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0521771145 - The Development of Standard English 1300-1800: Theories, Descriptions, Conflicts

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There are many questions yet to be answered about how Standard English came into existence. The claim that it developed from a Central Midlands dialect propagated by clerks in the Chancery, the medieval writing office of the king, is one explanation that has dominated textbooks to date. This book reopens the debate about the origins of Standard English, challenging earlier accounts and revealing a far more complex and intriguing history. An international team of fourteen specialists offer a wide-ranging analysis, from theoretical discussions of the origin of dialects, to detailed descriptions of the history of individual Standard English features. The volume ranges from Middle English to the present day, and looks at a variety of text types. It concludes that Standard English had no one single ancestor dialect, but is the cumulative result of generations of authoritative writing from many text types.

LAURA WRIGHT is Lecturer in English Language at the University of Cambridge and Fellow of Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge. She is author of *Sources of London English: Medieval Thames Vocabulary* (1996) and, with Jonathan Hope, *Stylistics: A Practical Coursebook* (1996).

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

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

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521771146

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First published 2000

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

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

The development of standard English, 1300–1800: theories, descriptions, conflicts/ edited by Laura Wright.

p. cm. – (Studies in English language)

Includes index.

ISBN 0 521 77114 5 (hardback)

1. English language – Standardisation. 2. English language – Middle English, 1100–1500 – History. 3. English language – Early modern, 1500–1700 – History. 4. English language – 18th century – History. 5. English language – Grammar, Historical. I. Wright, Laura. II. Series.

PE1074 7 .D48 2000

420'.9 – dc21 99-087473

ISBN-13 978-0-521-77114-6 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-77114-5 hardback

Transferred to digital printing 2005

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In 1997 the International Conference on the Standardisation of English was held at Lucy Cavendish College, University of Cambridge, with the purpose of re-examining the topic of the history of Standard English. In 1999 several of the themes first aired at Lucy Cavendish College were further developed at the Workshop on Social History and Sociolinguistics: Space and Process held under the auspices of the Centre for Metropolitan History, at the Institute for Historical Research, Senate House, University of London. The editor would like to thank Lucy Cavendish College and the Centre for Metropolitan History for providing the venues, and the participants at the conference and workshop for their contributions to the events. I would particularly like to thank Reiko Takeda for her invaluable help in running the conference, and Derek Keene for facilitating the workshop. I am also grateful to Cambridge University Press, to the editor, Dr Katharina Brett, and to three anonymous readers for their criticisms.