

5 April 2021

MIDDLE ENGLISH DIALECT INDICATORS

These are general observations, not dispositive rules. That is, exceptions are possible.

1. OE ā → <a> in North, <o> in South
2. OE y → <u> in south-west, <e> in south-east, <i> elsewhere
e.g. OE *brycg* 'bridge' → *brugge*, *bregge*, *brigge*
3. OE æ → <a>, except west midlands is often <e>
4. OE a + NASAL → <o> in W and w. midlands
5. OE eo, ea → <e>, <a>, except sometimes not in w. midlands
6. OE f → variation in W and S, e.g. *wox*, *vox*, *fox*
7. Northern <g> and <k> affricate in the south
e.g. northern *kirk* and southern *church*; northern *rigg*, southern *rigge* 'ridge'
8. OE hw → ME <wh> and Anglian <w>

Also indicative are:

- a) forms of present participles
North: –and, –inde, –ende, –iende
South: –ing(e), –yng(e)
- b) participial preterites (OE ge–) → i– or y– in South and West
- c) personal pronouns:
North: they, them
South: hem, here (esp. London)