

1 From the Early Modern Era to an International Research Area

Marco Condorelli

The study of orthography in the early modern era has followed different strands, according to various geographical areas and periods of time. Areas of discussion and investigation have ranged from the question of biscriptality, the topics of codification and nation-building to spelling reform and to the role of the introduction of printing technology in orthographic developments and standardisation. The variation related to the study of historical orthography across Europe should not surprise us, if we consider the obvious differences across languages in Europe on different linguistic levels (including orthographic, phonetic, syntactic and so on), the different political decisions made in the administration of educational curricula (especially at university level) and the natural divergence of interests related to profound historical, cultural and political differences in every corner of Europe – all of which undoubtedly represent an element of richness and diversity which should be valued and fostered in the future for the sake of progress in the field. Despite the profound differences in interests and goals, however, some common threads are identifiable in the investigation of orthography across early modern languages, and especially with regard to some of the most recent research trends and advances. The end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first have marked the beginning of a change in the field of historical orthography, especially for the early modern period. For approximately two decades now, and in connection with the development of historical sociolinguistics as a separate sub-discipline, the focus of several studies in historical orthography has shifted to exploring the sociolinguistic aspects of writing systems, without necessarily taking a position in the

While I fully authored this introductory chapter and I have edited this volume alone, I am indebted to Marija Lazar, Elena Llamas-Pombo, Hanna Rutkowska and Anja Voeste for enriching this chapter with some valuable subject-specific reference material. Many thanks are also owed to Gijsbert Rutten, for his bibliographical suggestions for Dutch.

relational–autonomist debate.¹ The first studies to have investigated orthographic variation from a diachronic sociolinguistic standpoint appeared in the late 1990s and early 2000s.² The main focus of these studies has been on the diffusion of early standard spelling practices in late-fifteenth-century correspondence, and the correlation of selected spelling innovations with the authors' age, gender, style, social status and social networks. A few other studies have covered a variety of both orthographic and extra-linguistic variables, with a sociolinguistic framework that has allowed scholars to investigate patterns from the perspective of the author profiles and the socio-historical and cultural factors as drivers which have contributed to the regularisation of spelling.³

In addition to a slight change in perspective, research in historical orthography has been subject to a complex interplay between technological development, the implementation of new analytical approaches, and theoretical and methodological innovations and discussions. Much as in historical linguistics more generally, the traditional approach used to investigate historical orthography has been predominantly qualitative. Examples of

¹ Sgall, 'Towards a theory', 2–3, labelled as 'relational' and 'autonomistic' the two main points of view concerning the connection between the notions of speech and language on the one hand, and writing and language, on the other. From the relational perspective, represented mainly by structuralists (e.g. de Saussure, Bloomfield, Sapir, Hockett), speech equated language, and writing had only a subsidiary role. This concept was expressed by de Saussure as follows: '[l]anguage and writing are two distinct systems of signs; the second exists for the sole purpose of representing the first' (de Saussure, *Troisième cours de linguistique générale*, 41a). In contrast, autonomists (e.g. Vachek, Bolinger, Stetson, McIntosh, Venezky) claimed that '[m]uch is written that is not pronounced' (Stetson, 'The phoneme and the grapheme', 35) and that '[w]riting is any manifestation of language in visible signs; a written language is a code that may not need preliminary decipherment into speech to be understood' (Vachek, 'English orthography', 38). See Rutkowska, 'Linguistic levels', for a more detailed discussion of both approaches, as well as of their implications for the definition of a grapheme.

² Aquino-Weber et al., *Sociolinguistique historique*; Blas Arroyo, 'Tras las huellas'; Branca-Rosoff, 'Sociolinguistique historique'; Branca-Rosoff and Schneider, *L'Écriture des citoyens*; Bravo García, 'Indicadores sociolingüísticos'; Conde-Silvestre and Hernández-Campoy, 'A sociolinguistic approach'; Gadet, *La Variation sociale*; Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre, 'Sociolinguistic and geolinguistic approaches'; 'The social diffusion'; Kristol, 'Sociolinguistique historique'; Martineau, 'Pratiques d'écriture'; Martínez, *La Variation graphique*; Medina Morales, 'Problemas metodológicos'; Oesterreicher, 'Aproximación'; Stockmann-Hovekamp, *Untersuchungen*; Tyne et al., *La Variation en question(s)*; Wandt, *Die Schreibsprache*.

³ Cf. Rutkowska and Rössler, 'Orthographic variables' for an overview of early sociolinguistic research in diachronic orthographic variation; other relevant references are Aquino-Weber et al., *Sociolinguistique historique*; Biedermann-Pasques, *Les Grands Courants orthographiques*; Blas Arroyo, 'Tras las huellas'; Branca-Rosoff, 'Sociolinguistique historique'; Cerquiglini, *Le Roman de l'orthographe*; Gadet, *La Variation sociale*; García Santos, 'La ortografía nebrisense'; Golubović, 'Nauka o pismu u srpskoj lingvistici'; Kristol, 'Sociolinguistique historique'; Maquieira, 'Teoría y práctica ortográficas'; Martínez, *La Variation graphique*; Tyne et al., *La Variation en question(s)*; Zhivov, 'Deadaptsiia v orfografi'; 'Norma i variativnost'; 'Sozdanie grazhdanskogo shriфта'.

variation have been selected and discussed in context, sometimes leading to limited understanding of orthographies in historical languages. Most studies, at least to some extent, have discussed the extra-linguistic conditioning of the orthographic variation in this period, with particular attention paid to orthographic regularisation and various stages of vernacular standardisation (i.e. a vernacular variety being adopted as a socially accepted norm, with a consequential adoption of specific orthographic norms). Many have employed a purely qualitative approach to the data, focusing mainly on extra-linguistic factors like the role of nation-building policies, the prestige of certain varieties, the Reformation movements, the introduction of printing technology, and debates over spelling reform in the process of orthographic standardisation.⁴ A smaller number of studies have combined both qualitative and quantitative approaches, and have used corpora of various sizes, yet some of the current limitations in digitisation technologies sometimes provide an incomplete perspective into topics and issues that are relevant to historical orthography.⁵ The limited accessibility of primary sources, often not available in digitised format, let alone transcribed, has prompted the development of research programmes geared towards enlarging the quantity of available digitised data. From this point of view, researchers investigating the history of orthographic variation in many languages across Europe are in a relatively good position, owing to the dynamic growth of corpora and databases with texts previously available only in paper form, in selected libraries. Similar sources have appeared and are beginning to grow

⁴ Baddeley, *L'Orthographe française*; Bataillon, 'Diego de Enzinas en Amberes'; Berger, 'Religion and diacritics'; Biedermann-Pasques, *Les Grands Courants orthographiques*; Bunčić, 'The standardization'; Bustos Tovar, 'Las propuestas ortográficas'; Cerquiglini, *Le Roman de l'orthographe*; Demonet, 'Tentatives de modernisation'; García Santos, 'La ortografía nebrisense'; Giesecke, 'Orthotypographia'; Gutiérrez Cabero, 'La enseñanza'; Johnston, 'Mateo Alemán's problem with spelling'; Kaverina, *Stanovlenie russkoj orfografii*; Klimaš, *Rěfarmatsyia ŭ historyi litaraturnykh moŭ slavjan*; Korompay, '16th-century Hungarian orthography'; Llamas-Pombo, 'Variation and standardization'; Maquieira, 'Teoría y práctica ortográficas'; Marcos Marín, *Reforma y modernización*; Marti, 'On the creation of Croatian'; Michel, 'Italian orthography'; Nordlund, 'Standardization of Finnish orthography'; Porák, *Humanistická čeština*; Ramírez Santacruz, 'Ruptura y renovación'; Sourkova, 'Azbuka and/or Abeceda'; Urbaničzyk and Olesch, *Die altpolnischen Orthographien*; Zhivov, 'Deadaptatsiia v orfografii'; 'Sozdanie grazhdanskogo shrifta'.

⁵ Baddeley, 'French orthography'; Cazal and Parussa, *Introduction*; Elmentaler, *Struktur und Wandel*; Fidlerová et al., 'Užívání velkých písmen'; Hernández-Campoy, 'Authorship and gender'; Markus, 'Abbreviations'; Martínez Marín, 'La estandarización'; Nevalainen, 'Variable focusing'; Osiewicz, *Wariantywność leksemów*; Ruge, *Aufkommen*; Rutkowska, 'Late medieval dialectal and obsolescent spellings'; 'Orthographical regularization'; *Orthographical Systems*; 'Selected orthographic features'; 'Typographical and graphomorphemic features'; Sönmez, 'Perceived and real differences'; Voeste, *Orthographie*; 'The emergence of suprasegmental spellings'; Zheltukhin, 'Variable norms'.

considerably in languages like English,⁶ Dutch,⁷ German,⁸ French⁹ and Spanish.¹⁰ Pan-linguistic digitisation initiatives are also worth mentioning, and especially the Early European Books project, which aims to comprise all books printed in Europe from the 1550s to 1701.¹¹ Recent advances have afforded scholars the ability to undertake systematic research to investigate the process of orthographic standardisation and have prompted a fundamental reconsideration of the approaches to the study of historical orthography. This statement is especially true for some of the most widely studied language groups across Europe, including Germanic,¹² Latinate¹³ and Slavic.¹⁴

Aside from a rising interest in digitisation activities, other patterns are identifiable in research in historical orthography across Europe, within the remits of the historical era of interest in this volume. These patterns reveal an interest of the scholarly community in broadening the perspective on spelling to include a variety of factors. Some of the recent publications have investigated correlations between orthographic features and various combinations of extra-linguistic variables, including, for example, gender and text type,¹⁵ gender, register and genre,¹⁶ gender and authorship,¹⁷ text type and register,¹⁸ register

⁶ Culpeper and Kytö, *A Corpus of English Dialogues*; Early English Books Online: Text Creation Partnership (EEBO-TCP); Taavitsainen et al., *Early Modern English Medical Texts*.

⁷ Nobels and Rutten, 'Language norms'; van der Wal et al., *The Letters as Loot/Brieven als Buit Corpus*.

⁸ Schröder et al., *Das Bonner Frühneuhochdeutschkorpus*; Wegera et al., *Referenzkorpus Frühneuhochdeutsch*.

⁹ Frantext.

¹⁰ CHARTA; CICA; CODEA+ 2015; CORDE; Corpus del español; Miguel Franco and Sánchez-Prieto Borja, 'CODEA'; Sánchez-Martínez et al., 'An Open Diachronic Corpus of Historical Spanish'.

¹¹ Early European Books.

¹² E.g. Baron et al., 'Word frequency'; Schneider, 'Computer assisted spelling normalization'.

¹³ E.g. Díez del Corral Areta, 'Encrucijada de ediciones'; 'La problemática'; 'Utilidad y límites'; Díez del Corral Areta and Martín Aizpuru, 'Sin corpus no hay historia'; Lavrentiev, 'Linguistique de corpus'; Marchello-Nizia, 'Écrire'; Moyna, *Compound Words in Spanish*; Torrens Álvarez and Sánchez Prieto Borja, *Nuevas perspectivas*.

¹⁴ E.g. Kučera, 'Vývoj účinnosti'; Scherrer and Erjavec, 'Modernising historical Slovene words'.

¹⁵ Baranda, 'Mujeres'; Cerquiglini, 'L'Orthographe des *Précieuses*'; Demaizière, *L'Écriture*; García Macho and Pascual, 'Sobre la lengua'; Mancho Duque, *Teresa de Jesús*; Oldireva-Gustafsson, *Preterite and Past Participle Forms*; Sairio, *Language and Letters*, 226–61; Schutzzeichel and Szczepaniak, 'Die Durchsetzung'; Sönmez, 'Perceived and real differences'.

¹⁶ Cerquiglini, 'L'Orthographe des *Précieuses*'; García Macho and Pascual, 'Sobre la lengua'; Mancho Duque, *Teresa de Jesús*; Markus, 'Abbreviations'.

¹⁷ Capdevilla et al., *Le Genre face aux mutations*; Cattán, 'Cuestiones'; Hernández-Campoy, 'Authorship and gender'.

¹⁸ Branca-Rosoff and Schneider, *L'Écriture des citoyens*; Bravo García, 'Indicadores sociolingüísticos'; Martineau, 'Pratiques d'écriture'; Osiewicz, *Wariantywność graficzna*; Taavitsainen, 'Scientific language and spelling standardisation'; Voeste, 'Die Norm'; Zhivov, 'Norma i variativnost'.

and level of formality;¹⁹ typographical considerations (spacing, line justification, word division)²⁰ and palaeographic factors.²¹ Orthographic variation has also been viewed from the perspective of discourse communities,²² community norms,²³ ideology,²⁴ social networks²⁵ and communities of practice.²⁶ A few researchers have compared the orthographic practice of printers across several editions of the same book.²⁷ With regard to orthographic variables, studies on early modern orthographies have often highlighted correspondences between graphemes and phonemes.²⁸ Several studies have also considered various

¹⁹ Branca-Rosoff and Schneider, *L'Écriture des citoyens*; Bravo García, 'Indicadores sociolingüísticos'; Martineau, 'Pratiques d'écriture'; Osiewicz, *Wariantywność leksemów*; Porák, *Humanistická čeština*; Tiekens-Boon van Ostade, 'Disrespectful and too familiar?'; 'Lowth's language'.

²⁰ Agata, 'Improvements'; Andrieux-Reix and Monsonégo, *Segments graphiques*; Arabyan, *Le Paragraphe narratif*, 'La Notion de paragraphe', 'Histoire et emplois de l'alinéa ouvrant'; Branca-Rosoff, 'Deux points'; Demonet, 'Rhétorique'; Egido, 'Los manuales'; Güthert, *Herausbildung*; Howard-Hill, 'Early modern printers'; Juda, *Pismo drukowane w Polsce*; Llamas-Pombo, 'Variación gráfica'; Marti, 'Ein "Kulturkampf" in der *Slavia romana*'; McConchie, 'Compounds and code-switching'; Nikitina, 'Istoriia perenosa slov'; Rutkowska, 'Typographical and graphomorphemic features'; Shute, 'Pressed for space'; Voeste, 'Proficiency'; 'The emergence of suprasegmental spellings'; Zhivov, 'Sozdanie grazhdanskogo shrifta'.

²¹ Llamas-Pombo, 'Variation and standardization'; Nikitina, 'Istoriia perenosa slov'; Osipov, 'Istoriia slitnykh i razdel'nykh napisanii'; Sánchez Prieto Borja, 'Para una historia'.

²² Cerquiglini, *Le Roman de l'orthographe*; Maquieira, 'Teoría y práctica ortográficas'; Taavitsainen, 'Scriptorial "house-styles"'.

²³ Bunčić, 'In-group spelling'; Cerquiglini, 'L'Orthographe des *Précieuses*'; Černá, 'Specifika pravopisného'; García Macho and Pascual, 'Sobre la lengua'; Koupil, 'Psáti neb tisknouti?'; Macha, *Der konfessionelle Faktor*; Rössler, *Schreibvariation*; Rütter, *Konstruktion*; Zheltukhin, 'Variable norms'.

²⁴ Vosters, 'Dutch, Flemish or Hollandic?'; Vosters et al., 'Spelling and identity'.

²⁵ Castillo Gómez, 'Del tratado'; Kozhinova, 'Rannie vostochnoslavianskie kriptograficheskie sistemy'; Maître, *Les Précieuses*; Sairio, *Language and Letters*; Tiekens-Boon van Ostade, 'Social network theory'.

²⁶ Gutiérrez Cabero, 'La Enseñanza'; Koupil, 'Psáti neb tisknouti?'; Mediavilla, *Histoire*; Rutkowska, 'Typographical and graphomorphemic features'; Sairio, 'Elizabeth Montagu's *Shakespeare essay*'; Tyrkkö, 'Printing houses'.

²⁷ Aronoff, 'The orthographical system'; Badiou-Monferran, 'Punctuation noire'; Behr, *Buchdruck*; Blake, 'English versions'; Chartier, *La Main de l'auteur*; Colombo Timelli, 'Les Dialogues'; Fidlerová et al., 'Užívání velkých písmen'; Horobin, 'The language'; Lisowski, *Grafia*; Rezetko and Young, *Historical Linguistics*; Rieke, *Studien*; Rutkowska, 'Late medieval dialectal and obsolescent spellings'; 'Orthographical regularization'; *Orthographic Systems*; 'Selected orthographical features'; 'Typographical and graphomorphemic features'; Sebastián Mediavilla, 'A propósito del *Persiles*'; Voeste, 'Den Leser im Blick'.

²⁸ Almeida Cabrejas, 'Escuchar los textos'; Amirova, *K istorii i teorii grafemiki*; Berger, 'Religion and diacritics'; Bunčić, 'The standardization'; Carrasco Santos, 'Análisis'; Carrasco Santos and Carrasco Santos, 'Las ordenanzas'; Elmentaler, 'Der Erkenntniswert'; Fournier, 'La Généralité'; 'La Notion'; Kuźmicki and Osiewicz, *Dokument pisany*; Mihm, 'Druckersprachen'; 'Graphematische Systemanalyse'; 'Zur Deutung'; Morin, 'The phonological status'; Nordlund, 'Standardization of Finnish orthography'; Osipov, *Fonetika i pis'mo na raznykh etapakh ikh istoricheskogo razvitiia*; *Fonetika i pis'mo v ikh razvitiu*; Parussa, 'La *Vertu*'; Porák, *Humanistická čeština*; Rospond, *Dawność mazurzenia*; Rutten and van der Wal, *Letters as Loot*; 'Local dialects'; Tejera and Silva Nones, 'El seseo'; Urbanczyk and Olesch, *Die altpolnischen Orthographien*.

orthographic realisations of lexical items and morphological categories (e.g. inflectional endings and derivational suffixes), and have discussed the competition between phonological and etymological principles in the orthographies, resulting in different levels of phonography and morphography in particular languages.²⁹ In other studies, specific diatopic and non-standard orthographic instances of variation (and its levelling) have been examined.³⁰ Likewise, abbreviations and contractions have received some attention,³¹ together with the systematisation of punctuation and capitalisation.³²

Alongside some of the detailed work conducted on fine-grained aspects of historical orthography largely from a single-language perspective, a few contributions have revealed an interest in a comparative, cross-linguistic approach to orthography in the early modern period and beyond. Some of the most recent publications, and in particular the edited collection by Susan Baddeley and Anja Voeste and the special journal issue edited by Laura Villa and

²⁹ E.g. Abad Nebot, 'Juan de Valdés'; Baddeley, 'French orthography'; Cerquiglini, *L'Accent du souvenir*; Le Roman de l'orthographe; Conde-Silvestre and Hernández-Campoy, 'A sociolinguistic approach'; Esteve Serrano, *Estudios*; Hernández-Campoy and Conde-Silvestre, 'Sociolinguistic and geolinguistic approaches'; Korompay, '16th-century Hungarian orthography'; Llamas-Pombo, 'Variation and standardization'; Martínez de Sousa, *Reforma*; Michel, 'Italian orthography'; Nejedlý, 'Humanistický a barokní pravopis'; Oldireva-Gustafsson, *Preterite and Past Participle Forms*; Osiewicz, *Wariantywność leksemów*; Rivarola, 'Ortografia'; Ruge, *Aufkommen*; 'Die Graphematik-Morphologie-Schnittstelle'; Sairio, *Language and Letters*, 226–61; Sönmez, 'Perceived and real differences'; Taavitsainen, 'Scriptorial "house-styles"'; Voeste, 'The emergence of suprasegmental spellings'; Zhivov, 'Norma i variativnost'.

³⁰ Arias Álvarez, 'Problemas'; Auer, 'Europe's sociolinguistic unity'; Borecki, *Kształtowanie*; Bunčić, 'The standardization'; Holtus et al., *Lexicon*; Isasi, 'Peculiaridades'; Kaverina, 'Ustranenie omofonii'; Kozhinova, 'Rannie vostochnoslavjanskije kriptograficheskie sistemy'; Llamas-Pombo, 'Variation and standardization'; Mihm, 'Regionalsprachen'; Nevalainen, 'Variable focusing'; Osiewicz, *Wariantywność leksemów*; Polanco Martínez, 'Análisis'; Reynaud Oudot, 'Aspectos ortográficos'; Rospond, *Dawność mazurzenia*; Rutkowska, 'Late medieval dialectal and obsolescent spellings'; Sönmez, 'Perceived and real differences'; Tarelka, 'Adaptacyja arabskaga pis'ma'; Vosters and Rutten, 'Three Southern shibboleths'; Vosters et al., 'Norms and usage'; Wiesinger, 'Zur oberdeutschen Schriftsprache'.

³¹ Audisio and Bonnot-Rambaud, *Lire le français d'hier*; *Diccionario*; Markus, 'Abbreviations'; Ruge, *Aufkommen*; Rutkowska, 'Typographical and graphomorphemic features'; Tieken-Boon van Ostade, 'Disrespectful and too familiar?'; 'Lowth's language'; Voeste, *Orthographie*.

³² Bikialo and Rault, *Imaginaires de la ponctuation*; Branca-Rosoff, 'Deux points'; Bunčić, 'The standardization'; Dauvois and Dürrenmatt, *La Ponctuation*; Favriaud, 'Ponctuation(s)'; Fidlerová et al., 'Užívání velkých písmen'; Gautier et al., *La Ponctuation*; Kirchhoff and Primus, 'The architecture'; Korompay, '16th-century Hungarian orthography'; Kosek, 'Interpunkce'; Llamas-Pombo, 'Ponctuer, éditer, lire'; Michel, 'Italian orthography'; Moulin, *Der Majuskelgebrauch*; Osipov, *Istorija russkoj orfografii i punktuatsii*; Rutkowska, *Orthographic Systems*, 88–96; Sebastián Mediavilla, 'A propósito del Persiles'; *Fray Luis y Santa Teresa*; *La puntuación del Quijote*; *La puntuación en los siglos XVI y XVII*; *Puntuación, humanismo*; Šlosar, 'Poznámky'; 'Průřez vývojem staročeské interpunkce'; Voeste, 'Interpunktion'; Wegera, 'Zur Geschichte'.

Rik Vosters,³³ suggest useful higher-level, cross-linguistic empirical generalisations as well as more widely applicable theoretical concepts. The former contribution has provided an overview of the development of spelling practices in Europe over the early modern period highlighting some interesting similarities and differences, while the special issue of *Written Language and Literacy* has collected several studies on the social and ideological context in which spelling developments and standardisations took place across languages. More generally, the field of historical sociolinguistics has recently received increasing attention from the international scholarly community with an interest in historical orthography, with two new book series devoted entirely to historical sociolinguistic perspectives (published by Peter Lang and John Benjamins) and academic journals such as *Written Language and Literacy*, the *Journal of Historical Sociolinguistics* and the *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*. Another convincing indication of the subject's growing maturity is the increasing number of monographs devoted entirely to the study of orthographic variation.³⁴ There are also volumes which focus on the interrelation between orthography and cognate areas of investigation like palaeography, typography and transmission from manuscript to print.³⁵

While the work leading towards a broader, comparative perspective has been encouraging, however, there are still problems related to the organisational and institutional side of historical orthography, as well as issues related to the progress of knowledge in the field more broadly. One of the most outstanding organisational and institutional problems seems to be the tendency of scholars to work in relative isolation, largely following an individual philology-oriented approach due to disciplinary boundaries in the academy.³⁶ This isolated approach may have been caused by the fact that most scholars of European languages have touched upon a range of individual research areas, which have resulted in a diversification of goals

³³ Baddeley and Voeste, *Orthographies*; Villa and Vosters, *The Historical Sociolinguistics of Spelling*. See also Bunčić et al., *Biscriptality*; see further Salmon, 'Orthography and punctuation', for a comprehensive overview of the practice of and developments concerning orthography, capitalisation and punctuation in manuscripts and printed documents in Early Modern English, correlated with the views of contemporary (i.e. early modern) spelling reformers, grammarians, orthoepists and phoneticians.

³⁴ Baddeley, *L'Orthographe française*; Baddeley and Voeste, *Orthographies*; Borecki, *Kształtowanie*; Bunčić et al., *Biscriptality*; Elmentaler, *Struktur und Wandel*; Güthert, *Herausbildung*; Lisowski, *Grafia*; Osipov, *Istoriiā russkoī orfografii i punktuatsii*; Rieke, *Studien*; Rössler, *Schreibvariation*; Ruge, *Aufkommen*; Rutkowska, *Orthographic Systems*; Solling, *Zur Getrennt-, Zusammen- und Bindestrichschreibung*; Voeste, *Orthographie*; Zheltukhin, *Orthographic Codes*.

³⁵ E.g. Dumville, *English Caroline Script*; Hellinga, *Texts in Transit*; Janečková, *K jazyku českého baroka*; Kaverina, *Stanovlenie russkoī orfografii*; Shute, 'Pressed for space'; Thaisen and Rutkowska, *Scribes*; Traxel, *Language Change*; Zhivov, 'Sozdanie grazhdanskogo shrifta'.

³⁶ Cf. Amirova, *K istorii i teorii grafemiki*, 6–7; Baddeley and Voeste, *Orthographies*, 1.

and interests for each individual language. Additionally, orthography still remains one of the most under-investigated areas in historical linguistics, with theoretical and methodological aspects which have remained relatively unexplored and await comprehensive discussion. Examples include the role of printing houses and normative writings in the process of orthographic standardisation; enhanced terminological precision,³⁷ as well as some clarification and uniformity with a view to facilitating comparisons of findings across various studies. One of the possible reasons for the relative immaturity of historical orthography as a branch of historical linguistics could be the fact that scholars have mistakenly considered the study of writing, and consequently the study of orthography, as a subject that largely falls outside the remit of linguistics, unless it is treated as a source of evidence for phonological developments.

At the time when this introduction is being written, several issues and questions remain unresolved in studies on historical orthographic variation and in historical orthography more broadly. Some of the problems at stake include the limited understanding of the interrelation between linguistic and extra-linguistic factors in the shaping of orthographic systems; the relative incompatibility of the current theoretical approaches to orthography and writing both from a universal point of view and from a language-specific perspective; and the understanding of patterns of convergence and regularisation of writing practices as a complex process of change on multiple linguistic and non-linguistic levels. The intriguing yet problematic relationship between sound and spelling and the extent to which orthographic variation can reveal insights into phonological change, writers' or printers' linguistic characteristics, and geographical and dialectal variation are also still at the heart of research, and will have to remain so for the foreseeable future. Some areas in historical orthography have been explored less consistently and thoroughly than others, leaving holes in the understanding of patterns of regularisation, though recent years have seen a growing interest in some of the less developed areas of investigation like capitalisation and punctuation. Last but not least, the connection of new advances in historical and socio-historical linguistics with 'old' issues such as that of 'standardisation', and the effectiveness of language policy are still topics that remain largely or wholly unexplored. With the use of new tools to approach and understand orthography, some of these questions can now be explored empirically for the first time in history and can be investigated in a much more systematic way than before and discussed within the framework of a much broader dataset and innovative theories than in traditional scholarship. While most of the

³⁷ Cf., however, Catach, *L'Orthographe française*.

problems above cannot be addressed straightforwardly in any one small period of time or project, this edited collection aims to take a first, bold step forward towards covering some of the areas of investigation mentioned above.

The increasing interest in topics related to orthographic variation both from a language-specific and from a pan-linguistic perspective, as well as the increasing speed at which steps forward in historical orthography are being made, call for a volume that showcases the latest advances in the field and that brings together some of the main, most recent lines of research across different languages in Europe. The chapters collected in this book document an upsurging interest in advancing approaches to the study of historical orthographic variation common to various languages on different levels. Concurrently, the collection introduces readers to a comparative perspective on some of the most outstanding similarities and differences in research interests and goals across languages and different geographical areas. The majority of the chapters included in the book are the result of an intensive process of editorial selection which has taken into account the relevance and quality of research ideas in combination with the contributors' expertise. Additionally, the languages covered in the present collection represent the three largest language groups in Europe, namely the Germanic (English, German), Romance (Spanish, French), and Balto-Slavic (Croatian, Czech, Polish, Church Slavonic and Lithuanian). The focus of the book lies mainly in the early modern period, and especially from c. 1500 to the first few decades of 1800, a juncture of particular interest with respect to patterns in orthography across Europe.³⁸ While the dating of the early and late modern periods is a matter of debate,³⁹ a flexible chronological delimitation of the early modern era constitutes an agreed framework for the present collection, in order to guarantee comparability across the chapters and across languages, especially in light of the fact that not all orthographies in Europe standardised uniformly at the same time.⁴⁰ The time period indicated as an approximation in the title to this book, therefore, enables an overview of the development of patterns in orthography from a time of relatively unfamiliar systems to the beginning of an era of greater stability and predictability.⁴¹ Of course, the specific focus of each chapter means that not

³⁸ The geographical boundaries of early modern Europe are those defined in previous scholarship on the matter, and especially Baddeley and Voeste, *Orthographies*.

³⁹ Cf. Baugh and Cable, *A History of the English Language*; Blake, 'Early Modern English'; Čornejová et al., *Dějiny českého pravopisu*; Dobson, *English Pronunciation 1500–1700*; Görlach, *Introduction to Early Modern English*; Graband, *Die Entwicklung*; Hartweg and Wegera, *Frühneuhochdeutsch*, 21–8; Partridge, *Tudor to Augustan English*; Zhivov, *Istoriia iazyka russkoj pis'mennosti*.

⁴⁰ Subačius, 'Two types'.

⁴¹ Brengelman, 'Orthoepists'; Görlach, *Introduction to Early Modern English*; Jodłowski, *Losy polskiej ortografii*; Kaverina, *Stanovlenie russkoj orfografii*; Nevalainen, *An Introduction to*

every contribution covers the full time period indicated above, but each of the chapters included in this collection contributes to covering part of the four centuries in question. A natural limitation in the present edited volume can be seen in the range of topics discussed, which cannot be addressed exhaustively by any one collection of chapters on the matter. Nevertheless, the book touches upon a broad range of aspects and includes a variety of different perspectives, with a view to seeking relevance to audiences beyond single languages and geographical sites. The following section will explain in more detail the content of each chapter and will provide a rationale for the structure of the book.

1.1 Contents of the Book

The chapters collected in this book have been ordered in a way that enables a unified narrative throughout: the goal is to showcase some of the latest advances in historical orthography, with specific interest in early modern languages across Europe. The case studies included in the book are of different extents, which naturally reflect different individual, cultural and topic-based approaches to exploring orthography. The rules concerning notation in the volume are used in a way that purposefully reflects the flexibility and nuances intended by the individual authors, i.e. angle brackets enclose graphemes, vertical lines graphs, slashes phonemes and square brackets allophones, and italics are occasionally used to indicate words or spellings as more general entities, free from the assumptions intertwined with the concepts of graphemes and phonemes. The book takes as its starting point a discussion of relatively traditional, phonological insights into the study of orthography, as a foundation for an understanding of progression in the field that also encompasses more traditional approaches. The book then goes on to follow the thread of empirical innovation, exploring case studies which use a range of new empirical methods and models or simply reflect on new applications of more traditional approaches, with the potential of reassessing the traditional view of historical orthography and defining benchmarks for the most promising methods of orthographic enquiry. Some of the chapters included in the book drive towards establishing or rethinking one or more models for the understanding of orthography; others are more practical and implementation-focused, and use empirical methods more implicitly as a means to improve our openness to new knowledge from a language specific, as well as from a more synergic point of view. The concluding chapter

Early Modern English; Osipov, *Istoriia russkoï orfografii i punktuaŭsii*; Porák, *Humanistická čeština*; Roelcke, 'Die Periodisierung'; Takada, *Grammatik und Sprachwirklichkeit*; Vallins and Scragg, *Spelling*; Zhivov, *Istoriia iazyka russkoï pis'mennosti*.