Richard Dance (University of Cambridge)

The trouble with Vikings: ‘Difficult’ Old Norse borrowings in Middle English

An ICOME conference in Norway is the ideal opportunity to reflect on the considerable role played by the early Scandinavian languages in the development of English. Tracing this Old Norse influence has, of course, long fascinated scholars, and there has been much interesting recent work both on the linguistic evidence for it and on the contexts and nature of the contacts in Viking Age England which brought it about. Nevertheless, there remains a surprising amount still to do to identify and understand lexical borrowings from Old Norse in the surviving records of medieval English. This task can be a very challenging one, not least etymologically: given the genetic proximity of the languages in contact, and the patchiness of our knowledge of the vocabularies of both the source and target languages prior to and during the crucial period, it can be unusually difficult to establish which late Old and Middle English words really do show some input from Old Norse. (See, amongst many others, Townend 2002, Dance 2003 and 2011, Pons-Sanz 2013 and 2015, Durkin 2014: 190–219.) Things are especially tricky when it comes to the rich and diverse vocabulary of Middle English texts composed in the North, North Midlands and East of England, particularly the self-consciously showy and frequently obscure word-hoard of alliterative verse. Great literary monuments like the poems of the Gawain manuscript, The Wars of Alexander and the alliterative Morte Arthure contain hundreds of words whose forms, meanings or usage have been explained as showing Old Norse input by one or more commentators (in a plethora of editions, books, articles, dissertations and historical dictionaries) since the mid-nineteenth century. But the vocabulary of these texts has not been treated together from this perspective in a full, etymologically analytical study since Björkman’s panoramic survey of the Scandinavian loans in Middle English (1900–1902).
This paper draws on my ongoing work on the vocabulary of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (see Dance 2013), and introduces the larger ‘Gersum Project’ which has developed from it. *Gersum* is a collaborative project underway in Cambridge and Cardiff, funded for three years by the U.K.’s Arts and Humanities Research Council, in which Sara Pons-Sanz, Brittany Schorn and I (with the support of HRI Digital in Sheffield) are investigating all the words which could be derived from Old Norse in a range of late Middle English alliterative poems. In this paper, I shall present some of the fruits of this work so far, focusing on instances where the evidence for Scandinavian input is especially troublesome and, therefore, especially interesting. There are dozens of items in our texts whose etymology is essentially ‘obscure’, but where Old Norse derivation or influence is one amongst several more or less convincing attempts at an explanation, including the likes of *balʒ*, *enker-, draueled*, *flosche*, *gl[ ]opnyng*, *gryndel*, *loupe*, *slokes*, *snitered*, *sprit*, *taysed*, *traunt* and *wyles*. By examining a selection of these colourful and remarkable words — some of them well-known cruces in the etymological literature, some barely discussed at all — I shall explore in what ways these supposed relics of Viking activity prove to be so ‘difficult’, considering some of the things this tells us not only about the linguistic evidence itself, but also about the ways scholars have treated it. These words will help illustrate a few of the diverse and fascinating problems which beset linguists, editors and literary critics trying to interpret their material in the engagingly messy contexts of English language history — which can include (often at one and the same time) having to reconstruct forms much earlier in the history of Germanic, trying to work out what the words in our Old and Middle English and Old Norse sources actually mean, and wrestling with possible input from the other languages of medieval Britain.

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The *Gersum* Project: http://www.gersum.org

Alexandra Gillespie (University of Toronto)

**“Unbokeled is the male”: Chaucer and the makeshift manuscript**

In this paper, I argue that the editorial convention by which the *Canterbury Tales* are presented in Fragments (I-X) obscures some more interesting arrangements for the *Tales* that are witnessed in early manuscripts, such as the famous Hengwrt manuscript. I will juxtapose the idea of the *Tales*-as-book with Chaucer's depictions of pilgrims' bags within the *Tales*: the Pardoner's "male" and "mitain"; the
"male" that is unbuckled after the Knight's Tale, then knitted up - and unbuckled again - in the Prologue to the Parson’s Tale. I will describe some surviving medieval bags and compare the structure of Canterbury Tales manuscript Huntington HM 144 with that of Hengwrt, as I understand it. My overarching question is about the "makeshift" - provisional and portable - form of all of these objects. How does Chaucer build his codicological aesthetic in the Tales from ideas about books and bags, fragments and assemblages, Tales and tellers?

Gabriella Mazzon (University of Innsbruck)

Narration and argumentation in Middle English romances

Far from being only a form of “entertainment”, medieval romances were also the locus for conveying ideologies and values, especially at a time in which the reading public, or anyway the public that would be exposed to these narratives, was rapidly expanding.

Until not long ago, text analysis has mostly neglected to include the mode of reception of texts as a significant factor – more recently, however, the “performative turn” in various branches of textual and cultural studies has allowed us to analyse various text-types as “macro-speech acts”, constructed in ways that are functional to the mode of fruition of that text.

Thus, for instance, we should no longer conceive of text in verse as a kind of elitist, constrained and artificial form that has nothing to offer to language research. In particular, the texts of verse romances have been studied in this performative perspective, in connection with the tradition of oral poetry, musical entertainment and public reading. It was commonly maintained that poetry is not ideal for linguistic analysis because of its various formal constraints. On the one hand, this view discounts the fact that prose patterns were also constrained, that models from other languages had a strong influence, that scribes and “authors” were specifically trained and belonged to a rather limited elite; on the other hand, the fact that verse echoed, in certain text-types, a form of “performance” has also been underestimated, under the influence of our modern conception of “canonical” poetry.

In this talk I am going to consider both prose and verse romances as different text types but with relatively similar topics, sharing many ideological elements, and only partly different in terms of expressive and stylistic means. We will look, in particular, at ways in which narration progresses (e.g. in terms of linkers, deictics, topic-shifters), with special attention to the ways in which chronological sequences, as well as thematic shifts, are dealt with, and at ways in which arguments are put forth and proceed (e.g. in terms of modality markers, intensifiers, pragmatic markers), specifically in relation to the two discourses of “good/bad counsel” and “honour/shame”, both important ideologically in medieval romance, and both themes that have received critical, but not linguistic, detailed attention so far.

Matti Peikola (University of Turku)

Paratextual elements in Middle English manuscripts: challenges and opportunities for research

The concept of paratext – introduced by the French structuralist Gérard Genette in the 1980s – refers to the various verbal and visual elements that surround the ‘main text’ of a book, directing the reader’s perception of its message (the foundational work is Genette 1987; for recent developments, see e.g. Birke & Christ 2013). In addition to providing guidelines for interpretation (e.g. titles, prologues,
epilogues), paratextual elements help the reader to navigate the material book (e.g. rubrics, indexes, tables of contents). They may also serve to promote the interests of book producers commercially or otherwise (e.g. blurbs, title-pages, errata lists).

The current decade has witnessed an increasing and fruitful application of the paratextual framework to the study of early modern printed texts and their communicative practices (e.g. Smith & Wilson eds 2011; Meurman-Solin & Tyrrkö eds 2013, Pt. III). Applications to medieval texts transmitted via the manuscript medium, however, are still rare (e.g. Poleg 2013, Ch. 3; Liira 2014). Challenges are brought about, for example, by the heavy authorial emphasis in Genette’s original formulation and its underlying idea of a clearly discernible moment of publication. The ‘bespoke’ mode characteristic of medieval manuscript production, based on individual negotiations between makers and users of books, also adds a complicating layer to the model originally based on the ‘speculative’ production of printed books for the commercial market.

Acknowledging these challenges and responding to them, my paper addresses the opportunities that paratextual elements may offer for the study of Middle English manuscript texts. I seek to demonstrate that the concept of paratext has the potential to increase our understanding of the communicative functions that underlie the ‘framing’ or ‘packaging’ of medieval manuscript texts for their readers. Research into paratexts may also aid us in discerning broader patterns in a work’s textual transmission. It is not simply the presence or absence of a paratextual element that matters, but more the variant forms of the same paratext and the combinations of different paratexts attested across the manuscripts of a given work.

The materials I use to illustrate my arguments include both ‘interpretive’ and ‘navigational’ paratextual elements, especially prologues and various types of paratext in the form of a table or a calendar. The main focus will be on late Middle English manuscripts containing religious prose, but I will also address some scientific/utilitarian writings and some more ‘literary’ compilations. The paper is informed by my earlier research into paratextual elements of the Wycliffite Bible and some related manuscripts (e.g. Peikola 2009, 2015), and the ongoing work of the Framing Text: Early English Paratextual Communication, 1400–1600 team at the University of Turku.

References:


Soul and community in Middle English writings of religious instruction, c. 1200-1350

Church orthodoxy urged individuals to seek the salvation of their own souls as their lives’ priority, in an explicit command to put God before all human relationships and obligations; sermons and exempla emphasized the dangers of trusting to others for one’s moral well-being, both after death and during life. It was only in the decrees of the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 that Pope Innocent III first cautiously but officially averred that married laypeople could obtain salvation without abandoning that condition; presumably he was responding to a deep pastoral need, for priests to be able to reassure the laity that their souls were not necessarily condemned. But the most popular and influential writings continued to assert that the religious life was the only perfect life, that all concern with the things of this world leads to sin, and that personal relationships between the laity – familial, marital, and kinship bonds – were no help to the soul. Meanwhile, writing in Middle English arose in a period of increasing public dissatisfaction and class conflict, and complaint poetry and scabrous prose offered severely critical comment on society. And yet signs of lay optimism and clerical adaptation can indeed be found – in works such as the South English Legendary which offer a focus on community, and fellowship in purgatory, or in the enthusiastic adoption of affective piety in the ME lyrics, or in the sermon collections which equivocate on the nature of sin (‘The rycye ne rychesse god ne hatyth, / But who-so for rychesse god forsakyth.’)

This paper will examine the fascinating gap, in the early Middle English period, between the unremitting harshness of Church orthodox teaching, and the critical and engaged reception of that teaching, traced via the covert and overt responses to it found in literatures produced for and by a pious, but self-determining, and ethically independent, laity.

Syntactic features and clause typing in Middle English polar questions

My talk examines the syntax of polar questions involving if and whether in Middle English, concentrating on the exact status of these elements on the left periphery of the clause. While the analysis of if as a complementiser inserted into C is essentially uncontroversial in the literature, the status of whether has been subject to considerable debate. As is known, whether was available not only in embedded clauses but also in main clause interrogatives (Van Gelderen 2009, Fischer et al. 2001) from the Old English period onwards (and continued into Early Modern English). In main clauses, whether frequently but not obligatorily appeared with a fronted verb (V2 or T-to-C movement), but this was by no means obligatory: Van Gelderen (2009) interprets the lack of verb movement to C as an indicator of whether being a grammaticalised complementiser in these cases. The same asymmetry is manifest in Middle English embedded questions, where whether could be followed by that, as in (1) and (2):

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1 Wenzel, ed., from the Fasciculus Morum, 180-1.
I wot not whether that I may come with him or not. (Paston Letters XXXI)

If þai ani child miht haue, Queþer þat it ware scho or he
‘If they might have any child, whether it were a she or he.’
(Cursor Mundi 10205, Van Gelderen 2009: 155, ex. 61)

O þis watur he gert ilkan Drinc, quer he wald or nan
‘Of this water he gives each to drink whether he wanted it or not.’
(Cursor Mundi 5517–6618, Van Gelderen 2009: 155, ex. 62)

While (1) and (2) indicate a clear operator status for whether, examples without that, such as (3), raise the question why that was not inserted. Contrary to Van Gelderen (2009), and in line with Walkden (2014), I argue that whether was not grammaticalised as a complementiser, and the variation observed in Middle English reflects two possibilities for the insertion of the polar operator. This is important because the grammaticalisation of whether in Middle English would be inconsistent with its overall historical development, since whether is an operator in Modern English, too, as Van Gelderen (2009) also assumes; in this way, the history of whether raises important issues for historical syntax in general. First, it can be inserted into [Spec,CP] in the standard way, occupying the same position as ordinary wh-elements, even though it is not moved from within the clause. Second, it can be inserted into C by head adjunction (cf. Bayer and Brandner on similar phenomena in constituent questions). In the first case, the C head is filled by verb movement (head adjunction) or by the complementiser that. In the second case, whether lexicalises the C head, yet it is not a base-generated complementiser itself (unlike if). In both cases, the finite interrogative C head is lexicalised; I argue that this property of Middle English is a remnant of an earlier V2 pattern where [fin] generally had to be lexicalised. Regarding the lack of grammaticalisation, I claim that there is a feature difference between whether, which is specified as [wh], and if, which is merely [Q], a subset of [wh]: only an operator with a mere [Q] specification can be grammaticalised into a complementiser in polar questions, since the C head itself is specified as [Q]. Middle English provides evidence for the availability of if as an operator in conditional clauses (resulting in sequences like if that) but not in interrogatives; I argue that the early grammaticalisation of if into a complementiser in interrogatives was facilitated by the availability of whether as an overt operator, which enabled a functional split between the two elements.

References:


Artur Bartnik (Catholic University of Lublin)

Case assignment and the evolution of left-dislocated structures

Apart from typical left-dislocated structures illustrated in (1), in which the nominative case is assigned in a traditional way, Old English exhibits structures which seem to be structurally different (example 2). Consider:

(1) & se þe ne can þa beorhtnesse þæs ecan leohetes, se bið blind.
‘and he who does not know the brightness of the eternal light, he is blind’
(coblick, HomS_8_[BlHom_2]:17.62.230)

(2) And ðone ðe ðu nu hæfst, nis se ðin wer
‘and him who you now have, he is my husband’
(coaelhom, ÆHom_5:35.705)

Allen (1977, 1980) argues that the relative clause in (1) is externally headed, while in (2) the underlined head is internal to the relative clause because, among other things, the accusative case is assigned locally by the verb have (cf. also Harbert 1983 for a different analysis).

Old English left-dislocated structures also have more intriguing examples in which it is not easy to determine the source of case. Consider:

(3) And ham ðe me his heafod to gebringð, ic gife him c punda goldes
‘and he who shall bring me his head, I shall give him 100 pounds’
(coapollo,ApT:7.23.113)

(4) Þone þe me tocymð, ne drife ic hine fram me
‘he who comes to me I do not drive him away from me’
(coeuphr,LS_7_[Euphr]:67.66)

In examples (3) and (4) the relative elements (þam and Þone) do not receive case that results from their function in the clause (nominative). Rather, they seem to assume the case of the resumptive pronoun in the main clause (him, hine, respectively).

There are even examples in which the case assigner seems to lie outside the structure, as in (5) below. Note that the resumptive pronoun in the main clause is different from the dative þam in the fronted clause:

(5) For þon þam þe butan andetnessa & butan dædbote heora lif geendiaþ her on worulde, þonne ne becumaþ heo æfre to ængum life ne to ænigre reste,
‘because (for) those without confession and without repentance their life ends here on earth then they will never become to any life nor to any rest’
(coverhomL_HomU_15.1_[Scragg]:175.91)

To account for case assignment, we assume that structures like (2)-(5) are correlative constructions, in which relative clauses are adjoined to main clauses (cf. Liptak 2009, Bhatt 2003, Dayal 1996 for details). We further argue that Old English correlatives have defective complementizers which do not prevent case transfer across clausal boundaries.

In the paper we also discuss the demise of correlatives in Middle English. According to Kiparsky (1995) and Bianchi (1999), correlative clauses evolved into headed relatives in the history of English. We consider this evolutionary approach and show that once case distinctions disappear internal heads in correlatives are reanalyzed as already existing external heads illustrated in (1).

References:


The proposed paper is the outcome of an ongoing research project dealing with a comparison of the culinary and medical recipes at various stages of their development. The present study concentrates on the Middle English period. Its main aim is to illustrate the similarities and differences in terms of the major text type features as found in the two types of the recipe, such as (a) the form of the heading, (b) the degree of ellipsis in sentences, (c) the form of verbs, (d) the use of possessive pronouns, (e) object omission, (f) temporal sequence, (g) the lack of complex sentences, (h) a certain degree of technical language, and (i) the lack of quantifications. Our preliminary studies have shown that some of these features are typical of one type of recipe, being hardly noticeable in the other, as in the case of null object (popular in the culinary but not in the medical corpus), or technical language (for instance measure terms). The results will show the differences but also the degree of overlapping between the most prominent text type features of the two kinds of instructions.

The corpus for the proposed analysis consists of an equal sample of texts (culinary and medical) from the 14th and 15th centuries.

References:

María José Carrillo-Linares (University of Huelva, Spain) and Keith Williamson (University of Edinburgh, Scotland)

The linguistic character of manuscripts attributed to the so-called ‘Beryn Scribe’: a comparative study

In 2003 Mooney and Matheson identified a single scribe who produced the three copies of the Brut Chronicle found in London, British Library, Harley 1337, London, British Library, Harley 6251, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.901, as well as some portions of texts in Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Hatcher Library 225, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Hatton 50, and Oxford,
Bodleian Library, Tanner 11. Likewise, they argued that the same scribe was responsible for a copy of the Prick of Conscience, a fifteenth-century chronicle of London, and Chaucer’s Parliament of Fowls in Oxford, John’s College 57, one of the versions of Lydgate’s Life of our Lady, copied in Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Kk.1.3 (part 10) and a copy of the Canterbury Tales including the unique text of the Tale of Beryn in Northumberland, Alnwick Castle 455. Mooney and Matheson (2003) dubbed the copyist of these manuscripts ‘the Beryn Scribe’. Previously, in 2000, Horobin had identified another manuscript as being in the same hand as that of the Tale of Beryn in the paper sections of the Helmingham manuscript (Princeton Firestone Library Ms 100). Moser and Mooney (2014) made some additions to the existing list of manuscripts copied by the Beryn Scribe identifying Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawlinson C.901, another Middle English prose Brut Chronicle and Manchester, John Rylands Library English MS 63 plus Rosenbach MS 1084/2, of the Canterbury Tales.

Matheson (2008) argues that the Beryn scribe was ‘a consistent translator into his own dialect’. However, LALME LP 6040 localises the language of the text of Alnwick Castle 455 to southern Essex, and the language of the Helmingham manuscript was described by Manly and Rickert (1940) as East Midland language, and it seems to be even more markedly East Anglian. Our research on the text of the Prick of Conscience in Oxford, John’s College 57 rather suggests that the language of this text is better localised further north, in the area of north-west Norfolk and Ely. Our aim is to analyse the linguistic features of various texts copied by the Beryn scribe, producing extended LPs (i.e. going beyond the LALME list) for each of them. The linguistic evidence considered in the previous studies is restricted to a very limited number of forms, some of them with a widespread distribution and others which, although being less common, are not restricted to any particular area.

In order to achieve our aims, we compare the evidence in our LPs in order to find the common elements that might be attributable to the scribe’s own repertorire, as well as the features distinctive to any of them, which could have been motivated by the language of the exemplars he was using. This methodology enables us to provide a more detailed and nuanced account of the copying practice of the Beryn scribe.

References:


Quotative inversion with subject pronouns: from Old to Middle English

Quotative inversion, defined as S-V inversion in a reporting clause, is practically absent from PDE if the subject is a personal pronoun (Barber et al. 1999: 922), as shown in (1).

(1) “The safety record at Standset is first class,” he said. (after Barber et al. 1999: 922)

If inversion takes place, it is said to be “unusual and archaic” (Quirk et al. 1985: 1022), as in (2).

(2) ‘We may all be famous, then’, said he (after Biber et al. 1999: 922)

Since the structure is assumed to be archaic, its use in early English should be more common. Indeed, Mitchell (1985: §1949) reports after Ogura (1979) that there are two competing patterns attested in OE: cwað he (‘said he’) used in Bede and he cwað (‘he said’) used in the Homilies of Wulfstan, as in (3) and (4) respectively.

(3) Ac ic hæbbe, cwað he, in minre mægðe
But I have said he in my country
minne broðor mæssæpreost (cobede,Bede_4:23.328.9.3292)
my brother priest
‘But I have, said he, a brother who is a priest in my country’ (cobede,Bede_4:23.328.9.3292)
(4) Bearn ic afedde, he cwað (cowulf,WHom_11:108.1029)
child I fed he said
‘I fed a child, he said’

Cichosz (2016) shows that quotative inversion with all subject types in OE is largely restricted to the verb cweðan (only 3 out of 145 cases have secgan), while in PDE inversion is “most common when the verb is said” (Quirk et al. 1985: 1022). This study aims to show when and how seien (which dominates in the function of introducing direct speech in ME, cf. Moore 2011: 56-57) replaced quethen in this context. As shown in (5) and (6), both verbs could follow the inverted pattern in ME, while non-inversion is well attested for seien, as in (7) but unavailable with quethen (unlike in OE).

(5) Ich habbe funden quod he mon efter min heorte.
I have found said he man after my heart
‘I have found, he said, a man after my heart’ (CMANCRIW-1,II.46.432)
(6) Gode seide he ha beoð.
good said he they are
‘Good, he said, they are’ (CMANCRIW-1,II.60.608)
(7) ‘Firste,’ He saise, ‘sekes pe kygdom of heuen
first he says seek you kingdom of heaven
‘First, he says, seek a kingdom of heaven’ (CMEDTHOR,40.582)

In various analyses of ME syntax focusing on the loss of the V-2 rule, quotative inversion is mentioned but only to state that it would not be included in the investigation because of its distinct discourse characteristics (Los 2009, Westergaard 2007) and structural ambiguity (Haeberli 2002: 10, fn. 13), which make it different from typical V-2 (even though it is associated with V-2, cf. Zwart 2005: 19). This study takes ME quotative inversion as the main topic in an attempt to account for the variation found in the OE and ME data. The investigation is based on the YCOE (Taylor et al. 2003) and the PPCME2 (Kroch & Taylor 2000) corpora and employs corpus methods to trace the development of the structure in early English.
Communities of practice and the rise of Standard English: evidence from late fifteenth-century private correspondence

The development of a ‘third wave’ approach in sociolinguistic research has afforded a new view of language variation as practice inherent in the construction of both individual and group identities and in the enactment of social meaning (Eckert 2012). A key analytical construct in this respect is that of ‘community of practice’: a group of people linked by the pursuit of a joint enterprise, sharing a repertoire of resources, including linguistic ones like code selection and the adoption of standard or non-standard forms of language, among others (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). Field research has also confirmed the relevance of this construct in the diffusion of variation, as part of a common, locally-constructed style: “it is in the process whereby an individual negotiates with his/her communities of practice that linguistic style is constructed and refined and patterns of variation are imbued with meaning” (Eckert 2000: 172; see also Meyerhoff 2002). Communities of practice are therefore crucial for the diffusion of standard or non-standard practices, as part of the process of identity construction, and I believe that this tenet—which certainly holds for the present—could also be extended to the past, adding a new dimension to the historical study of standardisation. Historically-oriented studies based on this construct are scarce, due to the obvious difficulties in reconstructing groups and, especially, identities and social meanings in past societies—see, however, for the history of English, Watts (2008), Fitzmaurice (2010), Kopaczyck and Jucker (eds. 2013), and Conde-Silvestre (2016), among others. Nevertheless, evidence can be drawn from the extant collections of late Middle English private correspondence—like the Stonor and Paston letters—which, incidentally, belong with a crucial period in the early implementation of standard English. In this paper, I intend to reconstruct some of the communities of practice modelled by the correspondents in these letters, analysing the linguistic resources that their members shared, in connection with the adoption of incipient standard features. This micro-sociolinguistic perspective may help to see early
The impact of the grammaticalization of the definite determiner on Middle English Syntax

With this paper, I aim to present empirical data dealing with the impact of the grammaticalization of the definite determiner on Middle English syntax. The grammaticalization of the definite determiner in the English language is a debated issue within linguistic studies; according to Philippi (1997), both OE and OHG lacked a definite determiner. While Tschirch (1982) and Demske (2001) demonstrated that the definite determiner grammaticalized at the end of the OHG period, the discussion about the grammaticalization of the OE definite determiner is more controversial (Cf. Crisma 2011 and Osawa 2009).

Empirical data arising from the scrutiny of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles A and E, show that in OE the determiner paradigm *se* was involved in discourse organization, even if it also signaled definiteness in some contexts. At the beginning of the EME period, however, a functional shift can be observed: definiteness is signaled through the *se* paradigm, while the discourse organizational function has been taken up by the complex determiner *þis*. Finally, the *se* paradigm undergoes a leveling of forms, resulting in the uninflected form *þe*. These findings are in line with the development traced by Breban (2012).

The grammaticalization of the definite determiner may have played a significant role within the scenario of the syntactic change occurring between the OE and the ME periods. Starting from a metrical definition of prosodic heaviness (Cf. Hinterhölzl 2015), I aim to test whether the grammaticalization of the functional head D had an impact on the positioning of DP objects in ME.
According to the metric definition of prosodic heaviness, a constituent is defined as heavy if both its head and its complement are filled with lexical material; this definition predicts that a DP containing a realized head D and a complement NP is a heavy constituent. Moreover, in the framework postulated by Hinterhölzl (2015), the I-domain in the English language is PF-sensitive, requiring all heavy objects to be spelled out post-verbally. This definition predicts that a growing number of given, but heavy DP objects with a realized head D are spelled out post-verbally after the reanalysis of the demonstrative se as the definiteness marker. Together with the demise of the system of discourse markers such as ja and ponne, the increasing post-verbal positioning of given objects may have rendered opaque the information structural requirements governing the syntax of the OE language (cf. Pintzuk-Taylor 2012a-2012b, Petrova-Speyer 2011, Van Kemenade-Los 2006, Hinterhölzl-Van Kemenade 2012) and prompted the reanalysis of the syntactically-driven SVO word order.

The data are based on a scrutiny of Early Middle English texts and on wider searches on the YCOE corpus.

References:


Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/c/cme/


The circulation and transmission of hippocratic lunaries in Middle English

The great majority of lunar prognostic texts have ‘largely escaped the attentions of scholarship’ (Voigts, 1994: 123). This is the case of the Pseudo-Hippocrates´ Treatise on Zodiacal Influence, a text incorporated into medical codices which contain more extensive and relevant works. It has therefore hitherto remained comparatively unknown and the only way to identify parallel copies is by consulting different catalogues and medical manuscripts (Taavitsainen, 1987: 20). Nonetheless, even specialised catalogues are rarely comprehensive and do not include cross-references to other catalogues (Kibre, 1984 & 1985; Voigts and Kurtz, 2000), which makes the identification of parallel texts an arduous task and, consequently, their edition and study. In this paper we deal with this lunary, and concentrate on five copies of it — GUL Hunter MS 513, BL Additional MS 12195, BL Harley MS 2378, BL Sloane MS 73 and Royal Physicians College MS 384 — since they present a very similar layout, structure and content. They also contain a tract relating to abscesses at the end, which is absent in other related versions. This pseudo-Hippocratic treatise was translated from Latin into English in the late Middle English period (Taavitsainen, 2012: 93), and our hypothesis is that the five texts may be copies of the same exemplar. Our aim is to study their language according to the methodology of eLALME which will show the circulation and textual transmission of the treatise. The only transcription that has been published so far is the one produced by Means of BL Harley MS 2378, so we have firstly transcribed the other versions, and secondly examined the language of the five of them. Finally, by collating and comparing them, we intend to identify the original text which may have given rise to these translations. This research is part of a project that aims to identify the parallel texts of this pseudo-Hippocrates´ treatise and to group the Middle English manuscripts genetically in relation to the original versions. Future research will pursue the study of other Middle English translations in order to complete and enlarge the genetic affiliation of the English versions.

References:

Edurne Garrido-Anes (Universidad de Huelva)

Acceptance, rejection and omission of the word ‘dole’ in Middle English: an approach to assessing its dialectal distribution

Despite becoming mostly obsolete by 1600, the noun ‘dole’ – also spelt ‘dool’ or ‘dule’ – has survived into Present-Day English as an archaic, poetic or dialectal word. Its possible dialectal character in Middle English will be assessed in this paper by studying how scribes from different areas behaved when confronted with this word in their copy texts. Three works preserved in multiple manuscripts have been selected to carry out this research: The Prick of Conscience, with the study of the ninety-seven known manuscripts of the Main Version; Poema Morale, with its seven main extant exemplars analysed; and Cursor Mundi, with nine of them. In exactly the same contexts, most scribes tended to maintain the word that they found in their source. However, some parallel copies of these works at times present lexical variants, and occasionally avoid the item by omission or rephrasing. In order to be able to ascertain whether the recorded instances of acceptance, omission and apparent rejection of ‘dole’ – or of its derived forms – were or were not geographically conditioned, the methodology proposed by Carrillo-Linares and Garrido-Anes (2008, 2009) will be followed. Specialised external sources such as the MED, the OED, E-LAEME and E-LALME, alongside printed or online editions of at least one manuscript of the above-mentioned works constitute essential points of departure from which to elicit initial examples of the word, as well as further references of potential occurrences and of the localised or localisable manuscripts where they need to be checked. Once identified the factors that may prevent direct correlation between the dialectal localisation of a Middle English manuscript based on spelling and morphology and that of the lexicon it contains, some distribution maps will be provided to show common patterns of behaviour regarding the use of ‘dole’ in the textual transmission of the three works.

References:
The Parlement of Foules remains a strange bird in Chaucer’s body of work, critics finding it difficult to reach an overall consensus as to its meaning and import. The most popular approach disregards the first half of the poem altogether, links the courting of the formel eagle to the impending nuptials of Richard II and Anne of Bohemia, and attributes the dissension among the fowls to the riotous Parliaments of 1376, 1377, and 1380. Basically functioning as an epithalamium, the poem is thus reduced to a premier instance of English occasional verse. Other critics, finding the first half of the poem incompatible with such an interpretation, have made a virtue out of the poem’s lack of coherence, arguing that it allows for an open-ended treatment of a topic that inherently resists tidy analysis. I will argue that both these ways of approaching the poem are defensive and unable to give its project proper articulation. Rather than being form without content or content without form, The Parlement of Foules expresses how an old hierarchic harmony gradually gives way to the chaotic discordance of a new world. By initially introducing Cicero’s Somnium Scipionis and its absolute emphasis on the necessity of love of the state, Chaucer offers a lens through which to view the subsequent action. What emerges is a poem that is not only subversive to its genre but to a prevailing social order, a poem that far from being incoherent and obscure is a very deliberate structure openly engaging with critical issues of social power.
Alpo Honkapohja, University of Zurich

**Abbreviations after the Conquest: a corpus investigation of manuscript abbreviations in the Linguistic Atlas of Early Mediaeval English.**

The aim of the paper is to carry out a corpus study of manuscript abbreviations. As anyone who has worked directly with manuscripts knows, scribes were in the habit of making considerable use of abbreviations to save space or time. In printed editions and corpora based on these editions, these abbreviations are normally expanded ‘for the benefit of the reader’, which creates a number of problems for historical linguistic enquiry (see, e.g. Lass 2004, Driscoll 2006 & 2009, and Rogos 2011 & 2012). However, even though we now have corpora in which the abbreviations are encoded rather than expanded (LAEME and MEG-C), there have been fairly few corpus linguistic studies that make use the abbreviations as linguistic data. The present study aims to address this problem by presenting a quantitative approach to manuscript abbreviations in the early Middle English period, between 1150 and 1350. The period is of particular interest for the study of writing systems, as both the linguistic situation and orthographical practices changed in the aftermath of the Norman Conquest of 1066. The data comes from the *Linguistic Atlas of Early Medieval English* (LAEME) corpus, which covers the years 1150 to 1350 and contains ca. 650,000 words. LAEME is one of the very few linguistic corpora, which encode abbreviations, instead of expanding them silently.

I will compare on the distribution of abbreviations in small function words (‘in’, ‘that’, and ‘other’) and longer lexical words, across different genres, geographical areas and etymological origin of the word, comparing Romance and Germanic vocabulary. Previous studies (e.g. Honkapohja, May 2017 forthcoming) have shown that scribes are likely to treat function words and lexical words differently, each having their own individual repertoire for the former, while reproducing the forms found in the exemplar for the latter. In order to compare scribal behaviour, I will focus particularly on parallel texts, LAEME is well-suited for the present study as it includes 32 texts as parallel versions and contains clearly identified scribal stints.

The results are expected to shed light on the development of scribal practices during the formative years that followed the Norman Conquest, as well as the dissemination of Latin and French abbreviations into native Germanic vocabulary.

**References:**


Reflections on *Orrmulum* lexis

Work on a new edition of *Orrmulum*, the vast 12th century homiletic work surviving in the author’s holograph (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 1), and in some parts, lost from MS Junius 1, in a 17th century copy by Jan van Vliet (London, Lambeth Palace Library, MS 783), has yielded various by-products, such as analyses of Orrm’s scriptural interpretations (Johannesson 2007a,b, 2008a–c, 2012), studies of semantic fields (Johannesson 2006b), variation studies (Johannesson 2000, 2006a), and studies of individual words (Johannesson 2004, 2015). The purpose of the last two papers was to provide alternative interpretations and/or etymologies of a small number of individual words. The proposed paper, by contrast, will adopt a wider perspective of groups of words of different origins. Preparing the glossary for the new edition of *Orrmulum* has provided an opportunity to take a bird’s-eye view of the lexis used by Orrm in his homiletic work. In this paper I will present some reflections on the status of native English vocabulary, Old Norse borrowings, Old French borrowings, and Middle Dutch borrowings. An analysis of erased (but identifiable) words in the manuscript can give an indication of what kind of words Orrm had second thoughts about and eventually decided to exclude from his text. Orrm occasionally provides comments on the status of words as in (1), where the Scandinavian borrowings *brodd* ‘shoot’ and *blome* ‘flower’ were obviously sufficiently integrated to count as examples of ‘ennglish’.

(1) For nazaraþ bitacneþþ uss;
    Onn ennglishsh brodd. & blome. (H10772f.)

References


A morphosemantic study of zero-derivation in Middle English

The problem of zero-derivation has frequently been confronted in studies on English word-formation, usually, however, from the perspective of its usual place in the general theoretical framework of word-formation. Despite the fact that the process of zero-derivation, whereby a new word is derived from the already existing one with no accompanying change of morphological form, has been an inherent part of the English word-formational system since Old English (cf. Kastovsky 1968, Biese 1941), there is still a lot of controversy regarding the systemic nature of the process. The debate mostly focuses on the problem of zero-affixes as formal exponents of the process; linguists who view this process as a derivational technique analogical to affixation operationalize the term “zero affix” and, consequently, apply the term “zero-derivation” (e.g. Marchand 1969, Kastovsky 1968, 2005). One of the most frequent, and perhaps the most neutral with respect to theoretical affinity is the approach where the process is seen as morphological conversion, as it merely implies the shift of a given lexeme to a different word-class. Still different approaches treat this morphological process as a kind of syntactic recategorization within a single paradigm (cf. Vogel 1996, see also objections towards zero-affixes raised by Štekauer 1996) or as a kind of metonymic shift (cf. Schönefeld 2005). Although much has been said so far about zero-derivation from a theoretical point of view, very little attention has been paid to the historical aspects of this process. Still, the only comprehensive and systematic study of the development of zero-derivation in English is the publication by Biese (1941).

The present paper is a corpus-based study of zero-derived types sampled in the corpus of Middle English texts. Both formal properties, such as the motivation, directionality, and the availability of the process, as well as qualitative aspects of zero-derivation, such as the most common semantic patterns resultant from the zero-form application, have been taken into consideration. Also, etymological data has been incorporated into the present analysis, which has allowed to further speculate on the productivity of the process as far as the intake of foreign bases is concerned. The period of Middle English is especially important for the emergence of zero-derivation as one of the most productive word-formational patterns, as it has witnessed the truncation of the verbal infinitival suffix –en, which eventually eliminated formal differences between verbs and nouns in the nominative case. This inflectional loss has led to a significant rise in the productivity of the process in subsequent stages of the morphological development of the English language. Therefore, despite the fact that the present study is synchronic in nature, some diachronic aspects comparing the morphosemantic properties of Middle English zero-derivatives with their later development have also been briefly discussed, as the analysis has revealed substantial diachronic differences with respect to the availability, productivity, and semantic output of the process in question.

Primary Sources:

*The Diachronic Part of the Helsinki Corpus of English Text.*
*The Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse.*

Dictionaries:

*Middle English Dictionary* (available online at quod.lib.umich.edu/m/med)

References:

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Monika Kirner-Ludwig (State University of New York at Albany, NY)

Have we been misreading Harley 2253’s Man in the Moon? Revisiting medieval and Early Modern English references to the Man in the Moon from a historio-linguistic viewpoint

The Man-in-the-Moon motif has so far mostly received attention from literary scholars carving out its history and influencing factors as well as its metaphorical use (cf. e.g. Baring-Gould 1967; Brednich 1997; and Honegger 1997, 1999). While these scholars have mainly been concerned with Alexander Neckam’s mentioning of the Man in the Moon as a phenomenon people would actually believe to be true in his De Naturis Rerum (a1204) and William Shakespeare’s recurrent references to and re-contextualizations of the Man in the Moon in his Midsummer Night’s Dream (3.1.51-53), The Tempest (2.2.129-133), and Love’s Labour’s Lost (5.2.211-214), another array of studies has been produced which focuses on the one poem dealing with the Man in the Moon as part of the so-called Harley Lyrics, preserved in MS Harley 2253, fols. 114v-115r, British Library London, produced by an anonymous writer roughly around 1325. Those mostly philological studies have tried to more specifically date and comprehend this piece with regard to its linguistic facets and still unresolved riddles (cf. e.g. Boedeker, K. 1879; Brook 1948; Brown 1924, 1933; Ker 1965; Stenroos 2008). This paper’s perspective on the Man in the Moon is thus highly facilitated by the fact that both the provenance and instances of occurrence of the motif have been well researched and documented. Using this situation as a springboard, the three following main aims have been formulated in order to provide an explicitly diversified view on the conceptual frames and socio-historical relevance of the Man in the Moon:

1) I shall argue for a much more outside-the-box approach to the Man in the Moon, proposing a look beyond the textual margins most research into the motif has been constrained by.

2) I suggest a much more conceptual approach, zooming in on what the Man in the Moon stood for and what people associated this fuzzy concept with and how these facets reflect in diachronic language use on a linguistic, or more specifically cognitive-semantic and idiomatic level.

3) Based on 1) and 2), I claim that the Man in the Moon poem in MS Harley 2253 may have been misread and misinterpreted all along.

References:


Reconstructing spelling systems through grapho-phonological parsing: The case of 15th-century Scots

In this talk, we extend research on medieval writing systems – gained mostly through the study of Middle English (see, e.g., Laing 1999, Laing & Lass 2003) – to early Scots. In doing so, we will showcase the tools and methods developed for FITS (From Inglis to Scots, University of Edinburgh), a project which investigates Scots administrative texts from 1380–1500, drawn from the Linguistic Atlas of Older Scots (Williamson 2008).

Like their Middle English counterparts, we assume early Scots scribes to be “prodigal yet still systematic” spellers (Laing and Lass 2003: 258). FITS is concerned with the nature of these spelling systems and assumes them to be at least partly rooted in the phonology. We have therefore developed a method of grapho-phonological parsing (Kopaczyk et al., under review), which resolves individual word forms into their component spelling units (‘graphemes’). For each token of each resolved grapheme we record its:

- etymological sound value (e.g. OE [ð] for early Scots <y>)
- reconstructed sound value (e.g. <γ> representing [θ] in <yef(is)> ‘thieves’ and [ð] in <yarfor> ‘therefore’)
- graphotactic, morphographic and lexical context
- extralinguistic context (e.g. date, place of composition, sub-genre)

This technique enables us to (1) propose the underlying phonology represented by each scribal orthography (e.g. Alcorn et al. 2017, Molineaux et al. 2016, Maguire et al. in prep.) and (2) reconstruct the spelling systems of different texts, times and places. Here, we concentrate on the second of these goals. We illustrate how FITS tools allow us to establish sound substitution sets (‘SS
sets’, cf. Potestatic Substitution Sets, Laing 1999) and to investigate their contextual variation. We focus on the SS sets for the grapheme <y> and the digraph <th>, represented in Fig.1.

Fig.1. Overlapping consonantal SS-sets for <y> and <th> in the FITS database

Fig. 1 shows the range of reconstructed consonantal values for <y> and <th> as revealed by the FITS database visualization tool. This tool allows us to assess the strength of correlation between units of spelling and the sound values we reconstruct for them (indicated by the thickness of connecting lines within each set). It is apparent from Fig. 1 that <y> is preferred to <th> as a spelling for [ð], but is clearly dispreferred for [θ]. Our tools enable us to study these mappings further, e.g. in individual texts or in particular morphemes. In our talk we investigate the consonant interpretations of <y> and <th> more broadly by exploring their positional, geographic and temporal restrictions. In doing so we build on current scholarship by providing a fresh, Scots-based perspective.

References:


Virginia Langum (University of Umeå)

**Mad Pilgrims: Migration and Mental Illness in Premodern Literature and Culture**

Writing in the fifteenth century, the poet and civil servant Thomas Hoccleve speaks of his “wit” as “having gone on pilgrimage.” Although metaphorical, Hoccleve wrote in a culture saturated with associations of pilgrimage and mental and moral health. The image of the “mad pilgrim” is addressed in Foucault’s influential but often historically dubious *History of Madness* (2006). In this text, he claims that premodern societies often shipped away or exiled the mentally ill on boats. While unlikely that the medieval and early modern seas were filled with such “boats of fools,” madness was a common affliction of pilgrims who voluntarily left seeking a cure. Images of exile, pilgrimage and madness are pervasive in medieval texts, and these associations are both metaphorical, as in the case of Hoccleve, and material as in the case of the mystic Margery Kempe who was cast out by her fellow pilgrims for her idiosyncratic and “mad” behaviour. This abandonment causes her much mental distress and anguish. The present study will contextualize these literary descriptions of pilgrimage and exile within the context of historical documents pertaining to pilgrimage and healing, as well as medical accounts of mental illness and the impact of geographical and cultural change. This paper is part of a larger project which examines the articulation of mental illness and migration in literature from the Middle Ages to the present.

Andrzej M. Łęcki (Pedagogical University of Cracow) and Jerzy Nykiel (University of Bergen)

**The cycle of prepositional purpose subordinators in Middle English**

Recently more and more attention has been devoted to linguistic cycles, e.g. the papers in van Gelderen (2009) and van Gelderen (2016). Among developments that have some features of a linguistic cycle is the development of a number of purpose subordinators in Middle English. While some of such subordinators arise also later, that is in Early Modern English, their roots can still be traced to Middle English. What is common to all those subordinators is that their structure embraces P+NP+*that*. Not unlike similar forms present in PDE, as discussed by Brems and Davidse (2010), the noun in the NP is an abstract noun while the clause introduced by *that* is to be originally taken as a noun complement clause. The subordinators to be handled in this paper are: *to the intent that*, *to the effect that*, *to the end that*, *on purpose that*, and *in order that*. While the grammaticalization of each of these subordinators treated individually has been the subject of a number of our earlier studies, namely Nykiel and Łęcki (2013), Łęcki and Nykiel (2014), Nykiel (2014), and Łęcki and Nykiel (in press), in this study we take a global look at the renewal of these purpose subordinators. One of our aims is to explore the causes of the renewal by looking into untypical contexts and critical contexts (Diewald 2006) in which the purpose subordinators arose. Also, we look in this study into the lexical sources of the purpose subordinators with the aim of, firstly, reconstructing grammaticalization paths that lead to PURPOSE and, secondly, verifying to what extent a particular lexical source determines the meaning and function of the purpose subordinator.

It is to be borne in mind that the outburst of new purpose subordinators in Middle English is not an isolated phenomenon. Brems and Davidse (2010) note that in PDE similar developments are attested, e.g. *in the hope that*, which lends more support to the idea that the development of the purpose subordinators is cyclical. We argue in this study that the PDE developments further continue the cycle set in motion in Middle English.

The language data for this study are collected from the electronic corpora of the English language such as the Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse and Penn-Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Middle English.
References:


Łęcki, Andrzej M. & Jerzy Nykiel 2014. All roads lead to purpose: the rise and fall of to the end that and to the effect that in English. In Studies in Middle English. Words, Forms, Senses and Texts. Michael Bilinsky (ed.). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. 225-251.


Sonya Lundbland (University of Stavanger)

"Hit is tyme rest myn hert, y me suppos": Rhetoric, Dreams, and Maturity in *Fortunes Stabilnes*

In 1433, the noble prisoner, Charles d’Orleans was placed in the custody of the earl of Suffolk where he became involved in peace negotiations with France. Seven years later, he was released from his 25-year captivity and returned home to France (Arn 25-26). Before leaving England, he ordered the production of manuscripts of his French and English poetry (Critten 341). Now entitled *Fortunes Stablines*, his long English poem depicts the inner mind of a young speaker who is awakened to love for the first time and painfully suspended in a dreamlike state of eros (within which he actually falls asleep and dreams). While Julia Boffey’s “Charles of Orleans Reading Chaucer’s Dream Visions,” makes important connections, more comparisons with previous Middle English dream vision is necessary because claims about the static immaturity of Charles’ dreamer (Critten 343) and the unfinished nature of the poetry (Arn 22) have questioned the poet’s place in the tradition of Middle English verse. Some have claimed that the roughness of the English language and poetic device is intentional, a sign of belonging to the early modern period (Klinck 687). I would like to suggest that, like the dreamer in Pearl and The Book of the Duchess, Charles’ dreamer enters a maturation process that involves his faculty of reason. Charles’ dreamer suggests various courses of action to alleviate his pain, and all are rejected by Cupid who consistently explains his heartbreak as the inevitable consequence of love. The lover-dreamer’s eventual maturity is glimpsed when he comes to accept that love is illogical, unfair, and inevitable. Later, he embraces a Boethian sense of Hope as course of action. In this, he has much in common with the dreamer in Pearl and The Book of the Duchess. Using similar rhetorical devices, such as apostrophe (Barootes), Charles’ dreamer engages in reasoned critical analysis of injustice and offers various appeals. My paper is also responding to claims that both the lover and Charles affect an “unstable self,” (Spearing) and a duplicitous persona (Coldiron) in the spirit of early modern self-fashioning and subjectivity. Showing Charles’ participation in Middle English rhetorical poems exposes similarities between Charles and the lover, both endowed with reason, agency, purpose, and initiative rather than subjectivity. Like the pained lover he creates, in his exile, Charles knew quite a lot about the very things the lover-narrator expresses: lost agency,
captivity, longing for escape, intractable situations, and half-life existence akin to dream. Together with characters like Love, Beauty, and Fortune who are working against the lover, holding him in painful captivity, Charles crafted a multivalent world of interconnected forces that allude to his own situation without digressing into allegory. Therefore, it is possible that Charles’ poetry is less an expression of his feelings (or product of his psyche) as it is an efficacious contribution to his actual release from captivity in 1440. This understanding of the work arises from speculation about Charles’ possible performances in noble households before his release, and also from scholarly consensus about his opportunity to read Chaucer’s work (Epstein) (Critten) while being held in the home of Alice Chaucer (granddaughter to Geoffrey Chaucer and wife of the earl of Suffolk). No encounters with the Pearl poem are yet substantiated. Nevertheless, he wrote in the same high elegant style of the Pearl poet known as the "luf-talkyng” mode, one befitting Charles, a man of princely "nobility and refinement" (Arn 19). Therefore the comparison is also useful for considering his place in the Middle English verse tradition.

References:

Martti Mäkinen (Hanken School of Economics)

N-gram inventories in the study of Middle English variation

An earlier study showed that Stylo, a package for R, was able to discriminate between the purposes of writing, or the dialects, or the authors of Middle English documents (Mäkinen 2016). The current paper takes that study as a starting point, and develops the earlier findings by investigating the elements shared by the texts between which affinity was established, and determining what elements are conditioned by which factors.

Stylo is a stylometric package written for R for studies in stylometry and authorship attribution. Stylo uses n-grams of either words or characters, and their z-scores (the distance between the raw score and the population mean in units of the standard deviation) for establishing links between texts. In addition to the different visualisations, Stylo also provides the user with tables of
frequencies and z-scores, which can be used after the automatic analysis to study the n-grams that were pivotal in establishing links between texts. (Eder, Rybicki, and Kestemont, 2015)

The current paper starts from two assumptions: each Middle English text attests to a unique set of character n-grams, and such unique sets are more similar among texts that share a similar variant of Middle English, conditioned either diatopically otherwise (Jensen, 2010; Stenroos and Thengs, 2012). The material for this study is drawn from A Corpus of Middle English Local Documents (MELD), compiled at the University of Stavanger. The version used for this study is 2016.1, consisting of 1,436 texts and 600,000 words (MELD).

Looking at the choices of method and material, this study is situated between LALME and investigations on the geographical provenance of texts (cf. Williamson 2000, 144-151), i.e. the method combines elements from fit technique and “character n-gram geography”. As such, the automatically created n-grams do not yield themselves easily to the study of linguistic elements, that is, they do not respect the boundaries of morphemes or syllables. Nevertheless, they may open vistas into the spelling variation conditioned by provenance, purposes of writing, or authorship.

References:


MELD = The Middle English Local Documents Corpus, version 2016.1. September 2016, University of Stavanger.


Imogen Marcus (Edge Hill University)

**Loans or code switches? The status of lone other-language lexical items in later medieval texts**

This paper places Middle English within its multilingual context by seeing it as existing alongside Anglo-French and Latin. The Middle English Dictionary (Kurath, Kuhn & Lewis: 1952) lists large numbers of French origin lexical items. This paper asks: were these lexical items loans or code switches? Distinguishing a loan word from a single-word code-switch is notoriously difficult (cf. Poplack 2012, Durkin 2014) and poses a problem to researchers seeking to assess historical contact influence. In order to address this issue, three criteria based on Matras (2009), namely textual context,
verbal morphology and the length of attestation of individual lexical items are applied to a sample of French-origin Middle English words, taken from the Bilingual Thesaurus of Everyday Life in Medieval England.

The results tentatively suggest that although it is possible to find potential candidates for code switching among hapax legomena, code-switching is not responsible for single word French-origin lexical items in Middle English. Rather, as Poplack and Dion (2012) suggest in relation to present day data, individual lexical items of French origin were immediately borrowed into Middle English by language users, with no intermediate stages. However, in relation to Anglo-French, a different picture emerges. There is some evidence to suggest that a good number of lone other-language items could have been code switches in this variety of French. After outlining the principal reasons for why borrowing can be applied as an explanation in relation to foreign-origin lone items in Middle English but not in relation to these items in Anglo-French, the paper will conclude by stressing the lack of rigid boundaries between English, French and Latin lexis during the medieval period.

References:

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Secondary sources:

Matras, Y. 2009. Language Contact. Cambridge: CUP

Rafal Molencki (University of Silesia)

The divergent semantic development of people in Anglo-Norman and Middle English

The majority of Anglo-French borrowings preserve most of their original senses in Middle English, often becoming more formal and/or abstract counterparts of their Germanic synonyms, but the story of the word people in English is a clear counterexample. The paper is concerned with a lexical replacement in Middle English caused by language contact, accompanied by semantic extension. On the turn of the 13th and 14th centuries a new word people borrowed from Anglo-Norman appeared in English texts and in the latter half of the 14th century it became a high frequency item competing with earlier native words lede and folk. In Early Modern English lede became obsolescent and/or dialectal while folk was relegated mostly to the colloquial register of the language.

This semantic development and rapid increase in the use of people appears to have occurred in Middle English independently of Anglo-Norman, where the sense of the noun people was mostly restricted to that of ‘nation’, ‘subjects’ and ‘crowd’. Like in continental French the usual word denoting ‘people’, ‘persons’ was gentz with 1394 attestations in the Anglo-Norman Dictionary corpus vs. bare 84 occurrences of pe(o)ple.

After presenting some etymological information and the Anglo-Norman data, we will trace the expansion of the new Romance word versus the demise of its native counterparts in both lexical databases (especially Oxford English Dictionary and Middle English Dictionary) and the corpora of
various English texts written in the late Middle Ages. We will pay special attention to the manuscript variation (e.g. in *Cursor mundi*) in this respect and to the dialectal distribution shown in the *LALME* maps. The replacement process will be discussed in the context of bilingualism, code-switching and the typology of language contact and lexical borrowing. Some phonetic and semantic factors will also be taken account of.

References:


Minako Nakayasu (Hamamatsu University School of Medicine)

**How did Paston men and women regulate space and time? The spatio-temporal systems in Paston letters**

This paper explores how members of the Paston family exploit the systems of space and time in communicating through letter writing along the lines of historical pragmatics and discourse analysis (Taavitsainen and Jucker 2015). The text used for the present investigation is *The Paston letters and papers of the fifteenth century* edited by Davis (2004[1971]), including letters by both men and women.

The language has built-in spatio-temporal systems (Nakayasu to appear) in which the speakers/writers judge how far the situations they wish to express are from their ‘here and now’, that is, proximal or distal. Such relationships of space and time are represented with the aid of spatio-temporal elements, for example, pronouns, demonstratives, adverbs, tense forms and modals. These elements are related to each other not just in either the spatial or temporal domain, but in the integrated spatio-temporal domain, and these relationships change in discourse. Few studies have attempted such a systematic analysis of the spatio-temporal systems as an integrated whole.

The present paper carries out both statistical and discourse-pragmatic analyses of the spatio-temporal systems in Paston letters. First, a statistical analysis of how frequently the elements of space and time are employed shows which perspective, i.e. proximal or distal, is likely to be taken. Second, an examination of discourse-pragmatic aspects reveals how these elements are related with each other to take either perspective, and how these perspectives then continue to be taken and alternate with each other in discourse. The focus is also on the interaction between the writer and the addressee.

Sociolinguistic factors (Bergs 2005) such as the writer’s gender and the relationship between the writer and the addressee are examined in order to demonstrate how these factors influence the spatio-temporal systems in letters.

Finally, this research provides an answer to the question of how Paston men and women regulated space and time in their letters and yields insight into the pragmatic and discourse configuration of Middle English letters.
The obsolescence and ooss of the Old and Middle English negative indefinite naeniz

Naeniz (ne + æniʒ) ‘not any’ functioned as a negative indefinite of Old English and Middle English. It was used dependently as a noun modifier (naeniz godecunde englas) and independently as a noun (naeniz heora). In the second use, it often occurred with a noun in the partitive genitive. However, naeniz falls out of use during Middle English times while its functional equivalent nan (ne + an) ‘not one’ survives into Modern English times. (One measure of equivalence is that both were used to translate Latin nullus in texts like that of the Lindisfarne Gospels.) Though the functional equivalence was no doubt responsible in part for the obsolence of naeniz, why naeniz and not nan would fall out of use remains a question. This paper sets down some groundwork for addressing this question by investigating certain suppositions about the distribution of naeniz, relative to that of nan, and by analyzing the evolution of dependent and independent uses of naeniz in Old and Middle English.

One supposition regards dialectal differences. Some work suggests that naeniz was much more frequently occurring in the northern dialects (initially Anglian) than it was in the southern dialects, wherein nan was dominant form (Wülfing 1894; Jost 1950). A second supposition relates to genre differences. One study (Bately 1970) compares evidence from the Meters of Boethius to evidence from Alfredian prose and shows that naeniz had a presence in West Saxon but also that the form may have been more common in verse texts than in prose texts of that dialect. Since in base form naeniz was disyllabic and nan was monosyllabic, concerns for meter in verse texts may have been causal in some number of instances to the use of naeniz in such texts. Of course such concerns would have been irrelevant to the many instances of naeniz in the Northumbrian Lindisfarne Gospels. A third supposition concerns the progressive obsolence of naeniz and the approximate date of its loss. Mustanoja (1960: 210) asserts that naeniz dies out as an indefinite pronoun in Early Middle English, being last attested in the Ormulum (an East Midland text of c. 1200), The Oxford English Dictionary substantiates that claim, providing a quotation from the Ormulum as the latest instance of naeniz. However, the Middle English Dictionary offers evidence from the debatably later manuscripts Cotton Claudius D iii (a. 1225) and Lambeth 487 (a. 1225) as well as the more surely later manuscript Cotton Galba E ix (?a. 1450), containing the Siege Calais, that the word survived down to the 15th century. Clearly, additional data from a variety of textual materials must be examined in order to test these suppositions and arrive at a more complete picture of the obsolence and eventual loss of naeniz (cf. Mitchell 1985: 178). The present investigation analyzes instances of naeniz in in number of relatively data-rich Old and Middle English texts. By design, several of these texts are not cited in the studies mentioned above.

The data gleaned argue (1) that naeniz was not largely restricted to the northern dialects but had a significant presence in West Saxon, (2) that naeniz was much more frequent in West Saxon verse...
than it was in West Saxon prose, (3) that *næniʒ* survived longer in Middle English times than has been assumed to date, and (4) that certain patterns related to the dependent and independent uses of *næniʒ* may have been indicative of its obsolescence and loss.

References:


Michiko Ogura (Tokyo Woman’s Christian University)

**Indirect Object with or without to in the Earlier and Later Versions of the Wycliffite Bible**

In Modern English grammar, verbs with the dative object show twofold word order, as stated in Blake (2001: 91): “A recipient of the verb *give* may displace a patient in the choice for object (*I gave the book to him, I gave him the book*), but the double-object construction would have to be considered marked with respect to the construction with a prepositional phrase which is obviously much more common across verbs in general.” In Old English, verbs with the double object were found more frequently, owing to the fact that the case endings were distinct and reliable enough and nouns in the oblique case were not necessarily accompanied by prepositions: e.g. *GD1(C) 4.43.12* & he forgæf eac manegum oþrum læcedom & mundbyrd ‘and he also gave many others medicine and protection.’ In Middle English, the dative indirect object tended to take the preposition *to*, but the modern rule of word order was not established yet. The earlier and later versions of the Wycliffite Bible provides us with good examples of the dative with or without *to*. The earlier version often shows an excessive use of *to*, while the later version often matches with the modern grammar and order: *Mt 14.15 (EV) bigge meetis to hem, (LV) to bye hem mete; Mt 21.23 (EV) who ʒaf to thee this power?, (LV) who ʒaf thee this power?* In this paper I examine the Hexateuch and the four Gospels and compare earlier and later versions of the Wycliffite Bible so as to show (1) the overuse of *to* in EV, (2) the more “modern” use of the *to*-phrase and word order in LV, and (3) the reverse of these features (1) and (2). The result will give an earlier, unstable use of the preposition *to* with the indirect object and the still shaky word order in this construction.

References:

Forshall, J. and F. Madden (eds.) 1850. *The Holy Bible, containing The Old and New Testaments ... by John Wycliffe and his Followers*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Tino Oudesluijs and Anita Auer (University of Lausanne)

**Geographical Variation in Late Medieval Administrative Documents: Evidence from York and Coventry**

The Middle English period provides us with the greatest amount of variation in writing in the history of the English language (Milroy 1992: 156). This variation has since long been explained through geography. According to traditional dialectology, Middle English consisted of 5 broad dialect areas, i.e. Northern, West Midland, East Midland, Southern and Kentish, into which Middle English texts were subsequently categorised (cf. Brook 1965: 62). If they did not perfectly fit into one of these dialect areas, they were often labelled ‘mixed’ dialects. Later studies considered a dialect continuum, rather than various fixed dialect areas, and tried to place Middle English texts within the geographical space of that continuum (cf. *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*; McIntosh et al. 1986). By applying these two models scholars have argued that by the beginning of the sixteenth century – commonly considered the end of the Middle English period – we see that “local forms of written English had all but disappeared” (Benskin 1992: 71), and more supralocal forms had emerged in writing.

As pointed out by Stenroos (2016), however, both approaches use idealised models, as there are many other factors that should be considered which can affect the geographical realisation of written language. Moreover, she points out that regional variation in writing continued throughout the fifteenth century, and she subsequently states that “the geographical connections of any text, scribe or speaker are potentially highly complex” (Stenroos 2016: 122). In support of Stenroos’ claim, one should thus aim for the use of more flexible and “multi-pronged” approaches to the study of geographical variation in Middle English.

In this paper, we aim to apply such a multi-pronged approach to variation to the investigation and comparison of two previously uninvestigated data sets of fifteenth-century administrative writings from the urban centres of York and Coventry. As there is no doubt regarding the geographical origin of the two datasets, it will be interesting to see

- a. What kinds of linguistic variation can be found in the respective corpora (and whether the findings concur with or differ from other studies that focused on data from the respective urban centres),
- b. How the attested linguistic differences and similarities in both corpora compare against each other and how this may or may not reflect previous studies on these varieties,
- c. How the variation might be explained by considering other factors such as scribal practices, supra-localisation, etc.

Ultimately, we hope to be able to shed some light on the (ongoing) internal and external processes that may explain the variation - or lack thereof - in the language of fifteenth-century administrative texts from York and Coventry.

**References:**


Justyna Rogos-Hebda (Adam Mickiewicz University)

**Abbreviations as pragmatic markers: scribal practices in BL Harley MS 1706 of Richard Rolle’s *Form of Perfect Living* and *De Emendatione Vitae***

The proposed presentation focuses on the visual pragmatics of scribal abbreviating practices in two fragments of BL Harley MS 1706, containing Richard Rolle’s *Form of Perfect Living* and *De Emendatione Vitae* (ff. 67r-80v and ff. 114v-139v respectively). The author analyses how late medieval English scribes use the “half-graphic objects” (Traube 1909: 134) to encode linguistic information on the one hand and, on the other, to organise visually manuscript discourse (cf. Carroll et al. 2013: 56). Acknowledging the need for a cross-disciplinary framework in the study of manuscripts, suggested by the Pragmatics on the Page Project (PoP), i.e. the study of the linguistic contents of historical texts alongside their visual appearance (cf. Carroll et al. 2013), the proposed paper pursues a visual-pragmatic analysis of scribal abbreviations, which are interpreted here as visual discourse markers, operating on three levels of meaning: textual, interactional and metalinguistic (following Erman 2001). The manuscript under consideration, in turn, is approached as a "visual text" (cf. Kendall et al. 2013), that is one in which the readers construe the meaning of the text through internalising the physical organisation of the page. In her presentation the author will try to unpack the idiosyncracies of the visual pragmatics of scribal abbreviations and confront those graphic discourse markers with other visual cues on the page.

References:


*Pragmatics on the Page (PoP)*
https://www.utu.fi/en/units/hum/units/English/research/projects/Pages/Pragmatics-on-the-Page.aspx


Eve Salisbury (Western Michigan University)

**The Uses of Middle English Literature***

In her recent book, the *Uses of Literature*, Rita Felski identifies four “modes of textual engagement”---recognition, enchantment, knowledge, and shock---that change “our understanding of ourselves and the world.”2 Combining literary theory with common sense views of life, Felski argues that reading literature produces an “emphatic experience” that enhances our attachments to texts in different ways and for different reasons.

While Felski focuses primarily on modern literatures, I would like to apply her theory of reading to a range of Middle English narratives (romances such as *Havelok the Dane*, *Bevis of Hampton*, *Sir Gowther*, *Lybeaus Desconus* as well as didactic works such as “How the Goode Wife

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Taught hyr Doughter” and “How the Goode Man Taght hys Sone”)³ to suggest that Middle English literature produces the kinds of emphatic reading experiences Felski claims. Recognizing one’s self or situation in the text (whether by identifying with certain characters or by the circumstances in which they find themselves) urges a heightened sense of self and one’s relation to community; experiencing literary enchantment encourages excursions into virtual otherworlds that revive our sense of wonder and curiosity; learning about the customs and mores of another time and place expands our understanding of historical context; the shock element (whether jarring juxtapositions of human / non-human, miraculous / demonic) challenges the limits of what we think we know. Likewise, reading literature in a form of English both familiar and unfamiliar reminds us that mastering a language is the means by which we form attachments at the earliest stages of life. In thinking about these four modes of engagement in the Middle English canon Felski’s formulations reveal what we have known for at least twenty-five years: that attachments to this field of literature enhance our understanding of ourselves and the world(s) in which we live—both virtual and real, both then and now.

Hans Sauer (LMU, Munich/Vistula University, Warsaw)

**Lydgate’s use of binomials in his *Troy Book***

With ca. 140 000 lines of verse, John Lydgate (ca. 1370 – ca. 1451) has the distinction of being the most prolific English poet. He emulated Chaucer, but could not equal him. Whereas Lydgate was very popular in his time, and even enjoyed the patronage of the English kings, his reputation is much lower today, and he is often seen as mediocre and second-rate, and accordingly not in the centre of research. Nevertheless, studying his poetry is illuminating from a linguistic and a stylistic point of view. In the present paper I concentrate on Lydgate’s use of binomials in his *Troy Book* (ca. 30 000 lines), which was commissioned by King Henry V, and which Lydgate composed between 1412 and 1420. To my knowledge, they have not been studied in any detail before. Like many other 14th and 15th century authors, Lydgate was very fond of binomials, because they are one of the means to achieve a rich and ornate style. Binomials are pairs of words that belong to the same word-class, are connected by a coordinating conjunction, and have some semantic relation. To give just a few examples from the beginning of the *Troy Book* (and in a slightly modernized spelling): *the power and the might; sovereign and patron; hot and dry; war and strife; dim and dark.* Binomials have many interesting aspects that can be analysed, e.g.: their formal structure (simple or extended); their word-class (mostly nouns, adjectives and verbs); their connection (mostly *and*, but sometimes also *or*, etc.), their semantic structure (i.e. the semantic relation between the elements, especially synonymy - as in three of the examples given above, furthermore antonymy, and complementarity, as in *sovereign and patron* and in *hot and dry*); the relation to the source (in the case of the *Troy Book*, Guido delle Colonne’s *Historia destructionis Troiae*), i.e. the question which binomials Lydgate took over (or translated) from his source and which he newly introduced; the sequence of the elements (fixed or flexible, and the factors responsible for the sequence); the question how far they were traditional and formulaic (and, for example, taken over by Lydgate from Chaucer) and how far they were created *ad hoc* by Lydgate himself. The paper is thus a contribution to research on binomials in general and on Lydgate in particular.

Editions:


Select literature:


Wendy Scase (University of Birmingham)

**The LALME Typology of Scribal Practice: Some Issues for Manuscript Studies**

The proposed paper will present work being carried out by the presenter for her project ‘Crafting English Letters: A Theory of Medieval Scribal Practice’, funded by the Leverhulme Trust Major Research Fellowships scheme.

Angus McIntosh’s famous three types of scribal practice – usually referred to as literatim, translation, and mixed copying – have become thoroughly embedded in the analysis, both linguistic and literary, of Middle English manuscript texts. Historical linguists of what this paper will call the McIntosh School have developed and elaborated McIntosh’s typology and it provides a key conceptual framework for the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*, the *Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English*, and much related work on dialect. Unquestionably the LALME project was one of seismic importance and its impact continues to reverberate; for example the MELD project, while seeking to open up for linguists new approaches to medieval written English, presents itself as a complementary approach.

In the work of literary scholars and manuscripts researchers the LALME typology also continues to prove seminal. Editors and literary and textual critics have adopted McIntosh’s typology in their analyses of scribal behaviours. The typology informs discussions of editorial methods and approaches to textual criticism (e.g. Beadle). And it can sometimes appear in work with a more literary critical focus, for example Wakelin’s recent monograph that presents scribal responses to their texts as a kind of forerunner of modern close reading and literary criticism. Even Hanna’s doubts about the treatment of London texts in LALME concern interpretation and representation of the particular data rather than the typology.

This paper will identify some problems with the McIntosh typology when it is considered in relation to scenarios of text production and reception. The problems that will be discussed are not the often-rehearsed ones associated with the cartographic representation of linguistic relationships, or the fact that scribes moved. Instead the focus will be on how far the typology can be reconciled with the practicalities of copying and book production. Case studies of literary and other manuscript materials will be drawn on to illustrate some of the key issues and to explore alternative interpretations of scribal behaviour and accounts of the Middle English manuscript archive.

References:

Delia Schipor (University of Stavanger)

**Multilingual events in Middle English texts from the Hampshire Record Office**

The proposed paper investigates multilingual events in documentary texts dated to 1400-1525 from three collections located at the Hampshire Record Office in Winchester. This study forms part of a research project on which I am currently working, titled Multilingualism in the Late Medieval Material of the Hampshire Record Office.

The three collections are the Jervoise Family collection, the Winchester City Archives collection and the Winchester Diocese collection. They are complementary in the sense that they contain a wide variety of text types ranging from manorial records, court records, leases, surveys, family and official correspondence to wills, abjurations and other religious-administrative texts.

The languages used for these documentary texts are Latin, English, and French. Most texts are written in one of the three languages, but in some cases all three languages or two of the languages, mostly Latin and English, are used together in the same text. The main aim of this paper is to answer the following research questions:

- In which texts do multilingual events occur and what are their pragmatic functions?
- Do multilingual events cluster and if so, how? Can this be related to text type and chronology?

*Multilingual events* represent instances of multiple language use within a text, including *code-switching*. Code-switching defined as an alternation between languages within an act of communication is insufficiently broad when applied to historical texts accompanied by paratexts such as subtitles, illustrations and marginal notes which often introduce a new language in the text. This paper suggests classification tools and terminology for multilingual events found in visually complex historical texts.
Multilingual events in written communication may be both planned and spontaneous. They are interpreted pragmatically and analyzed in connection with the date and type of texts in which they occur.

Multilingualism was the norm across medieval England and multilingual practices seem to have evolved concomitantly with the language shift following the decision of Henry V to adopt English as the language of his Signet Office in 1417. This transition was a gradual process which developed differently across the country. To a large extent, individual scribes seem to have shifted at their own pace (cf. Schipor, 2013). Studying the pragmatic functions of multilingual events gives an insight into the changing roles of the languages involved and the literacy practices associated with the shift, as there are indications that the frequency and use of multilingual events change as the shift proceeds (Schipor, 2013).

References:


Birgit Schwan (LMU, Munich)

**Geoffrey Chaucer Translated – Taking “The Clerk’s Tale” as Example**

The question of Chaucer and translation can be looked at from two perspectives, namely (a) which sources Chaucer translated and how he changed his sources through his translation, and (b) how his works were rendered by later translators. Concentrating on the Griselda-story from the “Clerk’s Tale” in *The Canterbury Tales*, I shall focus on perspective (b) and take a fresh look at how Chaucer’s tale has been translated for today’s reader.

*The Canterbury Tales* were often rendered into Modern English, sometimes by famous poets such as Dryden and Wordsworth, as well as into other languages, including German. In my presentation, I am going to analyse a selection of passages from two Modern English translations, both verse (Wright 1986) and prose (Davis 2016), as well as from two Modern German translations, again both verse (Düring 1883-1886) and prose (Kemmler 1989). I shall compare these translations, and also discuss some passages that might be interpreted differently today than in the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries.
Since translation includes interpretation, it is fascinating to observe how an individual choice of words and/or translation technique can alter the meaning, sometimes only infinitesimally, at other times in more radical ways. Two of the essential questions of the “Clerk’s Tale” are: First, why is the main character of Griseldis so incredibly patient, and second, why is the marquis Walter so cruel? These questions are still taken up again and again. Yet, how do the various renderings by modern translators handle these questions? What do the linguistic and translational choices of modern translators tell us about their interpretation of the tale’s characters? What can we then infer about the characters’ reasons and their development (if any) after a close reading of Chaucer’s tale and the modern translations? And finally, is the spirit of Chaucer’s tale transferred into a modern age or has it been lost in translation?

References:


Ælfric’s Glossary in the Middle English Period

As a companion piece to his Grammar and Colloquy, Ælfric of Eynsham wrote a Latin-Old English glossary, presenting vocabulary in a series of semantically arranged groups of words. Ælfric’s Glossary covers a wide range of topics – from body parts to names of plants to vices etc. It was, of course, aimed at Anglo-Saxon learners of Latin; at the same time, the glossary also provides a systematic account of the Old English lexicon – or at least of the lexical fields included in the glossary.

Two of the extant manuscripts bridge the gap from the Old English to the Middle English period: Worcester Cathedral F. 174 was written in the 13th century by the famous “tremulous hand” scribe; its forms are consistently Middle English. London, British Museum, Cotton Faustinia A. x dates from the 11th century, but contains numerous annotations in Latin, French and Middle English, which were added in the late 12th century. The two manuscripts demonstrate that Ælfric’s glossary was still considered a useful lexicographical tool in the Middle English period. However, both manuscripts also show that the English lexicon had changed since Ælfric’s time and that the glossary needed updating.

In some instances, Old English words were replaced by or supplemented with more common Middle English words (e.g. steel for isen); in other cases, French glosses highlight words that were later borrowed into English (e.g. OFr grumil, which gave the English plant name gromwell).

The aim of the paper is to investigate and compare the lexical changes introduced by the Worcester scribe and the glossators of the Faustina manuscript. In addition, it focuses on the vocabulary of Ælfric’s glossary in the context of 13th-century Middle English. On a wider level, the paper explores the transition from Old to Middle English in the area of the lexicon and attempts to further our understanding of lexical and semantic continuity and change.

References:


Cognitive-cultural underpinnings of the LIFE IS A JOURNEY metaphor in Chaucer’s Parson’s Tale

As it is well known, Geoffrey Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales is a collection of tales told by pilgrims travelling to the shrine of Thomas Becket, each story being narrated in a manner that reflects the teller’s character. As the pilgrimage progresses, the tales come to form a pattern of mutually complementing stories, which offer a wide range of perspectives on the human condition. The final tale told by the Parson puts a different perspective onto the pilgrimage in that its content offers an important update on how human life should be comprehended. In this way, the Parson makes his listeners envisage their journey through space as part of their journey to Jerusalem celestial (ParsT, 1.50).

As it adopts a cognitive-cultural viewpoint on linguistic data, the paper focuses on how the construal of HUMAN LIFE AS A JOURNEY is achieved, and what sociocultural factors might have motivated Chaucer’s imagery. The Parson’s Tale is a treatise on penance, in which the Parson instructs his listeners how to achieve salvation. To help the other pilgrims understand and internalise the truths he preaches, the Parson imbues his sermon with medieval imagery from medieval iconography. Therefore, for instance, the abstract notions of PENITENCE is spatialised and represented using the TREE imagery.

Naturally, Chaucer’s use of the imagery of TREE derives from his Christian background, as the image of the tree is of Biblical origin. However, what may call for further investigation is the structure of the sermon’s text. More specifically, a question that arises concerns the cognitive foundation of the co-ordination of individual images into a coherent whole. Since the text is a meditation on penitence, evidence from medieval culture will be sought so as to show a potential correlation between the TREE imagery that pervades the tale and social practices of contemplation.

References:


Gjertrud F. Stenbrenden (University of Oslo)
The Middle English reflexes of OE <cg>

Most textbooks on Old English (OE) state that the OE digraph <cg> corresponded to a voiced affricate \[dʒ\] in OE (Quirk & Wrenn 1989: 16; Mitchell & Robinson 1992: 16). This assumption is built mostly on a set of occasional spellings, e.g. <orceard> for ort-geard ‘orchard’ and <micgern> for midgern ‘fat’, in early West-Saxon texts (Sievers 1968; Penzl 1969; Campbell 1959; Hogg 1992). That is, the sequences [t]+[j] and [d]+[j] are spelt <c(ce)> and <cg>, respectively, the latter of which is used etymologically for WGmc gg < PrGmc gj in words like <ceg> ‘edge’ and <secgan> ‘to say’. Hence, it is assumed that [tj] and [dj] underwent assimilation to [tf] and [dʒ], and since the scribes used <cg> for the latter, the etymological sound corresponding to <cg> must also have assimilated and affricated to [dʒ] at the same time, i.e. by the early ninth century at the latest (and before 700, in Hempl’s opinion, 1899: 377).
However, this is a non sequitur: what these spellings show is that the WGmc velar stops had palatalized in certain contexts, and that the spellings for these palatalized reflexes, <c(e)> and <g(e)>, were thought to be the best orthographic means by which to render the new pronunciation of the original sequences [tj, dj]. They do not prove that etymological <cg> words had reached [dʒ] in OE, cf. Penzl (1969: 102-103); Sweet (1888: §737) in fact does not assume [dʒ] for <cg> in OE. Moreover, ME texts are almost shockingly consistent in having <gg> for OE <cg> (LAEME); indeed, there is not one <dg> in all of LAEME, and such spellings seem to be rare before the fifteenth century (Jordan 1925: §192).Orm uses the Caroline <g> for the reflexes of OE <cg> only, which points to a special pronunciation of the consonant in these words;Orm never uses <dg> for OE <cg>, which is odd if the affricate [dʒ] had been reached in early OE.

OE words with <cg> show two diverging developments in modern English: the nouns typically have a retained stop /dʒ/ (edge, wedge, ridge, bridge), whereas the verbs have a diphthong /eɪ/ or /aɪ/ (lay, say, lie, buy), pointing to complete vocalization of the consonant, probably through analogy and paradigmatic levelling.

This paper seeks to examine all spellings for OE <cg> words in LAEME, and to track the development of these words through ME (and perhaps early Modern English), with a view to answering the following questions: 1. What is/are the most likely sound correspondence(s) of OE <cg> in OE and in ME? 2. When did the two diverging developments start? 3. To what extent did word class, position within the word, analogy and/or paradigmatic levelling play a role in the development of OE <cg> words?

References:

LAEME, see Laing 2008.

Jacob Thaisen (University of Oslo)

Quantitative analysis of Middle English palaeographical data

This presentation encourages the quantitative analysis of quantitative data in palaeography by way of example. Scholars have long called for studies in the field more strongly to incorporate data of this type and more studies which do so have begun to appear in recent years (Derolez 2003, Burgers 2007, He et al. 2014, Kwakkel 2012, Samara 2015; cf. Bischoff [1979] 1990). This being so, it is becoming increasingly important to give due attention to possible overfitting and biased predictor selection in their analysis. The presentation addresses these methodological concerns, which it is fair to say have not always been addressed in previous studies. It does so by offering six empirically valid classes in place of the theoretical, binary opposition between the varieties of cursive Gothic script known as Anglicana and Secretary. The basis for establishing the classes is patterns of co-occurrence of seventeen allographs encountered in English texts dating from the late Middle English period, and
more specifically the materials collected under the auspices of the Middle English Scribal Texts programme at Stavanger. The presentation complements linguistic (dialectal) analyses of the same materials. TwoStep Cluster Analysis is the means employed for identifying the patterns. The means employed for determining the relative contribution of each allograph to each class is regression modelling with texts’ class membership as the dependent variable and the presence or absence of the seventeen allographs as the independent variables. The models are constructed in R, using the “partykit” and “stats” packages. The presentation includes a comparison of conditional inference trees and generalised logistic models.

References:


Oliver Traxel (University of Stavanger)

**Middle English in the Modern World**

The representation and interpretation of the linguistic past is no new phenomenon. There are innumerable examples of older texts that have been edited, emended and prepared for use by a modern audience. While these deal with authentic material there are other cases where texts give merely an impression of belonging to a previous language stage; they are therefore compositions that draw on earlier material to create something new with an archaic twist. This paper gives an overview of the different categories where we encounter Middle English in modern contexts and discusses reasons, strategies and usefulness. It is part of a larger project that also includes Old English and Early Modern English.

Modern texts that look like Middle English may have been devised as forgeries. The most well known example is Thomas Chatterton’s 18th-century collection known as *Rowley Poems*, which are written in a pseudo-Middle English style. But much more common are compositions that make no attempt at deception as the subject matter is clearly modern, such as Carol Bergvall’s *Shorter Chaucer Tales* (Bergvall 2011) or the *Chaucer Blog* (Bryant 2010). There are also complete translations of modern children’s classics, such as Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s *Adventures in Wonderland* (2013) or Antoine de Saint Exupéry’s *Le Petit Prince* (2008). The language of these examples may be called neo-Middle English and such renderings require an excellent knowledge of this language stage. They are particular valuable for teaching purposes (Ruszkiewicz 2016).
Middle English may also be used for atmospheric reasons. The occasional incorporation of obsolete language features can be found throughout the modern period, ranging from Edmund Spenser’s poetry (Osselton 1990) to Walter Scott’s novels (Tulloch 1980) and beyond. In addition, Middle English words or brief translated passages can be found in modern media in order to provide the audience with a seemingly authentic atmosphere, as seen, for example, in various Arthurian movies (Osberg and Crow 1999). Finally, there is a lot of amateur work which shows only rudimentary linguistic knowledge and combines modern features with older ones for reasons of fun and entertainment. One prominent example is Billy Bailey’s Chaucer Pubbe Gagge, which is written in what may be called mock-Middle English (Traxel 2012).

References:


Letizia Vezzosi (University of Florence)

Some observations on Middle English Charms as a special discourse type.

Middle English charms have been collected, anthologized, translated, explained, and historically contextualized for their folkloristic, anthropological, literary, historical or metaphysical interest. Only rarely have they looked at as a piece of discourse with an independent status, an exception to which are the relatively recent studies by Olsan (2005) and Alonso-Almeida (2008). In line with these surveys, the present paper concentrates on some linguistic aspects that characterise ‘charms’ as ‘performative rituals’.

Studies on language use and on expression of personal attitude and evaluation (among others, Biber 2004 and 2006, Eggins 1994, Hunston and Thompson 2000, Kytö 1991, Ochs 1989, Taavitsainen 2001) defines ‘performative rituals’ as oral performances to accomplish a purpose, i.e. a change in the state of the person or persons or inanimate object, by means of performative speech in a ritual context (Garner 2004).

The efficacy of a speech act, such as a charm, depends on formulaic language and the rightness of the performance situation (i.e. rituality), but also shared knowledge (and shared belief) of magical language on the side of both the performer, the beneficiary and the community of hearers or believers.
The present paper aims to investigate how and which linguistic features (lexical, grammatical, and syntactical) clarify the magical intent of the charm performer. On the base of a corpus of nearly three thousand words taken from a variety of edited sources (mainly Sheldon 1978, with further additions taken from Hunt 1990, Alonso-Almeida 2000, Luria – Hoffman 1974), we will analyse two types of charms – those whose aim is to prevent or eradicate some negative element and those whose aim is to reinforce or establishing some positive element – and we intend to determine whether different types of charms are differently characterised in terms of formal structure, stance marking, or formulaic or rhetoric language: more specifically, whether they have a similar structure, that is they are structured into heading, directions of performance, incantation and concluding formula or show different patterns or different distribution), whether they manifest any preference concerning lexical, grammatical or person marking, or whether they show similarities or differences in the selection of rhetoric figures of speech, formulas etc.

References:


Maria Volkonskaya (National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow)

Number symbolism in the *Ormulum*

The author of the twelfth-century English exegetical text named the *Ormulum*, Orm, in line with the prologue traditions of his time (Johannesson 2007b, 109–125), describes the reasons for completing his task. The writing of this homily collection has been at his brother Walter’s bidding (Dedication 11–28 from Holt 1878); the translation of the gospels into English is set out for preaching in order to save the souls of all English people, but especially those of the illiterate who do not know Latin and therefore cannot read or understand the gospels properly (Dedication 111–138, 299–314).

Whereas Orm draws heavily on a number of Latin and Old English texts (Morrison 1984a, 1984b; Johannesson 2007a, 2007b, 2007c), he deliberately conceals his sources and only occasionally
refers vaguely to *pe hæc* “the book,” established by Matthes (1933) as *Glossa Ordinaria*. It seems that one of the reasons for not identifying his sources by name could be Orm’s wish to make his text more comprehensible for the uneducated.

On the other hand, there are several cases where he has to tackle rather complex ideas and convey them to his audience. One of those ideas is number symbolism, such as the Greek practice of isopsephy, that is, finding and explaining the numerical value of certain words (in particular, the names *Iesoys* in lines 4302 ff. and *Adam* in lines 16272 ff.). The complexity of these concepts could have posed problems for Orm’s didactic project.

This paper will discuss the sources that Orm uses in the passages on number symbolism, including one rather unexpected reference to William of Conches’s *Philosophia*, and the way he interprets, adapts, and includes them into his exegesis to suit the needs of the laity.

References:


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Lawrence Warner (King’s College London)

**New light on the Hm 114 scribe (and Thomas Usk)**

The scribe of Huntington Hm 114 has long been one of the most important figures in our histories of the production of Middle English literature. Hm 114 itself is famous for its mammoth *Piers Plowman*, a distinctive *Troilus and Criseyde* (an earlier copying of which, now Harley 3943, he had abandoned), and a bizarre *Mandeville’s Travels*, while his other major production, Lambeth 491, is likewise a major compilation (*Brut*, *Siege of Jerusalem*, *Awntyrs off Arthure* etc.). He has achieved new prominence recently by being identified, on the basis of what is called “quite conclusive evidence,” as Richard Osbarn, clerk of the chamberlain in London’s Guildhall from 1400-37, his literary copying being connected to the establishment of the Guildhall Library in the mid-1420s and offering “the clearest evidence we have for a personal interest in Middle English literary texts among the highest officers of the Guildhall” (Mooney and Stubbs). In this paper I expand his corpus substantially, with documents dating from 1397-1432, the bulk of which are from the Courts of the Mayor or Husting up to ca. 1411, and enable as detailed a record of a literary figure’s life as is possible in the days before personal diaries. The evidence suggests that he had departed the Guildhall ca. 1420, moving to the Goldsmiths’ Hall where he was engaged heavily in the production of their Register of Deeds, his last entry therein dated 1432. His literary copying almost certainly all took place after he departed the Guildhall, a proposal supported by my new identification of Hand D of his abandoned *Troilus*, Harley 3943, in a 1473 entry into the Goldsmiths’ Register, suggesting the probability that he came upon this
unfinished Chaucer copy in that site—and that the Hm 114 scribe might himself have used as his own exemplar a copy either produced or read by Thomas Usk, the Goldsmiths’ clerk in the early 1380s.

All this material, together with a new look at the evidence that supposedly leads to his identification as Osbarn, shows that he was a junior Guildhall clerk during his stints there and that he could not have been Osbarn, an identification based in large part on the misreading of a crucial piece of evidence. His recording of the lives of those many individuals who came before the Mayor’s Court, and who had their wills registered in the Court of Husting, I would suggest, was no less important a model for “the poetic compilations being produced by the London book trade” such as Ellesmere, Shirley’s volumes, and, Lambeth 491 and Hm 114 themselves as were the livery companies’ gatherings of ordinances and deeds (e.g. by the Goldsmiths) as suggested by Sheila Lindenbaum.

References:


Anna Wojtyś (University of Warsaw)

The preterite-present verb everyone has forgotten: the uses of *-nugan and reasons for its loss from English

The group of English preterite-present verbs, although very small, includes verbs of quite a high frequency and importance (cf. Ringe 2006: 260), since half of them later developed into modal auxiliaries. That latter group has been subject to numerous studies (e.g. Lightfoot 1979, 2009, Warner 1993, Fischer 2003), but the verbs eliminated from the language have not enjoyed such attention, with merely isolated texts discussing in more detail their use and potential reasons for their later elimination. Undoubtedly, the most neglected item in this group has been the verb *-nugan, only briefly mentioned in historical grammars, with comments confined to the date of its disappearance. The only reason suggested for its loss is embedded in the statement by Nagle — Sanders (1996: 256): “expanded predecessors of ‘It is enough’ helped to eliminate lexically related genugan/benugan”.

The present study analyzes attestations of *-nugan in medieval English in order to determine the verb’s distribution and its exact sense, thus offering a necessary prelude to the comprehensive discussion of its elimination. Discussed are also items carrying a sense identical or similar to that of *-nugan, which might have contributed to the later loss of the verb in question. This will show whether the causes of the loss of *-nugan were similar or different from those which led to the disappearance of other preterite-presents. The study also makes reference to the uses of the verb in other Germanic languages it was attested in.

The data for the study come from the Dictionary of Old English Database (DOED) as well as Middle English corpora (LAEME, Innsbruck, CMEPV) with references to historical dictionaries (i.e. Bosworth — Toller, OED, MED) and thesauri (i.e. TOE and HTE).

References:

(a) Database

Laura Wright (University of Cambridge)

**Administrative documents as a source of evidence for medieval London house names and why they are of sociolinguistic interest**

I have collected c.250 of the earliest names of London buildings in which people dwelt (a complicated way of saying “housetnames”, necessary because the modern-day notion of a house as a single physical building housing a family hadn’t yet come into existence), in preparation for constructing a sociolinguistic history of British housenames. My main sources of data for early London housenames are the Hustings Court Rolls and Westminster Abbey Muniment deeds.

It transpires that prior to the 1300s, London housenames only ever followed three templates: 1) name of the owner, 2) occupation of the owner, and 3) appearance of the house. Early examples are *Lodebure* (‘Hlotha’s bury or manor-house’, attested 1181-1203), *Blanchesapeltuna* ([house at] ‘Blanck’s apple orchard’, 1168–75) and *la Blakehalle* (‘the Black Hall’, 1222–46). However from the 1300s a new template arose, that of the heraldic device. Examples of London housenames from the early 1300s are: *Tabard* (1306), *le Ernedore* (‘eagle door’, 1321), *le Huse* (‘hose’, 1321–2), *le Popyngaye* (‘poppinjay’, 1325), *le Kok* (‘cock’, 1325). This time-frame is commensurate with the rise in usage of the heraldic badge by merchants as a personal device (unlike the heraldic shield, which signified noble dynastic lineage and which was unavailable to non-nobles). It is also commensurate with the rise of chivalric knighthood. Previously, knights had been non-noble cavalrymen belonging to nobles’ households, but in the 1300s the courtly, “nobiliary knighthood” emerged as a new social class. Heraldic badges as used by chivalric knights started to appear as the names of shops, selds and brewhouses. Chivalric orders created in the fourteenth century were the Society of St George, or Order of the Garter (1344/9), the Company of the Star (1344/52), the Order of the Sword (1347/59),
the Order of the Ship (1381-6). To be elected to these chivalric orders was a high honour, and it is these same emblems that begin to appear on fourteenth-century London taverns and brewhouses. Le Huse (1321-2) references the sign of the Garter. La Mariole (1328-9) is a representation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to whom the Order of St George was dedicated along with St George. Le George on the Hop (1331), le Sterre (1354-5), Sword of the Hoope (1382), le Shipp on the Hoop (1370-1) – all were to become common and long-lasting names.

I suggest that there were actually two steps in this naming process: 1) synecdoche (e.g. ‘cock’ meaning ‘ale-barrel tap’), followed by 2) canting interpretation (e.g. ‘cock’ meaning ‘fowl’), leading to all subsequent heraldic badge shop and pub names. This naming system then continued in use until the 1760s when an Act of Parliament introduced house numbering, which had the effect of eradicating all heraldic shop names, although heraldic pub names continue.

Fumiko Yoshikawa (Hiroshima Shudo University)

**Text politeness in Middle English religious prose: a focus on works that might have been regarded as heretic**

This study examines Middle English religious texts from a viewpoint of politeness theory, with a focus on works that might have been suspected as heretic. At the beginning of the eighth chapter of her book, Kerby-Fulton (2006: 297) quoted the final passage from the Long Text of Julian of Norwich's *Revelation of Love* (hereafter *A Revelation*) and points out that there are also similar warning expressions in *The Cloud of Unknowing* and in an English translation made by a translator just known as “M. N.” from Marguerite Porete’s *The Mirror of Simple Souls*. The passage from *A Revelation* starts with the words “I pray almyty God that this booke com not but to the hands of the[m] that will be his faitufull lo\vrs, and to those that will submitt them to the feith of holy church and obey the holesom vnderstondyng and teching of the men that be of vertuous life, sadde age and profound lernyng” (ch. 86). In *The Cloud of Unknowing*, a similar type of passage is found at the beginning of the text (ch. 1).

Seen from the perspective of speech acts, the illocutionary act of above-mentioned prayer in *A Revelation* is a type of directive (See Leech 1983, p. 205-206), which is achieved in the form of a desire to restrict readership of the book to faithful Christians, that is, to select the readers to meet certain conditions and ensure the writer stands on a common ground with the readers. Claiming common ground has been identified as a typical positive politeness strategy (see Brown and Levinson 1978/1987, pp. 103-124). Kerby-Fulton (2006) discussed in great detail that Julian was concerned about the issue of women’s right to teach; since writing this religious treatise must have put Julian at great risk of being regarded as a heretic, it appears that she tried to reduce this risk by using a pragmatic strategy of claiming common ground with the readers. That she also frequently refers to the ‘holy church’ can also be explained as the same positive politeness strategy of claiming common ground. Insisting that her interpretations of the revelations she received are consistent with what the holy church teaches is almost equal to insisting that the contents of her text are orthodox. The writer considers the readers, who probably desire to follow the teaching of the holy church, to be also on the same ground.

This study aims to collect words from religious texts that are directed to the readers and to examine their illocutionary force mainly based on Brown and Levinson’s (1978/1987) politeness theory. Finally, we will discuss how the writer tries “to hold the floor”, borrowing a phrase from Sell (1992: 220), by examining the perlocutionary effects of the writer’s words to the readers, that must be closely connected to the writer’s aims throughout the whole body of the text.
References:

Primary Sources

Secondary Sources