Review Article:

Gillis Kristensson, *A Survey of Middle English Dialects 1290–1350: The Southern Counties I. Vowels (Except Diphthongs) II. Diphthongs and Consonants* (Lund UP, 2001, 2002), 306 pp., 23 maps

Peter Kitson
Stoke Prior, Worcestershire

These two volumes conclude Gillis Kristensson's four-decade-long survey of Middle English dialects on the basis of the onomastic material (mainly place-names but also lexically based surnames and a few personal names) in the county tax documents called Lay Subsidy Rolls of the years around 1330. Though bound as two books, SMED[4] and SMED[5], they are really a single volume split in two for the publisher's convenience. Pages and maps are numbered continuously between the two; sometimes material presented in one is mapped in the other, and the six pages of summary and conclusions in vol. 5 cover both. No reader will want one without the other; in what follows they will be treated as a single entity. They cover the counties south of the Thames, with the exception of Cornwall whose onomastics are mainly Celtic, and perhaps partially of Greater London.[1]

SMED[3] and the general philosophy behind the project were reviewed in *Nomina* 21 (1998), 169–78. In what follows duplication with that review will be kept to a minimum, though it cannot always be avoided, since dialect distributions about which there are important disagreements among scholars straddle the southern and east midland counties. One well-known disagreement is about whether Lay Subsidy Rolls were as local in their writing as Kristensson thinks. Whether they were or not, their linguistic forms map in a way that shows a large

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[1] Kristensson's remark about this (p. 10) is not clear. He says the City of London is excluded, but it never stretched south of the river, and the valid linguistic reasons for excluding London from SMED[3] did not apply there. On the distribution-maps Greater London is marked anachronistically as a separate county, sometimes with symbols in, sometimes not. Maybe unstated reasons of twentieth-century archival practicality are a factor.

measure of concession to local tastes. There are two rolls for all
counties except one in this volume, and only for one set of forms in
one county, and that for the notoriously variable vowel OE *y* in the
vowel-neutralizing context before *r*, in Wilts (p. 119), does he find any
serious divergence between the pair.

Dr. Kristensson is an old-fashioned philologist of an archetypal
continental kind. His method is to sort the material according to which
Old English sounds it contains and to present the reflexes of each
sound separately, with what explanation he deems necessary for why
they take the forms they do. He brings in wider dialect geography and
sound-changes when they seem relevant, but mainly for background;
his instinct is to explain sounds atomistically, as is classically done in
the Old English grammar of Sievers and Brunner. That can lead to
faults of sorting, though not often, because he knows his material very
well; it can lead to understating linguistic variation on the ground. The
two go together, for example, in *Pobbelewe*, presented as a reflex of OE
hlāw 'burial-mound' on p. 26. It is true that the place-name Publow
shows the phonology of *hlāw*, and that thirteenth-century forms quoted
by Ekwall DEPN 374 also do. But this particular form really belongs on
p. 39 as a reflex of OE *hlΣw*. This reviewer's instinct is to applaud
Kristensson's richness of evidential detail but to wish his discussion
were organized more by larger linguistic patterns, as is classically done
in Campbell's Old English grammar. This is one of a fair number of
words for which doublets in Σ and *ā* were both current in literary Old
English. It would be helpful to have the data for both together. The two
pronunciations were favoured respectively by the 'Thames Valley'
component of West Saxon and the rest (of which more below), as
mapped for this word from Anglo-Saxon charter boundaries in my
(1995 map 11).[2] Publow is in north Somerset less than eight miles due
west of Bath, closer to some of the charters' Wiltshire features with Σ
than to their sole Somerset *hlāw* (which has *ā*), so it should not
occasion surprise if pronunciations of its name sometimes agreed with

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[2] The alternative explanation given by Campbell §636, and more tentatively
Sievers-Brunner §250 n. 1, is definitely false on the comparative etymological
evidence for this word and for some of the others to which they apply it.

the former against the latter.

The atomistic approach can lead to inconsistency between different parts of the book. Thus OE *tawian* has a long vowel on p. 27, a short one, surely rightly on his evidence, on p. 242. The discussion promised on p. 27 does not seem to materialize, unless it means just the paragraph on the middle of p. 242. On p. 263(ii) phonotactic strengthening of a kind discussed in several works by Angelika Lutz[3] is ascribed to Anglo-Norman influence. On p. 261(vii) it is unlabelled. Both choices may for all I know be wise, but one would welcome some integrating comment.

On p. 65 Kristensson rejects substantial evidence of *u* spellings that OE *hīd* '"hide", unit of estate' had in Somerset and Dorset a form *h d*. On p. 112 he gives without comment 'OE *h d* "hide"' for what look to this reader suspiciously like two misspellings for the compound 'five-hide' common on p. 62. He signals it as a personal by-name, so may mean 'hide of an animal', in which case we must acquit him of inconsistency, though I do not understand what 'fish-hide' or 'fit-hide' would mean.[4] Anyway the theory on p. 65 of 'inverted spellings' for just one element in two adjacent counties won't do. Contrast the genuine inverted spellings at the foot of that page, which strike randomly between elements and between counties. I think the trouble is the etymology of *hīd*. To judge by a sheaf of credible cognates both within Germanic and beyond,[5] its early Old English form was **hīwid* (cf. synonymous *hīwisc*), with loss of *w* as in compounds of obscured meaning (Campbell §468). This is not strictly a compound but a

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[3] Unfortunately the main ones are in German, but Lutz (1997a) section II explains the linguistic theory; Lutz (1997b) gives some nice examples from English words, and may at some level be relevant to both the names cited.

[4] Our adjective and verb "fit" did not yet exist, and the noun meant things like "division of a poem".

[5] Pokorny I 540, cf. Holthausen 160–61; e.g. Latin *cīvis* 'citizen'. Campbell §412 must be wrong to posit etymological - *u*-. The very occasional spelling *higid*- must reflect not quite complete reduction of the consonant (*g* meaning phonetically). I am not sure how to evaluate Holthausen's MLG *Hīge*; Campbell §411 may be relevant.

derivative, yet since simplex *$h\bar{\imath}w$ was not used in Old English (there was potential for confusion with the common homophone $h\bar{\imath}w$ '"hue", colour'), the derivation would have been obscured in the same way. It is reasonable to suspect that, among some speakers, as *w* was lost its labial quality coloured the contracted vowel, and that that underlies the forms with *u* (and perhaps some of those with *y*). It is alternatively possible that popular etymology in those counties equated the two kinds of hide.[6]

At times the author's manner, perhaps ordained by cost-conscious publishers, approaches what as a juryman one experiences from barristers, disclosing just the minimum evidence they think will secure the verdict they desire. This is fine where as on p. 15 he can testify that there's overwhelming evidence in one direction, and only rare exceptions need noting. It will pass too in some of the distribution-maps, though their format takes some getting used to: if a county makes just one choice in the variation being examined, he just prints a spelling across the map of it, confining symbols to counties that are internally inconsistent, thus in map 2 spellings *mang(h)er(e)* for Dev. Som. Dor., *monger(e)* for Kt. Sx. Sr., full datum-points only in Ha. Brk. Wil. What is not in this reviewer's opinion satisfactory is representing a county by a normative spelling, with datum-points only for exceptions; thus in that map a single *a*-form for Kent. To evaluate exceptions one needs to know how they relate geographically and numerically to the normal forms. The evidence for doing so is in these cases suppressed (though it matters less than it might in that nine of the eleven maps where this is done are of instances of Old English primary or secondary *y*).

Just once there is a gross piece of comparable suppression in the text. On the question of *ye/ie* for OE *ē̄o* in literary texts from Kent Kristensson takes (p. 231) what is very much a minority view, that they are French-influenced spellings for what was really a monophthong. That makes it quite unsatisfactory that he omits (p. 217) the evidence from Kent for OE *ē̄a*, which he grants was still a diphthong there, for

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[6] Perhaps mediated by the legend of Hengest's acquiring an estate at "Thong-chester"; but this is far-fetched.

which we expect some and perhaps most of the spellings to be with *y* and *i*. The large measure of disjunction between spellings in the *Ayenbite* and in his texts is a fact; how to account for it is another question. His statement that 'the language of the *Ayenbite* was strongly influenced by French' will hardly do; considering that it is largely a translation from French, what is striking is the absence of clear French influence on the spellings of words that are not themselves loans from French. Perhaps Kentish dialect was patchier than Kristensson allows for, and his material happens not to have caught Dan Michel's patch; against that, he is able to show e.g. (p. 180 and map 18) a cluster of *hierde* forms in north-west Kent agreeing nicely with Essex. I suspect that writers of Lay Subsidy Rolls, smooth legal types, were just not willing to write as broad dialect as Dan Michel was. They may have been as local as Kristensson says they were; they would still have known educated speech from outside their own locality, and may to some extent have accommodated their written language to the expectations of people like them from neighbouring counties. I had hoped, perhaps unreasonably, to discover in these volumes reflexes of the non-combinative *u*-mutation of *i* found in OE *wiodu/weodu* beside *wudu* for "wood", modern southern dialect *quid* and *quead* for "cud". It seems from p. 81 that there are none. Perhaps these forms of "wood" were totally[7] obsolete by the fourteenth century (though there were still some in Domesday Book); perhaps they existed and writers didn't write them.

Early English notoriously has a rich inventory of sound-changes. It is often possible to get from a known Old English starting-point to a known finish in Middle or early modern English by more than one route. Whole conferences of English historical linguistics have largely consisted of arguments about this. That is not Kristensson's style. His accounts of particular points are nearly always in some or other of the previous authorities, and he makes reference to them, but seldom acknowledges contrary views. When you have worked on a body of material as long as he has you trust your feel for how the parts fit together. He picks out of the century and a half of serious scholarship

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[7] Unless one contributes to "Sussex weed" as a name for the yew.

only those tiles which fit the mosaic of his design. This reader has the temerity to find his accounts often unconvincing in detail but nearly always the right *kind* of explanation. If I may so put it, his judgement is better than his reasoning.

That is due partly to compression, as in the three sentences on p. 66 on the small minority (he does not say how small) of spellings in *ou* for OE *o*. More than half of them are *Gould(e)* for 'gold', most of the rest *Fourd(e)* for 'ford', with three singleton outliers including *Throup* for the surviving name Throope Farm in Wiltshire.

> The <ou> forms all, except *Throup*, occur before lengthening consonant groups and denote a long vowel, v. further pp. 77 ff. The possibility that the <ou> forms for *gold* may be due to a glide having developed before /l/ (cf. Jordan §273) is contradicted by the fact that no <ou> forms occur for OE *bolt*, *cnoll*, *colt*, *folk*, *holt*, *tollere*.

The third sentence is just to dismiss *Throup* as 'scribal idiosyncrasy'. Reading the first of these sentences (whose exception is not real by the way)[8] you want to know *which* long vowel. The second points you toward words whose only long vowel is $\bar{o}$; the third points you away from a serious possibility of $\bar{u}$. I think there is no doubt, though, that $\bar{u}$ is the vowel actually meant by these spellings. The two main words are ones for which pronunciations with it are known to have existed later in English; they survive in the surnames Gould and Foorde.[9] Or remember the scene in Laurence Housman's plays of Queen Victoria where two superannuated Regency politicians lament, as one does, the passing of the cultured speech of their youth. What are the words they choose to represent it? 'Rome' and 'gold', in the pronunciations *Room* and *goold*. *Rūm* dates from the earliest Old English; it is entirely likely that *gūld* should go back to the fourteenth century.

Turning to pp. 77–80, it seems that despite his opaque phrasing

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[8] Because PNWilts's earliest forms, both 1289, *Ebblesburnthorpe* and *Thrope*, both show the vowel in lengthening contexts. The underlying form would be an Old English dative (governed by *æt*), not nominative.

[9] Dim memory suggests that Throop(e) is also a surname, but I cannot substantiate it from books to hand.

Kristensson may really have meant that after all. For here he gives a long series of words in OE *ō* that Lay Subsidy Rolls spell both *o* and *ou*. They have a variety of vowel-shades in modern English, 'food', 'good', 'stud', 'stroud', and 'moor' among them. All make sense to derive from late ME *ū*, some with subsequent shortening. Kristensson points out that in late Middle English *ou* was normally a spelling for *ū*, and that the distribution of *ou* forms is geographically patchy in a way which would be unlikely if it were a mere spelling-variant for *ō*. He concludes convincingly 'that <ou> stands for /uː/, i.e. that ME /oː/ had been, or was being, raised to /uː/', whence even an occasional spelling such as *Strude*. A smaller part of the same area has *ey/ei* spellings for OE *ē*. There he thinks 'that ME /eː/ had been, or was being, raised to /iː/', for which the spelling *i* was not available because inherited *ī* had by this time been diphthongized to [Ii].[10] We know that something like this happened some time because *ē* and *ī* were kept separate through the Great Vowel Shift. Kristensson deduces from what he calls 'the fact that the incidence of <ey/ei> forms is coextensive with that of <ou> forms' that we have here the core area of the Great Vowel Shift.

   This is another case of his judgement being better than his reasoning. As a description of his maps 6 and 5 that clause is nonsense as it stands. The *ou* area is so large that it would be hard for anything the size of the *ey/ei* area not to be contained in it and impossible for them not at least to overlap. Geographically the relation between the two could well be random. But the similarity of linguistic process in the two sound-changes makes it intrinsically likely that they should be causally related. If you *posit* this relation, then you may justly conclude as Kristensson does that the area of *ey/ei* forms on map 6 is the heartland of 'the tendencies which eventuated in the Great Vowel Shift', and may refine his conclusions to the effect that these changes began in W. Berks and W. Hants, spread faster near the south coast than inland, and *c*.1330 had been largely completed for *ō* but was very much still in progress for *ē*. However you fill in the detail, the Great Vowel Shift is the topic that has most energized English linguistic conferences over the years. Kristensson is entitled to preen himself for

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[10] Note [Ii] not the [@i] beloved of would-be authentic early music singers.

having something new to say on it, something moreover largely factual, not just bright theory to be overturned by the next bright theory.

'Why this tendency to raising of Middle English /eː/ and /oː/ made itself felt in the Central Southern dialects earlier than in other parts, it is impossible to decide' (p. 283), but two suggestions may be made. This is the sort of distribution to be expected of the West Saxon dialect realm when its twin centres of the upper Thames Valley and Winchester were acting together. The Thames Valley variety of West Saxon was the culturally central brand of English in late Anglo-Saxon times. If, or to the extent that, as some scholars believe, there was a 'standard West Saxon', it was based on that. The dialect region Kristensson's map 23 and modern dialectologists tend to call 'south-western', though this part is southern not south-western, largely continues the West Saxon realm. So one possible theory would be that with London not yet a clear cultural capital, the cultural centrality of West Saxon still had enough residual existence to make it the engine of linguistic change in the fourteenth century. That is of course tendentious. The distribution need be no more than a random effect of the standard historical-linguistic pattern of central innovation and peripheral conservatism combined with the greater populousness of this (especially as Kristensson defines it) than the other dialect regions. Either way it is worth mentioning that the opening of OE *u* to ME *o* in open syllables, due to which the spelling of "wood" in Lay Subsidy Rolls is boringly *wode*, had at the stage when Domesday Book gives a glimpse of it a rather similar distribution, only further east in the south and spreading into midland counties (my 1992a maps 2–3). The engine of that sound-change was Thames Valley-centred West Saxon with the Winchester area somewhat conservative. On the longest possible view of the Great Vowel Shift, that change and Kristensson's *ou* for *ō* should at some deep level be causally related.

This brings up the question of Old English antecedents of the Middle English dialect phenomena. Kristensson knows standard Old English scholarship well enough, but he does not have close know-ledge of the dialectal material in charter boundaries nor of my papers expounding it in recent years. Not only authorial vanity moves regret

that the only scholar whose papers the bibliography shows kept up with through the 1990s is Klaus Dietz! As a result he misses some historical explanations I think obvious; we disagree about likely origins of some items; and I think there is much falsehood in his accounts of OE *ēa* in Devon and OE *ēo* generally.

To take first the development of dialectal regions. Scholars who have specialized in modern colonial dialects, English, Afrikaans, and other, say that the language of the first settlers, even if relatively few in number, has a disproportionately large effect on the eventual dialect amalgam. Something like that seems to have worked for Old English. The fascination of the charter material is that even if the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* had never been written you would need something very like its tale of the settlement as interpreted by old-fashioned historians to account for what speech-communities could possibly have generated the distributions. Most important for present purposes is to distinguish between the early stage of the settlement, in round figures *c.*450–500, brought to an end by the victories traditionally ascribed to the *dux bellorum* Arthur, and the stage when the historic English kingdoms were founded, in round figures *c.*550–600, the fifty or so years between which saw no significant Anglo-Saxon advance, as we know from the evidence of the contemporary historian Gildas.

In those fifty years the English settlements that survived the Arthurian victories, originally a scatter of people from a wide variety of continental Germanic origins, were knit into a single linguistic amalgam I call the 'old south-east'. It comprised south of the Thames the counties from Hampshire and Berkshire east, north of it Essex, Middlesex, Suffolk, and presumably Norfolk though there is no charter evidence for Norfolk. The west boundary of Hants and Berks is in some distributions very sharp indeed; this is the only period of history at which such distributions could have been generated. The sixth-century invasions were of fewer larger groups rather more differen-tiated linguistically before they came. In the southern counties the most important are 'Thames Valley Saxons', whose centre seems linguis-tically to have been north Wiltshire and west Berkshire, though their first historically recorded capital is Dorchester, actually north of the Thames. There is a distinct 'south-western' stratum from Southampton

Water westward (which probably is what Asser in the ninth century called Jutish, but not quite what Bede in the eighth century did). These are the essentials. In using them two caveats must be borne in mind. The first is that no two linguistic features have exactly the same distribution; what we call main dialect boundaries are where a lot of them change in a small space, and the exact line of such a boundary is a matter usually of judgement not quite hard fact. The second is that every advance in the settlement was by a mixture of people of more than one origin, both from the continent and from the areas already settled, and the dialects historically recorded represent a smoothing out of earlier differences. South-west Wessex mixes elements of 'Thames Valley Saxon' with 'south-western', 'old south-eastern', and also 'Anglian' (Penda in his day came a-conquering as far south as Ciren-cester). On the whole 'Thames Valley Saxon' was the predominant strain, as Thames Valley dynasts were among the kings of Wessex. From the late ninth century and in some areas earlier, *all* other dialects were recessive before 'Thames Valley Saxon'.

This is why Kristensson (pp. 117–18 etc.), like previous scholars, finds it so hard to map the boundary between 'south-western' and 'south-eastern' Middle English. His 'south-eastern', other scholars' 'Kentish', is in most linguistic items the historical continuation of my 'old south-east'. In the fourteenth century it is still recessive before his 'south-western', the historical successor of Thames Valley-centred West Saxon. His map 23, of the dialect areas of all five volumes, probably does about as good a job of demarcating the 'south-east' as can be done; he agrees most closely with Wyld and Rubin of scholars cited. One aspect many readers won't like, including Fisiak and Trudgill (2001) and their contributors, is the separation of Suffolk from Norfolk. His reason, explained III 165, is that in his material they go different ways for phonetic distinctions he thinks most important. It seems likely, though, from Fisiak's data that this is because 'old south-eastern' features were recessive also in the north before east midland ones, and the traditional assumption that from the late sixth century East Anglia was largely a single area dialectally as well as politically probably holds good. By then the Roman engineering works in the Fens will have broken down to the extent to make them a serious

barrier to communication, as they would not have been in the very earliest days of the settlement (though the Wash then was substantially larger than now).

As a picture of an intermediate stage between the state of affairs in my (1995) maps and that described by the nineteenth-century dialectologists Ellis and Wright, Kristensson's map 23 looks generally pretty convincing, much more so than those in some much-reprinted textbooks of the history of the English language. This is true particularly of his grouping the central south midlands with southern as opposed to east midland dialects. Charter vocabulary shows conclusively that Northamptonshire was 'Thames Valley Saxon' originally (the only place-name candidate for the battle of *Feþanleag* in 584 is on its southern border). On that is overlaid appreciable 'Anglian' phonology. Kristensson's line half-way through would be a fair compromise representation. Chiltern counties are more West Saxonized in his material than they are in mine, reflecting the cultural advance of 'Thames Valley Saxon' already mentioned.

In circumstances of traditional agricultural society (very different from the television age) dialectal choices in vocabulary once settled don't change much; but fashions of pronunciation are always more or less in flux. So most of the phonetic items in Kristensson's maps concern different regional treatments of Old English sounds in Middle English. A few distributions look much older. Map 4, ME *a* (for OE *æ*) as *i*-mutation of *a* before nasals in words like *fenn* 'fen' and *denn* 'woodland pasture', is a striking example of a recessive 'old south-eastern' distribution, patchy everywhere from the west boundary of Hampshire east, but never further west. Kristensson is obviously right (p. 55) to scout the view that this /a/ was native only to East Saxon. A natural historical inference is that the process of *i*-mutation had already begun in pre-Old English before its speakers left the continent, and this represents the stage it had reached when the bulk of 'old south-eastern' settlers crossed; sixth-century West Saxons came with fronting to *e* further advanced. This should please scholars like Richard Coates who favour an early date for *i*-mutation.

A converse distribution is that of ME *touker(e)* 'fuller' representing OE *tūcere*. Map 22 shows it frequent in Wilts, Dorset, and further

west, but with just two instances near the west border of Hampshire further east. This looks like a classic case of a word that was *not* current in the 'old south-east' (perhaps because the concept was not either). It seems from p. 92 that a form in Surrey has gone missing from the map; it looks like 'an incomer' as p. 25. The agent-noun *tūcere* does not seem to be attested in Old English, but *tūcian* in literary Old English means to vex or harass, which I suppose a fuller may be thought to do to cloth. OE *fullere* is attested once, in the West Saxon translation of the Gospels, whose main manuscript was written at Bath and which at a first approximation belongs dialectally close to there, that is just outside and to the north of Kristensson's *Touker* area. The Gospels must be regarded as a 'Thames Valley Saxon' work, so *touker* is probably to be characterized in my terms as 'south-western'.

Kristensson draws attention to the 'remarkable' similarity (pp. 24–25) between the *touker* distribution and that of *ang* versus *ong* for OE *ang*. They are indeed similar in showing a south-west/south-east contrast whose median is close to the isogloss for occurrence of *touker* (the dashed line cutting across counties in maps 1 and 2). They are importantly dissimilar in showing, as he notes, two counties' width of gradation between the two preferences. That shows that, as one would expect, this contrast does not go back to the settlement period but has an origin intermediate in time between then and the one in map 6. Just when essentially it originates depends on just what it means. Two separate explanations are possible, or some combination of them; Kristensson only gives one. He thinks that what is going on is presence or absence of lengthening before *n* + consonant, with lengthened *a* becoming $/\square$ in the transition to Middle English as etymological *ā* does (e.g. OE *stān* > ME *stōn*). Maybe so, but it should be remembered that Old English had in this position three sounds with only two letters to indicate them. Short *a* before nasals was early nasalized, like modern French *an*, to a sound which was half-way between *a* and *o* but had to be spelt as one or the other (Scandinavian *å* had not yet been invented). Over time it was levelled out, to *o* in the west midlands and *a* in the south country; but we do not know over how much time. It may be that what Kristensson's maps really show us is that, as with *æ* for *fenn*, the 'old south-east' stuck at a more archaic stage of the vowel,

while the south-west early levelled the anomalous value to a standard one. A weakness I admit in this line of argument is that both areas certainly used the *a* spelling in late Old English; there had been fluctuation with *o* spellings earlier, but it pretty certainly reflected not local dialectal development but whether Mercian (*o*) or West Saxon (*a*) was the predominant cultural influence (with a time-lag of about thirty years as scribes educated the old way died off). I cannot come up with a reason why after the Conquest *o* should be adopted again. I raise the point because possibly Middle English scholars may be able to, and because in the fullness of time it should with luck be testable from the *Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English* under preparation by Meg Laing and others. If *o* comes in in spellings for these words at the same rate as it does for etymological *ā*, then Kristensson is right; if it doesn't, then something needs to be added to his explanation.

My 'south-western' stratum does not appear as such in Kristensson's material; it has been fully absorbed into a dialect amalgam that becomes more eccentric the further south-west you go. Some of his south-western features are already present in late Old English, however, notably Devon as the heartland of late Old English reduction of weak inflectional *-an* to *-a* (pp. 239–40); a twelfth-century Devon boundary full of this *-a* is presented in detail in my (1997.229–30). Other southern areas lose the timbre of the vowel and spell it *-en*, and midland ones replace it analogically with *-e*, ultimately from the strong dative. Relative frequencies in etymologically front and back positions in texts of the transitional period put the front vowel character of this written *-e* beyond doubt, as demonstrated at length in my (1992b), but textbooks unanimously assume it to mean schwa. That seems to be true in the Danelaw, or much of it, but not in the south and west or perhaps the far north. Just when in these areas it really came to be reduced to schwa is a question whose answering is in my opinion the greatest desideratum in Middle English studies. I am not sure what evidence to answer it would look like; I am sure that competent Middle English scholars have never asked it. Full reduction has obviously happened before the time of Kristensson's material, but the history affects his intepretation in places. It is not necessary to posit as he does on p. 240 that the Devon *-a* is a somehow different kind of schwa; it just got

reduced there more directly than the spelt *-e* of other counties, fast enough for Devon to keep the Old English-type *a* as a current spelling for schwa beside the French-type *e* general in Middle English else-where. It is regrettable that we are not told in what proportion those two spellings occur in Devon. The genitive *-es* evidently was pronoun-ced with a clear front vowel; only so can variants in *-is* and *-ys* (a kind of spelling more familiar from Scotland) be explained. Other instances of *i* in unstressed syllables (pp. 238–39) are due to neutralizing before liquid and nasal consonants; but it deserves mention that spellings with *u* before *l* are mostly in words where such spellings were current in Old English (*stapul* beside *stapol* 'pillar, "steeple"',[11] *apuldre* beside *apoldre* 'apple-tree').

On p. 245 'it is impossible to decide' whether forms like Devon *atte Treawen* (p. 230) represent dative or accusative plurals. If they represent anything Old English it is certainly dative, because that is the case the preposition *æt* governs, as well as because the Old English acc. pl. did not contain an *n*.[12] So the forms are rightly placed under *m*.

Ignorance of Old English evidence leads Kristensson into error on pp. 173 and 213 about the Devon and Somerset sound-change lying behind river-names Yeo. The starting-point was OE *ēa* 'river'. He posits a change unrelated to his other phenomena, first a shift of stress (and length) to the second element of the diphthong, then reduction of the *e* to a consonant (which is problematic, see on $^{/}o$ below), then raising of that to *i*, and only finally a joining in the general sound-change OE *ā* > ME *ō*; thus his '*ēa>eā>e9ā>i99ā>i9ō*'. The charters show that the sequence was both less isolated and phonetically more credible. It is a special case of the random fronting of *ēa* he documents in other phonetic contexts in other words in other counties on pp. 217–18. The charters show random fronting of *ēa* to *īe* in just the same way. In the charters just as in his material, it is most conspicuous in initial position in Devon, to wit in 976 (X²) S830 which has four times in

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[11] Whose forms are detailed in my (1996.7–8).

[12] It should be *trēo(w)* as Campbell §584(i), or in late Old English analogical *trēowu*, whence by phonetic weakening and/or further analogical levelling *treowa* in Hants 982 (XIV) S842(vi) and IoW 968 (XIV) S766(iv).

close succession *iest* for **ēast** 'east'. Other items include s. xi med. (XI[1]) S1547 *yederes* and *iederes* for **Ēadheres** 'Eadhere's', and the prize instance SW Somerset 882 (XII) S345 *norð to íe; þonne norð upp of þære íe* 'north to the river; then north up from the river'. So the true sequence is fronting first, then stress-shift (much easier with first element *i*, whose consonantal form is simply what in modern English we spell *y*) then *ā* > *ō*: thus my (1996.23) "OE *ēa* > *īa* > *i₉ā* > ME *i₉ō*". It should be emphasized that a spelling like *yederes* implies *y* as the stress-bearing vocalic element; our modern consonantal use of *y* only became possible as a *consequence* of the kind of stress-shift under discussion (and of graphemic replacement of the Old English letter-form ǀ with *y* in some Middle English scribal traditions). I doubt therefore if Kristensson is right to speak of a "prosthetic /j/" in some *Ye*-forms on p. 213; conservative spellings for a fronted diphthong that may by then have been monophthongized, rather as he suggested for the *Ayenbite*, more likely.

A question worth asking is whether charter *ie* for **ēa** in words other than *ēa* is simply fronting of the diphthong to the next available in the West Saxon system and was pronounced as spelt, or whether in any or all it is used as the nearest available standard *spelling* for what was actually pronounced *īa*; and if so, perhaps by conservatism also in Kristensson's material. My answer is the former, because charter surveyors were not afraid to write *ia* when they said **īa**; thus Wilts S272(i) *þæt riad geat* 'the red gate', same feature as S1513(i) *þæt read geat*;[13] but the answer need not be the same in all cases. A probably more important question is whether and if so how the development of *īa* with an *a* is conditioned by survival in this region of an etymologically regular locative or dative *īe* with a real *e*, seen in S345 and frequently in the Orosius and in no other text. In the Orosius it gives rise (less frequently) to a genitive *īe* which is unetymological. It may very well be a contributing factor to the prominence of the special Devon and Somerset development in *ēa* above all other words.

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[13] A textually related pair in a twelfth-century cartulary, datable as they stand to the mid-eleventh century, but with possible signs of drawing on earlier material. Kristensson makes needless trouble on p. 213 about fronted diphthongs for "red".

On $/o$ it is agreed that the diphthong was in most areas monophthongized toward the end of the Old English period. The product of monophthongization is oftenest *e*, sometimes *o* or even *u*. Kristensson assumes that in order to get to *o* the stress must previously have shifted from first to second element of the diphthong. This doctrine has been passed down since the mists of philological time; he never questions it. It seems to rest on a tacit axiom, which no upholder ever feels the need to justify, that a monophthongization product should be close phonetically to the stressed element of the antecedent diphthong. I think that both the axiom and the doctrine of stress-shift of OE $/o$ are simply false, and fail every empirical test one can bring to them. This may seem too arcane to be worth the attention of most readers of *Nomina*; unfortunately it affects his interpretations for the worse in many details.

In a falling diphthong, one whose main vocalic quality is on the first element, it doesn't matter much what the second element is, because it's leading on to the following consonant(s) anyway. In a rising diphthong, with the main quality on the second element, it does matter that the first element be stable in a quasi-consonantal form. That is why rising diphthongs practically always have first elements *i9* and *u9* (≈our *y* and *w*). Consonants are articulated with the tongue high in the mouth; *i* and *u* are the high vowels. The mid vowels *e* and *o* are problematic in such a function, the low vowel *a* quite impossible. When a diphthong with mid vowel first element is stress-shifted, the normal effect is for that element to be raised; thus *Bern-* with breaking of *e* before *r* + consonant becomes in Old English *Beorn*, in Old Norse with stress-shifting *Bjorn* (ON *j* = our *y* again). Then again, stress-shifting is a change that normally operates at the level of pattern, affecting all words that fit a particular pattern. The reflexes of OE $/o$ do not have that kind of consistency. Modern 'choose' and 'freeze' both continue the same diphthong *ēo*. There were brands of Middle English which said *ches(e)* to rhyme with *fres(e)*, but there were none which said **fros(e)* or **frus(e)* to rhyme with *chose* or *chuse*. And forms which according to Kristensson presuppose shift of stress occur long before I think he would seriously argue that it had happened, e.g.

his *Ostre* for *eowestre* 'sheepfold' (p. 187) is already present in Hants s. x^2 (XII) S385 twice *ostercumb*. The back value for the contracted vowel is routinely conditioned by the *w*, as suggested for *h$\acute{\iota}$d* above, and as in widespread *trow* for "tree" (pp. 230–32). Three quarters of Smith's forms from all over the country show it, including what Smith thought, alas falsely, to be the deliciously early attestation of *Ouestraefelda* (beside *Eostraefeld*) for Austerfield, W. Yorkshire, in Eddi's Life of Wilfrid, which is eighth-century.[14]

Monophthongization is really a banal kind of linguistic laziness. People can't be bothered to pronounce two sounds, so they aim some-where vaguely between them. The product, especially for vowels of the same height, may be anywhere in the phonetic space between the two elements, on occasion even outside it: e.g. the modern English pronunciation of "miles" to rhyme with "Charles" has a vowel further back than the back element of the diphthong. The principle of laziness means too that the process is sensitive to phonetic context. You can get front and back products of the same diphthong in the same word in the same text, conditioned by degrees of surrounding frontness and/or by stress. I drew attention (1993.20 n. 69) to Sussex 957 (XIII) S1291, which has genitive *floetes* twice in fully accented position, beside *-flet* thrice with reduced stress as second element of place-name com-pounds. Its earliness may surprise some readers, but changes motivated by laziness naturally are very patchy over long periods of time. Ekwall (1923b.61) adduced two *ninth*-century Surrey documents with *eo* for [ø;] (*i*-mutated *ō*), a reverse spelling implying that monophthongization of *ēo* had taken place already then in those parts. When conversely *ie*

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[14] In chapters 46 and 60 respectively, as spelt by the Fell and Cotton manuscripts respectively; vv. ll. C *Onestraefelda*, F *Eostrefeld*. Colgrave follows F for both readings, but medial *-ae-* is a conspicuous archaism, which would be likely to be modernized, and the reading containing it must be preferred. The extant manuscripts are eleventh-century, but not closely related; *-ae-* suggests that there is very little alteration since the original *c.*720. The trouble with this evidence is that in chapter 46 as well as chapter 60 C's reading looks the better one, making the place-name two words *on Estraefelda*, grammatically correct for a non-habitative place-name in early Old English and explaining the dative ending *-a*.

and *ye* spellings imply raising of *ēo*, that may have been motivated by hypercorrectness.

The lesson I draw from texts like S1291 is that in reading monoph-thongized *eo* spellings you must be open to the possibility of more than one phonetic value, relatively fronted [ø] and retracted [œ]. Kristens-son like most scholars operates in terms of just one value intermediate between *e* and *o*, his choice for whose symbol is *ʃ*, since it mainly fell together with *e* in his material. These front(ish) rounded vowels, once they existed, tended to fall together with the reflexes of the front rounded vowel *y*; ø tended more easily to *e*, œ to *u*, but there were many exceptions. It is well known that the development of *y* was main-ly regional, the three main reflexes being *i* in the north, east, and far south-west, *e* in the south-east, and *u* in the Severn region and the mid-south. Kristensson thinks (p. 116 etc.), as most Middle English schol-ars have done, that *u* is just a Frenchified spelling for a high front rounded vowel [y] as before (as modern French *u*). It is clear from the charters that it is not, but represents some degree of lowering and/or retraction, as it is present already in Old English in phonetic contexts favouring them, mainly in what became the Middle English *u*-area. The most striking item, with a sample of more than 50, is as mentioned in my (1993.17 n. 60) *pyll* 'creek', consistently spelt *pull* in charter boundaries of Worcs and most of Gloucs, most of them in the pre-Conquest portions of Heming's cartulary. Worcester is the last place to seek such early influence of French spelling! Rather we have to do with the kind of pronunciation deeper in the throat that goes with a Wessex burr or stage Mummerset in more recent centuries.[15]

Kristensson says with IPA symbols on p. 230 that written *u* means a sound higher and more fronted than what we agree was a monoph-thongized vowel represented by *eo*. I say exactly the opposite. If the Old English *y* pronunciation survived unchanged at all, it is more likely to be among his *eo* spellings than among his *u* spellings. He makes the valid point that the *eo* spellings, though scattered, are geographically coherent enough and frequent enough to imply some survival of tradi-

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[15] Since at least as early as 1614 for the latter; Fellowes (1967.254–55, 712) prints a choice sequence from John Ravenscroft.

tional front rounded vowel pronunciations from the south-west mid-lands southward; but they may well have covered the whole phonetic range [œ-ø-y], since monophthongized *ēo* had already fallen patchily together with $\check{y}$ in late Old English.

A phonetic context where it did widely is between *w* and *r* + consonant. The darkening influence of *w* led to the *y* often becoming *u*. Charter distributions like that of *þwy̆res* against *þwēores* for older **þweorhes* (my 1993 map 6) leave no doubt that this is the order of events, though textbooks, followed e.g. p. 236, miss or misstate the part of $\check{y}$ in it.[16] The geography is north-west West Saxon against south-east, confirming that the articulatory tendencies at work are those underlying ME *u* for *y*. The generalization holds in literature too, as far as it has been examined for the purpose, that works assignable dialectally to north-west Wessex have more *u* for *y* than those from further south and east. What the charters show is in principle a sound-change in progress, yet the domains of the contrast seem to have changed little in the century and a half they cover, and have enough in common with those where *eo* spellings do and do not survive beside *e* in Kristensson's data to be worth noting.

One other phonetic reflex of OE *y* calls for comment, *o*, presumably again meaning [œ], much less well known than the other three except to readers of Samuels (1963) and LALME. It is present in a small way in the charters too, though perhaps not in reliable texts in these counties; *stobb* is the majority form of *stybb* 'pollard, "stub"' in Warwickshire, in 978 (XI[1]) S1337 and four times in 1001 S898(i), an 'original'. Kristensson's single *mochel* (p. 96), with none that I could spot in his west midland volume, is in great contrast to LALME I map 103 and raises again the question of the nature of the local language of Lay Subsidy Rolls. It should be noted that this is Old English second-ary *y*, brought about by influence of adjacent consonants on a different vowel or by West Saxon *i*-mutation of *ea*. Here the influence is of *m* on *i*, and in a book organized etymologically the word belongs on p. 58. So does *risc* 'rush', even though a form with *u* is attested as early as Hants 973/4 (XII) S820. It is not necessary to suppose an intermediate

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[16] Campbell §§320–24 misses the essential fact that this is a lengthening context.

*rysc, as p. 115, ever existed; we have to do again with effects of a Wessex burr, such as yields identical first syllables for 'Bristol' and 'Burton'.[17]

Late OE *y* > *u* can mislead Kristensson the other way, e.g p. 81 '*stumbel*' should be *stymbel*. Both manuscripts of Herts S888(ii) vary between *stimbl(as)* and *stumbl(as)*; it is a pity we are not told the geography of this word for 'pollard' in his material. Page 87 '*pund* "pound, enclosure"' is the same word as p. 113 '*pynd* "enclosure, pound"', and '*pund-fald*' is really *pyndfald* as confirmed by its modern form 'pinfold'. The *o* forms for these words, conditioned by the preceding labial, gain added interest because *o* for *y* is so rare in his data (as well as because a pond is a sort of watery pound).

I regret that so much of this review is taken up with disagreement, because the author's vices are mostly learnt from his teachers and his virtues are mostly his own practice. There are many incidental felicities in this book. Connoisseurs of avifauna in personal names will like to meet on p. 90 Rudefowl, Warfowl, Cutfowl, Pinefowl, Purfowl, and Langfowl beside the anciently distinguished Seafowl. On p. 166 a *Brute* might be a Welshman and is so dismissed; p. 175 finds ubiquity of Anglian Welshmen (they got their English surnames before moving south?). Regional consistency of *gate* as opposed to *yate* in the southeast (pp. 193, 255) is foreshadowed in Anglo-Saxon charters of Kent, which for about half their 'gates' use plural with apparently singular meaning. The mainly relevant forms are sg. *geat(e)*, pl. *gatu(m)* usually reduced to *gatan*. The plurals are paralleled in Cambs and Middx but not Sussex or Surrey. On p. 277 Kristensson finds 'southern voicing' of *f-* to *v-* at a rate of about 20%.

Misprints are rare, usually isolated letters in typewriter-fount amid the proper print.[18] A deeper confusion of founts leads in etymologies on p. 175 to the voiceless velar fricative being represented not by a Greek chi Π but by English *x* as in International Phonetic Alphabet

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[17] As I once heard them pronounced by a conductor on what for that reason was a memorable train journey.

[18] On pp. 196, 268, 278 and 283.

/x/.[19]

There are many other points worthy of comment. This is a substantial book, albeit imperfect in matters the reviewer happens to know and care most about. The southern counties are of course where there is most Anglo-Saxon charter evidence; reservations about non-use of it apply much less to the preceding three volumes. The five altogether will stand as a worthy memorial to a philologist who not only set to work in a fruitful field but persevered in his toil there. As Sir Francis Drake said, it is the continuing unto the end that yieldeth the true glory.

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[19] On p. 173 there's a > too many, on p. 281 a defective diale<c>t, on pp. 90 and 176 metathesis in "lengthening".

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Any readers who venture to my (1996) are warned that printer's gremlins were active in it, mainly to remove "becomes" signs from the sound-change *ie>y*.