Historical roots of Present Day US English [06]

Middle English 1

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ME periodization

- Beginning: Norman Conquest (1066) and its aftermath
- End:
  1. Caxton's printing press (1476)
  2. Christopher Columbus

Texts and dialects

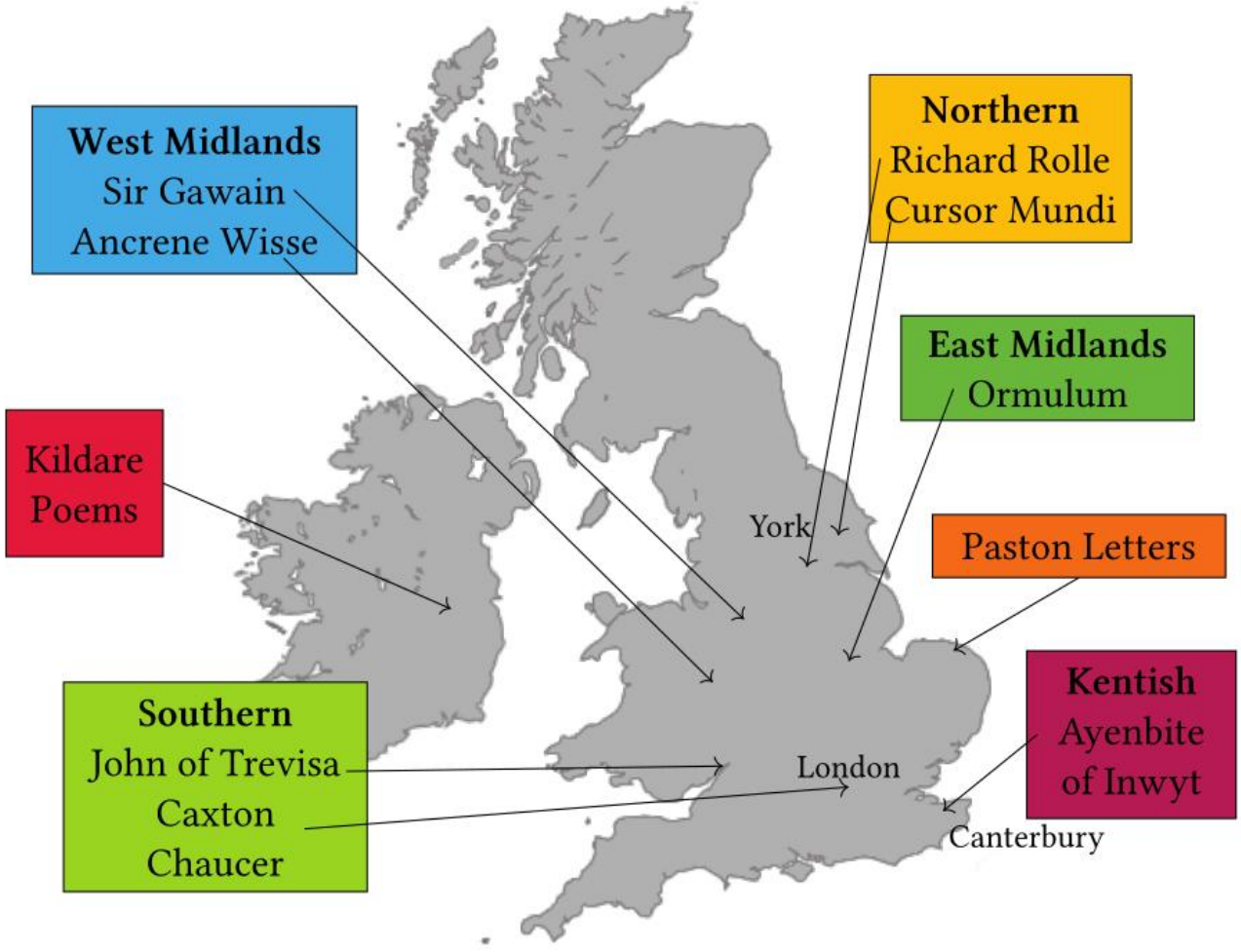


Figure 5.3: Some key texts and authors during the Middle English period

Source: Hejná and Walkden (2022, p. 180)

Contrasts

"Laverd," seið Godes spuse to hire deorewurðe spus, "þe rihte luvieð þe." Þeo beoð rihte þe luvieð efter riwle. Ant ȝe, mine leove sustren, habbeþ moni dei i-cravet on me after riwle. Monie cunne riwlen beoð, ah twa beoð bimong alle þet ich chulle speoken of þurh ower bone, wið Godes grace. Þe an riwleð þe heorte ant makeð efne ant smeðe, wiðute cnost ant dolc of woh inwit ant of wreiȝende, þe segge "her þu sunegest!" oþer "þis nis nawt i-bet ȝet ase wel as hit ahte!" Þeos riwle is eaver inwið ant rihteð þe heorte.

Whan that Aprill with his shoures soote
The droghte of March hath perced to the roote,
And bathed every veyne in swich licour
Of which vertu engendred is the flour;
Whan Zephirus eek with his sweete breeth
Inspired hath in every holt and heeth
The tendre croppes, and the yonge sonne
Hath in the Ram his half cours yronne,
And smale foweles maken melodye,
That slepen al the nyght with open ye
(So priketh hem Nature in hir corages),
Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,

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Left: From the beginning of Ancrene Riwle/Ancrene Wisse, early 13th century (c.1230)
Right: Chaucer, beginning of the Prologue to the Canterbury Tales (1387–1400)

Sounds

- no phoneme /ŋ/; the sound [ŋ] does exist, but only as an allophone of /n/
- no phoneme /ʒ/
- additional phoneme: the velar fricative /x/ (still found in Scottish English in Present Day English)
- vowels different (from those found in Present Day English as well as Early Modern English)
  - short and long vowels in stressed syllables
  - unstressed syllables carried important morphosyntactic functions
  - diphthongs not necessarily like those in Present Day English

Twelve monophthongs

i: *wif* "wife", *min* "my" — **u**: *nu, now* "now"

ɪ *lyuen* "to live" — **ʊ** *cutte* "cut" (past participle)

e: *meten* "to meet" — **o**: *mood* "mood"

ɛ, ɛː: *heed* "head", *mete* "meat" — **ɔ, ɔː**: *hoot* "hot", *boot* "boat"

a, aː: *ram* "ram", *name* "name"

Figure: HW: Chaucerian Middle English monophthongs, based on Horobin and Smith (2002, p. 48)

Dipthongs

five diphthongs:

1. /aɪ/ *day*
2. /ɔɪ/ *joye*
3. /aʊ/ *saugh* ‘saw’
4. /ɔʊ/ *knowe* ‘to know’
5. /ɪʊ/ *newe* ‘new’

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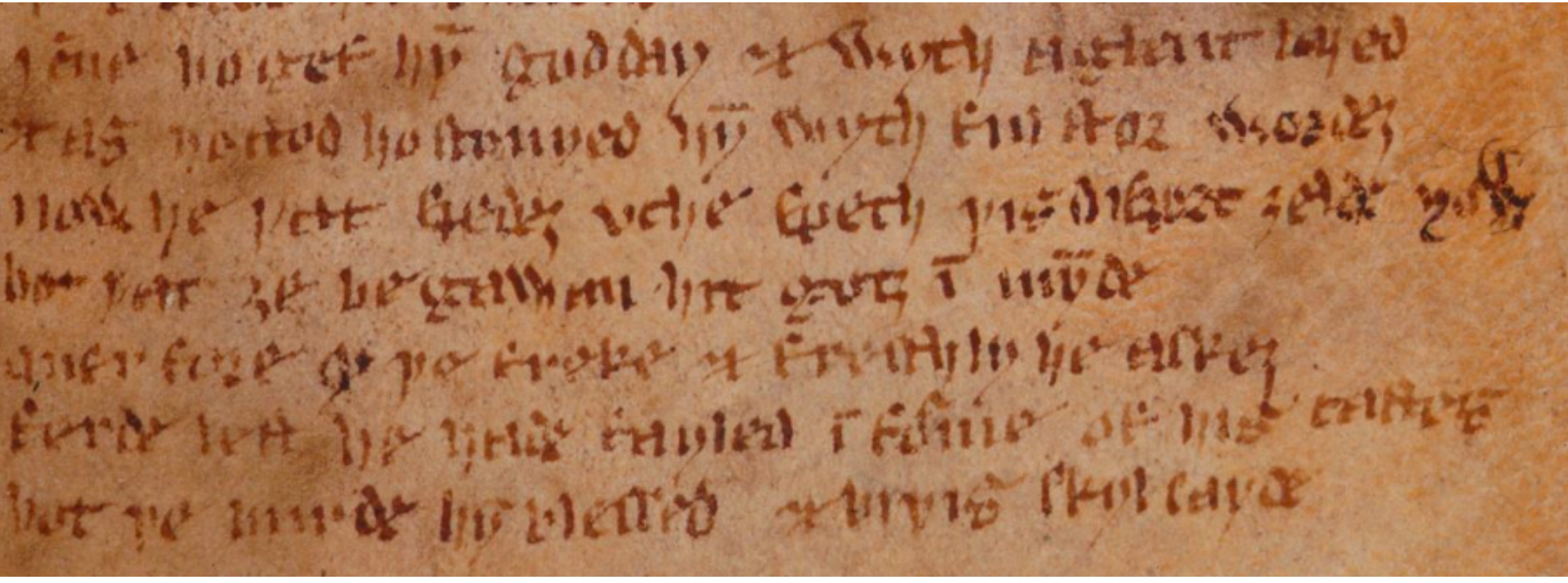
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A taste: `https://alanbaragona.wordpress.com/the-criyng-and-the-soun/the-canterbury-tales-general-prologue-ii-1-14-jane-zatta/`

Spelling

- insane spelling variation
- Same as OE: <þ> for voiced dental fricative /ð/ or the voiceless dental fricative /θ/
- yogh /jɒx/: <ȝ>. primarily for /j/ and /x/
- Norman scribal traditions: the sound /u/ spelt with <ou>

Manuscripts



Gawain!

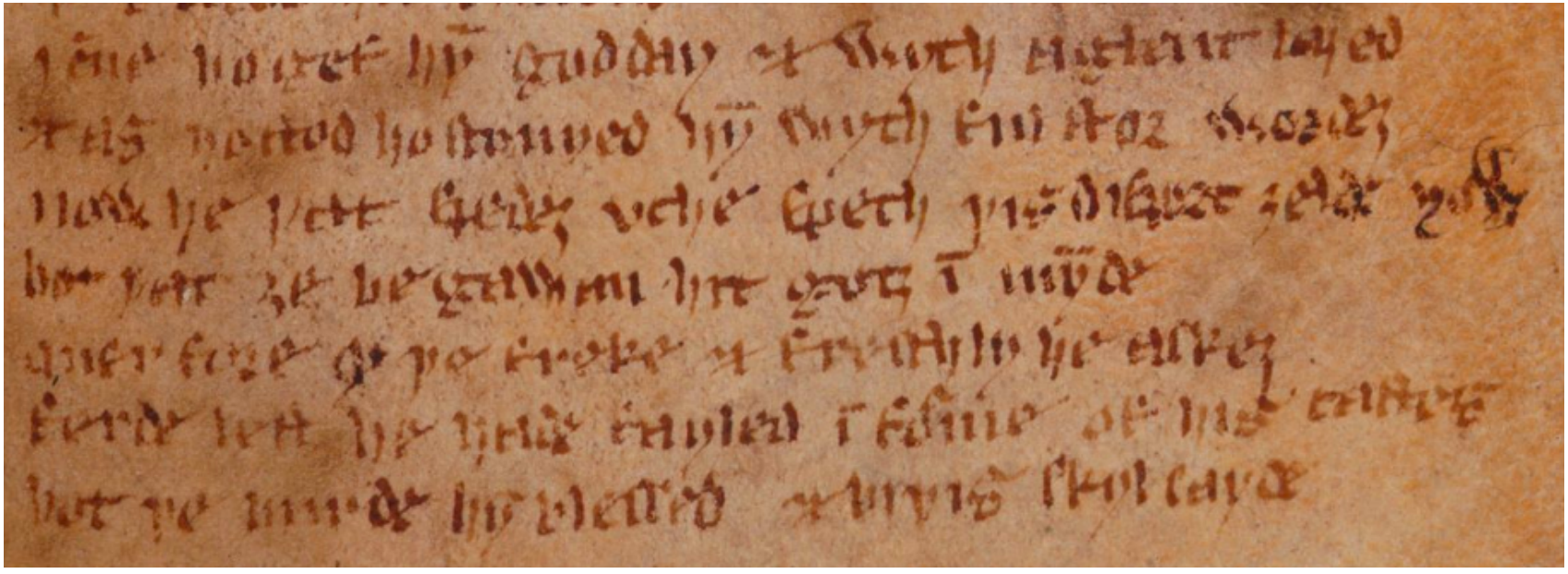


Figure: Figure 5.7: Beginning of our target excerpt of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight

Source: Hejná and Walkden (2022, p. 214)

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4. Analysis of spelling

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   PDE *house*: noun voiceless, verb voiced
3. Analysis of verse
4. Analysis of spelling
   PDE <f/v> *fine/vine*

Cf. Horobin and Smith (2002, pp. 43–44)

References I

- Hejná, Míša and George Walkden (2022). *A history of English*. Textbooks in Language Sciences 9. Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.6560337.
- Horobin, Simon and Jeremy J. Smith (2002). *An introduction to Middle English*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.