Origin and Remnants of the Dialects in England

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Abstract

This paper contains new theoretical approaches and results about the
ancestors of the English language or its dialects, from 449 to 1500 CE.
Its author has prepared a preliminary evaluation of the historical
dialects of England. 100 items, mainly single words and sometimes more
(us two, I am, are you, daren't, etc.) have been selected from 18
locations. Items not having any variety have been excluded, so the
procedure was selective, in order to show contrast. Our goal was to
analyze mathematically the distribution of all existing variants of
basic old words that had been likely present in Middle English. About
two-thirds of our data has originated from H. Orton, "A word geography
of England" (1974), the rest from Upton and Widdowson, "Atlas of English
dialects" (1996) and Orton-Sanderson-Widdowson, "The linguistic atlas of
England" (1978). All have been accepted without change. Here we can to
compare three maps illustrating the distribution of the words "I
am." (See Figure 1.) The first map is from the latter (1978: M28), the
second one is from Wakelin (1975:178) and the third one from Trudgill
(1994: 99), showing quite different locations for the borderlines. We
have not used the maps of Wakelin and Trudgill.

There were a few problematic situations, entries or missing information in some atlases, but most of
them have been explained in their Basic Material. In any survey, some informants are unable or
unwilling to respond to some queries. Our Figure 2 shows an illustration for this problem: two blank
areas along the Welsh border, from map M32 of Orton, Sanderson and Widdowson (1978). We find similar
difficulties in Orton (1974: 44-45, 75, 213-4) or in Upton-Widdowson (1996: 118). Some other issues
are tricky. For example, the "coal dust" is not called coal dust anywhere and "Female cat" is not
called by this name in any village. The informers had never confused the hedgehog with the porcupine
(as I did).

Every item from each location has been compared automatically, and the number of similarities within
each pair registered. Then, starting with the highest percentages of similarity, each of the 18
geographical points has been placed in one of the integrated groups where their speech had belonged,
always based on the highest similarities. Following this procedure, three major regions emerged: a
northern, a central-southeastern and a southwestern area. See Figures 3 (table of similarities) and
4. The similarity between the Northern and Central dialects is 12%, between the Central and
Southwestern is 59% and between the Northern and Southwestern is 7%.

The goal was to reduce the weight of numerous heavy volumes of atlases and substitute them by a

single map or just a few pages, tables, lists with handy and condensed results based on objective mathematical principles, instead of long subjective theories. We used a deductive method, not anticipating any certain outcome, working without any presupposition. Our expectation was that separate blocks would appear, instead of a perfect mess, showing an arrangement of the historical dialects in the past. Indeed, the result was a clear dialect classification using percentages. I conducted my research in Canada in 2001. Later I found Trudgill's excellent book in a library of Brazil, seeing with surprise that his maps and mines had been similar. Newbrook (2002) argued that my 100 words were insufficient to determine the dialects and their limits, also that my selected words may be arbitrary and not historical. He apparently did not know about Trudgill's evaluation, based only on eight arbitrarily selected words.

Our preliminary results show that the Lancaster-Hull line separates the northern and central regions. This may mean a shift of the ancient Danelaw boundary that has good correlation with the limits of the area containing place-names ending with -by, and the limits of frequent distribution of the surnames ending with -son. Our other border is the Gloucester-Portsmouth line. The boundaries that we offer here are not rigid. The resulting regions correspond well to the three main "languages" of Old English or the three main "dialects" of Middle English on the maps of modern linguists, proving their strong conservative forces. We show the three major focal areas without the transition areas, but those exist as well in reality.

"The Old English language" on the Internet tells that it belonged to the North Sea Germanic subgroup, with a code IEFBBB. Its status is extinct. It was the ancestor of Modern English, between the seventh and eleventh centuries AD. The Middle English language belonged to the Middle English subgroup, with a code IEFBBBAA. Extinct, it was the ancestor of Modern English. These give us an impression that the grandfather and the father of Modern English, so to speak, have been found officially. Instead of this, we offer the Mercian language as the grandmother, demonstrating that the so-called "Old English" was not its grandfather. Allegorically, it must have been only the ex-husband of its grandmother. Old English has no genetic relationship with Modern English, except some borrowings.

The line between accent, dialect and language is not a sure or a steady one and is often disputed, even by specialists... Some observe here that a language is a dialect with a flag and an army.

Professor Trudgill (1994: 2-6) is regarded as an authority on dialect. He tells that the pronunciation, grammar and words that people use make the dialects, and a small number of people speak a regionless accent sometimes referred to as a 'BBC accent.' He adds, "Traditional Dialects are what most people think of when they hear the term dialect. These dialects differ very considerably ...from each other... People often ask: how many dialects are there in England? This question is impossible to answer... There are no really sharp dialect boundaries in England... we shall be talking about Traditional Dialect and Modern Dialect areas as if there were such things as separate dialects... We realize that dialects form a continuum, but for the sake of clarity and brevity, we divide this continuum up into areas at points where it is least continuum-like. We draw boundaries between dialect areas at places where we find a situation most closely resembling an abrupt transition." Lord (1971: 39) cites a different opinion from Henry Sweet who found no natural division between one dialect and another. "There will be no lines of division; the dialects will shade insensibly into one another." One can add, as soon as an authorized group of linguists agrees on and sets the criteria (for example, 50% agreement as cognates out of x samples that could be words, word groups or grammatical features with dialectal variants) even a mapmaker could design a good map of English dialects.

"Why are there dialects? Why is it that people in different parts of the country speak differently? Trudgill (1994:5-7) thinks that English is constantly changing, and that different changes take place in different parts of the country, or the spread of changes will be halted by barriers to communication such as countryside which is difficult to cross. Our explanation is very different at this point but his statement is definitely valid for the present centuries. When a factory began to produce elevators or record players in one city of England, they may have given these names for their products. At the same time, another manufacturer in another city perhaps called and advertised them as "lift" and "turntable." Similar situation may have happened with the gym shoes. Those are

called plimsolls in a large area, probably comparing its design to a ship's Plimsoll line, named after Samuel Plimsoll, so the warriors of Hengist and Horsa would have conquered England wearing gym shoes. Modern differences like this cannot be projected into the past.

We feel that the present conditions do not give births to major linguistic changes. The opposite forces, including the printing and the media, are much stronger. Dramatic changes (wars, foreign occupations) are decreasing the number of dialects. Our Figure 5 shows the varieties of Old English as four dialects in McCrum, MacNeil and Cran (1992: 64) compared with Baugh and Cable (1994: 52). It has no been proved that the English, Saxon and Jute speech differed from each other very slightly as dialects in AD. 445. McCrum (1992: 58-60) admits, "Old English was not a uniform language. From the beginning it had its local varieties, just as today, on a much larger scale... Even the ancient kingdom of Kent, conquered by the Jutes from Jutland, still has a distinct speech-pattern whose origins can be traced back to that first invasion." The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells that the Saxons landed in the south and west, along the 'Saxon shore', the Angles in the east (in the part still known as East Anglia), and the Jutes in Kent... The man who was later become Pope Gregory the Great (590-604) asked some fair-haired slave boys, what was the name of their country. He was told that they were called Angles (Anglii), and that their ruler was called Aella, king of Deira.

Trudgill (1994: 8-9) tells, "The fact is that the languages we today call Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Icelandic, Faeroese, German, Dutch, Frisian and English were, around 2,000 years or so ago, all the same language... English speakers can still not understand Dutch or Norwegian without first studying them. A thousand years ago they probably would have been able to." We cannot agree with many mainstream linguists on these oversimplified conclusions. There is no logical or historical support for the view that the break-up of the co-called Proto-Indo-European language into its modern descendants was caused by a phenomenon called language change. Wrenn (1977:11) adds, "nor would it be right to assume that there was necessarily ever a race or people who spoke this Indo-European as their language."

The language as written by King Alfred is no longer comprehensible to us, but it may be illogical and biased to explain this with a rapid language change, or by a phenomenon that the largest number of words has died out in a short period when the vocabularies of these three languages had been allegedly still poor. Instead, probably they had rich and resourceful vocabularies by the time of merging. Two or three words would have been too many to mark a single notion so only one word has survived. On the other hand, there is not even one unknown word in Caxton's Prologue to his Aeneids (1490). We have posted it on the Internet with notes. The readers can find the text by google search ("William Caxton" and "Wikipedia.")

Readers can understand easily two Middle English poems written between 1300 and 1325 (Baugh and Cable, 1994: 140-142): Forthi (further?), me-thinks, almost at ease to work some good thing on English that may can both learned and lay. William of Nassyngton wrote: In English tongue I shall you tell, if ye with me so long will dwell... Both learned and lay, old or young, all understand the English tongue." Linguists try to prove many things by old rhymes, but here "a party" and "but feebly" do not rhyme. There is no guarantee that all surviving poems were excellent and reflected the vowels perfectly. The Cursor Mundi has breed and spread as rhymes. Its beginning is "Þis are Þe maters redde on raw Þat I think in Þis bok to draw, Schortly rimand on Þe ded, For mani er Þai her-of to spede. Notful me thinc it ware to man..." Our reading is "These are the matters ready in raw that I think is this book to draw, shortly remain on the deed, for many are they hereof to speed. Not fool, me-thinks, it were to man..." Baugh and Cable (1994: 402) offer different interpretation. All these show that there were no major changes in real English since 1300, and the rapid language change is a myth.

85% of the Old English words have died out, claim Baugh and Cable (1994: 53). This could indicate that Middle English has derived from the Mercian English, not from West Saxon. ("Old English" literary documents survived practically only in West Saxon areas.) The West Saxon once had been a "lingua franca" in the whole country, but it has died out and survived only in traces as a dialect. (See "Eiern" for eggs by Caxton's time.) Apart from convenience, practical, or prestige reasons, West Saxon cannot be called "Old English" but rather "Old Insular Saxon."

Wrenn agrees with us by telling, "King Alfred... calls the general language of England Englisc, and its peoples, whether Angles, Saxons or Jutes, Engle (Angles)... The dialect in which nearly all the important literature of the Anglo-Saxons is written is largely that of the South-South-West: whereas Modern literary English is much more derived from a Midland type belonging to the East of the country... The idea of clear continuity, therefore, in our literary monuments, as regards dialect, which the term Old English suggests, is somewhat illusion... Squarely facing the fact that the language of King Alfred is not the direct, but only the indirect ancestor of the English of to-day... it is unfortunate that there is not a direct continuity between this literary West-Saxon and later English, since the direct ancestor of modern literary English was some kind of Midland (Mercian as it is called for the Old English period), with an underlay of South-Eastern. The nearest direct descendants of West-Saxon are to be found in such counties as Gloucester, Somerset and Devon, as rural speech only" (Wrenn, 1977: 20-24). Baugh and Cable (1994: 187) confirm that the Standard English is based on the East Midland dialect.

The vernacular of King Alfred (871-900 AD) indicates that the real majority of the common speakers already used the real English language is his days. McCrum (1992: 79) mentions the collapse of Old English writing, and that spoken Old English had almost certainly lost most of its inflections by the time of the Norman Conquest. (Query: How do we know whether the real Old English - not the misnomer - had ever had inflections before that conquest if we have no written records of that Mercian language? Or, if the misnomer "Old English" was not the ancestor of the Mercian language, perhaps there has not been any need and possibility for such declension, so similar theories about developments in gender, dual number, etc. may not have good foundations.)

The language map of England had not changed much since Anglo-Saxon times. The author of Cursor Mundi had to translate a story from southern English for 'northern people who can read no other English...' The five main speech areas - Northern, West and East Midlands, Southern and Kentish - are strikingly similar to contemporary English speech areas, tells McCrum (1992: 80). However, the Kentish and West Midlands dialect now hardly stand out. We agree with Trudgill (1994) about the existence of his "Northern" and "Western Southwest" dialects, but all the rest of England seems to form a single block, without a sharp line between his Central and South. The rear cover of his book tells, "English dialects are the result of 1500 years of linguistic and cultural development." This may give an impression that English dialects did not yet exist 1500 years ago. We should modify it as "The modern English dialects are the result several millennia of linguistic and cultural development." It is impractical to mix convergence and divergence, or centripetal and centrifugal forces. These three nations must have spoken different languages and not dialects. When historians call tribes by names, they usually refer to different nations speaking different languages. Probably English was already a distinct language in the first centuries B.C.

Mainstream theories claim that the breaking up of a uniform ancestral language would have resulted in only minor differences, so during the first 450 years of the Christian era only slightly different dialects could have been born from the ancient Germanic. It is hard to harmonize Trudgill's claim with the views of other scholars regarding a time-frame: there is no time for separation for the Scandinavian languages from the West Germanic languages, or, High German from Low German. All these could not have happened within 450 years. Wrenn (1977: 6) thinks that English, when the Anglo-Saxons first conquered England, was almost a 'pure' or unmixed language. Bolton (1966: 31) cites Camden, "Whereas our tongue is mixed, it is it is no disgrace... Yet is it false which Gesner affirmeth, that our tongue is the most mixt and corrupt of all other. For if it may please any to compare but the Lords Prayer in other languages, he shall find as few Latine and borrowed forraine words in ours, as in any other..."

The first written records of the Anglo-Saxon languages in England go back to the seventh century AD, but this is no proof for their inability to write. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle tells that the first invaders of the British Isles - the Angles, Saxons and Jutes - sailed across the North Sea from Denmark, in the year AD 449... About 150 years later Aethelbert of Kent was styled rex Anglorum by Pope Gregory (590-604). The Venerable Bede (c. 731) composed a history called 'The English church and people.' The people were Angelcynn (Angle-kin) and their language was Englisc. By AD 1000, the country was generally known as Englaland, the land of the Angles (McCrum 1992: 55-57).

Egbert (802-839) was the first king of all England. Æthelstan (895-940) king of Mercia and Wessex was the first Saxon ruler to establish his authority over all England and crowned king of the whole country c. 925. The word "country" has allegedly originated ultimately from contratus, from Latin contra, 'against, opposite.' In our opinion, it originally meant Kent-rich, analogue to the German words "Frank-reich" or "Öster-reich." One of those kings may have called himself "king of my Kent-rich" and the common speakers may have stated, "Now this whole Kent-rich is ours." Its first appearance is from the Old English translation of the Ecclesiastical History, referring to an event in 597, "Ða wæs on a tid ÆÞelbeorht cyning haten on Centrice, and mihtig" (Baugh - Cable (1994: 60).

According to Trudgill (1994: 76) a number of important things have been happening to English dialects in England... the most important British dialect boundary of all in the Traditional Dialects that descended from Anglo-Saxon times and started on the east coast at the mouth of the Humber has disappeared completely... It has simply been displaced northwards to coincide today with, approximately, the English-Scottish border, he claims. (We have not examined Scotland, but we are certain that the dialectal boundary line drawn westwards from the mouth of the Humber does still exist and has not "disappeared completely."

Our "real English" area is the largest dialect and includes the London-Oxford-Cambridge triangle.

Linguists agree on about 900 English words of Scandinavian origin, including get, hit, leg, low, root, skin, same, want and wrong. It is impossible to prove that these words could not have existed in the ancient English language long before the Scandinavian invasion. While most people in Central England say "boy and girl," a huge northern area uses "lad and lass." This area coincides with the distribution of "lug" instead of 'ear,' etc. The words lad, lass and lug and similar basic dialectal words are the last remnants of a sunken language, the peaks of an iceberg that was not originally English in its vocabulary. It indicates that the majority of the speakers of their core area once consisted of foreigners, whether Picts, Goths or Scandinavians. Dozens of similar cases were not innovations, caprices, or conspiracy of the Northumbrians and Cumbrians against the spoken pure English language, but once those had been part of their own language. They could have been related to the Scandinavians. However, there was a triangular area in northeast England inhabited by English-speaking population. By the advance of the English conquest, the Scandinavian type of native population may had requested help from their relatives living in Denmark and Norway, and an influx of those new settlers balanced out the English influence. They may have kept their basic words but applied a simplified English grammar.

Dozens or hundreds of old words have common cognates in Welsh and English, like cotton, doll, brush, token, push ('weight' in Welsh), clean, board, glue, map, wench, fork, travel, trousers, blanket, etc. One cannot conclude that these are borrowings from the Welsh language. The hundreds of basic Old English words have not been "borrowed" from other Germanic languages. A massive borrowing from Latin is not a proof against the earlier existence of English words for point, circle, line, mountain, person, head, nose, eye, etc. If we claim borrowing everywhere, then the dialectal verb hain ('to throw') in Cornwall is a borrowing from the Finno-Ugrian languages, pinetops ('pinecone,' an area to the north of the Scottish border) is from the Hungarian "fenyô-toboz," oxter is from the Spanish "axila," and wench ('girl') is from the Mungkan (Melanesian) "wanch." Such borrowings are absurd, although they may indicate initially shared words. If we include the 40% borrowing from Latin and catalogue the full vocabulary of the English or any language, all words seem to be borrowings from somewhere else. Then, where is the English language?

This question is like the story of the naughty cat. In it, the lady of the house comes home after buying some meet. She washes her hands, and when she turns around she realizes that the whole contents of the bag has disappeared. Then she notices the fat tomcat as the likely culprit. She has a brilliant idea and checks the weight of each item on the receipt: 2.5 pounds of beef, 2 pounds of bacon and 3 pounds of salami; total, seven and a half pounds. She grabs the cat and puts him on the scale. He weighs exactly 7.5 pounds. Having the proof, she comes to the obvious conclusion: the cat has eaten up all the meat. However, an outsider may ask her, "But then, where is the cat?"

The "real English" area is the largest and includes the London-Oxford-Cambridge triangle.

Regarding the enigma of the Picts, traditional history tells that their ancestors asked Heremon and Hiberus, leaders of the Gaelic nation to give them wives and their request was granted. The name Pict probably meant "warrior" or "fighter," coming from a root "pight." One of their first rulers was Aengus Olmucadha that would be "Hengist Almighty" in Old English. Geide or Gedhe Ollgothach (c. 900 BC) perhaps meant Keith (head or guide?) of all Goths. The feared Fomori pirates were frequent conquerors of the British Isles, long time before the Vikings. They may have been Pomeranians, a mixture of Germans and Slavs who lived on the Baltic shores of Poland, called Pomorsko or Pomorje, and those of Germany. Its original meaning is probably "po-more," 'by the sea'). Pictish was extinct by the 10th century. Linguists could reconstruct that language with high probability, selecting the words from both English and Scottish that are still present in dialects of both, but missing in the "real" Scottish and "real" English language.

The northeastern corner of England at the Scottish border has only a few Scandinavian place-names ending with -by. This is an almost empty triangle on the map of McCrum (1992: 68), showing the Viking settlements (see Figure 6). The dialect of this "Northumberland" is quite good English and not pure Northern. Would this be an indication that the English had settled densely this area before the first Norse raids that began with the destruction of Lindisfarne in 793?

Tom Shippey explains that there is no difference between the Old Norse and Old English for horse: "They understand the main words. What they don't understand are the grammatical parts of the sentence" (McCrum, 1992: 69). The main words are more stable elements of these languages, while their grammars have changed radically during 800 years. (Trudgill tells that their grammars were still identical 800 years before the events mentioned here.) These opinions agree with ours regarding the stability of the oldest words and the instability of the grammars that is exactly the opposite of the claims of mainstream linguists.

Cornish language was spoken in Cornwall until at least the eighteenth century. Perhaps most of it was conquered after the decline of the Saxon supremacy. Some word-maps show lines through Cornwall like tree rings, maybe indicating the layers or waves of English colonists, pointing to a certain area of their origin and a century.

The ancient language of the Saxons (now in our south-western dialect block) may have been already a mixture of continental Saxon and English in 449. A tribe of the Angles perhaps intermarried with a Saxon tribe while still living on the continent. As for the Saxons, they have a sharp eastern dialect boundary line from Gloucester to Portsmouth. Trudgill (1994: 30-32) confirms this by telling that the word seven is pronounced ZEVEN to the west of this line… Along the south coast of England from Kent to Devon the consonants 'f', 's', 'sh' at the beginning of words became 'v', 'z', 'zh.' He is using eight major features of English Traditional Dialects in order to divide the country up into different dialect areas, based on the words long, night, blind, land, arm, hill, seven, bat. He combines his maps 1-8 into a composite map showing that England can be divided up into thirteen Traditional Dialect areas. Our conclusions are in harmony with four maps of Trudgill (1994: 53, 86, 89 and 99), all showing that the boundary between the ancient Saxon and English speech is still starting near Wolverhampton and passes between Oxford and London, being the eastern limit of the area where r is pronounced in arm, that is using pronoun exchange (PE), people saying thee (instead of you), and be (not am or are). Trudgill (1994: 53) shows a very different picture about the R-pronouncing regions than McCrum (1992: 115). The Saxon or Southern dialect still used the -st suffix in 1195: "du singist" (i.e., the nightingale). Even today the word "Bist" is still in use here, see Figure 4.

Trudgill (1994: 37 and 41) tells of the dialects of the north to the north of the Humber, then about the southern dialects, dividing this part of the country into six major dialect areas, using the criteria based on land, arm, hill, bat and seven. We do not pretend here to offer a more detailed dialect map than his, admitting that 18 locations are insufficient. Our results indicate that "yes, you can draw mathematically the borders of the focal areas standing out from the transition areas." We have done a similar work by computer in 1983, using variants of hundred words of 395 Hungarian villages. It involved over 7.7 million comparisons and resulted in 38 separate focal areas.

Crystal (1991:24-31) tells a lot of dialectology, heteroglosses, focal areas, transition and relic areas, expectation and reality isoglosses. Pei (1971: 33) tells, "If one takes a mean average of the isoglosses, it is possible to trace a single line which separates one major dialect area from another. This is the sole scientific basis for our classification of the major dialects of a given language." (You see that graphical solutions still dominate the numerical ones.)

In any language, the dozens of isogloss lines may show a mess on the map, but the numbers do not. Most modern dialect maps of many languages (French, Portuguese, Basque, German, etc.) may have been designed graphically, by art and intuition in locating the borderlines, based on one or a few words. None of these maps shows the complex results of 100 words compared. Since linguistics is not a subjective science, we must use mathematical evaluations and forget about the isogloss lines, maps or any picture in our minds. Mathematics comes first and the visualisation of the results much later. This step seems to be the hardest to make for the old logic: to forget the picture and trust only in the numbers and statistical rules. The author of this study is a land surveyor, thinking in terms of lines on maps, who has accepted this requirement by turning a switch in his brain. The isoglosses of any map can be converted perfectly into numbers or digital forms, just like if you imagine a digitiser taking information of a drawing by yes or no. Our procedure could be applied to the English dialects as well. We offer a new way in order to draw a more accurate and more scientific dialect map of England, with or without computer. (We must ignore such words as coffee or gym shoes.) The everlasting debates between linguistic camps about the definition of the oldest words do not mean that there is no solution about the criteria and the selection.

Few people know that thousands of oil lamps have been unearthed from Old Testament times in the Near East, so those tools may have been known all over the world. Our ancestors used a brake to stop a horse. One cannot claim that the words door, window, lock and key could not have existed in the vocabulary of a nomadic nation, and people that had no cows or goats could not have a word for milk. Even a tent may have a door and a window. Nomads can have chests with locks and keys, and lamps without electricity. They must have had words for milk since times immemorial, because breastfeeding is not a late invention.

The extreme use of etymological dictionaries as omnipotent tools is not recommended either. For instance, the Hungarian language has its first written records of the modern words for dog and velvet blanket from the same century, but one cannot conclude from these that their hunter ancestors did not know the dogs before 1500 AD. This serious problem is valid for any language.

Our barriers were given by the physical limitations of these three linguistic atlases. We wanted to include many important words into our evaluation of dialects, but we have found no information about their distribution. Where do people use the word maybe, and where do they prefer perhaps? People say quick, fast, rapid, swift, speedy, rush or agile in different regions, but one cannot find material about the distribution of these variants, or their use with the -ly suffix. It is not silly to ask: Which one of these would be the original or "real English" form? Is the word dog the only remaining form, or, somewhere they are still called hounds as were in 1195? The situation is similar with birds and fowls. Are there separate regions for nude and naked, or wise, smart and intelligent, happy and glad, broad and wide, short and brief, or rain and shower? Can we separate the areas of rabbit, hare and bunny, those of snake and serpent, or bugs and beetles? Where can we find lightning and where thunderbolt, and where mercury or quicksilver? Even some dirty or taboo words should be collected from each dialect, before they die out. If linguists do not answer these questions within a decade, the world will lose a large amount of information regarding the origin of the English language, since dialects become extinct soon. In actual history, every word has to fight its own gigantic fights, generally longer than a "Hundred Years War," for its survival. England has never been like a quiet pool. Viewers with passion and patience, like Trudgill, are still able to see three or more cradle points, or at least directions, from where ancient wave fronts originated centuries ago. The centres of those concentric waves are not active anymore but the pattern is in no way accidental.

As for the widely ignored and ill-defined "substratum languages" of the Roman Empire... No one can prove that the ancestors of the English did not use the word "mountain" five thousand years ago, or could not express the words black horsetail, ugly dogs or many birds" in their own language in 449.

The Old English and all languages are in the time-trap of the Latin and Proto-Indo-European. Being in the position of a prisoner, it is forced to seem like a primitive language before the days of the Romans. It is unlikely that there were no languages for millions of years, then 3000 languages or so sprang simultaneously in every corner of the earth within the last 2000 years. Theories claiming that all the languages of the world began to form after the days of the Roman Empire have a very low statistical probability. I am convinced that most languages have a very old age, and unwilling to accept theories concluding that the past of the English language is much shorter or it is less civilized.

We deal briefly with the development of the plural ending -s and the possible origin of the -s suffix for the third person singular. In Old English, they said "two stanas" for two stones, so the -s suffix had already existed before 1150 (McCrum, 1992: 69). Newbrook (2002) tells, "The history of pluralisation in West Germanic is already well understood; and English -s (not usual in OE) derives mainly from French." We cannot agree with him. An ancient Saxon text, written shortly after AD 700, contains the words "heofnas" twice, meaning "heavens" (Bolton, 1966: 25), being too early to be an import from French. They indicate a very early English influence in the Old Insular Saxon. (The word "custnung" in this text is clearly related to the word "ghost.") Around 994 we find the plural form heofenum, with the -m (now -n) suffix that is typically German and not English. However, the word "gyltas" ('guilts') shows some early English influence again for the existence of the plural suffix -s (Bolton, 1966: 26). Sir Thomas Browne assumed in reading Saxon texts that "ure saula" meant "our selves," but I read it "our souls" (Bolton, 1966: 76-79). 'Ourselves' was written as "ure selvan." The encyclopaedias tell that the word Lord comes from Middle English lord, loverd, from Old English hlafweard, "keeper of the bread." We note here that the word "louvor" is "praise" in Portuguese.

Wulfila, bishop of the Visigoths from 341, translated the Bible in his language. Its longest text has survived in the Codex argenteus of Upsala. García Morente (1967: 40-41 ff.) shows the transcription of Matthew 10: 34 to 39. The only problem is that the sound d or th is printed everywhere in this modern text by the letter p, instead of Þ: gawairpi for gawairthi (peace), airpa for airtha (earth), or (meina) wairps for wairths ('mine worths'). The Gothic word order is quite different from the English one: mannan wiÞra attan is (man against father his), dauhtar wiÞra aipein izos (daughter against mother her), but the -s suffix, either for plural or for the third person, already existed in the words fijands ('fiends or enemies'), wairÞs ('worths'), or andnimands (meaning 'loses').

The -s suffix of verbs marking the third person of singular cannot be a new development. It exists in many languages. It may have a connection with the Spanish -ce ending. For instance: grows (crece), knows (conoce) falls or fails (fallece), appears (aparece), offers (ofrece), flowers (florece), matures (madurece), means (amenaza), draws (traza), occurs and obscures (oscurece), cares (carece), tears (torce), pertains (pertenece), wins (vence). The me, thee and the -s in English may correspond to me, te and se in Spanish, menya, tebya and sebya (-sya in general) in Russian where this is not a Latin influence, and mich, dich and sich in German. The O.E.-M.E. word waeron 'they were' (Lord, 1971: 45, 127) is fueron in Spanish.

There are two less known texts related to Britain, written in Transylvanian runic script. The first one is in the Hungarian Vinland Map (Ingstad, 1969), in a Scandinavian-English jargon comparable to King Alfred's Orosius: "Örosiüs. Tjönne widj Nörtjan núverlt sindön tja. York end Vinlanda… Hoyerweg" (from Hoy Island). The Yarmouth rock inscription has been deciphered by an 89-year old lady, turned upside down and read from the right to the left: "(Eric)son has been in this place also with many comp(anions)." The author of this paper first published it in an English book in 1984.

The author of this paper believes in the deep roots of the real English language. The claim that its dialects simply did or do not exist, reminds him to the anecdote of an antique zoologist who, upon seeing a drawing of a, then unknown, giraffe, uttered these words, "And this animal simply cannot exist!

The lay readers have never heard of a reliable single dialect map of England. One cannot compile a

linguistic map or atlas based on 1000 basic words that are uniformly pronounced all over England. Similarly, a scholar may write a book about mountain goats without studying the plains, and his work will not be considered unscientific. So the selection of our locations is justified, being near or outside the zone of the densest heteroglosses, as one can judge it after a short visual study of the maps. These dense zones are running more or less parallel to each other, often from NW to SE in England and represent the borderlines between different dialects. The Midlands are under-represented, but we were aware of the fact that no massive bunches of heteroglosses had been cutting through the core area of the Midlands. We suggest that future works of this kind should not try to unify the similar dialectal variants of any word or item before doing the actual statistical comparison between the locations, only after that. Forcing them into arbitrary groups at the beginning would mean lost information.

My research method could be used in many sciences like history, archaeology, and anthropology, bringing praise for the participating mainstream linguists from the scholars of other disciplines. Trudgill's map (1994: 35) supports my findings: boundaries of the three largest kingdoms c. AD 650 (Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex) correspond well to our three major historical dialect areas. (Figure 7.)

Scholars could produce similar works using a further 100 basic dialectal words, also surveys that exclude the vocabulary and concentrate on the phonology and grammar. If their results would demonstrate a high correlation with my conclusions, then those facts would render my results logically and scientifically acceptable. If the correlation between their and my results would not be too convincing, it may mean that the phonological and grammatical factors involved reflect the fashions and usage of a different or more modern time period. It is understandable why linguists try to avoid similar studies: Without a consensus on a proper selection, a haphazard collection of linguistic phenomena and empirically influenced modern innovations in the grammar would not reflect truly the arrangement of the dialects of any age. It may result in a complete mess if the parameters and criteria had not been well defined and miscellaneous.

A cartographer cannot offer a completely finished and detailed linguistic product. He may get a negative review, but the next researchers on this subject will be praised. This is a call for attention, and just a baby-step. However, every great journey starts with the first step, say the Chinese.

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