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# Trabajo Fin de Grado

## Dialect Diversity in the Middle English Period

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# DIALECT DIVERSITY IN THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

## ABSTRACT

Languages around the world are not homogeneous. Any language is bound to suffer dialect variation within its grammar, lexis, and pronunciation and Great Britain is not an exception. There was a time in the UK when differences were at their peak. That happened during the Middle English period. The main issue of this paper is to comment on the most relevant differences within two great dialectal areas of Great Britain – North and South– by focusing on two texts from that period, specifically, from the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, the differences shown are a matter of geography, rather than chronological. Each text –the Northern manuscript *The Bee and the Stork* and the Southern text *Ayenbite of Inwyt*– has been analyzed both syntactically and morphologically in order to find out the most remarkable differences between them. This paper concludes with an explanation of the most relevant differences according to dialect and their gradual homogeneity as a consequence of the development of Standard English in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

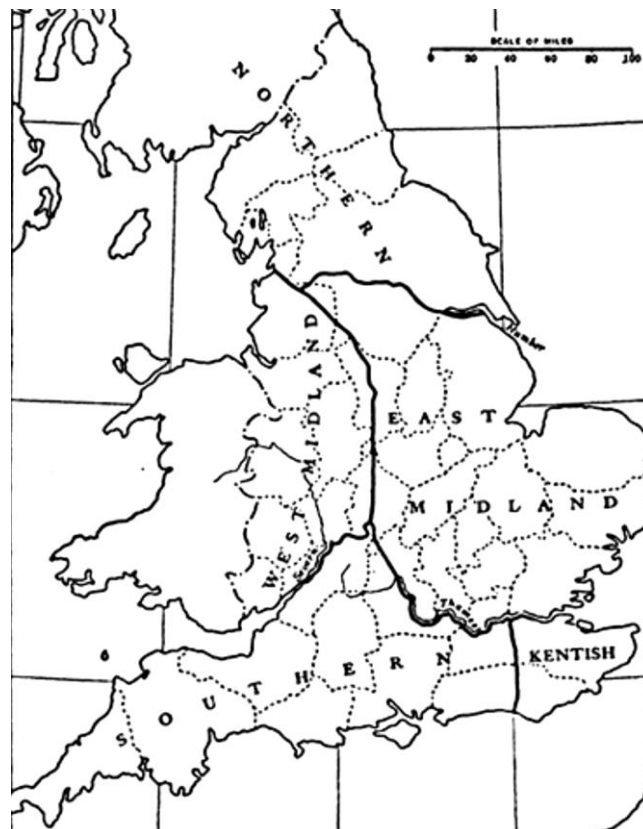
## KEYWORDS

Middle English, dialect diversity, North, South, Standard English

## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Baugh and Cable (2002), the time between 1150 and 1500 known as the Middle English period, was characterized by a number of changes which are considered the most significant ones in the history of the English language. Some of them took place as a result of the previous new tendencies that started in Old English, but others as a consequence of the Norman Conquest. These changes affected the English language in its grammar, which became more analytic, that is, a gradual decay in inflections started then. Furthermore, changes also affected vocabulary as there was a loss of Old English words as well as the incorporation of French and Latin words (p. 146).

One of the most outstanding characteristics of Middle English is its great dialect diversity. As Baugh and Cable (2002) comment, it is quite difficult to determine all dialect divisions. However, there are four main dialects which are easy to distinguish: Northern, East and West Midland and Southern dialects.



Nonetheless, it was in the North and the South where dialectal differences were more striking, since the Midlands occupied a neutral position. (p. 176-177).

The aim of this paper is to give an overview of the main differences –in grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation– that can be found between the main dialectal areas of Great Britain, that is, North and South. This essay will focus on two texts from the 14<sup>th</sup> century: the Northern manuscript *The Bee and the Stork* and a piece of the Southern text *Ayenbite of Inwyt*. The texts will be analyzed both syntactically and morphologically so as to compare them and find out the most remarkable differences between them.

## 2. DIALECT DIVERSITY IN THE MIDDLE ENGLISH PERIOD

### 2.1 THE BEE AND THE STORK

Richard Rolle of Hampole was a master of English prose and of great influence because he wrote a considerable number of manuscripts (Mossé, 1987, p. 230). He was the author of the first text under analysis, *The Bee and the Stork* which was written in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

The text belongs to Northern English, specifically to the dialect of Yorkshire. According to Allen (1988) this is a “piece of moralized history” of the animal world (p. 127). *The Bee and the Stork* was based on Aristotle’s *History of the Animals*. Aristotle’s manuscript introduces a study of the differences and characteristics of several animals. The book is organized according to four kinds of animal differences –parts, modes of activity, ways of life and characters (Lennox, 2011).

### 2.1.1 Middle English text and translation into Present Day English

1 The bee has thre kyndis. Ane es, þat scho es never ydill, and scho es noghte with thaym  
þat will noghte wyrke, bot castys thaym owte and puttes thaym awaye. Anothire es, þat,  
when scho flyes, scho takes erthe in hyr fette, þat scho be noghte lyghtly overheghede  
4 in the ayere of wynde. The thyrde es, þat scho kepes clene and bryghte hire wynges.  
Thus ryghtwyse men þat lufes God are never in ydyllnes; for owthyre þay ere in travayle,  
prayand or thynkande or redande or othere gude doande or withtakand ydill mene and  
7 schewand thaym worthy to be put fra þe ryste of heven, for þay will noghte travayle.  
(Mossé, 1987, p. 231).

Translation into Present Day English:

“The bee has three qualities. The first is that she is never idle, and she never associates with those who refuse to work, but throws them out and drives them away. A second is that when she flies she picks up earth in her feet so that she cannot easily be blown too high in the air by the wind. The third is that she keeps her wings clean and bright. In the same way, good people who love God are never unoccupied; either they are at work, praying or meditating or reading or doing other good works, or they are rebuking lazy people, indicating that they deserve to be driven away from the repose of heaven because they refuse to work” (Allen, 1988, p. 128).

### 2.1.2 Analysis

<u>The</u>	<u>bee</u>	<u>has</u>	<u>thre</u>	<u>kyndis</u>
Subject		V.		D.O

- **<The>**: definite article, nominative, singular. It came from the masculine form *sē* of the Old English (OE) paradigm *sē sēo þæt*; in Middle English (ME) it converged into an invariable form *þe*. In the text it is written with a <th-> form because in the 14th century <th> was introduced to replace the former thorn.

- **<bee>**: noun in the nominative singular. It came from OE *bēo bīo bī*. In the East of England, <ee> started to appear in the 12<sup>th</sup> century to show that the vowel was long. This is not only a change in spelling but also in phonology because in the ME, the Great Vowel Shift (GVS) started affecting long vowels so instead of [e:] we now have [i:] because it raised its point of articulation.

- **<has>**: third person singular, present indicative of *habben*. It came from OE *habban*. This is one of the few forms that Standard English has preserved from the North.

- **<thre>**: cardinal number *þree þreo þrī*, but there was a generalization of *þree*. It came from OE *þreo*. When 'thorn' <þ> disappeared in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, it became a <th>. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, because of the GVS, the pronunciation of [e:] was raised to [i:] towards the Present Day English (PDE) pronunciation of the word.

- **<kyndis>**: noun in the plural form. It came from OE *cynd*. The <k> was introduced by Anglo-Norman tribes and it was used before <i> instead of <c>. According to Baugh and Cable (2002), in early ME there were two distinctive ways of indicating plural: the ending in <-s> or <-es> from the strong masculine declension and the ending in <-en> (p. 148). The fact that this word has an ending in <-is> instead of <-es> is a Northern trait. What today are considered analogical plural forms in -s have a Northern origin, as this text shows.



<u>Ane</u>	<u>es,</u>	<u>[bat</u>	<u>scho</u>	<u>es</u>	<u>never</u>	<u>ydill</u>	<u>(and</u>	<u>scho</u>	<u>es</u>	<u>noghte</u>
Subject	V.	[ Subordinate clause of noun complement]								
		Link	Subject	V.	Attribute	(Coordinate clause)				
						Link	Subject	V.	Adv	

- **<Ane>**: cardinal number *ƿƿn*, *ƿƿ* (in the North *ān*, *ā*). In the Midlands and South there was a rounding to [ɔ:] and spelling <ō>. The addition of a final –e sometimes indicated that the vowel was long, as is the case here.

- **<es>**: 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present indicative of the verb *bē*. This form is only characteristic of the North, as a contrast of what was found elsewhere: *is*. It came from OE *bēon*.

- **<bat>**: Conjunction. ‘Thorn’<*p*> was replaced by <th> in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

- **<scho>**: feminine personal pronoun subject of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular. This form is typical of Northern dialects together with *3hō* and *chō*. It was perhaps taken from OE feminine demonstrative *sēo*. This form is different from the South and Western which prefer *heo*.

- **<es>**: see <es> in line 1.

- **<never>**: adverb. It came from Old English *nǣfre*. In the OE period the <f> was pronounced [v]. In the ME period there was a change in order and pronunciation due to the process of metathesis (from <-re> to <-er>). In the ME period started, the <æ> was replaced by <ea,e,a> so from <ǣ> we get <e>.

- **<ydill>**: adjective. It came from OE *īdel*. In Northern dialects, final unstressed vowels raised to [i], so this is a Northern trait which cannot be found in a Southern text. Adjectives became invariable in the Middle English period.

- **<and>**: conjunction. It came from OE *and*, *ond*.

- **<scho>**: see <scho> in line 1.

- **<es>**: see <es> in line 1

- **<noghte>**: adverb of negation. It came from OE *nōwiht*, *nāuht*, *nāht*, *nōht*. The <3> sounded like [x] in medial position and after a back vowel. With the passing of time <3> disappeared and became <gh>.

<u>with</u>	<u>thaym</u>	<u>&lt;pat</u>	<u>will</u>	<u>noghte</u>	<u>wyrke&gt;]]</u>	<u>[bot</u>	<u>castys</u>	<u>thaym</u>	<u>owte</u>
<i>Prep. Complement</i>		<i>&lt;Relative clause&gt;</i>				<i>[Subordinate concessive]</i>			
<i>Link</i>		<i>V.</i>				<i>Link</i>	<i>V.</i>	<i>D.O</i>	<i>Adv.</i>

- **<with>**: preposition. It came from OE *wið*. It has a different spelling because in the ME period <ð> was replaced by <th>.

- **<thaym>**: personal pronoun object, 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural. It came from Old Norse *þeim* (object) and started being used specially in the North but progressively moved southwards. This form typical of Northern dialects made its way into Standard English.

- **<pat>**: relative pronoun. According to Mossé (1987), this was the relative pronoun mostly used in ME to refer to who, what, which, that, etc (p. 62).

- **<will>**: It came from *wille* function word, auxiliary in all persons.

- **<noghte>**: see <noghte> in line 1.

- **<wyrke>**: Infinitive form. It came from OE *weorcean*. OE [ü] had different spelling and pronunciation in both Northern and Southern dialects; in the North it was pronounced [i] and written <i,y>, but in the South they pronounced it [e] and transcribed <e>. Final <-e> spelling disappeared in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

- **<bot>**: conjunction. It came from OE *būtan*. In the East Midlands it was pronounced [u]; in Modern English (ModE) the pronunciation was [ʌ], the one used in Standard English today.

- **<castys>**: third person singular, present indicative of casten. It came from Old Norse *kasta*. The third person singular ending in <(e)s>, today present in Standard English, is characteristic of Northern dialects and quite different from Southern <ep>, which eventually got lost

- **<thaym>**: see <thaym> in line 1.

- **<owte>**: adverb. It came from OE *ūt*. In ME the <ou>/<ow> was introduced for a [u:] sound by the French, but the pronunciation remained the same, as in OE. This word has dropped the final <-e>. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century the GVS started affecting long vowels, so [u:] became [eu] in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and [əu] in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, then, it raised its point of articulation even more and finally became [au].

**(and puttes thaym awaye)]. Anothire es [pat (when scho flyes scho takes erthe**

<u>(Coordinate clause).</u>				Subject	V.	<u>[Subordinate clause of noun complement]</u>				
Link	V.	D.O	Adv.		Link	<u>(Adverbial subordinate clause of time)</u>				
					Link	Subject	V.	Subject	V.	D.O

- **<and>**: conjunction. It came from OE *and*, *ond*.

- **<puttes>**: 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present indicative of *puten*. The third person singular ending in <(e)s>, today present in Standard English, is characteristic of Northern dialects and quite different from Southern <ep>, which eventually got lost.

- **<thaym>**: see <thaym> in line 1.

- **<awaye>**: adverb. In PDE, final <-e> has disappeared.

- **<Anothire>**: compound adjective and pronoun. This word has a Northern trait since in the North, there was a preference to use <i> instead of unstressed vowel <e>.

- **<es>**: see <es> in line 1.

- **<pat>**: see <pat> in line 1.

- **<when>**: adverb. It came from OE *hwanne*, *hwonne*, *hwænne*. <hw> was used in OE but in the ME period we find a change to <wh> due to the process of metathesis, although the pronunciation remained the same and the <h> continued being aspirated. Final <e> was dropped and then, there was no point in having two <n> so only one was left.

- **<scho>**: see <scho> in line 1.

- **<flyes>**: 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present indicative of *flēȝen*. It came from OE *flēogan*, *flīogan*. The third person singular ending in <(e)s>, today present in Standard English, is characteristic of Northern dialects and quite different from Southern <ep>, which eventually got lost.

- **<scho>**: see <scho> in line 1.

- **<takes>**: 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present indicative of *tāke(n)*. It came from Old Norse *taka*. The third person singular ending in <(e)s>, today present in Standard English, is characteristic of Northern dialects and quite different from Southern <ep>, which eventually got lost.

- **<erthe>**: noun. It came from OE *eorðe*, *iorðe*, *earðe*.

in hyr fette]], (bat scho be noghte lyghtly ouerheghede in the ayere of wynde).

Prep.complement	_____	_____	_____	(Subordinate clause of purpose)	_____
	Link	Sb.	V.	Adv.Comp	Prep.complement

- **<in>**: preposition. It came from OE *in*.

- **<hyr>**: possessive feminine pronoun, 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular. Although there are other forms for this 3<sup>rd</sup> person possessive: *hire*, *here*, *her*, this is the most generally used up to 1400 (Mossé, 1987, p. 58). Our Present Day English form *her* did not spread until the 15<sup>th</sup> century and rather slowly.

- **<fette>**: noun in the genitive plural case. It came from OE *fōt/fēt*. This is one of the cases of front mutation in the plural. This word has dropped the final <-e> and consequently one of the <t> because there was no point in preserving the two. Around the 14<sup>th</sup> century, to indicate the length of a vowel people duplicated it so from *fēt* we find *feet*.

- **<bat>**: see <bat> in line 1.

- **<scho>**: see <scho> in line 1.

- **<be>**: subjunctive of the present system of the verb *bē*.

- **<noghte>**: see <noghte> in line 1.

- **<lyghtly>**: adverb. It came from OE *liht*. It is very common in Northern dialect to find adverbs ending in <-ly> whereas in the South it is more frequent that these adverbs end in <-lich>.

- **<ouerheghede>**: past participle of the verb *ouerheȝen*. It came from OE *hēgan hēan*.

- **<in>**: preposition. It came from OE *in*.

- **<the>**: see <the> in line 1.

- **<ayere>**: noun. It came from Old French *air*, *aer*.

- **<of>**: preposition. It came from OE *of*.

- **<wynde>**: noun. It came from OE *wind*.

<b>The</b>	<b>thyrde</b>	<b>es</b>	<b>(þat</b>	<b>scho</b>	<b>kepes</b>	<b>clene</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>bryghte</b>	<b>hire</b>	<b>wyngez).</b>
Subject		V.	Link	Subject	V.	(Subordinate clause of noun complemen)				
						D.O				

- **<The>**: see <the> in line 1.
- **<thyrde>**: ordinal number. It came from OE *þridða*. The <þ> was replaced by <th> in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. There has been another change from OE to ME, a case of metathesis, where <þridða> has become <third(d)(e)>.
- **<es>**: see <es> in line 1.
- **<þat>**: see <þat> in line 1.
- **<scho>**: see <scho> in line 1.
- **<kepes>**: 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present indicative of *kepen* (weak verb). It came from OE *cēpan*. The third person singular ending in <(e)s>, today present in Standard English, is characteristic of Northern dialects and quite different from Southern <eþ>, which eventually got lost. This is a case of what was called 'spelling pronunciation', that is, a change in spelling in ME, so <k> lead to a change in pronunciation from [tʃ] to [k].
- **<clene>**: adjective. It came from OE *clæne*. Adjectives became invariable in the Middle English period.
- **<and>**: conjunction. It came from OE *and* and *ond*.
- **<bryghte>**: adjective. It came from OE *bryht*, *breoht*, *beorht*, *berht*, *byrht*. This word was pronounced as [ç] and not as a [x] because <3> came after a front vowel. Adjectives became invariable in the ME period.
- **<hire>**: possessive pronoun, 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural marked by final <-e>.
- **<wyngez>**: noun in the plural. According to Baugh and Cable (2002), in early ME there were two distinctive ways of indicating plural: the ending in <-s> or <-es> from the strong masculine declension and the ending in <-en> (p. 148). The ending of this word is very typical of the North since final <-es> was often replaced by <-ez> in Northern dialects.

<u>Thus</u>	<u>ryghtwyse</u>	<u>men</u>	<u>(þat</u>	<u>lufes</u>	<u>God)</u>	<u>are</u>	<u>never</u>	<u>in ydyllnes.</u>
Adv.	Subject	(Restrictive relative clause)	Link	V.	I.O	V.	Adv.	Prep.clause

- **<Thus>**: adverb. It came from OE *þus*. <þ> disappeared and it became a <th> in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

- **<ryghtwyse>**: adjective. It came from OE *rihtwīs*. Adjectives became invariable in the Middle English period.

- **<men>**: noun in the plural. It came from OE *mann*. This is one of the cases of front mutation in the plural, from *man* to *men*. Umlaut plurals took their form from OE.

- **<þat>**: see <þat> in line 2.

- **<lufes>**: 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, present indicative of *lufien*. It came from OE *lufian*. The third person plural ending in <(e)s> is characteristic of Northern dialects and quite different from the Southern <eþ>. In the OE period the <f> was pronounced [v] in a voiced environment, which was reflected in spelling in ME too. In the ME period short <u> started to be written as an <o> because of the influence of Anglo-Norman scribes (although they retained the same pronunciation for some time) and this is how we get the form we use nowadays: *love*.

- **<God>**: noun in the accusative singular case. It came from OE *god*.

- **<are>**: 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, present indicative of the verb *bē*. This form is characteristic of the North and came from Norse; in Southern dialects they had more traditional forms: *syndon/beeth*.

- **<never>**: see <never> in line 1.

- **<in>**: preposition. It came from OE *in*.

- **<ydyllnes>**: noun. It came from OE *īdleness*.

For owthyre þay ere in travayle, prayand or thynkande, or redande

*Subordinate clause*

Correlative conj. Sb. V. Prep.Compl. V. Correlative conj. V. Correlative conj. V.

- **<For>**: Conjunction. It came from OE *for*.
- **<owthyre>**: conjunction. It came from OE *ōðer*.
- **<þay>**: personal pronoun of subject in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural. This form is typical from the North and Midlands and was borrowed from Old Norse *þei-r* and *þeim*. 'Thorn' <þ> became <th> in the 14<sup>th</sup> century which is more similar to the form we use nowadays *they*.
- **<ere>**: see <are> in line 5.
- **<in>**: preposition.
- **<travayle>**: noun. It came from Old French *travail*.
- **<prayand>**: present participle of the verb *preien*, marked by final *-and(e)*, which is characteristic of Northern dialects and translated into Present Day English as a gerund *-ing*. It came from Old French *preier*.
- **<or>**: conjunction.
- **<thynkande>**: present participle of the verb *þynchen*, marked by final *-and(e)* which is characteristic of Northern dialects and translated into Present Day English as a gerund *-ing*. It came from OE *þynkan*.
- **<or>**: conjunction
- **<redande>**: present participle of the verb *ræden*, marked by final *-and(e)* which is characteristic of Northern dialects and translated into Present Day English as a gerund *-ing*. It came from OE *rædan*.

<b>or</b>	<b>othere</b>	<b>gude</b>	<b>doande</b>	<b>or</b>	<b>withtakand</b>	<b>ydill</b>	<b>men</b>	<b>[and schewand thaym</b>
		<i>Subordinate clause od D.O.</i>						
<i>Correlative</i>	<i>D.O</i>	<i>V.</i>	<i>Correlative</i>	<i>V.</i>	<i>I.O</i>	<i>[Coordinate clause]</i>		
<i>Conjunction</i>			<i>conjunction</i>			<i>Link</i>	<i>V.</i>	<i>I.O</i>

- **<or>**: conjunction.

- **<othere>**: demonstrative plural marked by final <-e>.

- **<gude>**: adjective. It came from OE *gōd*. In ME, there are two possible ways to show the length of a vowel, either we can find <ō> or the duplication of the vowel if it is <ē> or <ō>, that is, <oo> which started to appear in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Because of the Great Vowel Shift Middle English /o:/ raised its point of articulation to /u:/ in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

- **<doande>**: present participle of the verb *dōn*, marked by final *-and(e)* which is characteristic of Northern dialects and translated into Present Day English as a gerund *-ing*. It came from OE *dōn*.

- **<or>**: conjunction.

- **<withtakand>**: present participle of the verb *withtake*, marked by final *-and(e)* which is characteristic of Northern dialects and translated into Present Day English as a gerund *-ing*.

- **<ydill>**: adjective. It came from OE *īdel*. In Northern dialects, final unstressed vowels raised to [i], so this is a Northern trait which cannot be found in a Southern text. Adjectives became invariable in the Middle English period.

- **<mene>**: noun in the plural. It came from OE *mann*. This is one of the cases of front mutation in the plural, from *man* to *men*. This word has dropped the final <-e>.

- **<and>**: conjunction. It came from OE *and*, *ond*.

- **<schewand>**: present participle of the verb *schēawen* marked by final *-and(e)* which is characteristic of Northern dialects and translated into Present Day English as a gerund *-ing*. It came from OE *scēawian*.

- **<thaym>**: see <thaym> in line 1.



**worthy to be put fra þe ryste of heven, (for þay will noghte travayle)].**

		[Coordinate clause]	
Adj.	V.	Prep. Phrase	(Subordinate clause of reason)
		Link	Subject V.

- **<worthy>**: adjective. It came from OE *weorð*. By the time Old English ended there were only two diphthongs left, and they became a single vowel in the ME period. This is the case of <eo> which became an <o> in some parts of England. The <th> group was used instead of <ð> and <þ> in the 14th century.

- **<to be>**: verb *bē*.

- **<put>**: past participle of the verb *puten*.

- **<fra>**: preposition. It came from OE *frā*

- **<þe>**: see <the> in line 1.

- **<ryste>**: noun in the singular. It came from OE *rest*.

- **<of>**: preposition. It came from OE *of*.

- **<heven>**: noun in the nominative case. It came from OE *heofone*. The voicing is reflected in ME by means of a <v> because it is in between two vowels.

- **<for>**: Conjunction. It came from OE *for*.

- **<þay>**: see <pay> in line 5.

- **<will>**: It came from *wille*, it is a function word, auxiliary in all persons.

- **<noghte>**: see <noghte> in line 1.

- **<travayle>**: verb in the infinitive form. It came from Old French *travail*.

## 2.2 AYENBITE OF INWYT

Dan Michel, completed in Kentish dialect his work, *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, almost at the same time that Richard Rolle of Hampole finished his book *The Pricke of Conscience*. The text used for the analysis is also referred to as *Remorse of Conscience*. Dan Michel's book is a translation of the French manuscript *Le somme des Vices et de Vertues* —composed by Frère Lorens— into English (Morris, preface).

The *Ayenbite of Inwyt* is a confessional prose that dated from the 14<sup>th</sup> century, more specifically from about 1340. It is considered one of the great works written in Kentish and an extraordinary example of the unusual features that can be found in the South in spelling, pronunciation, morphology, etc.

### 2.2.1 Middle English text and translation into Present Day English

1 þe þridde article / and the vifte / þet uolȝeþ efter / belongeþ to þe zone / ase to þe  
manhode; þet is to zigge / ase þet he is man dyadlich. þanne mid þe þridde article / is  
3 ycontened / þet he wes y-kend / of þe holi gost / and y-bore of þe mayde Marie. þet is  
to onderstonde / þet he wes y-kend / ine þe Mayde Marie / be þe dede / and by þe uirtu  
/ of þe holi gost / and noþing / of dede / of man. And the mayde Marie / blefte eure  
6 mayde / an yhol be-uore / and efter. þis article zette zayn iacob / sayn lonnes broþer.  
(Morris, 1866, p.12).

#### Translation into Present Day English

“The third article and the fifth, that follows after, belong to the Son as to His manhood; that is to say, as He is mortal man. Then in the third article is contained, that He was conceived of the Holy Ghost, and born of the maid Mary. By which it is to be understood that He was conceived in the maid Mary by the deed and by the virtue of the Holy Ghost, and not at all by deed of man. And the maid Mary remained ever maid and whole before and after. This article St. James, St. John's brother, ordained” (Wyatt, 2013, p.9).

### 2.2.2 Analysis

#### þe þridde article/and the vifte/[þet uol3ep efter]

Subject

[Relative clause]

- **<þe>**: definite article, nominative, singular. It came from the masculine form *sē* of the Old English (OE) paradigm *sē, sēo, þæt*; in Middle English (ME) it converged into the invariable form *þe*. In the South it was written with a *<þ>* because the *<th>* form was introduced first in the North in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and then spread towards the South.
- **<þridde>**: ordinal number. It came from OE *þridda*. The *<þ>* was replaced by *<th>* in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and there was a case of metathesis, whereby *<þridda>* became *<third(d)(e)>*.
- **<article>**: noun in the singular. It came from French *article*.
- **<and>**: conjunction. It came from OE *and, ond*.
- **<the>**: see *<þe>* in line 1.
- **<vifte>**: ordinal number. It came from OE *fifta*.
- **<þet>**: relative pronoun. It came from OE *<þæt>*. The choice of *<e>* in the text points to the regional South Eastern variety in ME. Our PDE form *<that>*, was a regional form in the Midlands and as it was mostly there where Standard English began, this is the form we use nowadays. According to Mossé (1987), this was the most frequent relative pronoun in ME to refer to all relative forms: who, what, which, that, etc (p. 62).
- **<uol3ep>**: 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present indicative of *fol3en*. It came from OE *folgian*. The third person singular ending in *<ep>* is characteristic of Southern dialects and quite different from Northern dialects ending, in *<(e)s>*. This originally local feature became the ending *<-s>* adopted by Standard English as a mark for the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present indicative. The replacement of *<u>* for *<v>* reflects the initial voicing, characteristic of Southern dialects in ME.
- **<efter>**: adverb. It came from OE *æfter*. OE *<æ>* became *<e>* in South Eastern dialects.

belongep to þe zone/ase to þe manhode; þet is to zigge /

V.

I.O

Adverbial clause

- **<belongep>**: 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural, present indicative of *bilangen*. The third person plural ending in <ep> is characteristic of Southern dialects and quite different from Northern dialects, ending in <(e)s>. The <-es> was a Northern trait to mark both the singular and plural, but nowadays <-es> is only used to mark the singular.

- **<to>**: preposition. It came from OE *tō*.

- **<þe>**: see <þe> in line 1.

- **<zone>**: noun in the singular. It came from OE *sunu*. In OE <u> became ME <o> due to a French spelling habit introduced by French scribes. The final <u> became <e> after the levelling process and in the end it disappeared. <z> reflects the initial voicing from /s/ to /z/, which is a Southern trait.

- **<ase>**: conjunction (*al swa*).

- **<to>**: preposition. It came from OE *tō*.

- **<þe>**: see <þe> in line 1.

- **<manhode>**: noun in the singular. In an open syllable, the weak final <e> indicated that the previous vowel was long, but it had no pronunciation. The GVS started affecting long vowels in late ME, so ME [o:] raised its point of articulation and became [u:] along the 15<sup>th</sup> century. This was also reflected in spelling by duplicating the vowel, so from ME *manhode* we get *manhood*. This was initially a local 14<sup>th</sup> century feature of London English.

- **<þet>**: Demonstrative. 'Thorn' <þ> was replaced by <th> in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. For more information see <þet> in line 1.

- **<is>**: 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, present indicative of the verb *bē*. It came from OE *bēon*.

- **<to zigge>**: verb in the infinitive form. It came from OE *secgan*. <z> shows the initial voicing from /s/ to /z/, very typical of Southern dialects.

ase þet he is man dyadlich. þanne mid þe bridde article / is ycontened /  
Subject V Subject Complement Link Subject V.

- **<ase>**: conjunction (*al swa*).
- **<þet>**: conjunction. For more information see <þet> in line 1.
- **<he>**: masculine personal pronoun subject of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular (as well as the forms *hee*, *hā* and *a*). <He> is the only form that it is used in PDE.
- **<is>**: see <is> in line 2.
- **<man>**: noun in the singular. It came from OE *mann*.
- **<dyadlich>**: adjective. It came from OE *deaðlic*. It had French influence, it could be literally copied from the original French manuscript.
- **<þanne>**: Conjunction. It came from OE *þon*, *þonne*, *þanne*, *þænne*. Along the 14<sup>th</sup> century <th> was introduced to replace <þ>. This makes the word look similar to the PDE form.
- **<mid>**: preposition. It came from OE *mið*. It disappeared along the ME period.
- **<þe>**: see <þe> in line 1.
- **<bridde>**: see <bridde> in line 1.
- **<article>**: see <article> in line 1.
- **<is>**: see <is> in line 2.
- **<ycontened>**: past participle of the verb *contenir*. It came from Old French *contenir*. According to Mossé (1987), in the South, the past participle could be preceded by <y-> or <i-> which came from OE <ge-> (p. 80). At that time, the North, North-West-Midland and East-Midland dialects had lost this particle. But the prefixes <y-> or <i-> were preserved for a much longer time, until it eventually disappeared along the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Its ending in <ed> shows that it is a weak verb. The mark to know that a verb is strong is the ending in <en>.

[**þet** **he** **wes** **y-kend** / **of** **þe holi gost** / **and** (...)]  
          [Subordinate clause of D.O]  
 Subject      V.                      Prep.Complement   Link

- **<þet>**: conjunction introducing a subordinate clause of O. D. For more information see **<þet>** in line 1.

- **<he>**: see **<he>** in line 2.

- **<wes>**: 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular preterit indicative of the verb *wesan*.

- **<y-kend>**: past participle of the verb *3e-kennen*. It came from OE *gecennan*. According to Mossé (1987), in the South, the past participle could be preceded by **<y->** or **<i->** which came from OE **<ge->** (p. 80). At that time, the North, North-West-Midland and East-Midland dialects had lost this particle. But the prefixes **<y->** or **<i->** were preserved for a much longer time, until it eventually disappeared along the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Its ending in **<ed>** shows that it is a weak verb. The mark to know that a verb is strong is the ending in **<en>**.

- **<of>**: preposition. It came from OE *of*.

- **<þe>**: see **<þe>** in line 1.

- **<holi>**: noun in the singular. It came from OE *hālig*. In ME final **<g>** vocalized and became **<ī>** and then **<ȳ>**. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the GVS started affecting long vowels and in this case ME [ɔ:] was closed to [o:], it was diphthongised in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to [ou] and finally we get the RP pronunciation [əʊ]. Final **<y>** was established by French scribes in ME.

- **<gost>**: noun in the singular. It came from OE *gāst*. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the GVS started affecting long vowels and in this case ME [ɔ:] was closed to [o:], it was diphthongised in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to [ou] and finally we get the RP spelling [əu]. The **<h>** that its PDE spelling shows was introduced by Dutch printers in EModE.

- **<and>**: conjunction. It came from OE *and, ond*

<u>y-bore of þe mayde Marie].</u>		<u>þet is to onderstonde/þet he wes y-kend/ine þe Mayde Marie</u>	
<u>Attribute</u>	<u>Adverbial Clause</u>	<u>Link Sb</u>	<u>V. Prep.Complement</u>
V. <u>Prep. Complement.</u>			

- **<y-bore>**: past participle of the verb *beren*. It came from OE *beran*. According to Mossé (1987) in the South the past participle could be preceded by <y-> or <i-> which came from OE <ge-> (p. 80). For more information see <ycontened> in line 3.

- **<of>**: preposition. It came from OE *of*.

- **<þe>**: see <þe> in line 1.

- **<mayde>**: noun in the singular. It came from OE *mægden*. <æ> followed by palatal <g> formed a new diphthong in ME, which is reflected in the new spelling <mayde>

- **<Marie>**: proper name in the singular.

- **<þet is>**:

- **<to onderstonde>**: infinitive form. It came from OE *understandan*.

- **<þet>**: conjunction

- **<he>**: see <he> in line 2.

- **<wes>**: 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular preterit indicative of the verb *wesan*.

- **<y-kend>**: see <y-kend> in line 3.

- **<ine>**: preposition. It came from OE *innan*.

- **<þe>**: see <þe> in line 1.

- **<Mayde>**: noun in the singular. It came from OE *mægden*. <æ> followed by palatal <g> formed a new diphthong in ME, which is reflected in the new spelling <mayde>

- **<Marie>**: proper name in the singular.



/ be pe dede / and by pe uirtu / of pe holi gost / and nobing / of dede / of man  
Agent complement      Prep. Complement      Link      Agent complement

- **<be>**: preposition. It came from OE *bī*.
- **<pe>**: see <pe> in line 1.
- **<dede>**: noun in the singular. It came from OE *dǣd*. In the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, to indicate the length of a vowel in spelling Londoners duplicated it, so from *dede* we find *deed*. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, because of the GVS, the pronunciation of [e:] was raised to [i:] towards the PDE pronunciation of the word: /*deed*/.
- **<and>**: conjunction. It came from OE *and, ond*
- **<by>**: preposition. It came from OE *bī*.
- **<pe>**: see <pe> in line 1.
- **<uirtu>**: noun in the singular. It came from Old French *vertu*. The spelling <u> for <v> in ME shows a Latin spelling habit.
- **<of>**: preposition. It came from OE *of*.
- **<pe>**: see <pe> in line 1.
- **<holi>**: see <holi> in line 3.
- **<gost>**: see <gost> in line 3.
- **<and>**: conjunction. It came from OE *and, ond*.
- **<noþing>**: indefinite pronoun. It came from OE *nōwiht, nāuht, nāht, nōht*. The 'thorn' <þ> was replaced by <th> in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.
- **<of>**: preposition. It came from OE *of*.
- **<dede>**: see <dede> in line 4.
- **<of>**: preposition. It came from OE *of*.
- **<man>**: noun in the singular.

And the mayde Marie / blefte eure mayde / an yhol be-uore / and efter.

Link      Subject      V.      Complement      Adverbial Complement

- **<and>**: conjunction. It came from OE *and, ond*.
- **<the>**: see <þe> in line 1.
- **<mayde>**: see <mayde> in line 3.
- **<Marie>**: see <Marie> in line 3.
- **<blefte>**: 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular preterit indicative of the verb *bi-læfen*. It came from OE *belæfan*. As Burrow and Thorlac (1996) claimed in the preterit tense, weak verbs showed endings in <-ed(e)>, <-d(e)> or <t(e)> (p.33). So this is an instance of a weak verb marked by final <-te>.
- **<eure>**: adverb. It came from OE *æfre*. In the ME period there was a change in order and pronunciation due to the process of metathesis (from <-re> to <-er>). The spelling <u> for <v> in ME shows voicing and it was introduced because of a Latin spelling habit.
- **<mayde>**: see <mayde> in line 3.
- **<an>**: conjunction. It came from OE *and, ond*.
- **<yhol>**: adjective. It came from OE *gehāl*. In ME there was a vocalization of consonants: OE <ge-> became <gi->, then it was vocalized to <ii->, then, reduced to a single vowel <i-> till it disappeared in the end.
- **<be-uore>**: adverb. It came from OE *beforan*.
- **<and>**: conjunction. It came from OE *and, ond*.
- **<efter>**: adverb. It came from OE *æfter*. In South Eastern dialects OE <æ> raised and fronted to ME <e>.

**pis article zette zayn iacob / sayn lonnes broþer.**

D.O            V.            Subject

- **<pis>**: demonstrative. 'Thorn'<þ> was replaced by <th> in the 14<sup>th</sup> century in the North, then it spread gradually to the South. According to Mossé (1987), up to the 12<sup>th</sup> century the OE forms remained, that is, *þes* (masculine), *þis* (neuter), *þeos* (feminine) and *þās* (plural) and after that, *þis* was used for the singular (p. 61).
- **<article>**: see <article> in line 1.
- **<zette>**: 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular preterit indicative of the verb *setten*. It came from OE *settan*. The <z> indicates initial voicing typical of the South. This is a weak verb, because as Burrow and Thorlac (1996) asserts, in the preterit tense, weak verbs showed endings in <-ed(e)>, <-d(e)> or <t(e)> (p. 33).
- **<zayn>**: noun in the singular. It came from Old French *saint*. Initial voicing typical of Southern dialects is reflected by means of <z>.
- **<iacob>**: proper name in the singular.
- **<sayn>**: noun in the singular. It came from Old French *saint*.
- **<lonnes>**: proper name in the genitive (-es) singular.
- **<broþer>**: noun in the singular. It came from OE *broðōr*. 'Thorn'<þ> was replaced by <th> in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. There is a change in spelling from OE <o> to ME <e> which is a consequence of the levelling process.

### 3. COMMENTARY ON THE TWO VARIETIES

As it is reflected in the analysis of the previous texts, in ME there were several dialectal differences depending on whether a text comes from the North or the South. In this paper will be explained some of the most remarkable ones. In the North, the English language suffered a rapid development –perhaps because of the Norman conquest–, which was reflected in a gradual decay of inflexions. However, in the South, they kept tradition for more years since innovations followed North-South direction. As Mossé (1987) explains, it was around the 15<sup>th</sup> century that <p> gradually went out of use and was replaced by <th> (p. 8). That is why during that period it was quite frequent to find a word written with <th> (thyrde, text 1, line 4) in the North, whereas in the South, they were accustomed to write a ‘thorn’ <p> (bridde, text 2, line 1). Similarly, relative pronoun written <pet> (text 2, line 1) was the regional South Eastern variety in ME. Our PDE form <that>, was a regional form in the Midlands and as it was mostly there where Standard English began, this is the form we use nowadays.

Another big difference relies on the feminine personal pronoun subject of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular. As Mossé (1987) suggests, in the North they used to write it <scho> (text 1, line 1), which was supposed to be taken from the OE feminine demonstrative <seo> – with the passing of time <s> palatalized into <sh>. As well, there are some indications that it could also be copied from the OE feminine pronoun <heo>, arriving in the end at a palatalization in <scho>. On the contrary, the South and West-Midlands variety, as they were much more traditional, copied the singular feminine personal pronoun from OE <heo> (p. 56). Furthermore, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural masculine pronoun of both subject and object showed some dialectal differences. The pronouns Northerners used were variations from Old Norse –<pei-r> for the subject and <peim> for the object– whence ME <pay> (text

1, line 5) and <þaim/paym> (text 1, line 1) respectively. As opposed to the North, the South employed a native type taken from OE for the subject <hie>, which became <hy/hi> in ME. In addition, in the Southern parts, there were two different possibilities to express the 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural masculine pronoun of object, due to the fact that for some time, people still distinguished between accusative and dative. So we find <hi> for the accusative and <hem> for the dative (Mossé, 1987, p. 58).

Curiously, the area where the greatest differences were found was in the verb tense. Even in the simplest one, the present simple, one can see how the ending of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular and plural varied according to dialect. As Burrow and Turville-Petre (1996) explain in the Northern text one can find verbs ending in <-es> such as <takes> or <lufes>, (lines 4 and 5 respectively). Instead, if one focus on the Southern manuscript, verbs ending in <-ep> such as <uol3ep> or <belongep> (line 1) come to the surface. In addition, present participle also showed different ending depending on the dialectal area. Whereas in the North it was marked by final <-and(e)> such as <prayand> or <redande> (text 1, lines 5 and 6 respectively). In Southern dialects they used verbs ending in <-ind(e)> (p.32-33).

Not only did the present system vary according to dialect, but also the preterit system. So as Mossé (1987) comments, the way in which the past participle was formed also varied from North to South. In the South, the past participle could be preceded by <y-> or <i->, which were preserved until it disappeared along the 15<sup>th</sup> century (p.80). In *Ayenbite of Inwyte* there are some instances of this kind of word formation such as <ycontened> or <ykend> (line 3). However, at that time, the North, North-West-Midland and East-Midland dialects had lost this particle. So in the North people find verbs such as <overheghede> (line 3) from *The Bee and the Stork*.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Every language has its own varieties depending on region and social group. This may be due to the fact that languages are continuously changing, and every specific area accommodates to that changes in one way or another. Regarding the South of the UK, people have always been too conservative so changes related to language developed slowly. On the contrary in the Northern parts of the UK, people were very radical and innovative when accommodating to language changes. That is the main reason why there have been great differences between these two areas.

Nowadays, there are smaller differences among English dialects, since the set of rules, known as Standard English, began to be established at the end of the Middle English period. According to Baugh and Cable (2002) "the part of England that contributed most to the formation of this Standard was East Midland district, and it was the East Midland type of English that became its basis, particularly the dialect of the metropolis, London" (p. 179). Burrow and Turville-Petre (1996) claim that Standard English began to be properly known with what was called 'Chancery Standard' in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, the advent of the printing press in the last decades of the same century, confirmed the national standing of Standard English first in written form and later in spoken form (p. 5).

With the development of Standard English, differences simplified although not to the point of attaining complete uniformity as can be observed in the different dialects that today coexist in the United Kingdom, such as Northumbrian, Cockney or Kentish. Diversity still exists above all in the spoken form, but in the written form, for instance a literary text, it becomes almost impossible to distinguish the area in which the given work is written. Furthermore, it must be said that although many people believe that Standard English is

the correct way to use English because it is clear and proper, there is no dialect superior to another since all of them are varieties of a former language.

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