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≈ ABSTRACT ≈

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Introduction

The objective of this thesis is twofold: first, its aim is to contribute to the understanding of the application of Strict CV phonology to Middle English (ME) quantitative changes. Its other objective is to introduce a new notion into Old and Middle English phonology. This is the notion of *templaticness*, which is put to use in discussing the ‘great ME quantitative conspiracy’.

The argument I pursue is that a number of ME sound changes receive a more plausible explanation if a templatic account is adopted. The assumption that a template the size of two CV units underlies a number of ME quantitative changes is investigated against the backdrop of a number of Old English (OE) processes. The argument is that a ME process such as open syllable lengthening can be viewed as a continuation of OE templatic characteristics with a parametric change that regulated the nature of the second vocalic position of the CVCV template. It is also suggested that OE (and thus ME) hints at the possibility of a wider Germanic setting regulated by the CVCV template.

CHAPTERS 1 offers a discussion of some of the achievements of the radical offshoot of Government Phonology known as Strict CV phonology. The hallmarks of this theory are highlighted and compared with traditional syllable-based accounts, as well as Government Phonology. The view I adopt is that a higher degree of explanatory adequacy is attained if a radically simplified phonological structure is embraced, which consists of a skeleton with strictly alternating C (consonantal) and V (vocalic) positions. In this general sense of the term every language is templatic as every major lexical category is by definition built up of a number of CV units. Yet, not every language is regarded to be templatic in CV phonology. A templatic language is one where certain phonological processes operate on strictly delineated stretches of phonological material. The size of such a portion of the CV skeleton is known as a template: in OE and ME the size of this template is two CV units. The data presented in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 argue for a templatic analysis of OE. My claim is that the OE templatic characteristic is continued into ME.

This simplified and redundancy-free skeleton comes with two vocalic ‘forces’, one destructive (known as government), the other supportive (known as licensing). Government spoils the melodic expression of its target, licensing supports it. These metaphorical expressions simply encapsulate the idea (now set in a theoretical framework) that certain processes are more likely to occur in certain environments than in others, such as the underparsing of consonantal

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melody, which is more likely to occur in word final position than word-initially. Another hallmark of CV phonology is its representational (rather than derivational) character. The notion of derivation (as a means of tempering with lexical representations) is banned. The theory is thus a theory of the well-formedness of lexical representations. A well-formed representation is licit, possible or grammatical, an ill-formed one illicit in this framework.

CHAPTERS 2 sets out to discuss the licensing and governing potential of the two types of basic vocalic objects allowed by the theory, set against the data from a number of languages. These are (i) the **FULL VOWELS**, which always govern and license, and (ii) the **EMPTY VOWELS**, subdivided into (i) INTERNAL EMPTY NUCLEI (IEN's), which are devoid of licensing and governing abilities, (ii) SCHWAS (i.e. vowels that alternate with zero), which are parametrically regulated to govern and/or license (these features are regulated independently) and (iii) FINAL EMPTY NUCLEI (FEN's), whose governing and/or licensing potential is likewise regulated parametrically (and again independently of each other). The introductory chapters also discuss whether there is evidence for a consonant which is simultaneously governed *and* licensed. The conclusion is that there is no convincing evidence for such consonants. A stressed vowel is assumed to take up licensing (over the head of a consonant) from the following pronounced vowel and this configuration can lead to open syllable lengthening. This is exemplified by languages such as Italian (known as tonic lengthening), Turkish and ME. The consonant in such a configuration is necessarily governed only. A consonant flanked by two unstressed vowels is either governed or licensed (such consonants are claimed to be semi-weak in some analysis and the vacillation they show between a tap, an unaspirated voiceless plosive and an aspirated plosive in, for example, General American dactylic sequences is taken to be the result of their licensed *and* governed status).

Towards the ME template

To ascertain the implications of a templatic analysis of ME, I take a detour into OE. The notion of templaticness in an Indo-European language still has an exotic ring to it, although some steps have been taken in this direction (Czech, for example, shows traces of a once active templatic constraint in its

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verbal and nominal paradigms). Instead of the Czech template, a template closer home is examined in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

CHAPTER 3 has for its focus the pre-OE deletion of the two high vowels, *-i and *-u, known as High vowel deletion (HVD). The two vowels are lost after a heavy (H) syllable or a sequence of a light syllable (L) followed by either a heavy or a light syllable. The equation H = LX (where X ranges over H/L syllables) describes the deletion of the high vowels in sequences like **fēti* > *fēt* ‘feet’ and **werudu* > *werud* ‘troops’ (as opposed to **skipu* > *scipu* ‘ships’). The necessary condition on the loss of such vowels is lack of stress, but this is not a sufficient condition (in both **skipu* and **fēti* the high vowels are unstressed, yet only the ones preceded by a heavy syllable, or its equivalent, are lost).

One of the recent accounts, known as the Germanic Foot, assumes an uneven trochaic suprasegmental structure whose left branch must dominate at least two moras, and the right one only a single mora. It can only account for the loss of the high vowels by making a number of untenable assumptions, such as the sharing of stress by two consecutive vowels. The conclusion is that the Germanic Foot cannot adequately account for this OE phenomenon. I define the new approach in this chapter. The OE template is formulated in terms of CV units. The template’s extension is two CV units (i.e. CVCV), the head of the template is the full vowel of the first CV unit (this is the first anchor point), the second anchor point is the second vowel of the template which can be filled with either a full or an empty vowel. Both consonants can be full or empty. It is argued that the OE template offers a more insightful account of HVD, which dispels a number of common misconceptions about OE phonology, such as the sharing of stress by two vowels, or the absence of syncopation after a light (*fremede*/***fremde* ‘I did’), but not a heavy syllable (*dēmde*/***dēmde* ‘I judged’), put down traditionally to the moraic count principle of the Germanic languages according to which a stressed syllable must dominate at least two moras, etc.). It is also argued that the template is impervious to government from outside the template. Some of the consequences of this approach are explored with the help of (pre-)OE data.

CHAPTER 4 extends the templatic approach to a further segment of OE phonology, the assignment of primary and secondary stress. A number of traditional approaches are tackled and their shortcomings discussed in detail, such as the assumption that primary stress is based on syllable weight. The assumption pursued in this chapter is the possibility of applying the OE

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CVCV template to the assignment of secondary stress which, on the face of evidence from OE poetry and phonology, is always a heavy syllable's throw away from primary stress.

I claim that whereas primary stress, contrary to most current descriptions, is not quantity-based and depends on neither licensing nor government, secondary stress does depend on licensing from the following pronounced vowel. If the CVCV template is licensed, this is interpreted as secondary stress. A word whose structure is CV₁Cv₂CV₃Cv₄CV₅ has secondary stress on V₃, the head of the second iteration of the OE template (framed here). Secondary stress is secured by licensing from V₅. Primary stress is on V₁, the first vowel of the stem (it is also the head of the first template, shown with shading). Primary stress and syllable quantity are unrelated but coincide at a crucial point (at the point of the first vowel of the stem). I claim that this accidental meeting of primary stress and a heavy syllable have muddied the picture of OE phonology. The chapter also discusses the purely phonological (i.e. non-metrical) justification for secondary stress. The templatic account divorces these two phenomena in a framework that also offers additional insights into a set of hitherto unrelated phenomena.

CHAPTER 5 has for its objective the templatic reformulation of Sievers' Five Types, a set of rules on the distribution of primary, secondary, tertiary and unstressed syllables that underlie the structure of an OE poetic half-line. I argue that OE poetic metrics offers another piece of evidence for the templatic nature of OE. The chapter is essentially a vindication of Sievers' analysis of OE poetry in a new setting: the most ancient examples of half-lines (as found in *Beowulf*) are composed of four 'boxes' of alternating stressed and unstressed syllables. The boxes containing unstressed syllables can contain any number of them, as opposed to stressed boxes that are coextensive with the OE template (their size is thus CVCV). This analysis thus joins in with the rest of the achronometric analyses that are based on the unequal temporal extension of syllables of different degrees of stress: stressed syllables must be the size of two CV units. There is no such restriction on the gabble of unstressed syllables. Other constraints are also discussed: whereas alliteration is based on the onset of primary stressed syllables, there is no proof for the metrical difference between secondary and tertiary stress (their onsets can never be the originators of alliteration). The perpetuation of the difference between non-primary stresses is on based on morphological grounds: secondary stressed syllables are found on second parts of compounds, tertiary stresses on declensional and

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inflectional suffixes (never the other way around). In other words, the distinctions on which a half-line is based are three-fold only: primary vs. secondary vs. unstressed syllables. The extension of primary/non-primary stressed syllables is CVCV.

The second half of the chapter offers further evidence for the OE template: there is evidence from the morphology of compounding and the phonology of *i*-mutation in pre-OE that long vowels acted as a barrier to counting of CV units and spreading of melody. I take this to follow from the fact that long vowels came prefabricated, as it were, with a CVCV template (a long vowel/diphthong satisfies the OE template by default, as it encloses a sequence of two CV units).

The ME template

CHAPTER 6 is the first chapter that discusses ME quantitative changes in the order they are traditionally supposed to have taken place: homorganic lengthening (HOL), open syllable lengthening (MEOSL) which was counteracted by trisyllabic shortening (TRISH), and shortening before a consonant cluster (SHOCC). Some of the traditional accounts view all of these changes as part of ‘a great ME quantitative conspiracy’. The chapter offers a step-by-step discussion of the various nominal classes which were affected by open syllable lengthening.

The place of TRISH in ME phonology is questioned on a number of counts. The conclusion is that there is no proof for TRISH at any stage of English (Old, Middle or Modern). TRISH is a *post hoc* lexical rule (with no diachronic foundations) deducted after the lexicalisation of quantity item-by-item at the time of borrowing. Pairs of etymologically related words like *vane* ~ *vanity* do not prove that TRISH has ever existed as a real time rule of English: *vane* was borrowed with a long vowel, *vanity* with a short, the relationship between the two in the form of TRISH is a post hoc phonological rule based on the assumed etymological relationship of the two words. The phonological characterisation of the rule is down to meticulous phonological tinkering. It seems that TRISH was introduced into ME phonology because there was no other means available for explaining away the counteracting effects exercised by an unidentified rule on open syllable lengthening (e.g. *sādel* ‘saddle’ NSG ~ *sādeles* GSG; PL).

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After discarding TRISH from the inventory of ME sound changes, we turn to MEOSL. It seems that MEOSL is equally problematic: MEOSL only works consistently in the CVCə environment (CVCə > CVVCə). No MEOSL is found if the second vowel in the CVCV configuration is a full vowel (i.e. not a schwa): *belly*, *fallow*, etc. In addition, there is no lengthening if the stressed vowel is followed by a branching onset, i.e. a cluster of rising sonority (CVTRə sequences remain undisturbed by MEOSL). This sets apart MEOSL from Italian tonic lengthening in which a stressed vowel is lengthened if followed by a singleton consonant or a TR cluster). To complicate matters further, ME shows shortening of OE long vowels before TR clusters. The environment before a TR cluster is thus a shortening environment, just like the pre-TT environment for which traditionally SHOCC is invoked (parts of the RT-environment are covered by HOL). Both TRISH and MEOSL are problematic on a number of counts.

CHAPTER 7 offers an analysis of open syllable lengthening in ME in the framework of CV phonology. The possibilities of a templatic lengthening are investigated. The fact that open syllable lengthening only occurs in the CVCə environment is accounted for by a ME CVCV template. The only difference between the OE and the ME CVCV template is that the second vocalic position of the template can only be satisfied by a full vowel (as opposed to the OE template whose second vocalic position can be satisfied by both a full and an empty vowel). This explains the absence of lengthening in words like *belly*. Open syllable lengthening in CVCə-type words (*tālə* > *tāla*) is explained as the superimposition of the ME CVCV template onto the first (and only) full vowel. For this to occur, the template must be licensed by the following vowel (a schwa in this case). The fact that there is no open syllable lengthening in the *belly*-type words is taken as one of the main arguments in support of the ME template (a full vowel's licensing/governing potential can never be outweighed by that of a schwa or a FEN: full vowels always govern/license, schwas and FEN's do so only parametrically). What is traditionally attributed to TRISH (*sādeles*) is reinterpreted as the result of absence of licensing upon the syncopation of the medial schwa (*sādləs*). The syncopation of schwa is independently supported by the ME metrical template that underlies the iambic meter, as well as the emergence of intrusive consonants in syncopation sites (*Hum(ə)re(s)* > *Hambre(s)* ‘river Humber’). The effects of syncopation have never been investigated in ME sound changes. Assuming syncopation in the various ME nominal paradigms does away TRISH completely and offers a

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new view on ME sound changes. MEOSL is accordingly renamed METEL ‘ME templatic lengthening’.

The fact that there is no open syllable lengthening before TR-clusters is interpreted as a consequence of the visibility of the empty vowel flanked by the two consonants. The absence of lengthening before a TR cluster is thus the result of the absence of licensing over a consonant cluster: the ME CVCV template can not be superimposed on the stressed full vowel in the absence of licensing (*gādrə(n)* ‘gather’ vs. *tālə* > *tāla* ‘tale’). The chapter also offers some discussion on the licensing potential of FEN’s (there is no shortening of long vowels before a word-final coda). The chapter also offers a short discussion of a rare glimpse into the period of ME before the onset of open syllable lengthening on the basis of an early ME non-alliterative poem written in the septenary known as *Poema Morale*. This piece of poetry shows the use of the CVCV template as a continuation of an OE phonological tradition (i.e. the OE CVCV template in my interpretation). This is the last (known) piece of poetry that shows the use of the CVCV template. This tradition was supplanted in the later periods of ME by the iambic pentameter which is based on the distinction between stressed and unstressed syllables: a word like *belly* is thus found functioning in poetry as *béllÿ*, occupying two positions (a stressed and an unstressed one), rather than as *béllÿ* occupying only a single one as it would have been the case in OE poetry. This is to say that later ME poetry does not provide evidence for the CVCV template used as a single position. The only proof for the ME CVCV template remains the absence of lengthening in words of the *belly*-type, as well as the unfailing lengthening of vowels in words of the *tale*-type.

CHAPTER 8, drawing on the conclusions of the previous chapters, extends the use of the ME CVCV template to SHOCC ‘Shortening before consonant clusters’, i.e. to those cases in which shortening is found before clusters other than rising sonority sequences. The workings of the CVCV template are put to use in explaining the shortening of OE long vowels in closed syllables, as well as ME shortening in non-analytical forms in the verbal and nominal paradigms.

The last change I discuss is HOL ‘Homorganic lengthening’. From a diachronic point of view, this was the first ME (and last OE) change. HOL is found before Sonorant plus Consonant (i.e. nasal/liquid plus C) clusters: OE *wīndan* > ME *wīnde(n)* ‘wind’, *hūnd* > *hound* ‘dog’, *gōld* > *Gould* ‘gold’, etc. Many of its effects have been ‘undone’ in later stages, so its effects are

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‘patchy’ in MoE. The reason for HOL’s inclusion in the series of ME changes is that it also contributed to the ‘great ME quantitative conspiracy’. Its workings, however, are strikingly different from the rest of the ME changes and it sits uneasily with the templatic account. The various environments of HOL are scrutinised and the conclusion (at the present stage of the research) is that it cannot be described in terms of the ME CVCV template. The lengthening of vowels in the pre-SonC environment is not a templatic lengthening and its role in the ‘great conspiracy’ is epiphenomenal. This is why HOL is last the last one to be discussed in the series of ME changes.

With all this, in this dissertation I hope to have made some contribution to the understanding of OE and ME sound changes in the framework of Strict CV phonology. The following notions have been discussed and their relationships more clearly delineated in terms of a templatic analysis drawing on the CVCV template:

- the absence of syncopation after light syllables (known as Sievers’ Law of Syncopation) is reformulated in terms of the OE CVCV template, which deflects government,
- OE primary stress is no longer viewed as quantitative,
- secondary stress is at a CVCV template’s throw away from primary stress and is contingent on licensing
- OE High Vowel Deletion is templatic ‘short-vowel deletion’,
- OE long vowels must be analysed as right-headed, i.e. self-licensing,
- rising sonority consonantal sequences (or TR sequences), including those that could qualify for branching onsets, enclose a visible empty vowel, similarly to TT and RT clusters, i.e. they are buffers to vocalic interaction,
- the structure of OE half-lines is reformulated in terms of CVCV ‘boxes’,
- a possible case of templatic analysis of OE *i*-mutation, secondary stress assignment after light syllables, and compounding is attempted after the introduction of the NO CROSSING OF TEMPLATES constraint,
- the ‘great ME quantitative conspiracy’ is analysed as the protracted workings of the CVCV template into ME,
- ME vowels are analysed as left-headed (i.e. in need of external licensing),
- absence of open syllable lengthening in environments other than the CVCə environment is viewed as the consequence of a parametric change regulating the second anchor point of the ME CVCV template and, accordingly,
- MEOSL is reformulated as METEL (both anchor points of the CVCV template must be filled with full vowels),

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- whereas TRISH is a defunct phenomenon in ME, SHOCC can be successfully accommodated with the templatic analysis, not so HOL, which must be put down to a yet unidentified cause.

PUBLICATIONS IN THE SUBJECT OF THE DISSERTATION

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