Pushing the Boundary: The Periodisation Problem in Dictionaries of Old English

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ABSTRACT

This thesis offers a detailed study of the theoretical challenge of linguistic periodisation as it appears in dictionaries of Old English, past and present. I consider the varied representations by lexicographers of Old English as a period. I focus especially on how they establish the scope and context of their work by invoking the concept of an imagined period boundary that separates Old English from subsequent periods, and how this boundary is problematised.

Five major dictionaries of Old English are used to illustrate developments in historical lexicography from the early stages of Old English scholarship to the present day: William Somner's *Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum* (1659), Edward Lye and Owen Manning's *Dictionarium Saxonico et Gothico-Latinum* (1772), Joseph Bosworth's *A Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language* (1838), Joseph Bosworth and Thomas Northcote Toller's *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (1882–98 with later supplements), and the University of Toronto's *Dictionary of Old English* (1986–). Alongside these I also consider relevant material from the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1884–).

The first two chapters of the thesis establish the significance of dictionaries as objects of study that can offer unique insights into the development of linguistic periodisation, and situate them in scholarly history. Chapter Three outlines how lexicographers' interpretations (conscious or otherwise) of periodisation may be reflected in their dictionaries. Chapter Four examines the exact properties and ways of defining the period boundary marking the end of Old English, as it was imagined by different lexicographers. Chapter Five uses case studies of well-known texts associated with late Old English (focusing on the Peterborough Chronicle, the Winteney Rule of Benedict and the Textus Roffensis) to build an account of how the nature of mediæval source texts frequently leads to unavoidable inconsistencies in lexicographical policy. Chapter Six considers how ideal periodisation interacts with external pressures, including the practical methods and aims of lexicography and broader agendas surrounding the portrayal of Old English. The conclusion reflects on significant themes, findings, and identifies future directions for both research and lexicographical practice.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Dictionaries

DOE Dictionary of Old English

OED Oxford English Dictionary

OED1 The first edition (1884–1928) of the Oxford English Dictionary, published under the title of the New English Dictionary

OED2 The second edition (1989) of the Oxford English Dictionary

OED3 The third and current edition (1993–present) of the Oxford English Dictionary

Other dictionaries are referred to in-text by publication date and/or the surname of the lexicographers.

Other abbreviations

CUP Cambridge University Press

OUP Oxford University Press

s.v. *sub voce*

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

I follow the convention of most modern editions in representing the runic character wynn with <w>. Where the use of one or the other character seems significant, this will be clarified in footnotes. In quotations from Somner's dictionary, I have represented blackletter as bold, except (for ease of reading) if the entire passage quoted is set in blackletter. In quotations from all sources that use a special font for Old English text (see below p. 83), I have commented on this where I consider it to be significant, but have otherwise left it in ordinary Roman, undistinguished from other text.[1] Old English words are given in the form in which they appear in the dictionary under discussion, even when this is non-standard or erroneous.

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

[1] In most cases, the reader can assume that Old English headwords and quotations in Somner (1659) and Lye & Manning (1772) are set in special font. The font choice does not generally convey structural information to a modern reader, and is therefore treated as an aesthetic feature that does not need to be reproduced in quotation. Exceptions to this general state of affairs are discussed on a case-by-case basis.

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All Anglo-Saxon dictionaries contain words which are not Old-English, but belong to Transition-English (1100-1200), or even to Middle-English.

Henry Sweet, *The Student's Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon* (1897: vii)

INTRODUCTION

‘The division of the history of a language into periods is necessary for convenience of study; but the boundary-lines that are drawn between periods are arbitrary and unreal. To understand aright the development of the English vocabulary, it is necessary to pass a sponge over these misleading and disfiguring artificial boundaries’ (Bradley 1906: 314). So claimed Henry Bradley, then the second editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*). His claim is merely one expression of a common sentiment, that the history of English (or of any language) is ideally understood as a seamless narrative progressing from the earliest surviving attestations to the present day. From this perspective, dividing the historical linguistic narrative into discrete segments, or periods, is a response to the unwelcome intrusion of purely practical considerations; defining and focusing on a single period allows for more detailed and specialist treatment, at the expense of disrupting a fundamentally continuous narrative with ‘arbitrary and unreal’ boundaries.

Despite such misgivings, there exists in the history of English lexicography a long tradition of dedicated period dictionaries, which continues to this day. Indeed, while Bradley’s paper emphasised that the *OED* would be ‘capable of exhibiting the history of the English word-store in its true aspect as a continuous process’ (Bradley 1906: 314), ultimately the *OED*, too, offers an account of the history of English that is profoundly and inescapably shaped by period divisions.

In this thesis, I will examine dictionaries — past and present — that aim to document the linguistic period known today as Old English. These dictionaries must on some level accept the validity of periodisation as a premise of their existence; if we cannot meaningfully recognise Old English as a coherent linguistic entity, how can we produce a dictionary of it? Yet they also force us to confront the concerns verbalised by Bradley, that the act of periodisation they represent, by which the language documented in the dictionary is recognised as Old English and separated from the language documented in (for instance) a dictionary of Middle English, is inherently arbitrary — or worse, an active disfiguration of the historical linguistic record.

Studying the workings of periodisation in dictionaries of Old English therefore offers an important insight into the nature and preoccupations of historical lexicography, as well as an insight into what happens when idealised statements about the nature of language meet the messy reality of mediæval texts, lexicographical practicalities, and the numerous other concerns falling under Bradley’s label of ‘convenience of study’. It is easy to bemoan a dictionary’s theoretical or practical shortcomings as a

reference work, but these shortcomings have a value of their own; they are a record of how previous generations of scholars have grappled with the issues of periodisation that still concern us today.

In a way, then, this thesis is a history of Old English lexicography as seen through some of its most persistent failures. I trace the repeated attempts of the discipline to define the subject of its own study in the face of the impossibility of ever achieving perfection. The tension between the descriptive convenience of periodisation and its slipperiness as a linguistically motivated concept may be problematic, but the ways in which different lexicographers of Old English approach the conundrum of periodisation are historically illuminating.

Research questions

In the next chapter, I will set out in more detail the argument that scholarly approaches to the end of the Old English period merit further investigation. The topic is a complex one, there are many competing claims, and the treatment of the period boundary has implications for how the wider discipline of Old English studies is understood and taught. Due to the particular nature of dictionaries, their creation and function, the representation of this period boundary in lexicography has the potential to be especially interesting, and to demonstrate idiosyncrasies that are less readily apparent in other kinds of scholarly output. Despite this, however, a review of existing literature demonstrates that there has been little detailed consideration of how periodisation manifests in dictionaries. Furthermore, the numerous studies examining the history of periodisation in English and the limits of the conventional Old English period mostly overlook dictionaries as a source of evidence for historical scholarly assumptions. This thesis is intended to address these gaps in the literature on dictionary history and the history of Old English studies.

My aims in the following study are historical and exploratory. I do not intend to present a new or improved methodology for historical lexicography, or for categorising developments in the history of English, but to describe and better understand some of the methodologies and categorisations present in existing dictionaries. These dictionaries are of interest in their own right, whether as tools that we, as students of mediæval English, wish to use as effectively as possible, or as publications that helped to shape the history of our discipline. Their approaches to periodisation may not conform to modern expectations, but are worth considering on their own terms.

Thus, the variety in historical approaches to periodisation need not be a problem; it is evidence. Not only will appreciating this variety allow us to better understand how each dictionary functions in its own context; taken together, the different dictionaries will help build a picture of the range of possible

strategies that can be used to understand and represent periodisation. If the majority of dictionaries — which differ significantly in their contexts of production and other characteristics — converge on a single approach to a particular problem of periodisation, this would imply that it is either extremely well embedded in scholarly tradition, or else a natural response to the data at hand. If, on the other hand, they adopt distinctly different approaches, this would suggest that there might not be a single natural answer to the problem of periodisation. Both possibilities are informative.

The overarching research question of this thesis is therefore an exploratory one: how has the end of the Old English period been handled in different Old English dictionaries, and what commonalities or differences exist between dictionaries? Each chapter will address this question from a different angle, considering various aspects of what it means for a dictionary to 'handle' periodisation, from practical issues of communicating the evidence to theoretical ones of how a particular understanding of periodisation might be influenced by extra-linguistic factors.

Secondarily, I mean in this thesis to examine how the topics of dictionary history and the history of English — which, as the below literature review will demonstrate, are rarely brought together in this context — can illuminate each other. It is reasonable to expect that the end of the Old English period may cause particular problems for lexicographers due to the complex nature of the source materials and the constraints of the dictionary format. We can therefore view this periodisation as a kind of test case for the sophistication and flexibility of English historical lexicography, by considering which complexities lexicographers were able to accommodate and which proved more challenging. This will provide an entry point into exploring the nature of some of the lesser-studied dictionaries in this study, as well as being an opportunity to see some of the better-known ones in a new light. Conversely, the challenge of representing the period boundary within the constraints of a dictionary can also be a way of identifying and exploring complexities in the linguistic source material. If the same sources prove to be difficult to classify in multiple dictionaries, this might be taken as an indication that those sources represent points of particular complexity in the history of English as it is transmitted to us.

Thesis outline

To address these broad areas of interest, the thesis is divided into six chapters. In the first two chapters, I will establish the necessary preliminaries for my study. The first, 'Basic principles', argues for the significance of researching lexicographical periodisation in general and periodisation in dictionaries of Old English in particular. It also reviews the relevance of existing studies to my own work and sets out some basic principles regarding terminology.

Although some of the dictionaries discussed in this thesis — mostly those still in use today as standard reference tools in mediæval studies — are well known, others have received very little attention save in specialised historiographical accounts of early Old English studies. What information is known about these more obscure dictionaries is often scattered or otherwise hard to access. Meanwhile, a dictionary such as the *OED* has been the subject of so much scholarship that the reader may require some guidance to identify the most relevant material. For these reasons, the second chapter of this thesis, 'Major dictionaries of Old English from the seventeenth century to the present day', is dedicated to contextualising the dictionaries on which my study focuses. I offer a short summary of the necessary facts of their compilation and publication, sketch their relationship to each other as part of a continuing endeavour of historical lexicography, and identify key works of modern scholarship in which they are discussed.

I move on in the remaining four chapters to analysing the lexicographical evidence relating to periodisation. Each of these chapters asks a different question about how dictionaries of Old English represent the end of the Old English period and why they do so. In the third chapter, 'The evidence for lexicographers' views of periodisation', I ask what features of a period dictionary can be used to convey lexicographers' understanding of periodisation, and whether there is any significance in which approach is adopted in any given dictionary. The fourth chapter, 'Different approaches to periodisation', moves on to consider the varying understandings of the history of English that are encoded in these different dictionaries: how is the end of the Old English period imagined and defined? The fifth and sixth chapters, 'Challenges to consistent periodisation — Categorising the source material' and 'Challenges to consistent periodisation — Wider contexts', give examples of the difficulties that occur in aligning lexicographical periodisation with the historical linguistic record, thereby illuminating interesting features of both dictionary history and the history of English. Finally, a conclusion reviews my findings and comments on recurring themes.

CHAPTER 1: BASIC PRINCIPLES

In this chapter, I will establish the theoretical and practical background of my research. I begin by presenting an overview of the main themes of this thesis — dictionary history and periodisation — to make the case that they can usefully be brought together to generate new linguistic and historical insights. A brief survey of existing scholarship shows that previous studies in this area have been limited in scope; this helps to clarify the approaches taken in this thesis. Given the broad historical range of the dictionaries examined in this thesis (ranging from the mid-seventeenth century to the present day), another basic principle that needs to be established at an early stage is the relationship between periodisation and the changing scholarly terminology used to label and discuss particular historical linguistic periods. I therefore provide an overview of historical terminology for mediæval English and clarify my own usage in this thesis.

The significance of dictionaries

The knowledge and assumptions represented in a particular work are, inevitably, a reflection of the context of its production and the academic background of its author(s); we can examine it for evidence of the theories that were current in the place and time of its writing. However, presuming that the work finds at least some readers, it in turn becomes part of the intellectual context of future generations of scholars. These points can apply to any expression of ideas or information about a particular topic, but are perhaps especially relevant in the case of reference works such as dictionaries, which are necessarily produced with a consciousness of this dual role as a reflection of current thought and a tool for (and influence on) future research. In the case of the current investigation, this would be thought and research into historical forms of the English language.

Of course, dictionaries are not the only reference works that describe language. A dictionary, as the term is generally understood, is primarily a description of the lexis of a language or languages; it will not cover the same material as, say, a grammar that concentrates on describing the morphology and syntax of a language. Even resources such as editions of texts, though not so explicitly a codification of linguistic knowledge, clearly serve a similar dual role as an expression of the current state of knowledge and the foundation for subsequent investigation. To investigate the expression of periodisation in dictionaries is therefore to consider only one part of a much larger conversation and, as dictionaries focus on vocabulary, their perspective on periodisation is likely to be largely in reference to lexical change.

That my field of investigation is narrowly defined, however, does not mean that it is insignificant. The particular pedagogical and scholarly functions of dictionaries in historical linguistic study make their representations of periodisation especially interesting. One important factor is that, in the early history of Old and Middle English studies, dictionaries played a more prominent role than they do now; scholars not yet equipped with the techniques of modern comparative linguistics, and therefore unable to conduct systematic investigations of certain aspects of language, concentrated their studies on the lexicon. As John Considine comments in his account of European lexicography of the Early Modern period, 'it is easier to observe and collect old words than to observe and collect grammatical features' (Considine 2008:14). For instance, the first published dictionary of Old English appeared in 1659 (Somner), and was itself the successor to several earlier, unpublished, dictionaries, but it was not followed by an equivalent published grammar until several decades later (Hickes 1689). For reasons such as these, dictionaries represent what now seems like a disproportionately large amount of early historical linguistic scholarship.

However, even when the number of available resources grew and dictionaries' dominance of the field lessened, it can be argued that dictionaries retained their own distinct influence on the world of scholarship. Perhaps most obviously and directly, dictionaries have the potential to canonise particular interpretations of individual words (most significantly when their interpretation is doubtful); subsequent editors and translators, following the dictionary's authority, will use this interpretation in their own work, and subsequent lexicographers will include it in their own dictionaries.[2] Beyond this, individual words or ideas about words may even escape from the realms of scholarship into wider public consciousness, whether this be in authors' vocabulary choices or general beliefs (true or otherwise) about a word's meaning or history.[3] Of course, we would expect this to happen more frequently when the dictionary in question is perceived as particularly prestigious or authoritative; this is one factor guiding my methodology (discussed further below) of focusing my study primarily on a few well-known dictionaries.

We might reasonably ask whether these kinds of small-scale influences, occurring on the level of individual words can — even when considered cumulatively — have a significant effect on the

[2] As this thesis will illustrate, lexicographers throughout history have drawn substantially on the dictionaries of their predecessors. As will be seen, the use lexicographers make of these sources may have a significant influence on the overall character of the resulting work.

[3] For an example of a writer drawing directly and substantially on dictionaries as part of building a personal literary vocabulary, see for instance Dennis Taylor on Thomas Hardy, who offers a detailed discussion of what he refers to as 'kind of fencing between Hardy and Murray [James Murray, editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary*], each seeking precedents in the other' (1993: 119). Nor is this a one-off example of this kind of lexicographical-literary interchange; for instance, Hannah Crawforth (2013) provides various case studies of Early Modern authors' engagement with contemporary etymological research and lexicography.

discipline of historical linguistic study as a whole. Certainly it would be difficult to quantify their impact objectively. Nevertheless, dictionaries also influence historical linguistic studies on a higher level. One important reason for this, I would argue, is dictionaries' appearance of comprehensiveness. Of course, not all dictionaries claim to document the entire range of a language's usage,[4] but even those that do make some (explicit or implicit) claim of comprehensiveness do not truly meet this goal. Unless the corpus of texts representing the language is particularly small, a dictionary cannot practically include every variant of every word in every text, but must draw on its sources selectively. Unless a language is only attested for a small window of time, one of the criteria for this selection of data will be that of period.

Despite these barriers to true comprehensiveness, certain kinds of linguistic research make use of dictionaries as being broadly representative of the language as a whole. Of course, a dictionary is at a disadvantage when compared to a conventional corpus in that it does not reflect word frequency; a very high-frequency lemma will be represented in the dictionary by a single headword, just like an extremely uncommon one. However, this weakness becomes an advantage in the case of studies that focus on type-counts rather than token-counts — i.e. those that are concerned with the existence or nonexistence of a word in the language rather than in the frequency of its use. For these purposes, using the headwords of a dictionary as one's corpus simply means that the difficult task of locating examples of uncommon words has already been done by the lexicographers. An example of a study of this kind is Scheler's investigation into the etymological origins of modern English vocabulary (1977), which draws its data from the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, the *Advanced Learner's Dictionary* and the *General Service List* (with each dictionary representing a different stylistic register). In the field of Old English studies, we can see dictionaries being used as a source for syntactical (e.g. Koopman 1992) and morphological (e.g. Fulk 2009) studies, among others.

The simple fact that a dictionary presents its users with the vocabulary of a language at a glance gave it an appeal to many early scholars who, though they did not treat the dictionary as a corpus, used it to gather and organise philological observations pertaining to individual headwords; this kind of use is attested by the marginal annotations found in many copies. For instance, a copy of Lye and Manning's *Dictionarium Saxonico et Gothico-Latinum* in Cambridge University Library (MS XVI.3.7) contains numerous speculative etymologies in its margins; a much more thorough (and philologically rigorous) example of the practice can be found in the Dutch philologist Jan van Vliet's annotations to his copy of Somner's *Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum*, as described in detail

[4] Many period dictionaries are even more specialised in their focus. We might take as an example C.M.W. Grein's influential *Sprachschatz der Angelsächsischen Dichter* (1861–64), with its focus on the poetic vocabulary of Old English.

by Dekker (1999: 125–8). However, even in the present day, when we can draw on a huge amount of data and advanced corpus-searching tools, some low-frequency words may be very difficult to find without the help of a carefully curated dictionary and the research expertise represented in it.[5]

This observation leads to another, which is of considerable importance. Even if historical linguists do not use dictionaries as a primary source of data, the interdependence of scholarly work means that they may still be influenced by decisions originally taken by lexicographers. A large dictionary project involves collecting and sorting through huge amounts of linguistic data. One way of reducing the onerousness of this task is to re-purpose data originally gathered for another purpose. Another is, having collected data in line with the requirements of the lexicographical project, to find some parallel or subsequent use to which it can be put. A good example of this phenomenon in the history of English is the Early English Text Society, which in printing previously unedited texts aimed not only to make them available to students and scholars but also to provide reliable editions for citation by the *OED*.[6] In cases such as this, the needs and assumptions of the original dictionary project may end up shaping a tool that goes on to have other applications.

Another striking example of primarily lexicographical data-collection being used for other purposes is the case of the University of Toronto's (as yet incomplete) *Dictionary of Old English* (*DOE*). The project has given rise to various publications that, as the Early English Text Society did for the *OED*, brought into print sources needed by the lexicographers (through the Toronto Old English Series and the Publications of the Dictionary of Old English). More significantly than this, however, the entire corpus of Old English texts covered by the *DOE* has been made available to researchers in searchable form; a microfiche concordance was released in 1980 (Venezky & Healey 1980), with another concordance of high-frequency words appearing five years later (Venezky & Butler 1985), and was followed by a searchable version of the entire corpus in electronic form (originally Cameron et al. 1981; most recently Healey et al. 2009).This corpus has, naturally, proved an invaluable tool for researchers working on various aspects of Old English. To take some examples at random: Traugott (1989) used the concordance (along with the *OED*, *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*) and other sources) in an article to trace the rise of epistemic meanings in English — a semantic investigation — Fulk (2010) used the electronic corpus to find and compare the frequencies of analogical vowel deletion in Old English nouns — a phonological and morphological investigation — and Garley, Slade and Terkourafi (2010) used it to identify recurring formulaic sequences in Old English poetry

[5] Any corpus of natural language will have only very infrequent attestations for all but the most common words, a phenomenon described by Zipf's Law. An accessible discussion of the implications of Zipf's Law for lexicography is given by Atkins and Rundell (2008: 59–61).
[6] For an overview of evidence on the history and objectives of the Early English Text Society, see Singleton (2005).

— a literary investigation. In addition to this variety of applications, the *DOE* corpus — specifically, its selection of texts — has also helped to guide the creation of another large and influential corpus project used to study the history of English: the Helsinki Corpus of English Texts. This is a structured corpus representing English usage in a variety of genres from Old English to Early Modern English, and the Old English portion of it is based on the *DOE* corpus (Kahlas-Tarkka et al. 1993: 31).[7]

I will consider the *DOE*, its corpus, and its impact on historical linguistic study in more detail in subsequent chapters. At this point, it is enough to observe that the *DOE* corpus, by choosing to represent certain texts, manuscripts and editions while excluding others, creates in effect an Old English canon (including a canonisation of period boundaries) which is then taken up by the numerous subsequent studies that use it as a resource. None of the points I have made here are necessarily an argument that dictionaries are less reliable than other sources of linguistic data, or that they should not be used for these purposes. Any study should, of course, be aware of the potential weaknesses of its data collection methods and the limitations these may place on the interpretation of results. However, the case of the *DOE* gives some impression of how a large dictionary project can give rise to a resource so convenient that it could be easy to take its criteria and limitations for granted, even in non-lexicographical projects.

In the matter of periodisation, I wish to suggest that dictionaries occupy an especially significant position among other works of scholarship because of their relative lack of flexibility. If one is writing, for instance, a narrative account of the development of the English language, it is possible to reflect on the misleading nature of distinct period boundaries even while defining them. For example, although the first volume of *The Cambridge History of the English Language* bears the subtitle *The Beginnings to 1066*, suggesting a chronologically definite boundary, in the text itself Richard Hogg is able to offer the following cautionary note:

> It is most reasonable to suggest that the most important immediate effect of the Norman Conquest was political and that the most important long-term effects were cultural. This is to imply that the Norman Conquest itself had rather less immediate effect on the linguistic structures of English than is often supposed.
>
> (Hogg 1992: 9)

[7] A guide to the *DOE* corpus and its applications in linguistic analysis is given by Möhlig-Falke (2015), who also compares it with the Helsinki Corpus and several smaller, related parsed corpora. Further discussion of the use of *DOE* material in other research projects — and particularly of the adherence to standard practices of encoding that has enabled this sharing of material — can be found in Stokes (2009: 49–51).

In lexicography, however, there is much less scope for this kind of careful hedging. Although dictionaries are in principle free to recognise more subtle nuances of language change in their (narratively structured) introductory material, in their main body of entries they are largely confined to a binary of inclusion or rejection. To include a given word is to indicate that it falls within the period described by the dictionary; to exclude it is to declare that it belongs to some other period. It may be difficult and impractical to signal clearly and directly that a particular entry is a liminal member of the set of words defined by the dictionary, let alone to quantify exactly how liminal it is and set out the criteria according to which it counts as such. In other words, I argue that dictionaries represent linguistic data more directly than a narrative account such as a textbook; the dictionary does not merely describe the period but defines it. Consequently, the selection of words in any historical dictionary (save, perhaps, the theoretical case of a dictionary representing all forms of English from the first recorded evidence to the present day — theoretical because no such work exists) establishes a periodisation scheme, which may then go on to influence other research in the ways outlined above.

Linguistic periodisation and the end of Old English

In this thesis I focus on linguistic periodisation as an object of lexicographical concern. In order to address this topic effectively, it is necessary to reflect on some broader principles of periodisation and the issues that it presents, as well as to identify some key themes in scholarship relating to the periods — Old English and what follows it — with which I will primarily be concerned.

Periodisation is an almost unavoidable theoretical problem in any historically-oriented study of a phenomenon (such as language) that exhibits gradual change over time. When presented with a continuous timeline of change, one of our immediate instincts as researchers is often to impose a categorisation by dividing it into discrete chronological periods. This process of periodisation can be a powerful descriptive tool; it allows us to make generalising statements about common features within a period and to contrast these with the common features of another period.

Like any process of analysis and generalisation, however, periodisation — in any discipline — is a simplification of complex evidence, and is selective in which features of the historical record are given significance in defining a period and which, when they conflict with this periodisation, are represented as mere irregularities. The act of division into segments may in principle be relatively arbitrary, or may be strongly motivated by interpretative judgements; in recognition of this, Nicolaisen (1995:160) distinguishes between ‘stratification’ as ‘the mostly pragmatic aspect of the chopping up of continuous change’ and ‘periodisation’ as involving interpretation and evaluation of said change. However, there is an inevitable fluidity between these categories. On the one hand, the

imposition of an arbitrary stratification will naturally condition people to look for changes that can be used to distinguish descriptively one stratum from the next. On the other hand, a conventional periodisation scheme may take on the qualities of stratification if the data originally used to define the period boundaries are re-evaluated but the old boundaries are retained out of convenience; the boundaries, originally strongly motivated, lose their theoretical significance and become more arbitrary. Therefore, in the discussions that follow, I use the term 'periodisation' in a looser sense, encompassing Nicolaisen's entire spectrum of stratification–periodisation. In doing so, I wish to emphasise that the interpretative aspect of periodisation is to a certain degree unavoidably present. Periodisation turns a mass of unanalysed historical data points into a narrative, and this is both its strength and its weakness. Its strength, because it provides a theoretical structure for discussion and comparison, and its weakness, because not all data points fit easily and unproblematically into the general narrative of successive, discrete periods.

The problems that periodisation presents for historical disciplines have been widely discussed, and have even penetrated the popular consciousness to a certain extent. George Orwell, for instance, mocked the extreme interpretation of rigid periodisation in his description of the history teaching that he had received as a child:

> I used to think of history as a sort of long scroll with thick black lines ruled across it at intervals. Each of these lines marked the end of what was called a 'period', and you were given to understand that what came afterwards was completely different from what had gone before. It was almost like a clock striking. For instance, in 1499 you were still in the Middle Ages, with knights in plate armour riding at one another with long lances, and then suddenly the clock struck 1500, and you were in something called the Renaissance, and everyone wore ruffs and doublets and was busy robbing treasure ships on the Spanish Main… Now in fact these abrupt transitions don't happen, either in politics, manners or literature. Each age lives on into the next — it must do so, because there are innumerable human lives spanning every gap. And yet there are such things as periods. We feel our own age to be deeply different from, for instance, the early Victorian period, and an eighteenth-century sceptic like Gibbon would have felt himself to be among savages if you had suddenly thrust him into the Middle Ages.
>
> (Orwell 1943: 40)

Orwell was giving a popular account of changes in English national identity and literary taste, but this tension between the desire to mark historical change and a discomfort with the decisiveness of the 'thick black lines' dividing one period from another has broader resonances, and can equally well be applied to the linguistic sphere.

In the history of the English language, a point of periodisation that has long provoked debate is the definition of the boundary separating the periods of Old English and Middle English. Although some

accounts maintain that there exists an 'apparently sharp break between late Old English and the earliest texts in Middle English' (Milroy 2005: 336), most detailed considerations of mediæval English take the view that the boundary between Old and Middle English is a matter of considerable complexity and ambiguity. Scholars such as Malone (1930), Kitson (1997) and Lutz (2002) have used various linguistic criteria to argue for the placement of the boundary anywhere between 1000 and the mid-thirteenth century. Faced with these widely differing opinions, other approaches, such as Fisiak (1994) and Lass (2000), have observed the futility of attempting to define the boundary between Old and Middle English with too much precision, choosing to focus instead on whether the periods can be said to be real linguistic entities.

Even beyond the desire to settle such debates, the status of the period boundary between Old and Middle English is significant. For instance, the act of periodisation assumes that the history of English can be described in terms of the linear development of a standard variety, itself a considerable simplification of linguistic history (Milroy 1996; Milroy 2005; Kopaczyk & Krygier 2018: 105–6). It also promotes a (one-sided, at best) picture of language change in which periods of linguistic stasis are punctuated by brief intervals of rapid development. Furthermore, the framework of periodisation structures how we understand and teach mediæval English language and texts. On a practical level, establishing Old and Middle English as separate fields of study encourages research that is carried out within these fields rather than across them, potentially leading to the neglect of themes and sources that exhibit continuity between the periods. For instance, Elaine Treharne (2012: 3) writes of:

> … the neglect of those texts that fall into the gap of *c.*1060–*c.*1200, a gap created because the majority of the surviving texts produced in the twelfth century are clearly not "Old English" or "Anglo-Saxon", since they fall without the chronology of that political state, and illustrate numerous, systematic changes in the language used, but they are so obviously not Middle English either, in terms of their dependency on earlier English materials, and their varying proximity to the literary Standard, late West Saxon.

She argues that this ambiguity and subsequent neglect has led to an 'omnipresent criticism of twelfth-century English' (2012: 181) that obscures the potential value of such sources in attesting to the social and political concerns of English speakers at this time.

As well as being of considerable historical significance, the texts and manuscripts of this contested interval are vital to present-day conceptions of the Old English canon. I discuss in Chapter Five the significance of some selected post-Conquest manuscripts,[8] but this is only a sample of the considerable amount of material that is conventionally treated as Old English while also having post-

[8] The Norman Conquest of 1066 marking the end of the 'political state' alluded to by Treharne; see further below p. 105.

Conquest manuscripts as its unique or substantial witnesses. The chronological index to *The Production and Use of English Manuscripts 1060 to 1220* (Da Rold et al. 2010–13) gives a useful at-a-glance summary of the volume of writing surviving from this period, though without imposing a linguistic periodisation of Old and Middle English. N.R. Ker's important and influential *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (1957: xv-xix) gives a table of 189 manuscripts arranged in chronological groups. Although Ker's table excludes sources such as documents and scattered glosses, it nevertheless gives a general impression of the relative scarcity of early manuscript witnesses. Twenty-nine (15.3%) are judged by Ker to have been written in the late tenth century or earlier. The majority — 133, or 70.4% — are assigned to circa 1000 and the eleventh century, while twenty-seven (14.3%) are assigned to circa 1100 and later. (Ker largely disregards any manuscripts that appear on palæographical grounds to have been produced later than 1200, with a few exceptions that he considers to have close textual links to earlier manuscripts.) To omit post-Conquest manuscripts, therefore, would be to disregard a significant proportion of the major manuscripts containing Old English (more than 14.3%, since this figure only includes manuscripts written 1100 and later, and not eleventh-century post-Conquest manuscripts), even if we follow Ker's relatively conservative assessment of what may be considered Old English (as opposed to early Middle English).

Going a step further than this, recent scholarship has also drawn attention to the potentially problematic baggage inherited by any attempt to periodise the history of English; Kathleen Davis, for instance, characterises the periodisation of Old and Middle English as 'nationalist, colonial and fundamentally juridical' as well as closely associated with a 'racialized' conception of the Norman Conquest of 1066 (Davis 2010: 355). Such issues have obvious ramifications for both Old English and Middle English studies, although this study concentrates largely on the former, and is primarily linguistic in its focus.

Existing studies

Having established the interest to the historical linguist of studying periodisation in dictionaries, I move on in this section to an overview of existing work in the area. Despite the arguments given above for the significance of dictionaries to our understanding of linguistic periodisation, the topic has received relatively little attention.

Most historiographical accounts of periodisation in English focus on the textbook as the primary expression of canonical periods, and offer little or no analysis of dictionaries and the particular issues they raise. Examples include Nicolaisen (1995), Lutz (2002), Curzan (2012) and Kopaczyk & Krygier

(2018).[9] They are nevertheless useful insofar as they offer a general model for the analysis of English periodisation. Not only do they establish a precedent for considering periodisation as a topic worthy of study, but they also draw attention to its complexity. They emphasise that the periodisation of mediæval English, at least as represented in textbooks, has been subject to various changes in scholarly fashion over the years, not to mention various idiosyncratic approaches by individual scholars. We should therefore anticipate a similar situation when turning to the lexicographical evidence.

Notwithstanding the general focus on textbooks, there are a few dictionary-focused studies of periodisation that raise relevant points. Michael Adams (2018) discusses the issue of periodisation in dictionaries from a general and theoretical point of view, acknowledging lexicography's inability to escape the issue of periodisation and identifying different potential models of periodisation as exemplified in a range of dictionaries. Unsurprisingly, not all of these models would be suited to describing early mediæval English; for instance, the human scale 'people periods' that Adams identifies in the *Dictionary of American Regional English* rely on the kind of fine-grained data that can be associated with individual informants, about whom relatively detailed biographical information is known (2018: 89–94). The Old English-Middle English period boundary is discussed, but only in terms of the theoretical issues that it raises for periodisation (2018: 78–9). Although this kind of discussion serves as an important background to my thesis, it still leaves room for the question I wish to ask: what, in practice, is the relationship between the abstract concept of a historical period (however that is imagined) and the actual treatment of historical linguistic evidence in a completed dictionary?

Other accounts of how periodisation and the history of English are represented in dictionaries, such as Alicia Rodríguez-Álvarez (2009) on eighteenth-century monolingual English dictionaries and Richard Bailey (1990) on the development of English period dictionaries, offer useful models for how to assess periodisation as it is applied in specific dictionaries. However, Rodríguez-Álvarez focuses on the narrative overviews of the history of English that are included in many eighteenth-century dictionaries. This gives an interesting and useful picture, but it does not tell the whole story; dictionary historians have convincingly shown that such material, in common with other statements by lexicographers regarding their methodology and inclusion policies, does not necessarily reflect the

[9] Lutz does use dictionaries as a tool to quantify changes in the English lexicon (2002: 146–8) and even acknowledges in passing the great significance of lexicography in the Early Modern study of Old English (2002: 162 n. 5), but does not attempt to analyse dictionaries as a form of scholarly output that have themselves changed over time and may reflect differing approaches to questions of periodisation. Her summary of 'reference work perspectives on periodisation' (2012: 1250–3) is in fact entirely devoted to the accounts given in textbooks and histories of the English language, not in dictionaries.

actual (often complex and contradictory) practices used in the course of compilation (Coleman & Ogilvie, 2009). Bailey's overview approach, meanwhile, likewise does not have room for a detailed analysis of lexicographical practice.

Another significant observation arising from an overview of the existing literature is that the majority of substantial studies of the Old English-Middle English period boundary, whether their focus is linguistic, literary, historical or otherwise, are primarily concerned with the implications of this periodisation for the study of Middle English, and with the period boundary as marking the beginning of the Middle English period. The major linguistic studies of periodisation mentioned above, such as Malone (1930), Fisiak (1994), Kitson (1997), Lass (2000) and Lutz (2002) all frame their work with some variation on Malone's famous question, 'When did Middle English begin?' and search for the appearance of a linguistic innovation that might represent that beginning. In historiographical terms, it is generally accepted that the academic study of Old English was well established long before the reification of Middle English (Matthews 1999: xxxiv etc.), and it is probably for this reason that studies of the development of periodisation in English have focused largely on the territory claimed by Middle English studies from an older, nebulous, non-period-specific antiquarianism, and less on how the supposedly established field of Old English studies continued to develop and redefine its limits (albeit in less dramatically paradigm-shifting fashion.)

However, the question 'When did Middle English begin?' is not the same as the question 'When did Old English end?' It is easy to imagine a periodisation scheme in which Old and Middle English are not adjacent periods, and indeed Old English studies had to address the concept of periodisation long before Middle English studies had even emerged as a discipline. There are advantages to investigating periodisation in terms of its effects on Old English studies as well as on Middle English studies, and it is the former, less frequently discussed perspective on which I intend to focus in this thesis.

Terminology and the wider history of English

This thesis examines how the period boundary marking the end of Old English has been represented over the past three and a half centuries of lexicography, and, by extension, examines the variation in understandings of what constitutes the Old English period. However, it is not only the nature of the Old English period that is historically variable. The way in which the later history of English is divided into periods also varies, creating different overarching narratives of change into which the Old English period can be fitted. The names given to different periods vary as well; for instance, even though twenty-first century lexicographers of Old English can look back on the work of William Somner in the seventeenth century and recognise it as a forerunner of their own, Somner habitually

used different terms to refer to the language he was documenting. These variations need to be acknowledged in order to talk meaningfully about the more specific topic of how lexicographers treat the end of the Old English period.

The place of Old English in the history of English

Today, the most familiar way of viewing the history of English rests on a basic tripartite division into Old English, Middle English and Modern English. In practice, most scholars recognise additional period divisions — in particular, demarcating Early Modern English as a distinct field of study — but the underlying tripartite division remains evident.[10] The Old-Middle-Modern model is also used to describe the history of various languages other than English; as Lass (2000: 12–14) shows, it seems to have arisen in the context of mid nineteenth-century German romanticism. However, other divisions are possible and have been used, with scholars dividing the history of English into (for instance) five, six or eight periods (Lass, 2000: 14–16).

For the purposes of this study, with its focus on the Old English period, two observations are especially important. First is the relative consensus regarding the earliest stages of English. Although the unusual linguistic features of especially early Old English are occasionally commented on, it is almost universally accepted that Old English is the first period in the development of English. New discoveries, for instance of early runic inscriptions (Page 1999: 16–37), have pushed back the date for the earliest recorded evidence of Old English, but the boundary marking the beginning of Old English has remained marked primarily by the availability of early evidence and secondarily by the settlement of Germanic-speaking peoples in England. With no preceding period competing for territory, the beginning of Old English is uncomplicated from the point of view of periodisation, although difficult in many other respects.

The second important observation concerns models of the history of English that were in use prior to the popularisation of the Old-Middle-Modern schema, and the rise of Middle English. The earliest scholarly studies of Old English were, generally speaking, primarily exploratory and the focus was on finding and interpreting new texts rather than constructing a watertight account of the history of English as a whole. As such, the most obvious and common opposition was simply that between Old English and contemporary English; Old English was of interest, and required detailed study, because it was strikingly different from the everyday language spoken by those studying it. This does not

[10] Kopaczyk and Krygier (2019: 74) offer a tabulation of recent approaches to the periodisation of English in textbooks, showing relative consistency in the treatment of Old and Middle English, with significant variation mostly occurring in the division of Modern English into smaller sub-periods.

imply that Early Modern scholars were unaware of any texts produced between the Old English period and their own day, but they were rarely considered as part of a historical narrative in such a way as to necessitate the creation of more defined period boundaries.

However, the question of how Old English became contemporary English has always been of interest, and as early as the beginning of the eighteenth-century commentators were attempting to identify and name intermediate stages as representing corruptions of Old English proper, 'inter puriorem *Anglo-Saxonicum,* & *Anglicanum*'[11] (Hickes 1703–5, volume I part I: 134). The issue of identifying a clear, natural end of Old English would become more pressing as increasing attention was paid to Middle English in the nineteenth century, not only as a linguistic concept defined by its position in the Old-Middle-Modern triad, but as a literary and cultural one, with what Matthews calls 'ideological coherence' (1999: xxvi).

These differing understandings of how Old English fits into a wider historical linguistic narrative inevitably have at least some effect on the representation of the Old English period and its boundaries, and will be referred to in this study where relevant. However, all of the ways discussed below of representing the nature of period boundaries, and the challenges of applying them to the linguistic evidence, are, at least in principle, independent of the issue of how many such boundaries are used. The imagined nature of the period boundary can be used as a starting point for comparisons across dictionaries that subscribe to very different models of how to divide up the history of English on a larger scale.

Historical terminology for mediæval English

Unsurprisingly, changes in scholarly approaches and theories have been paralleled by changes in the terminology used to discuss periodisation. Making a complete study of these terminological changes is not my primary aim. My focus on dictionaries excludes from consideration the many other forms of evidence for shifting scholarly and popular practices in the use of terminology. Furthermore, the use of terminology is only one of the ways in which ideas about the period boundary are expressed in dictionaries, making a purely terminological study too narrow for my purposes.

Nevertheless, the question of terminology is an important one, which is inextricably linked with my research questions.[12] Different names for periods in the history of English imply different

[11] 'between the purer Anglo-Saxon and English'. Translation Matthews (2000: 17).

[12] The following discussion focuses solely on terminology as it relates to the division of a linguistic timeline. For discussion of the issues of ideology and identity that surround the terminology of 'Anglo-Saxonism' in general, as well as an overview of past and present usage, see for instance Wilton (2020). Niles (2015: 29–35) is another useful overview

assumptions about those periods and different boundaries for them. Although lexicographers may choose to define or re-define the exact limits of a historical linguistic period within their own work, they are also working within a wider context in which the generally accepted terminology both shapes demand and influences reception. In other words, if a concept of an Old English period is already current and has been given a name, it is more likely that a lexicographer will be inclined to treat that period as a coherent historical linguistic unit. Furthermore, casual users of the resulting dictionary are likely to skim over any specific delimitations placed on the period by the lexicographer, and conflate the Old English of that particular dictionary with similar but non-identical categorisations made in other works that use the same term. It will therefore be necessary at various points in this thesis to investigate what general or specific ideas a particular period term might convey, both by examining it in its immediate context and by considering the history of the term as used elsewhere.

The usual term used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for the Germanic language spoken in early mediæval England was simply ‘Saxon’, employed either nominally or — in phrases such as the ‘Saxon language’ or ‘Saxon tongue’ — adjectivally. The equivalent terms used in Latin were ‘Saxonicus’ et cetera. Although already present in the sixteenth century, notably in the work of the antiquary William Camden, from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, the term ‘Anglo-Saxon’ became increasingly frequently used (OED s.v. *Anglo-Saxon*, n. and adj.); however, it did not wholly displace ‘Saxon’.[13] Other terms used around this time, less familiar to modern ears, are ‘Anglesaxon’ (OED s.v. *Anglo-Saxon*, n. and adj.), ‘English-Saxon’ (n. and adj.), ‘Saxonish’ (adj.), ‘Saxonic’ (adj.) and ‘Anglo-Saxonic’ (adj. and n.) (all OED s.v.).

Other qualifiers could be added to ‘Saxon’ to specify a sub-category of the language. Of particular interest here is the term ‘Semi-Saxon’, attested from the end of the seventeenth century in Latin and from the eighteenth century in English (*OED* s.v. *Semi-Saxon*, adj. and n.), which was used to describe texts considered to be a late, debased form of Saxon, roughly equivalent to the modern category of early Middle English. The language spoken after ‘Saxon’, roughly corresponding to what is now called Middle English, lacked a fixed, conventional term in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; this makes sense when we consider that this phase of the language had yet to crystallise as either an acknowledged linguistic period or a distinct field of study (Matthews 1999). When referred to, it was spoken of in terms of the better-defined periods that preceded or followed it. The term ‘Semi-Saxon’,

of terminological history that looks beyond its merely linguistic applications, though one that minimises some of the contemporary associations with white supremacy that Wilton and others have more recently sought to foreground.

[13] The cited *OED* entry offers some etymological discussion regarding the significance of the qualifying prefix. In practice, it is possible in early scholarship to find ‘Anglo-Saxon’ being used both to convey ‘the Angles and Saxons considered as a single people’ and ‘the Saxons of England (as opposed to the Old Saxons of present-day northern Germany)’, with many usages being ambiguous between these two senses despite the theoretical difference of emphasis. (For the latter, compare ‘English-Saxon’.)

in other words, portrays the language that would now usually be labelled as late Old English and early Middle English as a debased, transitional form of the older ‘Saxon’ (Matthews 1999: xxvi-xxxii).

Approached from the other side, the language that came after Saxon could also be understood as the precursor of contemporary English. It was thus referred to as ‘ancient English’, ‘old English’, and so on. This use of ‘old English’ clashes significantly with modern usage, although it should also be noted that it was often applied in a rather vaguely descriptive manner, and that there are therefore some instances from as early as the sixteenth century, if not earlier, of ‘old English’ being used to refer to texts that would now be labelled Old English in the modern sense (Stanley 1995a, 1995b; Harris 2000).[14]

‘Old English’ began to take on its modern sense in the late nineteenth century; in his edition of the Old English *Pastoral Care*, Henry Sweet wrote, ‘I use “Old English” throughout this work to denote the unmixed, inflectional stage of the English language, commonly known by the barbarous and unmeaning title of “Anglo-Saxon”’ (Sweet 1871: v, n.1).[15] This change in terminology, though not immediately and universally adopted, marked a shift towards the new tripartite model of the history of English. As part of this same systemic shift, ‘Middle English’ emerged as the favoured term for the period following Old English (*OED*, s.v. *Middle English*, n. and adj.; Shapiro 1983; Stanley 1995a: 171–2). The exclusive use of this term was not immediately adopted; for instance, ‘Early English’ was also used around this time, though it ranges in its application from being a short, distinct period[16] to a general descriptive term.[17] Furthermore, many critics retained the idea of named stages between Old and Middle English; some retained older terms such as ‘Semi-Saxon’ alongside the new terminology (Matthews 1999: xxxi-xxxii), while others, following Sweet’s lead, added qualifying descriptors to the new terms to speak of ‘Transition Old English’ and so on (Sweet 1892: 211 §594). Nevertheless, from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, the use of period terminology for the history of English aligns for the most part with modern expectations.

Given the significant terminological shifts in the history of the discipline — and especially the complications introduced when existing terms such as ‘Old English’ take on a new sense within a new system of periodisation — it is important when analysing older dictionaries to bear in mind

[14] Other examples can be found than those given by Stanley and Harris, as for instance the dedicatory poem by William Jacob printed in Somner’s *Dictionarium* (1659: sig. c1r): ‘Old-*English* gave *Pannonia* law, with *Greece…’*

[15] Although this is perhaps the most famous expression of the sentiment, it was not the first; for instance, almost a decade earlier, Francis Palgrave had argued that there was ‘no such language as “Anglo-Saxon”’, and that ‘if you had asked Alfred what he had in his hand, he would have answered it was an Englisc-boc, and have been wonderfully surprised if you had given it any other name’ (Palgrave 1864: 631).

[16] As in Madden (1847: vi), for whom it is the period 1230–1330 between Semi-Saxon and Middle English.

[17] As in Ellis (1869a), whose *Early English Pronunciation* covers Chaucer to Shakespeare and beyond.

contemporary terminological conventions and the assumptions about the status of the Old English period on which they are founded. As subsequent sections of this thesis will illustrate, there exist more subtleties and contradictions of usage than suggested by this overview, which merely establishes a general basis for comparison.

Such comparisons cannot be perfect in any case; while it is possible to say that 'Saxon', as used by an Early Modern writer, is roughly equivalent to 'Old English' as used by a twenty-first century one, this study is founded on the premise that no two works of scholarship will define a linguistic period and its boundaries in exactly the same way. The use of 'Saxon' implies a different understanding of where the period fits within a wider history of English (emphasising its distinctness from contemporary usage rather than a sense of linguistic continuity), but two scholars using 'Saxon' may still differ significantly from each other in their understandings of periodisation, despite the shared terminology.

Terminology in this study

In the discussions that follow, I use 'Old English' as a default term to refer to a period understood to cover, in broad terms, early mediæval English (including most, if not all, of the English attested prior to the Norman Conquest of 1066). The use of this term is not meant to imply that Old English has any definite objective reality, or that modern periodisations (that use 'Old English' rather than some other term) are more accurate in their definition of the borders of the period than any others. By 'Somner's Old English', 'the Old English of the *DOE*' and so on, I simply mean the period that is established by those dictionaries of Old English, and which corresponds more or less closely to the habitual modern use of the term.[18] Other terminology is retained in quotations, and when discussing a lexicographer's choice of a particular term.

When generalising more widely, I have also adopted descriptive terms such as 'mediæval English' to refer to forms of English used in texts from any point in the historical mediæval period — that is, covering the conventional categories of Old and Middle English.

[18] It will also emerge in the course of this thesis that the 'Old English' of a single dictionary is not necessarily a stable, consistent category even within that dictionary; for this reason, the use of 'Old English' as a (frequently) anachronistic term usefully signals a certain abstraction.

CHAPTER 2: MAJOR DICTIONARIES OF OLD ENGLISH FROM THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY TO THE PRESENT DAY

Before analysing the phenomenon of periodisation as it appears in dictionaries of Old English, it is necessary to understand the source dictionaries in their historical context. The following brief account of the history of Old English lexicography is intended to serve as an introduction to the most important dictionaries that will be discussed in this thesis, and to some of the most relevant scholarship relating to their compilation.[19]

Principles of selection

To capture both the full history of the field and the range of different approaches and attitudes to periodisation adopted by lexicographers, this thesis considers older and more recent dictionaries of Old English alongside each other. I have selected six key dictionaries that represent between them some of the most significant developments in the past five centuries of Old English lexicography.

Given the large number of dictionaries that could potentially serve as primary sources, it is important to establish clearly the parameters of the investigation by setting out the principles of selection for the dictionaries that will be surveyed. I have excluded from my consideration all dictionaries that were not formally published. It has been convincingly argued on various occasions that the circulation of unpublished, manuscript material, including manuscript glossaries and dictionaries, was of considerable importance in early scholarship (e.g. Brackmann 2012); however, including manuscript works would have lengthened the list of dictionaries to be examined by an impractical amount, especially given the difficulties in accessing those of them that remain unpublished . Aside from these practical considerations, excluding unpublished dictionaries from the study corpus also has the advantage of focusing attention on those reference works that had the potential for wider and more enduring circulation (beyond personal networks of acquaintance) and therefore were most likely to affect perceptions of the period boundary among the wider scholarly community.

In compiling my study corpus, I have also attempted to restrict myself to works intended as surveys of the general language (within a given historical linguistic period). In other words, I exclude both

[19] In this respect it overlaps to a certain extent with the narrative overview provided by Bailey (1990: 1437–46), though his account is more wide-ranging and less detailed. For a bibliography of Old English dictionaries, glossaries and other reference works from the sixteenth century to the beginning of the 1980s, see Cameron et al. (1983: 2–13). A less comprehensive bibliography that nevertheless includes useful coverage of dictionaries too recent to be covered in the above works, as well as commentary on their usefulness to the average reader and their digital availability, can be found in Tichý (2007: 8–33); see also the version of this list published online at http://lexicon.ff.cuni.cz/app/list.htm.

dictionaries that focus on particular genres (most notably the dictionaries of Old English poetic vocabulary exemplified by Grein's *Sprachschatz* (1861–64) and its successors) and glossaries that describe the language of individual texts or groups of texts. Although understanding how these texts and their glossaries have been periodised is relevant to a complete understanding of periodisation, I will only discuss the periodisation of texts when this relates directly to lexicographical periodisation. Of course, in the case of glossaries to anthologies, it may be that one of the motivations for gathering the texts together was their perceived linguistic similarity, conditioned by the periodisation that labelled them as belonging to the same linguistic category as one another. It is easy to see how this situation could lead to a feedback loop of classification in which the periodisation applied to the texts both reinforces and is reinforced by the periodisation applied to the language of those texts. This would make such glossaries relevant to a wider study of the establishment of period boundaries in mediæval studies more generally. However, restricting my sample to works claiming to describe the language as a whole (however the period boundaries of that language are understood in each instance) will keep the focus of the current study more clearly on the origins and legacies of linguistic periodisation.

Similarly, this thesis does not attempt to give a full account of the scattered coverage of early mediæval lexis within dictionaries that are generally presented as descriptions of the contemporary language. Early words do of course appear in such works, whether as archaic and obsolete terms or in etymologies (Kerling 1979). However, as they are scattered through larger dictionaries, they can hardly be taken as discrete works of lexicography offering a readily accessible picture of mediæval English in its own right. My study therefore focuses on period dictionaries, not on historical dictionaries more generally. I make an exception here for the *Oxford English Dictionary*; although this is primarily presented as a dictionary of contemporary English, both the principles of its compilation and its later influence make it of particular interest here.

Most significantly, among period dictionaries, I concentrate on those that deal with Old English. It is, of course, a fundamental premise of this thesis that 'Old English' is not a stable category. However, as this chapter will show, it is possible to identify a group of dictionaries that, despite shifts in terminology and in period boundaries, belong to a more or less continuous lexicographical tradition. In all of them, the transitional period of English that forms the focus of this study comes at the chronological end of their coverage, even if the dates of this transition (or period boundary) are not agreed upon. In these respects, they are distinct from period dictionaries that begin with the transition and go on to cover later texts, such as the works of Chaucer, that are firmly established today as part of the canon of Middle English.

A final principle of selection is that I have largely excluded abridged dictionaries and those aimed primarily at students. The most notable dictionaries of this type are *The Student's Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon* (Sweet 1897) and *A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Hall 1894; fourth edition with supplement by H.D. Meritt 1960). The distinction between a student's dictionary and a scholar's dictionary, particularly in the case of a language such as Old English, is somewhat fuzzy. Both Sweet and Hall's dictionaries have been influential, including outside the classroom; the latter, for instance, forms the groundwork for the *Thesaurus of Old English* (Roberts & Kay 2017), in which it takes precedence over Bosworth & Toller (1882–98), the other standard dictionary of Old English available in complete form at the time of the thesaurus's compilation. However, the absence of quotations in these dictionaries makes it considerably harder to trace the use of sources, obscuring many useful clues to periodisation, and their general focus on providing a simplified overview of Old English for a student audience makes it reasonable to expect that they will not permit the same detail of analysis of periodisation as is possible for dictionaries aimed primarily at the researcher. Dictionaries aimed at other specialised audiences, such as that of Ludwig Ettmüller (1851) and Heinrich Leo (1872–77) with their ordering of entries on philological principles (making standard lookups extremely difficult for the ordinary user) are likewise excluded.

Following these principles of selection, the following discussions are structured around a selection of six key works from the seventeenth to the twenty-first centuries: the *Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum* (Somner 1659), the *Dictionarium Saxonico et Gothico-Latinum* (Lye & Manning 1772), *A Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language* (Bosworth 1838), *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* and its later supplements (Bosworth & Toller 1882–98; Toller 1921; Campbell 1972), the *Oxford English Dictionary* (Murray et al. 1884–1928 and various subsequent supplements and editions) and the *Dictionary of Old English* (Cameron et al. 1986–present). Observations on a limited number of more minor dictionaries are used to add detail to the basic narrative. The historical overview given in this chapter aims to introduce these key dictionaries to place them in their historical and intellectual context.

Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum (1659)

The sixteenth century in England saw a blossoming of interest in the vernacular language, manuscripts and texts of early mediæval England, especially those antedating the Norman Conquest of 1066. To this period of study belong important names such as Matthew Parker (1504–1575), his secretary John Joscelyn (1529–1603), Laurence Nowell (1530–c.1570) and William Lambarde

(1536–1601).[20] However, none of this scholarly activity resulted in the successful publication of a dictionary; after a series of unfinished attempts during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries both in England and on the Continent, the antiquary William Somner of Canterbury (?1606–1669) was the first to bring to publication a dictionary of the language he termed (Anglo-) Saxon: the *Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum* or 'Saxon-Latin-English dictionary' (Somner 1659). Somner was by this point an experienced lexicographer and scholar of Old English and early mediæval England, having — among other activities — published a glossary to Roger Twysden's *Historiae Anglicanae Scriptores X* (1652: x3r–Dd7v), contributed material to Roger Dodsworth and William Dugdale's first volume of the *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1655) and worked and corresponded with numerous other antiquarian scholars including Simonds D'Ewes (1602–1650) and Francis Junius (1591–1677).

The *Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum*, as its title suggests, is a trilingual work, with most Old English headwords being defined in both Latin and Early Modern English. The entries range in length from brief glosses to extended encyclopædic discussions (the longest, s.v. *beorn*, taking up more than a page). Direct quotations from or citations of Old English texts are present but infrequent; the presence of a citation in Somner is often a sign that he doubted the reading he found in his source. The dictionary entries take up almost 350 three-column pages; they are followed by an edition of Ælfric's *Grammar* and a Latin-Old English class glossary erroneously attributed to Ælfric.

Somner's dictionary has been the subject of some critical scholarship, mostly concerned with investigating its status as a foundational text in the development of Old English studies. The two most substantial investigations are Joan Cook's unpublished doctoral thesis (1962) and M. Sue Hetherington's monograph (1980). Both devote considerable space to identifying the texts in which Somner's headwords originated, as well as the particular manuscripts, printed editions of texts, or (unpublished) intermediary dictionaries through which he encountered them. Neither, however, offers any particular discussion of the definitional or selectional criteria Somner uses to set the bounds of the 'Saxon' language and to guide his inclusion of words and texts. They seem for the most part to take for granted that Somner's 'Saxon' aligns — in principle if not in execution — with their own concepts of Old English, and indeed with those of *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (Bosworth & Toller 1882–98; Toller 1921), the dictionary they use as a point of comparison with the *Dictionarium*.

[20] Throughout this thesis, dates and biographical details of lexicographers and other scholars have been checked against the relevant entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Direct references to individual articles are given in the case of more substantial citations.

In addition to the major works of Cook and Hetherington, several smaller studies have separately discussed Somner's debts to earlier lexicography. Albert H. Marckwardt showed in 1947 that Somner incorporated into the *Dictionarium* material from Laurence Nowell's unpublished *Vocabularium Saxonicum* (c. 1565); Marckwardt later went on to publish an edition of the *Vocabularium Saxonicum* (1952), which also serves as a useful source for tracing Nowell's influence in Somner's work. A lexicographical connection not mentioned in Cook, and only alluded to briefly in Hetherington, is Somner's involvement, before the compilation of the *Dictionarium*, with a similar dictionary project of William Dugdale, now MS Dugdale 29 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. This connection and its possible implications for Somner's dictionary have been noted independently by both Giese (1992) and Tornaghi (2007). As I have already established, I do not attempt in this thesis to undertake an exhaustive study of unpublished dictionaries. However, there are some cases in which the unpublished manuscript dictionaries consulted by Somner had a noticeable influence on the treatment of periodisation; see below p. 150.

The basic framework of Somner's dictionary appeared in print again in 1701 as the *Vocabularium Anglo-Saxonicum*. It was attributed to Thomas Benson, though it was in fact almost certainly the work of Benson's teacher, Edward Thwaites.[21] This publication appears to have been a reaction to the difficulty and expense of obtaining copies of Somner's dictionary, which was by this point 'rarum… nec nisi gravi ære redimendum'[22] (Benson 1701: a2r); sales of Somner's work had initially been slow (Kennett 1726: 97–8; Hamper 1827: 107) but many unsold copies were burnt in the Great Fire of London in 1666 (Pask & Harvey 2011: 251). Apparently intended as a student's dictionary, the *Vocabularium Anglo-Saxonicum* is for the most part a simple abridgement of Somner that replaces the sometimes long and discursive entries with succinct Latin glosses of the headwords. A small number of new headwords was also added, but probably the most important contribution of the *Vocabularium Anglo-Saxonicum* to philological scholarship lies in its making the material in Somner available to a wider audience. No other independent historical dictionaries of English were produced in the seventeenth century, or the first half of the eighteenth.

Dictionarium Saxonico et Gothico-Latinum (1772)

Edward Lye (*bap.* 1694, *d.* 1767) was, like many antiquaries, a clergyman (rector of Yardley Hastings from 1737) who devoted his free time to scholarship. The *Dictionarium Saxonico et Gothico-Latinum*,

[21] As early as 1885, it was being asserted that the bulk of the work was Thwaites' (Hearne 1885: 248). This seems to be confirmed by the existence of a copy associated with Thwaites and containing an 'ex dono editoris' inscription parallel to that in a copy of Thwaites' 1698 edition of the Old English Heptateuch. I would like to thank Professor John Considine, University of Alberta, for supplying me with this information.

[22] 'rare and not to be purchased unless for a great price'

or ‘Saxon and Gothic-Latin dictionary’, was not his first publication; he had previously brought to print an etymological dictionary of English from the papers of the philologist Francis Junius — the *Etymologicum Anglicanum* (Junius 1743) — and contributed a grammar to the *Codex Argenteus* of the Gothic gospels as edited by Archbishop Eric Benzelius (1750). In addition, he had also prepared a Latin translation of the Junius manuscript of Old English poetry (Oxford, Bodleian MS Junius 11), although it was never published due to lack of funding and was later lost in a fire (Clunies Ross 1999: 73). Lye’s dictionary was thus the crowning work of a career of philological scholarship, although Lye died before its publication, leaving the work to be completed by his friend Owen Manning.

As the title suggests, the *Dictionarium Saxonico et Gothico-Latinum* is in fact a combined dictionary of Old English and Gothic, with definitions in Latin; headwords from both languages are included in the same alphabetical sequence, though the two languages are easily distinguished since all Gothic is printed in the Gothic alphabet without romanisation. This mixing of languages was not unprecedented; indeed, Junius himself had worked on a polyglot dictionary (unpublished, now Bodleian MSS Junius 2 and 3) of several older Germanic languages, including ‘Saxon’ and Gothic. Junius’ work is in fact of considerable significance to understanding Lye’s dictionary. John Considine’s implication (2008: 235) that Lye merely reproduced MSS Junius 2 and 3 and claimed them as his own work overstates the case, but it is evident at a glance that the Lye-Manning dictionary contains a significant amount of Junian material.

The dictionary is in two volumes, with just over a thousand pages in total being devoted to dictionary entries. The extremely long encyclopædic entries characteristic of Somner’s dictionary are no longer present, but many more citations are used. The first volume includes short grammars of Old English and Gothic, and an appendix in the second volume contains editions of various short Gothic and Old English texts.

In all, little scholarship has been done on Lye’s dictionary. Some useful commentary is found the introduction to Lye’s correspondence as edited by Clunies Ross and Collins (2004). In this they demonstrate that Lye-Manning, in addition to introducing an influx of new material derived from the unpublished notes of Francis Junius, draws substantially on the Somnerian tradition in its selection of vocabulary. They also use the introduction to argue strongly for the importance of Lye-Manning to the history of Old English lexicography, proposing that influence of his work was unfairly minimised by nineteenth-century scholars. This discussion, along with an earlier article by Clunies Ross (1999), is the most detailed account of Lye’s lexicographical methodology currently available; however, it does not explicitly address issues of periodisation, placing his work unquestioningly in a tradition of Old English lexicography without examining its precise boundaries.

Although other, more minor, dictionaries containing relevant material appeared in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it seems that Lye — and even Somner, although by this point there must have been considerable difficulty in obtaining copies of Somner's dictionary for everyday use — continued for some time to be recognised as the standard reference works. When, in the early nineteenth century, the amateur Old English scholar Joseph Webb (1779–1814) wrote a list of desiderata for future scholarship, the second item on the list was a 'Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon — Either a reprint of Somner, Lye and Manning, or a methodical work something like Mair's *Tyro's Dictionary*, with an *Index*'.[23] Webb's comment demonstrates the continued currency of these two older dictionaries, even while considering the possibility of compiling a new work on the model of John Mair's Latin students' dictionary (1760, and in various later editions). This assessment of the situation seems not to have changed significantly by 1823, when Joseph Bosworth, acknowledging his use of Webb's papers, reproduced this list in the preface to his *Elements of Anglo-Saxon Grammar* (1823: xxxv-xxxvi, n.25).[24]

A Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language (1838)

Joseph Bosworth (1787/8–1876) is still well-known today as a scholar of Old English, not only for his lexicographical work but also for the professorships partly named after him at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge.[25] His dictionaries attracted criticism even when they were first published for their shortcomings, including a failure to account for the new methods of nineteenth-century philology,[26] and Bosworth is memorialised in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography as a scholar with 'only a very superficial acquaintance with the new philology' whose 1838 *Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language* shows an 'unscientific character' and 'many errors of detail' (Bradley &

[23] I quote here from the version of the list reproduced in Bosworth (1823: xxxv-xxxvi); the same material, with some differences of wording, is also included in the obituary of Webb published in the June 1815 edition of *The Baptist Magazine* (Rowe 1815: 222). I would like to thank Daniel Thomas of the University of Oxford for bringing this source to my attention. The *Tyro's Dictionary* referred to is Mair (1760 and various subsequent editions), a Latin-English dictionary for learners in which entries are organised by root and part of speech.

[24] As its title suggests, the *Elements of Anglo-Saxon Grammar* is not itself a dictionary; Bosworth's immediate point in reproducing Webb's list was the latter's first desideratum, a grammar. However, Bosworth also makes use of the footnote to advertise his own intention of publishing a 'Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon' in the near future. What is more, the note regarding the grammar is itself an interesting insight into Webb's conception of linguistic periodisation (though it would need closer examination to say how directly this influenced Bosworth): 'A Grammar of the primitive, intermediate and modern English tongue. The primitive or Anglo-Saxon to be made as complete as possible; the intermediate to consist principally of such notices of the progress and changes of the languages, as may be necessary to elucidate and correct the other two.'

[25] The position of Rawlinson Professor of Anglo-Saxon at Oxford, which Bosworth held from 1858 until his death, was later renamed the Rawlinson-Bosworth Professorship in his honour. The Elrington and Bosworth Professorship of Anglo-Saxon at Cambridge was founded on a donation made by Bosworth in 1867.

[26] On Bosworth's conservative, antiquarian approach to philology, see for instance Aarsleff (1967: 204–7). For more recent assessments of the controversy that emphasise the nuanced position Bosworth adopted in the conflict between old and new approaches to philology, see Thomas (2018: 235–42) and Baker (2003: 290–1). A wider perspective on the debate can be found in Momma (2013: 60–94).

Haigh 2008). However, other commentators on Bosworth's life and work have placed greater emphasis on the academic respect earned by Bosworth during his life[27] and his continuing influence on the field, particularly in the form of his 1898 *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (discussed further below), which is still used today. Even Henry Sweet, a scholar well known for his tendency to forthright criticism, acknowledged that Bosworth's work played an important role in the wider dissemination of Old English studies:

> The reputation Dr. Bosworth enjoyed as an Anglo-Saxon scholar was due to two causes — firstly, to his having had the courage to take up the study of the oldest stage of our language at a time when that study was perhaps at the lowest ebb it had ever reached since the days of Archbishop Parker; and, secondly, to his successful attempts to popularise it in convenient and cheap handbooks.
>
> (Sweet 1876)

Next to the 1898 dictionary, it is easy to overlook Bosworth's smaller dictionary of 1838, but when it was first published, this earlier work was both significant and eagerly anticipated. Indeed, according to Bosworth's own account in the preface, the news that he was working on the *Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language* was enough to persuade Robert Meadows White, then the Rawlinson Professor of Anglo-Saxon, to abandon his own plans for a dictionary to make way for Bosworth's work (Bosworth 1838: clxxvi).

Excluding the front and back material, the dictionary runs to 522 pages of entries, printed in three columns. It is primarily Old English–Modern English, though most headwords and citations are also translated into Latin. Distinctively, it includes indices to the Modern English and Latin definitions, allowing in principle a considerably greater flexibility of use, including translation into Old English. The dictionary's other striking feature is its extremely lengthy preface, more than 170 pages in length; I discuss this further below, p. 63.

In terms of the material included, Bosworth acknowledges debts to Somner, Lye-Manning, and a manuscript dictionary by J.S. Cardale,[28] as well as to other scholarly works such as editions of various Old English texts (Bosworth 1838: clxxvi). Lye-Manning in particular is presented as the flagship dictionary that Bosworth's work will supersede; Bosworth states his intention 'that this Dictionary

[27] Including the considerable commercial success of his work, from which he earned enough to fund his establishment of the Cambridge Anglo-Saxon professorship.

[28] Joseph Spencer Cardale (1771–1850), who practised as a solicitor in Leicester, was an editor of Old English and a correspondent of Bosworth's; Bosworth also acknowledges Cardale's contribution to his *A Compendious Grammar of the Primitive English or Anglo-Saxon Language* (Bosworth 1826: xi). Little else is known about him and the whereabouts of his dictionary, if it survives, are unknown. I would like to thank Daniel Thomas of the University of Oxford for providing me with this information.

may have the authority of Somner and Lye' while advertising that 'more practical information is comprised in this volume than in two folios of Lye' (Bosworth 1838: clxxv). In fact, a brief comparison of the Lye-Manning dictionary with Bosworth suggests that the two works are very similar, at least with respect to their headwords; Bosworth also takes over a significant proportion of Lye and Manning's citations, although in this he does not follow Lye-Manning quite so closely. This similarity did not go unnoticed; Walter Skeat, for instance, dismissed Bosworth's dictionary as 'little more than a translation of Lye and Manning' (Skeat 1896: viii).

Ten years later, Bosworth published the more compact *Compendious Anglo-Saxon and English Dictionary* (1848a), which went through several subsequent editions. It is for the most part an abridgement of the 1838 dictionary, though Bosworth stresses in the preface that it also contained new material (Bosworth 1848a: vii).

The small number of secondary sources dealing with Bosworth's 1838 dictionary focus primarily on his lexicographical influences. For instance, Bankert (2010) identifies Bosworth's connections to contemporary monolingual lexicography in the form of his debts to an edition of Samuel Johnson's famous *Dictionary of the English Language*, identifying not only borrowing of material but also imitation of typography and access structure. In another useful article, she traces (among other connections) Bosworth's reliance on the glossarial material included by Benjamin Thorpe, Bosworth's contemporary, in his editions of Anglo-Saxon texts (Bankert 2021).[29] Baker (2003: 287–91) concentrates his discussion of the 1838 dictionary on its similarities to Lye-Manning and its contemporary reception. Toswell (2018) concentrates on Bosworth's friendship with Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who contributed to the *Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language* a piece on Dalecarlian (Bosworth 1838: clix–clxi).

An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary (1882–98)

Generally known simply as Bosworth-Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* is based on the papers of Joseph Bosworth, completed and published after his death by Thomas Northcote Toller. The *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* began as a revision of the *Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language*; Bosworth continued to work on these revisions until his death in 1876 (Bankert 2003: 302; Bankert 2021: 276). The rights to publish this revised version were acquired by the Oxford University Press in 1863 (Bankert 2003: 302).[30] After his death, Bosworth's publishers seem to have considered abandoning

[29] I would like to thank Dabney Bankert for kindly allowing me to read a pre-publication version of this article.
[30] This news prompted sceptical comment from the philologist T. Oswald Cockayne, who published an essay questioning Bosworth's suitability for the task; to support his argument, Cockayne critiques several entries in the 1855 edition of

his still unfinished material in favour of starting afresh, but eventually, in 1878, Toller was invited to complete the work. Toller (1844–1930) was at this point a relatively inexperienced scholar, a lecturer in English Language at Owens College, Manchester; the dictionary would become the major work of his career (Bankert 2003: 302–4).[31]

In the Preliminary Notice to Parts I and II of the dictionary, published in 1882, Toller informs his readers that 'at the time of his [Bosworth's] death, only the 288 pages which form Part I of the present issue had been finally revised by him. So much progress, however, had been made with some succeeding sheets that it would have been a matter of considerable difficulty to make any but slight alterations in them'. Thus, the entries *A–Firgen* are primarily Bosworth's work, only lightly edited by Toller (Bankert 2003: 304). Progressing through the alphabet, more and more of the material is Toller's own and, as Peter Baker demonstrates (2003: 294–7) it is possible to track the development of Toller's methodology as he gradually moved away from the model established by Bosworth and introduced his own innovations, entry style and inclusion policies as he brought the dictionary to completion.

Toller began work on a supplement soon after completing the *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*; it is mentioned in a 1903 letter in the archives of the Oxford University Press, and the first part was published in 1908, with the final two parts appearing in 1921 (Bankert 2003: 313).[32] Writing the *Supplement* allowed Toller to make revisions and additions both to his own work and to the material inherited from Bosworth. More recently, further revisions were made by Alistair Campbell, whose *Enlarged Addenda and Corrigenda* were published in 1972. In the following discussions, I generally focus on the original *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, but, where relevant, I note the differences between the periodisation strategies adopted in the main volumes, the *Supplement*, and the *Addenda and Corrigenda* (using 'Bosworth-Toller' as an umbrella term to cover all of these), and specify in which versions the material I cite appears. The *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* and its revisions remain an important reference tool for the study of Old English — 'a scholarly standard that has served us well for over a century' (Baker 2003: 284) — and will, presumably, remain so until they are superseded by the as yet incomplete *Dictionary of Old English*. This is especially true now that the original dictionary and Toller's *Supplement* (but not Campbell's *Addenda and Corrigenda*) are available in a

Bosworth's *Compendious Dictionary* (Cockayne 1864). Cockayne was similarly critical of Bosworth in other contexts, describing, for instance, Bosworth's definition of *weoce*, 'a flag or rush, also the paper made of it' (Bosworth 1838, s.v.) as 'a puerile error' (Cockayne 1864–6, III: 348).

[31] For further biographical details of Toller, see Proud (2003) and Scragg (2009).

[32] Toller made a few further additions, published in *The Modern Language Review* (1922; 1924).

free, searchable online edition (http://bosworthtoller.com), a project begun in 2001 and currently hosted by Charles University, Prague.

The original Bosworth-Toller *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* runs to approximately 1300 pages of entries; counting Toller's supplement and Campbell's addenda would significantly increase this figure, but as many entries in Toller and Campbell revise or delete (rather than add to) the Bosworth-Toller entries, counting them as simple additions to the main volume would overstate the amount of entirely new material added. Defining is in English, though many Latin glosses are retained. Quotations from Old English texts are more frequent than in earlier dictionaries.

Significant secondary sources relating to Bosworth-Toller are Baker (2003) and Bankert (2003), both of whom supply useful information on Toller's use and reworking of Bosworth's material, as well as quoting from contemporary reviews and commentary on the *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* and the *Supplement.*

The Oxford English Dictionary (1884–)

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries brought with them not only an increase of activity in dictionary-making, but also a shift in approach. In contrast to the dictionaries of earlier centuries, which were primarily the work of individuals or small groups, modern dictionaries are increasingly the result of a new approach to lexicography, characterised by collaborative compilation and — in recent decades — shaped by the different possibilities offered by web-based research and publication. Significantly for the current study, these changes in methodology have tended to bring dictionaries closer to a scientifically descriptive approach to lexicography that aims to base its descriptions of language on observed corpus data rather than on linguistic intuition, the personal reading of a lexicographer, or on earlier dictionaries. This is, of course, a simplified and idealised picture; as will be seen, modern dictionaries are not uninfluenced by the works of lexicography that preceded them.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) is undoubtedly the best-known and most prestigious of these modern dictionaries, and a model for subsequent English language lexicography. Although it has its origins in the late nineteenth century, it is more modern than the near-contemporary Bosworth-Toller not only in its methodology but in the fact that it is still being revised and added to today.

Unlike the other dictionaries treated in this thesis, the *OED* is not a period dictionary; although based on historical principles, it covers contemporary as well as older vocabulary, and does so from the perspective of the present day (for instance, presenting headwords in their modern spellings, even

when the entry itself contains Old English material). In this respect, my inclusion of it is anomalous, as I have not attempted to survey any of the older English-language dictionaries that, though primarily synchronic, include at least some mediæval material. The *OED* is not presented to us as specifically a dictionary of 'Old English' or 'Anglo-Saxon', and so it does not establish any particular model of Old English-Middle English periodisation by its coverage alone.

However, the importance of the *OED* is such that it cannot be ignored in the context of Old English lexicography. Its fame and prestige alone would probably have assured its place in the narrative of dictionary periodisation, but we must also account for its strong links to more specialised period dictionaries. Material originally gathered for the *OED* was used as a foundation for period dictionaries including the *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*) and *Dictionary of Old English* (*DOE*) (Aitken 1987; Gilliver 2016: 416–18). These dictionaries have also fed material back into the *OED*, enhancing its coverage of their particular periods (*OED* blog [anon.] no date: Collecting the Evidence: Historical Dictionaries). Beginning in November 2010, the *OED* website has also included hyperlinks in its entries to take users to corresponding entries in other dictionaries, including the *MED* and *DOE* (Gilliver 2016: 579–80); similar hyperlinks on the *MED* and *DOE* websites direct users to the *OED*. Furthermore, the *OED* offered for some time the most practical and complete lexicographical treatment of Middle English (Lewis et al. 2007: 3). Given the acknowledged fluidity of the boundary between (late) Old English and (early) Middle English, this is another reason why the contents of the *OED* may prove particularly enlightening to my study.

For most of the dictionaries discussed so far, background information on how they came to be compiled and analysis of their content and methodologies has been rather scarce. The *OED* presents the opposite problem. Its history and character have been discussed at length in a wide range of publications both academic and popular, and this summary can only sketch a basic outline while pointing towards a small number of the most relevant pieces of secondary scholarship.

Most accounts of the *OED's* history begin in 1857 with the establishment by the Philological Society of London of an 'Unregistered Words Committee', which aimed to collect vocabulary not recorded in the existing major dictionaries of English, and Richard Chenevix Trench's delivery to the Society of a paper, 'On Some Deficiencies in our English Dictionaries' (Trench 1857). A 'Proposal for the Publication of a New English Dictionary' was published in 1859 (Philological Society 1859), although an earlier prospectus, of which no copies survive, had appeared in August 1858 (Gilliver 2016: 28). The proposal included a preliminary list of source texts and a list of 'Rules and Directions for Collectors' (1859: 11–34); significantly, unlike the earlier dictionaries discussed in this thesis, the

OED was from its beginning conceived of as a collaborative project that would not only involve numerous lexicographers but would also rely on data contributed by volunteers.

Related to the gathering of data for the dictionary was the need to publish potential source texts, allowing them to be easily read and cited. Activity of this kind is, of course, an important reminder that dictionaries are not created in isolation, but in the context of other scholarly projects, and they have the potential to both inform these and draw upon them. The editing and publication of mediæval texts to serve as sources for the *OED* is strongly associated with the Early English Text Society, which was founded in 1864 by Frederick J. Furnivall, then the editor of the *OED*.[33]

The first fascicle, *A–Ant*, was published by Oxford University Press in January 1884, under the title of *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles; founded mainly on materials collected by The Philological Society.*[34] The final fascicle was published in 1928, and in 1933 the dictionary was reissued with a single-volume supplement, and was now officially titled the *Oxford English Dictionary.* Another supplement, in multiple volumes, was edited by Robert Burchfield and appeared from 1972–1986. A second edition (*OED2*) was published in 1989. The three-volume *OED Additions Series*, published in 1993 and 1997, contributed further new entries. 1993 also marked the beginning of work on the third edition (*OED3*); unlike the partial revision of *OED2*, the aim of *OED3* was to revise the dictionary wholesale, a project that is still underway. The first *OED3* revised entries were published online in 2000, with the launch of the *OED Online* website. It is important to note, then, that users accessing the *OED* in its current form via the website are presented with a mixture of entries, some of which have not been substantially altered since the original publication of the *NED* and others of which have been added or revised at some later point.

For more detailed accounts of the history of the *OED*, see particularly Aarsleff (1962), Murray (1977), Mugglestone (2005) and Gilliver (2016). A number of significant documents relating to the *OED*'s history have been collected, with commentary, by Charlotte Brewer as a virtual issue of the *Transactions of the Philological Society* (Brewer 2014). A large amount of information, some historical and some functioning as a user guide (or publicity) for the *OED* in its current form is available on the *OED* blog (https://public.oed.com/blog). These sources were consulted in writing the brief history above.

[33] For an account of the early history of the Early English Text Society and a discussion of its connection to the *OED* project, see Singleton (2005).

[34] This title is usually given in abbreviated form as *NED*; however, I follow the common practice of using *Oxford English Dictionary* or *OED* as a generic term to refer to the work throughout its history, including the earlier period in which it was known as the *NED*.

The Dictionary of Old English (1986–)

The beginning of the *Dictionary of Old English* (*DOE*) can conveniently be dated to 1970, when the project received its first grant from the Canada Council, along with endorsement from the Old English Group of the Modern Language Association of North America (Cameron 1983: 14–15).[35] Unofficially, however, the genesis of the project is seen in the 1969 conference held at the University of Toronto; the conference proceedings were published the following year as *Computers and Old English Concordances* (Cameron et al. 1970).[36] As the title of these proceedings suggests, the use of computers in the compilation of the *DOE* was planned from the beginning of the project, an important difference from earlier dictionaries. Furthermore, the *DOE* was to be based on an Old English concordance; rather than drawing headwords primarily from existing dictionaries, the *DOE* lexicographers were to base their work on a computer-aided analysis of Old English texts, producing what has been variously described as 'a new dictionary afresh from the texts' (Leyerle 1971: 279) and 'a completely fresh approach to the collection, selection and presentation of pertinent materials' (Kornexl 1994: 422). Of course, we cannot realistically expect the lexicographers of the *DOE* to have been entirely uninfluenced by earlier dictionaries (even if this were desirable), and indeed publications related to the project acknowledge 'the previous lexicographers of Old English, whom we constantly consult' (Amos & Healey 1985: 13). Nevertheless, the explicitly declared intention to work from the texts rather than from other dictionaries is notable, even if it is neither entirely true nor entirely unprecedented.

A Plan for the Dictionary of Old English was published in 1973 (Frank & Cameron). A concordance of Old English texts was published in microfiche format in 1980 (Venezky & Healey), with another concordance, this time focusing on high frequency words, appearing in 1985 (Venezky & Butler). Another useful research tool published under the ægis of the *DOE* in this period was *Old English Word Studies* (Cameron et al. 1983), an extensive bibliography not only of earlier dictionaries but also of studies focusing on individual items of Old English vocabulary. At this point it is also worth noting that, like the *OED* before it, the *DOE* has led to the editing and publication of various other texts to allow their use by the main dictionary project. This was done primarily through the *Toronto Old English Series*, 'whose first purpose is to get into print all the remaining Old English texts' (Cameron & Amos 1978: 290), although later publications in the series branched out beyond editions to cover Old English studies more generally. The *Publications of the Dictionary of Old English* series also contains some relevant primary source material (e.g. Porter 2011). In addition, an examination

[35] I am very grateful to Antonette diPaolo Healey for her comments on this section.
[36] On the *Computers and Old English Concordances* conference as the beginning of the *DOE*, see for instance by Leyerle (1971).

of the *DOE*'s 'List of Texts' mentions the existence of a 'DOE [or 'Dictionary of Old English'] transcript' for 143 Old English texts (mostly charters); although this is not exactly equivalent to a formal, published edition, these transcribed texts are discoverable by search in the *DOE* corpus and hence available to scholarship, albeit in a format that favours lexical analysis rather than the consideration of the text as a whole. For other texts, the *DOE* uses already existing editions but incorporates its own corrections.[37]

The first fascicle of the *DOE*, D, appeared on microfiche in 1986, and was followed by C in 1988, B in 1991, *Æ* (and *beon* as a stand-alone entry) in 1992, A in 1994, E in 1996 and F in 2004. In late 2007 the *DOE* A–G was published on the web for the first time; G was also issued on microfiche in 2008, and the entire dictionary A–G was also published on CD-ROM (Holland 2008: 22). At the time of writing, the *DOE* covers A–I (Cameron et al. 2018); H was published in 2016 and I in 2018. The *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*, on which the *DOE* entries are based, was first published in 1981 (Cameron et al. 1981); it has since appeared — with the incorporation of revisions — on CD-ROM in several incarnations (Stokes 2009: 43) and is now available on the web; at the time of writing, the most recent release was in 2009 (Healey et al. 2009).

Information on both the *DOE* and its corpus can be found on the *DOE* website. A useful source for the history and progress of its development is to be found in the progress reports published in the *Old English Newsletter*. For the use of computer technology in the compilation and publication of the dictionary and corpus, Stokes (2009) offers a detailed overview that covers from the beginnings of the project up to the publication of the fascicle for G.

Dictionaries of Middle English: A brief note

All the dictionaries discussed thus far have belonged, with greater or lesser degrees of innovation, to a continuous, identifiable tradition of what might be called Old English lexicography. It is on this

[37] On the issues faced by the *DOE* in working from existing editions, see Stokes (2009: 52–6). Stokes (2009: 52, n. 63) writes, 'A search of the current *Corpus* for texts containing the word "corrected" in their bibliographical statement returned sixty-six examples.' Performing the same search a decade later (site accessed 8th March 2019), I found only fifty-eight texts with a bibliographical statement containing the word "corrected", but this total rose to 158 when the search was expanded to include both "corrected" and "corrections". Of course, only some of these bibliographical notes represent corrections made at the *DOE;* others refer, for example, to editions reprinted with corrections by the editor. (This distinction is not mentioned by Stokes.) Conversely, the corpus also contains corrections that are not mentioned in the metadata for the corresponding edition of a text. To take an example at random, the corpus text of the Old English *Life of St Giles* (Cameron number B3.3.9; short title LS 9 (Giles)) is not noted as incorporating any corrections to the printed edition by Treharne (1997). Several such corrections can, however, be found if the corpus text is compared with the printed version: for instance line 17 *geþancode* (corpus reading *þancode*), line 35 *inne* (corpus reading *innen*), line 59 *gyrsume* (corpus reading *gyrsumen*) and so on. (The existence of unsignalled corrections of this kind in the corpus is briefly acknowledged by Stokes (2009: 55).) In other words, the corpus's metadata cannot be taken as a reliable reflection of editorial practice regarding the corrections made to editions of texts.

tradition that my study will focus; nevertheless, to establish the periodisation context, it is also necessary to comment briefly on the parallel lexicographical tradition devoted to what we now know as Middle English. Although the exact time period referred to by terms such as '(Anglo-) Saxon' or 'Old English' is neither clear nor fixed in a lexicographical context, it is nevertheless possible to make a broad distinction between the Old English dictionaries discussed above and those concentrating on a generally later period of the language.

As Matthews (1999) describes, Middle English as a discipline of study took a long time to be fully codified and integrated into an academic context; Matthew's study of the 'making of Middle English' ends as late as 1910, with the death of Frederick James Furnivall, founder of the Early English Text Society. Words that would now be described as Middle English first appear in dictionaries, not in dedicated period works, but as archaic and obsolete items (sometimes marked as such, but other times undistinguished) in monolingual English dictionaries. As Kerling (1979) describes, these in turn owe a significant debt to glossaries made to Chaucerian texts. In this early period, Stephen Skinner's *Etymologicon Linguæ Anglicanæ* (1671) was an important development; although primarily an etymological dictionary of contemporary English, it includes a 104–page appendix 'vocum omnium antiquarum Anglicarum; quæ usque à *Wilhelmo Victore* invaluerunt, & jam ante parentum ætatem in usu esse desierunt, vitatis ubique quæ non obscurè *Romanam* redolent prosapiam'.[38] This appendix, in Kerling's opinion, is 'best looked upon as the first dictionary of Middle English' (1979: 153).

The first full dictionary of which I am aware that is dedicated to this phase of the English language did not appear until 1859: Herbert Coleridge's *Glossarial Index to the Printed English Literature of the Thirteenth Century,* which in a later edition (1862) went under the title *A Dictionary of the First or Oldest Words in the English Language.* Earlier dictionaries had, of course, published relevant material, but without focusing especially on Middle English as a coherent entity. For instance, James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps's *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words, Obsolete Phrases, Proverbs, and Ancient Customs* (first published in 1847 and appearing in numerous subsequent editions) contained material that would now be identified as Middle English, and was used as a source by Stratmann (1867; see below). However, rather than serving as a description of a unified linguistic period, Halliwell-Phillipps's work, as its title suggests, combines archaic and obsolete vocabulary from various periods with contemporary dialectal forms. (In doing so, of course, it stands in a long philological tradition of seeking in regional dialects for archaic forms lost from the standard language.) What is more, Halliwell-Phillipps takes as his subject material from the fourteenth century

[38] 'of all the old English words which have been with us from the time of William the Conqueror onwards, and which have not been used for well over two generations, excluding those that clearly reek of Latin' (trans. Kerling 1979: 137).

onwards — a starting point sufficiently late as to skip over most issues relating to the Old English–Middle English period boundary. Texts such as the *Ormulum* and the work of Layamon are characterised by him as not belonging fully to either period, but he does not attempt to cover them, beginning his work at a point where, in his view, only isolated archaisms separate the language from that of his own day (Halliwell-Phillipps 1847: ix-x).

Even when Coleridge's *Glossarial Index* appeared, it did not stand alone; it was intended, and clearly presented, as a tool for the preparation of what would later become known as the *Oxford English Dictionary* (discussed further below). Though Coleridge's dictionary aimed at comprehensive coverage of its chosen period, its primary aims and consequent organisational choices make it significantly different in some respects to the general-purpose dictionaries that are the main focus of this thesis. The change of title from *Glossarial Index* to *Dictionary* might suggest a desire to emphasise the work's potential use in its own right, not just in its application to the work of the *OED*, but there seems to have been little to no change in the actual content. For these reasons, the editorial choices made in Coleridge's dictionary regarding periodisation cannot be understood entirely in isolation from the *OED.*

A more independent project, with a wider scope, was Francis Henry Stratmann's *Dictionary of the Old English Language*. The first edition (1867) promised in its subtitle to cover the language of the 'XIII, XIV and XV centuries'; subsequent editions also cover the twelfth century. Further additions to Stratmann's work were later made by Henry Bradley, who in 1891 issued a revision under the title of *A Middle-English Dictionary*. (Note the shift in terminology.) Stratmann's work was soon followed by Mätzner's never-completed *Altenglische Sprachproben* (1878–1900) as well as less comprehensive dictionaries such as that of Mayhew and Skeat (1888).

As it does for Old English, the *OED* occupies an important role in the history of Middle English lexicography, and was for some time 'the fullest treatment of the Middle English vocabulary' available (Lewis et al. 2007: 3). Eventually, a full modern treatment of Middle English arose from William Craigie's call to produce a group of dedicated period dictionaries of English after the completion of the *OED*. This became the *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*); work first began in 1930, the first fascicle was published in 1952 and the dictionary was completed in 2001 (Adams 2009: 334–45). The (revised) *MED* is now available online.[39]

[39] https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary

Taken alongside the historical account of Old English lexicography given above, this brief overview of Middle English dictionaries gives a sense of which accounts of later mediæval English vocabulary might have been known to lexicographers of Old English at different points in history. Almost all lexicographers are — at least potentially — in conversation with a wider scholarly community, so the characterisation of the Middle English period and the treatment (or lack of treatment) of transitional material in the Middle English lexicographical tradition are possible factors in how and where lexicographers of Old English drew their period boundaries.

Perhaps the most important observation to be made in this respect is that Old English lexicography was already well established by the time the first useable dictionaries of Middle English were published. Furthermore, these early Middle English dictionaries generally (although not exclusively) began their coverage in the thirteenth or fourteenth century; as will be seen, this is some time after the end point of the Old English as given in most dictionaries. For these reasons, the potential for extensive overlap between dictionaries of Old and Middle English — and the implications that this brings for the treatment of the period boundary — is an issue that has only arisen relatively recently. Historically, most dictionaries of Old English have, of necessity, established their period boundaries without extensive direct reference to the Middle English lexicographical tradition. The most notable exception to this is the relationship between the *OED*, *MED* and *DOE*, which is discussed further below, p. 151.

CHAPTER 3: THE EVIDENCE FOR LEXICOGRAPHERS' VIEWS OF PERIODISATION

This chapter establishes how the concept of a linguistic period, and specifically the concept of Old English as a period with an identifiable end point, may be expressed in a dictionary. The choices made by lexicographers in the dictionary-making process reflect the understanding of periodisation on which a dictionary is founded. These choices may represent a deliberate act of communication on the part of a lexicographer who wishes to define the Old English period in an authoritative fashion for dictionary users; however, they may also be the unnoticed or unconsidered consequence of some other lexicographical decision or linguistic assumption. To construct a complete picture of lexicographical periodisation, it is therefore necessary to look carefully at a range of elements in a dictionary that may suggest, either to the casual user or to the researcher, a particular understanding of periodisation.

By considering in turn the most important lexicographical structures and techniques that can convey this information, I demonstrate the variability of possible approaches to periodisation and allow each dictionary's representation of periodisation and the period boundary to be understood in the context of the different possibilities seen in other dictionaries. The descriptive approach of this chapter provides the foundation for later chapters, which will analyse in more detail the reasons why lexicographers approached periodisation in different ways, and consider the implications of these approaches.

Assumptions about periodisation are made visible in dictionaries of Old English in various ways. Some lexicographers choose to include direct, explicit statements of their periodisation policy. Others, however, do not, and even when direct statements of policy are provided, they cannot necessarily be taken at face value (Coleman & Ogilvie 2009). To fully understand how periodisation is expressed in dictionaries, then, it is necessary take into account implicit evidence as well as explicit periodisation claims. This implicit evidence may come in various forms, with attitudes to periodisation being expressed not only through content but also through presentational and structural choices. In the three and a half centuries of lexicographical history covered in this thesis, it is not only views on periodisation that have changed, but also the conventions and structures that shape the expression of those views.

In some cases, periodisation may be addressed discursively in a preface, or in other paratextual elements of the dictionary.[40] In others, the lexicographer's underlying assumptions about the period boundary may not be spelt out, but are nevertheless visible in systems of entry labelling, visual presentation, or off-hand comments made within entries. The differing availability of each of these kinds of evidence in the different dictionaries of this study demonstrates not only developments in lexicographical technique, but also shifts in the amount of emphasis placed on periodisation as a distinct and significant concept.

Periodisation in prefaces

The preface or other front matter is an obvious place to start; the intended period coverage of a dictionary is relevant information to present to readers before they begin using the dictionary proper to enable them to judge its relevance for their research needs. Most of the dictionaries considered in the current study include in their prefaces at least some comments on the topic of periodisation. However, there is a large degree of variation in the attention given to this topic, which is linked to variation in the aims of the preface as a whole. The developing role of the dictionary preface as a way of communicating information about periodisation is best seen when the prefaces are considered chronologically.

Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum

The preface to Somner's dictionary includes a considerable amount of practical guidance for users on topics including the manuscript and print sources consulted in the compilation of the work, the variability of Old English spelling, aspects of Old English morphology, and so on. However, there is little to indicate that Somner had seriously considered the issue of periodisation, or of changes in English over time. Nevertheless, some relevant comments are made in passing.

For instance, when discussing his manuscript sources, Somner mentions the difficulties he experienced in interpreting the poetry of Oxford, Bodleian MS Junius 11. He appears to suggest that this difficulty arose, at least in part, from the language of the manuscript being particularly old; he describes it as 'veteri, obsoleto, poetico, tumido, affectato, mystico & ænigmatico' (Somner 1659: *Ad Lectorem* §7).[41] This comment makes it clear that Somner was aware of the potential significance

[40] On the history and study of dictionary paratexts — that is, the contextualising material surrounding the entries, which may include prefaces, titlepages, dedications, appendices, and so on — see McConchie & Tyrkkö (2018).
[41] 'old, obsolete, uncouth, poeticall, swelling, effected, mysticall [and] ænigmaticall' [Translation from Somner's unpublished English version of the preface, Canterbury, Cathedral Archives, CCA-DCc-ChAnt/M/352, f. 3r].

of language change over time.[42] However, the reference here is to variation within the class of texts considered by Somner to be Old English, not to a distinction between Old English and some later period.

Only one other brief comment in the preface gives any indication that Somner had considered that his source texts might show any kind of diachronic variation: discussing orthographical variants, he comments in passing that such variations may occur 'pro variâ scilicet vel ævi vel loci dialecto' (*Ad Lectorem* §14).[43] Again, however, Somner is apparently thinking of variation within Old English, rather than being concerned with the limits of Old English as a period. Furthermore, Somner implies elsewhere in the preface that this period-internal diachronic variation is for the most part insignificant. In a discussion of his manuscript sources, Somner mentions his awareness of other Old English texts than those he had consulted for the dictionary, 'quà materiæ varietate, quà scriptorium ætate diversis' (*Ad Lectorem* §3).[44] However, he goes on to state that he believes it unlikely that these unseen texts contained vocabulary unknown to him. While he was mistaken in this assumption (as can be seen from the small size of Somner's dictionary when compared to later dictionaries of Old English), it seems to indicate that Somner did not consider diachronic variation to be a phenomenon that would require any special consideration in his lexicographical methodology.

To gather any substantial evidence of Somner's approach to periodisation, it is necessary to read between the lines of his preface. Somner identifies the language represented in the *Dictionarium* as 'Saxonica' or 'Anglo-Saxonica' but does not set this in anything more than the most general of historical contexts. He describes his linguistic study as falling within the realm of 'Antiquitates, quæ præsertim medii essent ævi' (*Ad Lectorem* §1)[45] and later (*Ad Lectorem* §17) speaks of 'venerabilis Ælfrici, cognomento Grammatici, (quem annis abhinc fere septingentis claruisse perhibent:) Grammaticam.'[46] Thus, Somner's 'lingua Saxonica' is placed in history, but with no attempt made to

[42] The Junius 11 manuscript is not in fact especially old or archaic in its language. However, Somner was not the only early scholar of Old English to characterise the challenging language of Old English poetry in this way. Compare for instance the description by Abraham Wheelock (the first holder of the Anglo-Saxon lectureship at Cambridge that was later bestowed on Somner, and himself the compiler of a never-completed dictionary of Old English) of the poetry contained in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as 'perantiquum, & horridum' — 'very ancient and disorderly' (Wheelock 1643: 555).

[43] 'according to the various & varying dialect of the age or place' [Canterbury, Cathedral Archives, CCA-DCc-ChAnt/M/352, f. 4r].

[44] 'for the variety of their subjects, & the age of the authors, different' [Canterbury, Cathedral Archives, CCA-DCc-ChAnt/M/352, f. 1v].

[45] 'Antiquities, those especially of the middle age' [Canterbury, Cathedral Archives, CCA-DCc-ChAnt/M/352, f.1r]

[46] 'the Grammar of the venerable Ælfric, called the Grammarian (who, they hold, flourished about seven hundred years ago)' [My translation; this passage has no equivalent in Somner's English version of the preface.] A footnote cites as authorities for the dating of the Grammar 'Balæus. Pitsius. Vossius. &c.'; these are presumably the antiquaries John Bale, John Pitts and Isaac Vossius.

describe its chronological extent, the languages that preceded and followed it, or how it might be distinguished from them.

Nevertheless, the examples of Ælfric's *Grammar* and the Junius 11 manuscript demonstrate the potential value of named sources in establishing the dictionary's intended period coverage. This observation can be pursued further by considering them in the context of the other texts or manuscripts that are specifically named in the preface as sources for the dictionary.

There is an important distinction to be made between an attempt to examine all the sources actually used by a lexicographer and the consideration of only those sources that are specifically singled out for attention within the dictionary itself. While the former gives a better picture of actual lexicographical practice, the latter more usefully indicates how the dictionary is presented to users. Unless they are specifically noted to be anomalous in some way, prominently named sources are likely to be interpreted by dictionary users as prototypical examples of the period covered by a dictionary, and thus they can contribute to users' overall impression of periodisation. Even if the dates of the sources are not mentioned, taken together they offer a picture of the kind of material that one might expect to find in a dictionary of Old English. By invoking them in this way, Somner (intentionally or otherwise) makes them part of his periodisation, not only asserting that they are authentic examples of the period that his dictionary aims to document, but also putting them forward as especially important — and, perhaps, especially typical — examples.

Although the identification of source texts within the preface is a potentially valuable source of information regarding periodisation, it also has limitations. One such limitation is the ambiguity surrounding why certain sources are singled out for attention. Although their prominent presence in the preface may encourage many users to take them as a representative sample of Old English texts, Somner's practice when identifying source texts within dictionary entries suggests a different interpretation. Few of the entries in Somner's dictionary indicate the text or texts in which Somner found evidence for a word's existence; as Hetherington (1980: 147–8) observes, 'Somner, if he names a source, is waving a warning flag to indicate that something looks wrong to him and that if there is an error, the fault is that of the source.'

A similar principle seems to be at work when some texts are mentioned in the preface; the medical and poetic texts consulted by Somner are mentioned first and foremost in terms of their difficulty, and the likelihood of this leading to errors of interpretation. Similarly, in a later section of the preface, Somner warns his readers that 'tacendum autem non est, *Chronologiam Saxonicam* à D. *Wheloco* in lucem editam & translatam, cæteris ferè omnibus ejusmodi libris & monumentis (libro medico, &

paraphrasi *Saxonicâ*, duntaxat exceptis) adeo frequentiùs ideo citatam esse atq; allegatam, quòd *Latinam* ipsius in omnibus aut locorum ejusmodi quamplurimis versionem valde mendosam repererim' (*Ad Lectorem* §15).[47] Elsewhere in the preface, however, Somner names many of his source texts with no indication that they might be in any way problematic (*Ad Lectorem* §2). Furthermore, there is no indication that sources considered by Somner to be difficult or prone to error are necessarily also considered less typical of Old English as a period.

After Somner, dictionaries of Old English began to set out their sources more systematically, using lists of abbreviations for their source texts rather than scattered mentions within a discursive preface. Such abbreviation lists, as they become increasingly lengthy and comprehensive over time, become correspondingly less significant as examples of the (intentional or unintentional) privileging and foregrounding of certain sources as representative of a dictionary's coverage.

Dictionarium Saxonico et Gothico-Latinum

The next oldest dictionary considered in this thesis, Lye and Manning's *Dictionarium Saxonico et Gothico-Latinum* (1772), is like Somner's in that its preface is not greatly concerned with establishing the limits of the Old English period. Once again, there are only hints that the author of the preface (in this case, Owen Manning, who completed the dictionary after the death of his friend Edward Lye in 1767) was thinking about any kind of language change over time, let alone about using this change to establish period boundaries. There is a passing reference to the fact that some Old English texts included in the appendix to the dictionary are 'non ultimæ sanè antiquitatis' (Lye & Manning 1772 vol. I: sig. ** 2v).[48] However, though this implies some sense of relative linguistic chronology, Manning does not clarify what is meant by this comment or discuss the relationship he envisages between the appendix texts and older examples of Old English.

The appendix is in five parts. The first of these, which gives the fragmentary Gothic text of Paul's *Epistle to the Romans* 11–15, is of no direct relevance to the current study.[49] The other four parts are collectively described on the title page of the appendix as 'opuscula quædam Anglo-Saxonica' (Lye

[47] 'It may not be forgotten, that the reason why I more frequently quote the Saxon Chronology published and translated by Mr Whelock, than most other Saxon books or monuments, except the L.M. [Liber Medicus] and P.S. [Paraphrasis Saxonica] is because I found his version in all or most of those places very faulty.' [Canterbury, Cathedral Archives, CCA-DCc-ChAnt/M/352, f. 4v].
[48] 'not indeed of most distant antiquity' [My translation].
[49] This text, from a palimpsest manuscript, was first transcribed and published by F. A. Knittel (1762).

& Manning 1772 vol. II: sig. Kkkk kkkk 2r),[50] and are taken primarily from the library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, and the collection of the seventeenth-century antiquary Thomas Astle.

Given the relative lack of attention that is paid to dating and periodisation elsewhere in the dictionary, it is striking that the texts in the appendix are often dated with some care on internal grounds. The detailed note to the will of Æthelstan (Lye & Manning 1772 vol. II: sig. Pppp pppp)[51] illustrates the approach used:

> *Æthelstanus* filius erat natu maximus *Æthelredi II*. Regis, ex prima ejus conjuge *Elgiva*; & occisus est in prælio cum *Danis* circiter A.D. 1011. Scriptum est autem hoc Testamentum intra annos 1006 & 1008, quo tempore *Ælfsigus*, unus de testibus, episcopatu *Wintoniensi* functus est.[52]

This level of detail is a reflection of the nature of the texts; wills such as this lend themselves to historical contextualisation of this kind as the persons named are likely to appear elsewhere in the historical record. It is holistic commentary of the kind we might expect to find in a textual edition (of which the appendix is a miniature example) rather than a dictionary proper, which may explain why this is the only part of Lye and Manning's work to include such detailed observations on the dating of sources.

As Manning's comment in the preface indicates, some of the texts included in the appendix are of relatively late date; not only does Manning seem to consider them in such terms, but they are indisputably late in the sense (still familiar today) that they postdate the Norman Conquest of 1066. A charter of Henry I is dated between 1122 and 1135 (vol. II sig. Pppp pppp), [53] and a transcript by Laurence Nowell of the D text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Nowell's transcript is now Canterbury, Cathedral Library CCA-DCc-LitMs/E/1),[54] consists of entries covering the years 1043 to 1079, making it clearly post-Conquest in part (vol. II sigs. Rrrr rrrr 2r–Xxxx xxxx 2r). Similarly, the manumissions from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 140 that are given in section five of the appendix (vol. II sigs. Xxxx xxxx 2v–Yyyy yyyy 1v) are acknowledged to postdate the Conquest, as they mention figures active in the second half of the eleventh century. However, all these texts are

[50] 'certain small Anglo-Saxon works'
[51] Sawyer 1503 (Sawyer et al. 2010)
[52] 'Æthelstan was the eldest son of King Æthelred II, by his first wife Elgiva, and was killed in battle with the Danes around A.D. 1011. However, this will was written between the years 1006 and 1008, during which time Ælfsigus, one of the witnesses, held the episcopate of Winchester.'
[53] Pelteret 48 (Pelteret 1990).
[54] Lye and Manning's appendix introduces this transcript as the work of William Lambarde, an attribution supported by Ker (1957: 254). Although the transcript was at one time in Lambarde's possession, Angelika Lutz (1982: 330–1) shows by comparison with other manuscripts that the transcriber was Nowell.

presented in the same fashion as earlier dated texts in the appendix. No comment is made on their status as Old English beyond Manning's comment on their lateness in the preface.

It is difficult to make an absolute statement regarding the relevance of the appendix texts to periodisation in the dictionary as a whole. Their inclusion without obvious qualifying comments in a dictionary that claims in its title to treat the Saxon language strongly implies to readers that Lye and Manning consider them to be Old English. However, it might not be unreasonable to expect the appendix to have different inclusion criteria than the dictionary proper. What can be said for certain is that the appendix does not give readers any clear guidance regarding the dictionary's period coverage, and that the status of the appendix texts as Old English, though possibly somewhat marginal, is not examined in detail.

A Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language

A very different approach to preface-writing, and hence to discussing periodisation within the confines of a dictionary preface, is found in Bosworth's dictionary of 1838. Bosworth's preface is more than 170 pages long, of which only the final six introduce the dictionary itself. The rest of the preface stands alone, and indeed was later published as a separate volume (Bosworth 1848b).[55] It offers readers an account not only of the history of English, but of other Germanic languages, and ranges well beyond the chronological confines of Old English.

Unsurprisingly, this style of preface offers considerably more scope for the discussion of periodisation; however, this is not always linked directly to dictionary policy and remains somewhat vague and even self-contradictory. As will be seen subsequently, Bosworth's historical preface mentions as being significant to periodisation texts and dates that were clearly not used in formulating inclusion criteria for the dictionary's entries. In this respect, the majority of the preface seems — in line with its publication history — to function independently of the dictionary proper. It is lengthy

[55] Certain sections of the preface were also published separately, as brief introductions to the history and literature of different Germanic languages (Bosworth 1836; 1839). The complex publication history of the work is summarised by Bosworth himself as follows: 'This work was originally written as an introduction to the author's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, with a view of tracing the origin and progress of the Germanic languages, especially Old-Saxon and Anglo-Saxon, and of shewing their connexion with English; but as he considered it too long and uninteresting to appear in the whole impression, it was only prefixed to a part of it: a few copies, however, were printed in a separate form, with the title, "The Origin of the Germanic Language, &c." chiefly for private distribution. Copies of the Dictionary, with this long preface, were so much preferred, that it was twice found necessary to revise and reprint the preface. — The copies printed in a separate form, being exhausted, the author was induced to add a chapter, on the origin of alphabetic writing in the east, and its gradual diffusion to the west, as collateral evidence of the oriental source of European population; and, after giving, in the conclusion, a brief summary of the whole work, to prepare it for publication with its present title. It was then partly reprinted, that it might be published at the time, and in illustration of his "Compendious Anglo-Saxon and English Dictionary," in which he was engaged' (Bosworth 1848b: i).

enough, wide-ranging enough in its discussion, and sufficiently distinct from the rest of the work to make it a clear outlier among the prefaces discussed in this thesis. In addition, it is unlike the earlier prefaces in containing contributions from several distinct authors; the section on Frisian (Bosworth 1838: xxxv-lxxx) was written by the Dutch philologist J.H. Halbertsma, while a shorter section on Dalecarlian (Bosworth 1838: clix-clx) was the work of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.[56]

Despite its peculiarities and contradictions, Bosworth's preface represents a significant step forward in that it recognises the end of Old English as an issue significant enough that it merits explicit definition and discussion within the dictionary preface. The idea of a cut-off date is raised both in the practical introduction to the dictionary proper and in the contextualising historical narrative that precedes it; in both cases, the implication is that this is information that should be supplied to readers before they reach the main body of the dictionary. This is in contrast to the earlier Somner and Lye-Manning dictionaries, which barely acknowledge periodisation as an issue worth addressing. In general, Bosworth appears more concerned than are the earlier lexicographers to set out coherent (if not necessarily consistent) policies for what material is to be excluded from his dictionary.[57]

It seems likely that this is connected, at least in part, to an increased consciousness among scholars of the size of the early mediæval English corpus, and its increased accessibility. Somner, Lye and Manning could at least aim to record the language of all the texts to which they had access. Bosworth's preface, however, shows him to be keenly aware of a continuum of material linking Old English with the language of his own day; his account of 'The Anglo-Saxon Dialects' (Bosworth 1838: xxi-xxxiv) extends to giving examples of 'provincial dialect' material collected in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In this context, a stronger argument for defining the extent of Old English in theoretical as well as practical terms was apparently required.

The issue was not only a practical one of increased access to sources; it also represents a different way of thinking about the history of English. Older dictionaries, with their antiquarian outlook, give the impression of considering Old English primarily as a discrete object of curiosity. It may be of particular interest as 'affulgente jam, tum ad Antiquitates *Anglicas* cujuscunq; generis, tum ad vernaculæ linguæ originationes indagandas, peroptato & non obscuro lumine' (Somner 1659: *Ad Lectorem* §1);[58] however, it is rarely presented as part of a continuous narrative. It might be argued

[56] For more on Longfellow's interest in Old English and connection to Bosworth, see Toswell (2018).
[57] Although Somner (1659: *Ad Lectorem* §3) gives a lengthy justification for not consulting all known manuscript sources, his argument is that he believed the lexis of these manuscripts was already represented in his dictionary. He does not claim that it falls outside the scope of his work; in other words, his rationale for not using more manuscripts was one of practicality, not a theoretical statement about periodisation or an attempt to exclude non-Old English.
[58] 'the daily growing light proceding from it towards a discovery as well of our English Antiquities, as of the original of our mother tongue' [Canterbury, Cathedral Archives, CCA-DCc-ChAnt/M/352, f. 1r]

that Bosworth's more narrative-driven account of the history of English reflects an increased trend towards larger-scale, unified overviews in historical writing more generally, what Helen Kingstone (2017: 29–53) describes as an increased awareness among nineteenth-century British historians of history as a 'temporal continuum'.

More concretely, the convention of including historical outlines of English, reaching back to the origins of language itself, was already well established in other branches of lexicography. Historical outlines of this kind began to appear in monolingual English dictionaries of the seventeenth century but increased in scope in the eighteenth century (Rodríguez-Álvarez 2009: 183). Although it was relatively uncommon for such historical outlines to proceed, as Bosworth's does, beyond the eleventh century, it was not unprecedented (Rodríguez-Álvarez 2009: 191–2). Bosworth was thus conforming to a lexicographical convention that favoured this long view, although it is still noteworthy that, of all the dictionaries of Old English considered in this thesis, Bosworth's is the only one to adopt the feature of a narrative historical preface. In this way, Bosworth's dictionary is aligned more closely with contemporary monolingual dictionaries of English than other period dictionaries.

Bosworth's lexicography shows the influence of monolingual dictionaries in other respects, and specifically the influence of the discipline-defining work of Samuel Johnson. Bankert (2010) draws attention to Bosworth's debt to Henry J. Todd's 1818 edition of Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language*; the two dictionaries offer histories of the English language that, while not directly related in terms of their content, are typographically similar, suggesting an attempt to associate Bosworth's work with the prestige of Johnson's. Perhaps it is most productive to understand Bosworth's anomalous preface in terms of prestige and audience appeal; Bosworth appears to be addressing not only a limited circle of academic philologists but a wider readership who might have been more familiar with, for instance, Todd's Johnson than with earlier specialised period dictionaries such as Somner and Lye-Manning, and who therefore would have expected the lengthy preface. That the preface was also sold as a separate work suggests its inclusion may well have been commercially motivated, or at least that it was so useful that it became commercially viable in its own right. Thus, periodisation as expressed in the preface should be understood, at least in part, as an artefact of the increased popularity of Old English in the nineteenth century. This link with Johnson may help to explain other aspects of Bosworth's 1838 preface; Rodríguez-Álvarez (2009: 192) observes that Johnson's dictionary 'stands out [among other eighteenth-century English dictionaries] because he incorporates diverse sample texts to represent the state of the language at different historical moments'; this strategy of including numerous, relatively lengthy sample texts is also seen in Bosworth's preface. Bosworth's decision to adopt this format could be seen as a continuation of the

well-established antiquarian tendency to blur the lines between the dictionary and the textual edition — we might compare the edited texts included as an appendix to the Lye-Manning dictionary — but it can perhaps be linked just as convincingly to this feature as it appears in Johnson.

Dictionaries after Bosworth

Although none of the Old English dictionaries following Bosworth's in this study adopt the same discursive, textbook-style approach to preface-writing, they do mostly continue the trend of increased focus on defining their period scope. However, the inclusion of more detailed discussion of periodisation and period boundaries is not always straightforward.

The preface to the Bosworth-Toller *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (1882–98) is very short (only two pages in length; the *Preliminary Notice* printed with parts I and II of the dictionary was a single page) and contains only a passing, imprecise reference to the dictionary as 'cataloguing… English words preserved in works written before 1100' (Bosworth & Toller 1898: i). This is probably to be explained by the preface's framing of the dictionary less as a separate work than as the posthumous completion of Bosworth's projected revision of his 1838 dictionary. The (not entirely accurate) implication is that all details of the dictionary's scope and approach are as originally planned by Bosworth, with only some minor deviations from this plan meriting a mention in the preface. Similarly, the preface to Campbell's *Enlarged Addenda and Corrigenda*, which serves as a further supplement to Bosworth-Toller, notes that Campbell 'sparingly added' some words from twelfth-century manuscripts without clarifying how the addition of these items relates to the periodisation used in the work of Bosworth and Toller (Campbell 1972: v).

If the evidence that the Bosworth-Toller preface can offer is complicated by the dictionary's editorial history, the same phenomenon can be observed to an even greater extent in the prefaces of the *OED* and *DOE*. Both dictionaries are (or were originally) issued in fascicles, and while the *DOE* is still incomplete, the *OED* is now on its third edition. Multiple prefaces, associated with the publication of different fascicles and editions, therefore exist for both the *OED* and *DOE*. What is more, both dictionaries are now primarily accessed online, meaning that traditional, discrete prefaces may be partially replaced by blog pages, information boxes and other new structures. Nevertheless, both the *OED* and *DOE* give a specific date as marking the Old English–Middle English period boundary, and for the most part place this information in a relatively prominent position within their prefaces.

The prefatory 'General Explanations' in the first edition of the *OED* (1884: viii)[59] explicitly identifies the year 1150 as a 'natural halting-place' in the history of English. The *OED* aims at comprehensive coverage of the English lexicon after 1150, but only documents pre-1150 vocabulary if it continued to be used after this cut-off date. The result is therefore a partial coverage of Old English that only describes the vocabulary that persisted into subsequent periods; Old English is not treated in its own right, but only to the extent that it sheds light on the later development of English.

Even the apparently clear system of using the year 1150 as a boundary is contradicted elsewhere in the 'General Explanations'; in a discussion of the presentation of historical and variant forms and spellings, it is claimed that grouping these by century '[corresponds] broadly to distinct periods of the language; viz. 1 *Old English* or 'Anglo-Saxon'; 2 (12th c.) *Old English Transition* ('semi-Saxon')…' (1884: *General Explanations* x) The label '1' is here used to refer to 'all centuries down to 1100', while '2' refers to the twelfth century; it is therefore implied that Old English ended in 1100, and the supposedly natural halting-place of 1150 is not mentioned.[60]

The first edition of the *OED* thus addresses periodisation directly but inconsistently. Furthermore, different prefaces for the same dictionary may represent the issue of periodisation in noticeably different ways, even when the underlying lexicographical principles have not changed. In the preface to the third edition of the *OED*, the 1150 division between Old and Middle English is not placed as prominently, being mentioned only in a sub-section on variant spellings (Simpson 2000); however, the blog associated with the third edition includes a lengthy discussion of the coverage of Old English, which mentions both the 1150 cut-off date and the history of the OED's current policy for the handling of Old English material (Esposito 2012). This page is not a preface in the traditional sense of the term, but clearly serves a similar function; although it is hosted on a blog that discusses various topics relating to lexicography and lexicology in the OED and beyond, users of OED3 are directed to it via hyperlink when examining the citation details of any text labelled in the dictionary as being Old English.

Similar variability can be found in the case of the *DOE* prefaces. The pamphlet preface to the *DOE* (The Dictionary of Old English Project 1986) that was issued with the original microfiche fascicles simply defines the scope of the *DOE* as that already established by the *DOE* corpus, but leaves the interested user to seek further clarification in publications relating to the corpus. The current online incarnation of the dictionary, however, provides this information in a much more straightforward

[59] The front matter from all editions of the *OED* is available online at public.oed.com/history/oed-editions.
[60] See my discussion of labelling below, p. 72.

fashion; the first sentence under the heading ‘About the DOE’ reads: ‘*The Dictionary of Old English* (DOE) defines the vocabulary of the first six centuries (600–1150 A.D.) of the English language, using today’s most advanced technology’ (Cameron et al. 2018: *About the DOE*).

In these dictionaries of the late nineteenth century onwards, we thus see two significant developments in the role played by prefaces. On the one hand, there is the move away from the wide-ranging historical overview seen in Bosworth’s 1838 preface towards a dictionary more focused on its primary content. The preface once again becomes primarily an aid to navigation — a way of informing readers about the conventions and principles of the dictionary — although it is somewhat more likely to contain specific guidance about periodisation than it was in the time of Somner and Lye-Manning. On the other hand, online publishing has to a certain extent eroded the boundaries of what a preface is. Users of the *OED* or *DOE* sites may now find a wealth of paratextual material given authoritative status by the fact of it being published on the blogs associated with these dictionaries; however, given that the preface is no longer (as in a print dictionary) physically positioned as an introduction to the dictionary, it is arguably even easier to disregard it altogether.

Labelling

Within the main body of a dictionary, several systems may be used to indicate how sources fit into the lexicographer’s framework of periodisation. Of these, the most informative is likely to be the application of labels to or within entries; however, there is considerable variation between the dictionaries considered in this study in the extent to which labelling is used and its precise implications with respect to dating and periodisation.

My discussion of labelling in dictionaries of Old English is broadly informed by the principles articulated in metalexicographical scholarship on labelling, and particularly the work of Hausmann (1989); see also Svensén (2009: 316), Brewer (2016: 490) and Dollinger (2016: 64) for subsequent uses and discussions of Hausmann’s scheme. Hausmann’s primary concern is with general-purpose synchronic dictionaries, but many of his observations can also usefully be applied to period lexicography. Particularly useful to my discussion is Hausmann’s emphasis on the way in which dictionary labelling establishes a contrast between an ‘unmarkiertes Zentrum’[61] and a ‘markierte Peripherie’[62] (Hausmann 1989: 651). The act of labelling a feature is a recognition that the feature in question is somehow unusual and peripheral. In a period dictionary, the marked peripheries in

[61] ‘unmarked centre’
[62] ‘marked periphery’

diachronic labelling should indicate material that is considered more problematic for the dictionary's periodisation.

As will become clear in the following discussion, labelling is not a perfect tool and cannot readily resolve all possible issues of periodisation. Although it allows for greater nuance in some respects, labelling still operates by mapping complex, gradient phenomena onto a finite number of descriptive labels. Although a labelling system can, for instance, identify a word as 'late' Old English, it cannot express precisely how late that word is in relation to others, or at least cannot do so without starting down the path of creating a unique label for the unique history of each individual word, which would clearly be neither feasible nor especially useful. This means that, as with the other means of periodisation explored in this chapter, diachronic labelling in dictionaries must be understood as a way in which lexicographers can negotiate periodisation, and not as a way in which they can avoid the issue altogether.

A final point that should be made with respect to periodisation concerns the scope of labels. A label is not necessarily applied to an entry as a whole, but may be applied to an element within an entry, such as a specific sense, orthographical form or quotation. These lower-level labels, though often less prominent in the entry structure than those applied at headword level, are still significant as expressions of periodisation. Nevertheless, it is important to make careful note of the level at which a label is applied, as this reflects the grounds on which periodisation decisions are being made. For instance, applying a period label at headword level implies that the transition from one period of English to another is marked by the arrival of new lexical items and the obsolescence of existing ones, while applying a period label at the level of senses or orthographical forms allows for the possibility that the lexicon remains relatively stable but that change can nevertheless be observed in semantics and orthography.

The following sub-sections identify different approaches to period labelling and discuss the dictionaries of Old English in which they appear. It will be seen that labelling systems can reflect widely varying attitudes towards periodisation, and can, in some cases, create complex or ambiguous situations that require further exploration.

Absence of labels

Some of the dictionaries considered in this study have no labels related to dating or periodisation whatsoever. Somner's dictionary uses occasional labels to indicate the source (primary or secondary) on which Somner was drawing for a particular word or quotation; such labels can be seen in various

entries and are enumerated in his preface (Somner 1659: *Ad Lectorem* §10).[63] However, since the date or period of these sources is not discussed in the preface, the labels cannot be interpreted as relating directly to periodisation. For Somner, labelling appears to be a way of providing information about sources and their reliability, not about words and their contexts. Models for the latter kind of labelling were already available to him in contemporary monolingual dictionaries,[64] but this was not something that he incorporated into his own lexicography.

Bosworth's dictionary (1838) is similarly lacking in relevant labels, a fact made more interesting by the observation that the earlier Lye-Manning dictionary (1772), on which Bosworth drew substantially, does use labelling as a periodisation technique. The absence of labels in Bosworth thus seems to be a deliberate decision (removing them from the material that was taken from Lye-Manning), though there is nothing to indicate whether this was done on practical grounds such as saving space or whether it indicates a theoretical objection to Lye and Manning's use of labels.

Similarly, the later Bosworth-Toller dictionary (1882–98) does not include a relevant labelling system; although some comments on dating and periodisation appear in entries, these are too discursive and unstandardised to be considered labels. Although, as discussed below, such comments may provide very important information about periodisation, the impression they give to the user is different; brief, standardised labels imply regularity and discrete classification, while longer comments within entries give the sense of a lexicographer exploring the history of a word in depth and on its own terms.

Period names as labels

The Oxford English Dictionary

In those dictionaries that do include relevant labelling systems, the most straightforward for a discussion of periodisation are those in which the name of a period is used as a label. In this case, the word (or part of an entry) so labelled is clearly claimed as belonging to the period in question. This situation may occur when a dictionary is designed to cover more than one major period. Thus, the third edition of the *OED* labels quotations as 'OE' (Old English) to distinguish them from material of later periods. Labelling in the *OED* is in fact considerably more complex that this example

[63] I describe them as labels rather than considering them simply as part of the conventional presentation of quotations for two reasons. They appear even when Somner does not quote from a source, but merely relies on it for evidence of a word. Furthermore, as Hetherington observes, Somner does not apply them consistently to identify all of his sources, but selectively to indicate his reservations about the reliability of those sources (1980: 147–8).
[64] A range of examples is given in Osselton (2006).

suggests, however. The 'OE' label, together with more specific labels for early and late Old English ('eOE' and 'lOE'), was only introduced in the third edition; earlier editions do not include these labels, which also means that they are not used in the many *OED Online* entries that have not yet been revised for the third edition.[65] (This change in *OED3* policy applies only to Old English sources; quotations from later periods are still assigned dates, whether these are known or estimated.)

The preface to the third edition of the *OED* emphasises that this policy is a response to the challenge posed by manuscript transmission: 'much of the extant record of Old English appears in late manuscripts and it is not generally possible to guarantee that the particular word under review was not altered or added during the process of manuscript transmission' (Simpson 2000). In a fuller discussion of Old English by Anthony Esposito on the *OED* blog, this theme is again emphasised:

> The dating of quotations has been radically revised: the *New English Dictionary*'s practice of assigning putative composition dates to quotations typically preserved in manuscripts of much later date (a practice which resulted in quotations from *Beowulf* being given no date at all because of its uncertain date of composition) has been abandoned. In fact, individual dating of Old English quotations has itself been abandoned and replaced by a simple threefold division of all pre-1150 quotations into 'early OE' (600–950), 'OE' (950–1100), and 'late OE' (1100–1150), based firmly on manuscript dates as agreed by the most recent authorities.
>
> (Esposito 2012)

In other words, the labelling system used for Old English in the third edition of the *OED* is fundamentally different from the labelling used for other periods of English (or for Old English in earlier editions of the *OED*), not only because it does not give exact dates but because it reflects only the date of a manuscript witness and does not attempt to reconstruct the original date of composition of a text.[66] It is worth noting that these policies, although a logical response to the particular difficulties of dealing with early mediæval material, also incidentally serve to emphasise the artificially sharp distinction between Old English and Middle English as separate periods, since they are labelled in noticeably different ways, with named period labels for the former and dates for the latter.

'OE', 'eOE' and 'lOE' are applied in a similar manner in other parts of *OED* entries, not just to label quotations. They are also used as labels within the 'forms' field, although here the implicit separation

[65] Further detail on these labels in *OED3*, and direct comparison with *DOE* labelling policies, can be found in Milfull (2009: 246).

[66] Some dating information, based on manuscript dates, is encoded in *OED* data but not displayed in *OED Online*; this is used to ensure that multiple quotations within the OE (or eOE or lOE) date range are given in a consistent order. However, the precise date of a manuscript cannot be recovered from this ordering information. More precise dating information for Old English texts (including, but not limited to, the dates of particular manuscripts) is recorded and made available to *OED* editors in-house, but is not encoded within entries. (Inge Milfull, private communication, sent February 26 2020)

from later stages of English is not so strong, as this field also uses 'ME', 'eME' and 'lME' for Middle English and its sub-periods. Once again, this is a replacement for a different system used in earlier editions, in this case numbered periods, each corresponding to a century, as explained in the preface:

> [Entries include] the principal earlier *Forms* or Spellings, with their chronological range indicated by the unit figure of the century, thus 2–6 = 13th to 16th cent.; 1 standing for all centuries down to 1100. These figures also correspond broadly to distinct periods of the language: viz. 1 *Old English* or 'Anglo-Saxon'; 2 (12th c.) *Old English Transition* ('semi-Saxon'); 3 (13th c.) *Early Middle English*; 4 (14th c.) *Late Middle English*; 5 (15th c.) *Middle English Transition*; 6 (16th c.) *Early Modern* or Tudor *English*; 7 (17th c.) *Middle Modern English*; 8, 9 (18th and 19th c.) *Current English.*
>
> (1884: *General Explanations* x)

This system, however, is of very little relevance to present-day users of the *OED*, as, in the *OED Online*, even entries that have undergone no major revisions since their publication in the first edition have been updated to use the newer, clearer system for labelling forms.

Especially when the newer labels appear outside the forms field, it could be argued that their function as labels begins to shade into that of simple abbreviations; when 'OE', 'ME' etc. are used in full sentences within the etymologies field, for example, they are probably best interpreted as a space-saving device that employs the same abbreviation conventions that are used in labelling but is not necessarily part of a labelling system. In any case, despite the complications noted above, labelling and its role in periodisation manifests most clearly in the *OED* when associated with individual quotations.

Other dictionaries

The use of period names as labels can also be found in ostensibly single-period dictionaries. The clearest example of this approach in my study is the *DOE*. The *DOE* has two distinct sub-systems of labels that relate to the issue of periodisation. One of these is based on identifying the date of particular manuscripts; this will be discussed further below. The other engages directly with the issue of distinguishing — and naming — discrete periods in the history of English. The labels used are as follows: 'ME' (i.e. Middle English), '? ME' and '? eME' (i.e. early Middle English). All of these labels are used to identify words and senses that straddle the boundary between Old and Middle English. They appear primarily within the 'occurrences and usage' field,[67] but sometimes appear in

[67] See the comment on this field given under the 'Entry Format' tab on the *DOE* website (Cameron et al. 2018: *Entry Format*): 'This section lists the number of occurrences of the headword in the Corpus and includes any appropriate

other parts of the entry (when applied to a particular sense rather than to all attested senses of a word), in which context they overlap in function with more discursive comments on word history. Old English, as the unmarked norm, has no label. Specifically early Old English is occasionally noted, for instance s.v. *cinihte*, but this is infrequent and might in any case be better characterised as a descriptive adjective than the application of a formalised label.

Despite what might be expected, there is no apparent distinction in application between 'ME' and 'eME'; the latter appears almost exclusively in earlier fascicles of the dictionary, implying that its use was largely phased out by later editors.[68] These impressions are supported by my conversations with *DOE* staff, who spoke of the distinction between 'ME' and 'eME' in labelling as being primarily 'a matter of the individual editor's choice' (Robert Getz, interview, 18th March 2019). The only one of these labels for which I am aware of the existence of formal written guidelines regarding its application in the *DOE* is '? ME'. An in-house handbook for *DOE* editors compiled in the early stages of the *DOE* project dictates: 'Words which we have reason to believe could not have been common Old English (e.g. *tresoun*, *pais*) and words which are listed in the MED as ?OE may be identified as ?ME.'[69] The implied importance of the *DOE*'s relationship to the *MED* is a topic that will require further exploration (see below p. 151) but at this point it is enough to note that, though the quoted guidelines clearly identify the function of the '? ME' label to denote markedness, it was apparently not intended to stand in contrast to distinct 'ME' and '? eME' labels.

It is not unexpected, in the *Dictionary of Old English*, to find (standard) Old English treated as the unmarked norm, but the presence of a Middle English label in an Old English dictionary is, perhaps, a little surprising on first consideration. Given that we would ordinarily expect Old English and Middle English to be treated as mutually exclusive categories, the presence of material labelled as (potentially) Middle English within a dictionary of Old English draws attention to the practical impossibility of making a dictionary of Old English that contains nothing but Old English due to the challenges of categorising language in a discrete period system. Note that the *DOE*'s use of named periods in its labelling is different to the approach used by the *OED*. The *OED* covers multiple periods, and labelling a quotation as, for example, 'OE' specifies which of these periods it belongs

comment on its frequency or pattern of usage… Usage labels call the reader's attention to patterns or facts — to restrictions in use or occurrence by date of MS, or dialect, or region of the country, by genre, text or author.'

[68] '? eME' appears as a label in the occurrences field for the entries *agēn-talu*, *almerig*, *apuldor-stōw* and *cyllende*. Although used in text rather than as a bare label, 'eME' appears once as recently as the I fascicle, which was published in 2018, in the entry *īget, eit*. However, it may be significant to note that in this case it is used not as a stand-alone label but as an abbreviation in the context of a longer, explanatory comment within the 'part of speech' field. Clearly the concept of 'early Middle English' as a meaningful division of linguistic history has not been abandoned, but in the later fascicles of the *DOE* it no longer appears as a label.

[69] My thanks to Catherine Monahan of the *DOE* for allowing me to see this handbook.

to. In contrast, the *DOE* is explicitly presented as a single-period dictionary, dealing exclusively with Old English; the Middle English labels are implied to temporarily override this top-down periodisation.

One might also note the ambiguity, from the point of view of periodisation, in the use of the terms 'early' and 'late' in the *OED* and *DOE* labels. Although these labels may effectively convey the approximate chronology of a word's attestation, they may give rise to a subtle problem of interpretation for the reader interested in periodisation. Does (for instance) 'late Old English' or 'early Middle English' refer to a loosely-defined range of time within a specified period: the latter decades of the Old English period, or the early decades of the Middle English period? Or do these labels refer to periods imagined by the lexicographer as having independent status; consider, for instance, Henry Sweet's eightfold division of the history of English that presents Early Old English, Late Old English, Transition Old English and so on as distinct periods with defined start and end dates (Sweet 1892: 211, §594). Of course, the distinction between these two possible uses of 'early' and 'late' is not necessarily clearly perceived by the user, or even by the lexicographer, but it is worth bearing in mind as representing less or more rigidity of categorisation.

Date labels

In some cases, a lexicographer may choose to use as a label simply a date, expressed either precisely (perhaps giving a particular year) or more generally (giving a century, a conjectural date range, or similar). This information can be very useful in understanding periodisation, although it is not in itself an act of periodisation.[70] Two of the dictionaries in this study consistently use date labelling; the *OED* applies date labels to illustrative quotations, while the *DOE* applies them primarily to attested spellings and occasionally elsewhere within the entry.

The use of date labelling in the *OED*, including the differences between *OED* editions, has already been discussed above in the context of the period-name labelling that partly replaced it. The date labelling in the *DOE*, however, requires further consideration, as the *DOE* uses date labelling and period-name labelling for Old English alongside each other, rather than having one replace the other.

Date labelling in the *DOE* presents the issue of periodisation in a different way than does the period-name labelling discussed above. Within the 'Attested Spellings' field, certain spellings are marked

[70] Of course, the labelling of years, decades, centuries and so on is an arbitrary division of continuous time, and in that sense assigning a word to a particular century could be seen as an act of periodisation. However, calendar-divisions such as this are not intended primarily as a way of discussing linguistic change, and are therefore somewhat different from the linguistic periodisation with which this thesis is mostly concerned.

with a date, given in bracketed Roman numerals, which refers to the century in which the manuscript witnessing that spelling was written. This labelling avoids some issues of periodisation, as it reports facts about individual manuscripts rather than imposing higher-level categories. Nevertheless, the application of these labels still conveys information about periodisation.

The distribution of date labels in the *DOE* is noticeably uneven; in earlier fascicles of the dictionary, attested spellings are usually given either a date label or a manuscript identification, while more recent fascicles give both where appropriate. Thus, for example, spellings attested in the twelfth-century MS H of the West Saxon Gospels (a manuscript not concorded in the *DOE* corpus) are (mostly) consistently labelled 'WSGosp MS H, xii' in recent entries, but in the earliest fascicles are generally labelled simply 'WSGosp MS H';[71] if the date of the manuscript is relevant to the user, in these cases the information must be supplied from general knowledge or (more likely) by consulting an edition of the text.

Once again, it is significant that the absence of labelling corresponds to a perceived absence of markedness. In the majority of cases, attested spellings are only given date labels if they are from the twelfth century or later.[72] The result is an implied period boundary placed at the beginning of the twelfth century, the year 1100; the regular labelling of material from after this date positions it as being a deviation from the norm established by earlier sources.

However, the period boundary created by this labelling policy is subordinated in the dictionary's design to another boundary, with a later date, which is also at work in the date-labelling system of the 'Attested Spellings' field. Although dates are regularly noted for twelfth-century texts, spellings unique to manuscripts of the thirteenth century and later are further distinguished by placing them in a distinct section of the 'Attested Spellings' field, under the label 'late'. At least when dealing with attested spellings, then, the *DOE* draws another boundary at the year 1200, with spellings from after this date being described as 'late'; twelfth-century spellings, though implied by date-labelling practice to be non-standard, are nevertheless not counted as 'late'. This 1200 boundary is a firmer statement

[71] This reflects a change in labelling policy, still visible in entries from earlier fascicles as they have not been revised. Even in recent entries, however, there are occasional deviations from the standard labelling; the high level of detail and organisation in *DOE* entries can obscure the fact that the entry-writing process, including the application of labels, is still a manual process. Therefore, even for frequently cited manuscripts such as WSGosp MS H, it is to be expected that the date label will sometimes be inconsistently applied due to human error and the different practices of individual lexicographers. In the particular case of WSGosp MS H, some date labelling was in fact adjusted retrospectively (anonymised interview with *DOE* staff), but a search of *DOE* entries shows that there is still variability, particularly in older entries.

[72] Where an earlier date is used as a label, this often marks a particularly unusual spelling, such as <berigblæ> s.v. *bere-gafol*[2], or <iehwerfed> s.v. *ge·hwyrfed*. The intention in these instances is presumably to reassure the user used to encountering such non-standard spellings primarily in late texts that the spelling is, in this case, "authentically" early Old English in origin.

of periodisation than the division placed at 1100, although both boundaries are signalled by similar labelling practices and both reflect assumptions about the relationship of labelled material to the perceived standard of earlier sources.

Incidental date labelling

Although none of the dictionaries in this study before the *OED* use systematic date labelling, some of them include what might be called incidental date labelling. This arises from the use of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle as a major source of quotation evidence. The Chronicle, in at least some of its recensions, is cited frequently in all the dictionaries of Old English considered in this study. To direct users with more accuracy to the exact place where an illustrative quotation may be found, lexicographers have naturally found it useful to identify the particular Chronicle entry from which it was taken — in other words, to supply a date, specifically a year.[73]

Of course, the date of a Chronicle entry is not necessarily a reliable indication of the date of composition; it merely provides a *terminus post quem* for the writing of a particular entry, which in many parts of the Chronicle significantly predates the actual date of composition. Nevertheless, the inclusion of dated Chronicle entries may give dictionary users some rough sense of whether a usage is relatively early or late, and (particularly relevant to the issue of periodisation) make an implicit claim that the date given falls within the lexicographer's understanding of the Old English period.

In at least one case, a lexicographer was clearly aware of the potential for the Chronicle entries to be used in this way as a sort of partial quasi-labelling system, and discussed it in the dictionary's preface. This is Bosworth's dictionary of 1838. Discussing his inclusion of late and 'impure' vocabulary, he observes: 'These are mostly taken from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, with their date affixed. As the authors are always quoted, the age and purity of a word can at once be seen' (Bosworth 1838: clxxii). This claim is somewhat misleading, not least because some citations of the Chronicle in the dictionary refer merely to the page number of an edition, as for instance s.v. *bugend*, *bugigend* and *circe-wic*.

Nevertheless, Bosworth's main point is clear, that the information used to identify sources is also meant to serve a dual purpose as a rudimentary system of date labelling, at least in the case of the Chronicle. It does not apply to other texts, and (since Bosworth also cites from earlier parts of the Chronicle) it does not create the same immediate distinction between late and non-late sources that a

[73] Of course, this is not the only possible system for identifying Chronicle passages. For example, Lye and Manning's dictionary, in which the Chronicle is frequently cited, sometimes specifies the date of an entry and sometimes the page and line number of Edmund Gibson's printed edition (1692).

true period labelling system would; a word considered by Bosworth to be late would not necessarily be assigned a date in the dictionary unless it had been taken by him from the Chronicle, and conversely the mere presence of a Chronicle date in an entry does not necessarily indicate the lateness of the word in question. However, despite these limitations, it still offers the user potentially useful information, and Bosworth clearly recognised this potential.

The Chronicle, then, and Bosworth's use of it in particular, serves as a reminder of how dictionary users can (and can be expected to) piece together hints about dating and periodisation even when these are not offered in the form of a fully developed system of labelling.

Mixed criteria labels

In addition to the possible labelling systems described above, which we might think of as being purely diachronic, there are other kinds of labelling that may convey diachronic information while also making some other overlapping or related distinction. An example can be seen in Lye and Manning's dictionary; the choice of labels, and the way in which they are applied, involves consideration of dialect, language contact, and other kinds of potential synchronic variation as well as purely diachronic concerns. It is not entirely clear how conscious Lye and Manning were of these mixed criteria, or whether it would have concerned them if they had been; it is debatable whether the labels can even be considered a serious attempt at periodisation. However, the complexity of Lye and Manning's labels from the perspective of present-day scholarship means they merit separate discussion to better understand their relationship to more familiar approaches to periodisation.

Several different labels are used in Lye and Manning's dictionary, although none of them is especially frequent. The most common, 'Norm. Sax.' (Norman Saxon) has fewer than thirty occurrences altogether, including those found in the dictionary's supplement. (1772 vol. II: sigs Zzzz zzz 1r — Kkkk kkkk 1v) A slightly smaller number of entries receive the label 'Dano-Sax.' or 'Dan. Sax.' (Dano-Saxon), which at times co-occurs with 'Poët.' (*poetice*, i.e. 'in poetry'). A few more labels are used, but these are extremely uncommon: 'Anglo-Norm.' or 'Angl. Norm.' (Anglo-Norman) appears only three times, s.v. *orn, rent,* and *sclawen*. 'Semi-Sax.' appears once, s.v. *stourbing*.

There is no explicit discussion within the dictionary of the application or significance of these labels, but it is possible to make some deductions. Three of the five labels — 'Norm. Sax.', 'Dano-Sax.' and 'Semi-Sax.' — are identified by their names as sub-categories of the Saxon that, by implication, makes up the rest of the dictionary. Further investigation reveals that 'Anglo-Norm.', despite its name, also refers to a sub-category of Saxon; although the *OED* (s.v. *Anglo-Norman*, adj. and n.) only

records *Anglo-Norman* as referring to a variety of French, all three 'Anglo-Norm.' entries in Lye-Manning quote from clearly English (rather than French) sources, and two (*orn* and *sclawen*) are cross-referenced to more standard Old English forms given elsewhere in the dictionary. Therefore, (if we set aside for a moment the 'Poët.' label) it appears that labelling in Lye-Manning is used to identify distinct varieties of [Anglo-] Saxon, and is thus potentially relevant to periodisation.

The majority of the Norman Saxon words in Lye-Manning are drawn from a small set of texts, of which the most commonly cited is the Peterborough Chronicle, also known as text E of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, preserved in Oxford, Bodleian MS Laud Misc. 636.[74] This suggests that the 'Norm. Sax.' label may well convey information about periodisation; the two continuations of the Peterborough Chronicle (which cover the years 1122–1131 and 1132–1154) are still viewed by modern scholarship as key witnesses to the transition between Old and Middle English.[75] Many of the 'Norm. Sax.' entries in Lye-Manning draw on these continuations, though some draw on chronicle entries that predate the Continuations (for instance, *lit*, from the entry for 1052, and *snacca*, from the entry for 1066).

Many of the other citations in the labelled Norman Saxon entries would have been known to Lye and Manning through the *Linguarum Veterum Septentrionalium Thesaurus* of George Hickes (Hickes 1703–5). This influential work contains grammatical and historical accounts of historical Germanic languages, including Old English; Old English and Gothic are treated together in the first part of the first volume. Hickes quotes extensively from various early mediæval English texts by way of illustration.[76] In particular, Chapter 24, 'De Poetica *Semi-Saxonica*, sive corrupta poesi *Anglo-Saxonum*',[77] prints several short poems in full (Hickes 1703–5 vol. I pt. I: 222–35). These are intended by Hickes to demonstrate the poetry of the period he called 'Semi-Saxonica' (Semi-Saxon). Two of these poems above all, the *Stanzaic Life of Margaret*[78] (Hickes 1703–5 vol. I pt. I: 224–31) and the *Land of Cokaygne*[79] (Hickes 1703–5 vol. I pt. I: 231–3), are used multiple times in Lye-Manning 'Norm. Sax.' entries. Sometimes users are directed to the corresponding page of the *Thesaurus*; in the case of the *Life of Margaret*, sometimes the text is instead identified by name as 'Vit. S. Marg.'

[74] Lye did not work directly from the manuscript, but rather, as is apparent from the page numbers included in some citations, from the edition of the Chronicle by Edmund Gibson (1692).
[75] For further discussion of the Peterborough Chronicle in Old English lexicography, see below p. 125.
[76] Unfortunately, Hickes's work is not available in a full English translation. For relevant translations, see Costain (2009), who translates Chapter 21, Matthews (2000: 15–18), who translates parts of Chapter 22, and McCabe (2010: 89–189), who translates Chapter 23. Harris (1992) is a useful source of general and background information on Hickes and his work, but does not include translations of *Thesaurus* material.
[77] 'Of Semi-Saxon poetics, or the corrupt poetry of the Anglo-Saxons'
[78] For modern editions, see Reames (2003: 115–38) and Reichl (1973: 163–249). Hickes gives it the title *Vita Sanctæ Margaretæ*.
[79] For a modern edition, see Turville-Petre (2015: 3–9). Hickes gives it no title in the *Thesaurus.*

The choice of labels here is somewhat confusing at first glance; the entries in question are labelled in Lye-Manning as 'Norm. Sax.', yet Hickes's *Thesaurus*, the source from which they are taken, prints them in a chapter on 'Semi-Saxonica'. Furthermore, the *Life of Margaret* and the *Land of Cokaygne* are both described by Hickes within that chapter as 'Anglo-Normannica' (1703–5 vol. I pt. I: 224, 231); the former is also described as 'Normanno-Saxonica' (1703–5 vol. I pt. I: 224). However, it appears that Lye-Manning uses the labels 'Norm. Sax.,' 'Anglo-Norm.' and 'Semi-Sax.' interchangeably. All three of the 'Anglo-Norm.' entries contain at least one citation from the *Life of Margaret* (which, elsewhere in the dictionary, is cited in entries labelled 'Norm. Sax.'), and the single 'Semi-Sax.' entry, *stourbing*, is also derived from the *Life of Margaret*, although the reference given in the entry directs users not to Hickes's edition of the poem but to another page of the *Thesaurus* where the word is discussed in isolation. At least in the Lye-Manning dictionary, then, if not to Hickes himself, all three labels seem to be considered equally applicable to the single *Life of Margaret* text, and it seems likely that the lack of consistency is just that, and does not reflect any desire to make subtle distinctions between the three terms.

Having thus accounted for the mismatches of terminology between Hickes and Lye-Manning, we can say with relative confidence that a significant proportion of the labels in Lye and Manning's dictionary (of which there are relatively few in any case) are heavily dependent on Hickes rather than reflecting Lye or Manning's independent editorial judgement on the status of these words. However, even when the *Thesaurus* extracts lists of characteristic vocabulary from these texts, only occasional items from them are transferred into Lye-Manning. Hickes supplies more than 150 footnotes to the *Life of Margaret*, clarifying difficult words and providing etymons and cognates. Many of the footnotes give the Old English etymon of a word in the poem, making it clear that the language of the poem is something other than (pure) Old English.[80] Few entries in Lye-Manning are labelled at all, and of these even fewer (around nine) refer to the *Life of Margaret*. Clearly, Lye and Manning did not, for whatever reason, make comprehensive use of the pre-digested material provided by Hickes, despite the fact that their labelling (when applied) is heavily influenced by the *Thesaurus*. The overall impression of labelling in Lye and Manning's dictionary is that of a lexicographer without any particular interest in identifying sub-periods in Old English vocabulary; the labelling of entries as

[80] A minor complication is introduced by the fact that in some cases, at least, Hickes's Saxon is apparently his own reconstruction rather than being attested in an authentic Old English text. Thus, for instance, footnote s to page 226 (1703–5 vol. I pt. I) gives the unattested 'scalt tu to mede hafan' as a Saxon equivalent of the poem's 'scaltou han to mede' (although *tu* for *þu* would be non-standard in classical Old English and *hafan* for *habban* is unattested in the *DOE* corpus), and footnote a to page 227 gives a supposed Saxon 'middelgeard' for the poem's 'middelerd' (although the equivalent form attested in classical Old English would be *middangeard*; forms with *middel-* (*OED s.v.* †middle-erd, *n.*) are not attested before the twelfth century).

Norman Saxon and similar is not thorough, and is heavily dependent on a small number of texts that had already been categorised in this way by previous scholarship.

A few labelled citations are not so easily explained as those discussed above, and further remind us of the need for caution in interpreting Lye and Manning's labels. For instance, the quotation s.v. *halech* (an entry in the addenda, in volume II of the dictionary, which is given the label 'Norm. Sax.') appears on further investigation to be drawn from the A-text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (i.e. the Parker Chronicle), where it is entered under the year 890. The use of the A-text can be simply explained by the fact that Gibson's Chronicle edition, which, as mentioned above, was Lye's source for the later entries from the E-text, in fact follows the Parker Chronicle as its primary text at this point. The question of why Lye and Manning should have singled out this particular entry as an example of Norman Saxon, despite its apparently early date, is harder to explain. Certainly the sentence quoted is in fact a later interpolation, clearly distinguishable in the manuscript by its paler ink, [81] but if we hold to the hypothesis that Lye (or Manning) was consulting, not the original manuscript, but Gibson's edition (and this is supported by the use of a page reference consistent with Gibson, rather than a simple reference to the year of the entry), this cue would not have been available; Gibson comments on the various readings of different texts of the Chronicle at this point (1692: 90), but does not make reference to issues of dating. If the lexicographers were consulting both the manuscript and the printed edition, no note is made of this fact.

Another difficult entry with respect to period labelling is *orn*. Its reference to the *Life of Margaret* is consistent with what we have come to expect of the 'Anglo-Norm.' label that is applied to the entry. The reference to 'Bed. 5. 6.' is more puzzling; this abbreviation is not listed in the *Notarum Explicatio* at the beginning of the dictionary, but the source must be the Old English translation of Bede's *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Book 5 Chapter 6. The spelling of the quotation, 'Đat hors swyþost orn', suggests that the manuscript source was most likely Cambridge, University Library MS Kk.3.18, f. 83v.[82] It is hard to imagine how the text itself could be described as Anglo-Norman; Bede, the author of the original Latin work, is easily placed within the canonical Old English period, as is the Alfredian translation movement with which the Old English version is associated. It is not impossible that Lye had in mind the date of the Cambridge manuscript, which is from the second half of the eleventh century, and contains yet later Latin marginalia (Kato et al. 2010, 2013); this would suggest that Lye

[81] Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 173, f. 16r

[82] The manuscript reading is 'þ[æt] hors swyðost orn'. The Cambridge manuscript formed the basis of editions by Abraham Wheelock and John Smith, both of whom print 'þ[æt] hors swyþost orn' (Wheelock 1643: sig. Eee 3v; Smith 1722: 619). Lye may have used Wheelock's edition; he gives a more literal Latin translation than that supplied by Wheelock, but he also mentions the alternative spelling <arn>, which is given by Wheelock in a marginal note.

and Manning's period labelling was taking into account date of copying either instead of or in addition to date of original composition.

If we look again at Lye and Manning's dictionary, however, this appealing explanation seems unlikely. First of all, the Old English Bede is cited elsewhere in the dictionary (using the same abbreviation) without the label 'Anglo-Norm.' being applied. This could be a mere inconsistency, and is not conclusive by itself. However, the other text cited s.v. *orn*, 'V. Ps.', is neither a notably late text nor a notably late manuscript; it is Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Junius 27, an early tenth-century glossed psalter.[83] (Note, too, that 'V. Ps.' is cited elsewhere in Lye and Manning's dictionary without the application of a label.) The entry thus contains one citation from a text clearly identifiable as post-Conquest (the *Life of St Margaret*), one from a pre-Conquest text in a post-Conquest manuscript (the *Ecclesiastical History*) and one from a pre-Conquest text in a pre-Conquest manuscript (the psalter gloss). If the label 'Anglo-Norm.' attached to the entry is understood as indicating a coherent linguistic period, it is hard to explain this as anything other than a serious error.

Nye is another confusing entry, given that the text from which it is drawn is clearly identified by Hickes as 'Gallo-Anglico', i.e. Anglo-Norman French. Certainly, both Hickes and the original manuscript from which he was transcribing use the same form *nye* in the Middle English version of the line, but quotation in Lye-Manning is clearly of the French text. One wonders whether this is a case of Lye misunderstanding Hickes' intention. Even such a misunderstanding, however, would not account for the peculiar fact that, of the many similar words in the same passage quoted by Hickes, no others are given the label 'Norm. Sax.' in Lye-Manning. (At least one, *coueye*, appears in the dictionary unlabelled.) A similar situation can be seen for the Lye-Manning entries *pouerte* and *poure*; they refer to Hickes' *Thesaurus* (1703–5 vol. I pt. I: 149), where they are given as part of a text that is clearly French, and described as '*Gallicè*, vel *Gallo-Normannice'* (1703–5 vol. I pt. I: 148).[84] In cases such as these, it is possible that I have failed to reconstruct the rationale behind the lexicographer's labelling decision, but one is once again left with the impression that period labelling in Lye and Manning's dictionary is, at best, inconsistent and prone to error.

Despite the patchiness of Lye and Manning's use of Hickes, the knowledge that the Lye-Manning labels are influenced by the *Thesaurus* can lead us to a deeper understanding of their significance. Hickes's account of what he termed the 'dialecti' of Saxon was, as Cain (2010) demonstrates, founded on an understanding of language change that foregrounded concerns about the corrupting influence

[83] On this manuscript, see Gretsch (2008).
[84] The text in question, a metrical Life of St Nicholas, is found in the same manuscript as the poem from which *nye* is drawn, namely Trinity College, Cambridge B.14.39–40.

of language contact (see below p. 116). He therefore describes an original 'Britanno-Saxonica' being influenced in its vocabulary and morphology, first by Scandinavian influences (producing 'Dano-Saxonica') and subsequently by Norman ones (producing 'Normanno-Saxonica' or 'Normanno-Dano-Saxonica' and 'Semi-Saxonica'). Hickes at times treats these 'dialecti' as periods with chronological relevance; he arranges them sequentially and ties them to specific historical events (1703–5 vol. I pt. I: 87–8) and writes: 'pro tribus linguæ *Saxonicæ* epochis totidem Dialectos censeo esse statuendas'[85] (1703–5 vol. I pt. I: 87. Underlining mine).

However, the primary guiding principle behind the divisions appears to be that of linguistic influence rather than time, and Hickes's chronology often seems muddled. This is perhaps most readily apparent to modern eyes in his treatment of 'Dano-Saxonica', which he associates with Scandinavian settlement in England and the rule of Cnut, but also with certain aspects of poetic style; chapter 21 (Hickes 1703–5 vol. I pt. I: 101–34) is dedicated to the topic of the supposed Dano-Saxon poetic register. These assumptions are reflected in the frequent association of the labels 'Dano-Sax.' and 'Poët.' in Lye and Manning's dictionary.

In other words, the labels used by Lye and Manning — the naming of the Danes and Normans as representing linguistic influences on Saxon, and the assumptions underlying the use of the 'Poët.' label — are perhaps best understood, at least from a modern perspective, as representing mixed criteria for categorisation: not only periodisation in a chronological sense, but also other aspects of dialect and register that do not necessarily fall neatly into a chronological sequence. Above all, Lye and Manning's use of labelling appears to indicate their perception that a labelled linguistic feature is non-standard. For instance, they note s.v. *orn* that this verb form is also spelt *arn*; having observed the existence of these two variants they attempt to explain the presence of one, *orn*, by appealing to the theories of linguistic influence found in Hickes. Thus *orn* is given the 'Anglo-Norm.' label even though this is inconsistent both with the dates of the manuscripts cited in the entry and the (unlabelled) treatment of these manuscripts elsewhere in the dictionary. Similarly, following Hickes, the application of the label 'Dano-Sax.' reflects the presence of perceived non-standard vocabulary at least as much, if not more, as it does the historical plausibility of a given text's being produced at a time when there was significant Danish-English contact.

This conflation of factors in categorising Old English sources of the kind seen in Lye and Manning's labelling is a reminder of the difficulties of analysing lexicographical periodisation, and also of the multifaceted nature of periodisation. While it is possible to understand the primary concern of

[85] 'I am of the opinion [that] there were established just as many dialects [as there were] for the three ages ['epochæ'] of the Saxon language.' Translation Cain (2010: 733).

linguistic periodisation as being the neat division of a timeline, we can equally think of it in terms of grouping together materials that are in some way similar enough to be considered a coherent category. These similarities may refine or disrupt purely chronological divisions. Lye and Manning's labelling is (at least to modern eyes) an extreme example of this principle, to the extent that we might ask whether the concept of periodisation is in this case too anachronistic to be a useful way of analysing the lexicographers' policies.

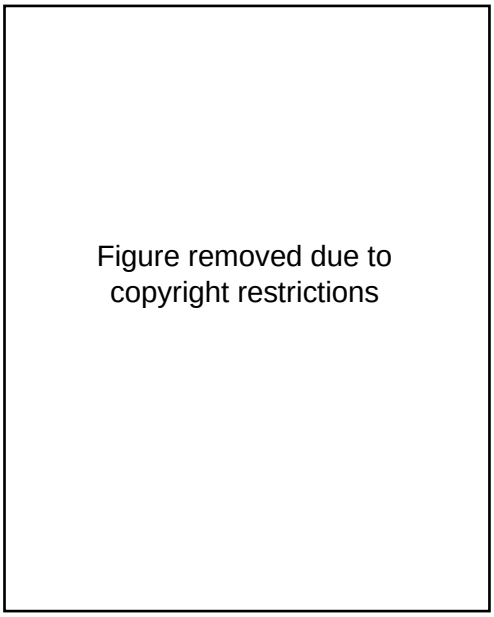
Typeface

One visually striking indication of periodisation in dictionaries of Old English makes use of the antiquarian convention of printing Old English texts in an "Old English" typeface reminiscent of the insular hands found in mediæval manuscripts. The use of such a typeface could serve as a visual signal of the antiquity of a text, and printers went to some effort to obtain suitable fonts. [86] It was likewise common to adopt a pseudo-mediæval style of handwriting when transcribing Old English texts, or even when writing individual words in Old English. In some cases, this appears to have been done with little regard for strict historical or palæographical accuracy; for instance, Stephen Batman, domestic chaplain to Archbishop Matthew Parker, included some notes in insular characters in his annotations to the fourteenth-century Cambridge, Magdalene College MS Pepys 2498 (McLoughlin, 1994) and there is even evidence of William Somner making scattered use of them in notes taken as part of his professional duties in the ecclesiastical courts of Canterbury (Canterbury, Cathedral Archives CCA-DCc-ChAnt/C/940C). However, the distinction between typefaces can be used more systematically to indicate a mediæval English text's status as Old English or otherwise, and hence help users of a dictionary to identify the location of the period boundary in relation to that text.

Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum

The periodising potential of typeface choice in lexicography is perhaps seen most clearly in Somner's dictionary. Old English is printed in the dedicated insular-style typeface, Latin is printed in Roman or italic, and (where present) contemporary English is printed in blackletter. As might be expected, all of Somner's headwords are given in the insular-style Old English typeface. However, Somner also includes a number of lengthy illustrative quotations, most of which are in Old English but some of which are in other languages.

[86] On the convention of using such typefaces and the issues involved in procuring them, see Adams (1917: 157–81) and Lucas (2003).



Faðe and *faul* in Somner (1659). Note the special typeface used to print Old English (particularly the distinctive insular forms of d, f, g and r). *Faðe* is a typical example of one of Somner's short entries, with the Latin and Early Modern English glosses being distinguished by the use of Roman and blackletter respectively. The use of blackletter in the quotation s.v. *faul* is more complex. (Image from *Early English Books Online*, data.historicaltexts.jisc.ac.uk/view?pubId=eebo-ocm12940561e, last accessed April 25, 2021.)

The entry for *faul* shows Somner quoting from a mediæval English text, a vernacular version of the Lord's Prayer found in London, British Library MS Harley 3724 and Cambridge, University Library MS Gg.4.32.[87] However, the prayer is given in blackletter, apparently signalling that Somner does not consider it to be an Old English text. In this way, the period boundary is marked typographically, with everything after the Old English period being treated by Somner as in some sense equivalent to the English of his own day. The same principle is applied to individual words as well as to lengthy quotations; for instance, s.v. *niþing*, Somner quotes from the fifteenth-century Latin-Middle English glossary known as the *Medulla Grammatice*:[88] 'In medulla Grammat. tenax *Anglicè* redditur, **a nything**.'[89] 'A nything' is both printed in blackletter and explicitly identified as being 'anglice' (as opposed to 'saxonice').

Although the neatness of this division is attractive, some complications exist in practice. Somner does not, in fact, use blackletter exclusively for Early Modern English; it is also used when quoting words in other modern European languages, chiefly Dutch (identified by the tag 'Kiliano', referring to the sixteenth-century Dutch lexicographer Cornelis Kiliaan). Somner does not quote long passages are

[87] The text is published by Patterson (1911: 108). It is likely that Somner did not consult a manuscript version directly, but took it from the *Remaines of a Greater Worke, Concerning Britaine* of William Camden (Camden 1605: 17), an author he refers to on numerous occasions elsewhere in his dictionary. Somner would therefore presumably have been familiar with Camden's dating of the text to the reign of Henry II.
[88] Somner knew this work through the Canterbury Cathedral Archives manuscript CCA-DCc-LitMs/D/2, to which he added many additional entries in Old English. A diplomatic transcription of the manuscript is available (McCleary, 1958).
[89] 'In the Medulla Grammatice, tenax is translated into *English* as **a nything**.' (Cf. McCleary 1958: 968)

quoted in Dutch; only single words given as cognates. However, the fact that these Dutch words are printed in blackletter means that the typeface was clearly not used exclusively as a marker of continuity in the history of English (equating late mediæval English with Early Modern English), but has wider applications.[90] Furthermore, the use of blackletter is not even confined to modern languages; it is also used when Somner provides Old Norse and Gothic cognates. It would not have been feasible, of course, to assign a distinct font to every language used in Somner's dictionary even if Somner and his printers had wished to represent such a fine level of detail, but this places limits on the deductions that can be made regarding Somner's understanding of the relationship between Old English and other languages. Nevertheless, the presence of blackletter remains a consistent indicator that a text is considered to be something other than Old English.

The application of the Old English typeface is likewise more complex than it appears at first. A proclamation of Henry III, dated to 1258, is quoted s.v. *unnan*; it is given in the Old English typeface despite postdating the Lord's Prayer quoted s.v. *faul*,[91] This may reflect the fact that Somner's presumed direct source for the Lord's Prayer uses Roman type and does not include the letter thorn (Camden 1605: 17); Somner's text of the proclamation, on the other hand, includes thorn, a character that would only have been available in the Old English typeface. However, Somner's fair manuscript copy of the two entries[92] similarly gives the text s.v. *faul* in Somner's usual handwriting (which was typeset as blackletter) and the text s.v. *unnan* in his Old English handwriting.[93] As the availability of thorn can only be invoked as an explanation in handwriting if we assume that Somner was specifically adjusting his usual habits to anticipate the needs of the printers, it seems simpler to hypothesise that the difference between the two entries in the dictionary reflects the fact that Somner took the text s.v. *faul* from a printed source, but transcribed the text s.v. *unnan* from a manuscript.

The apparent inconsistency in the periodisation of *unnan* is perhaps best explained by this argument that — at least in the case of this entry — Somner's choice of typeface does not represent a distinction in period so much as a distinction in the nature of his immediate source. However the evidence is

[90] More strictly, it seems that blackletter was used for modern Germanic languages; s.v. *blondenfeax*, the Italian *bionda* and *biondello* are printed in italics. These are the only examples of which I am aware of Somner citing Italian in his dictionary. Confusingly, the French *blond* in the same entry is given in blackletter, but this appears to have come about in the typesetting process; in the fair copy of the dictionary that was used for typesetting (Canterbury, Cathedral Library CCA-DCc-LitMs/E/20–21), *blond*, like *bionda* and *biondello*, is given a single underlining, used by Somner to indicate that a word should be set as italic.

[91] This proclamation and its significance to the period boundary is discussed further below p. 99.

[92] Canterbury, Cathedral Library CCA-DCc-LitMs/E/20–21

[93] The entry for *unnan*, including the full text of the Proclamation, was a late addition to the dictionary; it does not appear in an earlier draft of the work (Canterbury, Cathedral Library CCA-DCc-LitMs/C/9–10). In the fair copy (Canterbury, Catheral Library CCA-DCc-LitMs/E/21), the headword is squeezed in between two other entries, and the majority of the entry is inserted on a separate sheet of paper near the end of the volume. It is possible that the late addition of the entry is in some way significant to its use of the Old English typeface, perhaps representing a late change in policy, but this seems unlikely and there is no other evidence that would give obvious support to the theory.

interpreted, it seems clear that, while Somner's use of typefaces may, generally speaking, align with an apparent periodisation agenda, it is not primarily intended as such; it is a design element meant for the convenience of readers, a signal that Somner was part of an antiquarian community of practice in which the use of Old English typefaces was the norm, and is prone to influence by factors such as whether Somner read a source in print or in manuscript. It is therefore a somewhat unreliable guide to Somner's periodisation of mediæval English.

Dictionaries after Somner

The technique of using different typefaces to indicate period distinctions was, in principle, available to lexicographers of Old English after Somner. However, it is not seen as prominently in their work as it is in the *Dictionarium*, since the contrast is only meaningfully apparent when words or passages from post-Old English texts are quoted within an entry. I have not identified any examples in the eighteenth-century Lye-Manning dictionary, which is Old English-Latin (and Gothic-Latin) and only contains occasional glosses in contemporary English.[94]

The use of special types for printing Old English was eventually abandoned, and the possibility of distinction lost. This change is discussed in a lexicographical context by Bosworth (1838: clxxii), who claims: 'Nothing would have led to the adoption of this type [that is, Roman type as opposed to a special Old English type] but a thorough conviction that the Roman character would be the most legible, *and would best show the identity of the present English with the Anglo-Saxon,* as well as the clear analogy existing in the words of all the other Germanic languages' (emphasis mine). In other words, where Somner implicitly asserts the existence of a fundamental linguistic division between Old English and his own speech, Bosworth uses the same medium — that is, the selection of typefaces — to make a claim of linguistic continuity.

However, the practice of using special Old English typefaces was still being used by some scholars at least as late as 1866, the date of publication of the third volume of Oswald Cockayne's *Leechdoms, Wortcunning, and Starcraft of Early England*. This includes a glossary of 'Saxon Names of Worts and Trees from Various Sources'. The old convention of using a special typeface is retained, but the glossary begins with a note that 'such [headwords] as are printed in modern letters are taken from

[94] Where they do appear, such glosses seem to be etymologically motivated. They come before the Latin definition but do not replace it, and are supplied for entries where the Old English headword is very close in form to its later derivative (e.g. *fihtan — to fight*). Italic rather than blackletter is used to print these etymological glosses; indeed, I am not aware of any use of blackletter within the Lye-Manning dictionary. The dictionary does incorporate a useful typeface distinction by printing Gothic headwords in non-Romanised form, clearly separating them from the Old English headwords; however, this distinction does not relate to periodisation and so needs no further discussion here.

Manuscripts later than the Conquest' (Cockayne 1864–6, vol. III: 311). With regard to periodisation, this is a more informative version of Somner's system, since it indicates period (or sub-period) distinctions among headwords, not simply among illustrative quotations. Unlike Somner, Cockayne also states clearly the basis of his periodisation, categorising according to date of manuscript and explicitly locating the period boundary in the year of the Norman Conquest. However, Cockayne's approach is complicated by the practical issue of type availability. The Old English typeface used in Cockayne's glossary (like the equivalent typeface used in Somner's dictionary) incorporates some special characters, but for many letters there is no difference in appearance from a standard Roman type. It is therefore impossible to tell by sight whether Cockayne found a word such as *ac* 'oak, quercus robur' or *coccel* 'cockle, agrostemma githago' in a pre- or post-Conquest manuscript, as it would appear the same set in either typeface. Cockayne's work is, of course, a glossary rather than a full dictionary, but it demonstrates that the same techniques used by Somner were still available in principle to much later lexicographers, if not fully realised.

Of course, the majority of modern publications containing Old English, including dictionaries, use the special characters æ, ð, þ (and sometimes others) for letters that are not used in present-day English. What sets Cockayne's glossary apart is that, even though many of his Old English graphs are visually identical to the Roman ones, there are several (such as f and r) that have both an insular (or Old English) form and a Roman one; they are alternative letterforms rather than additional ones. The use of special characters and the conventions of transcribing Old English are complex topics in their own right, but as they rarely have a significant impact on lexicographical periodisation I do not discuss them here.

A possible exception is the treatment of the letters g and yogh in the *OED*. *OED1* visually distinguished between the flat-topped insular g (ᵹ) and the round-topped yogh (ȝ). In an entry such as *yet* or *any*, it is therefore possible to identify the placement of the period boundaries as the attested spellings switch from printing the first or final letter as <ᵹ> (Old English) to <ȝ> (Middle English). From this it can be seen, for instance, that the Lambeth Homilies, dated to 1175, were considered Middle English, since they are printed with <ȝ>. In mediæval manuscripts, of course, the distinction between <ȝ> and <ᵹ> is not necessarily so clear-cut;[95] the distinction enforced between the two is thus a minor kind of periodisation by typeface, though only applicable to this letter. *OED Online*

[95] The distinction was observed, though not reliably enough that it did not require frequent editorial correction, in the handwritten citation slips used in the compilation of the *OED*, but this is of course a deliberate practice of modern scholarship. In mediæval usage, yogh developed gradually from insular g, as *OED3* itself describes (s.v. *yogh*, n.). (My description of the *OED*'s citation slips containing Old English is based on my examination of those in the possession of the *Dictionary of Old English* at the University of Toronto, and I wish to thank the dictionary staff for granting me access to them.)

reprints all instances of <ȝ> as <g> but leaves <ʒ> unchanged, thus retaining the period distinction but further obscuring the actual gradual transition between the two forms. This is, however, acknowledged in *OED3* s.v. *G*, n.:

> It should also be noted that the conventional printing of *g* in Old English word forms and of *ȝ* in Middle English word forms can disguise continuity of what is in fact the identical written form, for instance among the forms of *any* adj., pron., n., and adv., early Middle English *æniȝ* in fact shows direct continuity of the same spelling as shown by Old English *ænig* (i.e. *æniȝ*), while it is the Middle English spelling *ænig* that in fact shows orthographic change, in the adoption of the continental letter form.

If this is a periodisation device, however, it is hardly an effective one, since it is only visible in words containing a particular letter and this discussion of its significance is not easily found by a user who does not already know to search for it.

The use of typeface distinctions to indicate the language of a text has significant implications for lexicographical periodisation, not least because, unlike many other ways of signalling periodisation decisions to dictionary users, its presence can be seen throughout the dictionary. Even though, without further clarification, the significance of the distinction between Saxon and blackletter typefaces may not be obvious, the fact that a distinction is being made on some grounds is clearly visible even to the casual user. Furthermore, for multiple typefaces to be used in this way, a decision has to be made about the linguistic and period status of every word or passage that is set in type. In this way, periodisation becomes a universally applicable framework for understanding historical texts, rather than something only considered on an ad hoc basis when encountering marginal cases.

However, the examples given above demonstrate that the connection between typeface and periodisation was rarely, if ever, this straightforward in practice. Even Cockayne's glossary, which comes closest to using typeface as a deliberate indication of a period boundary, is hampered by practical issues. In the other dictionaries considered here, we have seen that relatively few situations arise in which typeface selection is a significant vehicle of information about periodisation; most of the time, the typeface used for a word can be predicted from other, contextual factors. Furthermore, the complications involved in interpreting Somner's use of typeface clearly demonstrate that the primary criteria governing typeface choice are dependent on the context of the dictionary's production and do not align well with a modern understanding of periodisation and period boundaries.

Comments in entries

A final element of dictionary structure that can convey information about periodisation is the inclusion of comments within individual entries. Comments of this kind are clearly of limited use as explanations of a dictionary's overall approach to periodisation, as a user will not be aware of them when first consulting a dictionary, and will only encounter them by chance, if at all, as they look up different words. However, although scattered comments are primarily intended to convey specific information about the interpretation of a particular entry, it is sometimes possible to make deductions from them about a lexicographer's understanding of periodisation that apply in principle to the dictionary as a whole. A few examples will serve to illustrate the varied ways in which entry-specific material may have broader significance.

Dictionarium Saxonico-Latino-Anglicum

One of the longest entries[96] in Somner's dictionary is that for *oþer healfe*; it quotes at length from one of Somner's earlier works, the glossary to Roger Twysden's *Historiæ Anglicanæ Scriptores X* (Twysden 1652: sigs. x3r-Dd7v), specifically from the glossary's entry for *marca*, in which Somner cites both Latin and Old English sources to illustrate the conventions for counting by halves that were used in Old English. Significantly, in the middle of the discussion, Somner makes the following observation:

> Alia in promptu sunt exempla; hæc autem ad præsens sufficiant. Haud tacendum tamen est, eandem numerandi rationem posterioribus *Saxonibus* mansisse, ut in Speculo Saxonico (libro, ut summum, circiter duodecimum à Christo nato seculum incæptum, & non ante, teste *Gryphiandro*, de Weichbild. Saxon. cap. 48. nu. 14.) videre licet: ubi (lib. 2 art. 26.) *quartus dimidius nummus* occurrit.[97]

Somner's comment is clearly not intended as a general statement about the boundaries of the Old English period; its scope is both too narrow (relating specifically to a single entry) and too broad

[96] It takes up more than two printed columns; the longest, s.v. *beorn*, occupies all but two lines of a full three-column page.

[97] 'Other examples are at hand; however, let these suffice for the present. Nevertheless, it should not be passed over that the same manner of counting [as that used in Old English] remained to the later *Saxons*, as can be seen in the Speculum Saxonicum (a book begun in roughly the twelfth century after the birth of Christ, and not before, according to *Gryphiander*, De Weichbildis Saxonicis, chapter 48 no. 14) in which (book 2 article 26) *quartus dimidius nummus* occurs.' The source cited is Gryphiander (1625). The *Speculum Saxonicum* mentioned here is a mediæval German law code also known as the *Sachsenspiegel*. As Gryphiander merely discusses the dating of the *Sachsenspiegel* but does not quote from it, Somner presumably had access to a printed edition of the text itself, likely that of Alexander von Zweym (1528: sig. P5v), since later editions generally do not contain the exact phrase 'quartus dimidius nummus'. It seems probable that Somner did not have sufficient knowledge of German to read the German text, hence his reliance on the Latin. Many thanks to Sheila Watts and Mark Chinca, both of the University of Cambridge, for answering my questions about Early Modern editions of the *Sachsenspiegel.*

(discussing a cross-linguistic phenomenon and citing from a Latin version of a continental Saxon law text). Nevertheless, in this passing comment, Somner mentions a specific date that can be used to help fix our understanding of his periodisation. He clearly accepts as a matter of course that the year 1200 is post-Old English, or he would not use a text written at this time as evidence of this convention of counting having continued after the Old English examples that he discusses earlier in the entry. In this way, the comment reveals the unexamined assumptions about periodisation that Somner takes for granted, and expects his readers to take for granted.

Dictionarium Saxonico et Gothico-Latinum

While the Somner entry just discussed focuses on linguistic continuity across period boundaries, the Lye-Manning dictionary provides an interesting, although rare, example of an early lexicographer recognising features that distinguish Old English from the language of later periods. The following is quoted from the second sense s.v. *me*:

> Modum etiam impersonaliter loquendi, per hanc vocem Me, intulerunt *Dani*, vel potius *Danorum* posteri, *Normanni*; aut rarius saltem & specialius antea usurpatam, utendo communem fecerunt… Factum fuisse vero hoc opinatur *Hickesius* (Gram. Angl. Sax. p. 155. fol.) vel per *aphæresin*, a *Saxonico* Men: vel, per *apocopen* truncando a *Gallico* Homme.[98]

Again, the comment is clearly meant to shed light on the history of an individual lexical item and is not intended as a general statement of dictionary policy. However, it still conveys important information about how periodisation functions in Lye and Manning's dictionary. The distribution of *me* is described with reference to the foreign invasion and rule of England, implying that linguistic contact through conquest is seen as the most important factor behind language change. As was also the case with labelling in the dictionary, the influence of Hickes (1703–5) is seen to be extremely important for the dictionary's overall presentation of periodisation.

The fact that this sense of *me* is included in the dictionary at all is also telling. Lye and Manning's entry is noticeably cautious on the topic of whether it existed at all before the Danish and Norman influences on English, and the possibility is raised that *me* is, etymologically speaking, French. Thus, this entry is a good example of the tendency of Lye and Manning towards inclusiveness, even of material that might not be Old English at all by their own account.

[98] 'Also, the *Danes*, or rather the *Normans*, the followers of the *Danes*, imported a way of speaking impersonally with this word Me, or at least they brought into common use what was rarer and more specialised before the usurpation…. *Hickes* (Anglo-Saxon Grammar p. 155 fol.) supposes this to have been made in truth either by *aphæresis*, from the *Saxon* Men, or to have been truncated by *apocope* from the *French* Homme.'

In this particular case, there was perhaps another pressure to include *me*: it appears in this sense in one of the appendix texts discussed above (p. 62). Footnote f to one of the manumissions reproduced from Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 140 (Lye & Manning, 1772 vol. II: sig. Yyyy yyyy 1r) offers a comment on the word 'me' in the phrase 'to þam þ[æt] me hi fægere underfo [and] holdlice for heore sawla beo,' and directs readers to the corresponding dictionary entry. It is the only comment in the appendices to show this degree of interest in the linguistic detail of Old English vocabulary and its dating. It seems most likely that the entry was written before the inclusion of the manumission in the appendix, as the former does not mention the latter. Nevertheless, this serves as an interesting, and surprisingly rare, example, of an approach to periodisation that remains consistent across different elements of the dictionary.

An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary

Scattered comments are not only a feature of early dictionaries. For instance, a similar technique is used to draw users' attention to problematic late material in the Bosworth-Toller dictionary. In this case, the comments could also be seen as partial compensation for the dictionary's lack of a labelling system, although the comments are too variable and too entry-specific to be analysed as labels.

Various comments in Bosworth-Toller identify sources that are considered to be marginal or atypical examples of Old English. For instance, s.v. *steallere*, the following observation is given in square brackets after the definition ('a marshall'): 'The word occurs only in late documents; the passages given belong to Edward the Confessor's reign.' In other cases, a specific source is not mentioned, as is the case s.v. *híd* in Toller's supplement to the dictionary (1921): 'The nominatives *híde, gyrde* […] are perhaps really incorrect late forms.'

Interestingly, most of the comments of this type that mention the idea of lateness are clustered in either the second half of the main dictionary or in Toller's 1921 supplement. This means that they do not appear in the part of the dictionary that is based most closely on Bosworth's work, but in the substantial additional material contributed by Toller after Bosworth's death.[99] The distribution of comments suggests, then, that Toller had a greater interest than Bosworth in providing comments of this type that discuss individual sources in terms of their lateness (that is, their problematic proximity to the period boundary).

[99] Baker (2003: 294–7) and Bankert (2003: 304) discuss Bosworth and Toller's contributions to the dictionary, and the differences between them.

The Oxford English Dictionary

One way in which the *OED* is unlike the other dictionaries considered in this study is that it records not only Old English vocabulary, but also the terminology that later English speakers have used to describe Old English. *OED* entries for these terms thus offer yet another perspective on periodisation. Such definitions are similar to the comments mentioned above in other dictionaries in the sense that they appear scattered throughout the work rather than given a prominent position in the paratext. However, unlike other comments, they define a period directly, rather than indirectly shedding light on the definition of a period through the discussion of a particular word or source. Furthermore, the *OED* entries are more likely to be found by users seeking for information on periodisation, since there is a clear link between the headwords and the topic of periodisation. In this sense, then, the *OED* entries I am about to discuss sit somewhere between paratextual material and the passing comments of other dictionary entries in terms of the extent to which they make an intentional contribution to the dictionary's overall representation of periodisation.[100]

The *OED3* entry *Old English* (*n.* and *adj.*) in *OED Online* offers users a wealth of information on both the limits of the period as applied in the *OED* and on the general history of the term. Sense A.1. specifies a period boundary: 'The English language of an earlier period; (now) *spec.* the language in use until around 1150.' The year 1150 is, of course, the standard cut-off date for the end of Old English in the *OED* (see above p. 67). An explanatory note adds further detail about the history of the term and the morphological and lexical characteristics that distinguish Old English from Middle English. In addition, the web format of the entry allows users to be directed to relevant material elsewhere. Not only is a cross-reference to *Middle English* (*n.*) supplied in sense A.1., but a pop-up 'commentary' box is associated with the *Old English* headword, giving links to an article on Old English on the *OED* blog (Durkin 2012b) and to the *OED* entries *Anglo-Saxon* (*n.* and *adj.*), *English* (*adj.*, *adv.*, and *n.*) and *Middle English* (*n.* and *adj.*). These links therefore make it easy for users to understand how the *OED*'s periodising use of 'Old English' fits into a wider theoretical and terminological framework.

In earlier editions of the *OED*, the level of detail provided was much lower. This is partly due to the more limited cross-referencing achievable in print (versus digital) format, but even setting this aside, there is generally less clarity when it comes to identifying the limits of the Old English period. For instance, the reference to the year 1150 is not present in the entry for *Old English* prior to *OED3*; users are redirected to *English* (*a.* and *n.*), where sense B.1.b offers the much vaguer formulation,

[100] This is not to imply that *OED* entries cannot also include passing comments with relevance to periodisation in otherwise unconnected entries, as seen in other dictionaries. The size of the *OED*, however, makes these difficult to locate.

'*Old English*: in popular use applied vaguely to all obsolete forms of the language. According to the nomenclature now generally adopted in this country, the *Old English* period ends about 1100–1150'. It is clear that the *OED3* revisions represent a concerted effort to provide more — and more consistent — information on periodisation than was available in earlier editions of the *OED*. Similar processes of revision can be seen in other relevant entries; for instance, a reference in *OED1* s.v. *Anglo-Saxon* to Old English being 'the language of England before 1100' (in contradiction to the 1150 date used elsewhere) is removed from the *OED3* definition, but repurposed as an illustrative quotation.[101]

Conclusion: What is the significance of dictionaries' different means of expressing periodisation?

The examples given above demonstrate the considerable variety of ways in which periodisation may be expressed in dictionaries. The fact that this information may appear in so many different places within the structure of a dictionary is a reminder that periodisation is not an isolated issue that can easily be confined to one stage of the dictionary-writing process, but a general concern that may be addressed from different angles depending on the priorities of the lexicographer and the conventions of presentation used in a given dictionary. However, even accounting for these differences in approach, the dictionaries considered in this study are not equal in the amount of information they provide about their periodisation decisions, or in how easily this information may be retrieved by users.

We can think of the different evidence for periodisation in dictionaries as existing on a continuum of intentionality. At one end of this continuum are lexicographers who clearly wanted to make their policy on periodisation clear to dictionary users, for instance by including a clear discussion of the issue in their preface. The *DOE* is the best example of this; the intended chronological scope of the dictionary is stated directly in the preface, and multiple labelling systems, applied liberally (and relatively systematically) within entries, likewise draw issues of dating and periodisation to the attention of casual dictionary users who might not have consulted the relevant parts of the prefatory material.

At the other extreme are lexicographers who are uninterested in providing their users with information about periodisation, and who often seem to have given little or no conscious thought to the issue. Scattered comments within individual entries, for example, may provide relevant information, but

[101] The use of the 1100 date is presumably a retention of an alternative system of labelling used by the *OED*; see above, p. 67.

they will be missed by users who do not happen to consult the entry in question, and so are not a reliable way of informing users about the policies of the dictionary as a whole. To take another example, although the distinction in typeface employed by Somner is applied throughout the dictionary, it is also unhelpful in informing readers, since the rules governing its application (if indeed they were ever consciously formulated as such) are never explained and can only be reconstructed by carefully comparing multiple entries.

It is clear that much information about periodisation in dictionaries is not reliably expressed directly. Over time, an experienced user may begin to recognise, if only subconsciously, that certain sources are (or are not) represented in a dictionary, or are treated in particular ways, and from this gain a sense of that dictionary's interpretation of the scope of the Old English period. However, to examine this, we need to move beyond the deliberate expressions of periodisation discussed in this chapter. Instead, the interested researcher must reconstruct a dictionary's periodisation through analysing cited sources for evidence of lexicographers' entry-writing practice. Subsequent chapters will offer such analysis.

Most of the dictionaries in this study fall somewhere in the middle of the continuum of intentionality; relevant information about periodisation is supplied, at least sporadically, to users who know where to look for it, but it was clearly not a priority to establish the period scope of the dictionary as one of its defining features. Even in the *DOE*, issues of periodisation are not signalled as clearly as some other aspects of dictionary policy. What is more, in most dictionaries, including the *DOE*, there are at least occasional inconsistencies in the specific claims made about periodisation and the period boundary. Some such inconsistencies are almost inevitable in a lexicographical project of any substantial size or duration, but they may nevertheless mislead or confuse users.

The number of dictionaries considered here is not large enough to make particularly meaningful claims about any overall trends in the historical development of how periodisation is expressed in dictionaries of Old English. Speaking broadly, we might say that earlier dictionaries of Old English tended to provide less direct information about periodisation, and that later dictionaries both show an increased consciousness of the need to clarify periodisation policy and are able to make use of an increasing number of presentational techniques to do so. However, there is no clear trajectory of increasing detail. Even when one dictionary depends closely on another, as Bosworth's (1838) does on Lye and Manning's (1772) or Bosworth and Toller's (1882–98) does on Bosworth's, ways of expressing periodisation may be abandoned as well as added: Bosworth omits the labels used in Lye-Manning and Bosworth-Toller abandons the distinctive, lengthy preface of Bosworth's earlier dictionary. It is therefore important to consider each dictionary on its own terms.

CHAPTER 4: DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO PERIODISATION

The previous chapter demonstrated how different elements of dictionary structure may provide more, or less, informative indications of a lexicographer's approach to periodising mediæval English. I concluded with the suggestion that, in addition to (and to a certain extent independent of) their actual information content, these varied ways of expressing periodisation can also indicate the extent to which a lexicographer intended to engage with the issue of periodisation.

This chapter considers in more detail the different attitudes to periodisation and the period boundary that can be seen in the dictionaries in this study. In the first section, I ask which dictionaries, taken as a whole, appear to demonstrate a sense of the existence of a boundary between periods in mediæval English, and what the nature of that boundary is. In the second section, I present an overview of the different criteria used to define and locate period boundaries.

Attitudes to the period boundary

Unanalysed periodisation

As I suggested in the previous chapter, some of the dictionaries in this study include little or no sustained analysis of periodisation. Old English (or some approximately equivalent term) may be mentioned as a linguistic entity, but no details are provided regarding its end point, the periods that come after it, or the characteristics that distinguish it from those later periods. Although all of the dictionaries in this study engage at least to some extent with issues of periodisation, in some a lack of analysis is the norm.

In some cases, the possibility remains open that users of the dictionary were expected to bring this knowledge with them. Somner concludes his preface with the following comment:

> Ut proæmium istud extendam expleamve, *Saxonicæ* linguæ antiquitatem, amplitudinem, utilitatem, aut alias ipsius dotes & merita prosequendi & enarrandi gratiâ, nemo hominum speramus expectar. Meo certè judicio, hoc pensum à pluribus viris longè doctissimis... ut si illud aggrederer, non aliud quàm actum agere, & post *Homerum* Iliadem scribere. messem deniq; in alienam falcem meam immittere, meritò judicari possem.[102]

[102] 'That I should here ingorge, or further inlarge in my discourse of the Saxon language, with an intent to show the antiquity, amplitude, utility, or other properties of it, I hope is not here expected. For my owne part, I conceive this taske so well already undertaken, & so happily & fully performed by severall learned men... that I should but actum ager, & seeme to write Iliads after Homer, or to thrust my sickle into other mens harvest, to enter into any such discourse' [Canterbury, Cathedral Archives, CCA-DCc-ChAnt/M/352, f. 5r].

(Somner, 1659: *Ad Lectorem* §18)

Somner appears to take it for granted that the studies already published by other antiquaries provide a sufficient description of the nature of Old English; the primary purpose of his dictionary is to supply lexical detail rather than to tackle general questions about the field. Users of the dictionary are expected to be familiar enough with these existing publications to justify Somner's rhetorical display of modesty in the above passage; at the least, they are encouraged to seek out and adopt the attitudes already expressed by the scholars that Somner mentions. We might recall, too, the personal networks that characterised much of the early study of Old English; Somner could expect a significant proportion of his early readers to be people within his closely-knit social and intellectual network, which would be another reason for them to tend to share his assumptions about the scope of the dictionary and of the Old English period.[103]

Somner's deliberate choice to defer to (supposed) common knowledge makes a statement about the position of his dictionary as part of a wider intellectual endeavour. It helps explain why Somner might have chosen not to offer a more detailed account of periodisation within the dictionary; in practice, however, this common knowledge is unlikely to have been much more informative when it comes to the detailed consideration of periodisation. The primary source mentioned by Somner in his preface as an illustration of the characteristics of Old English is the *De Quatuor Linguis Commentationes Pars Prior* (1650: Old English is discussed at pp. 127–418) of his friend Meric Casaubon; it is mainly concerned with issues of etymology and language origins, particularly Casaubon's attempt to derive Old English from Greek. This kind of investigation is much more likely to be what Somner had in mind when he wrote of the existing body of knowledge on Old English, rather than anything that would directly clarify the boundaries of the Old English period.

[103] For instance, Brackmann (2012) emphasises, particularly in her first chapter, the significance of research circulated among sixteenth-century antiquarian acquaintances in manuscript form. Lutz's (2000) account of the early history of study of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle serves as an excellent case study of the extent to which antiquarian and Old English research in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was strongly associated with networks of scholars who shared social connections and political sympathies as well as access to primary and secondary sources.
The scholars considered in studies such as these were the leading lights of Old English scholarship, and as such not necessarily representative of the wider community of people who might have purchased and used Somner's dictionary in a more casual fashion. Some sense of Somner's readers might be gathered from the list of subscribers printed at the end of his dictionary (1659: sigs. Ttt 2r-v); many of the subscribers are either residents of Somner's native county of Kent (and likely personal acquaintances), or, though not necessarily Old English specialists themselves, can easily be linked back to Somner through shared acquaintances and antiquarian interests. To take one example, John Marsham, the sixth subscriber listed, had contributed a *Propylaeon* to Roger Dodsworth and William Dugdale's *Monasticon Anglicanum* (1655), a work on the history of English monasteries to which Somner had contributed transcriptions and translations (Kennett 1726: 83). More such relationships can be uncovered through the study of private correspondence, as I have shown with regard to Somner and Dugdale's working relationship (Fletcher 2018).

Precise boundaries

Another possible approach to periodisation is to attempt to establish a precise, dated boundary between Old English and the period that follows it. All the dictionaries in this study use this approach to some extent, some straightforwardly so and others with caveats.

Modelling the history of English as a series of stable and cohesive periods divided by abrupt changes is problematic. It has the potential to obscure significant variation (not only temporal, but also regional, sociolinguistic and so on) actually attested within a monolithic category such as Old English and leaves little room for considering the diffusion of change.[104] Despite this, the descriptive convenience of such a model, particularly for period lexicography, cannot be denied. In principle, selecting a single date as representing the absolute end of the Old English period establishes a convenient, consistent and objective means of determining whether a given source is admissible as evidence when describing the vocabulary of Old English. In practice, of course, applying such rules rigidly to the complexity of mediæval texts is likely to lead to difficulties and inconsistencies. Indeed, a single dictionary may mention multiple dates at different points, all (apparently) presented as precise boundaries. Bosworth's dictionary mentions 1258 (1838: xvii) and 1100 (1838: clxxii), though it is implied that the latter is an idealised period boundary that would not be enforceable in practice. The *OED*, at various points in the history of its development, used the dates 1250 (Philological Society 1859: 5), 1131 (Gilliver 2016: 106), 1100 (see above p. 67) and 1150 (the date used by the *OED* today) for the period boundary, though very little documentation survives to provide evidence for when and why the decisions were made to change from using one date to another.

I have observed two different principles for selecting the date of a precise period boundary. In some cases, the date is evidently chosen for its numerical convenience: a round century or half-century. This gives us Bosworth's selection of 1100 (Bosworth 1838: clxxii) as well as the 1150 boundary used by both the *OED* and *DOE*. Even if the point is not made directly, it is clear that the use of round dates such as these has a certain symbolic significance, emphasising the arbitrariness of selecting a single date and implying that the precise boundary is a descriptive convenience rather than representing a rapid change genuinely occurring overnight on New Year's Eve 1099 or 1149.

In other cases, the date selected does mark a particular event, but this event is external to linguistic history, instead being associated with a symbolic historical turning point.[105] This turning point is

[104] On the considerable variation within mediæval English and its implications for the precise boundaries of traditional periodisation, see Lass (2000: 32–4).

[105] There has been considerable discussion of how useful it is to take account of external events in periodisation. For the history of English, see for instance Nicolaisen (1995:167–8) for an argument in favour of internal criteria, Milroy (1996)

sometimes a particular text or author envisaged as ushering in a new linguistic age. It appears to be on this principle that, elsewhere in his dictionary, Bosworth places the end of Old English in 1258:

> The Saxon power ceased when William the Conqueror ascended the throne, but not the language; for Anglo-Saxon, after rejecting or changing many of its inflections, continued to be spoken by the old inhabitants till the time of Henry the Third, A.D. 1258. What was written after this period has generally so great a resemblance to our present language, that it may evidently be called English.
>
> (Bosworth 1838: xvii)

Bosworth apparently selected 1258 as the conclusive end point for Old English because this is the date of a proclamation of Henry III to the people of Huntingdonshire.[106] This text was commonly accepted in the early nineteenth century as being the first dateable text in English (as opposed to Anglo- or Semi-Saxon). As early as 1768 it was being quoted by the historian George, Lord Lyttelton, as an illustration of 'how near the language then written approached to that of the present century' (Lyttelton 1767–81: II 344). I have not found any instances of scholars before Bosworth's *Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language* explicitly identifying the Proclamation as the earliest identifiably English text; the claim was, however, made several times in the decade following Bosworth's dictionary (Hallam 1837–9 vol. I: 61; Latham 1841: 64), perhaps following Bosworth but more likely (given the vagueness of Bosworth's reference) independently.[107]

Bosworth's choice of 1258 as a periodising moment is thus a good example of how the period boundary may be associated with a particular text. However, the choice of the Proclamation in particular raises the issue of another way in which the period boundary may be defined: by associating

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as advocating the importance of external changes as historical sociolinguistic factors, and Matto and Momma (2008:7–8) for a suggestion that 'the usefulness of "internal" and "external" as defining conceptions in within HEL may have run its course.' As Curzan concludes in her survey of periodisation in the history of English, 'In the end, many of the fundamental questions about periodisation in the history of English boil down to what counts as "linguistic" history' (Curzan, 2012: 1254).

[106] The proclamation was in fact distributed, as stated in the text itself, throughout the kingdom. The letter sent to Huntingdonshire was enrolled on the Patent Rolls; although a single-sheet copy exists (Oxfordshire Record Office (Temple Road, Cowley), OCA/H.29.1), most scholarship has concentrated on the Patent Rolls version. For text, discussion, and a brief bibliography of recent editions, see Laing (2013: index numbers 11 & 12). The edition by Ellis (1869b) contains useful information on earlier editions.

Coincidentally, the first known printing of the text was in Somner's *Dictionarium,* s.v. *unnan.* However, Somner does not seem to view the text as Old English; although he includes it in its entirety for historical interest, Somner mentions it in the first place only to demonstrate that the verb is 'purum putum *Anglo-Saxonicum; Anglo-Normannis* autem eorum expugnatoribus, transmissum, & in horum monumentis post aliquot secula, ævo scil. *Henrici* Regis *Anglo-Normannici,* istius nominis tertii, inter ejusmodi multa, repertum' (pure, unmixed Anglo-Saxon; however, [it was] passed on to their conquerors, the Anglo-Normans, and is found in those monuments after several centuries, indeed in the age of the Anglo-Norman king Henry, third of that name, among many of this sort). Samuel Henshall's assertion, then, that 'Somner considers [it] a Saxon Record' would seem to misrepresent Somner's position (Henshall 1798: 33). On Somner's use of typefaces in this entry, see above p. 83.

[107] It also seems to be alluded to in a document from the early stages of planning for the *OED*, which locates the 'commencement of English' at 'about the end of the reign of Henry III' (Philological Society 1859: 3).

it with a perceived historical turning point. In his discussion of the significance of the Proclamation to scholars such as Henry Hallam and Robert Latham, David Matthews makes a useful point that might also be applied to Bosworth:

> Despite Latham's more philologically informed judgement, he, too, associates the emergence of English with a moment that is political as much as it is linguistic: English is seen as springing into being with a regal proclamation about liberty and individual rights.
>
> (Matthews 1999: xxix)

Although Bosworth is eager to stress that declarations of liberty are an essential part of the ancient Germanic national character as well as the modern English one (Bosworth 1838: lxiv, lxxxii; more explicitly in Bosworth 1848a: iii-iv), the idea of linking a linguistic period boundary to a nationally defining political moment remains. This is not to say that there is no textual or linguistic support for Bosworth's selection of this date; for some time after the Conquest, and even more so after the reign of William the Conqueror, it was rare for royal documents to be issued in English (Machan 2003: 36). The striking fact that the Proclamation was issued in English as well as Latin has led some commentators to identify it as a sociolinguistic turning point heralding the re-emergence of English as a language of official communication. Although recent scholarship has argued that it is unlikely that the use of English in the Proclamation was intended as a statement of national linguistic identity (Machan 2003: 21–69), the interpretation of the Proclamation as marking a change in linguistic policy was apparently accepted by Bosworth as well as by many of his contemporaries, and it could thus be used as a convenient point of division between Old and Modern English: an event with enough significance for language, history and national identity to be given the status of an absolute period division.[108]

The Norman Conquest as period boundary

More often, however, the placement of the period boundary in early mediæval English is linked to a much better known historical event, namely the Norman Conquest and the Battle of Hastings in 1066. The dynastic shift represented by this event, whereby rule of England passed to the Norman William the Conqueror, has long been considered of especial historical significance, and has frequently been invoked in accounts of linguistic history. The explicit use of the Norman Conquest as a significant

[108] On the other hand, there were other nineteenth-century commentators who apparently considered the Proclamation to have neither the linguistic nor the political significance to merit drawing the period boundary at this point, and thus categorised it as still being a form of Old English. For instance, Carl Friedrich Koch wrote of the text's 'reinen sächsischen Ausdruck,' saying that 'es ist Ags. mit abgeschwächten Formen' (pure Saxon expression... it is Anglo-Saxon with weakened forms) (Koch 1863: 15).

factor in determining the linguistic period boundary dates back (at least) to one of the first printed books containing Old English, the *Testimonie of Antiqvitie* (Parker et al. ?1566). The first text in this book is referred to as 'A Sermon of the Paschall Lambe, and of the sacramentall body and bloud of Christ our Sauiour, written in *the olde Saxon tounge before the Conquest*' (sig. Ciiir [19], emphasis mine).

The Norman Conquest is repeatedly alluded to as a historical and linguistic turning point in Somner's dictionary. The dictionary is prefaced by four dedicatory poems addressed to Somner, all of which celebrate his work. Thus, although they were not written by the lexicographer himself, they still invoke his authority and play a significant role in declaring the nature and content of the *Dictionarium.*[109] These poems appear to endorse an approach to periodisation that sees Old English ending abruptly and catastrophically in 1066 with the Norman Conquest. William Jacob declares, now that 'A Language lost from th'Archives and from thee / Receives a happy *Palingenesy*', that 'wee'l now forget / Our femal *French* and *Norman* Sibbolet' (Somner 1659: sig. c1r). To Ioannes de Bosco (a.k.a. John Boys) the end of Old English is marked not only by the Norman invasion but by that of Cnut at the beginning of the eleventh century: 'Boots it to know how our forefathers spoke / Ere *Danish, Norman,* or this present yoke / Did gall our patient necks?' (Somner 1659: sig. b3r).[110]

Of course, we should bear in mind that the authors of these poems were not antiquaries or lexicographers, and in any case had as their purpose praise of Somner's work (and, especially in the case of Boys's poem, contemporary political comment) rather than scholarly precision. That the Norman (or, in the case of Boys, Danish[111]) conquest serves as a convenient shorthand for characterising a linguistic change does not necessarily imply a genuine belief that Old English abruptly ceased to exist as such at the very moment of political transition. However, the dedicatory poems are evidence of the popularisation of this idea, as well as of its association with a

[109] At least the final two (by Joshua Childrey and William Jacob) must have been seen and approved by Somner directly, since they appear in his own hand in the final manuscript copy, now Canterbury, Cathedral Archives CCA-DCc-LitMs/E/20. Another poem, by Henry Hugford, is present but is not in Somner's hand. John Boys's poem is absent from Lit MS E.20, at least as it currently stands; if it was ever present, it must have been lost before the manuscript was foliated in 1966, but it is more likely that Boys's poem was a late addition to the dictionary.

[110] The 'present yoke' is apparently a reference, from a Royalist perspective, to the Commonwealth of England; the poem thus equates the study of Old English with the Royalist cause. For the concept and evolving interpretation of the concept of the 'Norman Yoke' and the various political ends it was made to serve, see Hill (1958), although this discussion gives more attention to the use of the idea by Parliamentarian thinkers, and Simmons (2000), which focuses on the use of the concept by the Diggers, and on its influences on nineteenth-century thinkers. The application of the image of the Norman yoke to the (perceived) replacement of Old English by French was also not unique to Boys; see for instance Camden (1605: 22), who writes of 'the practise of the Normans, who as a monument of their Conquest, would have yoaked the English vnder their tongue, as they did vnder their command'.

[111] See below (p. 116) for further discussion. Although earlier sources in particular tend to emphasise the cultural and linguistic impact of the Scandinavian settlement of England as much as they do that of the Norman settlement, I have found no examples in the dictionaries of the Scandinavian settlement being assigned a single start date (as 1066 for the Norman) that could be used as a precise period boundary.

lexicographical project. Even if Somner never intended the poems to be read as sincere reflections of his approach to periodisation, his failure to specify this approach elsewhere in the dictionary's front matter leaves them open to this interpretation by dictionary users.

Occasional references to the Conquest also appear within the main body of Somner's dictionary, such as the following comment s.v. *cniht* (Old English 'boy, servant', which later developed into 'knight'):

> We now casting off the old signification of the word, ordinarily understand by it *Eques auratus*, or as we vulgarly turne it, *Miles*. But in that notion I never find it used by the *English-Saxons*: after whose supplanting by the *Normans* it succeeded in the place of their ðegen, or *Thane*. [112]

As in the prefatory poems, the Normans are implied to have brought about significant, periodising change. The phrasing of this observation on semantic change does not rule out the possibility that the 'supplanting by the *Normans*' was the beginning of a gradual linguistic development: a catalyst for subsequent change rather than the moment of change itself. Nor, indeed, is it made clear that 'supplanting' necessarily refers to a single date rather than to a process; 1066 is not mentioned. Nevertheless, it follows in the established path of aligning linguistic change and historico-political event.

The semantic change of *cniht*, and its replacement of *ðegen*, can be seen as a cultural change as much as an abstract lexical one; the earlier *ðegen* did not perform exactly the same social role as the later *knight*. In other entries, Somner invokes the Conquest as a cultural turning point without explicitly mentioning linguistic change at all. For instance, in a discussion s.v. *ordæl* of various kinds of trial by ordeal, he observes that 'I wish my Reader not to reckon this [walking across red-hot ploughshares] for any of the kinds of *Ordeal* ever practised in England; as neither (untill the time of the Normans: for before I cannot trace it in any of our Lawes or stories) that of Camp-fight, Duell, or single combat'. The reference here is not to the currency of *ordæl* as a word, but rather to the legal custom to which it refers; it might be compared to Somner's use, in another of his works, of the Norman Conquest as a reference point for the dating of different styles of architecture (Somner, 1640: 168). In other words, Somner's use of the Conquest as a period boundary is partly — and arguably primarily — non-linguistic.

After Somner, the use of the Norman Conquest as a period boundary does not by any means disappear, but it is complicated by other factors. One of these is an increased emphasis placed on the idea that

[112] *Eques auratus* = Latin 'knight'; *miles* = Latin 'soldier'. Somner's point is that in Old English *cniht* was not a title of social or military rank, and that the closest Old English equivalent to modern 'knight' was *ðegen*. The semantic amelioration that led to the modern sense of 'knight' developing from *cniht* is ascribed by Somner to Norman influence. Compare Verstegan (1605: 318–19).

the Conquest was not merely a periodising political event, but brought about a new linguistic situation (increased contact between English and French) as a direct result of its political changes. It therefore becomes less of an arbitrary boundary and is instead presented more explicitly as a direct catalyst of change. The specific association of the Conquest with French contact as a mechanism for linguistic change was doubtless available to Somner, but is not discussed directly by him, and is often obscured by his tendency to focus on the broader cultural impact of Norman rule. Later lexicographers, however, often conflate the Conquest as a period boundary with the introduction of French loanwords. For instance, the Lye-Manning entry for *me* (quoted above p. 90) apparently prefers the hypothesis that the word was introduced by the Normans because this would fit with Hickes's suggestion that it is a clipping of the French *homme* (Lye & Manning 1772: s.v. *homme*; cf. Hickes 1703–5, vol. I pt. I: 155). The use of the presence of loanwords as a criterion in periodisation is, however, a complex topic and will be discussed further in a subsequent section (p. 116).

Later lexicography also tends to acknowledge more clearly that although the Norman Conquest may be a politically symbolic moment, the cultural (and linguistic) changes it is used to symbolise did not, in fact, take place immediately on William's victory at Hastings in 1066. Recognition of this fact led Bosworth to state clearly his rejection of 1066 as a linguistic period boundary: 'The Saxon power ceased when William the Conqueror ascended the throne, but not the language' (Bosworth 1838: xvii).

Although post-Conquest texts and manuscripts are more likely to be treated as unreliable or liminal (for instance in labelling, as seen above p. 72), excluding them altogether from dictionaries of Old English would significantly limit the amount of source material available to lexicographers.[113] Even Somner, of all the lexicographers in this study most clearly invokes the idea of 1066 as an absolute boundary, included at least some acknowledged post-Conquest material. A particularly clear example can be found in the entry for *domes-dæg*, which runs as follows:

> Dies judicii. **the day of judgement.** *It.* Liber apud *Anglos* censualis: *Angliæ* Notitia. **the famous** *Domesday* **book in the Exchequer.** Monumentum sanè hoc non augustum minùs quàm antiquum, de quo utilis admodum & jucundus apud doctiss. *Spelmannum*, in optimo Glossario, tractatus.[114]

[113] See above p. 26.

[114] 'The day of judgement… *Also* a census-book among the English: Record of *England*… This monument is certainly no less venerable than it is ancient, about which there is a very useful and delightful discussion in the most learned Spelman, in his excellent Glossary.' Note the use of the term 'Angli' (English) rather than Somner's usual 'Saxones' (Saxons), another indication that he is consciously discussing a post-Conquest society.

In this case, an entire sense refers exclusively to the Domesday Book, a work that not only post-dates the Norman Conquest, but that could be said to count the Conquest as a driving factor in its production. While Somner's periodisation here is not quite as explicit as in previous examples — the entry does not state the date of the Domesday Book outright — the fact that it post-dates the conquest was well-known to Somner (and, presumably, to his intended audience) and is made clear in the discussion by Henry Spelman (1626, s.v. *Domesdei*) to which Somner refers.[115]

The use of 1066 as an absolute boundary in recent dictionaries is thus rare.[116] It is sometimes used as a historical point of reference (mentioning that a particular word or form is attested pre- or post-Conquest), as though in acknowledgement of its popular significance as a periodising moment, while emphasising linguistic continuity between pre- and post-Conquest usage; see for instance Bosworth-Toller s.v. *-isse*[117] and *-hám*.[118] It also continues to be used in defining and discussing words for concepts only introduced to England under Norman rule; see for instance the *DOE*'s definition of *dene-gyld* (s.v.) as 'Danegeld; a land-tax collected after the Norman Conquest'.

Marginal categories

Given the problems with adopting an absolute date boundary to characterise the end of the Old English period, it is unsurprising that many lexicographers have modified their periodisation strategies to allow for the existence of marginal material. A boundary may still be established, but it is explicitly noted to be a guideline rather than an absolute; material extending beyond this boundary can be included, but it is marked in some way.

If we re-examine how some of the absolute date boundaries discussed above are employed in practice, we find that a marginal category is created around them. The 1100 date mentioned by Bosworth in his 1838 dictionary is a good example of this. It is discussed in the section of the preface called 'An Account of the Work'; this short section, unlike most of the rest of the preface, is not an abstract

[115] Spelman's glossary was later edited, completed and reissued by Somner's friend and fellow antiquary William Dugdale under the title of *Glossarium Archaiologium* (1664).
[116] It is more frequent in other forms of scholarship; for instance, the first volume of the *Cambridge History of the English Language* (Hogg, 1992) ends its account in 1066, though not without hedging. As Lass (1992: 24) observes in the second volume of the series, 'if we take the Norman Conquest as a symbolic division between Old and Middle English, we must use it with tact.'
[117] 'This suffix, Lat. *-issa*, which in later English became the common suffix to mark the feminine gender, is found before the Norman Conquest in the word *abbud-isse* abbess' (Bosworth & Toller 1882–98: s.v. *-isse*).
[118] 'The distinction between *-ham* and *-hám* seems to have been lost before the Norman Conquest, as in the Chronicle one MS. has *tó Buccingahamme*, another *tó Buccingahám*' (Bosworth & Toller 1882–98: s.v. *--hám*).

historical and linguistic discussion but instead describes practical details of dictionary policy. Bosworth describes the scope of the dictionary in the following terms:

> It was originally intended to exclude all impure Anglo-Saxon words, and to introduce none of a later date than A.D. 1100. Subsequently it was found desirable to take a wider range, and to include some terms of a more recent formation. These are mostly from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, with their date affixed. As the authors are always quoted, the age and purity of a word can at once be seen.
>
> (Bosworth 1838: clxxii)

As Bosworth had already mentioned another precise date boundary, 1258, earlier in the preface (1838: xvii), this statement immediately creates a grey area; it is implied that, although Bosworth considered English written between 1100 and 1258 to be Anglo-Saxon, he nevertheless thought it 'impure', presumably because of its 'rejecting or changing many of its inflections' as he had mentioned earlier in the preface (1838: xvii).

More interesting than the simple fact of the inconsistency in dates, however, is how Bosworth treats the 1100 boundary. Bosworth admits that he did not ultimately use 1100 as a cut-off point in his compilation of the dictionary; he still mentions his initial selection of 1100, as though presenting it as a theoretical ideal of the period boundary, but acknowledges that in practice he included vocabulary of a later date. In this, Bosworth appears to be resigning himself to the impossibility of describing language change in terms of hard boundaries. Significantly, in this passage Bosworth does not offer a new hard boundary at a later date (perhaps 1258), but instead describes how his original boundary has become fuzzy. Only 'some' later terms are included, he tells users, and these have been admitted largely because of their presence in a particular text (the Chronicle). In other words, Bosworth is describing a selection process that increasingly operated on a case-by-case basis when it came to later vocabulary. This selection process is inconsistent not only from one text to another, but also from one part of the dictionary to another, as Bosworth admits in a footnote when discussing the inclusion of the 'terms of a more recent formation': 'As many words were omitted in the early part of the alphabet, the supplement is rendered much more extensive than would otherwise have been necessary' (Bosworth 1838: clxxii).

On this basis, we can see post-1100 vocabulary in Bosworth as a marginal category created by the deliberate softening of a precise date boundary. Interestingly, the status of this category is shifted in Bosworth's later *Compendious Anglo-Saxon and English Dictionary* (1848a), a revised and abridged version of the 1838 dictionary. The preface to the *Compendious Dictionary* contains a passage corresponding to that cited above (1848a: vii), but the words 'and to introduce none of a later date

than A.D. 1100' and 'and to include some terms of a more recent formation' are omitted in the *Compendious Dictionary*. This omission may simply have been to save space, though it may also reflect an increased desire on Bosworth's part to disown his earlier approach that took the year 1100 as a meaningful period boundary. Whether or not Bosworth was consciously attempting to downplay the significance that he had previously ascribed to the year 1100, the result is a subtle shift of the emphasis of the passage. Post-1100 vocabulary is no longer specifically identified as a marginal category; the qualitative descriptor of marginal material as 'impure' remains, but this impurity is apparently no longer defined in terms of date boundaries.[119]

Bosworth's creation of a marginal category in his periodisation is presented as the result of revising the dictionary's inclusion policy mid-project. However, the *DOE* provides an example of a similar approach to periodisation being carried out in a more deliberate fashion. The 'ME' (and similar) labels used in *DOE* entries (discussed above, p. 72) similarly create a marginal category that is specifically associated with sources of late date, but which is not exhaustive; the presence of some material labelled as Middle English is presented as an exception to the usual policy of the dictionary, rather than as establishing a precedent that would lead to the inclusion in the *DOE* of any and all material considered to be Middle English. The 'ME' entries in the *DOE*, like the post-1100 quotations in Bosworth, do not act as an independent category, or a new (sub-) period in the history of English, so much as a way of blurring the boundaries of an established Old English period. Nevertheless, the period boundary is being blurred deliberately. It is not simply a case of a lexicographer stating a definite date boundary in a preface but failing to follow this principle in practice; instead, users' attention is drawn to the presence of the marginal material, emphasising the problems inherent in traditional date-based periodisation. Even if the policy might only have become intentional in retrospect (as appears to be the case in Bosworth), it represents a new way of thinking about periodisation.

Periodising criteria

Whether lexicographers of Old English imagine period boundaries as precise individual dates or something more fluid and flexible, it is important to consider the criteria that are used to define these boundaries. What linguistic or extralinguistic differences are understood to distinguish the language on each side of a period boundary, and how are individual texts, manuscripts or words assigned to one period or the other?

[119] For further discussion of the concept of language purity in periodisation, see below p. 163.

Date

The most obvious periodising criterion that can be used to establish a period boundary is that of date. If a period boundary is defined solely as being a theoretical division at a particular point on a timeline, then the task of periodisation is in theory a simple one. Any potential linguistic source can be defined as belonging or not belonging to the Old English period based on its date of composition. Needless to say, this concept is far from simple in practice. Although some texts can be dated on historical grounds (thanks to known authorship, reference to known persons or events, relationship to other texts and so on), many more cannot. Furthermore, many have a complex transmission history, meaning that any attempt at dating them must take into account both a hypothesised original date of composition and the date at which the surviving manuscript copy was produced, as well as any linguistic changes potentially introduced in the copying process. 'Uncertainty in dating' has therefore been described as 'a basic feature of the Old English period' (Amos, 1980:1).

Given that the majority of early mediæval English texts are difficult to date precisely, in practice it is inevitable that lexicographers should use other periodising criteria besides date. Even if they do not consciously follow precise criteria for doing so, scholars habitually identify texts as being Old English (or not) based on their linguistic features. These linguistic features may be directly tied to an absolute or relative date, and thus used to fit texts into a date-based periodisation framework. However, it is also possible to use linguistic features as periodising criteria independent of, and perhaps even opposed to, dating. For instance, a text known to have a late date of composition might nevertheless be classed as Old English because it shows linguistic features considered characteristic of the Old English period. In such an approach, linguistic periodising criteria would be allowed to override date to account for the existence of linguistically conservative texts. The same principle may also apply to extra-linguistic features used to date and classify manuscripts.

The application of dating tests to Old English is a complex issue requiring considerable specialised knowledge.[120] However, such tests are traditionally used primarily to diagnose the relative ages of a relatively fixed literary canon of Old English, rather than to distinguish Old English sources from post-Old English ones. As the following section will demonstrate, the criteria for periodisation that are readily apparent in lexicography tend to be much more impressionistic. Unsurprisingly, none of the dictionaries in the current study adhere strictly to a single criterion for periodisation. In the

[120] For a historical overview of dating tests and the problems associated with them, see Amos (1980).

following sections, I will consider a variety of periodising criteria in order to give a sense of what lexicographers have understood to be the distinctive features of Old English as a period.

Orthography

Orthographical variation is almost immediately obvious in mediæval English texts, and is particularly relevant to lexicographers, who are not only considering texts word by word but also need to identify and group together variant spellings in order to alphabetise dictionary entries. It is unsurprising, then, that an awareness of orthography as a potential criterion for periodisation is found in even the earliest dictionaries in this study.

As noted above (p. 58), Somner's preface includes a relatively lengthy discussion of orthographical variation within Old English, and notes that this variation is in part a reflection of diachronic variation: 'pro variâ scilicet vel ævi vel loci dialecto' (*Ad Lectorem* §14).[121] This indicates Somner's awareness of, and interest in, orthographical change, but here Somner focuses on variation occurring within Old English, not on orthographical characteristics that might be used to distinguish Old English from post-Old English. For evidence of the latter, we must turn to the main body of the dictionary; this contains extensive further discussion of orthographical issues, most commonly in the form of the discursive comments that begin most alphabetical sections.

Some simple examples of how these comments can be related to periodisation can be found under K and Q:

> Literas *K* & *Q* rarissimè usurparunt *Anglo-Saxones*: sed ipsarum loco plerumq; *C*.[122]

In this comment, spellings with <k> and <q> are identified as being uncharacteristic of the usage of the 'Anglo-Saxones'; the implication is that such spellings are a later, post-Old English development. However, Somner does nevertheless enter a few headwords under both letters, indicating that this periodising distinction did not dictate his lexicographical practice. Under the heading of the sub-section CH, Somner makes this point even more clearly:

> Here note, that this (of *ch*, as both *Gill*,[123] and *Butler*,[124] in their severall English Grammers, have observed) is at this day one of the eight English aspirats: being peculiar to the English, and used altogether in English words. Nor was this way of writing known to the old English-Saxons, but

[121] 'according to the various & varying dialect of the age or place' [Canterbury, Cathedral Archives, CCA-DCc-ChAnt/M/352, f.4r]
[122] 'The *Anglo-Saxons* very rarely used [or perhaps 'borrowed'] the letters *K* & *Q*, but in their place generally [used] *C*.'
[123] Gill (1619)
[124] Butler (1633)

> is since their dayes crept in, and used now and then in a few such words as those hereunder following: improperly enough, except in Cherubin, Chor, and Christen; which being originally no words of theirs, are not properly written otherwise than in their native language.[125]

Spellings with <ch> are claimed to be unique to 'English' (as distinct from Saxon), and Somner makes it clear that he believes they were not used by the 'old English-Saxons', being found only in later usages and in loanwords. The implications of this statement are striking; Somner acknowledges that many of the entries in the section that follows do not represent the usage of the 'old English-Saxons'. The simplest interpretations of this are either that Somner envisaged Old English as a language continuing (albeit in corrupted form) after the 'days' of its native speakers, or else that he was deliberately including post-Old English material in his dictionary. In practice, it seems likely, based on his attitudes to periodisation elsewhere, that Somner's actual rationale included elements of both interpretations but that he was for the most part not seriously attempting to formulate an absolutely consistent policy of inclusion and exclusion. Nevertheless, Somner's comments still demonstrate a clear awareness of the periodising potential of orthography.[126]

The convention of including orthographical discussion at the beginning of alphabetical sections is continued in all the dictionaries in this study save the *DOE*. Similar comments are occasionally found elsewhere in the dictionary's structure; in the Lye-Manning dictionary, a brief comment on <uu> appears immediately after *Uuta*:

> Notandum autem istam scribendi methodum, scil. Uu pro [W],[127] ut & alias quamplurimas linguæ *Anglo-Saxonicæ* corruptiones introduxisse *Danos*.[128]

In Bosworth's dictionary of 1838, similar claims about orthography can also be found in the short grammar of Old English that forms part of its introductory material: 'The letters *j, k, q, v,* and *z,* are not found in genuine Anglo-Saxon' (Bosworth, 1838: clxxxiii). Once again, the claim is one of purity

[125] A separate note under C links the <ch> spelling to another commonplace in periodisation discussions, the influence of the Norman Conquest, by claiming that <ch> was introduced by the Normans. Incidentally, this comment also shows an awareness that the presence of <ch> is an orthographical phenomenon rather than a phonological one, as Somner acknowledges contemporary theories (since confirmed by scholars of Old English) that <c> before <i> and <e> was pronounced /ʧ/.

[126] At least some of the <ch> spellings included by Somner in his dictionary are indeed demonstrably late. For instance, his entry for *chin-teð* is probably derived from the glossary in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Bodley 730, dated by N.R. Ker to the twelfth or thirteenth century, and containing glosses in Latin, French, and what is described by Ker as 'Middle English' (1957: 279–80, no. 317). It is not clear to me whether Somner consulted this manuscript himself or found lexical items from it in some intermediary source; it is not mentioned by Cook (1962) or Hetherington (1980) as a manuscript known to have been consulted by Somner, though Somner includes at least one other distinctive form from it: *anstonde* for *an-standende.*

[127] Lye-Manning prints here the runic character wynn, in accordance with the conventions of transcription and font choice used throughout the dictionary; for the treatment of wynn in this thesis, see above p. 88.

[128] 'However, it is to be noted that the *Danes* introduced this method of writing, that is Uu for [W], and very many other corruptions to the *Anglo-Saxon* language.' This observation is not inherited from Somner's dictionary, but cf. Hickes (1703–5, vol. I pt. I: 137).

or authenticity, and does not exclude a small number of words with these non-'genuine' orthographical features from appearing as dictionary headwords.

Similar discussions in later dictionaries are often more cautious about making sweeping statements. For instance, the Bosworth-Toller dictionary, s.v. *Q*, observes that 'this letter occurs but seldom in Anglo-Saxon' but carefully notes a dozen instances of <q> in early mediæval English texts. Similarly, though without giving as much detail, the *OED* s.v. *Q* notes that <q> is found 'in early writings in Old English' as well as emphasising the traditional periodisation with the statement that 'after the Norman Conquest, the spelling *qu* for /kw/ again begins to be found, although at first somewhat sporadically.' However, for all the dictionaries in this study (apart from the *DOE*), the points of primary significance remain the same: orthographical variation (such as <c> and <k>) is identified with a shift in periods, but does not dictate inclusion policies, since the lexicographers include some headwords with the supposedly newer orthographical conventions.[129]

Loanwords

Particularly in early accounts of the history of English, lexical change is frequently seen as one of the primary measures of language change and periodisation. Like orthography, it is more immediately apparent to the casual reader than many other changes; furthermore, it is particularly relevant to lexicography, which documents language on a lexical level.

The appearance of new items in the lexicon as a result of language contact is particularly likely to be used as a criterion for periodisation; the imposition of vocabulary from some external source can be used to construct an appealingly straightforward narrative of cause and effect in language change. What is more, language contact situations can often be associated with historical moments used as periodising dates.

French

The best known of these contact situations in the history of English is the lexical influence of French, which is strongly associated by many commentators with the periodising historical event of the Norman Conquest in 1066; the borrowing of French vocabulary into English is understood as a direct

[129] The *DOE* eschews long encyclopædic comments and does not provide any general discussion of orthography in its entries for letters of the alphabet. Its headwords are generally normalised to late West Saxon forms, with all located attested forms being listed in a separate section of the entry.

consequence of the political shift to a French-speaking ruling class in England.[130] Famously, this idea is seen as early as Higden's *Polychronicon* in the fourteenth century, which describes how:

> hæc quidem nativæ linguæ corruptio provenit hodie multum ex duobus; pueri in scholis contra morem cæterum nationum a primo Normannorum adventu, derelicto proprio vulgari, construere Gallice compelluntur; item quod filii nobilium ab ipsis cunabulorum crepundiis ad Gallicum idioma informantur. [131]
>
> (Book I chap. lix; Babington & Lumby, 1865–86, vol. II: 158)

The introduction of French vocabulary into English was also strongly associated by early scholars with the writings of Geoffrey Chaucer, who was alternately praised and censured as, in the words of Richard Verstegan, 'a great mingler of English with French, unto which language by lyke for that hee was descended of French or rather wallon race, hee caryed a great affection' (Verstegan 1605: 203–4).[132] It may be noted that this identification of Chaucer's writing as a turning-point in the English language, as well as in English literature, was not necessarily seen as incompatible with a periodisation model based on the Norman Conquest. This can be seen in the following comment by the antiquary William L'Isle, although it is somewhat unclear whether the borrowing of foreign vocabulary into English is here envisaged as a cause of linguistic change, a reaction to it, or both:

> Tully himselfe scarce understood the Latine that Lælius spoke: nor wee Chaucers English; *nor hee, that was spoken before the conquest. If he did, hee would never have borrowed so many words from abroad,* having enough and better at home, except it were to please the Prince and Nobles, then all Normanizing, a fine point of Court-rhetoricke for those daies.
>
> (L'Isle 1623: sig. c3r. Emphasis mine)

[130] In the following discussion, I use 'French' as a generic term, without specifying whether borrowings are likely to have been from continental French or from the French spoken in England (known as Anglo-French or Anglo-Norman). Detailed investigations of etymology require such a distinction to be made, as the two kinds of borrowing differ both linguistically and in terms of the contact situation that led to their adoption into English, and it would be misleading to describe borrowings from continental French as being a direct result of the Conquest. However, the distinction is rarely made by lexicographers of Old English, and to them is in any case secondary to the primary dichotomy: Old English on the one hand, and French (as non-Old English) on the other. For more detailed discussion of (Anglo-) French and of its influence on English, see Rothwell (2005) and Durkin (2014: 229–36).

[131] In John of Trevisa's translation, 'This apayrynge of þe burþe of þe tunge is bycause of twei þinges: oon is for children in scole aʒenst þe vsage and manere of alle oþere naciouns beeþ compelled for to leue hire owne langage, and for to construe hir lessouns and here þynges in Frensche, and so þey haueþ seþ þe Normans come first into Engelond. Also gentil men children beeþ i-tauʒt to speke Frensche from þe tyme þat þey beeþ i-rokked in here cradle' (Babington & Lumby, 1865–86, vol. II: 159).

[132] There exists a considerable body of scholarship on French influence in Chaucer's language, the history of critical perceptions of this influence, and the role played by Chaucer's works in the Early Modern controversy regarding so-called 'inkhorn' terms. A few starting points are Cannon (1996; 1998) and Machan (2012).

The idea that the presence of French loanwords is the primary factor in the drawing of period boundaries continued well past the Early Modern period. Writing in the second half of the nineteenth century, the philologist Walter Skeat claims:

> The chief stages of the English language are three, viz. Anglo-Saxon, from the earliest times of which we have records to about A.D. 1150; Middle-English, from that time to about A.D. 1500; and modern English, later than the fifteenth century. The Anglo-Saxon is almost free from admixture with Norman-French; the Middle-English is remarkable for the numerous Norman-French words which are so mixed up with it as to form an essential part of the vocabulary; the modern English is marked by a still larger increase in its vocabulary by the help of borrowed words taken from almost every language of any note.
>
> (Forshall & Madden, 1879: xvi)

Skeat goes on to mention other criteria, but the matter of loanwords is given pride of place.

As a result of such beliefs about the periodising influence of French, there is a long history of treating the absence of French loan-words as indicative of a text's Old English status. At least for some scholars, this criterion could outweigh other characteristics that might favour its classification in a later period; take the case of Dutch philologist Jan van Vliet's description of the *Ormulum* as an 'Anglo-Saxon manuscript' on the basis that 'although it was later than all others, its language was still unmixed with Romance or modern French'.[133] Crucially, as Dekker (2018: 268) observes, 'for van Vliet's classification of the Ormulum as Old English the absence of French vocabulary was deemed more important than its idiosyncratic spelling or its late date'.[134] Nor was van Vliet alone in this approach. For instance, the critic George Ellis similarly wrote of Layamon's *Brut* that 'as it does not contain any word which we are under the necessity of referring to a French origin, we cannot but consider it as simple and unmixed, though very barbarous Saxon' (Ellis 1811 vol. I: 73).[135]

More recent and linguistically precise scholarship has highlighted some of the problems of taking the introduction of French loanwords as marking a period boundary. For instance, Angelika Lutz (2002) argues that such periodisation is incompatible with other ways of marking the period boundary. Lutz makes the case that the lexical influence of French on English was considerable, but did not make its

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[133] Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, III E 9, 229: 'Est autem recentior omnibus quae extant; nihil tamen Romanici sive hodierni Gallici sermonis admixtum habens'. Citation and translation: Dekker (2018: 268).

[134] The *Ormulum* in fact contains a small number of French borrowings, but van Vliet was correct insofar that they represent a 'tiny' proportion of the text's vocabulary, noticeably less than comparable texts (Durkin 2014: 267).

[135] Just as van Vliet was incorrect in claiming categorically that the *Ormulum* contained no French loans, so Ellis did not account for the (likewise small) number of French loans in the *Brut*. This point was made by Henry Hallam (1837–9 vol. I: 60): '*Duke* and *Castle* seem exceptions; but the latter word occurs in the Saxon Chronicle before the Conquest, A.D. 1052.' Note that Hallam appears to privilege date over the presence of loanwords, suggesting that although the French character of *duke* and *castle* makes them appear exceptions to Ellis's characterisation of the *Brut*, their presence in a pre-Conquest Old English text establishes their authenticity as Old English.

mark on the literary record until some time after the Norman Conquest; moreover, it does not align with the classic morphological diagnostic of periodisation (see below p. 119). 'For the lexicon,' Lutz claims, 'we need a separate, bipartite periodization distinguishing Anglo-Saxon (comprising Old and Early Middle English) from English (comprising all later stages), which reflects the lexical and cultural facts' (Lutz 2002: 161). When French loanwords do start to appear in quantity in vernacular texts, the waters are further muddied by the difficulty of telling, in many cases, whether a word should best be described as a French borrowing, a Latin one, or a mixture of the two (Durkin 2014: 223–97; see also Durkin 2002 for a consideration of the lexicographical representation of the issue).

Nevertheless, given the iconic nature of the French lexical influence on English, it makes sense to expect the presence of French loanwords to be used as a periodising criterion in dictionaries: in other words, for French loanwords to be excluded from dictionaries of Old English. However, this is not the case; all the dictionaries in this study include at least some words of French origin.

Labelling presents an immediate problem; few Old English dictionaries clearly indicate a word's status as a loan. Of the dictionaries in this study, only the *OED* reliably offers full etymologies; in none of the other dictionaries is etymology a primary concern.[136] As has been observed (p. 77), the labels used in Lye-Manning imply an etymological judgement without stating it outright (and are not consistently applied). The other dictionaries in the study also generally avoid making direct claims about etymology; etymological information is usually given by simply listing parallel word forms from other languages or other stages of English, without analysis. In this etymologically agnostic approach, it is left to the user to form a judgement whether a word is to be taken as an etymon or a cognate. On this basis alone, then, it could be argued that the majority of the dictionaries in this study are not primarily concerned with words' status as loans; if they were, fuller and clearer etymologies would be provided, at least to identify loanwords if not throughout. In some cases, where no etymological information at all is provided, it is not even clear whether a lexicographer was aware of a word's possible status as a loan.

Setting aside these difficulties of interpretation, we can make the general observation that more recent dictionaries contain a greater number of French-derived words than do the older dictionaries. For instance, approximately a quarter of entries given possible French etymologies in the *DOE* do not appear in any of the previous dictionaries.[137] Examples include *betragan, broche* and *feþ*. However, this is likely to be a side effect of other aspects of the *DOE*'s inclusion policy, and of the fact that the

[136] The standard reference work for Old English etymology is a separate dictionary, Holthausen's *Altenglisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (1934).
[137] Leaving aside the *OED*, which is not a single-period dictionary and therefore is difficult to judge by the same criteria.

DOE simply draws on more source texts (and so includes more new entries of any kind) than were available to any older dictionary. Nevertheless, the resulting impression received by users is still likely to be that the *DOE* takes a more inclusive attitude to counting loanwords as Old English.

While the inclusion of French-derived words not present in older dictionaries could be indicative of a general improvement in coverage rather than a specific policy regarding the treatment of loanwords, it may be possible to draw more confident conclusions in the opposite scenario, where a lexicographer omits French-derived words that had already entered the lexicographical canon and are recorded in older dictionaries. If a word had already been recognised by an earlier dictionary that served as a source for the dictionary that superseded it, then we would expect it to be carried across to the later dictionary unless the lexicographer had a strong reason for excluding it. A word's status as a loan could be one such reason. Lye and Manning's dictionary includes a number of French loanwords, although they are not necessarily labelled as such. Some of these, such as *dubbian* and *feormere*, were included in subsequent dictionaries, but others were excluded in Bosworth's 1838 dictionary (e.g. *cuntesse*), or, more commonly, retained there before being excluded in the 1882–98 Bosworth-Toller dictionary or its supplement (e.g. *almerig, canonie, Mellont*). The apparently deliberate exclusion of such words by Bosworth and Toller raises the possibility that they were considered too obviously foreign to merit inclusion in a dictionary of Old English, in spite of other factors that might have encouraged their retention; *canonie* and *Mellont* are both attested in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*[138] and *almerig*, attested in the late Winteney text of the Benedictine Rule, was well-established in the lexicographical tradition, having been included in Laurence Nowell's sixteenth-century manuscript dictionary of Old English (Marckwardt 1952, 1971: 26) and Somner's 1659 *Dictionarium* before appearing in Lye-Manning.

In the work of Bosworth and (especially) Toller, then, we see the possibility that loanword status did, in some cases, have a bearing on inclusion policy. However, this cannot be generalised as an overarching criterion for periodisation. Toller's supplement (1921) to the Bosworth-Toller dictionary also introduces a number of new entries, not present in Lye-Manning, for French-derived words such as *arblast* and *flanc*.[139] This is clearly not consistent with a straightforward policy of excluding French loanwords.

Overall, then, the treatment of French loanwords in dictionaries of Old English is clearly complex. The examples above have shown that there is surprisingly little consistency in how individual lexical

[138] Bosworth and Toller may also have excluded *Mellont* on the grounds that it is a proper noun.
[139] The etymologies of these additions are variably acknowledged. In the cases of the examples given here, Toller notes that *arblast* is 'from French' but offers no etymology for *flanc*.

items are identified and treated in practice. As a result, it is hard to see the identification of French loans as either a consistent date-independent system of categorisation or as systematically linked to a traditional periodisation that relies primarily on date boundaries. Despite this, all the dictionaries in this study engage to some extent with the idea that the arrival of French loanwords marks the end of the Old English period, from the dedicatory poems in Somner's dictionary, which set Old English up in opposition to 'femal *French* and *Norman* Sibbolet' (Somner 1659: c1r), to the *DOE*'s cautious handling of multilingual (or potentially multilingual) sources.[140] The presence of French loanwords appears to have some theoretical weight, at least, as a criterion for periodisation, even if it is difficult to see it being used as such in practice.

Scandinavian

However, French is not the only foreign influence on mediæval English that needs to be considered when discussing loanwords. Higden's famous comment in the *Polychronicon* about the use of French does not, in fact, attribute all linguistic innovation in English to the influence of the Normans; immediately preceding the passage quoted above, he claims that the changes in English arose 'ex commixtione tamen primo cum Danis, deinde cum Normannis' (Book I, chap. lix; Babington & Lumby, 1865–86, vol. II: 158).[141] The idea of Danish influence on English being almost or as significant as Norman influence is not confined to Higden. Hickes's *Thesaurus*, for instance, dedicates two chapters (1703–5, vol. I part I: 88–134) to the topic.[142] The idea also appears in dictionaries of Old English. The prefatory poem to Somner's dictionary written by John Boys gives equal emphasis to Danish and Norman influence when it asks, 'Boots it to know how our forefathers spoke / Ere *Danish, Norman,* or this present yoke / Did gall our patient necks?' (See above p. 102) Considerably later, the Frisian scholar J.H. Halbertsma, in his contribution to the preface of Bosworth's dictionary, refers to 'English, polluted by Danish and Norman conquests' (Bosworth, 1838: xxxix).

Despite this acceptance of the Scandinavian influence on English, however, the presence of Scandinavian loanwords seems to have received much less attention as a potential criterion for

[140] See, for instance, the entries for *custure* and *coitemære*, which are given the comment, 'The word has alternatively been taken as a French gloss to a Latin lemma.'

[141] In John of Trevisa's translation, 'by commyxstion and mellyng, furst wiþ Danes and afterward wiþ Normans'. (Babington & Lumby, 1865–86, vol. II: 159)

[142] In his earlier work, the *Institutiones Grammaticæ* (1689), Hickes was admittedly somewhat cautious about the necessity of 'a Chapter to shew how it [English] was vary'd by Danish mixture' (Harris, 1992: 71). Cain (2010: 732–3) demonstrates that Hickes's decision to include a discussion of Danish influence in the *Thesaurus* was influenced by his correspondent William Nicolson.

lexicographical periodisation.[143] As was the case with French loanwords, the fact that most dictionaries in this study do not commit themselves to etymological claims makes investigation difficult — especially so with regard to Scandinavian material, which is very likely to also be cited as a Germanic cognate — and indicates that etymology is generally considered a separate field of investigation rather than as something central to the policies of a general-purpose dictionary of Old English.

In many cases, the status of a word as a Scandinavian loan is not mentioned at all. For instance, the replacement of *æ* in its sense 'law' with *lagu* has been described as an important insight into 'the ways in which "Old English" lexical choices gave way to "Middle English" ones.' (Dance 2012: 173; see also Pons-Sanz 2013: 84–7, 307–16) Given that *lagu* is a Scandinavian loan (and furthermore one that is not uncommon and that is of obvious relevance to the semantic field of law, a topic of particular interest to many early antiquarian scholars of Old English), it would seem to offer an ideal opportunity to draw a connection between loanwords and periodisation. However, its status as a loan is not mentioned in the lexicographical record until Henry Sweet's *Student's Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon* (1897: s.v.), in which it is labelled 'Scand.';[144] a slightly fuller discussion was given in the Bosworth-Toller dictionary (1898: s.v.). Other legal terms that are Scandinavian borrowings, such as *hamsocn* and *grið*,[145] fall into similar patterns; they are not generally identified explicitly in dictionaries as loanwords before the late nineteenth century. The Germanic character of Scandinavian loans may have meant that they were generally considered less strikingly out of place in Old English, and thus less worthy of comment. Perhaps more likely, given the closeness between the Germanic languages and the lack of theoretical background to support detailed etymological speculation, earlier lexicographers may not always have been capable of recognising Scandinavian loanwords in practice, however much they alluded to their existence in theory.

When lexicographers attempted to address the historical context that led to the borrowing of Scandinavian material into Old English, further complexities emerged. This is clearly seen in Lye

[143] The phenomenon of Scandinavian loanwords has, of course, been studied outside the lexicographical context. Some useful recent sources are Pons-Sanz (2013) on loans appearing within the period traditionally defined as Old English and Dance (2003), Lutz (2017) and numerous others on loanwords first attested post-Old English. Durkin (2014: 171–221) addresses both categories of Scandinavian loanwords into English.

[144] Sweet does not provide a discussion of the rationale behind this label, which he applied to 'only about 50' entries (Björkman 1900: 3, §2). It appears to be an etymological indicator in the same spirit as the (less frequent) 'Fr.' for French loanwords and 'Gk.' for Greek ones, but is not presented with the same proscriptive attitude as '!', which is used to 'warn the reader against' Latinate coinages that Sweet considers 'contrary to the genius of the language, some of them being positive monstrosities' (Sweet 1897: viii). Sweet's labelling of Scandinavian loanwords, in contrast, does not suggest that they are anything other than Old English, albeit with a noteworthy etymology.

[145] For the probable Norse derivation of *hamsocn*, see Pons-Sanz (2013: 116–17, 305 and elsewhere). The same information is given for *grið*, 'one of the most productive Norse-derived words in Old English texts' (Pons-Sanz 2013: 115); see Pons-Sanz (2013: 114–15, 301–4 and elsewhere).

and Manning's treatment of so-called 'Dano-Saxon'. Like all the Lye-Manning labels (see above p. 77), the label 'Dan. Sax.' (or 'Dano-Sax.') is not a wholly independent editorial judgement, but reflects the usage of George Hickes's *Thesaurus* (1703–5). In Lye-Manning, the 'Dan. Sax.' label is not applied with enough consistency throughout the dictionary to constitute a coherent lexicographical policy. In Hickes's work, however, 'Dano-Saxonica', or Scandinavian-influenced Old English, is presented as the second of the three 'epochae' into which Hickes divides the 'lingua Saxonica' (Hickes 1703–5, vol. I pt. I: 87). In other words, the Lye-Manning labelling system is directly indebted to a work that uses the presence of Scandinavian loanwords as a criterion for periodisation.

However, Hickes's account of Dano-Saxon aligns poorly with present-day understandings of the Scandinavian influence on Old English, demonstrating the difficulty of trying to trace the use of loanwords in periodisation over time. In particular, the association of Scandinavian influence with synchronic dialectal variation and with poetic diction (see above p. 81) complicates any attempt to understand loanwords as a simple diagnostic for periodisation. Hickes's legacy in this respect continued well into the nineteenth century; Bosworth's dictionary of 1838, although mostly rejecting 'Dano-Saxon' as an antiquated term, still observes, of the *Ormulum*, that 'Orm's dialect merits, if any, to be called Dano-Saxon: his name also betrays a Scandinavian descent' (Bosworth, 1838: xxv, quoting Thorpe, 1834: x). Bosworth's dictionary does indeed exclude the *Ormulum* (almost) entirely from its citations, but it is clear that the term 'Dano-Saxon' is being used to describe national or regional identity as much as a lexically defined period.

As is the case with French, then, the presence of Scandinavian loanwords is presented in general terms as a potential criterion for establishing a period boundary, but the situation is much more complex when considered on the level of individual lexical items. However, particularly in more recent dictionaries, Scandinavian loanwords are even less prominent in practice than French as a periodising factor.

The use of the historical date of 1066 as a periodising political event (see above, p. 101) reinforces the theoretical significance of French loanwords. The beginning of Scandinavian contact is not generally associated with a single, iconic historical event equivalent to the Battle of Hastings; there are several that could potentially have been selected, such as Canute's victory at Assandun and the beginning of his reign in 1016 or the recognition of the Danelaw in the tenth-century treaty of Alfred and Guthrum, but there is no clear evidence in the dictionaries considered in this study that any one of these was settled on. In addition, the evidence of Hickes suggests that from an early stage, the idea of Scandinavian influence was closely entwined with aspects of variation that were not clearly

diachronic, perhaps weakening or obscuring its potential to be used as an indicator of a chronological divide. Finally, Norse, as a Germanic language, is far more closely related to Old English than is French; as a result, Scandinavian loanwords are not only harder to identify but were also perhaps perceived by some lexicographers as less of an intrusion on the language than were French loans.

Overall, whether French or Scandinavian, loanwords may be invoked impressionistically as indicators of a period boundary, and are sometimes labelled, giving them marked status. However, there is little evidence that any lexicographers of Old English systematically excluded loanwords from their work while writing entries.

Inflection

Probably the best-known linguistic criterion for the periodisation of mediæval English is morphological, namely Henry Sweet's description of Old English as 'the period of *full* endings', Middle English as 'the period of *levelled* endings' and Modern English as 'the period of *lost* endings'. (Sweet 1892: 211 §594) However, the morphological criterion is extremely rarely mentioned in dictionaries of Old English. It appears in the paratext of the *OED*; for instance, inflectional reduction is characterised as one of the 'most important linguistic developments' characterising Middle English (Durkin 2012a). Furthermore, inflectional change is alluded to in the introduction to the first edition of the *OED* as one of the factors influencing the decision not to attempt complete coverage of Old English:

> To do this would have involved the inclusion of an immense number of words, not merely long obsolete but also having obsolete inflexions, and thus requiring, if dealt with at all, a treatment different from that adapted to the words which survived the twelfth century… [By the twelfth century] the old inflexional and grammatical system had been levelled to one so essentially modern as to require no special treatment in the Dictionary.
>
> (*OED* 1884: *General Explanations* viii)

However, this is a concern that, among the dictionaries included in this study, applies only to the *OED*; all the others, as period dictionaries dedicated to Old English, must account for the inflections of Old English by default. This fact, combined with the lexicographical convention of giving headwords in uninflected form where possible, probably explains the lack of attention to inflectional change in other dictionaries of Old English; paradoxically, the issue of inflection becomes, depending on one's point of view, either unavoidable or easily sidestepped. It is unavoidable in the sense that a dictionary of Old English cannot, as the *OED* does, base its periodisation on the premise that the inflections of Old English are an unusual phenomenon requiring 'special treatment' if not avoided

altogether. At the same time, however, the dictionary's natural focus on headwords, given in lemmatised form, means that the inflected forms attested for a given lemma are often obscured from the user (the *DOE*, with its detailed listing of attested forms, is an exception), with the effect that emphasis is naturally placed on the period status of the lemma rather than on its inflectional behaviour.

Palæography

Not all periodising criteria rely on the identification of linguistic features, and the dating of manuscripts on palæographical grounds requires further discussion in particular. The dating of manuscripts operates on a different level than the dating of texts, and in most cases a lexicographer's primary concern is with the texts rather than with the manuscript as an artefact in its own right. This does not make the dating of manuscripts irrelevant; the date of a manuscript is often more secure than a conjectured date of composition, provides a terminus ante quem for the composition of texts it contains, and may be relevant to an analysis focusing on individual attestations, orthographical variation, and similar fine-grained analysis.[146]

However, there are instances, especially in the earlier history of Old English studies, that demonstrate an underlying confusion between the dating of manuscripts and the dating of texts, to the extent that palæographical observations take on a quasi-linguistic significance. A useful source for demonstrating this confusion is the biography of William Somner written by White Kennett (1693, with a revised version appearing in 1726; Somner had died in 1669). In it, Kennett makes the following observation:

> It is true, the next successor *Henry* the first, gave a Charter to *William* Archbishop of *Canterbury*, confirming to him the possessions of his See, in the Saxon language and characters. This was but a single instance, and perhaps done to oblige his Queen of the Saxon line, and to ingratiate himself with the *English* subjects, who might hope by this marriage they had a better title in him. And therefore it is a mistake in the learned *Mabillon*, and some other Authors, who assert the Saxon way of writing was lost from the very time of the *Norman* conquest. It was with the Saxon characters as with signs of the Cross in public Deeds, which were for the most part chang'd into the *Norman* way of seals and subscriptions, yet some Charters were with the old form of Crosses. The Saxon Dialect obtain'd no doubt in Country Vills, with some borrowed variation from the *French*, and some remains of it did intermix with the Court language.
>
> (Kennett 1726: 30–31)

[146] The *DOE*, which offers manuscript dates in its attested spellings field, is a good example of this.

Kennett alludes here to a comment in Jean Mabillon's *De Re Diplomatica* (1681).[147] This influential work was a treatise on diplomatics and palæography, rather than language, and indeed Mabillon's observation seems to apply solely to this aspect of documents, the 'Saxonica scriptura' as a 'modus scribendi' (1681: 52). It is worth noting, then, Kennett's elision of the 'Saxon language' and 'characters' under the ambiguous heading of 'the Saxon way of writing'; this allows him to cite primarily palæographical evidence as offering an insight into the linguistic question of the preservation and identity of the 'Saxon Dialect', even though this relationship is not necessarily a direct one.

That Somner's biographer made this case for the continuation of the 'Saxon language' well after the Conquest is not proof that Somner himself would have claimed the same, or would have conflated palæography and language in exactly the same way; after all, the Mabillon treatise which Kennett critiques here was not published until after Somner's death. Nevertheless, it might encourage us to be alert to similar ambiguities in Somner's dictionary and other early works, especially given the significance placed by Somner and others on palæography — or, more specifically, distinctive letter forms — as an indicator of authentic Old English (see above p. 83).

Conclusion: What is the significance of dictionaries' different approaches to periodisation?

The dictionaries in this study vary widely in how they define the period boundary marking the end of Old English, both in terms of how clear-cut the boundary is presented as being and in terms of the linguistic or non-linguistic characteristics used to locate primary sources in relation to the boundary. If any overarching observation can be made, it would surely be an acknowledgement of the lack of consistency. For instance, a lexicographer may at one point describe the period boundary as a precise, date-based division, but elsewhere introduce the idea of fuzzy borders and marginal categories. Likewise, no dictionary exclusively uses a single criterion for periodisation. Lexicographers move between periodising criteria as it suits them to do so, with the result that none of the periodising criteria discussed in this chapter can be used in isolation to predict accurately and precisely which words, texts or manuscripts will be included in, or excluded from, any given dictionary.

This lack of consistency could be seen from one point of view as an inevitable failing in lexicography; the size of the task and the fallibility of the lexicographers mean that any dictionary will contain imperfections and errors, and inconsistencies in the handling of periodisation are simply another kind

[147] The reception of Mabillon's work by scholars of Old English is discussed further in Hiatt (2009).

of error.[148] However, we might also — in many cases perhaps more usefully — see this inconsistency as arising from the inherent challenges of periodisation: no dictionary is perfectly consistent because there is no single correct way to segment the history of English.

Different kinds of period boundary, defined by different periodising criteria, are invoked at different points depending on what best suits the data being considered. For instance, the use of a precise, date-based boundary may be appealing when used in the front matter of a dictionary as a way of sketching a narrative of linguistic change that will allow readers to link the material they are reading to their existing historical knowledge. It is much less useful when deciding how to treat an individual mediæval source that cannot be dated with any degree of confidence. Similarly, it would be counter-intuitive for a lexicographer to disregard dates of copying or composition altogether in cases where these are known, but where they are not, other periodising criteria can still be applied, with different criteria proving more or less conclusive depending on the context. In this sense, inconsistencies of periodisation can be seen as arising from the messiness of the available data, and from the various possible descriptive purposes of a period boundary. (A period boundary as a narrative convenience, for example, is not the same as a boundary intended to guide lexicographical practice.)

Furthermore, some commentators have pointed out that if multiple linguistic criteria are used in periodisation, we cannot necessarily expect them to produce period boundaries that agree with each other. As Roger Lass (2000: 35 n.1) observes, '"periods" in a language history may not have the same boundaries at all levels: English phonology c. 1500 is a lot less modern-looking than its morphology.' In other words, as soon as we accept that the nature of the evidence means that we must triangulate on the dating of mediæval texts by using whatever diagnostic criteria prove most fruitful in the case at hand, then we must also accept that this act of periodisation will be inconsistent with others that used different diagnostic criteria. If extra-linguistic criteria such as palæography and political history are included, there is perhaps even less reason to assume a neat alignment.

This chapter has demonstrated that there exist multiple ways of imagining and defining a period boundary, and that — counterintuitively on a theoretical level, but usefully on a practical one — these different boundaries can coexist within a single dictionary. This coexistence causes difficulties for any attempt to understand these dictionaries of Old English as presenting a coherent manifesto on the nature of language change. Rather, it is a reminder of the nature of dictionaries as both scholarship in

[148] See for instance Sweet's comment in his *Student's Dictionary* that 'All Anglo-Saxon dictionaries contain words which are not Old English,' a fact that he blames on 'uncritical compilers' (Sweet, 1897: vii).

progress and as working scholarly tools; inconsistency is the natural outcome of an approach that is inclined to adopt whatever theoretical framework proves most convenient given the data at hand.

CHAPTER 5: CHALLENGES TO CONSISTENT PERIODISATION — CATEGORISING THE SOURCE MATERIAL

The previous chapter demonstrated that Old English dictionaries take a range of different approaches to the period boundary, and that it is very common for multiple approaches to coexist within a single dictionary. I suggested that this inconsistency is in part a reaction to the complex nature of the source material that the lexicographers are attempting to categorise.

In this chapter, I offer specific examples of how early mediæval English texts present challenges to periodisation. Using a small number of especially problematic texts, I demonstrate some of the range of issues that lexicographers may face. These are not the only problematic sources that a lexicographer must confront, nor (since every source is unique) do they represent all the possible challenges that can arise. However, I have selected them to illustrate in a variety of ways how inconsistencies in lexicographical policy can arise in response to the unique characteristics of a particular source.

The Peterborough Chronicle

The main part of the Peterborough (or E) text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Laud Misc. 636) was copied in Peterborough in the early twelfth century.[149] The annals from the beginning of the chronicle in 60 BC up to the end of 1121 show a 'consistency of the hand and ink' (Irvine 2004: xviii) that suggest that they were copied from an exemplar by a single scribe working largely continuously. The majority of the material in this first section is also to be found in other surviving manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. However, twenty unique interpolations insert additional material relating to Peterborough; these were apparently added in the process of copying and, unlike the surrounding material, show 'distinctively late characteristics' in their language (Irvine 2004: xc). From 1122 to the end of 1131, the annals continue in the same hand but show palæographical inconsistencies suggesting that they were added gradually over a period of time, thus suggesting that the initial work of copying was done around 1121 by a scribe who was then responsible for updating the chronicle over the course of the subsequent decade (Irvine 2004: xviii–xix). This section 1122–1131 is often known as the First Peterborough Continuation. The remaining

[149] A modern scholarly edition of the Peterborough Chronicle is Irvine (2004).

annals in the manuscript, which from 1132 continue to 1154, were added by a different scribe, and are known as the Second or Final Continuation (Irvine 2004: xviii).

The Peterborough Chronicle, specifically those parts of it that were not merely copied but actually composed in the twelfth century, has therefore long been recognised as a historically and linguistically significant source. It is the only version of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle to include substantial coverage of the twelfth century (Irvine 2004: xiii). It is privileged, often hyperbolically so, as one of the few original compositions in English to survive from the period. For instance, Cecily Clark (1970: xxxvii) claims that 'the *Peterborough Chronicle* is important as a linguistic record, since, apart from the *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, there is hardly another Middle-English text of which it can be said both that it is an original, not a garbled copy, and also that its date and provenance are firmly established.' This claim is arguably somewhat problematic in its dismissal of other twelfth-century sources as 'garbled', but communicates an attitude that is typical of many discussions of the Peterborough Chronicle, emphasising its singular value as a linguistic source for twelfth-century English.[150]

The Peterborough Chronicle was relatively well known from the earliest stages of Old English scholarship; it is referred to and briefly quoted (as 'the Saxon storye of Peterborowe church') in *A Testimonie of Antiqvitie* (Parker et al. ?1566: 16) and was one of the manuscripts consulted by Gibson for his 1692 edition of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.[151] However, its familiarity does not mean that it has been easy to classify. The later annals, particularly the Second Continuation, are frequently treated as Middle English, and are occasionally claimed outright as the 'first substantial ME text' (Milroy 2005: 337), not only because of their demonstrably late date of composition but also due to the presence of numerous linguistic features that anticipate the developments (such as changes in pronoun usage, the reduction of inflectional endings and so on) characteristic of later mediæval English (Irvine 2004: ciii–clxvi; Clark 1970: xxxvii–lxxiv). However, their status as continuing additions to a common stock of chronicle material begun in the late ninth century also aligns them with an existing Old English tradition.

The representation in dictionaries of the late annals of the Peterborough Chronicle reflects this tension. The Peterborough Chronicle is used as a source by all the dictionaries in this study except Somner's; as Joan Cook (1962: 27) demonstrates, Somner's single citation of the entry for 604 s.v. *Dor wit-ceastre* relies on a secondary source and does not indicate that Somner had access to the

[150] See Treharne (2007; 2012) for detailed arguments of the problems of privileging as 'original' a small number of well-known twelfth-century texts and dismissing the copied texts and non-literary documents that attest to a wider use of English during this period.
[151] On the use of the manuscript by early antiquarian scholars, see further Irvine (2004: xiv-xvii).

Peterborough Chronicle text. In all of the remaining dictionaries, the marginal status of the late annals is signalled at least some of the time, and there are frequent inconsistencies in treatment that suggest confusion about how best to classify the material.

I have already discussed above (p. 78) the labelling system used in the Lye-Manning dictionary and the practice of citing the Peterborough Chronicle in labelled entries. The fact that so many entries labelled by Lye and Manning as 'Norm. Sax.' or similar cite the Peterborough Chronicle Continuations suggests that Lye-Manning, like many other sources, considers the Continuations to be on the periphery of the Old English period. Furthermore, while the application of many of the labels in Lye and Manning's dictionary is determined by how the text is presented in Hickes's *Thesaurus* (1703–5), the Peterborough Chronicle is cited independently of the *Thesaurus*, suggesting that in this case the labelling, and the resulting impression that the Peterborough Chronicle Continuations are a marginal or transitional source, reflects Lye and Manning's independent opinion of this text rather than a mechanical copying of Hickes.

With regard to the general treatment of the Peterborough Continuations in the Lye-Manning dictionary, however, it is also important to observe that numerous quotations from the Peterborough Chronicle, including the Continuations, appear in unlabelled entries. This includes both entries in which the Peterborough Chronicle is the only source given for a word (e.g. *sotlice*, which cites the entry for 1137) and those in which it is one of many citations (e.g. *sellic*, Peterborough Chronicle s.a. 1127).

This treatment is unsurprising, given the inconsistency of labelling in the Lye-Manning dictionary that I have already demonstrated. However, other dictionaries also seem ambivalent about the status of the Peterborough Continuations. Bosworth (1838: xxiii–xxiv) gives in the introduction 'an extract from the Saxon Chronicle of the year 1135, [which] will show how much the language was then corrupted in its idiom, inflections and orthography.' The Peterborough Continuations are thus explicitly associated with non-standard Old English, and, by being given as the first in a series of chronologically ordered illustrative passages, are presented as part of a process of progressive linguistic corruption that leads to the 'Semi-Saxon' texts of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. Furthermore, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (by implication, specifically the Peterborough Chronicle, as it is the only manuscript to include substantial amounts of twelfth-century material) is the only text named by Bosworth when he justifies his decision to include in the dictionary material dating from after 1100 (1838: clxxii).

This sense of the Peterborough Chronicle Continuations as a marginal source is continued in the citation practice seen within the dictionary entries. Not all of the vocabulary from the Continuations is recorded in Bosworth's dictionary, but it seems that no annals were rejected out of hand as being too late; for instance, the final annal for 1154 is cited s.v. *Þorneg.* A few entries that cite the Chronicle even include vocabulary that might plausibly have been excluded from the dictionary on other grounds; *uuerre* (Peterborough Chronicle s.a. 1140), for instance, is a clear example of a French loanword.[152] The inclusion of these late annals from the Peterborough Chronicle is — according to Bosworth's own account (Bosworth, 1838: clxxii) — the main source of post-1100 citations in the dictionary,[153] further confirming the status of the Peterborough Chronicle as a significant outlier in Bosworth's periodisation.

In some other dictionaries, the perceived period division between the Continuations and the rest of the Chronicle is emphasised even more clearly. This can be illustrated by examining the work of T. Northcote Toller, who was responsible for completing the Bosworth–Toller dictionary (1882–98) as well as for the entirety of its supplement (1921).[154] While Bosworth does not appear to differentiate between early and late annals in the Peterborough Chronicle, Toller's work shows the gradual reclassification of the later annals. Beginning around H in the Bosworth–Toller dictionary, Toller starts to cite these later annals within square brackets, usually at the end of an entry or sense division. Elsewhere in the dictionary, square brackets also enclose cognates, references to other dictionaries, and citations of Middle English texts such as the *Ormulum*, the *Ayenbite of Inwyt*, the works of Chaucer and others; the implication, therefore, is that Peterborough Chronicle extracts given within square brackets are likewise considered to be something other than Old English. At first, there is some variation from entry to entry in whether or not these late Chronicle entries are placed in square brackets, but Toller becomes increasingly consistent in treating them as post-Old English, such that by the end of Bosworth–Toller, and throughout the Supplement, most Chronicle entries for the twelfth century or later are placed in square brackets. The strategy of placing citations of different annals in different parts of an entry thus strongly reinforces the impression of the Peterborough Chronicle as a text that crosses a period boundary, though, notably, it is still treated as a single text in the sense that the same identifying title abbreviation is used for all citations no matter where in the entry they occur.[155]

[152] On the treatment of French loanwords, see above p. 111.
[153] See above p. 128.
[154] The entries up to *firgen* in Bosworth-Toller are largely based on Bosworth's notes, with only minor revisions by Toller (Bankert, 2003: 304). Subsequent entries show Toller's development of his own lexicographical style, gradually diverging from the conventions established in the earlier parts of the dictionary (Baker 2003: 294–7).
[155] In fact, the manner of citation implicitly groups together all the various manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, including the Peterborough Chronicle, as though they were a single text; they are all referred to primarily with the

Toller appears never to place annals of 1099 or earlier in square brackets,[156] suggesting that he is using the round date of 1100 as his dividing point.[157] This seems to be preferred to a cut-off point determined by the particular features of the text and manuscript, in other words, to treating the Continuations as distinct but the annals for 1101–1121 as of a piece with the earlier material, since they were copied in the same hand at the same time. This is despite the fact that John Earle's edition of the Peterborough Chronicle, which is the one cited by Toller, notes the distinctiveness of the Continuations, including their 'provincial diction and orthography' and 'modernisms' (Earle 1865: xlix–l). In other words, the treatment of the Peterborough Chronicle seems to be led by periodisation decisions made elsewhere; despite its iconic status, the Peterborough Chronicle does not appear to lead or otherwise force changes in established periodisation strategies. Date, in this case date of annals (distinct from date of composition) takes precedence over the identity of the Continuations in Toller's periodisation.

Another dictionary in which established period boundaries interact awkwardly with the natural internal divisions of the Peterborough Chronicle is the *OED*. In revised (*OED3*) entries, the main bulk of the Peterborough Chronicle is treated as late Old English (labelled lOE). Presumably this was done because, although these annals can largely be traced back to a late ninth-century Anglo-Saxon Chronicle *ur*-text, as they exist in the Peterborough Chronicle manuscript they were copied in the early twelfth century.[158] For instance, in the etymology field s.v. *Britain,* n.2, *OED3* cites the Peterborough Chronicle's annal for 380, 'Maximus… wæs on Brytenlande geboren'. This annal is not one of the late interpolations of the Peterborough Chronicle; the same phrase, including the headword *Brytenlande*, appears (with slight orthographical variations) in the C and F versions of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle under the year 381. Nevertheless, presumably because the first phase of copying on the Peterborough Chronicle manuscript was carried out in the early twelfth century, the quotation is still labelled as late Old English.

When it comes to the Continuations, the treatment of Peterborough Chronicle material in *OED3* makes use, to a certain extent, of the natural internal divisions of the chronicle's composition and copying; the First Continuation annals (covering the years 1122–1131) are labelled as lOE, but the

abbreviation 'Chr.' Although the editor of the relevant printed edition is also noted (thus the Peterborough Chronicle may be found cited as 'Chr.; Erl.', for John Earle's 1865 edition), editions such as Earle's contain the parallel texts of several different manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle.

[156] There are apparently a few exceptions, such as s.v. *mǽd,* which places in square brackets an extract from the Peterborough Chronicle entry for 777. The precise intention of this choice is unclear, but it may be relevant that this part of the 777 annal is in fact a late interpolation (Irvine, 2004: xciii-xciv). Nevertheless, other interpolations in the Peterborough Chronicle are not so marked.

[157] This 1100 period boundary had already been established — with particular reference to the Chronicle — in Bosworth's 1838 dictionary, and this policy is carried through, though stated less clearly, in Bosworth-Toller. See above pp. 66, 105.

[158] On the problem of what date to assign to copied texts for purposes of periodisation, see further below, p. 139.

Second Continuation annals (covering the years from 1132 onwards) are given the date label '?a1160'. This is consistent with the periodisation policy stated elsewhere in *OED3*; the sub-period 'late OE' is applied to texts dated between 1100 and 1150, with post-1150 material being treated as Middle English and assigned a date (exact or approximate) rather than simply an Old English sub-period (Esposito 2012).[159] The First Continuation annals, which were added piecemeal to the manuscript, presumably not long after the events to which they refer, thus fall conveniently within the 'late Old English' sub-period, while the Second Continuation annals, which cover up to 1154 and were apparently copied in a single block (Irvine, 2004: xix), must have been entered into the manuscript after the *OED*'s cut-off date of 1150 for the end of the Old English period.

Earlier editions of the *OED*, however, show considerably more variation and confusion in the treatment of late Peterborough Chronicle annals. In the first and second editions, the eOE/OE/lOE sub-period labels were not used, and so all quotations from the Peterborough Chronicle are assigned a date. The choices of dates, however, reveal several competing ways of understanding the Peterborough Chronicle. In some cases, an annal is dated according to the year to which it refers, even if it was copied in a block along with later annals. Thus, for instance, the *OED2* entry *† tray,* v.[1] cites the annal for 1104 (from the homogeneous main part of the Peterborough Chronicle) with the date of 1104. Elsewhere, the two Continuations are used to group and divide entries; a First Continuation annal, such as 1127 s.v. *tho,* adv. (and conj.), is dated to 1131 (the year of the last annal of the First Continuation) and a Second Continuation annal, such as 1137 s.v. *thole,* v., is dated to 1154 (the year of the last annal of the Second Continuation). In the same way, Peterborough Chronicle annals for years prior to the beginning of the First Continuation in 1122 can be dated approximately as being earlier than 1122 (e.g. the annal for 1086 s.v. *untruth* n.) Occasionally, however, a different dividing line, not based on the internal characteristics of the Chronicle, can be found; a few unrevised *OED2* entries date non-Continuation annals as '*a* 1100' (e.g. the annal for 1087 s.v. *† besit,* v.), suggesting that a round-number approach is here taking precedence over following the pattern established by the continuations.[160]

Overwhelmingly, the problem of the Peterborough Chronicle and its late annals challenges dictionaries' approaches to periodisation, but is dealt with by treating it as an exception to general rules rather than as a prompt to reconsider periodisation strategies. This exceptional treatment is largely justified by the sense that the entirety of the Peterborough Chronicle, though composed over a period of time, is nevertheless a single text. Some lexicographers, such as Lye and Manning, may

[159] See above p. 71 for further discussion of date labels in the *OED*.
[160] '*a* 1100' appears to have been widely used in earlier editions of the *OED* as a generic date label on a range of Old English texts; this is presumably linked to the (abandoned) use of 1100 as a period boundary, on which see above p. 67.

make only minimal distinctions between early and late material in the Chronicle, but even those, such as Toller, who seem ultimately to conclude that the Peterborough Chronicle begins as Old English and finishes as Middle English, still seem at least somewhat inclined to treat it as a single text, and are hesitant to discard all the later annals from consideration entirely.

The general attitude of many lexicographers to the Peterborough Chronicle is well summarised by Henry Sweet in his *Student's Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon* (1897: vii): 'I have thought it right to keep many of the words which occur in the later portions of the Chronicle… partly because of the continuity and great importance of the Chronicle.' Certainly the fame of the Peterborough Chronicle as a vernacular historical source and as part of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tradition appears to have affected its treatment in dictionaries. This will be seen more clearly when we move on to examine other challenging sources that are neither as well known nor as clearly situated as direct continuations of earlier material.

Rule of Benedict (Winteney)

The English translation of the Rule of Saint Benedict that is preserved in London, British Library Cotton MS Claudius D. iii similarly raises problems for lexicographical periodisation.[161] The manuscript, which presents English and Latin versions of the text in parallel, is associated with the nunnery of Winteney, Hampshire, and is the only surviving copy of the English translation to use feminine forms throughout, indicating that its primary audience was nuns rather than monks.[162] The manuscript is of the early thirteenth century, but, like the Peterborough Chronicle, it has links to a textual tradition that is considerably older; the oldest surviving manuscript of the English translation of the Rule dates to the tenth century, and Rohini Jayatilaka (2003: 183) argues that the version of the translation represented by the Winteney copy can be traced back to the early eleventh century, if not the late tenth.[163] However, the way in which the Winteney Rule is treated by dictionaries of Old English sets it apart from the Peterborough Chronicle in some important respects.

The Winteney Rule was not, it seems, used to any significant extent by early lexicographers of Old English. It is unclear whether Somner consulted it directly. His dictionary contains a few words that, according to the *DOE* corpus, are unique to the Winteney Rule,[164] but he may have been relying on a

[161] It is edited by Schröer (1888, repr. 1978).
[162] The manuscript also contains Anglo-Norman verses, inventories and calendars (Da Rold et al. 2010, 2013).
[163] It is considered the latest copy in this Old English tradition of the Benedictine Rule; several fifteenth-century English versions of the Rule exist (Kock, 1902), but these represent a distinct tradition.
[164] Some appear in later texts not included in the *DOE* corpus, and can for instance be found in the *MED*, but, when they are considered as a group, the Winteney Rule seems the most plausible source.

secondary source, since neither his spellings nor his Latin glosses always align with the manuscript with its Latin parallel text. For instance, Somner's *boc-scamul* is glossed 'Pluteus ecclesiæ, *vulgò, Lectorium*', but appears in the Winteney Rule (and nowhere else in the *DOE* corpus) as <bocscæmele>, corresponding to *analogium* in the Latin parallel text. It is possible that Somner was drawing in part on Laurence Nowell's unpublished *Vocabularium Saxonicum* (Marckwardt 1952; 1971) — words from the Winteney Rule such as *almerige* and *gabbung* appear in both, though with different English glosses — but Somner also includes Winteney Rule material not in Nowell, such as *aswindung*. Somner was perhaps relying on another unpublished collection of vocabulary, such as the manuscript dictionary of Simonds D'Ewes in London, British Library MSS Harley 8 and 9, which Somner is known to have consulted (Hetherington 1980: 145–52).

However they made their way into Somner's dictionary (and aside from any speculation about whether Somner would have included them as Old English had he known more about their provenance), the entries that rely on the Winteney Rule were generally taken over by lexicographers after Somner. It seems that Somner was taken on trust, as there is little evidence of lexicographers revisiting these entries, or attempting to identify or check the source text for themselves. The result of this acceptance of Somner's (uncited) entries was that a handful of words from the Winteney Rule entered the Old English lexicographical tradition, and remained in it for many years, without the Winteney Rule being recognised as their source or even widely accepted as an Old English text. At least one of these words, *gabbung*, is explicitly marked for deletion by Toller in his supplement to the Bosworth-Toller dictionary, but it is unclear whether this is because he was unable to find independent evidence of its existence (Bosworth-Toller only cites older dictionaries as evidence in its entry) or because he traced it to the Winteney Rule and on this basis excluded it as being too late to count as Old English. Toller was certainly aware of the Winteney Rule and made use of it, as is evident from his comment in the Supplement s.v. *a-rédian*, in which he compares the readings of the Winteney Rule and another manuscript of the English Rule of Saint Benedict; in this comment, he writes of 'the later (Winteney) version' but is not explicit about whether he considers this version of the text to be Old or Middle English.

This limited coverage of the Winteney Rule is not expanded until the *OED* and *DOE*. Both dictionaries treat the text more or less as would be expected. In the *OED*, the Winteney Rule is explicitly said to be Middle English (s.v. *-ster*, suffix); in the *DOE* it is generally given a label marking it as a thirteenth-century source, and is occasionally associated with the additional (sub-)period label '?(e)ME'.

The Winteney Rule is thus another clear example of a marginal text. It is sometimes treated as Old English, sometimes as Middle English, and sometimes its period status remains unclear, and was perhaps unclear to the lexicographers. It is interesting, however, to compare its contribution to lexicography with that of the Peterborough Chronicle Continuations. The late annals of the Peterborough Chronicle, though continuations of an older text, are original compositions that do not rely on an earlier exemplar.[165] The Winteney Rule of Benedict, on the other hand, is one particular version of an early English text that exists, with variants, in multiple manuscripts. Its particular linguistic interest, and the reason why it can be the source of unique material in a dictionary, comes from the variants, specific to the Winteney version, that mostly arise either from the lateness of the copy or as a result of its adaptation to a female audience. The lateness of the copy may lead to lexical updatings, such as the Winteney Rule's **fettweascunge*, 'foot-washing' (the manuscript reads <fettweascuge>) where other English texts of the Rule use forms of the noun *þweal* (*DOE* s.v. *fēt-wæscung*).[166] The fact that it was addressed to a female audience, meanwhile, means that it provides otherwise unattested vocabulary such as the feminine agent nouns *bellringestre* '(female) bell-ringer', *gefestre* '(female) giver' or *hræglþenestre* '(female) garment-keeper', where other versions of the text, if they have a direct equivalent, use masculine forms.

In terms of the unique or uncommon vocabulary that lexicographers may draw from it, a copied and updated text such as the Winteney Rule may differ somewhat from a continued text such as the Peterborough Chronicle. Although they have a superficial similarity in being marginal texts with links to a more canonical Old English tradition, the kinds of lexical development likely to be clearly illustrated in the updating of a text such as the Winteney Rule are not the same as those likely to be best illustrated in the Peterborough Continuations, and the difference in subject matter between the two texts makes the distinction still more pronounced. However, dictionaries vary in the extent to which they recognise this potential distinction between copies and continuations as two different kinds of marginal text.

[165] This does not mean that they are all entirely independent; see Irvine (2004: xc-ci) for an overview of relationships between the Peterborough interpolations and Continuations and other historical documents. Nevertheless, they are not direct reworkings of any single source text.

[166] In early mediæval English, the verb *wæscan* 'wash' generally referred to the washing of garments or fibre, and the noun *wæscing* 'washing' only has a single attestation in the Bosworth-Toller dictionary (s.v.), where it is tentatively isolated from the compound *weascingweg*. For the washing of the human body, *þwean* 'to wash' and *þweal* 'washing' were usual (OED, s.v. *wash*, v.) However, the sense of 'wash' expanded, replacing *þwean, þweal*; the *MED* does not record any uses of *þwean, þweal* after the end of the twelfth century (s.v. *thwēn* v., *thweal* n.), though in fact the verb *þwean*, spelt <þeawan> in the manuscript, appears elsewhere in the Winteney Rule itself (Schröer, 1888: 79). It seems very likely that, given the semantic broadening of 'wash' and the associated loss of *þwean, þweal*, the thirteenth-century scribe of the Winteney Rule replaced (although inconsistently) the *þweal* of their exemplar with the more familiar and current *(fett)weascunge.*

Of the dictionaries in this study that make direct use of the Winteney Rule, only *OED3* makes its status as a late copy clear. This is because *OED3* incorporates a date-labelling system for Middle English quotations that is able to give both the manuscript date and the conjectured date of the text's original composition (*OED* blog 2013). Thus quotations from the Winteney Rule receive the label '*a*1225 (▸ OE)', indicating a manuscript date some time before 1225 and an original composition date within the period defined as Old English by the *OED*. This clearly positions the lexical updatings and other distinct vocabulary of the Winteney Rule as variants of an Old English base text rather than as representing an independent moment of linguistic creation.

The *OED3* may be the only dictionary in this study to identify late copies in this way, but it seems very likely that the Winteney Rule's status as a copy influenced its treatment in other dictionaries as well. It is considerably less well known than the Peterborough Chronicle; this may be attributed in part to its content; a monastic rule lacks the immediate historical and literary appeal of a chronicle. All English versions of the Benedictine Rule received relatively little scholarly attention after the Early Modern period, and none was available in a full edition until 1885 (Gretsch 1974: 125). In addition, however, Treharne (2012: 5) argues that in mainstream scholarship 'the moment of *original* composition is privileged as the only moment of significance when, really, each manifestation of a text has a great deal to reveal about its creator's intentions, purpose and rhetorical situation'. The Winteney Rule's position as a late copy, traditionally considered to be merely an imperfect version of a privileged 'original' composition, has arguably enabled it to be further sidelined in scholarship, and hence in lexicography. This might explain why even a fairly careful lexicographer such as Toller, who knew of the Winteney Rule, failed to identify a significant number of quotations from it that were inherited from earlier dictionaries, neither adding to them nor properly citing the source text. However, the fact that the Winteney Rule is a copy of an older text is also why we might be inclined to identify it as part of the Old English textual tradition in spite of its late date.

The Winteney Rule therefore illustrates some new periodisation challenges. As a relatively obscure text that was for a long time unedited (and hence unavailable to most researchers), it hints at the potential significance of textual availability, and at the ease with which citations, particularly of less well-known texts, may be divorced of their source identification and passed down as part of an unchallenged and unexamined lexicographical tradition.[167] It also begins to demonstrate some of the issues that may arise for lexicographers when dealing with late copied texts.

[167] These issues, and their relevance to periodisation, are further discussed below, p. 148.

Textus Roffensis

The Textus Roffensis provides another example of material with a demonstrably early origin existing in a late copy. The Textus Roffensis is the name traditionally applied not to an individual text but to an entire manuscript: Rochester, Cathedral Library, A.3.5.[168] It consists of two parts; the first is made up of law texts, genealogies and other similar material, mostly in Old English, while the second part is a cartulary. The main text of the manuscript (that is, both the laws and the cartulary, excluding a few later additions) was compiled in the twelfth century, and is written in a single hand throughout (Ker 1957 no. 373: 443–7; Treharne et al. 2012); however, it is the only witness to several seventh-century Kentish law codes, including that of Æthelberht of Kent, of which it has been observed that 'no other Old English text (with the sole exception of a few runic inscriptions) can be dated so early' (Lendinara 1997: 211–2). In this respect, it raises problems rather similar to those discussed above with reference to the Winteney Rule, although with the important distinction that, while other, older, Old English versions of the Rule of Benedict are extant and can be compared with the Winteney copy, there is no surviving older manuscript of Æthelberht's law code, or of the other early law codes contained in the Textus Roffensis, to act as a point of comparison that might be used to help identify lexical updatings or other changes introduced in the copying process. The evidence for distinctively early — or distinctively Kentish — linguistic features in the Kentish law codes is complex, but it is generally accepted that, as they are found in the Textus Roffensis, they are 'much changed by centuries of scribal modernization and error' (Oliver 2002: 25). Indeed, some modern scholarship has questioned whether the original seventh-century law codes were issued in Old English at all, or whether the texts known to us are later translations of Latin originals (Lendinara 1997).[169] However, studies of the language of the Kentish law codes (e.g. Oliver 2002: 25–34; Lendinara 1997; Hough 2015) have largely focused on identifying traces of archaic Old English rather than on distinguishing linguistically late elements that might represent distinctively twelfth-century usages introduced by the scribe of the Textus Roffensis.[170] It is this latter issue, of course, that is most relevant to issues of periodisation, since the twelfth century is frequently treated as ambiguous or transitional.

The matter is complicated further by the coexistence within a single manuscript of texts with widely varying original dates of composition. The Textus Roffensis also includes material that, from the

[168] For an overview of the Textus Roffensis and its history, see Richards (2015).
[169] See, however, Hough (2015) for a counter-argument in favour of an early Kentish original, as well as the extensive discussion of dating in Oliver (2002: 25–51).
[170] Lisi Oliver's edition provides brief notes on linguistic modernisation in the laws of Wihtred (2002: 149) and of Hloþhere and Eadric (2002: 122), but observes that the scribe of the *Textus Roffensis* is a 'careful copyist' who 'often emends the text when he catches himself modernizing' and who, at least in part of the manuscript, 'appears to have been meticulous in preserving elements of the exemplars which seemed to him archaic' (2002: 22). Perfect literatim copying would clearly obscure evidence of twelfth-century usage, but the actual situation is not quite so clear-cut.

names of the kings referred to, can immediately be seen to have been composed at a much later period. The coronation charter of Henry I (fols 96r–97v), which provides grounds for dating the manuscript to the twelfth century, is in Latin, but the Textus Roffensis also includes vernacular material that clearly postdates the Norman Conquest: a text in the name of William I concerning the rights of Englishmen and Frenchmen in trial by combat (fols 47rv).

In principle, lexicographers drawing on the Textus Roffensis as a source have the choice to treat the manuscript as a single text, despite its historically composite origins, or to treat each item within the manuscript on its own terms and come to a decision regarding the period status of each. An approach that treats the manuscript as a single text would have grounds to consider its vernacular contents as Old English, since it contains material with apparently early origins, including the sole exemplars of early law codes. Conversely, however, making a single periodisation judgement for the entire manuscript might lead to rejecting it outright as a source, since evidence such as the coronation charter of Henry I shows clearly that everything contained in the manuscript must be at least a late copy if not a late composition. The latter approach, treating each item in the manuscript as an independent text, might allow lexicographers to pick and choose which (vernacular) items in the manuscript were represented in their dictionaries.

The Textus Roffensis was an important source for the early antiquarian study of Old English (Richards 2015: 19). This can be seen from traces left in the manuscript itself, which contains the red underlinings characteristic of manuscripts used by Matthew Parker and his circle, as well as additions by William Lambarde (Treharne et al. 2012), Elizabeth Elstob (Oliver 2002: 24) and others. The Textus Roffensis has also been transcribed and edited, in part or in full, numerous times since the sixteenth century (Oliver 2002: 251–6). Directly or indirectly, it was therefore available to all the lexicographers considered in this study.

In the preface to his dictionary, Somner specifically mentions his use of ‘alios minores tractatus, atq; è *Textu* (ut vocatur) *Roffensi*, & similibus libris MSS. excerpta’ (Somner 1659: *Ad Lectorem* §2).[171] Somner’s wording seems to imply that he recognised the Textus Roffensis contained multiple distinct texts, and that he did not necessarily make use of all of them. The Textus Roffensis is cited eight times by name within the dictionary itself, showing that Somner made use of a range of texts from the manuscript, from the early Kentish law codes (s.v. *Lunden-wic*) to a charter of the early eleventh century (Sawyer et al. 2010: Sawyer 1481d, s.v. *oþer healfe*; cf. Lambarde 1596: 385–9). However, I have not found any reference in Somner’s dictionary to clearly post-Conquest texts in the Textus

[171] ‘other smaller tracts & transcripts from Textus Roffensis, and the like’ [Canterbury, Cathedral Archives, CCA-DCc-ChAnt/M/352, f.1v]

Roffensis, and no comment is made on the date of the manuscript. It is not clear whether this is because Somner was content to consider the twelfth century as part of the Old English period, or simply because he was unaware of (or unconcerned by) the linguistic changes likely to be introduced by a twelfth-century scribe, though the latter seems more likely. For texts that appear in the Textus Roffensis and some other source, Somner occasionally points out variant readings, but does not seem to imply by his inclusion of them that the Textus Roffensis readings are less reliable. For example, s.v. *fore-gewitnysse*, Somner signals (with the note 'cogitandum tamen') that this reading, taken from Lambarde's printing of Æthelstan's law code in his *Archaionomia* (1568: f. 61v), which used a different manuscript source, is questionable in light of Textus Roffensis's <wohre gewitnesse>, and the Textus Roffensis reading is also given its own entry s.v. *woh gewitnesse*.[172]

By the time that Lye was working on his dictionary, printed editions of the Textus Roffensis were available. The page references given in Lye's citations of 'Text. Roff.' (and similar abbreviations) point to the use of Thomas Hearne's edition (1720). These page references are used instead of naming the individual text from the Textus Roffensis, meaning that the entire manuscript is in effect presented as a single item to any reader who is not using the dictionary with a copy of Hearne's edition to hand.[173] Nevertheless, by following Lye's references, it is possible to determine that he did cite the post-Conquest vernacular material found on fols 47rv of the Textus Roffensis, which are printed on page 16 of Hearne's edition: see s.v. *for-sacan* and *ornest*.

In later dictionaries, however, there is a gradual shift towards citing the contents of the Textus Roffensis as independent texts, using editorial titles for each text rather than simply the name of the manuscript. Both the Bosworth and Bosworth–Toller dictionaries show a mixture of the two citation styles, but in the *OED* and *DOE*, 'Textus Roffensis' appears to have fallen out of use as an identifier. This can be explained in part as a simple change in the textual editions available to lexicographers; Somner implies that he was supplied with a transcript of the *Textus Roffensis*,[174] and Lye refers to an edition based on the manuscript, but later editors such as Liebermann (1903) were more likely to focus on producing editions that collated multiple extant manuscripts of a single text, thus making it

[172] This is the conclusion reached by later scholars; see Liebermann (1903: 156) and compare Toller's deletion of the Bosworth-Toller *fóre-gewítnys* in the *Supplement*.

[173] In fact, Hearne's edition is incomplete; if a text in the Textus Roffensis was available in print elsewhere, even if it was edited from a different manuscript, he does not include it in his edition.

[174] Writing of the manuscript and printed sources he consulted, he refers to 'tractatus' ('treatises' or 'tracts') from the Textus Roffensis (Somner 1659: *Ad Lectorem* §2); however, the English version of the preface reads at this point 'tracts & transcripts'. The antiquary Henry Spelman is known to have made a transcript of the Textus Roffensis (Oliver 2002: 251); Spelman was the founder of the Cambridge lectureship held by Somner as well as being the grandfather of Somner's patron Roger Spelman, so Somner may have gained access to a transcript through this connection.

more natural to cite by text rather than by manuscript.[175] This change in editorial practice may lead simply to a change in citation style (with the manuscript no longer named); where more than one witness to a text exists, as is the case with some items in the Textus Roffensis, it may also shift attention away from a late copy such as the Textus Roffensis, which becomes one version among others (and perhaps considered unreliable or corrupt due to its late copying) rather than being given the privileged status of base text for an edition. For instance, Eric Stanley (1985: 345) notes that the Textus Roffensis is not fully concorded in the *DOE* corpus, meaning that 'highly important variants of the laws' are liable to be overlooked unless a lexicographer manually checks the corpus data against the source edition, in this case Liebermann (1903).

The more modern convention of citation by text has further implications for how users of the dictionary understand periodisation. In theory, different texts could be assigned different dates (and periodisation status) based on their conjectured original date of composition. In practice, however, this potential distinction does not seem to be used by either the *OED* or the *DOE*, both of which, when it comes to the Textus Roffensis, favour dating according to the manuscript rather that the conjectured original composition of the text.[176] More significantly for the dictionary user's experience of periodisation, citing by text obscures the manuscript source; in the case of the *DOE*, for example, unless one already knows that the early Kentish law codes are preserved solely in the Textus Roffensis, there is almost nothing in the dictionary itself to indicate the manuscript context of these texts, or to explain the late date assigned to them. This is, in a way, the opposite of the system seen in the earlier dictionaries such as Somner and Lye-Manning; while the earlier dictionaries, citing by manuscript, gave the misleading impression that the contents of the Textus Roffensis were homogeneous, the modern dictionaries obscure almost entirely the relationships between individual texts found in the same manuscript.

The complexities involved in handling and labelling the texts of the Textus Roffensis demonstrate how even a source that has long been established as central to the study of Old English can be difficult to categorise, and can reveal varying approaches to periodisation between different lexicographers. I have also used the example of the Textus Roffensis to highlight the challenge of fully representing both the distinct histories of individual texts and their shared manuscript context when making periodisation decisions. This issue is particularly visible in the Textus Roffensis because it contains

[175] The same shift towards thinking in terms of texts rather than manuscripts can be seen in other sources, even texts surviving in a single manuscript only. For instance, Somner identifies citations from the Junius manuscript of Old English poetry as 'P.S.' (for 'Paraphrasis Saxonica', 'Saxon paraphrase [of the Bible]) without attempting to identify individual poems in the manuscript.

[176] This policy is more apparent in the *OED*. The date labelling used in the *DOE* is somewhat inconsistent in this respect, but s.v. *hēr-æfter* even the laws of Wihtred (LawWi, one of the seventh-century Kentish law codes mentioned above) are explicitly labelled 'xii', referring to the twelfth-century date of the Textus Roffensis manuscript.

English texts with such widely varying dates of original composition, and because the content of these texts would have made their differing historical origins clear even to early scholars (who lacked the detailed philological analysis necessary for many other methods of dating texts). However, the principle applies equally well to a large number of other manuscripts that contain both canonically Old English texts and other, later material that is generally overlooked by Old English scholarship and often deliberately excluded from standard editions.[177]

Modern copies

The issue of late copies of earlier texts has arisen for all three of the case studies given in this chapter. However, a 'late' copy of an Old English text may be far later than merely the twelfth or thirteenth century, and such cases introduce further complications for lexicography. I will discuss a few examples in brief.

Several early mediæval English texts now survive only in the form of modern transcripts, the manuscripts from which they were copied having been lost, damaged or destroyed at a later point. Well-known examples include the poems known as *The Finnsburh Fragment* and *The Battle of Maldon*. The former was printed by Hickes in his *Thesaurus* (1703–5, vol. I pt. I: 192–3) from an unidentified manuscript leaf in the Lambeth Palace library (Dobbie 1942: xiii–xix). The latter was transcribed in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson B 203, ff. 7–12 from the Cotton Library MS Otho A. xii, shortly before the manuscript was destroyed in the Ashburnham House fire of 1731 (Rogers 1985, who also identifies the transcriber as David Casley); this transcription became the source for a printed edition by Thomas Hearne (1726: 570–7).

In some respects, these modern transcripts are, at least as far as a lexicographer is concerned, no different from any other modern edition of an early mediæval text for which the lexicographer does not have direct access to the manuscript source. Seen from another perspective, however, modern transcripts of lost mediæval manuscripts also bear significant similarities to cases such as those discussed earlier in this chapter of early mediæval texts surviving only in later mediæval manuscript copies. In some ways, the work of an eighteenth-century transcriber might be said to be closer to that of a thirteenth-century scribe than to that of a twenty-first or twentieth-century critical editor; in many cases, the work of the transcriber may not be literatim, instead incorporating both copying errors and

[177] We might also place in this category manuscripts that contain French texts alongside material treated as Old English; the Winteney version of the Benedictine Rule in London, British Library Cotton MS Claudius D. iii (discussed above, p. 131) is one such example.

intentional changes.[178] In subsequent editions, such transcriptions are frequently subjected to the same kinds of editorial interventions that are applied to the work of late mediæval scribes. There are, of course, significant differences, not only in the (assumed) motivations for copying but in the linguistic knowledge of the copyist. Depending on the date one assigns to the end of the Old English period, a thirteenth-century scribe might be considered to be a native speaker of a late variety of Old English, or, if not, at least a native speaker of a language developed from Old English and still close to it in many ways; an eighteenth-century transcriber, on the other hand, would have been a native speaker of a language much further removed from Old English, and have learned Old English through academic study.

The peculiar status of these Old English texts that survive only in modern copies has the potential to cause particular problems for periodisation. On a practical level, the loss of the source manuscript means the loss of many palæographical, codicological and contextual clues that might be used to date and periodise the manuscript and its contents. More theoretically, these transcripts cause problems for the idea of assigning a date or period status to a manuscript rather than to a text. If manuscript date is used to establish the placement of the period boundary, then it becomes difficult to formulate a consistent set of rules that would acknowledge that the earliest known copy of some Old English texts dates from the eighteenth century, and yet not force the absurd claim that the Old English period therefore lasted until the eighteenth century.

The *DOE*, which is the most recent dictionary in this study and which employs a complex system of date labelling (see above, p. 74) is a useful illustration of the uncertainty surrounding the status of transcripts. Although much more transparent than earlier dictionaries, the *DOE* is somewhat inconsistent in its labelling of transcripts. The label ‘transcr.’ or ‘transcript’ appears occasionally in the ‘Attested Spellings’ field. Sometimes the transcriber is named but no date is supplied; in other entries, Roman numerals give the century of transcription in the same way that other century labels are applied in this field of the dictionary. Confusingly, however, a number of entries contain attested spellings, labelled from the sixteenth century to as late as the nineteenth (<eggce>, s.v. *ecg*), that are not explicitly identified as being taken from transcripts but are treated in the same way as other ‘late’ (i.e. thirteenth-century or later) spellings. Due to the nature of the *DOE* as a long-term project employing many lexicographers, it is unsurprising to find that there are also inconsistencies in the treatment of individual texts. For instance, Ch 553, which supplies the spelling <eggce> mentioned above, is only labelled once in the *DOE* as a ‘late’, nineteenth-century spelling. In the entries *apuldor*,

[178] This is not to claim, of course, that present-day diplomatic editions never contain errors; furthermore, it goes without saying that not all present-day editions are diplomatic. Nevertheless, as will be seen, they do not generally take the same liberties as their fellows of several centuries ago.

apuldre; hamm[2] and *hlȳp-geat, hlȳpe-geat*, the same text is mentioned by name in the 'Attested Spellings' field, a suggestion that its spellings might be considered in some way unusual,[179] but not grouped with the 'late' spellings or labelled with a century.[180] Even more confusingly, the text HomM 15, which survives in an early eighteenth-century transcript (see further below p. 155), is cited s.v. *fēste* labelled with the date (twelfth-century) of the now-burnt original manuscript, but s.v. *hǣl-wurþe* labelled with the date of transcription.

The most natural conclusion to be drawn from these observations is that the consistent labelling of transcribed material was (perhaps understandably) not a priority for the early editors who established much of the *DOE*'s policy. However, the implications of this for the dictionary's representation of periodisation are interesting. There is, in effect, no systematic distinction made in the *DOE* between, say, a nineteenth-century charter transcript and thirteenth-century manuscript such as the Winteney version of the Benedictine Rule. Various approaches to labelling the spellings attested in such manuscripts can be found throughout the *DOE*, but at least some readings from modern transcripts are labelled in exactly the same way as readings from thirteenth-century manuscripts: by labelling with the century of copying and placing in the 'late' section of the 'Attested Spellings' field. The labelling used does not impose a hard boundary between the two concepts; there is no defined end to the 'late' category. Whether or not it was intentional, the implication of the labelling is that the nineteenth-century transcript and the thirteenth-century manuscript can potentially have the same relationship to (unmarked, standard) Old English, whether they are both seen as direct witnesses to Old English or both seen as secondary, fallible proxies for lost originals.

In extreme cases, the absence of a manuscript source may call into question the authenticity of a text altogether. The best-known example of this is probably the Old English law codes printed by William Lambarde in his *Archaionomia* (1568). This was recognised as an important source by Somner, and continued to be cited by later lexicographers; it even appears occasionally, under the abbreviation 'Lambd.', as late as the Bosworth–Toller dictionary. Modern scholarship has convincingly demonstrated that some of the material printed by Lambarde was not authentic Old English, but composed by the antiquary Laurence Nowell (Wormald 1997). I am not aware of particular reason to

[179] As a rule, texts are only named in the 'Attested Spelling' field if the spelling being cited is found only in a manuscript not included in the *DOE* corpus, or if the text is late or perceived to be unusual in some respect.

[180] On the nineteenth-century transcript of Ch 553 and the rediscovery of the (probably twelfth-century) manuscript from which the transcription was made, see Abrams (1989). When the *DOE*'s entry for *apuldor, apuldre* was being prepared, only the transcript would have been available. The entries *ecg*, *hamm*[2] and *hlȳp-geat, hlȳpe-geat* postdate Abrams' article. However, the inconsistencies of date labelling for Ch 553 cannot be explained as resulting solely from new information coming to light regarding the text. If this were the case, it would make sense for all entries written prior to the rediscovery of the manuscript to show one pattern of labelling, and all those written after its rediscovery to show another; in fact, only *ecg* labels its citation of the text as a nineteenth-century spelling.

think that early lexicographers were aware of this.[181] However, if we assume that early lexicographers believed Nowell's compositions to be authentic, our understanding of periodisation in their dictionaries is nevertheless complicated, since the result was that they inadvertently included material written long after the end (by any standards) of the Old English period.

Even in later dictionaries, compiled after the spurious laws were revealed as such, Nowell's compositions still make occasional appearances. In *OED3*, three entries (*† orfgild, n.*, *† overhold, v.* and *tithe, n.2*) mention Lambarde's *Archaionomia* by name in the etymology field as providing spurious or unverifiable antedatings; in this way, Nowell's neo-Old English as published by Lambarde is given a marginal status in the dictionary without being claimed as authentic Old English. Similarly, the *DOE* s.v. *cēap-scip* notes Lambarde's spurious 'be ceapscypum' but separates this from the two authentic citations in the entry; this, however, appears to be an exception, as I have not identified any other references to Lambarde in the *DOE*.

Eric Stanley, in a collection of essays published in memory of the *DOE* editor Angus Cameron, went further still in arguing for an inclusive attitude in handling spurious texts such as those found in Lambarde:

> I want to make a plea for my last example, though that plea will seem *outré* even by the standards I have adopted throughout for inclusiveness. If a reasonable user of the dictionary might look up in it a word in what purports to be Old English he should find it, even if the use is signalled as spurious.
>
> (Stanley 1985: 355)

This extreme position is not fully realised in any dictionary, but the fact that it was suggested, and the challenges it would pose to a conventional account of periodisation were it to be adopted, demonstrate the extent to which unusual texts and histories of transmission can disrupt standard models of periodisation.

Conclusion: What is the significance of hard-to-categorise source material?

The examples of the Peterborough Chronicle, the Winteney Rule, the Textus Roffensis, and the other sources discussed in this chapter demonstrate that lexicographical periodisation is more difficult in

[181] It is a point for speculation whether, if early lexicographers had been aware of the presence of Nowell's reconstruction, they would have shared modern scholars' concerns about authenticity, or whether they would have still accepted Nowell's neo-Old English as part of the canon.

practice than in theory. Although many of the texts dealt with are well-known and important sources for the study of Old English, they have rarely been categorised consistently, with significant variations in approach often appearing even within a single dictionary.

The uncertain status of copied texts is a recurring issue, especially as, of the dictionaries in this study, only the *OED* has an entry structure designed to incorporate as a matter of course two dates (composition and copying) for a single quotation, and even this structure is not fully utilised for Old English, due to the difficulties of dating Old English texts.[182] Perhaps less expected, however, is the difficulty for periodisation caused by differing understandings of what counts as a single text; as seen in the examples of the Peterborough Chronicle and the Textus Roffensis, there can be significant implications for periodisation depending on whether material is considered to be closely linked to its manuscript context (and categorised as such for the purposes of periodisation) or whether it is considered out of context, or in the context in which it was placed by modern editors.

In terms of lexicographical periodisation, there is an additional complication in the form of the potential disconnect between the history of a particular text or manuscript as it is known today and as it was known to the lexicographer. Lexicographers of previous centuries who included in their dictionaries spurious texts such as the *Archaionomia* laws, or who, in a text such as the Peterborough Chronicle, failed to distinguish a late interpolation, were not consciously making a noteworthy statement about the status of these texts as Old English; as far as they were concerned, there was nothing unusual about them. Nevertheless, the presence of such material in their dictionaries does affect how periodisation is handled in practice, and how it might be perceived by a subsequent user aware of the origins of the material. Furthermore, it is not even necessarily possible to reconstruct with confidence whether or not a particular lexicographer was aware of the anomalous features or history of a text, and a dictionary's silence on this point could indicate either lack of knowledge or the belief that the anomalous features of a text are nevertheless consistent with the dictionary's scheme of periodisation.

In this we see, then, that the qualities of texts and manuscripts that make them hard to classify, and hence hard to fit into a dictionary's periodisation scheme, are linked closely to the more subjective factors of how those texts and manuscripts are studied, edited and viewed by lexicographers and other

[182] The *DOE* implicitly recognises the distinction between date of composition and date of copying simply by its regular inclusion of multiple (variably dated) witnesses to a single text, but does not generally spell this out explicitly. As I have shown, the other dictionaries in this study are even less clear in how they represent the phenomenon of copying.

scholars. The following chapter will consider such factors in more detail, giving an overview of what might be considered the external factors that influence and complicate lexicographical periodisation.

CHAPTER 6: CHALLENGES TO CONSISTENT PERIODISATION — WIDER CONTEXTS

The previous chapters of this thesis have treated periodisation as though it were a largely self-contained process, shaped by the decisions of a single lexicographer or group of lexicographers, and able to be described on the level of an individual dictionary. It is clear that this is an oversimplification, as can be seen from the frequent references to trends persisting across dictionaries in previous chapters, or to the influence of external sources and factors such as particular textual editions, secondary sources and so on. In this final chapter, I return to these issues and consider their wider significance to the lexicographical history that I have already sketched, addressing the question of how periodisation within a single dictionary relates to its wider intellectual context.

First, and perhaps most obviously, any given dictionary of Old English needs to be considered in the context of those that preceded and influenced it. The first part of this chapter is devoted to tracing these influences, and specifically to demonstrating some of the unexpected ways that they may influence how a dictionary represents periodisation. It will be seen that a given dictionary's account of the scope and limits of the Old English period is almost inextricably bound up with how other lexicographers have approached the same issue. Periodisation becomes something that is negotiated collaboratively over time, and users' expectations of what a dictionary of Old English should look like are established with reference to those that have gone before.

Lexicographers of Old English are not, however, in conversation simply with each other. As I have already emphasised, their dictionaries also communicate to the wider scholarly community a broad sense of the identity of Old English; at the same time, they absorb ideas, assumptions and techniques from this community. In this two-way conversation, periodisation again plays an important role in an ongoing negotiation of what the field of Old English should look like. One of the ways in which the identity of a field may be established is the definition of its borders through periodisation, which allows everything falling within those boundaries to be defined in opposition to everything outside them. In the second part of this chapter, therefore, I give a brief account of some of the relationships between lexicographical periodisation and wider issues of disciplinary identity, focusing on the understanding of synchronic variation and perceived purity within the Old English corpus and the perceived relationship of Old English to later stages of the English language.

Dictionaries in the context of broader Old English scholarship

Lexicographical inheritance

None of the dictionaries considered in this study was compiled in isolation; even the earliest (Somner 1659) draws extensively on older manuscript dictionaries and published glossaries (Hetherington 1980: 148–56). Some of them are indeed highly derivative; the Lye-Manning dictionary, for instance, draws heavily on both Somner and the unpublished manuscripts of Francis Junius (Clunies Ross 1999; Clunies Ross & Collins 2004: 47–8). Lye-Manning had in turn a considerable influence on Bosworth's *Dictionary of the Anglo-Saxon Language*, which Walter Skeat dismissed as 'in fact, little more than a translation of Lye and Manning' (Skeat 1896: viii). The Bosworth-Toller dictionary was in origin — and especially in its earlier parts — a relatively close revision of Bosworth's earlier work (Baker 2003; Bankert 2003). Bosworth-Toller is extensively cited in the *OED*, and was used freely as an aid to locating suitable quotations for the latter work.[183] As will be seen, even the *DOE*, which was envisaged as 'a new dictionary afresh from the texts' (Leyerle 1971: 279) and 'a completely fresh approach to the collection, selection and presentation of pertinent materials' (Kornexl 1994: 422), works closely with the *OED*, and acknowledges the influence of 'the previous lexicographers of Old English, whom we constantly consult' (Amos & Healey 1985: 13).

The result of links such as these is that dictionaries of Old English are, at times, at least as dependent on the evidence of earlier dictionaries as they are on mediæval sources; entries may at times be based solely on the authority of an earlier dictionary, without being checked against a manuscript or edition. This tendency is particularly visible in the Bosworth-Toller dictionary; as its citation of sources is more thorough than previous dictionaries, it is easy to identify the large number of entries that cite either Somner, Lye-Manning, or both as their only authority, although many of these entries were subsequently amended by Toller in his supplement (Baker 2003: 109). The most obvious — and extreme — result of this kind of lexicographical inheritance is the phenomenon of ghost words, which have no record of actual usage but, having been introduced in error to one dictionary, are subsequently repeated by other works following the authority of the first. The term was coined by Walter W. Skeat

[183] Indeed, an undated (post-1885) list in the *OED* archives, entitled 'Resources for the addition of quotations and completion of the sense-history of words' (OED/B/5/1/4) gives 'Bosworth-Toller Dict.' as the first such resource to be consulted for Old English. Furthermore, many of the quotation slips used in the compilation of the *OED* include cross-references to, or comments on, Bosworth and Toller's work, suggesting that such consultation was an integral part of the lexicographical process for treating Old English vocabulary in the *OED*. (Many quotation slips were dispersed after the completion of the *OED* to facilitate the creation of associated period dictionaries (Gilliver 2016: 414–8). A considerable number of those containing Old English quotations eventually found their way to the offices of the *DOE* in Toronto; it is on an examination of this collection that my comments are based.) I would like to thank Beverley McCulloch for showing me the *OED* archives.

(1887: 350–74) and is a widely recognised phenomenon in lexicography.[184] Elsewhere, Skeat wrote more specifically on the phenomenon as applied to Old English:

> I now wish to draw particular attention to the fact that there are also two distinct kinds of Anglo-Saxon. The former is the real language, as exhibited in extant manuscripts, in trustworthy editions that are not manipulated, and in the best dictionaries only. The other Anglo-Saxon is a pure fiction, a conglomeration of misleading rubbish, but is to be found only too plentifully. It is cited *ad nauseam* by Bailey, Skinner, Johnson, and the rest, and is extremely familiar to those who learn Anglo-Saxon only from books.
>
> (Skeat 1896: 172)

In this latter category, Skeat included not only entries introduced through misreadings and other errors, such as Somner's *adastrigan* 'to discourage', which Skeat interprets as a misreading of the attested Old English form <adustriga> (see *DOE* s.v. *and-ustrian*, 'to curse, repudiate'), but also what might be seen as categorisation ghost words, arising from lexicographers' differing understandings of the inclusiveness of Old English as a category. Thus, Skeat comments on the inclusion of *rascal* in Somner's dictionary, 'Oh! the pity of inserting into an A. S. dictionary a word which is so plainly Anglo-French!' (1896: 173). Of the presence of *carited* in Bosworth's dictionary, he similarly observes that 'this is an O. F. [Old French] word occurring in the *A. S. Chronicle.* There is no great harm in inserting such a word in an A. S. dictionary; only readers must not imagine it to be "Saxon"' (1896: 174).

For Skeat, the inclusion of such entries is the result of philological ignorance or oversight: 'The citation of A. S. words requires much heed and knowledge; and that is why people generally rush at it blindfold, to save trouble' (Skeat 1896: 174). However, as I have discussed above (p. 116), not all lexicographers of Old English adopt the same stance regarding loanwords' status as Old English; seen from another point of view, Skeat is merely describing the result of inheriting from older dictionaries entries that do not fit his own (relatively narrowly defined) understanding of the boundaries of Old English as a category.

The same principles can apply to other contentious issues in periodisation besides loanwords, and the results may cause considerable complications for lexicographical periodisation; if one dictionary makes use of a source that fits its definitions of the Old English period, and that entry is inherited by later dictionaries, then that source may gain a place in the later dictionaries even if their definitions of the limits of the Old English period might otherwise have excluded it. Furthermore, assuming that lexicographers accept the authority of earlier dictionaries and do not check the inherited entries

[184] See for instance Landau (2001: 42) and Robinson (1983: 83).

against editions or manuscripts, the periodisation conflict may be introduced entirely unconsciously, with lexicographers never realising that they have inadvertently included material that goes against the periodisation schemes they have established elsewhere in their dictionaries.

We have already seen this process at work in the lexicographical treatment of the early thirteenth-century Winteney Rule manuscript (see above, p. 131). Although it is unclear how words from this source first entered the lexicographical record, it is probable that even Somner, the first to record them in a print dictionary, was not aware of their ultimate origins. If he had been able to examine the Winteney Rule directly, rather than encountering its vocabulary through an intermediary source, there is no guarantee that he would have considered it to be an Old English text. Nevertheless, Somner includes words from the Winteney Rule in his dictionary, and subsequent lexicographers follow his lead. However, the Winteney Rule is not an isolated case. An especially telling example can be found in the treatment of another (probably) thirteenth-century source, a Latin-French-English herbal glossary.

A close reading of Somner's dictionary reveals a number of uncommon and unusual plant names, including *bridestung, cattes-mint, cunt-heare,* and *maiwe,* that cannot be traced back to Somner's primary source of botanical vocabulary, London, British Library Royal MS 12 D. xvii. All of them, however, can be found in the sixteenth-century manuscript dictionary (unpublished during his lifetime) of Laurence Nowell.[185] Nowell's dictionary was known to Somner, who frequently cites from it directly using the abbreviation 'N.', and makes further silent use of it elsewhere (Hetherington 1980: 149–50). We can therefore conclude with a relatively high degree of confidence that these entries in Somner's dictionary are dependent on Nowell.

However, it is the nature of Nowell's source that makes these entries of particular interest in a study of periodisation. None of the four word-forms given above can be found in the *DOE* corpus (and only <maiwe> appears in the *MED*), but <briddestunge>, <kattesminte>, <cuntehoare> and <maiwe> all appear in a trilingual (Latin-French-English) plant glossary on fol. 24v of London, British Library MS Harley 978, dated ca. 1230–60 (Sauer 2012: 197).[186] This seems the most likely source for Nowell's headwords (and hence Somner's), since this manuscript was known to sixteenth-century antiquaries and has been identified as a source for another manuscript Old English dictionary of the period, that of John Joscelyn (Hetherington 1980: 35). Various features of the original source — the presence of French glosses, the presence of orthographical features such as <k> that would be unexpected in classical Old English, and the wider manuscript context — make the Harley glossary

[185] Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Selden Supra 63, published by Marckwardt (1952; 1971)
[186] The glossary is edited by Wright and Wülcker (1883: 554–9).

a surprising source for Somner's Old English dictionary, given what we have seen elsewhere of Somner's approach to periodisation. However, all these features were stripped away by Nowell, Somner's immediate source. In Nowell's glossary, the French glosses are not included, the spellings have been changed,[187] and the manuscript source is not identified.

In incorporating these entries from Nowell, Somner inherited Nowell's classification of the Harley glossary as Old English, and with it Nowell's more inclusive periodisation. These were in turn passed on to later lexicographers. *Cattes-mint* appears, indeed, as late as the Bosworth-Toller dictionary. In one nineteenth-century dictionary of Middle English, Eduard Mätzner's *Altenglische Sprachproben nebst einem Wörterbuche* (1878–1900), a single entry for *kattes minte* includes a citation of both the original form from the Harley glossary (as a Middle English word) and, in the etymology, the "ghost" Old English form *cattes mint*.

The confusion was subsequently resolved; the first edition of the *OED* (s.v. *catmint*) gives the Harley glossary (as printed in Wright & Wülcker 1883) as the earliest citation for the word, and the Bosworth-Toller *cattes-mint* entry is marked for deletion in Toller's 1921 supplement. Nevertheless, the fact that a ghost entry such as *cattes-mint*, with its origins in a thirteenth-century bilingual glossary, stood unchallenged for so long in dictionaries of Old English demonstrates the potential of lexicographical inheritance to disrupt neat periodisation schemes. In other words, the context of a dictionary's practical, methodological relationship to earlier dictionaries may directly influence the treatment of material that is of relevance to discussions of the period boundary.

Planned overlap

The problems for periodisation caused by lexicographical inheritance are, of course, generally unintentional on the part of the lexicographers. For the most part we can assume that if the lexicographers had been aware of the ultimate sources of their inherited entries, they would have been more cautious in their use of them. It is therefore tempting to downplay the significance of the resulting inconsistencies in periodisation as being the result of mere human error. However, the relationship between dictionaries can also result in the introduction of inconsistencies in periodisation that are entirely conscious and planned.

[187] Presumably an effort by Nowell to remove orthographical features associated with later mediæval English and to reconstruct what he considered to be more authentic Old English forms; Nowell's 'recreating' of Old English texts (which was also practised by some of his fellow antiquaries, such as William L'Isle) is well known (Robinson 1993: 280). See also p. 141 above.

Lexicographers can create a more flexible model of periodisation by thinking about the period dictionary as first and foremost a functional tool for linguistic study. In this approach, the theoretical significance of the period boundary is clearly subordinated to users' needs. The principle is neatly summed up by Eric Stanley in his discussion of the problems of treating late Old English material in the *DOE*, which was at the time in its early stages:

> Dictionary-making is a practical art the exercise of which should aim to fulfil practical needs such as a reasonable user might have. The corpus of Old English is small, and a reasonable user may expect a comprehensive dictionary to give extensive treatment to Old English even beyond its natural confines wherever it seems unlikely that any dictionary of Middle or Modern English will provide the information.
>
> (Stanley 1985: 357)

All the dictionaries in this study are indeed practical tools that may at times go beyond the 'natural confines' of Old English to provide readers with useful information that might not be available elsewhere. For instance, this can be seen as the motivation behind the encyclopædic additions (including quotations from post-Old English texts) in Somner's entries, or even the appendices in Lye-Manning or the lengthy preface in Bosworth. All of these elements might be said to be unnecessary to the simple goal of lexical reference, but provide additional information that would be of interest to users with antiquarian or philological interests. However, when it comes to deliberately overreaching ordinary period boundaries in the name of practicality, the clearest example is to be found in the *DOE*'s relationship with other historical dictionaries, specifically the *OED* and the *Middle English Dictionary* (*MED*).

Both the *DOE* and the *OED* place the end of the Old English period in the year 1150. Furthermore, although the period covered by the *MED* begins in 1100, thus giving it a nominal 50–year overlap with the *DOE*'s coverage, the same rationale is invoked, as can be seen in the following passage from the 'About the DOE' section of the *DOE'*s webpage:

> The DOE complements the *Middle English Dictionary* (which covers the period 1100–1500 A.D.) and the *Oxford English Dictionary* (which documents the development of the English language to the present), the three together providing a full description of the vocabulary of English.
>
> (Cameron et al. 2018: *About the DOE*)

This aim of complementing other dictionaries is not a post-hoc justification, but a principle referred to at various stages of the *DOE'*s production. In his account of the early stages of work on the *DOE,* the dictionary's founding editor, Angus Cameron, observed that 'The delimitation of the field to be

covered by the *Dictionary of Old English* was not a problem. We started with the earliest recorded English texts in the eighth century and examined texts up to the point when the *Middle English Dictionary* takes over in the twelfth century' (1983: 17).[188]

The concept of the *DOE, MED* and *OED* working together to provide a complete, overarching account of the history of English was subsequently realised in a more direct fashion than merely the selection of complementary or slightly overlapping period boundaries. The publication of all three dictionaries on the web has enabled the *DOE* to supply hyperlinks within its entries that take users directly to the corresponding entry in the *MED* or *OED*, with equivalent links in these works directing users to the *DOE*.[189] Of course, hyperlinks are not required for users to consult multiple dictionaries alongside each other, but they make the process less laborious and in doing so arguably reduce the perceived distance between the dictionaries involved, and hence the perceived significance of the period boundaries that divide them. This ideal of seamless navigation between the *DOE, MED* and *OED* as parts of a connected historical linguistic narrative was envisaged by the *DOE*'s then Chief Editor Antonette diPaolo Healey in the early 2000s:

> My dream is that one day we will be able to explore the entire history of an English word with a click of a mouse, with one sweeping movement from the *Dictionary of Old English*, through the *Middle English Dictionary* to the *Oxford English Dictionary*.
>
> (Healey 2002: 177)

Of all the dictionaries discussed in this thesis, the *DOE* is the only one to explicitly define its chronological scope by referring to its relationship to other dictionaries in this way.[190] Indeed, it is the first major dictionary of Old English for which such an approach to periodisation has been practically achievable; when the Bosworth-Toller *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* was published at the end

[188] It is, however, also worth noting here that Cameron suggests in the same passage that 1200 (rather than 1150) was being considered as the formal end point for the *DOE*, writing that 'Dr. Ker's palæographical cut-off date of 1200 is a very good one for our purposes. It allows us to coincide partly with the *Middle English Dictionary* without much repetition of materials.' (Cameron 1983: 17). The reference to Ker's *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon* (1957) as a determiner of the *DOE*'s cut-off point is of course a demonstration that the *DOE*'s periodisation is also influenced by its interaction with non-lexicographical texts, even though the 1200 cut-off is not referred to in the *DOE* itself.

[189] The *DOE* was the first to institute these links (first linking to the *OED* in 2007 and the *MED* in 2014), with the *OED* and *MED* later making them reciprocal (Cameron et al. 2018: *Acknowledgements*; Healey 2013: 84–5).

[190] Further discussion of the relationship between the *DOE* and other dictionaries, particularly the *OED*, is given by Milfull (2009) and by Harvey & Durkin (2018: 16–28). Although I do not consider them in detail here, the *DOE*'s links to other reference resources, specifically *Parker on the Web* and the *Corpus of Narrative Etymologies*, should also be acknowledged; see Healey (2013) for a detailed discussion of these links and a consideration of their implications.

of the nineteenth century, the first fascicles of the *Oxford English Dictionary* were only just beginning to appear, and there still existed no standard comprehensive dictionary of Middle English.[191]

Arguably, the possibility of genuinely linked dictionary projects of this kind was only really raised as the first edition of the *OED* neared completion; when William Craigie, one of the editors of the *OED*, set out his well-known proposal (1919 [1931]) for a series of historical dictionaries, including what would eventually become the *MED* and (indirectly) the *DOE*,[192] the scheme was presented in terms of its connection to the *OED,* and the dictionaries that it gave rise to were founded on quotation slips collected for the *OED*.[193] In Craigie's plan, each historical period would remain distinct, with 'its own characteristics, which can only be appreciated when it is studied by itself' (Craigie 1919 [1931]: 7), but each period dictionary would nevertheless work alongside and be compatible with its chronological neighbours, and all of them would have as their point of origin the *OED*, in which the same linguistic period was treated as 'one link in the long chain of the language as a whole' (Craigie 1919 [1931]: 7). In a way, then, the *DOE*'s use of hyperlinks helps bring closer together dictionaries that were from the beginning considered as a family. This leads to a rather different attitude to periodisation than that seen in earlier Old English projects, which were generally conceived of in isolation and in that sense do not give the same impression of Old English as part of a continuing linguistic history.

It is one thing to establish on a sweeping, theoretical level that the *DOE* aims to work in harmony with the *MED* and *OED*, but for these dictionaries to ensure in practice that the transition between Old and Middle English is handled smoothly, considerable amounts of information must be shared between the different projects. The ways in which this sharing takes place affect the overall picture of periodisation presented by the *DOE*.

[191] Mayhew & Skeat's *Concise Middle English Dictionary* (1888) and Eduard Mätzner's never-completed *Altenglische Sprachproben* (1878–1900) overlapped in their publication with Bosworth-Toller (1882–98). Herbert Coleridge's *Glossarial Index* (1859, reissued 1862 as *A Dictionary of the First, or Oldest Words in the English Language*) and Francis Stratmann's *Dictionary of the Old English Language* (1867, revised by Henry Bradley and published as *A Middle English Dictionary* in 1891) were both on a much smaller scale than Bosworth-Toller. In any case, it must be remembered that, in producing the Bosworth-Toller dictionary, Toller was — especially in the earlier parts — working within the outlines of Bosworth's existing materials, which were older as well as being generally conservative in approach.

[192] Craigie's 1919 proposal does not include the making of a new dictionary of Old English; he describes Old English as a period meriting individual treatment, but considers the relatively recently completed Bosworth-Toller dictionary as an adequate resource, albeit with some 'defects and inconveniences' (Craigie 1919 [1931]: 7) that could be remedied by a revised edition (a desideratum that was soon met by Toller's 1921 supplement). However, the *DOE* might be said to be in the spirit of Craigie's proposal, and is treated alongside the period dictionaries actually proposed by Craigie in A.J. Aitken's account of the period and regional dictionaries of English that arose from Craigie's scheme (Aitken 1987), and likewise in Michael Adams's account of period dictionaries of English (Adams 2009).

[193] Craigie's plan and its outcomes are described in Aitken (1987) and Adams (2009); see also Gilliver (2016: 414–18).

First, we must consider the material inherited by the *DOE* from the other two dictionaries. The *DOE* received some quotation slips from the *MED*; some of these were compiled at the *MED*, and represent new reading carried out for that project, but the majority are *OED* slips.[194] The quantity of this material is, however, very small and it had relatively little influence on the *DOE* (Gilliver 2016: 418); unlike the *MED* and the other period and regional dictionary projects arising from Craigie's proposal, the *DOE*'s primary source of quotations is its own corpus of Old English. As this corpus is intended to be comprehensive, quotations from other dictionaries would, at least in principle, only duplicate material already available in the corpus. My own examination of the inherited quotation slips held at the *DOE* has confirmed the impression that *DOE* lexicographers rarely consulted *MED* quotation slips to check for overlooked material, and almost never made use of those from the *OED*.

Although the *DOE*'s connection to the *MED* and *OED* with respect to the initial gathering of quotations is not especially close, it nevertheless maintains connections with the other dictionaries that have an effect on how material from the Old English–Middle English transition period is represented. When I interviewed them in early 2019, *DOE* staff gave details of their continuing contact with the *OED*, in which lexicographers working on the two dictionaries consult each other about locating attested spellings, organising senses within entries, and other matters.[195] This process of mutual consultation, as well as helping with some of the details of entry-writing, presumably also makes it easier for the *DOE* and *OED* to remain closely compatible by treating material in the same way as each other where this is considered appropriate.

At times, consultation with the *OED* has also played a part in the *DOE*'s decision-making process when it comes to the inclusion of late material, with an impact on periodisation. This was the case with the collected incipits and explicits of homilies referred to in the *DOE* by the short title HomM 15 (Cameron number B3.5.15). This material was originally excerpted by Humfrey Wanley from London, British Library Cotton MS Otho A. xiii, and published in his famous catalogue of manuscripts (Wanley 1705: 233); less than three decades later, the manuscript was badly damaged in the Cotton Library fire, with the loss of most of its contents.[196] Stephen Pelle, one of the *DOE*'s editors, has in his own research (2014) dated it to around 1200 — half a century after the end point of 1150 stated in the *DOE*'s introduction — and describes its language as Middle English.[197] Despite

[194] I would like to thank the *DOE* for allowing me to examine this material.
[195] There is, at least at present, 'very little communication' with the *MED*, although there was more in the past, before the *MED* was completed. (Catherine Monahan, interview, 14th March 2019)
[196] For further discussion of the manuscript and what survives of its contents, see Pelle (2014).
[197] Features typically associated with the label 'Middle English' are the texts' 'phonological and syntactic evolution, high degree of inflectional simplification, and presence of a number of French loanwords' (Pelle 2014: 202).

this, it has been included in the *DOE* corpus from the beginning of the dictionary project,[198] and it is cited in three entries in the current *DOE*: *fēste*, *hǣl-wurþe* and *hȳran*[1]. In an interview, Pelle explained that the *DOE* reviewed its use of the incipits because it was felt that they would be better characterised as Middle English, but — in consultation with the *OED* — decided that the *DOE* should include these quotations because they represented important information not provided by the *MED* or *OED*.[199]

This example of the Otho A. xiii incipits and explicits illustrates several important points about how the *DOE*'s periodisation is influenced by its relationship with other dictionaries. First, it is worth reiterating the point that the treatment of these fragments demonstrates direct consultation with the *OED* to come to a joint decision on an aspect of the *DOE*'s inclusion policy. It also shows in practice what was discussed above as a theoretical ideal. The *DOE*, *MED* and *OED* are presented as providing between them an uninterrupted historical account of English; this lack of interruption is achieved in practice by decision-making such as this, in which the primary aim was to ensure that the important lexical items in the text were recorded in at least one dictionary and did not 'fall between the cracks of where Old English turns into Middle English' (Stephen Pelle, interview, 18th March 2019).

Overall, then, the *DOE*'s representation of the period boundary can be described as primarily pragmatic, because it deliberately prioritises making information available to its users over maintaining a theoretically consistent boundary. Furthermore, unlike other dictionaries in this study, which establish a period boundary on the basis of internal linguistic or external historical factors, the *DOE*'s period boundary is defined, at least in part, by its relationship to other dictionaries, and as work on the dictionary continues the boundary is negotiated case by case on this basis. On the same grounds, of course, the other dictionaries involved in the relationship (of which only the *OED* is discussed in detail in this study) could also be described as adopting the same pragmatic approach to periodisation. However, it remains most obvious in the *DOE*, which, being produced later, could refer to the *OED* in its earliest stages of production; the results of the overlap are only visible in the *OED* in a relatively small number of recently revised entries.

The *DOE*'s treatment of the Otho A. xiii material is also useful as an example of some of the ways in which apparent inconsistencies can arise from the interaction between different dictionary projects.

[198] Its inclusion was likely influenced by the manuscript's presence in Ker's *Catalogue* (1957: 222 no. 173). HomM 15 was assigned a Cameron number in 'A List of Old English Texts' in *A Plan for the Dictionary of Old English* (Frank & Cameron 1973) and was given a short title identifier in 'Short Titles of Old English Texts' (Mitchell, Ball & Cameron 1975).

[199] The incipits and explicits are not used by the *MED*. (Note that the *DOE* entries that cite the incipits and explicits are found within fascicles first published after the completion of the print *MED* in 2001.) They are cited seven times in the *OED*, s.v. *before*, adv., prep., conj., and n.; *both*, pron., adv., and adj.; *know*, n.; *†o*, adv.; *owe*, v.; *own*, adj. and pron.; *passion*, n.; in all cases, this is new material first appearing in *OED*3. There is no overlap between these lexical items in the *OED* and those illustrated by quotations from HomM 15 in the *DOE*.

Although all the (vernacular) text of the homilies quoted by Wanley can be found by searching in the *DOE* corpus, it is only cited in the *DOE* in the three entries noted above. In all three of these entries, HomM 15 is the only source of evidence for a particular word (*fēste*, *hǣl-wurþe*) or sense (*hȳran*[1]). It is never cited purely as evidence of a variant spelling; for instance, <erendrache> (HomM 15 001 (1.1)) is not listed in the *DOE* as an attested spelling of *ārend-wreca, ārend-raca*, and <heuenriche>[200] (HomM 15 0006 (3.2) and 0011 (5.2)) is not listed as an attested spelling of *heofon-rīce*. This is consistent with the *DOE*'s treatment of HomM 15 not as an ordinary source but as supplementary material, included out of convenience.[201] However, the result is that HomM 15 only receives partial coverage in the *DOE*. Furthermore, as noted above, some of its vocabulary is treated uniquely in the *OED*, where it appears seven times in six entries, under the title '*Incipits & Explicits* in H. Wanley *Catal. Librorum Septentrionalium* (1705)'. The text therefore ends up effectively split between two dictionaries, the *DOE* and *OED*, reinforcing the general impression of its uncertain status.

Planned overlap of this kind, then, is unlikely to produce dictionaries with tidy, theoretically consistent approaches to periodisation. Indeed, the very concept of overlap between period dictionaries — or at least between the periods they represent — could be said to undermine the essential abstraction on which periodisation is based, namely the division of diachronic variation into distinct, contiguous segments. Nevertheless, pragmatism and inclusiveness are among the most important principles influencing the creation of a period dictionary as a functional reference work. Above all, this kind of planned overlap involves the recognition that a dictionary is first and foremost a practical research tool rather than a theoretical object intended to illustrate a particular scheme of periodisation (or indeed of anything else). Furthermore, it involves the recognition of the dictionary as a single work existing in a wider network of scholarly activity; on one hand, it may be put to uses slightly different from those for which it was primarily designed, but, on the other, when faced with tasks for which it is not fit for purpose, its users will generally hope or expect that their needs will be met by a different work, in such a way that as many use cases as possible are covered.

Etymological gaps

If the intention behind what I have called planned overlap is to ensure that information about an ambiguous or transitional source is documented and made available to users, then a related but distinct

[200] Note that here the *DOE* corpus differs from Wanley, who prints <hepeneriche> for both occurrences.
[201] In this it is somewhat similar to the *DOE*'s use of the textually related Trinity and Lambeth Homilies, which are likewise treated in the *DOE* as supplementary late sources but not given full status in the dictionary (Robert Getz & Stephen Pelle, interview, 18th March 2019). On the relationship between HomM 15 and the Trinity and Lambeth Homilies, see Pelle (2014: 201).

scenario is the filling of etymological gaps. In this scenario, ambiguous, transitional, or otherwise unused sources gain a place in a dictionary not because their vocabulary is unattested elsewhere but because the presence of a particular item of vocabulary in that particular source is considered to be significant in itself.

Inge Milfull (2009: 241 n.18) observes that an entry for the adjective **poughed* was added to the third edition of the *OED* in spite of the fact that the only quotation given is from a text categorised as late Old English,[202] 'because it sheds light on the history [of] POUGH *v.* and its relationship to POUGH *n.*' As I have already discussed, the usual policy of the *OED* is to include Old English vocabulary only if it continued in use after 1150, so the case of *poughed* is an (uncommon) example of an Old English source effectively being treated as if it were post-Old English in order to fill an etymological gap in the *OED*'s account.[203]

Such gap-filling entries are occasionally found in other dictionaries of Old English. For instance, the Bosworth-Toller dictionary contains an entry for the noun *wíl*, yet all of the quotations supplied in the entry are placed in square brackets, used in Bosworth-Toller to indicate supplementary information, including post-Old English material. The earliest quotation given is from the 1128 entry of the Peterborough Chronicle, but the quotations continue to the fifteenth-century *Promptorium Parvulorum* (Way 1865: 528). Why was this entry included, despite *wíl* apparently being unattested in Old English? The presence of *wíl* in an — albeit late — Peterborough Chronicle entry may be a factor, but more significant is the cross reference at the end of the entry to *flige-wíl*, a hapax legomenon compound said to occur in the Old English poem *Vainglory*.[204] It appears, then, that Toller (who was responsible for entries in the latter half of the alphabet, and who is generally more cautious than Bosworth about the inclusion of late material, see for instance pp. 91, 128) may have included *wíl* at least in part because it supported the interpretation of the compound *flige-wíl*, and because — although not attested in isolation in any surviving Old English text — *wíl* could nevertheless be assumed to have been in use in Old English because of its appearance in the compound. In this case, the reasoning is based on a misreading; the manuscript reading of the *Vainglory* compound is now

[202] It is an early twelfth-century copy of the English translation of the Rule of St Benedict as found in London, British Library, Cotton MS Faustina A. x.
[203] Note, too, that the headword is modernised in accordance with *OED* policy; the original form given in the quotation is <pohhede>.
[204] The Bosworth-Toller entry for *ormǽtlíc,* on the other hand, does seem to have no clear motivation for its inclusion other than its appearance in a late Peterborough Chronicle entry. It may be significant, then, that in the *ormǽtlíc* entry not only the quotations (as s.v. *wíl*) but also the headword itself are placed in square brackets.

generally accepted to be not <fligewilum> but <fligepilum>, with the second element being the Old English noun *pīl*; see *DOE* s.v. *flyge-pīl*, *OED* s.v. *pile* n.1, and Toller's supplement s.v. *flyge-píl*.[205]

The essential rationale, however, was broadly sound; the Bosworth-Toller entry for *wíl* filled a gap in much the same way that **poughed* fills a gap in the *OED*. One of the tasks of a historical dictionary is to tell the history of a word, but — especially when the textual record is patchy — this narrative may naturally extend beyond the strict confines of linguistic periods. The significant factor here is that the pressure to fill such etymological gaps arises from the wider purposes of a dictionary as considered in its intellectual context. If a dictionary were concerned only with acting as a glossary to a closed corpus of Old English texts, recording their vocabulary, then the need for etymological gap-filling would not arise. However, all the dictionaries of Old English considered in this study engage to varying extents with broader scholarly projects and interests, of which the tracing of word histories is one.

Encyclopædic motivations

A lexicographer's motivations for including material that is inconsistent with the dictionary's periodisation claims need not even be linguistic at all. Many of the dictionaries in this study show a marked tendency towards the inclusion of encyclopædic digressions, in which non-linguistic information is supplied. Encyclopædic entries were famously criticised by Richard Chenevix Trench in his *On Some Deficiencies in Our English Dictionaries*, the contents of which prompted the development of the *OED*. Trench writes: 'And as an English Dictionary ought not to include the technical words of different sciences, as little ought it to attempt to supply the place of popular treatises on the different branches of human knowledge; it must everywhere know how to preserve the line firm and distinct between itself and an encyclopedia. Let the quotations yield as much information as they can be made to yield, in subordination to their primary purpose, which is, to illustrate the *word*, and not to tell us about the *thing*' (Trench 1860: 60–1). In a similar vein, Sidney Landau writes of the encyclopædic elements in more recent dictionaries that 'Their chief effect on the dictionary is to make it heavier to carry and more expensive to buy. Those who find their dictionaries heavy enough as they are will not rejoice to find biographies of every US president and vice-president contributing to their bursitis' (Landau 2001: 151).

The over-generous inclusion of encyclopædic information has been characterised as a typical feature — and perhaps a typical fault — of Early Modern lexicography, which was gradually remedied in

[205] Cf. Napier (1900: 159, fn. to sect. 7 l. 165), quoted by Toller.

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; Trench refers dismissively to the way in which 'Our early lexicographers, I mean those who preceded Johnson, from failing to recognize any proper limits to their work, from the desire to combine in it as many utilities as possible, present often the strangest medleys in the books which they have produced' (Trench 1860: 56). It is certainly the case that Somner's dictionary (the only Early Modern dictionary considered in this study) contains a striking number of non-linguistic digressions, and as such it it is a characteristic product of the encyclopædic antiquarian scholarship of the seventeenth century. The antiquaries were encyclopædic by temperament; for instance, William Bromley, writing to William Dugdale in 1653, declared that 'I have often consider'd the Antiquary the Encyclopædia of learneing: most of the liberall Sciences (if they doe not center in him, yet) come wthin his Circle' (Hamper 1827: 242). As Parry (1995: 14) argues, the inclusiveness of antiquarian scholarship was strongly motivated by the need to preserve historical records in danger of destruction, unrecorded dispersal, or simple oversight — an attitude wryly characterised by an eighteenth-century commentator as 'hold[ing] every thing worth preserving, merely because it has been preserved' (Walpole 1762: 81).

Seen in this intellectual context, Somner's digressions appear natural and well-motivated; if he did not record and disseminate incidental information that he found in the course of his studies, it was in danger of being lost altogether, and in any case all such information was of potential relevance to the antiquarian project of adding to the general store of humanistic knowledge, regardless of its immediate relevance to the study of Old English. For Somner, these demands clearly take precedence over any concept of strict periodisation. His digressions cover a wide variety of topics, from the custom of wassailing (s.v. *wæs-hale*) to the history of Roman Britain (s.v. *Welinga-ford*) to Pliny's account of druids (s.v. *dry*), among many others. Those entries that happen to contain linguistic material falling outside the period boundaries of Old English (as these were understood by Somner) are best understood as serving a similar purpose. The Old English headword acts as a peg on which to hang an (often tangential) interesting piece of information; this information may include texts that fall outside the conventional boundaries of Old English, but this is not a conscious reimagining of periodisation, merely an incidental effect of the dictionary's encyclopædic scope. The situation is well illustrated by Somner's entry for *unnan*, which (as mentioned above p. 85) contains the text of a thirteenth-century English proclamation. Somner clearly indicates that his motivation for including this text is not solely or primarily linguistic; it is done 'in eorum gratiam qui cum linguæ tum historiæ & politicæ gentis nostræ sunt studiosi'.[206] In this way, encyclopædic elements in historical

[206] 'As a favour to those who are studious not only of the language but also the history and politics of our people'.

lexicography can cause theoretical period boundaries to be violated, but without necessarily implying that the lexicographer responsible considered those boundaries invalid on a linguistic level.

Encyclopædic elements of this kind may be expected in Somner, but from the metalexicographic commentary quoted above, we might assume that they would disappear from later works. This is true to a certain extent, but not entirely. The inclusion of encyclopædic and digressive material is influenced as much by the purpose and intended audience of a dictionary as it is by its time of compilation. For instance, the abridgement (Benson 1701) of Somner's dictionary, clearly aimed at a student market, was intended to be cheap and portable. It thus excludes Somner's lengthy and periodisation-violating digressions, as all entries are stripped down to simply an Old English headword and Latin gloss, showing that a relatively early period dictionary need not necessarily be encyclopædic, if encyclopædic additions would have made it less marketable.

Equally, a tendency to encyclopædic copiousness persists in some dictionaries of Old English well after the severnteenth century. It is certainly possible to see the Lye-Manning appendices (see above p. 61) as part of this intellectual tradition (even though the dictionary's entries themselves are generally less discursive than Somner's). Even in the nineteenth century, Bosworth was continuing this trend, though it might be argued that this was one of the many aspects in which his lexicographical approach was somewhat conservative and backward-looking; as Sweet remarked, somewhat cuttingly, in his obituary of Bosworth, 'he never mastered the principles of modern scientific philology, but remained till the last true to the older school represented by the works of Hickes and Lye' (1876: 534).

The lengthy and wide-ranging preface to Bosworth's dictionary of 1838 certainly seems the product of an antiquarian mindset, but the same general impulse can also be seen in his entry-writing. To take as an example two randomly-selected consecutive pages of Bosworth's dictionary (1838: 161–2), we find a comment on the role of the 'gleeman or joculator' (including not only a short anecdote about King Alfred visiting a Danish camp in disguise as a gleeman, but also a note about the three villas possessed by Berdic, 'a *joculator* of the king' at the time of the Domesday Book), a reflection on the religious appropriateness of the similarity between the Old English words *God* 'God' and *gōd* 'good', a brief summary of Bede's account of the conversion of King Edwin at Goodmanham in 625, and a speculation on the absence of gold coinage in early mediæval England. Most of these asides are considerably abbreviated or omitted altogether by Toller in the Bosworth-Toller dictionary. Of course, none of these, except perhaps the reference to Berdic and the Domesday Book, pose any problems for linguistic periodisation. However, they illustrate the general point that Bosworth saw the scope of his dictionary as being broader and more encyclopædic than might be considered

appropriate in current lexicographical practice. If Bosworth felt that it was relevant to include even these clearly non-linguistic comments in his Old English dictionary, then other apparent digressions such as, in the preface, the collection of 'dialect' texts up to the fourteenth century (1838: xxi-xxvi), no longer seem so drastically out of place, and we need not consider their relationship to Old English as their only — or even their primary — source of interest or reason for inclusion.

Encyclopædic motivations can thus lead to the inclusion of material inconsistent with a dictionary's periodisation scheme. At the same time, they offer us a new way of looking at apparent violations of periodisation; the presence of apparently non-Old English texts in an Old English dictionary can, in some cases, be seen not as a bold claim about their period status but as an aside, something intended to be of potential interest to readers but not necessarily to influence their understanding of linguistic history.

Encyclopædic material maintains a presence (albeit much less prominent than in Bosworth's work) even in modern dictionaries, and can even be argued in some ways to be particularly necessary in historical and period lexicography, in which a successful definition may require the lexicographer to elaborate on the historical context of a period-specific concept or piece of technology. This point is made by Jeffrey L. Singman, an editor for the *MED*, who observes (contrary to Trench's privileging of words over things) that 'the reader looking up a technical term in [a historical dictionary] is probably not interested in the word merely as an element in a linguistic system, but wants some guidance as to the actual nature of the phenomenon to which it refers. We must after all bear in mind that our readers, unlike the readers of modern dictionaries, have no personal familiarity with the culture in question' (1997: 152).

Singman's point, though it goes against the grain of much of the period lexicography of recent centuries, is a significant one because it raises directly the issue that period dictionaries have to a certain extent always been records of historical culture as least as much as of historical language, and in this sense their inherited encyclopædic tendencies are natural, rather than being simply a side effect of Early Modern scholarly fashion. This, too, has implications for periodisation; if the study of Old English as a language cannot be meaningfully separated from the people and culture that spoke it, then the tendency to use historical and cultural events as points of reference in linguistic periodisation (as we have seen, for instance, in the repeated invocation of 1066 as marking a period boundary; see above p. 101) gain, perhaps, an additional legitimacy.

Old English in the context of other linguistic categorisations

Perceptions of purity and variation in Old English

The issue of whether linguistic variation is acknowledged to exist within the Old English period is central to the problem of periodisation. As we have already seen, various lexicographers appeal to a concept of linguistic "purity" to justify their periodisation; if Old English is considered to be pure, then signs of impurity such as its 'rejecting or changing many of its inflections' (Bosworth 1838: xviii) or the presence of French or Scandinavian loanwords may be used, if not to draw an absolute period boundary, then at least to establish some kind of transitional phase between Old English and subsequent periods. This logic, however, relies on the assumption that Old English is indeed pure and largely unvarying, so that change and impurity can be firmly associated with the boundary or transition.

It was arguably possible for early lexicographers to make claims about the purity of Old English, and its clear separation from an impure post-Old English period in part because there was less recognition of internal variation within Old English. Richard Bailey (1990: 1436) claims of English period dictionaries before the nineteenth century that 'since the age and regional provenance of the manuscripts was little understood, those who undertook the lexicography of Old English… assumed a synchronic view of their materials.' Certainly it would be hard to find anything in early Old English scholarship equivalent to, for instance, Thomas Hearne's defence of the apparent errors in the mediæval Latin of the Textus Roffensis, in which he points out that, although mediæval Latin differs from Classical Latin, the language of Cicero and Terence likewise differs from that of earlier Latin authors such as Cato and Ennius (Hearne 1720: ix-x). This indeed suggests, then, that linguists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, though capable of acknowledging variation and change within something recognised and named as a single language, were more hesitant about applying this concept to Old English, with its small surviving corpus and lack of continuity as a learned language, than to Latin.

This does not mean, however, that early lexicographers were oblivious to the existence of variation within Old English. Indeed, as I have observed above (p. 59), Somner's discussion of orthographical variation 'pro variâ scilicet vel ævi vel loci dialecto' (*Ad Lectorem* §14)[207] is entirely focused on variation occurring within the Old English period, rather than on orthographical distinctions that

[207] 'according to the various & varying dialect of the age or place' [Canterbury, Cathedral Archives, CCA-DCc-ChAnt/M/352, f. 4r]

might be used to distinguish Old English from subsequent language stages. What Somner's discussion of orthography lacks is any sustained attempt to explain the significance of this variation, and in his dictionary it is fairly common for orthographical variants to be given the status of separate headwords, sometimes (where no cross-reference is supplied) leaving it unclear whether they were in fact recognised as belonging to the same lemma. This practice persisted in Lye-Manning and in Bosworth's dictionary of 1838; Peter Baker (2003: 288) describes Bosworth's failure to consolidate Lye's variants as 'a fateful decision', though Bosworth did improve Lye's cross-referencing between variant spellings. It therefore appears that, at least until the nineteenth century, dictionaries of Old English acknowledged that the surviving Old English corpus was not linguistically uniform, but did not consider this as a linguistic phenomenon to be investigated so much as a practical issue to be overcome. They therefore paid it no particular attention beyond supplying enough ad-hoc cross references to aid navigation.

When these early dictionaries do attempt to include some analysis of observed variation within Old English, it results in further complications for lexicographical periodisation. Cain (2010: 729) locates the 'first attempt to describe the records of Old English as varied by dialect' in the *Thesaurus Linguarum Septentrionalium* (1703–5) of George Hickes. Hickes's understanding of dialect was a characteristic product of his time; it reflected a 'pervasive cultural anxiety' (Cain 2010: 731) about linguistic decay arising from the mixture of languages, producing a system in which all observed variations within early mediæval English are claimed as the result of contact with either Scandinavian or French, and are generally only loosely located in a historical framework. As a result of this ideological stance, Hickes groups together such stylistically, chronologically and geographically disparate texts as the gloss to the Lindisfarne gospels, the Old English verse *Genesis* and the 'For Unfruitful Land' charm (London, British Library Cotton MS Caligula A. vii, ff. 176r-78r) as instances of a supposedly impure 'Dano-Saxonica' (Hickes 1703–5 vol. I pt. I: 88–102; 102; 103).

I have shown above (p. 78) how these assumptions made by Hickes are partially absorbed into the inconsistent labelling of Lye and Manning's dictionary, resulting in (to modern eyes) a confusing, hybridised periodisation. Even if we accept Hickes's periodisation on its own terms we are faced with a theoretical problem when it comes to its relationship to linguistic purity. Hickes describes the various dialects he identifies as the result of linguistic mixture and corruption — in other words, as only partially Old English. Lye and Manning, as we have seen, inherit much of this underlying ideology along with Hickes's terminology and quotations, but they do not exclude Hickes's dialectal sources from their dictionary. The result is that, even though the desire to define the Old English period by its purity is baked into the inherited assumptions of Lye and Manning's dictionary, their

own lexicographical practice implicitly acknowledges that the complete coverage of Old English vocabulary also requires one to read and cite supposedly impure texts. That these sources are identified through Lye and Manning's labelling as belonging to the dialectal groups identified by Hickes only serves to draw attention to the inescapable fact of variation and inconsistency within the Old English period, at least as it was defined for lexicographical purposes.

The confusion already seen in Hickes between geographical and chronological variation in the identification of dialects was to continue into the nineteenth century. The core of the problem can be seen in the following comment in the preface of Bosworth's *Compendious Anglo-Saxon and English Dictionary* (1848a), an abridgement of his 1838 dictionary.

> Some impure words are taken from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle with their date affixed, and others in the Northumbrian dialect from the Rushworth Gloss,[208] and the Durham-Book,[209] but their age and impurity are easily ascertained by the letters of reference.
>
> (Bosworth 1848a: vii)

It is apparent that the category of 'impure Anglo-Saxon words' included, for Bosworth, not only late vocabulary but also dialectal forms, i.e., non-West Saxon evidence regardless of date, and Bosworth mentions these two axes of variation (temporal and regional) as though they are essentially equivalent.

The issue of the relationship between dialects and periodisation is not, however, an innovation in the preface to the *Compendious Dictionary*; several comments in the 1838 dictionary suggest that Bosworth was aware of how dialectal variation could complicate attempts to construct a linear narrative of language change. The section of the preface titled 'The Anglo-Saxon Dialects' in fact illustrates temporal as much as regional variation, giving specimen texts that range from the tenth century to 1340 (Bosworth 1838: xxi-xxvi). Bosworth declares that he will not 'enter minutely' into a discussion of Old English dialects (1838: xxii), but, as a supplement to the illustrative extracts he gives, offers quotations from two other scholars. From J.S. Cardale (Cardale 1829: xxvii) he takes the observation that the two main dialects of Old English (identified by Bosworth as West Saxon and 'Northumbrian or East Anglian') 'were not consecutive, but contemporary' (Bosworth 1838: xxii). However, another passage, taken from the prolific editor and translator of Old English texts Benjamin

[208] The Rushworth or MacRegol Gospels are Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Auct. D. 2. 19. The interlinear vernacular gloss is dated to the tenth century (Ker 1957: 352 no. 292); Bosworth agrees with this dating in his 1832 dictionary (1832: xxiii).

[209] Now better known as the Lindisfarne Gospels, London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero D. iv. The interlinear vernacular gloss is dated to the second half of the tenth century (Ker 1957: 215–16 no. 165); Bosworth himself placed it at 'about A.D. 900' (Bosworth 1832: xxii).

Thorpe, suggests that the relationships between Old English dialects need to be considered in terms of both space and time:

> Saxon MSS. ought to be locally classed, before any attempt be made at chronological arrangement; nor will this appear strange when we consider, that in early times the several divisions of the kingdom were, comparatively speaking, almost like foreign countries to each other; that *in some parts the Saxon must have continued uninfluenced by foreign idioms much longer than in others*...
>
> (Bosworth 1838: xxii, quoting Thorpe 1832: xii; emphasis mine)

In other words, the possibility is raised that some dialects were more conservative than others, and that, in effect, the Old English period may have ended at different times in different parts of England. As Bosworth writes at the end of his section on dialects:

> It is evident, from the preceding extracts, that the pure West-Saxon did not ever prevail over the whole of England, and that in process of time the language approached more or less to the present English, according to its relative position to the West-Saxons.
>
> (Bosworth 1838: xxvi)

It should be noted that the issue of distinguishing between dialectal and chronological variation in surviving Old English texts continues to be a challenge to scholars. Not only are many texts difficult to date and localise, but there is little chronological overlap between the main written dialects, with a particularly striking division between Northumbrian evidence, which is mostly early, and West Saxon evidence, which is mostly late.[210]

One possible end-point of this way of thinking is the abandonment altogether of what James Milroy (1996: 182) calls 'unilinear' narratives of the history of English. Milroy makes the case for considering Old and Middle English as distinct entities; instead of assuming that Middle English (as we know it from surviving written records) is the direct descendant of Old English (again as we know it from surviving written records), we might focus on the history of English as the parallel development of coexisting dialects, with Middle English representing a different dialectal tradition and perhaps even being the result of creolisation. Milroy (1996: 171–2) claims Bosworth's adoption of 1258 as a periodising moment dividing Old and Middle English as 'seem[ing] to take for granted' the '"common-sense" position of the mid nineteenth century [which] assumed implicitly that large-scale differences between Old and Middle English were indeed associated with an abrupt break and a discontinuity and that something reasonably called Modern English was established at some point

[210] For a general overview, see Crowley (1986), especially the useful time-line on p. 103.

in the thirteenth century'; according to his claims, this discontinuity reflects the fact that Middle and Modern English are not the direct linear descendants of Old English. He goes on to argue that the rejection by many modern scholars of a clear thirteenth-century period division is the result of scholars in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries favouring a narrative of linguistic continuity that gave modern English a clear, unmuddied mediæval heritage (see also Milroy 2005).

I differ from Milroy in my reading of Bosworth's periodisation. In fact, as I have already shown, Bosworth does not 'take for granted' that 1258 is the only natural placement for the period boundary; 1258 is only mentioned once in passing as a periodising moment in the 1838 dictionary, and does not appear to influence Bosworth's lexicographical practice (see above p. 99). For Milroy, the acknowledgement that different dialects coexisted during the Old English period appears to strengthen his conviction that there should be a sharp, self-evident period boundary between Old and Middle English; for Bosworth, on the other hand, dialectal variation apparently merely introduces yet another complicating factor in the already difficult attempt to draw such a boundary.

Nevertheless, the framework offered by Milroy is useful to the extent that it makes a convincing argument that assumptions of periodisation in the history of English, including the relationship between periodisation and dialect, are unavoidably a matter of ideology (regardless of our beliefs about the linguistic origins of Middle English). He identifies two influential ideologically driven tendencies in many accounts of the history of English, particularly in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first is the minimisation of variation within the Old English period in favour of portraying Old English as a standard language (Milroy 1996: 170). I have already proposed that, at least in the major dictionaries of Old English considered in this thesis, variation within Old English is never as comprehensively ignored as Milroy seems to suggest, though it is not always explained.[211] Nevertheless, only Bosworth, in his 1838 preface, explicitly discusses the potential significance for periodisation by raising the possibility that a date placed on the end of the Old English period might not be equally applicable across all dialects of Old English.

[211] Some smaller dictionaries of Old English have been more systematic in imposing dialectal standardisation on their contents; see for instance Henry Sweet's policy in *The Student's Dictionary of Anglo-Saxon* that 'the head-words are given in their Early West-Saxon spellings, with, of course, such restrictions and exceptions as are suggested by practical considerations… As the regular variations of spelling are given in the List (p. xiv) [a summary table of common spelling variants set out in generic terms such as 'a = æ, ea'] in alphabetical order, they are not repeated under each word' (Sweet 1897: x). J.R. Clark Hall's *Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* rejected orthographical normalisation in the first edition (1894: iv) but normalised in the second edition of 1916 and subsequent editions (1960: v). Although the *DOE* adopts late West Saxon as a standard, words not attested in late West Saxon are generally not normalised to a late West Saxon form (Cameron et al. 2018: *Entry Format*); the *DOE* could not in any case be said to ignore dialectal variation, since this information is effectively provided by the listing of attested forms.

The relationship of Old English to present-day English

The second tendency identified by Milroy is a purism that values varieties of Modern English according to the extent to which they are seen as preserving the 'essential structural aspects' of Old English (Milroy 1996: 182). At stake in this discussion is the perceived relationship between Old English and present-day English; unsurprisingly, then, this too has the potential to influence periodisation. What is valued in this relationship, according to Milroy, is the sense of linguistic continuity and pedigree provided by a connection to Old English. Such an attitude might motivate scholars, including lexicographers, to downplay the significance or intrusiveness of the period boundary in order to emphasise the similarities between Old English and contemporary English.

It is certainly the case that some dictionaries of Old English emphasise these similarities, either descriptively or prescriptively. From the descriptive perspective, it is necessary to make connections between Old English and present-day English because the latter can be used to interpret otherwise obscure parts of the former, though this frequently shades into a general preoccupation with tracing etymologies. For instance, when Somner writes (1659: s.v. *cusceote*) that the ring-dove 'to this day in *Lancashire* is called a *Cow-shot*', the etymological link is used both to affirm the historical continuity of English and to confirm Somner's interpretation of the Old English.[212] Similarly, the Lye-Manning dictionary, although it generally provides definitions only in Latin, will insert an English gloss at the beginning of an entry in cases where the form is clearly similar to that of the Old English headword, and even the Bosworth-Toller dictionary occasionally prioritises the demonstration of etymological connectedness over the provision of useful definitions, as can be seen in entries — for instance that for *tyrdlu,* 'animal droppings' — where the formally similar *treddles* is the first gloss supplied, though subsequent comments within the entry make it clear that this was a term with only limited dialectal currency, and in this respect it is hardly practical as a definition for the average user.[213]

On a more prescriptive note, we find active claims that ideal contemporary English usage should emulate Old English. Somner's dictionary, for instance, occasionally cites the work of contemporary grammarians who write approvingly of Early Modern English usages that are 'agreeable… to antiquity' (1659: s.v. *cyric,* paraphrasing the spelling reformer Charles Butler 1633: 22).[214] More

[212] Somner took this observation from the unpublished dictionary of Laurence Nowell; Nowell's influence on Somner, and his references to Lancashire dialect, are discussed by Marckwardt (1947a; 1947b).
[213] One might be tempted to argue that this is simply the polite avoidance of a taboo term, but cf. *tord*, which is straightforwardly glossed 'a turd, dung'. For a near-contemporary criticism of the practice of using dialectal glosses, see Sweet (1897: ix).
[214] More examples are given by Cook (1962: 211–13)

explicitly, we find comments such as those in Bosworth (1838: xxvii) that 'our present polished phrase and fashionable pronunciation are often new, and, as deviating from primitive usage, faulty and corrupt.' From the perspective of periodisation, comments like this presuppose the existence of a significant difference between the Old English period and later usage, while also apparently desiring to diminish that difference by rejecting those elements of modern English that are deemed 'faulty and corrupt'.

Such attitudes are frequently part of a wider agenda that looks to the mediæval past as a model and symbolic point of origin for other, extra-linguistic, elements of the present. This topic is beyond the scope of the present discussion, but has been treated at length in many other works.[215] Within the history of Old English lexicography, we can find a useful point of comparison in the way that both Somner and Bosworth's dictionaries situate Old English as exemplifying a peculiarly English national character that values (vernacular) law and ideals of freedom. In one of the dedicatory poems printed in Somner's dictionary, William Jacob declares:

> Hence *Moot; Vous-avez* hence: for now we heare
> Our Lawes with an Intelligible Eare;
> [...]
> Old-*English* gave *Pannonia* law, with *Greece,*
> And all the Tract from *Spaine* to th'*Hebrides.*
>
> (Somner 1659: sig. b4r)

What Jacob calls 'our Lawes', which are favourably contrasted with the French (exemplified by '*Moot; Vous-avez*'), are presented as the direct descendants of, and possibly even equivalent to, Old English law. In the preface to his *Compendious Anglo-Saxon and English Dictionary* (an abridgement of his 1838 dictionary), Bosworth takes this nationalistic reading of Old English as a touchstone for contemporary ideals of law and liberty to greater rhetorical heights:

> Wherever these tribes appeared, liberty prevailed. They thought and acted for themselves. They were free, and loved the language of freedom. Where is the Englishman that does not feel his heart beat with conscious pride and independence, when he considers his *Freedom*? He *feels* he has a *free doom, province or jurisdiction*, in which none dare interfere, — he is entirely free, — free to enjoy, and do all the good of which his benevolent nature is capable. How tame is the Romanised *liberty*, in comparison with the old Gothic, Germanic and English *Freedom*!... This is true, *heartfelt Freedom*, and we derived it from our Anglo-Saxon forefathers.

[215] Niles (2015) is a useful recent overview of some of the roles the idea of pre-Conquest England has played in the shaping of national identities, although the full scope of the topic cannot be covered in a single book. Compare, for instance, Vernon (2018: 45–101), who covers in detail the troubled links between mediæval England and African-American identity, a theme only touched on briefly in Niles (2015: 278–286). Many more examples could be given.

(Bosworth 1848a: iii-iv)

Within the dictionaries, such attitudes are not necessarily linked explicitly to the issue of linguistic periodisation, but the effect is to emphasise the links between the Old English period and the present day. This does not, of course, negate the fact that the lexicographers still have to establish a stopping-point for their Old English dictionaries when it comes to the practical task of gathering citations, but the surrounding rhetoric nevertheless emphasises a sweeping, narrative in which present-day English represents the natural continuation of Old English. In a context such as this, any fuzziness in the lexicographical boundary might seem forgivable, indeed appropriate. The same attitudes and assumptions may still be used to support rigid periodisation on a smaller scale, by reinforcing the idea of the exceptional status of English in opposition to other languages, particularly French, and so lending weight to the use of the Norman Conquest as a periodising moment; the concept remains, however, of an underlying English (linguistic) identity that, despite interruptions, continues to the present day.

It is possible to see the relationship between Old English and present-day English from another, very different perspective. Unsurprisingly, dictionaries of Old English on the whole proceed from the assumption that Old English is valuable and worthy of study, but a competing narrative exists that presents Old English as an underdeveloped language, distinct from more valued later stages of English. In this tradition we find the identification — which goes back to the fifteenth century — of Chaucer as the 'firste fyndere of our faire langage' (Hoccleve, *The Regiment of Princes*, l. 4978, ed. Blyth 1999).[216] Moving beyond Chaucer to a wider literary perspective, we find scholars such as Thomas Warton, who wrote of the 'antient barbarism and obscurity' (1774: 43) of English poetry before 1200, and declined outright to discuss any poetry written before the Norman Conquest, on the grounds that 'the Saxon language is familiar only to a few learned antiquaries' and 'before the Norman accession, which succeeded to the Saxon government, we were an unformed and unsettled race. That mighty revolution obliterated almost all relation to the former inhabitants of this island; and produced that signal change in our policy, constitution, and public manners, the effects of which have reached modern times. The beginning of these annals seems therefore to be most properly dated from that era, when our national character began to dawn' (1774: vi).

As these quotations demonstrate, this rejection of pre-Conquest literature, language and society as fitting subjects for academic study is naturally associated with a greater emphasis on the importance

[216] The tradition of Chaucer as a founding or revolutionary figure in English language and literature — and the history of opposition to this claim — is discussed by Cannon (1996; 1998). For a specifically lexicographical perspective on perceptions of Chaucer's language, see also Kerling (1979).

of the period boundary, characterised by Warton as a 'mighty revolution'. In this model of the history of English, Old English is considered to be a distinct entity from later stages of the language, which can be characterised as English "proper". If these assumptions are accepted, it is natural to seek a clear period boundary that will mark not only the death of Old English (or rather, 'Saxon') but the birth of English.

In most sources that adopt this attitude to periodisation, the perceived difference of kind between the language used before and after the period boundary is, of course, also reflected in the terminology that is used. The now-familiar terminology of Old English, Middle English and Modern English is comparatively recent (see above p. 31); Warton, and the many other commentators using this model of periodisation, were in their own terms attempting to identify the end of '(Anglo-) Saxon' and the beginning of 'English'. It does not necessarily follow that all uses of '(Anglo-) Saxon' imply that any sense of linguistic continuity is being rejected; we saw above that Bosworth emphasises this sense of continuity in his lexicography, for instance, and yet he still calls the language 'Anglo-Saxon'. Nevertheless, it is interesting to recall in this context that Jacob's dedicatory poem in Somner's dictionary, though its title addresses Somner as 'the great Restorer of the Saxon Tongue' (Somner 1659: sig. b4r) nevertheless uses the then uncommon term 'Old English' in the lines quoted above, which emphasise the continuity of legal tradition and national identity from pre-Conquest England to the seventeenth century.

I have already suggested that we would not generally expect to find this attitude to periodisation, with its dismissal of the relevance and value of Old English, represented in the dictionaries of that language discussed in this study. There is, however, a significant exception in the form of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, particularly in the early stages of its development. The *OED* is of course not dedicated to Old English, despite including a significant quantity of Old English material (see above p. 47), and on purely practical grounds it had (and continues to have) obvious practical reasons to avoid documenting Old English in its entirety, and to adopt an outlook on the history of English that justifies this avoidance.

From the very early stages of planning, it was made clear that the *OED* (then still the *New English Dictionary*) would be concerned with English as opposed to (Anglo-) Saxon, except to the extent that the latter was relevant to the development of the former. This can be seen in the *Proposal for the Publication of a New English Dictionary* (Philological Society 1859):[217]

[217] On the publication history of the *Proposal*, which was first published in 1858, see Gilliver (2016: 28–30).

> As soon as a standard language has been formed, which in England was the case after the Reformation, the lexicographer is bound to deal with that alone; before that epoch, however, the English language was in reality another name for the sum of a number of local languages, *all exhibiting an English type distinct from the Saxon*, and therefore all equally entitled to notice as authorities in the formation of a Dictionary…
>
> The limits of quotation in point of time are next to be fixed. *We have decided to commence with the commencement of English, or, more strictly speaking, with that definite appearance of an English type of language, distinct from the preceding semi-Saxon*, which took place about the end of the reign of Henry III.
>
> (Philological Society 1859: 3, emphasis mine)

Establishing that (Anglo-) Saxon is distinct from English and thus beyond the remit of the *OED* neatly avoids a practical lexicographical problem, as James Murray would go on to point out in the 'General Explanations' published in the first volume of the *OED*:

> The middle of the twelfth century… has been adopted as the only natural halting-place, short of going back to the beginning, so as to include the entire Old English or 'Anglo-Saxon' Vocabulary. To do this would have involved the inclusion of an immense number of words, not merely long obsolete but also having obsolete inflexions, and thus requiring, if dealt with at all, a treatment different from that adapted to the words which survived the twelfth century. For not only was the stream of English literature then reduced to the tiniest thread (the slender annals of the Old English or Anglo-Saxon Chronicle being for nearly a century its sole representative), but the vast majority of the ancient words that were destined not to live into modern English, comprising the entire scientific, philosophical, and poetical vocabulary of Old English, had already disappeared, and the old inflexional and grammatical system had been levelled to one so essentially modern as to require no special treatment in the Dictionary. [218]
>
> (1888: xviii)

In this sense, the way the *OED* portrays the relationship between Old English and later stages of the language, including the assumption of a distinct period boundary, is driven by the desire to avoid large amounts of additional, specialist research into Old English.

Still, even though the decision is couched in practical terms, it is clear that it also reflects assumptions about what defines Englishness. The *Proposal* ended by describing the *OED* as 'a common, and we may add national, project,' and saying that 'we call upon Englishmen to come forward and write their own Dictionary for themselves' (1859: 7–8). However, the ideal of English national identity that this invokes is one that values the English language as having a clear, neat and easily documented point

[218] For the *OED* today, besides the problems of finding space and time to cover a large additional amount of vocabulary requiring different treatment due to its 'obsolete inflexions', attempting fully to cover the Old English period would also duplicate the work of the *DOE*, rather than (as I have described above, p. 151) working in harmony with it. See also Esposito (2012).

of origin; the *OED* is by its design as a dictionary on historical principles concerned with establishing precise origins wherever possible.[219] This clarity and neatness is reinforced by contrasting it with the assumed obscurity and messiness of Old English.

I have sketched two possible ways that Old English may be imagined as relating to present-day English, and their implications for periodisation: the narrative of continuity, which may imply the minimisation and blurring of the period boundary, and the narrative of a triumphant birth of English from early mediæval confusion, which generally implies the existence of a significant and well-defined boundary.[220] In practice, of course, lexicographers rarely adhere wholly to one of these two extremes. For instance, Bosworth's use of the 1258 Proclamation of Henry III as a periodising moment is complex because the idea is mentioned once in the preface to the 1838 dictionary but never apparently put into practice. It becomes even more difficult to interpret when we consider that the proclamation was identified by several of Bosworth's near-contemporaries as the first English (as opposed to Anglo-Saxon) text (Hallam 1837–9 vol. I: 61; Latham 1841: 64). This might seem to align Bosworth with the "birth of English" narrative, despite comments elsewhere in his dictionary that seem to endorse the "continuity" narrative. We can reconcile the two to a certain extent; for instance, it is possible for Bosworth to value contemporary dialect for its 'direct descent from our high-spirited Anglo-Saxon ancestors' (1838: xxvii) while nevertheless treating such dialect as a side note to a narrative of the emergence of a more prestigious standard English, imagined as more refined and distinct from its Old English roots.

On the whole, however, we must accept that while these broad ideas of the narrative of English may be influential, they are also malleable; material originally used to support one narrative may be reused elsewhere to make a very different point. We have seen how Hickes's *Thesaurus* provided an important and influential model for recognising and categorising variation within Old English while framing this variation as linguistic degeneracy and corruption. Lye and Manning inherited Hickes's terminology and a number of his citations, but broke free of his misgivings about corruption to the extent that their nominally 'Saxon-Latin' dictionary contains more French-derived vocabulary than any other dictionary of Old English until the *OED.*

[219] Compare Crowley (1991: 151), who in his discussion of the *Prospectus* observes not only that establishing a definite historical limit to English is necessary to the *OED*'s goal of tracing word history (since 'English words could not exist until the language itself "first" appears') but that, in this question, 'what is at stake is not just the historical dating of the beginning of the language, but of the nation and people too.'

[220] For a slightly different analysis of competing attitudes towards language change and the status of Old English, with a focus on Victorian mediævalism, see Abberley (2020).

These concerns are, on the whole, less immediately apparent in more recent dictionaries; we might question the implications of the *OED Online* identifying itself in its website header as the 'definitive record of the English language' while still deliberately offering only partial coverage of Old English, but certainly the *DOE* — and even Bosworth-Toller — largely avoids grand statements about the place of Old English in a narrative of national identity. This does not mean that these narratives no longer have any effect on present-day scholarship. It could be argued, however, that present-day lexicographical periodisation is more firmly settled in the narrative of linguistic continuity and more likely to accept and champion ideas of minimised, indefinite period boundaries, given that these ideas are strongly implied not only by the general adoption of the Old-Middle-Modern terminology, but also by the planned overlap between historical dictionaries discussed in the first half of this chapter.

Conclusion: How does the periodisation of Old English fit into a wider contextual framework?

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how a complete understanding of lexicographical periodisation requires us to consider not only individual dictionaries or periods, but also the relationships between them. Even in the early dictionaries, before the advent of Middle English lexicography, the Old English period boundary was unavoidably and fundamentally shaped by the consideration of how Old English could be defined in relation (or opposition) to other accounts of the history of English, whether these were dictionaries with overlapping coverage or the more abstract concept of other periods or varieties of Old English. As time passed, the body of existing scholarship and preconceptions grew, meaning that Old English lexicography had to define itself in the context of an increasingly complex and crowded field. In some ways, this additional context limited the scope of dictionaries of Old English, encouraging them to define their boundaries more closely; encyclopædic digressions on thirteenth-century texts (as found in Somner's dictionary) were less necessary or appropriate when other works of scholarship had arrived to cover this ground. However, with the ability to provide greater coverage comes the goal of providing perfect coverage, which can lead to inconsistent liminal cases as dictionaries attempt on a case by case basis to find space for material that might otherwise go undocumented, as seen in the *DOE*'s relationship with the *OED* and *MED*. It is tempting to see the general trend towards a narrative of linguistic continuity as another manifestation of this gap-filling instinct, though, as I have argued, an emphasis on linguistic continuity may be found in some form in earlier dictionaries as well as those of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

This chapter only outlines some of the ways in which it is necessary to consider the contexts of lexicographical periodisation. As I have emphasised throughout this thesis, periodisation was and is a concern for many branches of historical and linguistic scholarship besides lexicography. Dictionaries can be understood as simply one more contribution to this general conversation and to the gradual establishment and continuous revision of the identity of Old English studies as a discipline. The interaction between periodisation in lexicography and in other forms of scholarly output, and especially the influence of the availability and categorisation of mediæval source texts in edited editions, would be a fruitful avenue for further study.

Despite limiting the scope of my discussion in this way, I have in a sense brought my account of lexicographical periodisation and its driving forces full circle, returning to the themes raised in the introduction to this thesis: the history of Old English lexicography and the historical variability of terminology used to talk about Old English and related periods in the history of English. In doing so, however, I hope to have made the case that the specific details of lexicographical history have much to add to the discussion of these topics. In the final, concluding chapter of this thesis, I summarise the major issues and themes I have identified in the lexicographical periodisation of Old English, and discuss the potential significance of these issues to the present and future of Old English lexicography.

CONCLUSION: UNDERSTANDING PERIODISATION IN DICTIONARIES OF OLD ENGLISH

Previous chapters of this thesis have approached the problem of periodisation in dictionaries of Old English from a variety of angles. I have shown how, although lexicographers are far from equal in the level of overt interest they express in periodisation (whether this is as a linguistically descriptive concept or simply as a convenient way of signifying the practical extent of their research), it is possible in all dictionaries to find evidence of the decisions that make each dictionary's representation of the Old English period subtly different from the others. Having established in this way the nature of the evidence, I offered an account of the various ways in which it is possible to understand and identify the boundary that is imagined to mark the end of the Old English period: as precise, ambiguous, or intentionally fluid, and as defined by a variety of linguistic and extra-linguistic criteria. Using a series of case studies, I demonstrated that the nature of the textual record is such that it frequently defies simplistic attempts to divide it into linguistic periods, and that an appreciation of the unique challenges presented by individual texts can often explain the origins of apparent peculiarities in a dictionary's approach to periodisation. Finally, I examined some of the ways in which lexicographical periodisation interacts with external factors not only in the form of concrete influence from other lexicographical publications but also more intangibly as representing a generalised ideological stance on the nature of the English language and its history.

In the light of these findings, I now return to the research questions identified in the introduction to this thesis.

How has the end of the Old English period been handled in different Old English dictionaries?

My primary research question, being exploratory in nature, is answered by the cumulative findings of all the preceding chapters. It is also possible to make some meaningful generalisations that offer us new ways of thinking about periodisation and its role in historical lexicography. The most frequently recurring observation I have made in this thesis has been that — on whatever level we consider it — lexicographical periodisation is persistently inconsistent. It is expressed inconsistently and applied inconsistently, not only between dictionaries but even within a single dictionary, and it is not uncommon for even a single text to be treated in patchy and contradictory ways. On a certain level, it may feel like a disappointment that there is no single key that allows us to fully understand and rationalise lexicographical periodisation, and no simple narrative that can encompass the variety

of approaches. However, these multiple layers of variability and confusion are themselves informative.

At the beginning of this thesis, I suggested that if dictionaries tend to converge on a single approach to periodisation, despite their other differences, this might hint at the existence of a natural answer to the problem of periodisation, which is either so deeply rooted in the history of scholarship or so self-evident an interpretation of the linguistic data that it gains wide acceptance. This is apparently not the case; neither the textual record nor the weight of scholarly tradition seems as yet to have pointed towards a single, intuitive, "natural" approach to the periodisation of mediæval English. We should of course bear in mind that the linguistic data themselves have changed considerably over the past three and a half centuries of lexicography; new texts have been discovered and edited, new techniques have been developed to establish or disprove datings, and so on. Is it possible, then, that in the twenty-first century we have reached a point in history of English scholarship where nothing more is left to discover that could significantly alter our understanding of periodisation? The *DOE*, though as yet incomplete, might be seen as the final word in this respect; it is unlikely that substantial amounts of early mediæval material remain to be uncovered that are not already represented in its corpus. If this is the case, we might argue that the present-day periodisation of the English language is not only objectively superior to earlier periodisations (because it is better informed than they are), but unsurpassable by future scholarship (because it represents the best possible interpretation of the current evidence, and there is nothing left to discover that would prompt a reanalysis).

On balance, however, such a claim seems optimistic. As I have shown, periodisation choices are closely linked to lexicographical conventions and format, which dictate and limit how dictionary users are made aware of periodisation (Chapter Three), to the circumstantial privileging of certain texts as valued sources and points of reference, which causes periodisation to be defined in terms of these texts to the exclusion of others (Chapter Five), and to a host of external contextual factors, which transform periodisation from an objective historical-linguistic task to merely one factor in a complex network of collaboration and self-positioning (Chapter Six). When we combine this evidence with the observation that even current dictionaries such as the *DOE* and *OED* show signs of instability and inconsistency in periodisation, the most plausible conclusion is that a single satisfactory approach to lexicographical periodisation remains out of reach. The difficulties of periodisation reflect the complexities of the linguistic record, and indeed periodisation is generally better understood as a process of scholarship rather than as a feature of language (or even of the surviving linguistic record).

This conclusion is consistent with what we know about periodisation in non-lexicographical sources. Research such as that of David Matthews (1999) has demonstrated that the definition of literary periods in mediæval English is similarly inextricable from the moment and context of definition. Matthews is likewise clear in his view that present-day scholarship is not free from these biases: 'Genealogies [by which he means intellectual genealogies of the development of a discipline] describe determinant moments in which historical forces shape (in this case) texts, and we have to recognize that we live in a particular moment in which we might equally be caught by historical forces.' (1999: 197)

This is not to claim, however, that all the variability observed in lexicographical periodisation is the result of external 'historical forces' in an abstract sense. Dictionaries are more than impersonal products of a homogeneous scholarly zeitgeist, and this is, perhaps, especially true in the case of Old English lexicography, which has never been a large field and which is thus highly susceptible to the influence of individuals. As I have observed, one of the most striking characteristics of the lexicographical periodisation I have been investigating is the degree of inconsistency found even within dictionaries. Somner invokes in one entry the idea of the Norman Conquest as a natural linguistic and political boundary, while still citing known post-Conquest texts in others. Lye and Manning acknowledge 'Norman Saxon' as an apparent period category but apply this label unpredictably, largely following Hickes but seemingly not doing so either comprehensively or exclusively. Bosworth suggests at different points in his preface that the end of Old English can be located in 1100, 1258, and variously according to the dialect of a text, before ultimately acknowledging that his actual practice in selecting citations follows none of these periodisations completely.

Many — although not all — inconsistencies in the later dictionaries (especially the *OED* and *DOE*) can be explained as the result of the dictionaries in question being compiled by multiple lexicographers over an extended period of time. In the case of the earlier dictionaries, which were largely compiled by one or two individuals over the course of a few years, it is harder to explain inconsistencies in this way. This suggests, then, that the nature of the data itself defies simple categorisation, whether this is due to individually problematic texts, the potential for periodisation to operate on multiple linguistic (and extra-linguistic) levels, or the accretive nature of the scholarly process that means that the availability of material to lexicographers is shaped by the decisions of earlier generations of scholars.

Some significant ideas in periodisation can be seen to recur despite the general tendency towards variability. As I showed in the first part of Chapter Six, some of these recurring ideas can be ascribed

to lexicographical inheritance. Nevertheless, these elements were apparently considered useful enough, or at least unproblematic or unobtrusive enough, to retain. Other recurring ideas, however, are better explained as separate invocations of a concept already established elsewhere in scholarship (the significance of 1066 as a periodising moment, for example), or perhaps as independent convergence on an effective solution to a particular problem (for instance, the general favouring of a pragmatic policy of inclusiveness).

More importantly than individual boundary dates, or the inclusion or exclusion of particular texts, the Old English dictionaries in this study share fundamental assumptions about the nature and purpose of periodisation as it is applied to Old English. All of them accept implicitly that periodisation is necessary. This is, of course, a reflection of my choice of sources — all but one of the dictionaries I selected focus specifically on the language of early mediæval English texts — but the fact remains that there is no English dictionary that offers full coverage of the language from Old English to the present day. The closest any lexicographical project comes to doing away with the need for periodisation can be seen in the co-functioning of the *DOE, MED* and *OED*, something until recently not logistically achievable, given that it is enabled by the use of hyperlinks to connect electronic dictionary entries in a way that is both more immediate and more flexible than traditional cross-referencing. However, these remain separate dictionaries, which each follow their own lexicographical policies and which must be separately accessed.[221] In this way, periodisation remains a significant shaping factor even when using the three dictionaries as a connected whole.

Related to — but not identical to — the acceptance of periodisation is the characterisation of language from the end of the Old English period as a marked category that stands in contrast to the rest of the Old English corpus. For the end of the period to be noteworthy, the period itself must be an identifiable concept, and the implication is generally that language from the end of the period is unusual precisely because it is already beginning to change into Middle English (or an equivalent post-Old English category).

Somner's dictionary perhaps excepted, all the dictionaries in this study seem to take for granted that the end of Old English is a linguistically significant concept meriting special attention and discussion.[222] The form this special attention takes varies from dictionary to dictionary, but, whether

[221] Indeed, they are not equally accessible to all users, as only the *MED* is currently free to use online with no registration or paywall (see Lewis et al. 2000–18: *About*); the *DOE* allows a limited number of free logins per year and the *OED* requires users to have a subscription.

[222] See above (p. 97) for my discussion of Somner's dictionary as unanalysed periodisation. It is also interesting that the source most obviously singled out by Somner as being linguistically unusual with respect to the rest of the Old English corpus is the Junius 11 manuscript, which he associates in part with his perception that it is especially *early*: 'veteri [et] obsoleto', 'old [and] obsolete' (Somner 1659: *Ad Lectorem* §7).

through prefatory comments, labelling, entry-internal discussions or other means, material that sits on or goes beyond the period boundary is placed in contrast to an unmarked norm, and generally recognised as having features that anticipate the post-Old English period. Such an approach implicitly recognises that, even though periodisation is used to segment the linguistic timeline, it is to some extent an abstraction away from a historical linguistic record that is more complex and gradient; the Old English period is not homogeneous and discrete, but contains material that is in a state of transition. At the same time, however, the lexicographical representation of Old English as a distinct entity with boundaries is reinforced by the markedness of this transitional material. Labelling of and comments on this material draw users' attention to its existence (and hence to the challenges it presents for a clear-cut model of periodisation), but also function on the assumption that it is the exception to the "rule" of an Old English period that can be meaningfully defined by such rules. The recognition of a marked periphery implies the existence of an unmarked centre; in an approach to language history that avoided periodisation entirely and treated the linguistic record of English as existing on a continuous, undivided timeline, there would be no concept (save, perhaps, for one based purely on frequency of surviving attestations) of typical Old English with which the marked, transitional forms could be compared.

Although dictionaries' treatment of liminal Old English generally supports the idea of the period boundary as a meaningful concept, it does not follow that a period boundary is necessarily understood to be a single division. On the contrary, as I have shown, all the dictionaries in this study implicitly or explicitly make use of multiple boundaries in defining the end of the Old English period, both by recognising various transitional sub-periods (each of which may have its own boundaries) and by allowing boundaries to be defined in a variety of contextually appropriate ways such that, for instance, a discussion of loanwords may use a different period boundary than a discussion of morphology, or indeed a discussion of politics, and different rates (and kinds) of change may be acknowledged as taking place in different dialects.

Running counter to this implicit acceptance of a plurality of boundaries, however, is a relatively consistent pretence that the periodisation of Old English is simple. Of the dictionaries in this study, only Bosworth and the *OED* discuss their evolving periodisation choices directly and at any length, and — unsurprisingly — even these accounts tend to focus on maintaining the lexicographer's authoritative stance, representing the final strategy (which, as we have seen, is rarely universally applied in practice) as a logical improvement on those used previously. Bosworth passes quickly over his decision to include material from the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle after his 1100 cut-off date with the comment that 'it was found desirable to take a wider range, and to include some terms of a more

recent formation' before reaffirming the reliability of his approach from the user's perspective: 'As the authors are always quoted, the age and purity of a word can at once be seen' (Bosworth 1838: clxxii). Similarly, the webpage discussing the treatment of Old English in the third edition of the *OED* emphasises that the revision of how this material was handled in earlier editions remains consistent in general terms with the editorial policies of the first edition, but with changes taking the form of 'thoroughgoing' revisions based on 'revolutionized lexicographical methods' (Esposito 2012). Understandably, both dictionaries imply that their policies in this respect represent final answers to the challenges of periodisation that may be built upon but which will require no further major revision. In the other dictionaries in this study, which do not provide any significant discussion of their periodisation strategies at all, there is even less room to consider the possibility of alternative approaches.

This projection of simplicity in defiance of complex practice makes sense when we consider the extent to which the value of a dictionary depends on users' perception of its authoritativeness. As a reference work, a dictionary of Old English brings together and summarises in a convenient format data that, although it might in theory be accessible to most of its users, cannot practically be researched from first principles every time it is needed; if users are to accept the dictionary's conclusions, they need to have confidence in the underlying lexicographical process. Commentators taking these claims of simplicity in periodisation at face value might explain to a certain extent the scarcity of lexicographical sources in discussions of linguistic periodisation that I noted in the introduction to this thesis. A better appreciation outside lexicographical scholarship of the distinction between lexicographical principles and lexicographical practice might be beneficial to future accounts of periodisation and allow for greater use to be made of dictionaries as a source of evidence for this.

Dictionary history and the history of English: Mutual illumination?

The second major research question I identified in the introduction was whether and how dictionary history and the periodisation of English, topics only infrequently discussed in connection with one another, can serve each other. What does the handling of a complex topic such as periodisation tell us about the flexibility of available lexicographical techniques? How do the formal and practical limitations of lexicography serve to highlight points of particular complexity in the history of English?

Lexicographical flexibility

On the whole, all the dictionaries in this study have shown themselves to be flexible in the sense that they express information about periodisation in a large number of direct and indirect ways. Where one dictionary may address the topic in a lengthy preface, another dictionary may (apparently) compensate for a shorter preface by employing a more detailed system of labelling, or fuller comments in individual entries. Nevertheless, it is clear that some of these strategies can be described as more successful than others in terms of both their informativeness to the dictionary user and their reliability and ease of application.

Unsurprisingly, digital publication (as seen in the cases of the *DOE* and *OED Online*) represents a major step forward in the freedom to tackle issues of periodisation, as it does in many other aspects of lexicography. In web format, the pressure to be maximally economical in the use of space is greatly reduced, as the connection between printing costs and number of pages is severed. It is also possible to link more closely to resources outside the dictionary; as I have shown (see above p. 151), such links can substantially affect the assumptions behind a dictionary's periodisation.

It is easy to point to the web format as a technological innovation that was not available to earlier generations of lexicographers, which caused (and continues to cause) a radical reimagining of dictionaries' function and structure, offering new kinds of flexibility.[223] Other variations in lexicographical methodology, however, can be more difficult to interpret. If a given dictionary does not make use of a certain feature, it is not necessarily clear whether this should be interpreted as a design shortcoming of that dictionary, or whether the absence of that feature merely reflects the fact that the lexicographer, rather than being restricted by the constraints of their dictionary, felt that they had nothing to say that would require the use of the feature in question. That, for instance, the Bosworth-Toller dictionary does not use a system of diachronic labelling in its entries does not mean that Bosworth and Toller were unaware of the use of labels as a lexicographical strategy, or did not have the technological capacity to print them; they simply did not use them.

Indeed, another noticeable historical shift involving a lexicographer's practical ability to encode information within an entry involves a loss of informativeness; the abandonment of the antiquarian convention of printing Old English in a distinct typeface effectively deprived lexicographers of a potentially meaningful way of signalling the distinction between Old English and later periods. To

[223] There is also the question of how digital technology has changed the lexical data that goes into a dictionary; as I have suggested elsewhere in this thesis, a resource such as the *DOE* electronic corpus brings additional changes in terms of how texts (some of which may be of particular interest for periodisation) are processed to locate and verify citation evidence.

Bosworth, at least, the abandonment of this convention was itself a statement about periodisation, since he connects it to his agenda (see above p. 169) of emphasising the similarities between Old and Modern English, minimising the significance of the period boundary in doing so: 'Nothing would have led to the adoption of this type but a thorough conviction that the Roman character would be the most legible, and would best show the identity of the present English with the Anglo-Saxon' (Bosworth 1838: clxxii). In this instance at least, then, it is the choice of the lexicographer rather than the constraints of the dictionary format that determines how clearly and precisely periodising distinctions are made.

Identifying points of difficulty in the history of English

In any case, flexibility of format does not do away with the need to confront issues of periodisation, since, as I have already suggested, categories such as 'Old English' are inevitably idealised simplifications of a much more complex linguistic reality that does not admit a single, objectively correct division. All the dictionaries in this study show traces, in one way or another, of this linguistic complexity. How, then, does a dictionary's simplification of the history of English serve to highlight the elements that resist this simplification?

Several aspects of periodisation that present complexities to historical linguistic analysis are almost invisible on a lexicographical level. For instance, the syntactic developments that are recognised by many linguists as important yet complex criteria in distinguishing Old English from Middle English[224] are not only largely irrelevant to a dictionary's word-by-word approach, but would also not have been recognised by many earlier lexicographers, who lacked the theoretical framework for such analysis.[225] The absence of a given linguistic feature as a topic of lexicographical discussion, then, does not necessarily mean that it is unproblematic from the point of view of periodisation. However, we can assume that the reverse holds; it is likely that something that invites discussion by resisting simple lexicographical categorisation does so because it can be considered complex or problematic in general terms.

[224] See for instance Fischer (1992); for an example of syntactic data being used to make strong periodising claims (specifically, defining Middle English as 'Anglicized Norse'), see Emonds & Faarlund (2014).

[225] Cook (1962: 192–195) gives a picture of the depth of syntactic analysis of which Somner was apparently capable, bearing in mind that his dictionary predates the first publication of a grammar of Old English: largely passing mentions of topics such as impersonal verbs and the use of *[ic] eom,* 'I am', as an auxiliary in passive constructions. Most of these are dependent either on Aelfric's *Grammar* or on the Early Modern English grammars to which Somner had access. Subsequent scholars of Old English naturally refined these observations, but note that Bosworth's dictionary of 1838, which includes (clxxviii-ccii) a brief grammar of Old English based on the work of Rask and Grimm still says almost nothing substantial about Old English syntax, let alone about syntactic change.

In this study, I have drawn attention to various aspects of the historical linguistic record that appear to cause particular problems for lexicographical categorisation. These complexities are both external, in the sense that they reflect complexities or lacunae in lexicographers' access to or understanding of mediæval English, and internal, in the sense that they reflect complexities in mediæval English as it was used as a living language. The former category of complexities is of little interest, perhaps, on a linguistic level. However, as I showed in Chapters Five and Six of this thesis, it offers productive grounds for discussion on a historiographical level, revealing the preoccupations and oversights of past scholars and reminding us to be alert for their influence on our work today.

In the category of internal complexities, most striking is possibly the issue of how to categorise loanwords; these are a highly visible marker of linguistic change on the lexical level at which dictionaries operate, but, as we have seen, the timeline of their appearance in the written record does not align neatly with either recorded historical events or other linguistic markers of language change. In all the dictionaries in this study, therefore, loanwords frequently have an uneasy marginal status: visibly "other", yet distributed in a way that makes their presence in canonical Old English texts difficult to ignore.

Periodisation in dictionaries of Old English: Implications

I have discussed the nature of periodisation in the past three and a half centuries of Old English lexicography, from the mid-seventeenth century to the present day. The question remains: what implications might these observations have for future scholarship, either in Old English lexicography specifically or in the wider field of Old English studies? Looking backwards, we can identify the sometimes unusual patterns of coverage and editorial comments in dictionaries of Old English, and describe how they came to be as well as their place in a wider scholarly narrative of periodisation in the history of English. Most of these dictionaries, however, have been superseded as works of reference and are now only of interest to historians of the discipline; does the study of periodisation in these works have any significance outside such historiographical enquiries?

Three of the dictionaries on which this study focuses are still in current use: the *OED*, Bosworth-Toller, and the *DOE*. First and foremost, then, by better understanding periodisation in these works, we can use them more cautiously and appropriately, especially when carrying out lexical research that is liable to be sensitive to issues of periodisation, such as studies dealing with the vocabulary of Old English texts typically classed as 'late'. As I have demonstrated, these are prone to inconsistent treatment even in the *DOE*.

Of these three dictionaries, two (the *OED* and *DOE*) are still actively being updated. Given the long-term nature of both projects, they are to a considerable extent constrained by the patterns and practices established in earlier parts of the dictionary, and are therefore unlikely to introduce substantial changes in their handling of periodisation in the foreseeable future. Bearing in mind this limitation, however, how might an understanding of periodisation in older dictionaries inform future lexicographical practice?

Whatever the problems raised by traditional periodisation, it seems practically impossible to imagine a lexicographical future that is uninfluenced by it. As Michael Adams summarises, even if we do not accept the inevitability of periodisation as a linguistic phenomenon, we can hardly escape it as a lexicographical one:

> Telling the story of English in one continuous narrative… doesn't work for lexicography. Unlike the history of English… English lexicography produces works of some volumes, some column length, and doesn't have the theoretical luxury of continuous narrative, even in the Digital Age. Even if periodization is historically problematic, it's lexicographically convenient — were languages not broken into implausible periods, historical dictionaries would never be produced. Imagine the grant proposal for a dictionary without period limits.
>
> (Adams 2018: 80)

In response to this practical limitation, Adams imagines a future of flexible, opportunistically applied 'micro-histories' (2018: 97). Though attractive in theory, and indeed in other lexicographical sub-fields, it is difficult to see how such an approach could bring about significant change in the documentation of mediæval English, if only because, as I have shown (particularly in Chapters Four and Five), the metadata necessary for such micro-histories are often absent or ambiguous. Furthermore, the introduction of a radically new approach to periodisation would run the risk of isolating the dictionary that used it from related scholarship.

Of course, this study has demonstrated that it is possible for different models of periodisation to rise and fall, with Somner's implicit two-period model (of Saxon contrasted with contemporary English) giving way to the Lye and Manning's focus on sub-periods defined by language contact, which in turn is superseded by the increasingly modern-seeming approaches of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. With these changes as precedent, there might seem to be no convincing reason why the next major dictionary of Old English should not overturn the models of periodisation seen today in the *DOE* and *OED*.[226] I would counter this, however, with the observation that many of the "new"

[226] Save, perhaps, for the general tendency for lexicographical projects to increase in size and complexity over time. While Somner's dictionary, documenting the relatively small corpus of Old English as it was then known, was completed by a single lexicographer in a handful of years, the *DOE*, now with considerably more ground to cover, remains a work in

approaches to periodisation seen in this study are primarily cosmetic. The lexicographers present new rationalisations of how Old English fits into a wider narrative of linguistic development, but — with a few exceptions, such as the brief appearance of the *Ormulum* in Lye and Manning, or Toller's removal of a number of inherited entries in his supplement to the Bosworth-Toller dictionary — the linguistic content of the dictionaries is not considerably disrupted. The framing of periodisation may change, but the treatment of the lexicon itself remains — allowing for the discovery of new texts — surprisingly stable. This tends to lead to further mismatches between lexicographers' theoretical claims and their practice as seen in their inclusion policies. Bearing this in mind, a radically new approach to periodisation that makes a meaningful contribution without introducing too many new inconsistencies seems a difficult goal to achieve.

What is more, any dictionary that did radically redraw the boundaries of Old English would be in danger of alienating its users, who for the most part come to a new dictionary not with theoretical concerns but with immediate practical goals, such as reading a particular mediæval text. Unless carrying out particularly specialised research, they are likely to be operating within an existing framework that adheres broadly to current norms of periodisation. Any periodisation, however theoretically sound, that led to the exclusion of a popular "Old English" text (the laws of the Textus Roffensis, for instance, on the grounds that they were copied at a late date, or the D text of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle on the grounds that it contains the French loanword *arblast* 'crossbow', or indeed any text that shows the beginnings of the loss of inflectional distinctions) would lead to a dictionary that failed to serve the needs of this audience. The user's idea of Old English, formed through experience and through the norms set out not only in curricula, editions, grammars, articles and so on, but also in existing dictionaries, dictates what they will expect and hope to find in any new dictionary. It is this general feeling that many scholars of Old English have, that they would know it when they see it, that forms the groundwork of a lexicographical inclusion policy, with the lexicographical periodisation policy often serving as a mere post-hoc rationalisation or a terminological framework. If we consider Old English not as a linguistic category to be defined, or even as a historical one, but as a shared field of interest, then the resistance of Old English dictionaries to substantial recategorisation is easy to understand.

What is left, then, if we accept that the foreseeable future of lexicography is unlikely to bring any radical reinterpretations of mediæval English periodisation? To my mind, the main possibilities for the improvement of lexicographical periodisation lie in the careful and explicit discussion of the

progress despite the work of numerous lexicographers over the course of decades. To put forward a contentious new approach to periodisation that may or may not gain widespread acceptance might therefore seem a riskier investment of time and resources now than it was in previous centuries.

periodisation decisions made in a dictionary. As I have shown throughout this study, conscious or unconscious choices and preconceptions about the status of the Old English period and its boundaries can be found underlying many aspects of a dictionary's structure and content, yet it is relatively rare for lexicographers to acknowledge this fact. I demonstrated in chapter three that paratexts can be important for building up a picture of how a dictionary approaches periodisation, even though they cannot be taken entirely at face value. In a dictionary with no such paratextual discussion of periodisation, however, dictionary users must rely even more heavily on reconstructing and hypothesising lexicographers' underlying conceptions of periodisation from the evidence of dictionary entries if they wish to make informed generalisations about how the dictionary's coverage relates to an abstract ideal of Old English as a linguistic period. The most useable and least misleading dictionaries in this study are, I would argue, those that state most clearly their essential principles in this respect.

More acknowledgement of the challenges of periodisation would therefore seem to be in order. Indeed, a similar observation has already been made by Anne Curzan with reference to the treatment of periodisation in the allied field of history of English textbooks: 'The critical lesson is that historians of English, particularly those writing reference works, need to be explicit about how they are establishing periods in the history of the language — the internal and/or external criteria they are employing and the implications' (Curzan 2012: 1253). Curzan may be referring here primarily to textbooks, but the same point holds of dictionaries as another kind of reference work.

At the same time, however, it may be wise to remember that, as I have shown, periodisation will always by definition be a simplified abstraction away from complex and messy linguistic data. In a dictionary that presents the histories of each individual word in the lexicon, there will be at least as many periodisation decisions to be made as there are entries, and even the most exhaustive preface cannot account for them all. Even when attempting to document the decisions involved in lexicographical periodisation, then, we have to be satisfied with the abstraction rather than with an undigestible superfluity of detail.

Another way of understanding the seemingly unavoidable messiness of attempts at lexicographical periodisation is to turn to a concept familiar to present-day lexicographers and linguists concerned with the study of meaning: the tension between definition on the basis of necessary and sufficient conditions and definition following prototype. The former approach, based on classical semantic theory, attempts to identify a limited number of key features that can uniquely identify a particular category: a 'bachelor' is an unmarried, male, adult human, and any entity possessing those features can confidently be said to be a bachelor. The latter approach, recognises that many categories are

difficult to frame in such absolute terms. Instead, categories are clustered around prototypical instances: a robin is a prototypical bird, and the more like a robin something is the more inclined we are to consider it a bird, but the category also allows for relatively "un-birdlike" birds such as penguins or ostriches, which may lack some of the features (such as the ability to fly) that we consider typical of birds.[227] Thinking in terms of prototypes also allows us to recognise fuzziness between categories; between a prototypical cup and a prototypical bowl, for instance, there is an ambiguous continuum of things that might variously be considered one, the other, or both (Labov 1973). A linguistic period such as Old English could likewise be defined in terms of a prototype based on the reading of familiar, frequently-studied texts (the language of Ælfric, for instance, or of the Alfredian translation movement) rather than attempting to impose on it a set of necessary and sufficient conditions involving date of composition, presence of loanwords, and so on. Liminal Old English texts, in this view, are comparable to penguins; they are simply less prototypical members of the category.

This understanding of periodisation may cause conceptual difficulties if we consider that the main goal of the dictionaries considered in this study was to provide an objective classification of the English language. If this was their task, then all of them can be said to have failed in it. As I have attempted to demonstrate, however, it is not; the dictionaries I have examined are flexible works that respond dynamically to individual needs, interests and challenges as they arise, and that treat periodisation not so much as a theory than as a tool, or as an ongoing process. In this context, fuzziness and liminality is unavoidable and perhaps in some contexts even desirable; each word (and text) has, not only its own history, but also its own relationship to the abstracted, prototypical idea of Old English.

Therefore, another desideratum for future scholarship that this study has highlighted is more careful and dedicated attention paid to the edges of disciplines. This is a pressing concern in a practical sense. Texts such as HomM 15 illustrate how even careful and deliberately inclusive modern scholarship can lead to the awkward or confusing treatment of material perceived as transitional. Furthermore, the startling disparity of treatment (in both present and past lexicography) of near-contemporary texts such as the *Ormulum* (almost entirely absent from the Old English lexicographical record) and the Peterborough Continuations (after Somner, almost omnipresent) demonstrates that more could be

[227] Classical semantic theory and prototype theory have been widely discussed; for further detail, see for instance Taylor (2003: 19–83). For a consideration of these ideas from the perspective of lexicographical defining, see for instance Atkins & Rundell (2008: 414–19), who point out that, although traditional defining styles rely heavily on the idea of necessary and sufficient conditions, good defining often requires greater flexibility: 'Claims that our definitions specify — in an "authoritative" way — the essential characteristics of a given L[exical] U[nit] are likely to prove unsustainable in the face of observable language data. So we should settle for the less ambitious but more realistic goal of abstracting, from a mass of individual instances, the central and recurrent semantic features of a word or LU and, when appropriate, providing additional information that will help users to identify prototypical members of a category' (2008: 419).

done to read texts of the immediate post-Conquest period alongside each other, with dictionaries' tendencies to assign them to different periods hindering this effort. A dedicated dictionary of the Old English–Middle English transition might be too specialised a project to be of general interest, but it would in theory at least present a different narrative to offer a counterpoint or challenge to the accumulated assumptions of the mainstream lexicographical tradition.

However, the edges of disciplines are also of interest in a more theoretical sense. One of the ideas I have returned to throughout this study is that it is by taking pains with the boundaries of a field that we make a statement about what constitutes its core. The question, 'Where is the end of Old English?' is in many ways simply another way of asking 'What is Old English?' What features — linguistic or otherwise — are so central to our conception of Old English as a field that their absence compels us to apply a different label? This thesis has examined some of these core features as seen by the past three and a half centuries of Old English scholarship, without identifying a single one that has been fully accepted. Ultimately, the Old English period is something we are continually defining and re-defining for ourselves.

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