

**Assessing the provenance of
Constantinus Africanus'
Venerabilis Anatomia in London,
Wellcome Library, MS
Wellcome 290 (ff. 1r-41v)**

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Jesús Romero-Barranco
University of Málaga

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Introduction (*i*)



- ✧ Middle English “exhibits by far the greatest diversity in written language of any period before or since”, where “variability was very wide-ranging at every linguistic level: spelling, morphology, syntax and lexicon” (Baugh 1959; McIntosh 1989; Milroy 1992; Smith 1999).
- ✧ Middle English dialects:
 - ✧ Kentish
 - ✧ Southern
 - ✧ East Midlands
 - ✧ West Midlands
 - ✧ Northern

Introduction (*ii*)



- ✦ Translation of scientific treatises into the vernacular in the 14th and 15th centuries.
- ✦ According to Laing (2004), there were three types of scribes or copyists:
 1. Literatim
 2. Translator
 3. Mixer
- ✦ Due to this, it is usual to find different versions of the same text, depending on the area in which it was translated and the dialectal provenance of the scribe.

Introduction (*iii*)



- ✦ Dialectology looks at three analytical planes: diachronic, diatopic and diastratic.
- ✦ Different approaches have been made to Middle English dialectology:
 - ✦ Oakden (1930)
 - ✦ Moore, Meech and Whitehall (1935)
 - ✦ McIntosh et al. (1986)

Introduction (*iv*)



- ✧ Oakden (1930):
 - ✧ He studied only 45 items.
 - ✧ His work was just a prelude to a detailed study of alliterative poetry.
- ✧ Moore, Meech and Whitehall (1935): the first serious approach. McIntosh found some shortcomings though:
 - ✧ The number of selected items was too small.
 - ✧ The selection of texts was not appropriate.
 - ✧ They covered such a wide chronological spread that linguistic differences due to chronological factors were confused with genuine dialectal.

Introduction (v)

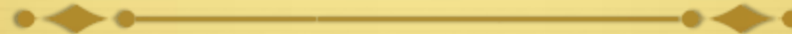


✧ McIntosh et al. (1986):

✧ It covers England and some parts of Wales in the period 1350-1450.

✧ The *Linguistics Atlas of Late Middle English* provides us with a frame of reference for isolating and classifying those types of language that are less obviously dialectal, and can thus cast light on the probable sources of written standard English that appears in the fifteenth century (Samuels 1989: 66).

Methodology (*i*)



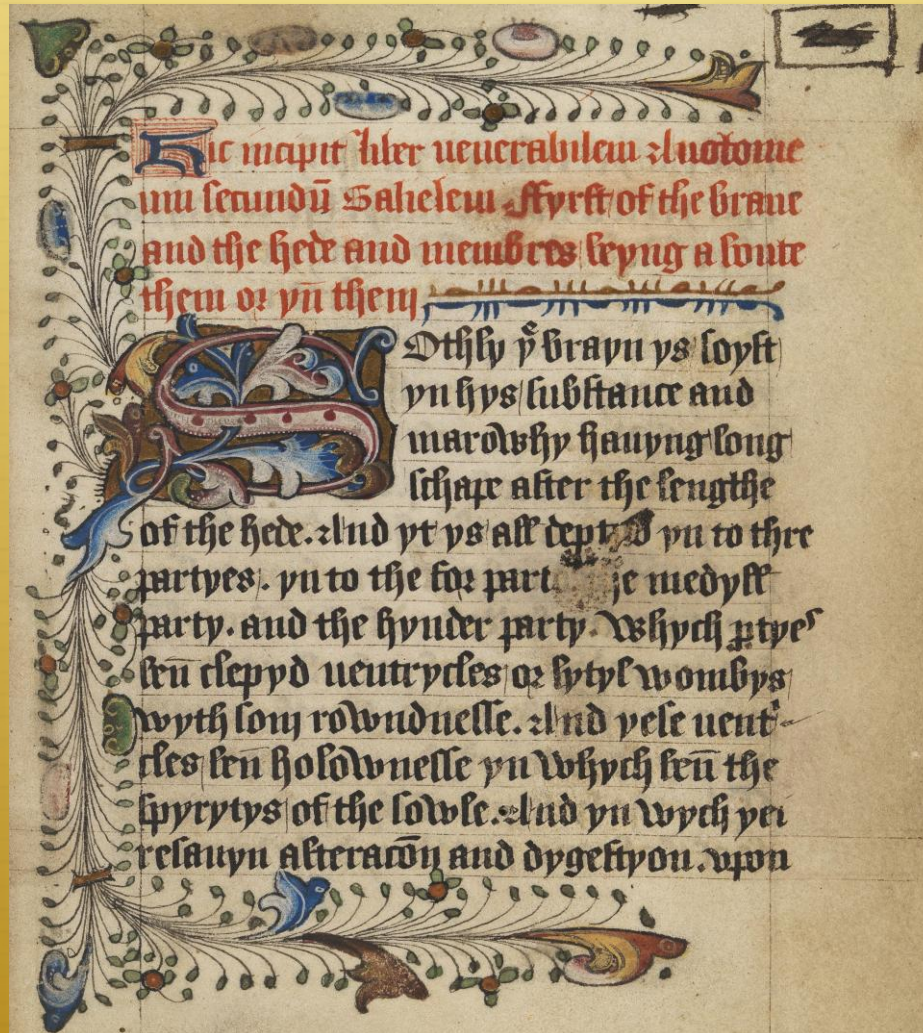
ID	Word_Original	Lemma_Original	category	sub-category	type	sub-type	tiempo_grado	number	person
27	Sothly	sōthli, b	Adve	Manner					
28	þe	thē, d	Dete						
29	brayn	brain, n	Noun					Sing	
30	ys	bēn, va	Verb		Anom		PrsInd	Sing	3rd
31	soyft	soft, a	Adje						
32	yn	in, p	Prep						
33	hys	his, d	Dete	Poss				Sing	3rd
34	substance	substance, n	Noun					Sing	
35	and	and, c	Conj	Copu					
36	marowshy	marwī, a	Adje						
37	hauyng	having(e, ng	Noun					Sing	
38	long	lōng, a (1)	Adje						
39	schape	shāp(e, n	Noun					Sing	
40	after	after, p	Prep						
41	the	thē, d	Dete						
42	lengthe	length(e, n	Noun					Sing	
43	of	of, p	Prep						
44	the	thē, d	Dete						
45	hede	hēd, n	Noun					Sing	
46	.	PUNCTUATIONMARK	PUNCTUATIONMARK		PUNCTUS				

Methodology (*ii*)



- ✦ Generation of a lemma-based list of allographs
- ✦ Fit-technique:
 1. A questionnaire is designed.
 2. Those words are placed in the dot maps.
 3. The results are compared with the item maps.
 4. Those items that have not been plotted are checked against the county dictionary.
- ✦ A linguistic analysis is carried out in order to support and corroborate the results obtained.

The text



Dialectal analysis (*i*)

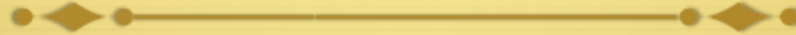
after	after (52) Affter (6)
any	eni (1)
but	but (23) butt (1)
each	eche (1)
flesh	flech (6) flesch (2) flessch (1)
from	from (55) fro (16) frome (3)
I	I (1)
less	lesse (6) lasse (1)
man	man (6) mane (2) mannys (1)
much	much (2) moche (1)
neither	neyþer (1)
other	other (13) oþer (8) oder (1)
shall	scholde (4) schuld (4)
than	þan (6) than (1) þanne (1) thanne (1)
them	þem (4) them (3) þem (1)
then	þen (1) þene (1) thenes (1)
they	þei (36) þey (2) they (1)
until	tyl (1)
well	wele (5) wel (2) well (1) welle (1) weyl (1)
when	whan (20) whane (1) whanne (1)
-ly	aliuelych (1) clothelych (2) dedelych (1) prencypallych (1)

Dialectal analysis (*ii*)



be	are (2), ar (1)
good	gode (1), goode (1)
if	yf (4)
little	lytyl (10)
many	many (4)
might	myght (2)
not	not (33)
shall, v	schal (6), schalt (4)
these, d	þese (41)
wh-	whan (20), what (4), where (2), wherfore (4), why (3), whych (158)
whych	whych (158)

Dialectal analysis (*iii*)



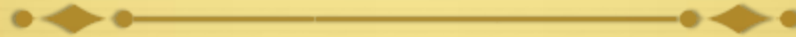
- ✧ The morphology of these words has been carried out leads to the conclusion that W290 is likely to have been written in the north of Essex. One can never be completely sure, whether the scribe was actually a native speaker of that zone or, on the contrary, whether he acquired his habits of written language therein (Crespo and Lezcano-González (1999)).
- ✧ Actually, the linguistic profile of the text under scrutiny happens to be very similar to those of 6310 and 6350 in *LALME*, which also belong to that geographic area.

Linguistic analysis (*i*)



- ✧ Linguistic analysis can sometimes confirm, sometimes refute, modify or even confuse textual or historical evidence, but it always adds something to our knowledge of a scribe and his work (Laing 1988).
- ✧ In the case of the present investigation, the linguistic analysis comes to corroborate the results obtained in the dialectal analysis.

Linguistic analysis (*ii*)



	<i>Nominative</i>	<i>Objective</i>	<i>Genitive</i>
	<i>Singular</i>		<i>Plural</i>
1st person	-e		-e
2nd person	-st, -t		-
3rd person	-th		-en, -e, -yn, -yth
3rd plur.	Thei/þei/þey	hem/them/þem	-

Conclusions



- ✦ The present analysis suggests that W290 is likely to have been written in the south-eastern part of Great Britain, somewhere to the north of River Thames, near Chelmsford, in the county of Essex, thus following the conventions of the East Midlands dialect.
- ✦ In addition, the results have been supported and corroborated by the linguistic analysis.

Thank you!



jromer@uma.es