case of language contact. As a
result of the crossing (i.e. bilingual blending) of English
and French in the 12th-14th centuries, the vocabulary of E.
was considerably replenished with French words and a number

of minor changes took place in spelling, pronunciation and grammar. The following is a review of the most important of these changes.

A. French Influence on the Vocabulary

There is little evidence of the influence of French upon E. before the Norman Conquest. Only about a dozen words seem to have been borrowed before that event (e.g. pride, proud, false, mantle, turn, chancellor, etc.). Other French words begin to appear in E. in the 12th century. Their number is limited at first, but grows steadily. Approximately 900 French loanwords appeared in E. before 1250. Especially many words were borrowed in the period 1250-1400. It has been estimated that roughly forty per cent of all the French words in the E. lg. were borrowed during this period (note that about 55 per cent of the vocabulary of Pres.E. is of Romanic origin).

It is important to remember that the form of the French lg. which was introduced to England as a result of the Conquest was a mixture of various northern dialects (the speech of Normandy and Picardy) which underwent certain modifications and became known as Anglo-French or Norman French. The greatest flood of French words, however, in the 13th-14th centuries came from Parisian or Central French (the dialect of the Ile-de-France). It is this difference in the French dialects from which E. acquired loanwords that accounts for doublets such as the following in Pres.E.:

Northern French: catch   warden   wage launch gaol   reward

Central French: chase   guardian gage   lance   jail   regard

It has already been pointed out that the Norman Conquest introduced a new social order to England. As French became the lg. of government, the court, the army and the church,

it is only natural that many terms relating to administration, law, ecclesiastical affairs, etc. should have been borrowed into English. The French influence was equally great in matters of culture, the arts, literature, dress, food and social life in general.

Governmental, Administrative and Legal Words. This group includes such fundamental words as government, state, county, authority, crown, sovereign, royal, council, parliament, bill, act, treaty, tax, mayor, court, judge, crime, petition, jury, advocate, proof, punishment, prison, just, innocent, etc.

Army and Navy. The fact that the control of what would now be called the armed services was in the hands of these who spoke French, and the circumstance that much of English fighting in the Middle Ages was done in France, resulted in the introduction of a number of French military terms. Despite numerous later changes in arms, techniques, etc. many of these early borrowings are still in use in English, e.g. army, navy, enemy, peace, battle, defence, retreat, soldier, guard, captain, lieutenant, sergeant, etc.

Ecclesiastical words. The importance of the church in medieval life is well known. The higher clergy in 11th-13th century England were practically all Normans. French was for a long time also spoken alongside Latin in monasteries. Accordingly we find in E. such French words as religion, sermon, confession, prayer, lesson, clergy, dean, chaplain, pastor, hermit, convent, sanctuary, creator, virgin, saint, miracle, mystery, faith, temptation, charity, mercy, pity, obedience, virtue, solemn, preach, repent, sacrifice, etc.

Fashion, Meals and Social Life. It is not surprising that the French-speaking upper class should have set the standard in fashion and dress. The last two nouns are themselves French, as are gown, robe, cape, cloak, frock, collar, lace, embroidery, kerchief, mitten, galoshes, boots, fur, ermine, satin,

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etc. The colours blue, brown, scarlet are French loanwords of this period. It is significant that the words jewel, ornament, brooch are of French origin, as are the names of all the more familiar precious stones: diamond, pearl, ruby, emerald, sapphire, cf. also crystal and coral.

The words dinner and supper are French (note that the name of the more simple meal breakfast is of OE origin). The well-to-do French-speaking strata of society also introduced the words feast, banquet, appetite, taste, boil, fry, stew, roast, soup, cream, sugar, salad, spice, mustard, vinegar, saucer, plate.

A number of new words suggest the leisure enjoyed by the ruling class and its influence on the household and social life in general: curtain, chair, cushion, lamp, lantern, blanket, quilt, towel, basin, wardrobe, pantry, ceiling, garret, recreation, dance, pleasure, leisure, chess, conversation, etc.

The Arts and Learning. The cultural and intellectual interests of the ruling class are reflected in words connected with the arts, literature and science, e.g. figure, image, beauty, art, painting, music, colour, poet, story, tragedy, volume, chapter, paper, study, grammar, copy, medicine, physician, surgeon, apothecary, pain, plague, contagion, anatomy, remedy, stomach, poison.

Names of Professions. Such French loanwords include carpenter, draper, joiner, butcher, mason, painter and tailor.

The classes of words illustrated in the preceding sections indicate some of the most important fields in which French influenced the E. vocabulary in the ME period. Actually the French influence was much more extensive and affected every province of life and thought. Very many indispensable everyday words in E. today are of French origin. A random sampling of such words includes air, place, table, city,

country, face, flower, honour, hour, joy, lesson, marriage,
mountain, noise, people, river; able, certain, easy, foreign,
gentle, large, natural, poor, secret, simple, sure, usual;
allow, arrive, cry, carry, close, enjoy, enter, excuse, move,
obey, pass, pay, please, prove, remember, travel, wait.

Assimilation of French Words

The French words introduced into E. as a result of the
Norman Conquest often look or sound quite different from the
corresponding words in Modern French. This is due either to
the fact that such early borrowings came from northern French
(see above, p. 26) or to subsequent developments which have
taken place in the two languages. Thus the OFr beste, passed
into ME as beste, becoming beast in MoE, while in MoFr as a
result of the disappearance of s before other consonants
towards the end of the 12th century the corresponding form is
bête. The same difference appears in feast - fête, forest -
forêt, and numerous other words.

In other cases the difference between the anglicized
French word and the corresponding MoFr word is apparent in
pronunciation. Early French loans have as a rule undergone
all the sound changes that have taken place in E. since their
adoption.

Thus words with the long [i:]-sound have had it diph-
thongized into [ai], e.g. fine, price, lion; long [u:](written
ou or ow) has similarly become [au], e.g. round, hour, flour;
flower, tower, power, as a result of the Great Vowel Shift in
the 15th-17th centuries. Cf., however, machine, caprice, rout
and other words borrowed after the Great Vowel Shift was over
and which have retained the vowels of their French original

Some English words, e.g. judge, chant preserve the early
French pronunciation of j and ch which in the 13th century
became [ʒ] and [ʃ] in French. Therefore we may recognize
chief, chair, chamber, chimney, Charles, age, just, journey,
gentle, etc. as early borrowings, while chef, chauffeur,

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chagrin, Charlotte, prestige are more recent French loans.

It should also be noted that French words in E. were
for centuries stressed in the French manner. Chaucer, e.g.,
had honour [ɔ'nu:r], corage [kuˈra:dʒe], resoun [reˈzu:n],
pilgrimage [pilgriˈma:dʒe], and it was only gradually that
the principal stress in such words was shifted forward to
its present place (cf., however, the terminal stress in more
recent loans, such as police, machine, etc.).

Loss of Native Words and Differentiation in Meaning

As a result of the Norman Conquest many French words
came into use that had meanings identical or similar to those
of existing native words. In such cases as a rule one of two
things happened: of the two words one was ultimately lost, or,
when both survived, they were differentiated in meaning.

In some cases the French word disappeared, but in the
majority of instances it was the native E. word that died
out. Often both words continued in use for a longer or shorter
time, and the E. word sometimes survives in regional dialects.
Thus the OE ēam, which has been replaced in StE by the French
word uncle, still lives on as eme in Scotland. Other cases of
the substitution of a French word for the OE one include moun-
tain (cf. OE beorȝ), forest (OE weald), river (OE ēa), army
(OE fierd or here), peace (OE friþ), wait (OE bīdan).

Where both the E. and the French words survived they
were generally differentiated in meaning. A few French words
have actually become more popular and commonplace than their
E. synonyms; cf., e.g. valley, action, forest and dale, deed,
wold. In most cases, however, it is the native word that is
felt to be more informal and colloquial than the more formal
and literary French word; compare e.g. the word-pairs begin –
commence, freedom – liberty, work – labour, hearty – cordial,
hide – conceal, and many others. An interesting group of words
illustrating the principle of semantic differentiation is
that of ox, swine, sheep and calf alongside the French equiv-

alents beef, pork, mutton and veal.

The different connotations and associations of French and native E. synonyms are not easily learnt, especially by the foreigner; but they undeniably endow the E. vocabulary with flexibility and grace.

Factors Facilitating the Assimilation of French Loanwords

Thousands of French words had entered the E. vocabulary by the end of the ME period. The question arises: How did the masses of the population manage to learn so many foreign words?

In a few cases the process of assimilation was helped by the resemblance of a French word to an old native one. The resemblance was sometimes the result of French having in some previous period borrowed the corresponding word from a Germanic dialect. Thus it is difficult to say how much MoE rich owes to OE rīce 'powerful, rich' and how much to French riche. The old native verb choose was supplemented with the noun choice from French choix. One should also note the similarity between the native agent-noun forming suffix -er and the corresponding French suffixes -ier and -eur. The French loanwords carpenter and interpreter could thus easily find a place alongside the native baker, miller, etc.

The learning and adoption of French words must have been greatly assisted by the habit noticeable in ME texts beginning with the early 13th century of using a French word side by side with its native synonym. The latter served as an interpretation of the former for the benefit of those not yet familiar with the foreign word. Thus one finds in the "Ancrene Riwle" (ab. 1225): cherite bet is luve; in desperaunce, bet is, in unhope...; ignoraunce, bet is un- wisdom & unwitenesse.

Other manuscripts contain numerous analogical collo-

cations. The native word was originally better known than
the foreign word. It is interesting to note that the native
word is now usually forgotten or less common than the for-
eign one.

In Chaucer, Caxton, etc. one can also find similar
double expressions, but here such collocations are intro-
duced for a different purpose. The reader is evidently sup-
posed to be equally familiar with both words and the writer
uses them to heighten or strengthen the effect of the style:
He coude songes make and well endyte (Ch.), I toke a glasse
or a mirrour (Caxton). Olde and auncyent doctours (Caxton).

B. French Influence on Word-Formation

In the centuries immediately following the Norman Con-
quest there was a perceptible decline in the use of the old
methods of word-formation (see IOE, pp. 29-33). Many OE
prefixes and suffixes lost their productiveness (esp. the
former). New self-explaining compound words also became less
frequent as ready-made French words were borrowed instead.
In short - the wealth of easily acquired new words weakened
the native E. habits of word-formation.

On the other hand, a number of French derivational
elements entered the E. language. Some suffixes of French
origin have become highly productive. In this connection
one must mention the phenomenon of hybridism. A hybrid,
lexicologically speaking, is a composite word formed of
elements of different languages. Hybrid words are produced
in comparatively great numbers in most languages (cf. Est.
reaalne, realistlik, kroolima). E. is especially rich in
hybrids composed of a native stem and a foreign ending. The
ease with which hybrids were formed in ME is a result of
the extensive and rapid assimilation of French words. Thus,
the borrowing of nouns with the suffixes -ess, -et, -age
(princess, duchess; coronet, islet; courage, carriage) made

possible the formation of hybrids containing these suffixes
added to native stems, such as <u>shepherdess</u>, <u>goddess</u>; <u>stream-</u>
<u>let</u>, <u>leaflet</u>; <u>breakage</u>, <u>shortage</u>. One of the most produc-
tive derivational endings in E. is the adjective-forming
suffix -<u>able</u> (-<u>ible</u>). Occurring in numerous borrowings from
the French (<u>agreeable</u>, <u>variable</u>, <u>possible</u>), it has produced
equally numerous hybrid formations (<u>drinkable</u>, <u>eatable</u>,
<u>understandable</u>, <u>answerable</u>). Other productive affixes taken
from the French include the verb-forming suffix -<u>ish</u> (<u>fin-</u>
<u>ish</u>, <u>perish</u>, <u>punish</u>), the noun-forming -<u>ance</u> (-<u>ence</u>) (<u>hin-</u>
<u>drance</u>, <u>allowance</u>, <u>patience</u>), the prefixes <u>dis</u>- (<u>disappoint</u>,
<u>distrust</u>), <u>en</u>- (<u>encircle</u>, <u>endear</u>), etc. All such affixa-
tional elements have become part and parcel of the E. lan-
guage.

C. <u>French Influence on Spelling</u>

When works of literature began to appear again in E.
about a century after 1066, the old traditional spelling
of the 9th-11th centuries was no longer strictly adhered
to as there was no generally recognized literary standard.
As a result parallel forms and other inconsistencies became
common phenomena. Moreover, the Norman French scribes who
did most of the writing and copying introduced a number of
innovations. Several of the latter have survived and have
played their part in making MoE orthography notoriously
illogical.

<u>Note</u>. - The history of E. spelling should be carefully
distinguished from that of phonetic change (pronunciation).
Thus, e.g. the substitution by Anglo-Norman scribes of <u>ou</u>
for the OE long [u:] in words such as hūs, mūs did not af-
fect the pronunciation of these words which continued to
be pronounced with a long [u:], e.g. <u>hous</u> [hu:s], <u>mous</u>
[mu:s]. The pronunciation of such words with a diphthong
[haus, maus] is a much later development of the 16th-17th

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centuries.

It should be emphasised that the changes in spelling introduced by the Norman scribes were purely graphic and did not as a rule influence EME pronunciation.

The following are some of the principal EME orthographical innovations resulting from the Norman Conquest:

Vowels

(1) The OE long [u:] (written u in OE texts) came to be represented by the digraph ou (because the latter represented a similar long sound in OFr spelling). Used first in loanwords, such as trouble [tru:bl], couch [ku:tʃ], the digraph then appeared in native E. words, e.g. hous, out, loud (cf. OE hūs, ūt, hlūd).

In a final position (and occasionally within a word) the French ou was usually written for calligraphic reasons as ow, e.g. cow, how, down (cf. OE cū, hū, dūn; note that in MoE the only words still spelt with a final -u are you and thou).

The use of ou (ow) to denote the long [u:] resulted in some orthographic confusion as the same digraph was also used in other words for the ME diphthong [ou]. This is why MoE has (a) out, cow, now, down (where the MoE [au] < ME [u:] and (b) soul, snow, slow, low (where the MoE [ou] < ME [ou]).

(2) The OE short [u] continued to be represented in EME texts as a rule by means of the letter u. In some positions, however, where it was liable to be confused with some other letters, it came to be written as o. This happened mainly in the neighbourhood of so-called "stick consonants" (i.e. onsonant letters containing "sticks" or vertical strokes, uch as n, m, v, w). A sequence of vertical lines could be confusing in an EME manuscript. OE cuman could look something like ⊂ 77777 ℓ 77 and resemble cimie, cmue, etc.

To avoid possible confusion in such cases, the Anglo-Norman scribes substituted an o for the u. Such a spelling was encouraged by the fact that in many Norman French words where the letter o originally represented a short [o] it had come to stand for a short [u]. This arbitrary change of E. spelling for purely graphic or calligraphic reasons is responsible for such spellings as EME coman, sone, son, love (MoE come, son, some, love; cf. OE cuman, sunu, sum, lufu).

(3) In OE the long [eː] was written by means of e (ē in modern edited texts). In Norman French the combination of letters ie stood for the long [eː]. Soon after the introduction of French loanwords, such as chief ['tʃeːf], relief [reˈleːf], the digraph ie appeared in native E. words, e.g. field [feːld], thief [θeːf] (cf. OE feld, þeof).

Consonants

(1) The consonant letters ð and þ were gradually replaced by the combination of letters th. E.g. OE þis > ME this; OE þreo > ME thre. The letter ð disappeared first, whereas þ continued to be used fairly widely till the introduction of printing at the end of the 15th century.

(2) The OE [v] in an intervocalic position represented by the letter f came to be written v (or u), e.g. over (ouer), love (loue), cf. OE ofer, lufu.

(3) The voiceless affricate plosive stop [tʃ] began to be represented by means of the French combination ch which had become familiar as the result of the borrowing of such words as chair, chaumbre, Charles. Thus OE tēcan and cīld became ME techen and chīld.

The corresponding voiced affricate [dʒ] could be expressed by means of g, i or dg, e.g. the French loanwords courage, joy, the native ME bridge ['briːdʒe] (< OE brycg).

(4) The fricative spirant [ʃ] as in OE scip, scīnan came to be written sh or sch, e.g. ME ship (schip), shīnen.

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(5)   In OE the letter h stood for three varieties of sounds
(or phonemes?): (a) the glottal fricative spirant [h], as
in hūs, hē, hēafod, (b) the palatal fricative spirant [ç] or
ich-Laut, as in niht, briht, and (c) the velar fricative
spirant [X] or ach-Laut, as in eahta, bronte (for details
see IOE, pp. 18–19). The Anglo-Norman scribes retained the
spelling h for [h], but introduced gh for [ç] and [X]. The
latter sounds did not occur in French and the gh provided
a kind of clue to the pronunciations. This resulted in spell-
ings like ME night, bright, broghte (pronounced [niçt, briçt
broXte]. As the result of developments in the 15th–16th cen-
turies, the gh in such words became a silent combination
(see below, p. 103).

(6)   Various minor ME orthographical changes concerning con-
sonants include (a) the frequent substitution of k for c, as
in ME drinken (cf. OE drincan), ME knowen (cf. OE cnāwan);
(b) the habit of replacing final i by y for calligraphic
reasons (a final flourish was felt to be ornamental), as in
they, why (cf. earlier þei, whi); (c) the use of y instead
of initial g in words where the latter character (or more
correctly its OE counterpart ȝ) had the value of [j], e.g.
year, yet, yielden (cf. OE ȝēar, ȝȳt, ȝieldan); (d) the grad-
ual introduction beginning with the 13th century (ab. 1280)
of the character w for the earlier uu or vv. The latter two
combinations of letters were in their turn introduced by the
Norman scribes soon after the Conquest to represent the Eng-
lish bilabial spirant (lacking in the Romanic lgs.) which
had previously been represented in OE manuscripts by the
runic wen-letter ƿ (see IOE, p. 13). In other words, the
Normans preferred the doubling of one of their own letters
to the use of a character of runic origin. As y and u were
not fully differentiated in ME and even later, the letter w
could be regarded either as a combination of two u's or two
v's (hence its different name in, e.g. E. and Est.).

D. **French Influence on Pronunciation**

The influence of French on E. pronunciation has not been extensive. The introduction of large numbers of words containing certain new sounds led to their eventual incorporation in the sound system of the language. The best known cases are the diphthong [ɔi] which came in with such French loanwords as ME boilen, pointe, soile, moiste, the voiced [v] at the beginning of words, e.g. in verray, veyne, vain, and the voiceless [f] between voiced sounds, as in parfit.

The stressing of French loanwords in the French manner persisted for a long time (see above, p. 30).

E. **French Influence on Grammar**

The influence of the French language on the grammatical structure of ME is regarded as varied and extensive by some investigators, but negligible by others. Attempts have been made to demonstrate that the crossing of French with E. in the 12th-15th centuries accounts directly or indirectly for numerous changes both in ME morphology and syntax. Included among such shifts and changes one usually finds: (1) the substitution of prepositional locutions for old case inflections (e.g. the of-phrase instead of the inflected genitive), (2) the spread of the -(e)s plural, (3) the increasing use of the analytical means of forming the degrees of comparison in the adjective and adverb, (4) the evolution of various analytical forms of the verb such as the Perfect Tenses, etc.

The assumption that a French influence was directly responsible for such developments is erroneous, because the usages and constructions referred to can easily be shown to have been more or less established features of OE. The tendencies of the language in this respect would have been the same even if there had never been a Norman Conquest. On the other hand, the Norman Conquest and its aftermath acted as

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a kind of linguistic catalyzer and undoubtedly accelerated some of the changes under way in the structure of the language. This was the principal result of a situation where E. was left for some centuries without the retarding and conservative influence of an accepted literary standard. In such circumstances, tendencies which had only begun to reveal themselves in LOE, could develop unhampered. The existence of parallels in OFr may have served indirectly to reinforce and enrich already established E. usages.

Despite a vast amount of literature on the subject of French and English language contacts in the ME period, it cannot be said that we have convincing answers to anything like all the questions involved. There is still room for further intensive research in this interesting field.

3. Early and Central Middle English Phonology

Profound changes occurred in the phonological system of E. in the ME period. They will be dealt with below in the following order:

A. Vowels. 1. Reduction of final unstressed vowels, 2. Quantitative changes affecting separate vowels, 3. Qualitative changes affecting separate vowels, 4. Disappearance of old and development of new diphthongs;

B. Consonants.

A. Changes Affecting Vowels

1. Reduction of Final Unstressed Vowels. All unstressed vowels in a word-terminal position underwent a radical change in EME becoming weak e, i.e. the schwa vowel [ə]. This tendency went hand in hand with a tendency to drop inflections and to use analytical forms. In the 13th-14th centuries the obscuring of final vowels became universal in nouns, adjec-

tives and verbs, e.g. OE sunu > EME sone ['sunə], OE stānas > EME stōnes ['stoːnəs]; OE se gōda man > EME þe gōde man; OE wrītan > EME wrīten.

The relations between phonetic reduction on the one hand, and the loss of inflections, i.e. the development of an analytical system in E. on the other hand, constitutes an interesting problem that has received much attention, but has not yet been convincingly solved. The neo-grammarians (Junggrammatiker) attributed the development of the predominantly analytic grammatical system of E. to phonetic causes, such as stress, etc. According to O. Jespersen's notorious language progress theory the development from a synthetic to an analytic system is an absolute law of the evolution of languages. The traditional view has been that the old inflectional endings lost their meaning as new analytical means of expression (prepositions, word order) became more important. Such a gradual loss of grammatical meaning on the part of old endings led to the levelling out and ultimate disappearance of final unstressed vowels. The theory that the loss of the grammatical meaning and function of inflectional endings resulted in the reduction of their vowels and the eventual disintegration of the endings, is known as the functional theory. This theory was formerly popular both abroad (W. Horn, M. Lehnert) and in the Soviet Union (B. Ilyish, V. Zhirmunski). More recently, however, the opinion has been expressed by some Soviet anglicists that the reduction of vowels and the disintegration of morphology are two parallel processes independent of each other. The late Prof. A. Smirnitsky and V. Passek have pointed out that these two processes occur in all the Germanic languages, but possess specific features in each of them (e.g. both processes have occurred in E., whereas in German there has been reduction, but little loss of inflections; in Swedish there has been hardly any reduction, but considerable loss of inflections, etc.). It is hardly plausible that reduction and

morphological disintegration are entirely independent phe-
nomena. Further investigations are needed to establish the
correlations between the two processes. An interesting recent
Soviet approach (L. Barkhudarov) seeks to explain the loss
of endings in the light of information theory (as a result
of redundancy of information).

2. Quantitative Changes. These changes affected the quanti-
ty or length of vowels and occurred as (a) shortening or
(b) lengthening. The pertinent developments are probably an
expression of the rhythmic principle in E. pronunciation,
i.e of the well-known tendency to alternate stressed syl-
lables with weaker ones in connected speech.

(a) Shortening of Originally Long Vowels

Practically all long vowels followed by two consonants
(either a double consonant or a consonant group) underwent
shortening, e.g.:

       OE cēpte (pt. of cēpan) > ME kĕpte (cf. kēpen).
       OE fēdde (pt. of fēdan) > ME fĕdde (cf. fēden)
       OE wīsdom ·   > ME wĭsdom (cf. wīs)
       OE fīfta   > ME fĭfth (cf. fīve)

There were some exceptions to this general rule, however.
Thus a long vowel remained long before certain consonant com-
binations, viz. ld, mb, nd. This meant that the LOE lengthen-
ing of the vowel in cīld, clīmban, bīndan was preserved in
ME child, clīmben, bīnden. Long vowels also usually remained
long before st, e.g. OE eastan > ME ēsten 'in the east', OE
mǣst > ME māst, mōst; cf., however, OE dūst > ME dŭst.

The shortening of vowels in ME had a considerable ef-
fect on the outward appearance of the language as it gĕve
rise to such MoE spellings as feed – fed, sleep – slept,
deep – depth, goose – gosling, etc.

(b) Lengthening of Originally Short Vowels

Already in LOE short vowels were lengthened before ld, mb, nd, etc. (see preceding section and IOE, p. 23). The end of the 12th and the first half of the 13th century saw the lengthening of a, e, o, in open stressed syllables of disyllabic words. This development began in the Northern dialects and spread throughout England in the course of the 13th century. The changes involved had a profound influence on the future development of the E. vowel system which now began increasingly to resemble that of MoE.

The following are some examples of lengthening:

Old English		Middle English		
		11th century		12th–13th centuries
măcian	>	măken	>	māken
tălu	>	tăle	>	tāle
năma	>	năme	>	nāme
stĕlan	>	stĕlen	>	stēlen
smŏca	>	smŏke	>	smōke

In some cases the close short vowels i and u were also lengthened in open syllables and turned into an open e and o respectively, e.g. OE wĭce > ME wēke 'week', OE dŭru > ME dōre 'door', OE wudu > ME wōde 'wood'. The latter changes involve an alteration of the quantity as well as the quality of the original vowel.

Doublets

The developments outlined in the preceding sections are responsible for a number of doublets in MoE. Such doublets usually arose in ME on the basis of uninflected forms containing a long vowel, and inflected forms with a short vowel, e.g.:

OE		ME		MoE
scéadu	>	shāde	>	shade
scéadwe	>	shădwe	>	shadow
(gen., dat., acc. sg.)		(vowel occurs before		
		double consonant!)		
mǣd	>	mēde	>	mead
mǣdwe	>	mědwe	>	meadow
(gen., dat.. acc. sg.)				

Cf. also the MoE adjective black from OE blăec (m.+ n.) through ME blak and the family name Blake from OE blăcu (f.) through ME blake. Other doublets due to similar causes are food – fodder, toad – tadpole, game – gammon, etc. Differences in the pronunciation of various other words containing identical stem vowels can also be accounted for by the position of the vowels. Short vowels were lengthened in LOE before ld, mb, nd, etc., but not if still another (i.e. a third) consonant followed these combinations, e.g. child – children; hind, behind – hindrance, hinder; wild – bewilder, wilderness.

3. Qualitative Changes. Such changes involved an alteration of the actual nature and quality of individual vowels. Strictly speaking, the reduction of unstressed vowels (see above, p. 38) also involves a change in the quality of vowels and could have been discussed under the present heading.

(1) Several OE short vowels were retained unchanged in EME, e.g. OE tellan > EME tellen 'tell', OE singan > EME singen 'sing', OE hors > EME hors 'horse'.

(2) Short and long a. As a rule OE short a also remained unchanged in ME. Before a nasal consonant OE a or o underwent different development in the various dialects. In the West Midland dialects o was retained unchanged in words like mon 'man' and con 'can', whereas in the other dialects (Northern East Midland and Southern) it was the a that remained unaltered.

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OE ā was changed to a long open ō in the Southern and Midland dialects, remaining unchanged in the North (see Fig. 3). This rounding of OE ā appears to have begun in some dialects already before the middle of the 12th century (the Peterborough Chronicle has some ǫ spellings), though its results were not universally expressed in spelling before the first quarter of the 13th century.

Fig.3. The development of OE ā in ME dialects.

The change meant that OE hām, gān, snāw, stān, māra, cnāwan became respectively EME hǭm, gǭn, snǭw, stǭn, mǭre, knǭwen. Cf. the present-day Northern and Scottish dialects where one finds hame [heim] for home, bane [bein] for bone, etc. Such dialect pronunciations go back to the original long [a:] in these words which remained unchanged in the North and turned into [ei] as a result of the Great Vowel Shift. A few such Northern forms have passed into StE during the modern period, e.g. hale (alongside whole), raid (beside road).

(3) Short and long æ. OE æ > ME a in most dialects, e.g. OE glæd, æppel, wæs > ME glad, appel, was.

In order to discuss the development of OE ǣ it will be convenient to distinguish the two origins of this sound as $\bar{æ}^1$ and $\bar{æ}^2$.

The former goes back to Early OE ǣ and Proto-Gmc. ē. This ǣ as in OE slǣpan 'sleep', dǣd 'deed', lǣtan 'let, hinder' became a long close ẹ̄ in the Northern Midland and

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8.

Kentish areas already in LOE (except in the Southwestern dialects where it became a long open ę̄). This close ē̇ was retained in ME: slēpen, dēd, lēten.

The OE ǣ² was the result of the i-mutation of earlier OE ā and developed into EME long, open ę̄ (but a long close ē̇ in Kentish already in LOE), e.g.: OE dǣl 'deal', sǣ 'sea', clǣne 'clean', rǣdan 'read' > EME dę̄l, sę̄, clę̄ne, rę̄den.

The distinction between close ē̇ [eː] and open ę̄ [ɛː] persisted throughout ME and has left its traces in the MoE spellings with ee (meet, see, sleep, deed) and ea (meat, sea, clean, read). Although the words listed as illustrations are now all pronounced with an identical long [iː], they were still phonetically distinguished in the 16th century when ea was introduced in the spelling of those words that were originally pronounced with the long open [ɛː]. In the late 17th and the early 18th century ea lost its specific meaning when [ɛː] > [iː] (as [eː] had already done in the 15th–16th centuries).

(4) Short and long y. The OE y (ȳ) underwent different development in the various dialects in LOE and EME. In the Northern and East Midland dialects it became i (ɪ), in Kent and Suffolk it changed into e (ē), whereas in the greater part of England (that is to say in the West and Central Midlands and the South except Kent and Suffolk) it remained with, approximately, its original sound well into the 15th century (see Fig. 4; also above, p. 12). It is thus that OE fyrst occurs as first, ferst or fyrst, OE hyll as hill, hell, hyll in manuscripts from different parts of the country. From a very early period, at least as early as 1170 or so, the French spelling u came to be used for the old sound, and later, this with occasional o, becomes the exclusive manner of representing it when short. The long sound was frequently written ui, uy.

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Fig. 4. The development of OE y in ME
dialects.

4. Disappearance of Old and Development of New Diphthongs

All the OE diphthongs (see IOE, p. 16) were monophthong-
ized, i.e: turned into simple vowels early in the ME period.
This development may be summed up in the statement that
they lost their lightly stressed elements while their
strongly stressed element remained.

E.g. OE ea > æ > a, as in EME ald, half, arm from OE
eald, healf, earm (note that MoE old goes back to a Mid-
land form ōld (< OE ald), the vowel here being the result
of the regular LOE lengthening of a before ld and the EME
change of ā > ē).

OE ēa > ǣ > ę̄, as in OE bēam, 'tree', strēam 'stream'
> EME bēm, strēm.

OE eo changed first into the sound [ö] which survived
in the West Midland and Southwestern dialects till the 14th
century (spelt eo), whereas in the other dialects it became
ę in the 12th century. Thus OE heorte [heorte] 'heart' > EME
heorte [hörte], herte; OE steorfan 'die' > EME steorven

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[störven], sterven.

OE eo > long close ę̄ (often spelt ee), e.g. OE dēop 'deep'> EME dēp, deep; OE ćēosan 'choose' > EME chēsen.

At the same time as the old diphthongs disappeared various new diphthongs came into existence. Thus the diphthong [ɔi] was introduced with the help of numerous French loanwords, e.g. boil, oil, soil, moist, choice (see above, p. 37). The two principal sources of new diphthongs in native words in ME are (1) the vocalization of OE ʒ[j] which combined with a preceding æ, e (ē) or a (ā) to produce a diphthong, as when OE dæʒ, mæʒ, weʒ, draʒan, āʒen > EME dai (day), mai (may), wei (wey), drawen, ǭwen; and (2) the development of a glide between a vowel (ēa, eo, ā, o, ō, etc.) and h, as in OE hēah 'high', dāh 'dough', brōhte 'brought', plōh 'plough' > EME heih (high), dough, broughte, plough.

As a result of these and various other minor developments there appeared in ME a new type of diphthongs represented in spelling as ai, ay, ei, ey, au, aw, ou, ow, etc. These new diphthongs with their close second element differed in character from the OE diphthongs which all ended with an open element.

B. Changes Affecting Consonants

It is a well-known fact that the consonant systems of languages are relatively more stable than their vowel systems. The OE consonants also underwent few alterations in comparison with the varied changes that affected the OE vowels in the ME period.

The following is a brief survey of consonantal changes in EME (for a more detailed account of the OE consonants see IOE, pp. 17-18).

(1) The OE front palatal stop ć and consonant combination ćʒ became the voiceless affricate [tʃ] and voiced [dʒ] respectively already towards the end of the OE period. The manner of representing these sounds in spelling has been dis-

cussed above (p. 35). E.g. OE ćin 'chin', čīld, bryčჳ
'bridge', hryčჳ 'ridge', ečჳ 'edge' > ME chin, child,
bridge, ridge, edge.

(2) The OE consonantal combination sc developed into
the fricative spirant [ʃ]; e.g. as in ME ship, shīnen < OE
scip, scīnan.

(3) The initial h disappeared in words beginning with
one of the consonant clusters hl-, hn-, hr-, e.g. OE hlā-
ford 'master', hnutu 'nut', hrinჳ 'ring' became EME lord,
nute, ring.

(4) The consonant ჳ changed into ŋ or disappeared al-
together before another consonant in some words, e.g. EME
havkes (gen. sg. of hafoc 'hawk') > CME haukes (from which
a new nom. sg. hauk was formed); OE hlæfdiჳe 'lady' > EME
lavdi > CME lādy; OE hlāford 'master, lord' > EME lǫverd
> CME lord; OE nafoჳār 'auger' > EME navgar > CME nauger.
MoE auger is the result of so-called metanalysis, i.e. the
mistaken division of a word whereby a nauger > an auger;
other cases of metanalysis have given rise to such forms as
a newt (< ME an ewte), an apron (< ME napron), a nickname
(< ME an ekename), an adder (< ME a naddere).

(5) In the Southern dialects initial voiceless f in
words of Germanic origin became voiced ჳ, e.g. OE fæder
'father', frēond 'friend', fyret 'first' > Southern ME
'vader, vrend, ferst'.

In the Kentish dialect initial s in Germanic words was
turned into voiced z, e.g. OE sēofon 'seven', synne 'sin',
secჳan 'say' > Kentish ME zeven, zenne, ziggen.

Such pronunciations survive in the present-day regional
dialects of southern, especially southwestern England
(vaarm'r = farmer, vox = fox, zommer = summer, zon = son).
The vocabulary of Modern StE contains a few such southern
words, e.g. vat (cf. OE fæt) and vixen (cf. OE fyxen and MoE
fox < OE fox)

C. Summary

By the time of Chaucer (1340?-1400) the phonetic system of the E. lg. had changed considerably in comparison with that of the OE period. The principal differences are the following:

(1) Unstressed vowels have been levelled under the schwa [ə].

(2) The OE diphthongs of the ea type (i.e. with an open second element) have been replaced by a new type of diphthong with a close second element, such as ei, ai.

(3) A new principle comes into effect of the dependence of the quantity (length) of a vowel upon phonetic conditions within a word (lengthening, shortening).

(4) Voiced and voiceless affricate consonants make their appearance.

The system of vowel sounds which developed in the 12th-14th centuries became the foundation for the development of the MoE system. The principal phonetic changes that distinguish MoE vowels from those of ME constitute the Great Vowel Shift of the 15th-18th centuries. There have been only a few important consonantal changes since the 14th century (see below, p.102).

4. Middle English Grammar (1100-1400)

A. Introductory

The profound changes in the grammatical structure of the language that occurred in the ME period reduced E. from a highly inflected language to a predominantly analytic one.

At no other period in the history of E. have such sweeping and relatively rapid shifts taken place in grammar.

Speaking of these developments the following general points should be borne in mind: (1) the changes were especially rapid in the 12th-14th centuries (perhaps this rapidity is more of an illusion because the changes in colloquial E. may simply not have been reflected in the texts of immediate pre-Norman Conquest literature written in traditional classical Late OE); (2) the changes began in the Northern dialects from where they gradually spread southwards; (3) the changes proceeded at a different rate in the different parts of speech, viz. they were particularly extensive in the nominal parts of speech, less extensive in the verb; (4) the changes show a pattern of typization, i.e. there is a tendency towards the establishment of a limited number of definite types of inflections (a result of the operation of language analogy); (5) the changes taken as a whole reveal a marked shift towards an analytic system (a number of new analytic forms and constructions become established features of the language).

B. Morphology

A general levelling of the inflectional endings of the noun and adjective took place. To some extent the same thing is true of the verb. The endings marking distinctions of number and case and often of gender were altered in pronunciation so as to lose their distinctive form and also their usefulness. The phonetic changes were simple but far-reaching. They mainly involved vowels (for reduction of vowels, see above, p. 38) and, to a lesser extent, consonants. The earliest change seems to have been that of final -m to -n in the dat. pl. of nouns and adjectives and in the dat. sg. (m. and n.) of adjectives when inflected according to the strong declension. E.g. OE mūðum 'to the mouths' > mūðun; OE gōdum (dat. pl. of the adj. gōd 'good') > gōdun. This -n along with the -n of the other inflectional endings was then dropped. At the same time the vowels a, o, u, e in inflec-

tional endings were obscured to the [ə]-sound, which came to
be written e (less often i, y, u). As a result, several orig-
inally distinct endings such as -a, -u, -e, -an, -um were
reduced to a uniform -e, and the grammatical distinctions
that they formerly expressed were no longer conveyed. Traces
of these changes have been found in OE MSS. as early as the
10th century and by the end of the 12th century they seem to
have become general. As stated above, the disintegration of
the morphological system was especially rapid in the nominal
parts of speech.

1. The Noun

In the old -a-declension (see IOE, p. 42) the various
inflected forms stān, stānes, stāne, stān in the sg., and
stānas, stāna, stānum, stānas in the pl. were reduced to
three: stōn, stōnes and stōne (note the change of OE ā > ME
ō. In such words the ending -e (which stood for an ending in
the OE paradigm) was in the 15th century extended by analogy
to the nom. and acc. sg. so that forms like stone, house ap-
pear, and the only distinctive ending (termination) is the
-s of the gen. eg. and of the nom. and acc. pl. As these two
cases of the plural were those most frequently used, the -s
came to be regarded as the sign of the plural and was extend-
ed to all plural forms. Other deolensions underwent even
greater disintegration, so that in many words (OE giefu, sunu,
etc.) the distinctions of case and even of number were com-
pletely lost.

Already in the 11th-12th centuries there was a tendency
for the nom. plurals in -as (OE stānas) and in -an (OE naman)
to be extended to nouns which originally belonged to other
declensions. In OE, as is well known (see, e.g. IOE, p. 48),
here were also plurals such as stræta, scipu, dæde, bēc
with umlaut) and hūs (an invariable plural). All these means
of expressing the plural of nouns gradually disappeared. In
EME the -as and -an endings were levelled to -es and -en. Un-

til the 13th century the -en plural was very popular in the
South of England, being often used with nouns which had
not belonged to the weak declension in OE. In the rest of
the country, especially in the North, the -(e)s plural
spread rapidly. By 1200 -(e)s was the standard plural end-
ing in the North and north Midland areas. By 1300 it had
conquered the rest of the Midlands and in the course of the
14th century it had been accepted all over England as the
normal sign of the plural in nouns. The reasons for the
spread of the -(e)s plural are not entirely clear. They
probably include (a) the influence of analogy, (b) the
specific quality of the sibilant [s]; this 'chief of con-
sonants' (as it has been called because of its importance
in E. grammar) is more distinctive than the nasal [n] or
any of the vowels that were also used to express the plural
and which eventually underwent reduction, (c) the possible
indirect influence of Old French (it was a coincidence that
OFr nouns also took the ending -s in the plural).

As a result of the developments we have outlined, the
inflection of the noun in the literary form of the language
(see below, p.89) became practically identical with that
in MoE. In the 14th century (e.g. in the works of Chaucer)
nouns have the following system of inflection:

(1) Most nouns were inflected as follows:

	Sg.	Pl.
Nom.⎫		
Dat.⎬ stǭn, cāre, dǭr		stǭnes, cāres, dǭres
Acc.⎭		
Gen.	stǭnes, cāres, dǭres	stǭnes, cāres, dǭres

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(2) Nouns ending in -f and -th preserved the interchange
    of voiced and voiceless consonants:

	Sg.	Pl.
Nom.)		
Dat. }	līf, path [θ]	līves, pathes [-ð-]
Acc.)		
Gen.	līves, pathes [-ð-]	līves, pathes [-ð-]

(3) Nouns with mutation (umlaut) plurals were declined
    as follows:

	Sg.	Pl.
Nom.)		
Dat. }	man, fōt	men, fēt
Acc.)		
Gen.	mannes, fōtes	mennes, fētes

(4) Several nouns which belonged to the weak declension in
    OE continue to take -en in the plural, e.g. oxe 'ox' -
    oxen; ye 'eye' - eyen, yen; fō 'foe' - fōn; tō 'toe' -
    tōn.

    The plural ending -en was even extended to a few words
    which belonged to the strong declension in OE, e.g. shō
    'shoe' - shōn (cf. OE sceoh, pl. sceohs).

(5) A number of nouns preserved their old invariable (i.e.
    uninflected) plurals. They include neuter nouns such
    as swīn, dēr, shēp, thing, yēr, hors and some masculine
    and feminine nouns, e.g. winter, mōneth, night. Gradual-
    ly, however, these words also came to be inflected ac-
    cording to the usual pattern: yēres, thinges, monthes.

    An important analytical development in connection with
    nouns was the use of prepositional constructions in-

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stead of the older case endings. Thus the preposition to
gradually edged out the dative case and constructions with
the preposition of came to be used more and more often in-
stead of the old genitive. Prepositions began to be used to
express a variety of syntactic relations. Compare, e.g. OE
bīdan windes and ME to biden for the wind, OE grētan wordum
and ME greten with wordes.

It would be a mistake to believe that prepositional
constructions were substituted for earlier case endings
after the latter had fallen into disuse. Prepositions were
actually used quite frequently already in OE where they
served to make the meanings of case inflections more emphat-
ic or precise. As the inflections began to lose their mean-
ings prepositions gradually became an increasingly import-
ant vehicle (together with word order and juxtaposition)
for expressing syntactic relationships. The connection of
this complicated process with the phonetic reduction of vow-
els has been touched upon in another connection (see above,
p. 39).

2. The Adjective

In the adjective the levelling of forms occurred on
an even greater scale. An extremely rapid disintegration of
the adjectival declension took place in the 11th-14th centu-
ries, beginning in the North. Partly as a result of the
working of analogy, partly through the extensive reduction
of vowels, the form of the nom. sg. of the adjective was
gradually extended to all cases of the singular, and that
of the nom. pl. to all cases of the plural, both in the
strong and weak declensions.

Already in the 13th century the complicated OE system
(see IOE, pp. 56-57) had acquired the following form:

9*

	Strong	Weak
Sg.	gōd	gōde
Pl.	gōde	gōde

As can be seen all the older final vowels have been
levelled under —e. When in the 14th cent. final —e largely
ceased to be pronounced, it became a mere feature of spell-
ing. By the early 15th century the adjective had thus be-
come an uninflected word. Instead of the eleven distinct
forms of the adjective that were possible in OE, only one
was used by the end of the ME period. The complete absence
of inflection in the MoE adjective is definitely an asset
of the language.

The degrees of comparison are formed in ME by means
of the endings —.er ; —est (cf. OE —ra, —ost):

```
        glad  -  gladder  - gladdest
        grēt  -  gretter  - grettest
        fayr  -  fayrer   - fayrest
```

Some adjectives retain mutation in their comparative
and superlative forms, e.g. ǭld - elder - eldest, long -
lenger - lengest, strong - strenger - strengest.

A number of ME adjectives form their comparative and
superlative degrees from a root different from that of the
positive (an instance of suppletivity; cf. IOE, p. 58),
e.g. gōd - bettre - best; evil - werse - werst;
muchel - mǭre - mǭst, mest; litel - lasse - lēst.

The analytical manner of forming the degrees of com-
parison by means of the words more and most also makes head-
way in ME. Such analytical forms are common in Chaucer
(e.g. the more mery; the bettre and the more profitable;
moost feithful; the gentileste that ever she ... fonde).
The view that the analytical mode of comparing adjectives
is the result of French influence is hardly tenable because
some instances occur already in OE texts. Old French may

however have had a reinforcing role in this as well as other
respects (cf. above, p. 37).

3. The Pronoun

Note: This section should be read in conjunction with
the corresponding parts in IOE (pp. 50–53).

(1) Personal Pronouns. In comparison with the inflections
of nouns and adjectives that of the personal pronoun has
been remarkably well preserved. Here there was greater need
for distinct forms for the different genders and cases. Ac-
cordingly most of the distinctions that one finds in OE
were retained. There is much confusion of forms and many
variants in different dialects (see above, p. 11) and in
the works of individual authors. The following is a list of
the usual pers. prns. in 14th-century London E.:

Singular					Plural		
1.	2.	3.			1.	2	3.
		m	f	n			
Nom. I, ich	thow [ðuː]	hē	hē, shē	hit, it	wē	yē	hi, they
Obj. mē	thē	him	hir,her	hit, it	us	you	hem, them

The following major changes distinguish the system of
ME pers. prns. from that of OE (cf. IOE, p.50):

(a) The forms of the old dative and accusative were
merged in LOE-EME, generally under the form of the dative
(him, her, him).
(b) The dual number disappeared in the 12th-13th cen-
turies.
(c) OE iċ > EME ich (where the ch was merely a spelling
for [tʃ]. In addition to ich, all ME dialects also had an
unstressed form i (with a short vowel), which came to be

written as a capital I̲ for calligraphic reasons. This form
I̲ came to be used in stressed (with a long vowel) as well as
unstressed positions and by the end of the ME period it had
almost replaced i̲c̲h̲. MoE I̲ [ai] has developed regularly from
the ME I̲ [i:] used in a stressed position.

(d) The genitive cases of pers. prns. became established
as possessive prns. after having sometimes been used as such
already in OE. Some of the pertinent changes here are:

(i) EME ōwer, ȝūr (< OE ēower) took a final -e̲ in LME
on analogy with ūre, becoming youre.

(ii) m̲ī̲n̲ and b̲ī̲n̲ dropped their final n̲ before a conso-
nant in EME (e.g. m̲ī̲ f̲a̲d̲e̲r̲), keeping it before a vowel or
h̲ + vowel (e.g. m̲ī̲n̲ a̲r̲m̲, b̲ī̲n̲ h̲e̲r̲t̲ẹ). In LME the n̲ was often
dropped before a vowel as well. The n̲ was, of course, always
kept when the possessives were used absolutely, or when they
followed their noun (e.g. h̲i̲t̲ i̲s̲ m̲ī̲n̲, b̲r̲o̲b̲e̲r̲ m̲ī̲n̲).

(iii) In LME (end 14th-15th cent.) the possessives end-
ing in -e̲ generally took the genitive ending -s̲ when used
absolutely: t̲o̲ m̲ī̲n̲ h̲o̲u̲s̲ o̲r̲ t̲o̲ y̲o̲u̲r̲ẹs̲ (cf. OE tō mīnum hūse
obbe tō eōwrum); a̲l̲ b̲i̲s̲ g̲ō̲l̲d̲ i̲s̲ o̲u̲r̲ẹs̲ (cf. OE eall bis gold
is ūre). This -s̲ was an extension of the -s̲ of h̲i̲s̲, as in
h̲i̲s̲ g̲ō̲l̲d̲; b̲a̲t̲ g̲ō̲l̲d̲ i̲s̲ h̲i̲s̲.

N̲o̲t̲e̲: Such OE locu-
tions as tō ēowrum,
of ūrum gave the ME
forms in -n̲: o̲u̲r̲e̲n̲,
y̲o̲u̲r̲e̲n̲ and the forms
h̲i̲s̲n̲, h̲e̲r̲n̲, t̲h̲e̲i̲r̲n̲
which still occur in
uneducated AE as well
as BE speech.

(e) In the 3rd p.
pl. the forms t̲h̲e̲y̲,
t̲h̲e̲i̲r̲, t̲h̲e̲m̲ of Scandi-
navian origin gradual-

**Fig. 5. The distribution of plural
pronoun forms in ME.**

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ly replace their native equivalents (hi, here, hem < OE hĩe,
hiera, him). The nom. pl. prn. was borrowed earlier than the
others, and many ME authors, including Chaucer, have the Sc.
form in the nom., but native forms in the other cases, e.g.
thei (they), here, hem. By the end of the ME period, however,
the forms they, their, them may be regarded as the normal E.
plurals. See Fig. 5 for the territorial distribution of them
and hem.

(f) Initial h in the 3rd p. sg. neuter prn. hit was often
dropped in an unstressed position. Consequently, both hit
and it occur in 13th-14th century texts, e.g. in Chaucer.

Fig.6. The distribution of feminine
pronoun forms in ME.

(g) The form she
(3rd p. sg. fem. prn.)
gradually replaced the
earlier hē (i.e. the
fem. and masc. forms
coincided in some
earlier texts). The
new form she evident-
ly developed under
the influence of the
OE fem. dem. prn. sēo
'that'. At any rate
she has been univer-
sally used since the
middle of the 14th
cent. (for further
material concerning the probable origin of she, see IOE,
p.52; see also Fig.6 for the regional distribution of the
variant forms of this pronoun).

(2) Demonstrative Pronouns. Of all the pronouns it is the
demonstratives that underwent the greatest loss of inflec-
tions.

Of the numerous forms of the OE dem. prn. meaning 'that'
(sē, sēo, þaet; see IOE, p.53) MoE has retained only the

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definite article the (< sē) and the demonstrative that (< þæt). All the other forms indicating gender, number and case disappeared in most dialects early in the ME period.

The same drastic shedding of forms is characteristic of the demonstrative this which was represented in OE by the numerous forms of þēs, þeos, þis (IOE, p. 54). Everywhere except in the South the neuter form þis came to be used early in ME for all genders and cases of the singular.

The old plural thō (< OE þā 'those') survived in some places up to the 16th century, having been generally replaced already in EME by a plural thōs(e) (< OE þās 'these'). The MoE these is derived from a new plural form þeos(e), þēs(e), which arose in ME probably under the influence of the original nom. sg. fem. þēos.

Thus only five forms remain in MoE of the once complicated declensions of the dem. prns. These are the article the and the prns. this – these, that – those.

Traces of the older forms of dem. prns. survive chiefly in proper names such as Atterbury, Nash (see IOE, p. 54).

4. The Numeral

Most OE numerals developed quite regularly into their ME counterparts.

Cardinal numerals: 1 – ōn (OE ān), 2 – twō (OE twā f.; cf. m. + n. twezen ME tweie(n) MoE twain), 3 – thrē (OE þrēo), 4 – fower, four (OE feōwer), 5 – five (< OE oblique case forms fīfe, fīfa of nom. fīf), 6 – six (OE siex, six), 7 – seven (OE seofon), 8 – eighte (OE eahta), 9 – nizen, nīn, nīne, nyne (OE nizon), 10 – ten (OE tīen, ēn), 11 – enleven, elleven (OE endleofan), 12 – twelf, .welve (OE twelf), 13 – thirtene (OE þrēotiēne, þrittīene), 14 – fourtene (OE feōwertiēne), 15 – fiftiene (OE fīftīene), 16 – sixtene (OE sixtiēne), 17 – seventene (OE seofontīene), 18 – eightenene, eightene (OE eahtatīene), 19 – nintene

(OE niӡontīene), 20 - twenty (OE twentiӡ), 30 - thritti,
thirty (OE þrītiӡ), 40 - fourty (OE fēowertiӡ), 50 - fifty
(OE fīftiӡ), 60 - sixty (OE sixtiӡ), 70 - seventy (OE hund-
seofontiӡ; in this and the two following numerals the OE
prefix hund- was dropped in ME), 80 - eighty (OE hundeahta-
tiӡ), 90 - nīnty (OE hundniӡontiӡ), 100 - hundred (OE hund,
hundred), 1000 - thousand (OE þūsend).

Units are usually put before tens. Numerals such as
39, 63 are expressed as nīne and thirty, thrē and sixty.

In OE there was no numeral higher than thousand. ME
millioun is the French form of Late Latin mīllīo, acc.
mīllīonem formed from Latin mīlle 'thousand'.

Ordinal numerals: 1 - first (OE fyrest; alongside the
more common OE form 'first'), 2 - second (< Fr. second <
Lat. secundus; this form ousted the OE ōþer), 3 - thirde
(OE þridda; note metathesis), 4 - fourthe (OE fēowerþa),
5 - fifte (OE fīfta), 6 - sixte (OE sixta), 7 - seventhe
(OE seofoþa), 8 - eighte (OE eahtoþa), 9 - ninthe (OE
niӡoþa), 10 - tenthe (OE tēoþa), 11 - eleventhe (OE endlef-
ta), 12 - twelfth (OE twelfta). The ordinal numerals 11-19
have the ending -tenthe and are formed from the correspond-
ing ordinal numerals (fourtenthe, fiftenthe, sixtenthe,
etc.). The ordinals 20-90 take the suffix -tithe (OE tiӡo-
þa).

Development of the Indefinite Article

The indefinite article came into being in the ME pe-
riod although it occurred sporadically already in LOE. As
in numerous other languages it originated in the unstressed
form of the numeral one, i.e. OE ān. This ān was later
shortened into ăn. After the change of OE ā > ME ō, the
numeral acquired the form ǫn. The phonetic difference between
the stressed and unstressed forms contributed to the differ-
entiation of the article from the numeral (i.e. the numeral
ān > ǫn, but the article ăn remained unchanged).

10.

When ǫn or ǎn was followed by a word beginning with a consonant, the -n was dropped, yielding the forms ǫ and ǎ. Such alteration was later abandoned in the case of the numeral but retained in the case of the article.

5. The Verb

Introductory

All the types of OE verbs are represented in ME (strong, weak, preterite-present, anomalous; see IOE, pp. 64, 67 ff.). The ME levelling of weak vowels under ę had a comparatively slight effect on the verb inflections. There are considerable dialectal differences. The most noteworthy change in the verb during the ME period was the decline in the relative importance of the strong conjugation.

The principal developments in the system of the ME verb are the following:

(1) Endings containing unstressed vowels were levelled to obscure [ə], e.g. the -an of the infinitive became -en and later -e: OE drīfan > ME drīven > drīve; OE mǎcian > ME māken > māke; the OE endings -a, -ast,-aþ, -ode > ME -e, -est,-eþ, -ede.

(2) Dialectal differences were most marked in (a) the plural of the present indicative, (b) the present participle, (c) the 3rd p. sg. present indicative, (d) the prefix of the past participle (see Table above, p. 11 ; also Figs. 7-9).

(2) The number of strong verbs became smaller. Already in OE the strong conjugation, although including some of the most important verbs in the lg., was relatively small as compared with the large and steadily growing body of weak verbs. Practically all new verbs formed from nouns and adjectives or borrowed from other lgs. (French, Scandinavian) in the ME period were regularly conjugated as weak. Moreover, numerous native strong verbs fell into disuse or came to be

Fig.7. The ME dialect end-
ings for the plural
forms of the present
indicative.

Fig.8. The present parti-
ciple forms in ME.

Fig.9. The ME dialect
endings of the
third person
singular present
indicative.

conjugated as weak verbs. A. C. Baugh (A History of the Eng-
lish Language, New York 1935, p. 200) points out that of
330-odd OE strong verbs more than a hundred, i.e. 1/3 were
lost at the beginning of the ME period. Another 30 became
obsolete in the course of ME, and an equal number, which
were still in use in the 16th and 17th centuries, disappear-
ed except in the dialects, often after they had passed over
to the weak conjugation or had developed weak forms along-
side the strong. Today about three quarters of the OE strong
verbs have disappeared completely from the standard lg. Some
survive only in dialects and elevated style. The E. lg. as
a whole now has only about 16C irregular verbs of any kind
(some 70 going back to OE strong verbs, the rest deriving
from other sources and including invariable verbs, e.g. set,
cut, shut, which have developed from weak verbs). The un-
certainty which many speakers and writers feel with respect
to such verbs as awake, strive, etc. and frequent uneducated
forms such as knowed, growed, etc. seems to predict that the
number of irregular verbs will become even smaller as time
goes on.

The tendency to conjugate strong verbs according to the
more familiar pattern of weak verbs was noticeable already
in OE. This tendency is an expression of the principle of
analogy or typization referred to above (p. 49). At a time
when E. was without the restraining influences of education
and a literary standard, i.e. in the 12th-14th centuries,
it was quite natural that many speakers should have applied
the pattern of weak verbs to some which should have been
conjugated as strong. In the 13th cent. the trend to conju-
gate former strong verbs as weak on analogy with weak verbs
becomes clear even in literary usage (e.g. in the case of
the verbs burn, bow, climb, help, walk, weep, flow). By the
14th cent. some 45 verbs had become weak. The trend seems
to have been checked by the steady rise of a standard form
of the lg. and later by the stabilizing effect of printing.
At any rate only about a dozen new weak formations appeared

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in the 15th century and another dozen came into use in the
16th-20th centuries. One should add that there has also been
some movement in the opposite direction too, i.e. a few orig-
inally weak verbs have become strong. Such cases, however,
are rather unusual, e.g. wear and dig were still conjugated
as weak verbs in Shakespeare's time.

(3) Another important development in the case of strong
verbs in the ME period was the tendency to extend their sin-
gular preterite forms to the plural preterite or vice versa.
This change meant that ME verbs came to have three principal
forms instead of the OE four (in OE the preterite or past
tense commonly had a different form in the sg. and the pl.;
see IOE, p.64).

Usually the vowel of the plural preterite was levelled
under that of the singular:

OE	ME
stelan – stæl – stǣlon – stolen	stēlen – stal – (stēlen), stal – stǫlen
beran – bær – bǣron – boren	bĕren – bār – (bĕren), bār – bǭren
wrītan – wrāt – writon – writen	wrīten – wrǭt – (writen), wrǭt – writen

In some cases, however, the vowel of the singular was
ultimately levelled under that of the plural or of the past
participle, as in:

OE	ME
cēosan – cēas – curon – coren	chēsen – chēs – chǭsen – chǭsen
helpan – healp – hulpon – holpen	helpen – halp – holpen – holpen

As a result of further changes in the EMoE period the
vowel of the preterite tense form could be levelled under

that of the past participle or vice versa, e.g. in the case
of bear – bore – born(e) where the ME preterite was bār.
On the whole the conjugation of strong verbs underwent
considerable levelling and analogical change in ME. As a
result of various sound changes the old ablaut sequences
became blurred and there was considerable transference from
one class to another. Quite common verbs, e.g. give, get,
bid, choose, have numerous variant forms in ME and ENE.

Verbal Inflections in ME

The following Tables give the verb forms of the Mid-
land dialects. The endings characteristic of other dialects
are given in parentheses:

Conjugation of the strong verb binden 'bind'

	Indicative	Subjunctive	Imperative
Present Sg. 1.	bīnde	bīnde	–
2.	bīndest (N.bīndes)	bīnde	bīnd
3.	bīndeth (N.bīndes)	bīnde	–
Pl.	bīnden (N.bīndes, S.bīndeth)	bīnden	2nd p. bīnde(th)
Preterite Sg. 1.	bǭnd	bounde	
2.	bounde, bǭnd	bounde	
3.	bǭnd	bounde	
Pl.	bounden, bǭnd	bounden	
Infinitive	bīnden		
Pres.Part.	bīndende, bīndinge (N.bīndande, S.bīndinde)		
Past Part.	bounden		

Conjugation of the weak verb __delen__ 'deal, divide'

Indicative		Subjunctive	Imperative
Present Sg. 1.	dēle	dēle	-
2.	dēlest	dēle	dēle
	(N.dēles)		
3.	dēleth	dēle	-
	(N.dēles)		
Pl.	dēlen (N.dēles	dēlen	2nd p. dēle(th)
	S.dēleth)		

Preterite Sg. 1.	delte	delte
2.	deltest	delte
3.	delte	delte
Pl.	delten	delten

Infinitive	dēlen
Pres.Part	dēlende, dēlinge (N. dēlande, S. dēlinde)
Past Part.	delt

Conjugation of the weak verb __haven, han__ 'have'

Indicative		Subjunctive	Imperative
Present Sg. 1.	have	have	-
2.	hast	have	have
3.	hath (N.has)	have	-
Pl.	han (N.has)	han	2nd p. have(th)
	S.hath)		

Preterite Sg. 1.	hadde	hadde
2.	haddest	hadde
3.	hadde	hadde
Pl.	hadden	hadden

Infinitive	haven, han
Pres.Part.	havende, havinge (N.havande, S.havinde)
Past Part.	had

Conjugation of Other Types of Verbs in ME

The minor groups of OE irregular verbs (i.e. preterite-present and anomalous verbs) survive in ME. The verbs belonging to these small but important groups underwent changes in accordance with the general tendencies of the period.

As the most important of these developments have been outlined in our IOE (pp. 67-70), we shall confine ourselves here to reproducing the ME paradigms of the preterite-present verbs witen 'know', cunnen 'can' and the anomalous verbs bēn 'be' and gōn 'go' (for a complete survey of these groups of verbs, see, e.g. Ilyish, pp. 216-19).

Conjugation of the preterite-present verbs witen and cunnen

	Indicative	Subjunctive	Imperative
Present Sg. 1.	wǭt	wite	-
2.	wǭst	wite	wite
3.	wǭt	wite	-
Pl.	witen, wǭt	witen	2nd p. witeth
Preterite Sg. 1.	wiste		
2.	wistest	wiste	
3.	wiste		
Pl.	wisten	wisten	
Infinitive	witen		
Pres. Part.	witende		
Past Part.	witen		
Present Sg. 1.	can, con		
2.	cunst, const	cunne	
3.	can, con		
Pl.	cunnen, can	cunnen	

	Indicative	Subjunctive	Imperative
Preterite Sg. 1.	couthe, coude		
2.	couthest, coude	couthe, coude	
3.	couthe, coude		
Pl.	couthen, couden	couthen, couden	

Infinitive	cunnen
Past Part.	couth

Conjugation of the anomalous verbs b̄en and gōn

	Indicative	Subjunctive	Imperative
Present Sg. 1.	am		-
2.	art	bē	bē
3.	is		-
Pl.	bēn (N.ar(e)n)	bēn	2nd p. bēþ
Preterite Sg. 1.	was		-
2.	wēr(e)	wēre	bē
3.	was		-
Pl.	wēren	wēren	2nd p. bēth

Infinite	bēn
Pres. Part.	bēinde, bēinge (N.bēand)
Past Part.	bēn

Present Sg. 1.	gǭ		-
2.	gǭst	gǭ	gǭ
3.	gǭth		-
Pl.	gǭn (S. gǭth)	gǭn	2nd p. gǭth

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11.

	Indicative		Subjunctive

	Indicative	Subjunctive
Preterite Sg. 1.	yede, wente	
2.	yedest, wentest	yede, wente
3.	yede, wente	
Pl.	yeden, wenten	yeden, wenten
Infinitive	gǭn	
Pres. Part.	gǭinde, gǭinge (N. gānde)	
Past Part.	gǭn, gǭ	

Development of Verbal Categories

Already in Late OE it is possible to find certain constructions with verbs which resemble various MoE analytical forms and constructions (see IOE, pp. 71-72). In ME such constructions became increasingly frequent. The following is a brief account of the most important developments in this field.

(1) The Perfect Tenses

In OE the verb habban 'have' used as the predicate of a sentence, was sometimes followed by a direct object with a past participle of a transitive verb attached to it in the function of a predicative adjective. The participle agreed in number, gender and case with the direct object e.g. hīe hæfdon hiera cyninʒ āworpenne 'they had deposed their king', Hē hæfþ þā bōc gewriten 'he has that book written' (see IOE, p.71; G+V, p.165). This construction did not show whether the action expressed by the past participle was performed by the subject of the sentence or by some other agent. It was from constructions where the subject of the sentence was the doer of the action that the perfect tense form developed. The participle lost its forms of agreement with the noun-object and, changing its place (He has written ...), became closely connected with the verb to have. Both elements lost their in-

dependent meaning and merged into one sense unit, i.e. what
was originally a free syntactical combination gradually
turned into the analytical tense form of the perfect.

By the 14th century the present and past perfect tenses
appear to be firmly established. Numerous instances occur,
e.g. in the works of Chaucer, e.g. ... I have herd it told;
The holy blisful martir for to seke that hem hath holpen
when that they were seke; And whan that he had herd Arcites
tale; ... hir housbond hadde lost his lyf.

In OE constructions with the verb bēon (wesan) 'be'
the past participle of an intransitive verb was used as a
predicative to the subject with which it agreed in number,
gender and case, and the verb bēon had the function of a
link-verb in a compound nominal predicate, e.g. hē is acumen
'he is come', siþþan hīe āfarene wǣron 'after they had
gone away' (IOE, p.71). In ME intransitive verbs continued
to be used with the verb be (ME bēn) in such constructions.
The verb be itself took the auxiliary have, e.g. for sefenn
winnterr haffde he beon in Egypte 'for seven years he had
been in Egypt'.

In LME the verb be with intransitive verbs in perfect
tense forms was occasionally replaced by have, i.e. the
latter verb came to be used as an auxiliary verb with both
transitive and intransitive verbs. Constructions with be,
however, continued to be widely used in the 16th-18th cen-
turies (e.g. Shakespeare has: He is retired to Antium;
Malcolm and Donalbain... Are stol'n away and fled; This
gentleman is happily arrived). Cf. some survivals in MoE,
such as The sun is risen; Spring is come; cf. also the
distinction in MoE between He has gone and He is gone.

(2) The Continuous Forms

OE constructions of bēon (wesan) with present parti-
ciples, such as hīe feohtende wǣron 'they were fighting',
þā þā hē sprǣcende wæs 'while he was speaking', bear a

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formal resemblance to MoE continuous or progressive forms.
In such constructions, however, there was only a vague sense
of the duration of action. They are usually construed as
compound nominal predicates and not as simple predicates
expressing a single sense unit (cf. IOE, p. 72).

Such constructions are rather rare in ME. Thus only six
pertinent cases have been found in the works of Chaucer
(e.g. <u>Singynge he was, or floytinge al the day</u> 'singing he
was or playing the flute all the day'; <u>al this ground on
which we have been ryding</u>). Moreover the precise shade of
meaning expressed in these six cases is not quite clear. It
is not immediately obvious, e.g., what distinguishes a com-
bination of the verb <u>be</u> followed by a present participle
from an ordinary present tense form of the verb.

The origin of the continuous forms is not quite clear
and two possible sources have been suggested (see G+V,
p. 158; Ilyish, pp. 222-223):

(1) OE combinations of the verb bēon and a present
participle in -ende (N. -ande, S. -inde), e.g. Hē is singende
'Ta on laulev'. Here the present participle had the function
of a predicative while the verb bēon was a link-verb, and
the whole combination represented a compound nominal predi-
cate.

(2) OE combinations of the verb bēon with the preposi-
tion on and a verbal noun (later a gerund) ending in -ing
(-ung), e.g. Hē is on singing. This construction emphasized
the process and had the meaning of 'He is in the action of
singing'.

Originally the present participle and the verbal noun
had different forms, the participle ending in -ende (-inde)
and the verbal noun in -ing (-ung). In the course of time
the OE participial ending -ende (and its variant forms; see
above, p. 11) was replaced by a new participial ending -inge.
It now became possible for the present participle and the

verbal noun to be confused, especially as they were used
in similar constructions. The ME continuous forms are prob-
ably the result of the blending of such constructions. The
preposition in the combinations with the verbal noun grew
gradually weaker till it disappeared altogether, e.g.:
He is on singinge > He is a-singinge > He is singing(e).

Influenced by the construction with the verbal noun
(later the gerund), the construction with the present
participle which originally indicated state (a compound
nominal predicate), began to express the progress of an
action at a given moment and thus turned into the continu-
ous form - an analytical form of the MoE verb.

Cf. survivals of the older constructions in folk-songs
and poetry: He would a-hunting go; the frog he would a-woo-
ing go; the child is a-playing.

(3) The Future Tense

A special future tense form originated in LOE (IOE,
pp. 70-71). In ME the verbs shal and wil frequently lose
their modal quality almost entirely in combination with
following infinitives and express simple futurity. There
are numerous instances of such analytical future tense
forms in Chaucer (e.g. ... the knightes ... of whiche I
tolde yow, and tellen shal) alongside others where the
modal quality is retained (e.g. There shal no deth me
from my lady twinne 'no death shall separate me from my
lady').

(4) The Non-Finite Forms of the Verb

(1) The gerund developed as the result of the merging of
the ME verbal noun in -ing(e) and the present participle
which had the ending -ende (N. -ande, S. -inde) or later
-inge (in its turn the result of the confusion of construc-
tions with the verbal noun and the participle; see above,

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p. 70). The double nature of the gerund with its noun and
verb characteristics is due to the mixed background of this
non-finite form of the verb. E.g. and in his harpyng, whan
that he hadde sunge, his eyghen twynkeled in his heed a-
right: 'and in his harping when he had sung, his eyes twink-
led in his head aright'; ... we alle have ynogh to done in
liftyng up his hevy dronken cors '... we all have enough to
do in lifting up his heavy drunken body'.

(2)   The OE datival infinitive with the preposition tō (tō
wrītenne, tō bindenne; cf. IOE, pp. 65, 82) lost its final
-e merged with the simple infinitive in ME (i.e. OE tō
drincenne and drincan both turned into ME drinke(n) and
later MoE drink. The preposition to became simply an infi-
nitival particle frequently used when there was no meaning
of direction or purpose.

(3)   The prefix ʒe- of the OE past participle (IOE, p.65)
was weakened to y- in EME and gradually lost altogether be-
ginning with the Northern dialects (see Table, p.11).

(5) The Passive Voice

        Constructions formed with wesan (bēon) 'be' or weorþan
'become' and the past participle of transitive verbs had a
vague passive meaning in OE (IOE, p. 72). With the disap-
pearance of weorþen in EME, the verb bēn becomes the only
auxiliary in constructions of this kind expressing (1) state
or condition (e.g. thise wordes al with gold y-writen were.
When this was rad (= MoE read), than sayde this olde man);
(2) action (e.g., thilke day that thou were chased from our
heritage).
        Passive constructions came to be extensively used in
ME.

(6) Mood

The subjunctive mood retains most of the numerous func-
tions that it had in OE (see IOE, pp. 73-74).

6. Other Parts of Speech

(1) Adverbs in EME and CME continue to be formed from
adjectives chiefly by means of the ending -e; e.g. fayre
(< adj. fayr), brighte, faste. If an adjective ends in -e,
the corresponding adverb is formally identical, e.g. newe,
clene.

The suffix -ly is also used in ME, e.g. specially,
thriftily.

Adverbs can be compared either synthetically by means
of the suffixes -er, -est or analytically with the help of
the words more and most.

(2) Modal words make their appearance as a special
category. These are words parenthetically inserted into a
sentence without forming part of its grammatical structure.
They serve to show the attitude of the speaker toward the
predication expressed in the sentence, i.e. whether the
speaker considers the predication certain, uncertain, desir-
able, undesirable, etc. Such words do not occur in OE, but
are quite numerous in Chaucer. They include, e.g. certeinly,
certes, sikerly 'undoubtedly'; forsothe 'forsooth, really'.

(3) Changes occurred likewise in the system of pre-
positions and conjunctions. New prepositions in Chaucer's
works (not found in OE) include beside, undernethe. By the
14th century the conjunction ac had been replaced by but
(< OE butan). Other conjunctions that disappeared were þā,
þanne (þonne) (which were replaced by hwanne, whan 'when'),
þeahþe 'though', forþǣmþe 'for, because'.

C. Syntax

Until quite recently ME syntax had received relatively
little attention. Generally speaking, much good work has
been done on the syntax of Chaucer and Shakespeare, but the
period between them has not been sufficiently studied. Now
in addition to the classic works of L. Kellner, E. Einenkel,
etc. we have thorough discussions of various syntactic de-
velopments in the ME period by, e.g. B. Ilyish, V. Yartseva,
Tauno F. Mustanoja, etc. (see Select Bibliography, p.118).
Much specialized research is under way both in the Soviet
Union and elsewhere. What follows below is but a very super-
ficial account of some of the more significant ME changes
in this field.

The operation of phonological decay and the drastic
reduction in the number of ME inflections (see above, p. 49)
resulted in a simplification of syntactic patterns. A number
of grammatical categories such as concord, government and
gender lost their earlier importance or underwent marked
changes.

Grammatical gender was a very troublesome feature of
OE as the gender of OE words was not often determined by
meaning (see IOE, pp. 39-40). The gender of nouns was sig-
nalised chiefly by a highly inflected demonstrative pronoun
(later the definite article) and the concord of the strong
adjective. When the inflections of these gender-distinguish-
ing words were reduced to a single ending for the adjective,
and the fixed forms of the, this, that, these and those for
the demonstratives, the support for grammatical gender was
lost. The use of the 3rd p. sg. personal pronoun became the
only factor in determining the gender of E. nouns. Gender
as now determined on a semantic basis, i.e. it was no
onger grammatical but 'natural'.

Just as articles, adjectives and demonstratives ceased
to show grammatical agreement with following nouns, so pre-

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positions ceased to control or govern more than one following case (a single form serving as the dative–accusative, which for nouns was identical with the nominative). Prepositions now took over many functions of indicating syntactic relations which had earlier been expressed by inflectional endings. The pronoun subjects of verbs could no longer be so freely omitted as in OE, since the categories of person and number were more and more exclusively expressed by them.

All of these shifts both in morphology and syntax led to the establishment of a relatively fixed and restricted word order, which more and more took over the function of indicating grammatical relations with the sentence. The sequence Subject – Predicate – Object (S – P – O) began to be established as normal, though inversions were employed more often than in Present-day E. Position before the predicate at the beginning of a sentence (i.e. in head position) was increasingly assumed to indicate grammatical function as the subject of the sentence. Original datives, however, could still stand at the beginning, especially with impersonal verbs and the result could be ambiguous. Thus in the sentence Him wants (or lacks, or needs) time the form of the pers. prn. shows clearly that the verb is a 3rd p. sg. impersonal form (without and expressed subject) and preceded by a dative-accusative (objective) pronoun. The construction is not so clear if a noun replaces the pronoun: The man wants time. Under the influence of prevailing word order the expectation for agreement between man and want(s) was increased and this led to the syntactic reorganization of impersonal constructions and their transformation into personal ones in LME. The sentences became He wants (lacks, needs) time and The man wants time, etc. The shifts in question also affected originally impersonal verbs such as like, happen, seem, think, remember, ought, etc. The use of the pronoun it became general with impersonal verbs in LME

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and EMoE, e.g. happen, seem, think. Traces of the earlier
impersonal constructions may still be found in LME and EMoE
constructions such as It likes me well (cf. MoE I like it
very much; MoGer Es gefällt mir sehr). The old construction
of impersonal verbs involving an oblique case without the
subject being expressed (i.e. without 'it') survives in
methinks and meseems, both of which are felt to be archaic
(cf. OE mē þyncþ). In the phrase if you please the you is
historically not the subject of please but its object
(cf. L si vōbis placet, MoFr s'il vous plaît) and please
has no final s because it was originally a subjunctive form.
Now that the prn. you serves both in a subjective and an
objective function, it is regarded in this phrase as the
subject of please (cf. the parallel expressions if I please
and if they please). Once the change from impersonal to
personal use was established, it spread to pronouns which
have preserved the distinction between the subjective and
the objective. Hence earlier the story likes me has become
I like the story.

As part of the general trend towards a fixed word order,
modifiers were given a position very close to the words or
groups of words that they modified. In general there was a
tendency to place adjectival attributes before their head-
words (exceptions being cases such as heir male, court mar-
tial, knight errant, cousin german, lords spiritual – which
are the result of French influence; cf. also cases where
attributes stand after their head-words for the sake of
rhyme or other stylistic reasons: whan that Aprille with his
showres soote; the morwe gray.

There is a marked tendency in ME to use nouns in the
common case singular as prepositive attributes (e.g. iron
clubbe, pewter pottes; London ale, cristall water). By the
end of the 15th cent. the use of such prepositive substan-
tival attributes is well launched on its way to becoming the
widespread and important feature of the E. lg. that it is
today.

Towards the end of the 15th cent. likewise, the E. lg. had acquired scores of new homonymous adjectives and nouns (e.g. back, base, calm, chief, chill, choice, dainty, grave, kindred, magic, mean, purple, quiet, scarlet, sovereign, square, sterling, wee, weird, welcome).

In general, however, LME word order still retained a certain freedom. The object or the predicative could be placed in leading position for emphasis. The direct object could be inserted between an inflected auxiliary and the notional verb. In subordinate clauses the inflected part of the verb could stand in end position (as in OE). Thus Chaucer writes: and suretee wol I han ... thy body for to yelden 'and surety will I have ... to yield thy body'; sin al my wo thou wost 'since all my woe thou knowest'; Ayen sommer-sonne coloured is 'Again the summer sun is coloured'; so hadde I spoken to hem everychon 'so had I spoken to everyone of them'; wel coude he sitte on hors 'well could he sit on horseback'. Generally speaking, ME word order still resembled that of Modern German.

The Accusative with the Infinitive was considerably rarer in the 12th-13th centuries than in OE. It is used mainly with the verbs lēten 'let', māken 'make, compel', hōten 'order', sēn 'see', hēren 'hear'. E.g.: He lette seil ... liþen mid uþen 'He let the sail ... float on the waves'; and hehte hine bringe 'and let him bring'.

In the 14th century the Accusative with the Infinitive construction begins to be more widely employed.chiefly on account of its use with a variety of verbs borrowed from French, e.g. causen, compellen, constreynen, suffren, graunten, e.g.: This prison caused me not for to crye. But deeth, that wol not suffre vs dwellen heer.

Plural negations continue to be a normal feature of the lg. throughout the ME period. E.g. nexst fleshe neschal non werien no linnene cloþ 'nobody shall wear any linen cloth next to the flesh'; He nevere yet no vileynye ne sayde / in al his lyf unto no maner wight 'In all his life

he never yet spoke discourtesy to any living creature'.
Such plural negations disappear from literary E. only after
the middle of the 18th century as a result of the rational-
izing tendencies in E. grammar (the establishment of mono-
negativity on the principle of duplex negatio affirmat).
In illiterate or dialect speech today one can still often
hear a piling up of negations, an imaginary extreme though
plausible case being: I'll never do nothing no more for
none of you, no, never no more!

In his well-known textbook on the history of E., Prof.
B. Ilyish discusses a variety of other syntactic develop-
ments in ME (see Ilyish, p. 248 ff.). An interesting point
is the rise of numerous stable collocations of words. It
is in ME that collocations consisting of a verb + noun be-
came established in the lg., e.g. maken melodye, falle in
felawshipe, taken care. Such combinations of words function
as the equivalents of simple verbal predicates (or phraseo-
logical predicates).

Complex sentences were organized in LME very much as
in MoE. Various types of subordinate clauses came into use.
Adverbial clauses, especially temporal and conditional ones,
and attributive clauses are common. In the treatment of
reported speech ME has not yet achieved a sharp distinction
between direct and indirect constructions.

The use of various types of sentence structure for
literary effects is a question of style. Chaucer, for in-
stance, mastered a wide range of such types, extending from
simple, uncomplicated ones, often distinctly colloquial,
to long periodic statements with many modifiers.

The structure and style of ME complex sentences is
often characterized by a certain awkwardness and hesitation
(especially in the case of second-rate authors) if one
compares them with modern writing. This is due to the lack
of a controlling pattern of usage in these matters as a
national standard lg. was only beginning to emerge.

Chapter 3

THE REËSTABLISHMENT OF ENGLISH

1. Historical Background

For almost three centuries after the battle of Hastings
the E. lg. was excluded from political life, the law courts
and schools in England, although it continued to be used by
the great majority of the English people and successfully
resisted every attempt at assimilation by French (see above,
p. 25). Until the beginning of the 13th cent. the use of
French was not only natural but more or less indispensable
to the E. upper classes (several of the early Norman kings
did not speak E.). Conditions changed when England lost most
of her possessions in France shortly after 1200 and the flow
of Normans to England had ceased. A feeling of rivalry de-
veloped between the two countries. The use of French in Eng-
land became increasingly artificial, i.e. it was a social
custom and no longer a practical necessity. Moreover, the
kind of French that had developed in England on the basis
of a mixture of various French dialects and under the in-
fluence of E. linguistic tendencies, was something quite
different from any of the continental dialects. The differ-
ence was noticed quite early and before long the French of
England drew a smile from continental speakers. It even be-
came the subject of humorous treatment in literature. A
well-known instance of the latter is the gentle fun that
Chaucer makes of the Nun-Prioress: And Frenssh she spak ful
faire and fetisly, / After the scole of Stratford atte Bowe,

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/ For Frenssh of Parys was to hire unknowe,/- '... and she
spoke French elegantly, after the manner of Stratford-le-
Bow[1] for Parisian French she knew naught of'.

In the 13th and 14th centuries E. gradually won its
way back into universal use. Already in the "Cursor Mundi",
an encyclopedic poem on biblical subjects, written in the
Northern dialect about the year 1300, one may detect a mild
but clear protest against the use of French and a patriotic
espousal of E. The conflict of economic and political inter-
ests between England and France culminated in a long period
of intermittent warfare known as the Hundred Years' War
(1337-1453). The feeling that French was the lg. of an ene-
my country was probably one of the causes contributing to
the disuse of French. Another cause was the growth in num-
bers and importance of new E.-speaking social strata: the
merchants and craftsmen in the towns and the gentry in the
countryside (see above, p. 5).

At the beginning of the 14th century E. was once more
known by practically everyone in England. Evidence of this
can be found in statements by contemporary writers several
of whom tell us that old and young, learned and unlearned
could understand the E. tongue (see Baugh, p. 179). At the
same time, however, there is plenty of evidence that French
continued to be widely used at the court and by the educated
strata of society. It was also the lg. of the legal profes-
sion, and (alongside Latin) of the church and schools. The
reestablishment of E. in political and cultural life was a
slow and gradual process. The growth of the importance of
E. can be seen in the fact that already in 1258 Henry III
issued a proclamation in French, Latin and E. (see Selec-
tions, pp. 12-19). It was, as far as is known the first
proclamation in the E. lg. since the Conquest, and its ap-
pearance may be taken as an indication that E. was coming

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[1] A fashionable seminary for nuns near London.

to be recognized as an official lg. In 1362 the chancellor opened parliament for the first time with a speech in E. In the same year another important step was taken towards restoring E. to its rightful place as the lg. of the country. It was in October 1362, that parliament enacted the Statute of Pleading which provided that hereafter all lawsuits should be conducted in E. It is interesting to note that the reason frankly stated for the action is that "French is much unknown in the said realm". For a long time, probably soon after 1066, French had been the lg. of all legal proceedings, but in the middle of the 14th cent. such a practice was clearly without justification. Custom dies hard, and there is some reason to think that the statute was not fully observed at once. It constitutes, nevertheless, a major landmark in the official recognition of E.

The E. lg. likewise appears at this time in the acts, reports and other documents of towns and guilds. The use of E. in these documents does not become universal, however, before the middle of the 15th century. The records of parliament tell a similar story. The petitions of the commons, on which statutes were based if they met with approval, are usually in French down to 1423. After this year they are often in E. The statutes themselves are generally in Latin down to about 1300, and in French until 1485. In 1485 they begin to appear in E. alongside of French and in 1489 French entirely disappears.

The second half of the 14th cent. also saw another development of far-reaching significance in this connection. This was the substitution of E. for French in schools. Shortly after 1066 French had replaced E. as the lg. of instruction and remained that for a full three centuries. An English chronicler Ranulph Higden (c. 1299 - c. 1363), shows in his Latin "Polychronicon" that in the first half of the 14th cent. the use of French at schools was still quite general. John de Trevisa, who translated the "Polychronicon" into E., inserts an original note, however, in which he in-

forms the reader that the use of French in English grammar
school instruction continued to the year of the first visi-
tation of the Plague (1349), but that by 1385 (the date of
the writing) - "in all the grammar schools of England child-
ren have abandoned French and construe and learn English".
He recognizes in this change a loss since, as a result,
"children in grammar-schools know no more French than does
their left heel" and are in consequence at a disadvantage
when they "cross the sea and travel in foreign countries".
Trevisa also makes the remark that gentlemen have in great
part given up the practice of teaching French to their child-
ren - a significant remark proving that among the nobility
the use of E. was firmly established.

The literature written in E. during the ME period re-
flects fairly accurately the changing fortunes of E. During
the time that French was the lg. best understood by the
upper classes (1100-1250), the books they read or listened
to were in French. The separation of the E. nobility from
France by about 1250 and the spread of E. among the upper
classes is manifest in the next century of E. literature.
Types of polite literature which had hitherto been avail-
able in French now also begin to appear in E. The period
from 1350 to 1400 associated with the names of Chaucer,
Langland, Wycliffe, represents a high point in E. literary
achievement. Any one of these men would have made the latter
half of the 14th century an outstanding period in ME liter-
ature. Together they constitute a striking proof of the
secure position the E. lg. had attained. The literary career
of some writers of the period also reflects the rapid shift
in the choice of lg. at the time. Thus John Gower (1330-
-1408), a contemporary and friend of Chaucer's, wrote in
French at the beginning of his career (a number of "bal-
lades" and his "Mirour de l'Omme" or "Speculum Meditantis").
Later in life, however, he composed a second ambitious work
in Latin ("Vox Clamantis"). It was only in his later years
that he conformed to changed conditions and used his native

Fig.10. Geoffrey Chaucer.

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E. in a third long poem ("Confessio Amantis"). A parallel
may be seen in the three periods (French, Latin and E.) into
which the literary production of Chaucer himself is usually
divided.

2. Survivals of French in the 15th Century and Later

If the position of the E. lg. was assured in the polit-
ical and cultural life of the country by the beginning of
the 15th cent., it does not follow that French was unknown
or had entirely gone out of use. As we have already seen
(p. 81) parliamentary statutes were generally in French un-
til about 1485. Certain isolated remnants of French survived
till a much later date. Although the Statute of Pleading
(1362) provided that all court proceedings should be con-
ducted in E., a special jargon known as "law French" per-
sisted in courts of law till 1733, when it was finally
abolished by an act of parliament. The use of such a jargon
incomprehensible to the uninitiated clearly served the in-
terests of the ruling classes in their dealings with the
uneducated and illiterate or semi-literate strata of socie-
ty. Certain ancient formulas and mottoes of Norman French
origin still occur in British political and social life.
Scraps of law French are retained in the form of the royal
assent — Le roy (la reyne) le veult 'The king (the queen)
wills it' — or refusal Le roy (la reyne) s'avisera 'The
king (the queen) will consider' — to a bill in parliament.
We see French in the Royal Arms (Dieu et mon droit 'God
and my right'); in the motto of the Order of the Garter
(Honi soit qui mal y pense 'Shamed be he who thinks evil of
it'); in expressions like Oyez! Oyez! (the court crier's
call for silence deriving ultimately from Latin audiātis
'Listen!', and in the abbreviation Messrs (for Messieurs)
used in everyday business correspondence.

3. Factors Contributing to the Spread of London English

We have referred repeatedly to the variety and confu-
sion of local dialects in the ME period; we have also men-
tioned the fact that toward the end of the 14th cent. a
variety of E. emerged which won general recognition in the
course of the 15th century and subsequently became the re-
cognized standard in both speech and writing, i.e. the E.
national lg. (see above, p. 8). The basis of this standard
was the East Midland type of E., more precisely the dialect
of London with some southern elements. London was situated
in old Saxon territory (Middlesex). The early London dia-
lect was typical East Saxon. In the 14th century the London
lg. that we find in official documents underwent a change.
Many of the old Saxon features begin to disappear and by
the end of the century the lg. is mainly East Midland in
character. This change of dialect type long puzzled schol-
ars and is now usually explained as the result of large-
scale immigration. Large numbers of influential citizens
such as wealthy merchants, lawyers and clerks are known to
have come to London from the East Midlands, especially Nor-
folk. It is reasonable to assume that this influx of in-
fluential people affected the upper-class London dialect.
The LME official London type of lg. is no doubt modelled
on the lg. of the middle and upper classes in London in the
late 14th century and later Standard E. may be said to be
a direct descendant of this type of lg. Although mainly
East Midland in character, it had a fairly strong admixture
of old southern forms of Saxon origin. Standard E. has thus
developed from an upper-class dialect form of East Midland
E. The dialect spoken by the lower classes in London at the
time stood much closer to the original East Saxon of the
London area and was the precursor of modern Cockney.

A variety of factors contributed to the spread of Lon-
don E. and its ultimate establishment as a literary standard

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for the rest of the country. These causes were territorial, economic, political and cultural in character.

In the first place as a Midland dialect London E. occupied an intermediate position between the extreme dialectal divergences of the North and the South. People from the extreme ends of England found it difficult to communicate with one another but could understand London E.

In the second place, the East Midland district was the largest and most populous of the major dialect areas. The land here was more valuable than in the hilly country to the north and west. In a largely agricultural age this advantage was reflected in both the number and the prosperity of its inhabitants.

Thirdly, London was an important centre of trade and manufacturing. Without the rise of market towns, the extension of trade beyond the confines of local boundaries, and the development of large-scale trade in wool with the Continent (in which London outdistanced all the other cities), there would have been no foundation for the kind of national political unity which in turn facilitated the rise of a single national lg. The speech of London was familiar to the large numbers of people from the outlying parts of the country who came here to do business. They took back with them some of the forms and usages of the metropolis by which their own speech had been modified. London E., of course, in its turn also borrowed some traits of provincial speech.

In the fourth place, London E. was the lg. of the capital. London was the seat of the court, of the highest judicial tribunals, the focus of the political and social activities of the country. The lg. used in the political and administrative centre of the country possessed exceptional authority. In this connection it should be pointed out that the standard form of a lg. has usually arisen on the basis of the regional dialect which played the most important role in the development of a given nation. Such

a regional dialect is generally the one spoken in and near
the capital city. E. g. Standard Estonian is based on the
dialect of northern central Estonian and Tallinn; standard
Russian on the southern Great Russian dialects and that of
Moscow in particular; Standard French on the dialect of
the Ile-de-France and Paris (cf., however, the special con-
ditions which led to the development of Standard Italian
from the Tuscan dialect, and of Standard German from the
Saxon and east central German dialects).

Finally, there were cultural factors as well which
enhanced the prestige of East Midland London E. A number
of talented writers chose this variety of E. as the medium
in which they expressed themselves (Chaucer, Wycliffe,
Gower, Occleve, etc.). Chaucer's writings in particular
exercised a certain influence. His numerous admirers and
imitators perpetuated many of his usages and mannerisms in
the 15th century. Nevertheless it would be a mistake to
argue (as some bourgeois specialists have done) that Chau-
cer's work was the sole or even a primary factor in the
evolution and establishment of an E. national lg.

With the introduction of printing to England in 1476,
a new cultural influence of great importance in the dis-
semination of London E. made itself felt. From the very
first London became the centre of book publishing in Eng-
land. William Caxton (c.1422-1491), the first E. printer,
used the current speech of London in his numerous transla-
tions. A Kentishman by birth, Caxton gave up his regional
dialect and adopted that of London. The books that came
from his press and from the presses of his successors gave
a currency to London E. that did more than anything else
to ensure its rapid adoption throughout the country. Caxton
did very much to regulate E. usage in vocabulary, grammar
and spelling. Faced with conflicting dialect forms he often
had to make responsible decisions. Some idea of the diffi-
culties he encountered are illustrated in the famous pas-
sage from the preface to the "Eneydos" (1490; a translation

Fig.11. Beginning of the Prologue to the "Canterbury Tales"
(15th-century MS)

from the French by Caxton himself) describing how some
merchants who sought refreshment in the countryside, asked
a farmer's wife in Kent for "eggys". She replied that she
did not know any French. Neither did the merchant, as it
happened, so he became angry; but his companion stepped
forward and asked for "eyren". "Then the good wyf sayd
that she understod hym wel. Loo, what sholde a men in thyse
dayes now wryte, egges or eyren?" asks Caxton, plaintively.
His double profession of printer and translator made him
unusually eager to have a single standard recognized for
printed books. Although he did not express himself in those
terms, Caxton was actually advocating a single national lg.
for England.

     With the introduction of printing - a powerful force
existed for promoting a standard, uniform lg., and the
means were now available for spreading that lg. throughout
the territory in which it was understood.

                              ***

     To sum up: By the 15th century a more-or-less uni-
form variety of E. was used in the East Midlands. In the
latter part of the 15th century London E. came to be ac-
cepted (at least in writing) in a large part of the country.
In literary works after 1450 it is often difficult (except
in distinctly northern texts) to determine with any preci-
sion the region in which a given work was written. In cor-
respondence and local records there is a widespread tend-
ency to conform to the London standard. The other dialects
apparently begin to decline as vehicles of the written lg.
In speech dialectal differences continued well into the
17th-18th centuries and survive in rural districts till
today (e.g. Lancashire, East Anglia, Devonshire, etc.).
Thus the rate of the spread of London E. must not be exag-
gerated. Above all it should be remembered that when speak-
ing of a standard form of literary E. in the 15th century

the term is highly relative. There was nothing to compare
with the extensively regulated and highly polished standard
of the present day. All one can safely say is that by the
end of the 15th century a fairly uniform type of E. based on

Fig.12. From the MS of Capgrave's "Chronicle of England"
(ab. 1463)

that used by middle and upper-class Londoners was written
and probably spoken (by the well-to-do strata of society)
in the large area covered by the Midlands and that the same
type of lg. was familiar and partly used in writing in most
other regions of England.

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Chapter 4

LATE MIDDLE ENGLISH AND THE TRANSITION
TO EARLY MODERN ENGLISH
(1400-1550)

The century from 1400-1500 is generally regarded as
constituting the LME period whereas the years 1500-1650
(or 1700) make up the MoE period. In view of the continu-
ous nature of language development it is difficult to draw
a clear line of demarcation between ME and MoE. Some over-
lapping is inevitable in any discussion of changes in the
phonology, vocabulary and grammatical structure of E. in
the 15th and 16th centuries. Thus, as we shall see later
on, a number of phonetic changes (e.g. of er > ar, the dis-
appearance of [ə], etc.) began in the 15th cent. and con-
tinued in the following century. The beginnings of the
Great Vowel Shift also belong to the 15th cent. Various
grammatical features which became established in the lg.
at or soon after the period of Shakespeare also give the
first faint indication of their existence in the 15th cen-
tury. The most important of such cases are dealt with in
the appropriate place below.

1. Phonological Changes

A. Vowels
The changes which overtook the E. vowel system (esp.
the long vowels) during the LME and MoE period were remark-

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able and thorough. Changes in the consonants were relative-
ly insignificant. The E. vowels, which had hitherto more or
less preserved their original or what is sometimes called
their continental quality (i.e. approximately their values
in, e.g. Latin, German, Estonian, etc.), gradually passed
into those E. vowels which exist at the present time. E.
pron. at the end of the 15th century and early in the 16th
cent. differed considerably from what it was in Chaucer's
time. The pron. of Shakespeare's time was essentially the
same as that of today. Prof. A. C. Baugh says in this connec-
tion that we should probably have little more difficulty in
understanding Shakespeare's pron. than we experience in
listening to a broad Irish brogue, whereas the situation
would be very different with the lg. of Chaucer. The 200
years separating Chaucer from Shakespeare really saw very
significant shifts in the phonological system of E. The
great changes in the pron. of E. vowels were reflected hard-
ly at all in E. spelling. W. Caxton and the other early
printers of the end of the 15th and the early 16th cent.
helped to bring about a relative stabilization of E. ortho-
graphy. As the first printers tended to follow scribal tra-
ditions and were otherwise conservative in their choice of
spellings, they did not as a rule take into account the
changes in 14th-15th century pronunciation. Later changes
were not reflected either, and, consequently, the gap be-
tween pron. and spelling grew steadily worse. Indeed, there
is much truth in the statement that Present-day E. is writ-
ten essentially in the same manner as 500 years ago. Put in
another way, MoE spelling is Caxtonian and even pre-Caxton-
ian in quite a number of respects.

As EMoE spelling does not reflect the phonetic changes
that took place in LME and as we do not possess gramophone
records or other recordings of the pron. of that period,
the question may well be asked: where can we learn about the
changes that took place in pronunciation? Light upon these
problems is cast from two main sources:

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¶ Enprynted and translated out of frensfe in to englysshe the
viij day of Jupn tfe pere of our lord ⸫ iiij C lxxxvi / and
tfe first pere of tfe regne of kyng harry tfe vij/ And enprynt
ed tfe gj day of Maye after/ ⸫

Laus Deo

Fig.13. Specimen of Caxton's printing (1486).

(1) the works of the early grammarians (English and foreign)
of the late 16th cent., who, to the best of their ability,
discuss E. pron. as it existed in their own day;

(2) the scattered phonetic spellings, which occur, general-
ly in informal writings of the late 15th and early 16th
centuries.

H. C. Wyld and other scholars have carefully studied
the Paston, Cely, Verney, etc. papers, i.e. the files of
the private correspondence of these families. The writers
were often semi-literate persons who departed occasionally
from the traditional conventional spelling in favour of one
more phonetic. These "mistakes" in spelling may afford val-
uable information regarding a pron. which has already be-
come fashionable although the writers on pron. may not con-
descend to notice it till considerably later. E.g., the use
of semi-literate phonetic (also called 'plastic') spellings
such as lite, nite shows that the palatal fricative spirant
[ç] no longer occurred in the writer's pronunciation of the
words light, night.

(1) Loss of Final Unstressed [ə]

Before the thorough changes in the E. vowel system oc-
curred in the 15th-18th centuries, another important change
took place which marked the transition to the EMoE period.
This was the dropping of the weak unstressed terminal [ə] –

sound (and often also the letter e) in words such as write,
bite, name, sing (cf. 14th cent. singe ['siŋɡə]. This final
[ə] or schwa began disappearing towards the close of the
14th cent. (Chaucer frequently omits it in rhymes). The
tendency was especially noticeable in the Northern dialects.
The vowel [ə] was lost first when it occurred in a terminal
position, then also when followed by a consonant, e.g. in
the endings -es, -ed. In the 15th cent. the loss of the
weak unstressed final [ə] became universal.

The loss of final [ə] had several important results in
spelling.

(1) The letter e continued to be written in words whose
root vowel was long (name, bite, write). The final silent
letter -e came to be regarded as a mark of length in the
preceding vowel. As it was usual to find a silent -e at the
end of words containing a long vowel, an -e was also fre-
quently added in a number of other words where it had no
historical justification. This custom gave rise to, e.g.,
the forms house, stone, wrote (cf. ME hous, stōn, wrōt).

(2) Owing to the loss of final -e in words ending in -we
(e.g. morwe, sorwe, narwe), the forms mory, sory, nary,
etc. arose. In the 16th cent. final -w in words of this
type became a diphthong -ow as in morrow, serrow, etc.

(3) In consequence of the loss of final -e, the forms of
many infinitives coincided with those of nouns, e.g. answer,
love, etc. (cf. OE andswarian - andswaru, lufian - lufu;
LME answeren - answere, loven - love). The resulting homo-
nymity of infinitives and nouns greatly facilitated the
word-formative process of conversion and had a far-reach-
ing effect on the composition of the E. vocabulary.

(2) [er] > [ar]

The change [er] > [ar] began in the 14th cent. and was
completed by the close of the 15th cent. In most cases the
spelling reflects the change and it is only in some words

that er (or ear) is retained. E.g. ferre > far, sterre > star, sterven > starve, werre > war; cf. also the name of the letter r (earlier [er]); note the spellings heart, sergeant, clerk, hearth. (The usual AE pronunciation of clerk as [klə:ɹk] and the occasional poetic pronunciation of hearth as [ha:θ] are closer to the original ME ones.) Cf. also the pron. of place names such as Derby, Berkshire, Berkeley, etc. (and their AE variants). It should be noted, however, that the change from [er] > [ar] was far from universal. Many words containing -er remained unchanged (present pron. with [ə:]), e.g. servant, certain, vermin, perfect, university, learn, merchant, etc. (note the vulgar pronunciations sarvant, sartin, varmint; the colloquial varsity, the doublets person - parson).

(3) The Great Vowel Shift

In the 14th century the E. long vowels began a general and long-continued shift which led, eventually, to a complete transformation of the E. vowel system. This important series of changes is known as the Great Vowel Shift (GVS). No satisfactory explanation of the reasons underlying the shift has been given, (see Select Bibliography, p.119). The chronology of the changes is still largely unsettled. Scholars continue to disagree as to the time that the individual changes took place. In recent years there has been a tendency to advance the date by which most of the ME long vowels had acquired their modern quality. Thus H. Sweet and O. Jespersen believed that the shift came to an end in the 18th century, H. C. Wyld, B. Ilyish, etc. find that the present pron. of the sounds involved was established in broad outline towards the end of the 16th cent. and that the pron. of Shakespeare's time was essentially the same as that of today.

As a result of the GVS: (1) the ME long front vowels [a:, e:, ɛ:] underwent narrowing (raising) and fronting,

i.e. they became closer and more advanced; (2) the long back
vowels [ɔ:, o:] were likewise narrowed, (3) the long close
vowels [i:] and [u:] , that could not be narrowed any
further, underwent diphthongisation and their places were
taken by a new long [i:] and [u:] which developed from
ME [e:, ɛ:] and [o:] respectively.

The individual changes that make up the GVS may be
visualised in the following scheme or diagram:
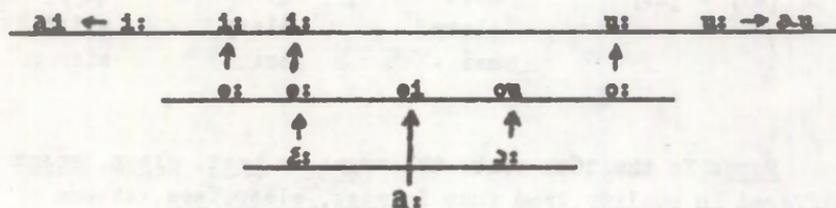
**Fig.14. Schematic representation of the Great Vowel
Shift.**

Such a diagram is only a very rough indication of what
actually happened. The changes indicated by the arrows must
not be thought of as taking place successively, but rather
as part of a general movement with slight differences in the
speed with which the individual results were accomplished
(or the date at which evidence for them can be found).

The changes involved can also be dealt with schematic-
ally in the alphabetical order of the vowels as follows:

ME vowel	MoE spelling	ME pron.	MoE pron.
1. 18th cent.			
1. [a:] > [ei]	e.g. take	'ta:kə	teik
	name	'na:mə	neim
	grave	'gra:və	greiv

ME vowel	MoE spelling	ME pron.	MoE pron.
2. late 17th–early 18th cent.			
[ɛ:] > [e:] > [i:]	beat	ˊbɛ:tə	be:t > bi:t
	clean	ˊklɛ:nə	kle:n > kli:n
	speak	ˊspɛ:kə	spe:k > spi:k
3. 15th cent.			
[e:] > [i:]	meet	me:t	mi:t
	sleep	sle:p	sli:p
	see	se:	si:

Note: In the 16th cent. the vowel in beat, clean, speak differed in quality from that in meet, sleep, see. At the end of the 17th cent. the long close [e:] which had developed from long open [ɛ:] also became [i:] and the difference between the vowels in beat – meet, etc. disappeared. In Shakespeare's time clean probably rhymed with lane (EMoE pron. [le:n]), whereas it now rhymes with seen.

4. 18th cent.			
[i:] > [ai]	like	ˊli:kə	laik
	time	ˊti:mə	taim
	rise	ˊri:zə	raiz
5. early 18th c.			
[ɔ:] > [ou]	boat	bɔ:t	bout
	stone	stɔ:n	stoun
	go	gɔ:	gou
6. 15th c.			
[o:] > [u:]	tool	to:l	tu:l
	moon	mo:n	mu:n
	do	do:	du:

ME vowel	MoE spelling	ME pron.	MoE pron.
17th c.			
7. [u:] > [au]	house	hu:s	haus
	noun	nu:n	naun
	down	du:n	daun

The preceding account of the GVS is very superficial.
Only the initial and final stages of the different shifts
in vowel quality have been given. In actual fact matters
were much more complicated. Thus, e.g. the shift from ME
[i:] to EMoE [ai] is believed to have comprised the fol-
lowing stages:

14th c.	14th-15th c.	15th c.	early 18th c.
[i:] >	[ɪ̆ɪ] >	[ei] >	[ai]

In the shift from ME [u:] to EMoE [au] one can also
distinguish several transitional stages:

14th c.	15th c.	15th-16th c.	16th-17th c.
[u:] >	[uᵘ] >	[ou] >	[au]

Similar intermediate stages can be shown to have exist-
ed in the case of all the other vowels involved.

There are numerous exceptions in MoE to the operation
of the GVS. Such exceptions are due to a variety of causes
like the position of a long vowel in a word, the period
when a loanword entered the lg., etc.

Thus, the long [u:] remained unchanged if followed
by a lip consonant, e.g.:

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MoE  droop  ([dru:p], but not [draup]) < ME droupe
MoE  troop                             < ME troupe
MoE  room                              < ME roum
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15.

ME [ɛ:] did not always change into [i:]. In some clas-
ses of words it was contracted into [e] before the late 17th
– early 18th cent. development of [e:] > [i:]. This occur-
red mainly before the forelingual consonants [d] and [θ],
e.g. MoE bread (< ME brēd), dead, head, lead (n.), red,
breath; likewise before [t] in the words fret, ate, sweat,
thread. In several other words of the same type, however,
the regular change took place, e.g. knead, lead (v.), read,
health.

In most words which were borrowed from French in the
18th cent. after the changes [u:] > [au], [i:] > [ai], [a:] >
[ei] had come to an end, the long vowel of the original
has remained unchanged, e.g. in route [ru:t] (but earlio-
to rout [raut]), coup; machine, police (cf. the earlier
loanwords fine, line), vase, promenade (in the latter two
cases the pronunciations [veiz] and [prɔmíneid] are
possible alongside the more usual BE [va:z] and [prɔmíná:d]).

Some changes in E. spelling connected with the GVS
should also be mentioned. The spelling ea was introduced
in the 16th cent. for words that contained the open [ɛ:]
in ME, e.g. meat, clean) and which still differed in pron.
from those that had contained a ME close [e:]. The spelling
ee as in meet, sleep came into use at the same time for the
long [i:] derived from ME close [e:] (alongside the earlier
French spellings ie, ei as in field, chief, receive). The
distinction between ea and ee lost its purpose when the
last stage of the change [ɛ:] > [e:] > [i:] in the late 17th
c. led to the homonymity of words such as meat – meet,
feat – feet, sea – see. The exceptional pronunciation of
great, break, breakfast, steak should also be noted in this
connection.

In the 16th cent. likewise the spelling oa was intro-
duced to denote the intermediate vowel that had developed
from ME long open [ɔ:] as in boat, load (cf. broad [brɔ:d]).
The corresponding vowel from ME long close [o:] (and whicn
later developed into [u:]) was spelt oo as in moon, food,

soon.

As may be seen from the preceding discussion the GVS
had just got under way by the beginning of the 16th cent.
Most of the vowel changes were but in an early or interme-
diate stage and the proper place for a more detailed account
of the GVS is in a history of EMoE. The LME changes proper
include [e:] > [i:]   and   [o:] > [u:].

Thus in the late 15th cent. the verbs see and do were
probably pronounced [si:] and [du:], approximately as in
MoE. The newly created close vowels [i:] and [u:] did not
fall together with the original long [i:] and [u:], because
the latter vowels were themselves already in the process of
a kind of internal splitting which was ultimately to pro-
duce the diphthongs [ai] and [au] in their stead (see above,
p. 97). The process probably did not go very far in the
15th cent., but it sufficed to make the old long [i:] and
[u:] phonemically distinct from the new long vowels raised
from original long [e:] and [o:].

ME long [a:] began a gradual rise to a closer and more
fronted position. In the 15th cent. it may well have reached
the stage of [æ:].

•••

Detailed accounts of the GVS and of the numerous excep-
tions to its operation are given in most histories of the
E. lg. and in books devoted especially to the history of E.
phonology (see Select Bibliography, p.115). Opinions often
differ, however, as to the nature and chronology of the
changes involved.

(4) Short Stressed Vowels

ME short stressed vowels underwent very little change
during the transition to EMoE. Chaucer's [a] probably be-
came [æ] by Shakespeare's time in such words as cat, glad,
thank, apple. Thus we have a return to approximately the

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value of the OE vowel (OE [æ] > ME [a] > EMoE [æ]).

Note: This sequence of sound-changes is viewed with suspicion by many scholars who consider that the substitution of ME a for OE æ is merely an orthographic change and that the vowel itself remained practically unchanged.

In several instances, short vowels were influenced by neighbouring consonants. The rounding of a after w (or qu) as in water, wash, quarter began in the 15th or 16th cent., but was not accepted in educated speech before the 17th cent. The combination a + l gave [au] in the 15th-16th cent. and later became [ɔː], as in all, call, fall, tall. In words where the l after a was itself followed by a non-labial consonant, it regularly disappeared, e.g. in talk, walk, chalk. If l was followed by a labial consonant ([f, v, m]), the [au] (<[a + l]) has developed into [ɔː] instead of becoming [ɑː], as in palm, calm, alms, calf, half.

B. Consonants

As we have already pointed out the consonants of E. have been much more stable than the vowels. In LME, too, but a few consonants underwent modification.

(1) The Velar and Palatal Fricative Spirants

An important change affecting both vowels and consonants was the fate of the velar fricative spirant [x] and the palatal fricative spirant [ç]. Two cases must be distinguished here: (a) the fricative spirant before [t] and (b) the fricative spirant in a word-final position.

(a) In the 14th century light, bright, night were still pronounced [liçt, briçt, niçt]. Early in the 15th cent. the [ç] began to disappear and the preceding [i] was lengthened. This two-fold development resulted in the forms [liːt, briːt, niːt]. Subsequently the long [iː] underwent diph-

thongization along with original long [i:]. The spelling
does not reflect the change and gh continues to be written
in MoE.

The velar spirant [χ], preserved after back vowels in
EME, ultimately became a glide element [u] before a follow-
ing consonant [t]. The resultant diphthongs developed normal
mally into MoE [ɔ:], as in daughter, brought, caught.

In the Northumbrian dialect and some varieties of Scot-
tish E. [ç] and [χ] before [t] continued to be pronounced.

(b) When final and following a back vowel the velar
spirant [χ] generally became [f] or was lost as in the
standard MoE pron. of rough, enough, cough, laugh, laughter;
plough, dough, through. In Scotland as well as parts of
Northern England (Cumberland and Lancashire) the [χ] per-
sisted. Cf. also MoE dwarf (< ME dwergh < OE dweorh).

(2) Loss of Other Consonants in Certain Positions

The most conspicuous consonant change in LME was total
loss of [r] in some positions(usually before another consonant).

Spellings like fust for first, and akoded for accorded
reflect the weakening of r before another consonant.

Initial k and g were retained before n and not lost
before the latter part of the 17th cent., but their arti-
culation was modified already in the 15th cent. It is pos-
sible that a voiceless n [n̥] was substituted for them so
that know and gnaw became either [n̥nou], [n̥au] or [hnou],
[hnau].

Analogously, final -g after [ŋ] (written ng, pro-
nounced [ŋg]) was also weakened and eventually lost. In
consequence long and sing became [lɔŋ] and [siŋ] respec-
tively, although probably not universally until the 16th
cent. In the Northern dialects [-ŋg] has been retained in
such words.

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(3) Other Minor Consonantal Changes

The voiced stop [d] became the spirant [ð] by way of [dð] before unstressed -er [ər], as in mother < moder, gather < gader, weather < weder.

During the 15th cent. probably, there began the voicing of initial voiceless fricatives in unstressed words like the and this.

The dental consonants [t] and [d] when followed by [j] began the palatalization which eventually led to [tʃ] and [dʒ]. It is hard to say how far the process had gone by 1500, but spellings like sogers and soudeours (for soldiers), indicate that it was in progress. Like [t] and [d], the consonants [s] and [z] also palatalized before [i] and [j], producing the spirants [ʃ] and [ʒ] respectively in words like sugar, confession, resolution and measure. The voicing of final -s in unstressed words like is, was presumably also began in this period.

2. Grammatical Changes

A number of LME developments in the field of grammar have been sketched in the section devoted to EME and CME grammar (see above, p 48ff). The following is a summary of some of the more significant 15th-century and early 16th-century grammatical changes.

A. Morphology

Most of the morphological changes in the 15th cent. were the result of the operation of the various sound changes described above (p 94ff). Among the latter, the loss of final -e [ə] had the greatest effect on inflections in general. It caused the complete extinction of adjectival inflections, both strong and weak. Many adverbs originally distinguished solely by an unstressed final -e now lost

this suffix and thus became undistinguishable from adjec-
tives. In the 15th cent., e.g. it was possible to say He
is late come home (for lately: cf. Pres.E He came home
late; but He has lately arrived).

In the noun the only inflections retained were those
marking the common case plural and the possessive sg. and
pl. The strong, originally masculine ending -es was now
universal except for a small group of surviving weak and
invariable nouns. Archaizing poets from the 15th to the
end of the 16th cent. (as late as E. Spenser) kept forms
like eyne for eyes, shoon for shoes. In addition to the
usual invariable plurals sheep, deer, swine, etc. we also
find the uninflected neuter plural all thynge shoulde be
done (Th. Malory). Old invariable genitives still appear
in the 15th-16th cent., e.g. of fadir syde and of modir
syde (Malory), certayne of his contrey shyppes (More), by
a fountaine side (Spenser).

By the 16th cent. the personal pronouns became estab-
lished in practically their present-day forms (the only
important change since then has been the introduction in
the early 17th cent. of the form its instead of the 3rd p.
neuter his). In attaining this state the following 15th-
16th century changes were involved: (1) the disuse of thou,
thy, thee, and (2) the substitution of you for ye as a
nominative case form.

(1) Already in the 13th cent. the sg. forms thou, thy,
thee were used among familiars and in addressing children
or persons of inferior rank, while the pl. forms ye, your,
you began to be used as a mark of respect in addressing a
superior. The usage spread in the 14th-15th centuries until
ye, your, you became the usual pronouns of direct address
irrespective of rank or intimacy in the 16th cent. Shakes-
peare and his contemporaries use the 2nd p. sg. forms but
occasionally. The forms linger on today only in poetry,
when addressing the Deity, and in some rural dialects (e.g.

the Lancashire dialect); the Quakers use thee instead of the nom. form, probably because of the analogy with we, she, he.

(2) The substitution of you (< OE dat. and acc. ēow) for ye (< OE nom. ȝē) began in the 14th cent. In the 15th cent. the form ye appears for the objective case. From this time onwards the two forms seem to have been used pretty indiscriminately until ye finally disappeared. Some writers were careful to distinguish the nom. ye and the obj. you even in the early 17th cent. Despite such attempts to restore the historical use, you becomes the regular form for both cases in the 17th cent.

Relative pronouns were not standardized in their present-day use in either the 15th or the 16th century. The forms that, the which, which were used indiscriminately for persons as well as things.

The verbal inflections represent for the most part a continuation and standardisation of the conjugation as found in Chaucer.

As we have already seen, the disappearance of unstressed final e [ə] led to the formal identity of the 1st p. sg. present, the pl. present and the infinitive (see p. 60).

In the 3rd p. sg. present, the ending -(e)s, of Northern origin, appears and slowly gains ground in 15th-century London E., although the ending -eth clearly prevails (the -(e)s probably became the usual ending in the spoken lg. during Shakespeare's lifetime, whereas in the written lg. both endings were still more or less equal as regards the frequency with which they occurred).

The earlier ME tendencies to extend the preterite sing. forms of strong verbs to their plural forms (or vice versa) or to level the preterite sg. and pl. forms under that of the past participle (or vice versa) continued throughout the 15th-16th centuries. As a result of this generalization of one form on the basis of analogy there was considerable

fluctuation and alteration in the forms of the preterite tense and the past participle (e.g. such parallel preterite forms as <u>wrote - writ, rode - rid</u>; past participle forms such as <u>took - taken, broke - broken</u>).

The force of analogy also made itself felt in the continuing transfer of a number of strong verbs to the weak conjugation (cf. above, p. 62). Among the verbs which developed weak preterites in this period were <u>bide, crow, glide, mow, weigh, laugh, wake, walk, flow</u>, etc. The converse process of a weak verb becoming strong is rarer, e.g. <u>hide</u> (EME <u>hiden, hidde, hidd</u>), <u>dig</u> (EME <u>diggen, diggede, digged</u>), <u>wear</u> (EME <u>weren, wered, werede</u>)

A fairly large group of unchangeable verbs came into being in the 15th-16th centuries as a result of the loss of unstressed endings, e.g. <u>cut, shut, set, hurt</u>, etc. (cf. EME <u>cutten, cutte, cutt; shutten, shutte, shut</u>, etc.).

As regards the categories of tense and mood the 15th-16th centuries saw a continuation of earlier developments. There is an extension in the use of the perfect tenses which continue to be formed by means of the auxiliaries <u>have</u> and <u>be</u>. The first is generally restricted to transitive verbs (e.g. <u>they have cloven it in two</u>), while <u>be</u> expressed the perfect tense relationship of intransitive verbs of motion (e.g. <u>he is come; it is risen</u>; cf. above, p. 69).

The subjunctive mood of verbs was still widely employed in the 15th cent. and continued to be syntactically important throughout the Renaissance period. It was used in clauses following main verbs expressing doubt, contingency and conditions, as well as other clauses where MoE has forms of the indicative mood, e.g. <u>they deeme we be not ensuryd</u> (Paston Letters); <u>I can not leave thus without it be a gret displeasure to</u> ... (ibid.). The increasing use of auxiliaries (<u>should, would</u>, etc.) to replace synthetical subjunctive constructions can already be noticed, however, in more colloquial 15th-century texts.

16.

Before 1500 there are as yet few indications of the increasing use of certain auxiliaries, notably <u>do</u> and <u>be</u>. The verb <u>do</u> was already being employed as a substitute for other verbs, to avoid repetition as well as in the sense of 'to cause, to order' something to be done, e.g. <u>Therefore do as I bade (thee) do</u> (from the "Gesta Romanorum", an early 16th-century E. translation of a medieval Latin collection of anecdotes and tales). The characteristic modern functions of <u>to do</u> in interrogative and negative sentences, however, first begin to be prevalent in the late 16th and the 17th cent.

B. Syntax

In the field of syntax a number of developments mentioned earlier in this handbook (see p. 74) make headway. Thus a fixed word order becomes increasingly prevalent. Various impersonal constructions show a growing tendency to be turned into personal constructions. Infinitives, participles and verbal nouns appear in sentence patterns very similar to those of MoE. The insertion or omission of the preposition <u>to</u> as a sign of the infinitive was not yet standardized. Some finite verbs which today require an infinitive without <u>to</u> were followed in LME and EMoE by an infinitive with <u>to</u>. E.g. <u>Sir Laucelot made sir Lavayne to arme hym</u>. (Malory). Some authors habitually used <u>for to</u> instead of <u>to</u> as a sign of an infinitival construction, e.g. ... <u>(he) ded do shewe to me late certayn evydences wryton in olde Englysshe for to reduce it into our Englysshe now usid</u> (Caxton).

15th-century writers used a wide range of sentence patterns, extending from the simple to the fairly complicated. The structure and style of complex sentences still showed considerable awkwardness and hesitation. There are many instances of incomplete subordination, repetitious wording not only among unskilled writers but also among writers like Malory and Caxton who possessed talent, experience and a concern for style. E.g. <u>So whan trumpettis blew unto the</u>

fylde and kynge Arthûr was sette on hyght uppon a chafflet
to beholde who did beste (but, as the Freynshe booke seyth,
the kynge wold not suffir sir Gawayne to go frome hym, for
never had sir Gawayne the bettir and sir Launcenlot were in
the fylde, and many tymes was sir Gawayne rebuked so whan
sir Launcelot was in the fylde in ony justis dysgysed), than
som of the kyngis... were that tyme turned to be uppon the
syde of kynge Arthur (Malory).

3. Lexical Changes

The 15th–16th centuries in English history witnessed the
establishment of an absolute monarchy, the Renaissance, the
Reformation and the beginning of colonial exploitation. The
profound changes at home and closer contacts with foreign
lands both in Europe and elsewhere had an extensive influence
on the E. vocabulary. It was especially in the 16th and ear-
ly 17th centuries that many thousands of new words were in-
troduced into E. They came mainly from the classical lgs,
Latin and Greek, and from Italian, French and Spanish. These
numerous borrowings are all properly discussed under the ap-
propriate heading in connection with the EMoE period.

Throughout the 15th cent., Latin and French words con-
tinued to be borrowed into E. although their number is small-
er than in either the preceding or the following century.
There were even a few writers like Reginald Pecock (1395?-
1460?) who strenuously opposed the importation of Latin
words, and attempted to form E. equivalents by compounding
native Germanic elements. Thus Pecock creates words like
inleding for introduction, endal for final, undernyming for
reproaching. If he was striving for simplicity, he spoils
the effect by using several synonyms simultaneously and
organizing his sentences cumbersomely. The tendency to use
synonyms in pairs or groups (so-called collocations of na-
tive words with words of French or Latin origin) is likewise

16ʲ

characteristic of many other writers of the period (cf. a-
bove, p. 31). The contemporary admiration for Chaucer's
poetry strengthened a vogue for decorative vocabulary, ex-
tending into the 16th cent. The Chaucerian terms most fa-
voured by courtly writers were the polysyllables taken di-
rectly or indirectly from Latin. Excessive use of them pro-
duced a style called aureate (i.e. gilded) which was later
(in the 16th cent.) condemned as ink-horn writing.

    The Latin borrowings of the late 14th and 15th centu-
ries were mainly literary words. Some idea of the range and
character of these borrowings may be gained from the follow-
ing list selected at random from a longer list in Baugh,
p. 228: adjacent, contempt, frustrate, genius, gesture, his-
tory, immune, include, incredible, individual, interrupt,
juniper, legal, magnify, mechanical, necessary, nervous,
picture, polite, popular, prevent, quiet, solar, submit,
substitute, summary, temporal, testimony, tract, tributary,
ulcer, zephyr.
    A fairly large number of loanwords entered E. in the
15th-16th centuries from Dutch or Flemish (practically iden-
tical lgs. spoken in the Low Countries) and Low German. The
similarity of these lgs. to E. makes it often difficult to
tell whether a word has been adopted from one of them or
whether it is of native origin. Moreover, words have come
into E. from these lgs. not in consequence of some single
cause like the Norman Conquest (limited more or less to a
given period of time), but they have infiltrated gradually
due to the constant and close relations between England and
the people of Flanders, Holland and northern Germany. The
woollen industry was the major industry of England in the
Middle Ages. Most of the wool from England went to supply
Flemish and Dutch looms. On the other hand, weavers from the
Low Countries, noted for their superior cloths, were encour-
aged to settle in England. Trade between these countries was
responsible for much travel. Such conditions were favourable

for the introduction of loanwords and by the early 16th
cent. E. had borrowed words as nap (of cloth), deck, bow-
sprit, dock, freight, mart, rover, groat.

Conclusion

By the beginning of the 16th cent. the E. lg. had
undergone a variety of changes which make an extract from
a contemporary author easily recognizable as Modern E. OE,
however, looks like a totally foreign lg. to the uniniti-
ated present-day native speaker of E. and he also has much
difficulty in reading Chaucer.

The following passage is taken from a treatise pub-
lished in 1545 by Roger Ascham (1515–68, English scholar,
author and humanist, a prominent figure of the English Re-
naissance):

If any man woulde blame me, eyther for takynge such
a matter in hande, or els for writing it in the Englyshe
tongue, this answere I may make hym, that whan the beste
of the realme thinke it honest for them to use, I one of
the meanest sorte, ought not to suppose it vile for me to
write: ... And as for ye Latin or greke tonge, every thing
is so excellently done in them, that none can do better:
In the Englysh tonge contrary, every thinge in a maner so
meanly, bothe for the matter and handelynge, that no man
can do worse. For therein the least learned for the moste
parte, have ben alwayes moost redye to wryte. And they
whiche had leaste hope in latin, have bene moste boulde in
englyshe: when surelye every man that is moste ready to
taulke, is not moost able to wryte. He that wyll wryte well
in any tongue, muste folowe thys councel of Aristotle, to
speake as the common people do, to thinke as wise men do;
and so shoulde man understande hym, and the judgement of
wyse men alowe hym. Many English writers have not done so,
but usinge straunge wordes as latin, french and Italian,
do make all thinges darke and harde ... (Toxophilus, 1545).

If the passage has a quaintly archaic look to the modern eye, that is surely due mainly to the spelling. If we put it into modern spelling it is really very close to present-day usage. There are of course small differences. The author says 'this answere I may make hym' where we should say 'this answer I may give him'. He says 'In the Englysh tonge contrary'. There are small ways in which the word order differs from present-day usage, for example 'have ben alwayes moost redye' instead of 'have always been ...'. The sentence 'In the Englysh tonge contrary every thinge in a maner so meanly, ...' contains an omission of the verb form 'is ... done' understood from the preceding sentence. This is a case of ellipsis that would be unusual in Pres.E. The use of some auxiliaries in the extract is likewise peculiar, e.g. 'If any man woulde blame me ... and so shoulde every man understande hym'.

The prose passage chosen by us to illustrate early 16th-century E. does not obviously reflect all the major differences between EMoE and Pres.E.

Other extracts (e.g. from a play) would soon reveal such conspicuous features of E. at the time as the use of the 3rd p. sg. present tense forms of the verb in -eth, the 2nd p. pl. pers. prn. form ye, etc.

The 14th-15th centuries had seen the triumph of the E. lg. in England, and the establishment once more of a standard form of literary E. This did not mean, however, that E. was now entirely without a rival. Although French had faded from the scene, Latin still had great prestige as the lg. of international learning, and it was a long time before E. replaced it in all fields. We must bear in mind that such major works of science as Thomas More's "Utopia" (1516), Francis Bacon's "Novum Organum" (1620), Harvey's book on the circulation of the blood (1628) and Newton's "Principia" (1689) were all written in Latin. It was only gradually and due to the work of various factors that Latin was defeated

and E. finally established as the sole literary medium in England. At the time of the Reformation, controversialists wanted to be read by as large a public as possible. Since many of the people who were attracted by Protestantism lacked a classical education, this meant that controversial books and pamphlets tended to be written in E. The increase in national feeling in the 16th century led to a greater interest and pride in the national lg., while the lg. of international Christendom, Latin, slowly fell into the background. The new nationalism led to conscious attempts to create a native literature to vie with that of Greece or Rome. Both Spenser's "Faery Queen" (1570) and Milton's "Paradise Lost" (1667) were attempts to do for E. what Homer and Virgil had done for Greek and Latin.

But, while E. was thus establishing its supremacy over Latin, it was at the same time more under the influence of Latin than at any other time in its history. The Renaissance was the period of the rediscovery of the classics in Europe. In England there was a revival of Greek scholarship in the early 16th cent., but always it was Latin that was of major importance. A small but brilliant group of scholars (W. Grocyn, Th. Linnacre, Th. More, Th. Elyot, R. Ascham, J. Cheke) was associated with the Renaissance at the turn of the century and early in the 16th cent. (see above, p. 7). The immediate contribution of this group of humanists towards the development of the E. lg. and literature was not great. Their interest centered in classical studies. Their direct ambition was to produce good classical scholars rather than to promote the cultivation of E. Many of them even had a certain amount of prejudice against E. The latter was felt to be immature, unpolished and limited in resources, hence incapable of expressing the abstract ideas and range of thought embodied in the classical lgs. E., however, also had its defenders, such as Th. Elyot, R. Ascham (see the extract on p.111), R. Mulcaster. The use of E. for purposes of scholarship by these and other writers was at first

frankly experimental. There also were increasingly many translations of the classics into E. Familiarity with Greek and Latin led to mass borrowing from classical sources, which ultimately resulted in extravagances and a puristic reaction (R. Ascham, Th. Wilson). Patriotic reasons also helped E. to win recognition as a lg. of serious thought and scholarship in the middle and second half of the 16th cent. At the same time it should be pointed out that the English humanists when they did adopt E. as their medium of expression greatly felt the lack of the rules and pat-- terns that they had in the classical lgs. This led to a certain amount of interest in the regulation of usage and it is no coincidence that the first primitive dictionaries, pronunciation guides, grammars and spelling books appear in the latter part of the 16th century.

This new and growing interest in the study and regula- tion of the mother tongue coincided with the brilliant out- burst of 16th-17th century English literature and the be- ginning of the unprecedentedly rapid spread of English to America and other parts of the world in the wake of British colonialism. These exciting new developments, however, con- stitute chapters in the history of the English language in the modern period and cannot, therefore, be dealt with here.

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

The sources recommended for further reading in the bibliographical notes below represent a selection from a large number of useful books and articles. As a rule only such sources are mentioned as are available at the various libraries of Tartu State University. The notes are arranged according to the chapter-headings as given in the body of this handbook.

Note: The following abbreviations are used below when referring to the most frequently mentioned sources:

Arakin = В. Д. Аракин, Очерки по истории английского языка. Москва 1955.

Baugh = Albert C. Baugh, A History of the English Language. New York 1935 (1957[2]).

Brunner = К. Бруннер, История английского языка, т. I-II, Москва 1955.

> (Russian translation of K. Brunner, Die englische Sprache, ihre geschichtliche Entwicklung. Halle 1950-1952 (Tübingen 1960[2]).

Ilyish = В. А. Ильиш, История английского языка. Москва 1958[4].

IOE = O. Mutt, Introduction to Old English. Tartu 1962. 1972[2], 1964[3].

Schlauch = Margaret Schlauch, The English Language in Modern Times (since 1400). Warszawa - London 1964[2].

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Smirnitsky = А. И. Смирницкий, История английского
            языка. Средний и новый период. Курс лек-
            ций. Москва 1965.
Yartseva (M) = В. Н. Ярцева, Историческая морфология
            английского языка. Москва 1960.

Yartseva (S) = В. Н. Ярцева, Исторический синтаксис
            английского языка. Москва 1961.

Chapter I. INTRODUCTION TO THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

Surveys of the historical background to the ME period
are given in Ilyish, pp. 146—152, 254—258, Arakin, pp. 25—
31, 35—38, and Smirnitsky, pp. 7—13. The dialects and lite-
rary records of the period are discussed in Ilyish, pp. 132—
136, 161, 254 et passim, and Smirnitsky, pp. 26—29. For a
fuller discussion of the literature of the period, see, e.g.
А. Аникст, История английской литературы. Москва 1956,
pp. 17—54. A good Marxist account of ME socio-political his-
tory is provided in A. L. Morton, A People's History of Eng-
land (London 1938), pp. 58—175.

A thorough treatment of the historical background, dia-
lects and literature of the ME period may be found in Baugh,
Chapter V, pp. 131—192 et passim. For ME dialects, see also
Brunner, Vol. 1, pp. 85—92, and Schlauch, pp. 24—30.

Chapter 2. EARLY AND CENTRAL MIDDLE ENGLISH

The Scandinavian invasion and its influence on EME is
dealt with in Ilyish, pp. 146—148, 163—166; Arakin, pp. 25—
28, 290—296; Baugh, pp. 113—130. A much fuller account of
the same topics is contained in Brunner, Vol. 1, pp. 109—
128. Brunner also gives numerous bibliographical references.
The fourth chapter of O. Jespersen's "Growth and Structure
of the English Language" (Leipzig 1919) is also useful.

The literature on the Norman Conquest and its influence
on the E. lg. is very extensive. A good general survey is

provided in Ilyish, pp. 148-150, and further information is given on pp. 166-175, 186-190, 237. Arakin deals with the same problems on pp. 28-33, 296-301, and Smirnitsky on pp. 16-20. Interesting additional data may be found in Baugh, pp. 131-154, and in O. Jespersen's "Growth and Structure...", pp. 83-111.

Detailed discussions of the Scandinavian and French contributions to the E. vocabulary can be found in most books on English lexicology, e.g. A. Koonin, English Lexicology (Moscow 1940), pp. 29-39; И. В. Арнольд, Лексикология современного английского языка, Москва 1959 , pp.221-226. For both Scandinavian and French borrowings the reader can also refer to M. S. Serjeantson's "A History of Foreign Words in English" (London 1935).

EME and CME phonological changes are examined in Ilyish, pp. 175-188; Arakin, pp. 67-75; Smirnitsky, pp. 30-56. The same changes are dealt with at greater length in Brunner, Vol. 1, pp. 191-223, 285-297; and in H. C. Wyld, A Short History of English (London 1957), pp. 81-143.

Developments in ME spelling are reviewed by Ilyish, pp. 156-160, Arakin, pp. 75-79, and Smirnitsky, pp. 20-26.

The morphology of EME and CME is discussed in Ilyish, pp. 191-236; Arakin, pp. 138-247 et passim; Smirnitsky, pp. 57-82; Baugh, pp. 194-205. A more detailed treatment is provided in Yartseva (M), Chapter 3 et passim. Vol. 2 of Brunner is devoted almost entirely to morphology. The parts of speech are dealt with separately and the material pertaining to OE, ME and EMoE is presented in chronological order. The relevant sections with their wealth of data and supplementary bibliography are invaluable for the advanced student. A survey of current theories seeking to account for the transition from an analytic to a synthetic system in English is given in Л. С. Бархударов, К проблеме развития аналитического строя в английском языке. „Иностранные языки в высшей школе. Тематический сборник I МГПИИЯ." Выпуск 1.

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provided in Ilyish, pp. 148-150, and further information is given on pp. 166-175, 186-190, 237. Arakin deals with the same problems on pp. 28-33, 296-301, and Smirnitsky on pp. 16-20. Interesting additional data may be found in Baugh, pp. 131-154, and in O. Jespersen's "Growth and Structure...", pp. 83-111.

Detailed discussions of the Scandinavian and French contributions to the E. vocabulary can be found in most books on English lexicology, e.g. A. Koonin, English Lexicology (Moscow 1940), pp. 29-39; И. В. Арнольд, Лексикология современного английского языка, Москва 1959 , pp.221-226. For both Scandinavian and French borrowings the reader can also refer to M. S. Serjeantson's "A History of Foreign Words in English" (London 1935).

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Москва 1962, pp. 47-59; see also idem Еще раз о развитии аналитического строя., Иностранные языки в высшей школе. Выпуск Ⅲ. Москва 1964, pp. 85-89

A good general survey of ЕМЕ and СМЕ syntax can be found in Ilyish, pp. 236-253. The advanced student will derive much useful information from the discussions of special problems in the appropriate sections of Yartseva (S). Leon Kellner's "Historical Outlines of English Syntax" (London 1913) is a partly outdated classic. F. Th. Visser's "An Historical Syntax of the English Language", Part One (Leiden 1963) is the first volume of a projected three-volume work, which when completed will constitute a very comprehensive treatment of historical E. syntax. Another full-scale treatment of the subject will be T. F. Mustanoja's "A Middle English Syntax", Part One of which appeared in Helsinki in 1960.

Chapter 3. THE REESTABLISHMENT OF ENGLISH

The process of the reinstatement of E. in the political and cultural life of England after the Norman Conquest and the reasons for the spread of London E. in the 14th-15th centuries are discussed by Ilyish, pp. 150-156, 254-258; Arakin, pp. 33-38; Smirnitsky, pp. 85-92. Baugh devotes an entire chapter to these questions (Chapter VI), see also Baugh, pp. 230-242.

Chaucer's use of E. in the "Canterbury Tales" and his other works has been the subject of an immense amount of research by such well-known specialists as M. Kaluza, B. Ten Brink, W. Skeat, A. Pollard, and, more recently, by B. Ilyish, H. Kökerits, R. Berndt, Michio Masai and others.

An interesting survey of the various views on the dialectal background of London E. in the Middle Ages and later is given in Ulf Jacobsson, Phonological Dialect Constituents in the Vocabulary of Standard English (Lund 1962), p. 8 ff.

Chapter 4. LATE MIDDLE ENGLISH AND THE TRANSITION TO EARLY MODERN ENGLISH

LME phonological changes are discussed together with those of EMoE in Ilyish, pp. 288-299; Smirnitsky, pp. 93-109; see also Arakin, pp. 79-134 (the latter source contains a lengthy discussion of the Great Vowel Shift) and Schlauch, pp. 41-50. A more detailed account of these changes is given in H. C. Wyld, A Short History of English (London 1957), pp. 144-221. Much valuable information on LME pronunciation is contained in E. J. Dobson, English Pronunciation 1500-1700, Vol. 1 (Oxford 1957), likewise in W. Horn, Laut und Leben. Englische Lautgeschichte der neueren Zeit (1400-1950). Bearbeitet und herausgegeben von M. Lehnert, Bd. 1 (Berlin 1954).

A concise survey of shifts in the morphology and syntax of London E. during the 15th-16th centuries is provided in Schlauch, pp. 50-61. The pertinent developments are dealt with against the general background of EMoE in Ilyish, pp. 314-351; Smirnitsky, pp. 110-126. In the case of Arakin and Brunner (Vol. 2) one will find that the relevant material has been arranged topically and presented in chronological order when discussing a certain part of speech, construction, etc.

For a discussion of the early Renaissance in E. see Baugh, Chapter VIII, especially pp. 245-250. Baugh also deals with LME lexical borrowings from the Low Countries. from Latin and with so-called aureate terms (pp. 227-232).

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In addition to the wide range of material provided in the well-known books referred to in the foregoing "Select Bibliography", the student of ME may find supplementary data and interesting points of view in most of the sources listed below.

Of the many older surveys of the history of the E. lg., which deal likewise with ME, those by H. Bradley, E. Weekley, L. P. Smith, G. H. McKnight and H. C. Wyld must be mentioned in particular (H. Bradley, The Making of English, London 1937; E. Weekley, The English Language, London 1928; L. P. Smith, The English Language, London 1912; G. H. McKnight, Modern English in the Making, New York - London 1928; H. C. Wyld, A History of Modern Colloquial English, Oxford 1936).

Special attention should be drawn to F. Mossé's "A Handbook of Middle English" (Baltimore 1952). This clear and orderly account of ME is a translation of the second part of the author's well-known "Manuel de l'anglais du moyen âge" (Paris 1949).

Surveys of the history of ME pitched at the level of the intelligent layman rather than that of the serious student are included in the following more recent books:

Simeon Potter, Our Language (London 1954); G. L. Brook, A History of the English Language (London 1958); John William Clark, Early English: A Study of Old and Middle English (New York 1964); Thomas Pyles, The Origins and Development of the English Language (New York 1964); Charles Barber, The Flux of Language (London 1965; first published under the title of "The Story of Language", Pan Books Ltd in 1964); Lincoln Barnett, The Treasure of English (New York 1964).

An ambitious attempt to produce a history of E. along structuralist lines was made recently by Martin W. Bloomfield and Leonard Newmark in their "A Linguistic Introduction to the History of English" (New York 1963). Unfortunately, the result is of uneven quality. Important topics in the history of E. have been neglected and there is a constant shifting of methods and points of view (see review of this book in "Language", Vol. 40, No 3, Part 1 (July-Sept. 1964), pp. 465-483).

A number of original if not always convincing structuralist-descriptivist interpretations of ME phenomena and

data may be found in Charles F.Hockett's well-known "A Cour-
se in Modern Linguistics" (New York 1963),pp. 365—401 pas-
sim.

The past 15—20 years have seen the publication of a num-
ber of significant contributions to the historical study of
the English language. Special mention should be made of the
textbooks of the history of English brought out by I.P. Iva-
nova and L. P. Chakhoyan (Moscow 1976), R. Berndt (Leipzig
1982) and T. A. Rastorgueva (Moscow 1983). For a survey of
these and other pertinent books and articles, see our paper
"Some notes on recent and current research into English and
the teaching of English (7): History of the language" – in
Linguistica, Tartu, 1983, pp. 59—67 (ACUT = Açta et Commen-
tationes Universitatis Tartuensis, fasc. 656).

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For representative samples of ME texts the reader is re-
ferred to the appropriate sections of A. Smirnitsky's "Speci-
mens of English" (Moscow 1939^2) or its more recent and revi-
sed version " Хрестоматия по истории английского языке (Моск-
ва 1953). See also our "Selections from Old, Middle and
Early Modern English" (Tartu 1970^2). Exercises for the prac-
tical studies which should always accompany a theoretical
course in the history of English can be taken from С. С. Линс-
кий, Сборник упражнений по истории английского языка (Ленин-
град1963). Additional ME texts can be found in I.P. Ivanova,
A Reader in Early English (Leningrad 1973).