

A Companion to
the History of the English Language

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A COMPANION TO

THE *H*ISTORY
OF THE ENGLISH
*L*ANGUAGE

EDITED BY
HARUKO MOMMA AND MICHAEL MATTO

 **WILEY-BLACKWELL**

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Note on Phonetic Symbols and Orthography

Though the study of the history of the English language does not require an extensive linguistic background, it is helpful to know some typographic conventions of linguistic analysis and some letters and abbreviations no longer found in current orthography.

Phonetic Transcription

Brackets

Readers will note three kind of brackets placed around letters and other symbols in these essays: angle brackets <t>, slashes /t/, and square brackets [t].

- <t> angle brackets indicate *graphemes*: how a sound is represented in written form.
- /t/ slashes indicate *phonemes*: the smallest meaningfully distinct sound within a language.
- [t], [t^h] square brackets indicate *phonetic transcription*: the exact description of a spoken sound.

While phonemics and phonetics are often virtually identical in practice, very precise phonetic transcription offers more phonological detail. For example, the phoneme /t/ in *top* and *stop* is spelled with the grapheme <t> and for most speakers represents essentially the same sound, but the <t> in *top* is aspirated (i.e., accompanied by a puff of breath) and so signified by the superscript ^h in phonetic transcription [t^h], while the <t> in *stop* is not aspirated [t].

Phonetic alphabet

The desire among linguists for a systematic method for transcribing the spoken sounds of languages was realized with the creation of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) in 1888 by the International Phonetic Association. Designed to represent the

discrete sounds of all the world's languages within one set of symbols, the IPA allows linguists to transcribe spoken sounds consistently.

The IPA provides symbols for far more sounds than any individual language uses, so the symbols are not always intuitive for speakers of a given language. Variations on the IPA have therefore been developed, often for use in dictionaries, but also for scholarly use. One set of such variants, though not codified by any official organization, is known informally as the Americanist Phonetic Alphabet (APA), with symbols based primarily on English spelling. Also, differences in transcription systems sometimes reflect differing underlying phonetic theories. For instance, the English sounds represented by the letters <y> and <w> in the words *yet* and *wet* might be categorized as kinds of consonants (as IPA does) or as glides or semi-vowels (as APA generally does).

The editors of this volume have decided to allow each contributor his or her choice of transcription system, thus symbols from both the IPA and the APA appear in this book. This results in some small inconsistencies across essays using different systems. To clarify for readers, we offer the following charts to outline the correspondences.

Consonants

The chart below contains all the consonant sounds discussed in the book, most of which are standard in English pronunciations throughout the world. Some (/ϕ, β, x, ɣ, χ/) were important in the earlier history of the language, but are no longer in wide use. Two symbols in one cell represent variants from APA (left) and IPA (right) as used in this book.

		LABIAL		DENTAL			PALATO-VELAR			GLOTTAL
		Labial	Labio-dental	Dental	Alveolar	Alveo-palatal	Palatal	Velar	Uvular	
Stops (Plosives)	voiceless	p			t			k		
	voiced	b			d			g		
Fricatives	voiceless	ϕ	f	θ	s	š/ʃ	ç	x	χ	h
	voiced	β	v	ð	z	ž/ʒ		ɣ		
Affricates	voiceless					č/ʧ				
	voiced					ǰ/dʒ				
Nasals		m			n			ŋ		
Approximants (Liquids)	rhotic				r					
	lateral				l					
Approximants (Glides, Semi-Vowels)	voiced						y/j			
	voiceless labialized							hw/ɰ		
	voiced labialized							w		

Superscript symbols

- ^h aspiration: indicates that the sound is accompanied by a puff of breath.
^w labialized: indicates that the sound is accompanied by a rounding of the lips.

Compare the /k/ aspirated in *kit* [k^hɪt], unaspirated in *skit* [skɪt], and labialized in *quit* [k^wɪt].

Consonant sounds of modern English illustrated

/p/	pit	/f/	fan	/ʃ/, /ʒ/	sure	/m/	mine	/y/, /j/	yet
/b/	bit	/v/	van	/ʒ/, /ʒ/	azure	/n/	nine	/hw/, /w/	whet
/t/	tip	/θ/	thigh	/tʃ/, /tʃ/	char	/ŋ/	sing	/w/	wet
/d/	dip	/ð/	thy	/j/, /dʒ/	jar	/r/	rat		
/k/	cot	/s/	sue	/ç/	huge	/l/	let		
/g/	got	/z/	zoo	/h/	hot				

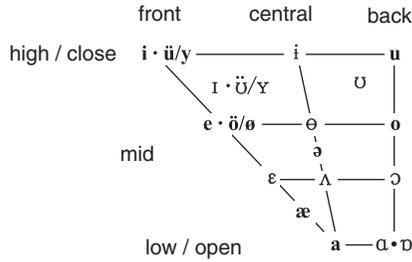
The following fricative consonant sounds are not generally found in modern American or British RP pronunciation, but are important to the history of English.

- /ɸ/ voiceless like /f/, but with lips together as if pronouncing /p/
 /β/ voiced like /v/, but with lips together as if pronouncing /b/
 /x/ unvoiced like /ç/ but slightly further back, as if pronouncing /g/
 /χ/ slightly further back than /x/, but not so far as /h/
 /ɣ/ like /x/, but voiced

Vowels

The various schemas and symbols for representing vowel systems are difficult to reconcile with one another. While most vowel schemas attempt to reproduce the biological manner of articulation, they employ different terminologies. For instance, IPA describes the openness of the mouth (with “close – mid – open,”) while APA instead indicates the level of the tongue (with “high – mid – low”).

Like the consonant chart, the schematic below represents only the sounds discussed in this book. One should imagine the graph represents a mouth facing left, and the symbols mark places of articulation. Three of the sounds are given two symbols, which represent transcription variants from APA (left) and IPA (right): ü/y, ö/ʏ, and ø/ø. Note that the vowel phoneme /y/ (from IPA) is different from the consonant or glide phoneme /y/ (from APA), though they use the same symbol. Symbols to the left and right of bullet points represent unrounded and rounded variants, respectively (rounded sounds are pronounced with the lips pulled into a circle and slightly protruding).



Long and short vowels

: indicates a long vowel, which is held longer than its short counterpart, but is otherwise articulated in the same place. Compare the long vowel of *sea* [si:] with the short vowel of *seat* [sit]. Length can also be indicated by a doubling of the phonetic symbol: /sii/ versus /sit/.

Vowel sounds of modern English

Examples are from standard American pronunciation.

- | | | | | | |
|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|--------|
| /i/ | bee | /ə/ | bud | /u/ | boo |
| /ɪ/ | bid | /ʌ/ | bug | /ʊ/ | book |
| /e/ | bade | | | /o/ | boat |
| /ɛ/ | bed | | | /ɔ/ | bought |
| /æ/ | bad | | | /ɑ/ | body |

The following vowel sounds are not generally distinguished in modern American or British Received Pronunciation, but are important to the history of vowels in English.

- /ü/, /y/ like /i/, but rounded (like the French *du*)
- /ÿ/, /ʏ/ like /ɪ/, but rounded
- /ö/, /ø/ like /e/, but rounded
- /ø/ like /ə/, but slightly higher
- /i/ like /ø/, but slightly higher (e.g., the unstressed first syllable of *begin*)
- /a/ like /æ/, but slightly lower
- /ɒ/ like /ɑ/, but rounded

Diphthongs

Many of the vowels of English are pronounced as a movement from one vowel to another; these are called diphthongs. The three most commonly pronounced diphthongs in English can be heard in the standard American pronunciations of *boy* /bɔɪ/,

buy /bai/ and *bough* /bau/; each unambiguously contains a movement between two vowel sounds. However, compared with many other European languages, modern English has few pure vowel sounds at all. For instance, even the /e/ of *bade* has a slight glide from /e/ to /ɪ/ for many English speakers, a movement perhaps more noticeable in the word *bane* or *bay*.

Orthography

Handwriting and typographic conventions change over time and vary among languages. Some of the essays in this collection make use of unfamiliar orthography when quoting from period sources or languages other than English. The following notes may be of use:

- <ȝ> is called *yogh*, and is related orthographically to <g>. Yogh was used in the Middle English period to represent a variety of related velar sounds, including /y/ and /x/.
- <7> is the so-called “Tironian *et*” used in medieval manuscripts as an abbreviation for *and*, much as modern printers use <&>.
- <þ> is called *thorn* and was used to represent either /θ/ or /ð/ in Old and Middle English. It was virtually interchangeable with <ð>.
- <ð> is called *eth* and was used to represent either /θ/ or /ð/ in Old and Middle English. The grapheme <ð> thus does not always carry the same sound as the voiced fricative /ð/. It was virtually interchangeable with <þ>.
- <v> and <u> were used either interchangeably or in the reverse of modern convention in medieval and early modern English. Often, <v> is used at the beginning of a word, <u> in the middle. In other texts, <v> might regularly represent the vowel, and <u> the consonant.

A Timeline for HEL

The following timeline will help readers contextualize the historical events discussed in this volume. While this list emphasizes topics covered by the contributors (as noted), it also includes other important events.

>1000 BCE	Indo-European languages spread throughout Europe and southern Asia, some already attested in writing for hundreds of years. (Baldi)
ca. 1000–1 BCE	Gradual sound shifts (Grimm’s Law) take place in Germanic languages. (Fulk)
55–54 BCE	Julius Caesar invades Britain.
43 CE	Romans under Claudius conquer Britain; the “Roman Britain” period begins.
ca. 50–100	Scandinavian Runic inscriptions are produced, which remain the oldest attestations of a Germanic language. (Baldi)
ca. 98	Roman historian Cornelius Tacitus writes <i>Germania</i> . (Fulk)
ca. 350	Bishop Wulfila translates the Bible into Gothic, an East Germanic language. (Baldi)
410	Roman troops withdraw from Britain as Visigoths sack Rome; the “Roman Britain” period ends.
449	According to tradition, Anglo-Saxons (Angles, Saxons, Jutes) begin invasion and settlement of Britain, bringing their West Germanic dialects to the island.
597	Pope Gregory sends Augustine to Kent where he converts King Æthelberht and 10,000 other Anglo-Saxons to Christianity. (Donoghue)
793–ca. 900	Vikings (Danes, Norwegians, Swedes) raid England periodically and establish settlements.
878	King Alfred’s victory over Guthrum’s Danish army at Edington paves the way for the creation of the Kingdom of the Anglo-Saxons. (Gretsch; Donoghue)
886	King Alfred and Guthrum sign a treaty establishing the “Danelaw” north and east of London, heavily settled by the Norse-speaking vikings. (Donoghue)
890s	King Alfred translates Pope Gregory’s <i>Regula pastoralis</i> into English. (Gretsch)

ca. 900	Bede's <i>Ecclesiastical History</i> is translated from Latin into Old English. (Donoghue)
ca. 975–1025	The four great manuscripts containing Old English poetry (Exeter Book, Junius Manuscript, Vercelli Book, and <i>Beowulf</i> Manuscript) are compiled, though many of the texts they contain were likely composed over the previous 300 years.
993–5	Aelfric composes his Latin–Old English <i>Glossary</i> . (Hüllen)
1066	William the Conqueror leads the Norman conquest of England, solidifying French as the language of the nobility. (Turville-Petre)
1171	Henry II leads the Cambro-Norman invasion of Ireland, bringing French and English speakers to the island. (Dolan)
1204	King John of England loses Normandy to France. (Turville-Petre)
ca. 1245	Walter of Bibbesworth compiles his <i>Tretiz de Langage</i> to improve the French of English-speaking landowners. (Hüllen; Turville-Petre)
1282	Wales is conquered by King Edward I of England. (Löffler)
1348–50	The Black Plague kills about one-third of the English population.
1362	Statute of Pleading requires English be spoken in law courts. (Plummer)
1366	Statutes of Kilkenny outlaw (among other Irish customs) speaking Irish by Englishmen in Ireland. (Dolan)
1370–1400	Chaucer writes his major works. (Plummer)
1380s	John Wycliffe and his followers illegally translate the Latin Vulgate Bible into English. (Nevalainen)
1380–1450	Chancery standard written English is developed. (Lerer)
ca. 1450	Johannes Guttenburg establishes the printing press in Germany.
1476	William Caxton sets up the first printing press in England. (Nevalainen; King)
1492	Christopher Columbus explores the Caribbean and Central America.
1497	Italian navigator John Cabot explores Newfoundland.
1500–1650	Great Vowel Shift takes place. (Lerer; Stockwell & Minkova)
1525	William Tyndale prints an English translation of the New Testament. (King; Nevalainen)
1534	The first complete English translation of the Bible from the original Greek and Hebrew is produced. (Nevalainen)
1536 and 1543	Acts of Union (Laws in Wales Acts) annex Wales to England. (Löffler)