CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-68569-6 - Old English: A Linguistic Introduction
Jeremy J. Smith
Frontmatter
More information

## Old English

*Old English* provides a clear linguistic introduction to English between the fifth century and the Norman invasion in 1066. Tailored to suit the needs of individual course modules, it assumes no prior knowledge of the subject, and presents the basic facts in a straightforward manner, making it the ideal beginners' text. Students are guided step-by-step through the main characteristics and developments of English during that period, aided by concise chapter summaries, suggestions for further reading, and a comprehensive glossary. Each chapter is accompanied by an engaging set of exercises and discussion questions based on authentic Anglo-Saxon texts, encouraging students to consolidate their learning, and providing essential self-study material. The book is accompanied by a companion website (www.cambridge.org/Smith), featuring solutions to the exercises and useful additional resources. Providing essential knowledge and skills for those embarking on the study of Old English, it is set to become the leading introduction to the subject.

JEREMY J. SMITH is Professor of English Philology in the Department of English Language at the University of Glasgow. His recent publications include *Sound Change and the History of English* (2007), *Essentials of Early English* (second edition, 2005) and *An Introduction to Middle English* (with S. Horobin, 2002).

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-68569-6 - Old English: A Linguistic Introduction
Jeremy J. Smith
Frontmatter
More information

## Cambridge Introductions to the English Language

*Cambridge Introductions to the English Language* is a series of accessible undergraduate textbooks on the key topics encountered in the study of the English language. Tailored to suit the needs of individual taught course modules, each book is written by an author with extensive experience of teaching the topic to undergraduates. The books assume no prior subject knowledge, and present the basic facts in a clear and straightforward manner, making them ideal for beginners. They are designed to be maximally reader-friendly, with chapter summaries, glossaries and suggestions for further reading. Extensive exercises and discussion questions are included, encouraging students to consolidate and develop their learning, and providing essential homework material. A website accompanies each book, featuring solutions to the exercises and useful additional resources. Set to become the leading introductions to the field, books in this series provide the essential knowledge and skills for those embarking on English Language studies.

Books in the series

*The Sound Structure of English* Chris McCully

*Old English* Jeremy J. Smith

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-68569-6 - Old English: A Linguistic Introduction
Jeremy J. Smith
Frontmatter
More information

# Old English

## A Linguistic Introduction

Jeremy J. Smith

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-68569-6 - Old English: A Linguistic Introduction
Jeremy J. Smith
Frontmatter
More information

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press,
New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521685696

© Jeremy J. Smith 2009

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2009

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*
Smith, J. J. (Jeremy J.)
Old English : a linguistic introduction / Jeremy J. Smith.
p. cm. – (Cambridge introductions to the English language)
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 978-0-521-86677-4
1. English language – Old English, ca. 450-1100. I. Title. II. Series.
PE123.S65 2009
429–dc22
2008053265

ISBN 978-0-521-86677-4 hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-68569-6 paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to
in this book, and does not guarantee that any content on such
websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-68569-6 - Old English: A Linguistic Introduction
Jeremy J. Smith
Frontmatter
More information

For Amy

© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-68569-6 - Old English: A Linguistic Introduction
Jeremy J. Smith
Frontmatter
More information

# Contents

*List of Figures* *page* viii

*Preface* ix

*Notations and Conventions* x

1 About Old English 1

2 Describing Language 11

3 The Structure of Old English 25

4 Spellings and Sounds 37

5 The Old English Lexicon 59

6 Old English Grammar I: Syntax 74

7 Old English Grammar II: Inflexional Morphology 94

*Appendix 1* Texts 124

*Appendix 2* Discussion Questions and Further Reading 143

*Glossary of Old English–Present-Day English* 147

*Glossary of Key Terms* 183

*References* 191

*Index* 195



© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-68569-6 - Old English: A Linguistic Introduction
Jeremy J. Smith
Frontmatter
More information

# Figures

1.1 The Indo-European family of languages, with special reference to Germanic *page 5*

1.2 Trees and waves 9

5.1 The semiotic triangle 69



© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-68569-6 - Old English: A Linguistic Introduction
Jeremy J. Smith
Frontmatter
More information

# Preface

This book is designed for the use of undergraduate and postgraduate students who wish to understand the linguistic structure of Old English. It is designed as a bridge between elementary primers (e.g. Hough and Corbett 2006, Hogg 2002, the OE sections of Smith 2005, and classic and still useful outlines such as Sweet/Davis 1953) and more advanced discursive works (e.g. Lass 1994) and OE grammars (e.g. Campbell 1959, Hogg 1992). I envisage the book being used, at a fairly early stage, as part of a general programme in English historical linguistics or (it is hoped) wider Germanic philology.

This book was commissioned some time ago, and since I undertook it other publications have appeared which cover some of the same ground. Perhaps the most important of these, and certainly the best, is McCully and Hilles 2005, which is designed with a similar audience in mind. However, I see my book as complementary to such works; it derives its orientation from 'traditional' philology (though drawing, of course, on more recent scholarship), and it is laid out as a resource rather than in units. Although, happily, old antagonisms between traditional approaches and more 'modern' linguistics are now receding, there is maybe a place for an approach which tries to synthesise long-established and more recent scholarship, accessible to scholars of both backgrounds.

Materials in this book derive from courses I have taught in English historical linguistics over the last twenty years, and I am most grateful to undergraduate and postgraduate students and colleagues who have used and commented on them. In particular, I am grateful to Simon Horobin, who read through the first draft of the book and made many suggestions for improvements. I am also very grateful to Helen Barton of Cambridge University Press, for her tolerance and understanding in putting up with a dilatory and distracted author, to Rosina Di Marzo, to Jill Lake for her skilful and tactful copy-editing, and to Philip Riley for his meticulous proofreading.

Jeremy Smith



© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-68569-6 - Old English: A Linguistic Introduction
Jeremy J. Smith
Frontmatter
More information

# Notations and Conventions

| | |
|---|---|
| EModE | Early Modern English |
| EWS | Early West Saxon |
| IPA | International Phonetic Association |
| LWS | Late West Saxon |
| ME | Middle English |
| ModE | Modern English |
| OE | Old English |
| PDE | Present-Day English |
| <..> | graphemic transcription |
| <<..>> | allographic/graphetic transcription |
| /../ | phonemic transcription |
| [..] | allophonic/phonetic transcription |
| > | goes to, becomes, is realised as |
| < | comes from |
| $ | syllable boundary |
| # | morpheme boundary |
| Ø | zero |
| / | in the environment: X > Y/A_B = 'X becomes Y in the environment of a preceding A and a following B, i.e. AXB becomes AYB.' |
| V | vowel |
| C | consonant |
| : | indicates full length of preceding vowel (i.e. long vowel) |
| ˈ | main accentual stress or pitch prominence on following syllable |

In the following list of phonetic symbols, based on those used by the International Phonetic Association, pronunciations are as in 'Received Pronunciation' (RP), the prestigious accent used in England, 'General American' (GenAm), the reference accent commonly used for US English, or sometimes 'Standard Scottish English' (SSE), the prestigious accent used in Scotland. Occasionally reference is made to other languages, e.g. French, German. For a full account of IPA usage, see the *Handbook of the International Phonetic Association* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).



© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-68569-6 - Old English: A Linguistic Introduction
Jeremy J. Smith
Frontmatter
More information



a front open unrounded vowel, as in CAT (RP, GenAm, SSE)
æ front unrounded vowel between open and mid-open, as in some RP pronunciations of CAT
ɑ back unrounded vowel, as in BATH (RP), PALM (GenAm)
ɒ back rounded vowel, as in CLOTH (RP)
b voiced bilabial plosive, as in BEE
β voiceless bilabial fricative, as in BLAVA 'blue' (Catalan)
ç voiceless palatal fricative, as in ICH 'I' (German)
ɔ back mid-open rounded vowel, as in THOUGHT (RP, GenAm)
d voiced alveolar plosive, as in DEEP
ð voiced dental fricative, as in THOSE
e front mid-close unrounded vowel, as in FACE (SSE)
ɜ unrounded central vowel, as in NURSE (RP), NURSE (GenAm)
ɛ front mid-open unrounded vowel, as in DRESS (GenAm), PÈRE (French)
f voiceless labio-dental fricative, as in FEE
g voiced velar plosive, as in GOAT
h voiceless glottal fricative, as in HOT
i front close unrounded vowel, as in FLEECE (RP, GenAm)
ɪ centralised unrounded mid-close vowel, as in KIT (RP, GenAm)
j palatal unrounded semi-vowel, as in YACHT
k voiceless velar plosive, as in CLOTH
l voiced alveolar lateral continuant, as in LOT
ɫ voiced alveolar lateral continuant with velarisation, as in ILL (RP)
m voiced bilabial nasal, as in MOUTH
n voiced alveolar nasal, as in NURSE
ŋ voiced velar nasal, and in THING (RP)
o back mid-close rounded vowel, as in GOAT (GenAm, SSE)
ø front mid-close rounded vowel, as in PEU 'few' (French)
œ front mid-open rounded vowel, as in PEUR 'fear' (French)
θ voiceless dental fricative, as in THING
p voiceless bilabial plosive, as in PALM
r voiced alveolar trill, as in RED (SSE)
s voiceless alveolar fricative, as in SING
ʃ voiceless palato-alveolar fricative, as in SHIP
t voiceless alveolar plosive, as in TAP
u back close rounded vowel, as in GOOSE
ʊ centralised rounded mid-close vowel, as in FOOT (RP, GenAm)
v voiced labio-dental fricative, as in VIEW
ʌ back mid-open unrounded vowel, as in STRUT (RP, GenAm)
w labial-velar semi-vowel, as in WEATHER
ʍ voiceless labial-velar fricative, as in WHETHER (SSE)



© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-0-521-68569-6 - Old English: A Linguistic Introduction
Jeremy J. Smith
Frontmatter
More information



x voiceless velar fricative, as in LOCH (SSE)
y front close rounded vowel, as in TU 'you (sg)' (French)
ʏ centralised rounded mid-close vowel, as in FOOT (SSE)
ɣ voiced velar fricative, as in AUGE 'eye' (German)
ʒ voiced palato-alveolar fricative, as in MEASURE
z voiced alveolar plosive, as in ZOO



© Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org