

The Dialectal Localisation of Hands B and C in Manchester, Chetham's Library, MS Mun.A.3.127

Carolina Pérez Guillén
Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Spain

Abstract. This paper studies the dialectal features of Hands B and C in Manchester, Chetham's Library, MS Mun.A.3.127 since these two hands conflate in the same folios (ff. 57r-58v). The manuscript under analysis is a late Middle English codex that contains different recipes to cure illnesses. The main aim of this paper is to localise geographically the area of provenance of these two hands by means of the model offered in the electronic version of *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English (eLALME)* (Benskin et al. 2013). The analysis carried out signals two close areas of origin for both scribes: Hand B has been localised in the border between the southern part of East and West Ridings of Yorkshire and the northern part of Lincolnshire, whereas Hand C has been found in the border between southern Yorkshire, the northern part of Lincolnshire and the northern part of Nottinghamshire. This conclusion might be indicative of the presence of a scriptorium in the eastern part of the country at the time.

Keywords: dialect, provenance, *eLALME*, linguistic profile, late Middle English.

1. Introduction

The main objective of this paper is to localise geographically the linguistic features found in Hand B and Hand C in the mediaeval English manuscript Manchester, Chetham's Library, MS Mun.A.3.127 (Mun.A.3.127 hereafter) so as to establish a likely place of origin for the dialect of both scribes. The methodological procedures followed are the ones established in the electronic version of *A Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (Benskin et al. 2013) (*eLALME* henceforth).

Such a study is of interest because of the characteristic lack of consistency of Middle English in the written language, a fact that is emphasised by Milroy (1992, 156): “the most striking fact about Middle English is that it exhibits by far the greatest diversity in written language of any period before or since.” This inconsistency offers the researcher the possibility of tracking the origin of mediaeval copyists. Traditionally, five main dialects were distinguished before the *LALME* project was fully developed (Kentish, Southern, East-Midland, West-Midland and Northern);¹ however, the boundaries between these varieties are actually blurred (Mossé 1968, 2).

In addition to the previous aspects, a more uniform variety was incipiently emerging in late Middle English (Blake 1996, 12), which is commonly referred to as Central Midland Standard or Chancery English (Samuels 1963, 85-89) and believed to be the predecessor of standard written English (Nielsen 2005, 138; Benskin et al. 2013). This diffusion of a national standard implicated renouncing local variants in favour of other features which were more commonly diffusing

¹ Mossé (1968, 2) offers a map distribution.

over the country (Samuels 1981, 43, cited in Taavitsainen 2000, 135). In any case, it has recently been argued that quite a lot of English documents were not actually written in the Chancery offices but were instead composed by petitioners all around the country who reflected their own dialect features in their texts (Benkskin 2004, 30-32; cited in Conde-Silvestre and Hernández-Campoy, forthcoming).

The text under study is a late Middle English manuscript (ff. 1r-72v) housed in Chetham's Library in Manchester (UK). It was written between the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries and includes some Latin interpolations. It contains different recipes to cure illnesses ordered from the head to the feet and it is preceded by a list of plants and herbs, and a table of contents; it is thus described as a "guide to family health [...] and a permanent record of years of collected treatments and cures" (Chetham's Library n.d.). Fifteen different hands have been identified in the writing process of this mediaeval document, and particularly the dialectal analysis offered in this paper is focussed on Hands B and C as these two copyists conflate in the same folios: Hand B is seen in folios 57r and 59r-60v, whilst Hand C is spotted in folios 57v-58v. The extracts by these two scribes are anonymous as no signature can be witnessed in those folios. In light of the above, and before carrying out the dialectal analysis of these two hands and studying the different results obtained, the main structure of this paper is provided. It is basically divided into five different sections: first, an introduction to the study and a brief description of the codex are offered. Second, the main methodological procedures followed are supplied. Third, Hand B is analysed including both the linguistic profile of this hand and the main discussion. Fourth, the linguistic profile and the discussion of Hand C are presented. Finally, the main conclusions are summarised.

2. Methodology

The method of analysis follows the model proposed in the electronic version of *eLALME*. The main objective of this resource is to offer the possibility of establishing the area of provenance of a text by contrasting the linguistic features with the evidence provided by a number of anchor texts from "England and those parts of Wales for which source-material is available" (Benskin et al. 2013). In fact, one of the main methodological aspects of *eLALME* is that regional features of the language may only be localised in a particular area of the country and these linguistic characteristics are thus helpful to localise texts geographically (Benskin et al. 2013).

In light of the above, the first step has been the completion of two independent linguistic profiles (LPs hereafter), containing some items (in small caps) and their spelling variants extracted from these two different hands, which have been obtained after the implementation of a survey questionnaire consisting of 424 items. Later, the 'fit-technique' has been applied and the different orthographic realisations have been mapped on the dot and user-defined maps in order to localise the hands geographically. The first of these two maps shows "the geographical distribution of individual linguistic features as indicated by each map's title" (Laing 2015, 5), whereas the second displays the "locations at which

the chosen forms are attested” (Alcorn 2017, 10). As a matter of fact, only those features that have proved to be salient variants have been the ones that have allowed us to narrow down the places of origin of both scribes as a few other spelling variants may be found in divergent areas and are therefore of little help.² The county dictionary has been consulted for those variants that are not present on the maps. Finally, the LPs of Hands B and C in Mun.A.3.127 have been compared to several other LPs in *eLALME* and with complementary bibliographical resources so as to confirm the areas of provenance.

In order to carry out all the steps indicated before, it has been necessary to firstly transcribe the text by means of the digitised images provided on Chetham’s Library website.³ Later, all the lexical elements have been tagged and lemmatised on an Excel spreadsheet. The primary lexicographical resource to obtain the lemmas has been the *Middle English Dictionary* (Lewis, Kurath and Kuhn 1952-2001) and the word class has also been specified. This process has allowed the regularisation of word-division and the easy localisation of all the spelling variants of a single item.

3. Hand B

Hand B is present in folios 57r and 59r-60v and includes a sample of enough extension to determine the area of provenance of this hand. For this analysis, ninety-nine different items from *eLALME* have been found in the text with their corresponding spelling variants, offered in decreasing frequency (see Appendix).

To narrow down the origin of the language of Hand B, two types of localisation have been applied with the ‘fit-technique’ following *eLALME*. First of all, a broad localisation provides a rough approximation to the most probable area of provenance by choosing just a few spelling realisations. Several linguistic forms delimit the Midlands and northern parts of the country, chiefly: ‘ye’⁴ and ‘ye’ (THE)⁵; ‘all’ and ‘al’ (ALL); ‘day’ (DAY); the third-person singular form of the present indicative of HAVE (‘has’); ‘hym’ (HIM); ‘how’ (HOW); both the singular and plural form of MAY (‘may’). What is more, both ‘tak’ and ‘mak,’ were frequent spellings of TAKE and MAKE in the northern and north Midland dialects because of an early loss of final <-en> (Wright and Wright [1923] 1979, 41).

Other features are particularly found in certain counties within the Midlands and the north. For a start, <y> was preferred in all positions within a word in the north and the East Midlands, and that is why ‘ye’ is found instead of ‘pe’ or ‘the’ in Hand B (Benskin 1982, 14-15; Fulk 2012, 23). The most salient realisations of SHALL, both the second-person singular form (‘sall’) and the third-person singular form of the present indicative (‘sal’) are also present in this area, since they are found in Lincolnshire, northern Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire. The dropping of <h> is remarked as a representative feature in unstressed-word position in the

² Orthographic realisations are considered to be salient when they are frequent in the text and show dialectal variation (Marqués-Aguado 2009, 112).

³ In situ observation of the manuscript at the library has also been necessary since some folios are incorrectly foliated on the website and some others are not even digitised.

⁴ Single inverted commas enclose words found in the text.

⁵ Small caps correspond to *eLALME* items.

northeast Midlands (Wright and Wright [1923] 1979, 125-126; Fulk 2012, 55). The form 'yen' (THEN) is principally localised in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. The spelling realisation 'thoro' (THROUGH) is particularly located in Yorkshire, Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. Both 'gude' and 'gud' (GOOD) are present in Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and Lancashire, as these are usual realisations in northern dialects (Brunner 1963, 15; Smith 1999, 119; Fulk 2012, 117). The linguistic form of HEAD ('hede') is spread throughout Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Cambridgeshire and Leicestershire, whereas 'modyr' (MOTHER) is localised in East Anglia, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. The past participle form of SAY ('sayde') is quite widespread as it is found in Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, whereas 'owt' (OUT) is more restricted to Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Norfolk. The spelling realisations of WELL ('wele' and 'well') are also found in this Midland area, as they are present in Staffordshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Yorkshire.

Complementarily, with the analysis of more variants, the localisation of Hand B has been restricted to the northeast Midlands, as attested by several conclusive features. Two of the orthographic realisations of THE ('ye' and 'ye') have been determining since they are spotted in East Anglia, the East Midlands and the northern counties, whilst 'yi' (which also appears in the text) is not present in *eLALME*. Another form also visible in this area is 'yes' (THESE), with the allograph <y> for , since both <bes> and <bese> were typical in the Midland area (Brunner 1963, 63; Wright and Wright [1923] 1979, 171). The only variants of EACH ('yIk') and THIRD ('therd') are encountered in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk, whilst the three variants of IS ('es,' 'is' and 'ys') are mainly present in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire.⁶ Although both 'wyl' and 'wyl' for the third-person singular form of the present indicative of WILL are witnessed in the whole territory, they display a more prominent presence in the border between Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. The spelling realisation of EARTH ('erth') is recorded in the East Midlands, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, as it was a usual spelling variant in this area (Wright and Wright [1923] 1979, 31). The forms of EYES ('en' and 'ene') are localised in Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and western Derbyshire as they were typical in the north (Brunner 1963, 23). Finally, the form 'fare' (FARE) is highlighted as a northern feature typical in Yorkshire since the end of the fourteenth century (Brunner 1963, 18).

Therefore, with the analysis provided, we can conclude that the place of origin of Hand B may have been the northern part of Lincolnshire in the border with the West and East Ridings of Yorkshire (Figure 1). This hypothesis is reinforced after having made a comparison with three different LPs in *eLALME* that share common linguistic features with Hand B, which are itemised below.

⁶ Brunner (1963, 84) highlights 'es' (IS) as an East Midland feature.

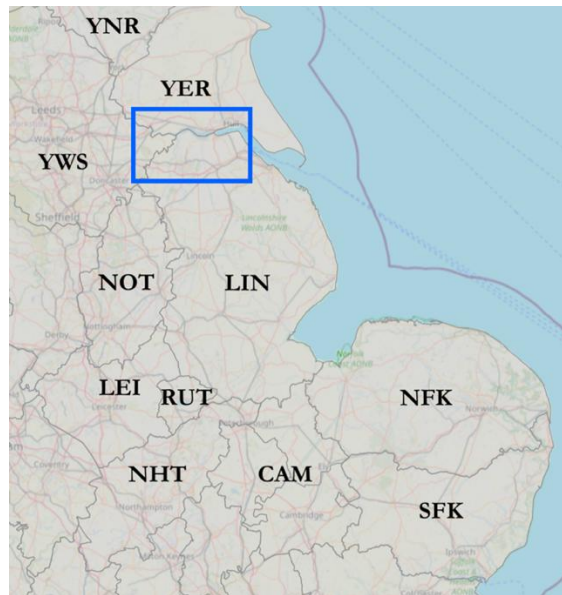


Figure 1. Provenance of Hand B (adapted from *eLALME*).

The first one is LP 491, which shares the greatest number of variants with Hand B in Mun.A.3.127 with a total of twenty-nine different orthographic realisations. It belongs to Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Add. A.106, a fifteenth-century manuscript localised in northern Lincolnshire, close to the border with Yorkshire and northern Nottinghamshire, that contains both medical recipes and religious poems. This manuscript is written by several copyists and the part that has been studied in *eLALME* is the one written by Hand A. The common features with Hand B in Mun.A.3.127 are these: ‘yes’ (THESE), ‘sal’ (SHALL), ‘ye’ and ‘ye’ (THE), ‘was’ (WAS), ‘schuld’ (SHOULD), ‘wyll’ and ‘wyl’ (WILL), ‘all’ and ‘al’ (ALL), ‘bot’ (BUT), ‘erth’ (EARTH), ‘day’ (DAY), ‘ee’ (EYE), ‘gud’ and ‘gude’ (GOOD), ‘has’ (HAS), ‘hede’ (HEAD), ‘how’ (HOW), ‘hym’ and ‘hym’ (HIM), ‘may’ (MAY), ‘modyr’ (MOTHER), ‘owt’ (OUT), ‘sayde’ (SAID), ‘well’ (WELL), ‘-er’ and ‘-er’ (-ER), ‘-est’ (-EST).

The second one is LP 212 and it corresponds to London, British Library, MS Cotton Vespasian A XXIII, a codex written in the first quarter of the fifteenth century that offers expositions to the Ten Commandments. It is localised in northern Lincolnshire in the border with Yorkshire, close to the Humber. It is written in one hand and it shares twenty-six forms with Hand B: ‘ylk’ (EACH), ‘es’ (IS), ‘sal’ (SHALL), ‘ye’ and ‘ye’ (THE), ‘was’ (WAS), ‘yen’ (THEN), ‘wyll’ (WILL), ‘all’ and ‘al’ (ALL), ‘bot’ (BUT), ‘erth’ (EARTH), ‘day’ (DAY), ‘gude’ (GOOD), ‘has’ (HAS), ‘hede’ (HEAD), ‘how’ (HOW), ‘hym’ and ‘hym’ (HIM), ‘may’ (MAY), ‘modyr’ (MOTHER), ‘sayde’ (SAID), ‘therd’ (THIRD), ‘-er’ and ‘-er’ (-ER), ‘-est’ (-EST).

The third one is LP 45, which pertains to the manuscript London, British Library, MS Royal 17 C. XVII, written by one single hand in the early fifteenth century and localised in northern Lincolnshire next to the border with Yorkshire. It includes a number of different texts: *Nominalia* and Mirk’s *Instructions for Parish Priests* (among other religious verse and prose texts), *The Life of St Mary Magdalene*, *The Testament of Christ*, *The Prick of Conscience* Book IV and *The*

Legend of the Holy Blood at Hayles. The twenty-five variants shared with Hand B in Mun.A.3.127 are the following: 'es' (IS), 'sal' (SHALL), 'ye' and 'ye' (THE), 'was' (WAS), 'wyll' and 'wyl' (WILL), 'all' and 'al' (ALL), 'bot' (BUT), 'erth' (EARTH), 'day' (DAY), 'ee' (EYE), 'gude' (GOOD), 'has' (HAS), 'hede' (HEAD), 'how' (HOW), 'hym' and 'hym' (HIM), 'may' (MAY), 'modyr' (MOTHER), 'well' (WELL), '-er' and '-er' (-ER), '-est' (-EST).

The features shared by these three LPs and the LP of Hand B are: 'ye' and 'ye' (THE), 'was' (WAS), 'wyll' (WILL), 'all' and 'al' (ALL), 'bot' (BUT), 'erth' (EARTH), 'day' (DAY), 'gude' (GOOD), 'has' (HAS), 'hede' (HEAD), 'how' (HOW), 'hym' and 'hym' (HIM), 'may' (MAY), 'modyr' (MOTHER) and '-er' and '-er' (-ER).

However, other variants found in the language of Hand B in Mun.A.3.127 are misleading as they are attested in areas which are alien to the proposed location: 'hit' (IT), found in London and western areas; the secondary variant of the third-person singular form of the present indicative of SHALL ('schalle'), more prominent in the Midlands and southern parts of the territory; the second-person singular form of the present indicative of WILL ('wylt'), with a greater presence in East Anglia and the south; the primary form of the third-person singular form of the present indicative of WILL ('wyl'), detected in East Anglia; 'als...as' (AS...AS), localised only in Lancashire; 'fyl' (FILL), spotted in Norfolk and London; 'gost' (GO), witnessed in East Anglia and the south; 'ren' (RUN), encountered in the south only, as well as 'who' and 'wo' (WHO). As it may be expected, these variants do not attach to a particular area within the country and therefore are not determining. Besides, it cannot be concluded that the extract written by Hand B is an example of *Mischsprache* since the number of alien linguistic forms and the frequency of these variants are limited.⁷ Finally, a number of items (AGAIN, WH-, DAYS, OR, -LY) are very extended geographically in the whole country, whilst a few other variants also present in the text are not included in *eLALME*: 'fayr'; 'safyr'; 'holle.'

4. Hand C

Hand C can be found in folios 57v-58v and, therefore, an extract of enough extension is available to be analysed and establish a likely geographical origin. What is more, the corresponding variants of seventy-seven items from *eLALME* have been found. These linguistic realisations are given in the LP in the Appendix in descending frequency.

The origin of Hand C can be broadly localised in East Anglia, the East Midlands and Yorkshire because of the presence of the following spelling realisations: 'ye' (THE); 'hym' and 'hym' (HIM); 'on' (ONE); 'out' and 'oute' (OUT); 'wele' (WELL); 'ze' (YE); '-ful' (-FULL); the STRONG PAST PARTICIPLE ending '-yn'; 'all' (ALL).

Besides, some other variants are localised in specific counties within these areas: 'yees' (THESE) is found in West Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Cumbria; 'yai' (THEY) is witnessed in Norfolk, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire,

⁷ The defining characteristic of *Mischsprachen* "is the persistent co-occurrence of dialect forms whose regional distributions are such that their geographical overlap cannot reasonably be supposed" (Benskin et al. 2013).

Yorkshire and other northern counties, a fact that is highlighted in previous studies as a northern and Midland realisation (Wright and Wright [1923] 1979, 163; Fulk 2012, 65); the primary spelling realisation of THEN ('yan') is seen in Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk, whereas the secondary one ('yen') is visible in Cheshire, Lancashire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire; the primary variant of AS ('as') is spotted in the East Midlands and East Anglia, whilst the secondary form ('os') is found more specifically in Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire; 'about' (ABOUT) is encountered in Leicestershire, Cambridgeshire, Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire; 'abouen' (ABOVE) is spotted in Rutland, Cambridgeshire and Yorkshire; 'be' (BY) is extensively witnessed in Norfolk, eastern Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, Derbyshire, Cheshire and Lancashire; 'eyne' (EYES) is more prominent in East Anglia, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire; the only variant of HEAD ('hede') is encountered in Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire and Derbyshire; 'zif' (GIVE) is visible in Norfolk, Leicestershire and Staffordshire; 'olde' and 'old' (OLD) are particularly concentrated in Norfolk, the East Midlands and Yorkshire; 'eye' (EYE) is found in the East Midlands and Norfolk; 'olde' and 'old' (OLD) are both found in Norfolk, the East Midlands and Yorkshire.

With the aim to narrow down the area of provenance, other variants have been scrutinised. The ones which offer a more exact location are: 'yem' (THEM) is found in West Yorkshire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk, as those forms starting with either <þ-> or <th-> instead of <h> in the objective case are of northern and northeast Midland origin (Fulk 2012, 65);⁸ 'er' (ARE)⁹ and 'als...als' (AS...AS) are particularly encountered in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire.

The area that stands out is the border between the northern part of Lincolnshire, East and West Yorkshire and the northern part of Nottinghamshire (Figure 2); therefore, Hand C may have been from there. This hypothesis is supported after having compared the LP obtained with three LPs in *eLALME* which are from this area too. These LPs are briefly explained below.

⁸ It is important to bear in mind that the use of <y> instead of <þ> became a northern practice (Benskin 1982, 15).

⁹ This feature is described as a northern variant by Brunner (1963, 84).

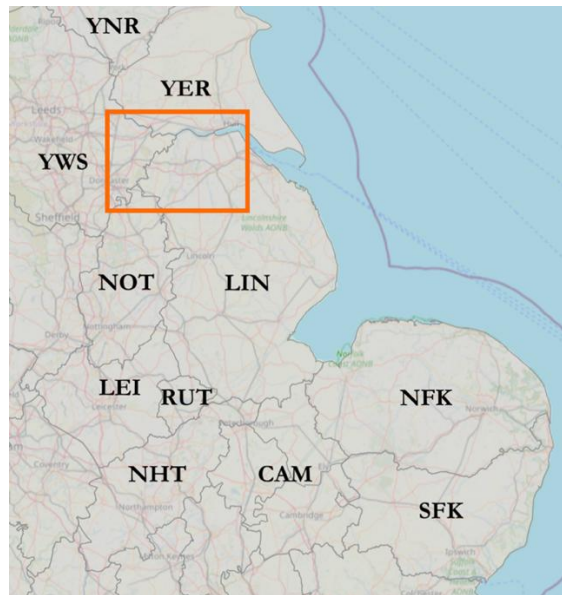


Figure 2. Provenance of Hand C (adapted from *eLALME*).

Firstly, LP 45 is part of the manuscript London, British Library, MS Royal 17 C. XVII. It is localised in northern Lincolnshire in the border with Yorkshire and was written by one single hand at the beginning of the fifteenth century. It includes *Nominalia*, *Instructions for Parish Priests*, *The Life of St Mary Magdalene*, *The Testament of Christ*, *The Prick of Conscience Book IV* and *The Legend of the Holy Blood at Hayles*. It is the one that shares the greatest number of linguistic features with Hand C in Mun.A.3.127 (twenty-three in total), which are the following: ‘yai’ (THEY), ‘es’ (IS), ‘ye’ (THE), ‘er’ (ARE), ‘wyll’ (WILL), ‘sall’ (SHALL), ‘yan’ (THEN), ‘als...als’ (AS...AS), ‘about’ (ABOUT), ‘as’ (AS), ‘all’ (ALL), ‘be’ (BE), ‘eyne’ (EYES), ‘on’ (ONE), ‘hede’ (HEAD), ‘hym’ and ‘hym’ (HIM), ‘olde’ (OLD), ‘wele’ and ‘well’ (WELL), ‘ze’ (YE), ‘oute’ and ‘out’ (OUT).

Secondly, LP 508 corresponds to Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 6686, a manuscript written either in the first quarter (Benskin et al. 2013) or first half (Digital Birgitta n.d.) of the fifteenth century and localised in the central part of Lincolnshire. This codex was written by different hands and the LP provided in *eLALME* pertains to the poem *Speculum Vitae*, written by Hand B on pages 235-269. Twenty-one spelling realisations coincide with those included in Hand C in Mun.A.3.127: ‘yai’ (THEY), ‘es’ (IS), ‘ye’ (THE), ‘er’ (ARE), ‘wyll’ (WILL), ‘sall’ (SHALL), ‘yan’ and ‘yen’ (THEN), ‘als...als’ (AS...AS), ‘as’ and ‘os’ (AS), ‘all’ (ALL), ‘be’ (BE), ‘on’ (ONE), ‘hede’ (HEAD), ‘hym’ and ‘hym’ (HIM), ‘olde’ (OLD), ‘wele’ (WELL), ‘ze’ (YE), ‘oute’ (OUT).

Thirdly, LP 38 belongs to London, Inner Temple Library, MS Petyt 511.7, which was written in the second half of the fourteenth century. It is localised in southern Lincolnshire and was written by one single hand. It contains Robert Manning of Brunne’s *Chronicle* and his translation of Peter Langtoft’s *Gesta Anglorum*. Twenty different linguistic features are present in this text and Hand C in Mun.A.3.127, which are the following: ‘yai’ (THEY), ‘es’ (IS), ‘er’ (ARE), ‘sall’ (SHALL), ‘yan’ and ‘yen’ (THEN), ‘about’ (ABOUT), ‘as’ (AS), ‘all’ (ALL), ‘be’ (BE), ‘on’

(ONE), 'hede' (HEAD), 'hym' and 'hym' (HIM), 'olde' and 'old' (OLD), 'wele' (WELL), 'ze' (YE), 'out' and 'oute' (OUT).

In short, these LPs share sixteen different forms with the LP of Hand C: 'yai' (THEY), 'es' (IS), 'er' (ARE), 'sall' (SHALL), 'yan' (THEN), 'as' (AS), 'all' (ALL), 'be' (BE), 'on' (ONE), 'hede' (HEAD), 'hym' and 'hym' (HIM), 'olde' (OLD), 'wele' (WELL), 'ze' (YE), 'oute' (OUT).

Finally, in this hand, some orthographic realisations are so general that they are of little use for the localisation of the text. Particularly, these items are: ANY, AGAIN, WH-, THROUGH, WHEN, WEAK PAST PARTICIPLE, FILTH, FIRE, LONG, MAY, STAND. This text may not be an instance of *Mischsprache* as these alien variants exert little influence and are not very frequent. Other forms have demonstrated to be misleading in this localisation process as they may be present in southern parts of the country: 'hys' (HIS); 'who' (WHO); '-ht' (-GHT).

5. Conclusion

In the present paper, the linguistic features of Hands B and C in Mun.A.3.127 have been analysed by means of the model proposed in *eLALME* (Benskin et al. 2013); therefore, two different LPs have been obtained, the 'fit-technique' has been used and the dot and user-defined maps have been checked. The language employed is generally characterised by a high degree of standardisation in these two hands, something typical in England in the late Middle English period (Samuels 1963, 85-89; Blake 1996, 12; Nielsen 2005, 140). Because of the previous aspect, we may notice the presence of a number of orthographic variants which are encountered throughout the whole country and are of little help when trying to localise hands. Still, some other orthographic realisations are recurrent in specific areas or counties and have led to possible localisations.

Indeed, we have been able to conclude that both Hand B and Hand C originate from the eastern part of the country. Hand B might be circumscribed in the border between the northern area of Lincolnshire and East and West Yorkshire. On the other hand, the language of Hand C may be restricted to the border between Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire. Neither of these two hands seems to be examples of *Mischsprachen*. The origin of these two scribes is summarised in the figure below (Figure 3).

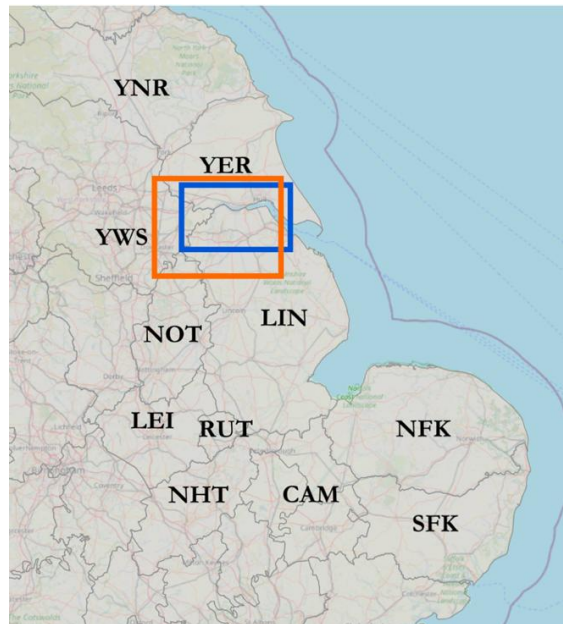


Figure 3. Provenance of Hand B (blue) and Hand C (orange) (adapted from *eLALME*).

The localisations obtained in the analyses provided in the present paper have been compared with a number of LPs in *eLALME* so as to confirm the places of origin of these two copyists in Mun.A.3.127. Several spelling forms are very widespread in the whole territory and offer little dialectal information. However, “the Middle English period is characterised by the absence of a fully institutionalised standard variety” (Taavitsainen 2000, 136), and that gives way to the occurrence of different spelling realisations which help us to locate the texts. Hands B and C in Mun.A.3.127 hence share a number of features with the LPs provided in the analyses and may share a common location.

Finally, the localisations of these two hands are not too far apart from each other, and this may be due to the possible existence of a scriptorium in the East Midlands. Even though the presence of a medical school in this area is unknown (Taavitsainen 2004, 215), McIntosh (1989, 116-117) makes reference to the possible placing of a centre of scribal activity in the area that includes north-eastern Leicestershire, Rutland, northern Northamptonshire, northern Huntingdonshire and parts of northern Ely and north-western Norfolk.¹⁰ This scriptorium may have been specialised in learned texts, particularly in “surgical and anatomical writings, especially by Chauliac and Ardene, but not exclusively” (Taavitsainen 2004, 214).

¹⁰ Benskin (1981, 11, cited in Taavitsainen 2004) wonders how it is possible to find such a big amount of scientific writing coming from that small area.

Appendix

1. Linguistic profile of Hand B

Items	Spelling variants and frequencies
THE	ye (63×), y ⁱ (7×), ye (2×), y ^e (1×)
THESE	yes (1×)
HER	hir' (1×), hyr' (1×)
IT	yt (30×), it (19×), it (2×), hit (1×)
THEM	hem (6×), yem (4×)
EACH	ylk (1×)
MAN	genitive: mans (3×), manne (1×)
IS	es (15×), is (1×), ys (1×)
WAS	was (1×)
SHALL	2 nd pers. sing. pres. ind.: sall (1×) 3 rd pers. sing. pres. ind.: sal (5×), schalle (2×), sall (1×), shall' (1×), s[all] (1×)
SHOULD	3 rd pers. sing. pres. ind.: schuld (1×)
WILL	2 nd pers. sing. pres. ind.: wylt (1×) 3 rd pers. sing. pres. ind.: wyl (4×), wyll (2×), will (1×), wyll' (1×)
TO	to + infinitive + consonant: to (4×) to + preposition + consonant: to (4×) to + preposition + <h>: to (2×)
FROM	preposition: fro (1×), from' (1×)
THEN	yen (4×), then' (1×)
IF	yf (2×)
AS	os (2×), as (1×)
AS...AS	als...as (3×)
AGAIN	agayn' (1×)
WH-	wh- (10×), w- (1×)
NOT	not (4×)
THERE	yer (3×)
THROUGH	preposition: thoro (3×)
WHEN	when (3×), when' (2×)
SUBSTANTIVE PLURAL	-s (23×), -es (7×), -is (5×), -ys (3×), -es (1×), -us (1×)
PRESENT PARTICIPLE	-yng (9×), -yn' (1×), -yng' (1×), -ynge (1×)
2 ND PERS. SING. PRES. IND.	-st (2×), -yst (1×)
WEAK PAST PARTICIPLE	-d (2×)
STRONG PAST PARTICIPLE	-en (1×), -yn' (1×)
ALL	all' (4×), al (3×)
ALSO	also (4×)
AWAY	adverb: a way (2×) preposition: a way (2×), away (2×)
BE	infinitive: be (9×)
BEFORE	adverb: be for' (1×)

BOTH	bothe (1×)
BURN	imperative: bren (1×)
BUT	bot (2×)
BUY	3 rd pers. sing. pret. ind.: boght' (1×)
COME	3 rd pers. sing. pres. ind.: cums (1×)
CAST	imperative: cast (1×)
DAY	day (2×)
DAYS	days (2×)
DO	imperative: do (8×) infinitive: do (1×)
EARTH	erth (1×), erth' (1×)
EYE	ee (1×)
EYES	en' (1×), ene (1×)
FAIR	fare (1×), fayr (1×) superlative: fayrest (1×)
FILL	fyl (1×)
FIRE	fyr (1×), fyre (1×)
FOR-TO	for to (1×)
GET	imperative: g ^{et} (1×)
GO	2 nd pers. sing. pres. ind.: gost (1×)
GOOD	gude (12×), gud (2×)
HAVE	3 rd pers. sing. pres. ind.: has (3×) 3 rd pers. sing. past ind.: had (2×)
HEAD	hede (2×)
HIM	hym' (9×), hym (8×)
HIS	hys (3×)
HOLD	infinitive: hold (1×)
HOW	how (1×)
LET	imperative: lat (4×), let (3×)
LONG	long (1×)
MAKE	imperative: mak (3×), make (1×) past participle: made (2×)
MAY	3 rd pers. sing. pres. ind.: may (5×) 3 rd pers. plural pres. ind.: may (1×)
MOTHER	modyr (1×)
OR	or (9×)
OUT	preposition: owt (2×), out' (1×), oute (1×)
PRAY	3 rd pers. sing. past ind.: prayd (1×)
RUN	infinitive: ren' (1×)
THE-SAME	y ^e samme (1×)
SAY	past participle: sayde (1×)
SILVER	syluer (1×)
SLAY	infinitive: sle (1×) 3 rd pers. sing. pres. ind.: sle (1×)
STEAD	stede (1×)
STRONG	stronge (1×)
SUFFER	infinitive: safyr (1×)
TAKE	imperative: take (16×), tak (10×) 3 rd pers. sing. pres. ind.: take (1×)
THEE	y ^e (1×)

THIRD	therd (1×)
TOGETHER	to gedyr (8×), to geder (1×)
WELL	well' (9×), well (2×), welle (1×)
WHO	who (4×), wo (1×)
WHOLE	hole (4×), holle (1×)
WITH	with (18×), wyth' (1×)
WITHOUT	preposition: <i>with</i> outyn' (1×)
YOU	you (4×)
-ALD	-ald (1×)
-ER	-er (41×), -er (8×), -er' (1×)
-EST	-est (1×)
-FUL	-fule (1×), -full' (1×)
-LY	-ly (3×)
UN-	vn- (1×)
-HT	-ght' (6×), -ght (1×), -ghte (1×)
K FOR C	(1×)
ABSENCE OF Y-PREFIX IN PAST PARTICIPLE	(5×)
'BRENGE' IN BRING	brenge (2×)
<T> FOR <D> IN WEAK PAST PARTICIPLE	-et (1×)
DOUBLING CONSONANT AFTER LONG VOWEL	-ll- (1×) -nn- (4×), -nn- (1×)
DOUBLING OF CONSONANT	-mm- (4×)
<NNE> AS IN CHILDREN, OPEN	-nee (7×)

2. Linguistic profile of Hand C

Items	Spelling variants and frequencies
THE	y ^e (47×), y ^e (1×)
THESE	yees (1×)
IT	it (41×)
THEY	yai (1×)
THEM	yem (10×), yem' (4×), yem (1×)
EACH	ich (1×), ych' (1×)
ANY	any (1×)
ARE	3 rd pers. plural pres. ind.: er' (3×)
IS	be (5×), es (2×), is (1×)
SHALL	3 rd pers. sing. pres. ind.: shall' (8×), sall' (1×) 2 nd pers. sing. pres. ind.: shalt (1×)
WILL	3 rd pers. sing. pres. ind.: wyll' (1×)
TO	to + infinitive + consonant: to (3×) to + infinitive + <h>: to (1×) as preposition + consonant: to (6×) as preposition + vowel: to (1×)
AFTER	adverb: aftir (1×)

	preposition: aftir' (1×)
THEN	yan (3×), yen (2×)
IF	if (3×)
AS	as (1×), os (1×)
AS...AS	als...als (1×)
AGAIN	agayne (1×)
WHILE	whyle (1×)
WH-	wh- (9×)
THERE	yer (12×)
THROUGH	preposition: thorough' (5×), thorough (1×)
WHEN	when (2×), when' (2×)
SUBSTANTIVE PLURAL	-es (10×), -es (8×), -eys (2×), -is (2×), -s (2×)
PRESENT PARTICIPLE	-yng' (1×)
WEAK PAST PARTICIPLE	-d (1×), -ed (1×), -ede (1×)
STRONG PAST PARTICIPLE	-yn' (2×)
ABOUT	adverb: about (1×) preposition: about (1×)
ABOVE	adverb: abouen' (1×)
ALL	all (2×), all' (2×)
ALSO	also (1×)
BE	infinitive: be (3×)
BOTH	bothe (1×)
BY	be (1×)
DAY	day (2×)
DO	imperative: do (7×) infinitive: do (2×)
EYE	eye (3×)
EYES	eyne (7×)
FILTH	fylth' (1×), fylthe (1×)
FIRE	fyr' (1×), fyre (1×)
FOR-TO	ffor to (1×)
GATHER	imperative: geder (2×)
GIVE	imperative: zif (1×)
GO	2 nd pers. sing. pres. ind.: gose (2×)
GOOD	gode (1×)
GREAT	gretane (1×)
HAVE	infinitive: haf (1×) 3 rd pers. sing. pres. ind.: has (1×)
HEAD	hede (1×)
HEADS	hedes (2×)
HIM	hym (2×), hym' (1×)
HIS	hys (2×)
LET	imperative: lat (1×)
LITTLE	lytyll' (2×), litill' (1×)
LONG	longe (1×)
MAKE	imperative: make (3×) infinitive: make (1×)

MAY	2 nd pers. sing. pres. ind.: may (1×)
OLD	olde (2×), old (1×)
ONE	pronoun: on (2×)
OR	or (12×)
OUT	adverb: out (1×)
	preposition: out (3×), oute (1×)
STAND	infinitive: stond (1×), stonde (1×)
	3 rd pers. sing. pres. ind.: stondes (1×)
SUFFER	infinitive: safe
TAKE	imperative: take (22×), tak (5×), thak (1×)
TOGETHER	to geder (6×)
WELL	wele (6×), well' (2×)
WHO	who (1×)
WITH	with (12×)
YE	3e (1×)
YOU	you (2×), you (2×)
-ER	-er (7×)
-FUL	-full' (1×)
-HT	-ght' (9×)
K FOR C	-k- (1×)
TH- FOR T-	th- (1×)
DOUBLING OF CONSONANT AFTER LONG VOWEL	-ss- (1×)
F FOR MEDIAL V	(1×)
-W- FOR -U-	(1×)

References

- ALCORN, Rhona. 2017. *An Electronic Version of a Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English (eLALME): A Guide for Beginners (version 2)*. <https://bit.ly/46X6mFK>. Accessed December 13, 2023.
- BENSKIN, Michael. 1981. "A Linguistic Atlas for Late Mediaeval English." *Mediaeval English Studies Newsletter* 4: 5-13.
- BENSKIN, Michael. 1982. "The Letter <þ> and <y> in Later Middle English, and Some Related Matters." *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 7 (1): 13-30. <https://bit.ly/3QndtCK>. Accessed August 3, 2023.
- BENSKIN, Michael. 2004. "Chancery Standard." In *New Perspectives on English Historical Linguistics: Selected Papers from 12 ICEHL, Glasgow 21-26 August 2002. Volume III: Lexis and Transmission*, edited by Christian J. Kay, Carole A. Hough and Iréné Wotherspoon, 1-40. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- BENSKIN, Michael, Margaret Laing, Vasilios Karaiskos and Keith Williamson. 2013. *An Electronic Version of a Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English*. Edinburgh: The University of Edinburgh. <https://bit.ly/3Ql73nT>. Accessed August 3, 2023.
- BLAKE, Norman. 1996. *A History of the English Language*. London: Macmillan.
- BRUNNER, Karl. 1963. *An Outline of Middle English Grammar*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP.
- CHEATHAM'S LIBRARY. n.d. "Medical Recipes." <https://bit.ly/3pWIDHp>. Accessed July 17, 2023.
- CONDE-SILVESTRE, Juan Camilo and Juan Manuel Hernández-Campoy. Forthcoming. "Spelling Practices and Emergent Standard Writing in Late Middle English." In *The*

- New Cambridge History of English. Vol. 3: Change, Transmission and Ideology*, edited by Joan Beal. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- DIGITAL BIRGITTA. n.d. "Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Additional MS 6686." University of Bergen. <https://bit.ly/3PVo6b1>. Accessed October 12, 2023.
- FULK, Robert Dennis. 2012. *An Introduction to Middle English: Grammar and Texts*. Peterborough: Broadview Press.
- LAING, Margaret. 2015. *Introductory Tour to the Elements of eLALME*. <http://bit.ly/46X6mFK>. Accessed December 13, 2023.
- LEWIS, Robert E., Hand Kurath and Sherman Kuhn, eds. 1952-2001. *Middle English Dictionary*. Ann Arbor, MI: The U of Michigan P. Online edition in *Middle English Compendium*. Eds. Frances McSparran and Paul Schaffner. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Library, 2000-2018. <https://bit.ly/3s3GhGf>. Accessed February 6, 2023.
- MARQUÉS-AGUADO, Teresa. 2009. "The Dialectal Provenance of G.U.L. MS Hunter 513 (ff. 1r-37r)." In *Textual Healing: Studies in Medieval English Medical, Scientific and Technical Texts*, edited by Javier E, Díaz Vera and Rosario Caballero, 109-121. Bern: Peter Lang.
- MCINTOSH, Michael. 1989. "Present Indicative Plural Forms in the Later Middle English of the North Midlands." In *Middle English Dialectology: Essays on Some Principles and Problems*, edited by Margaret Laing, 116-122. Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP.
- MILROY, James. 1992. "Middle English Dialectology." In *The Cambridge History of the English Language, Vol. 2: 1066-1476*, edited by Norman Blake, 156-206. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- MOSSÉ, Fernand. 1968. *A Handbook of Middle English*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins UP.
- NIELSEN, Hans Frede. 2005. *From Dialect to Standard: English in England 1154-1776*. Odense: UP of Southern Denmark.
- SAMUELS, Michael. 1963. "Some Applications of Middle English Dialectology." *English Studies* 44: 81-94.
- SAMUELS, Michael. 1981. "Spelling and Dialect in the Late and Post-Middle English periods." In *So Meny People, Longages and Tongues. Philological Essays in Scots and Mediaeval English Presented to Angus McIntosh*, edited by Michael Benskin and Michael L. Samuels, 13-54. Aberdeen: Aberdeen UP.
- SMITH, Jeremy. 1999. *Essentials of Early English*. London: Routledge.
- TAAVITSAINEN, Irma. 2000. "Scientific Language and Spelling Standardisation 1375-1550." In *The Development of Standard English 1300-1800: Theories, Descriptions, Conflicts*, edited by Laura Wright, 131-154. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- TAAVITSAINEN, Irma. 2004. "Scriptorial 'House-Styles' and Discourse Communities." In *Medical and Scientific Writing in Late Medieval English*, edited by Irma Taavitsainen and Päivi Pahta, 209-240. Cambridge: Cambridge UP.
- WRIGHT, Joseph and Elizabeth Mary Wright. [1923] 1979. *An Elementary Middle English Grammar*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford UP.