Urazbaev Khikmatullo

HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Guliston 2012

O'ZBEKISTON RESPUBLIKASI OLIY VA O'RTA MAXSUS TA'LIM VAZIRLIGI

Guliston Davlat Universiteti

Hikmatullo Urazbaev

INGLIZ TILI TARIXI

Gulistan **- 2012**

H. Urazbaev. Ingliz tili tarihidan lavhalar (ingliz tilida).
– Guliston 2012. – 132 b.

Bosh muharrir:
Filologiya fanlari nomzodi, dotsent Tojiev X.

Nechun hozirgi zamon ingliz tilida u yoki bu harf (harf birikmasi), bu yoki u so’z aynan shunday talaffuz qilinadi (yoziladi), ushbu tarihiy izohdan bila olish mumkin. Kitobda til matnlarning diahronik izohi asosida hozirgi zamon ingliz tilining yozuvi va grafemalar talaffuzi talqinining o’ziga hosligi ko’rsatilgan.

Universitetlarning roman-german filologiyasi fakultetlari, chet tillar institutlari bakalavriyat, magistratura yo’nalishlaridagi talabalar, aspirantlar, ingliz tili o’qituvchilari va ilmiy tadqiqotchilarga mo’ljallangan.

PREFACE

This volume is an attempt to outline the historical development of the English language from ancient times to the Middle English period. The book does not claim to be a regular textbook of English historical phonetics either. It is rather in the nature of a brief historical commentary on English pronunciation in its relation to spelling.

The book is designed primarily for use by teachers of English, both at secondary school and college level. But it can also be used, in addition to the existing English language history manuals, by undergraduates at English language departments of Universities and Pedagogical Institutes, as well as by any person interested in historical explanation of Modern English reading rules and the peculiar reading of some individual words, or in the origin of some phonetic features of present-day English.

It is designed to satisfy their natural curiosity about the reasons for peculiarities of present-day English spelling, the sound values of letters and letter combinations in the English language of today, and the peculiar reading of individual words, while at the same time stimulating the student's inquiring thought and arousing interest in the historical study of the language. Simplicity of presentation, with extremely sparing use of special terms, makes the book intelligible even for first-year students.

The reader may gain a general idea as to the historical evolution of the phonetic system of English. However, the purpose is not historical study for its own sake. Historical developments are considered in so far as they have a close bearing on the state of things in the English language of today, and it has been attempted throughout to make clear their relevance to the facts of present-day English.

A book of this length can, of course, make no claim to completeness. As an introduction it is only concerned with the main lines of development and even these could not be treated exhaustively. Strict limitations of space inevitably entailed a highly selective approach but every attempt has been made to avoid the consequent danger of arbitrariness in the choice of items to be dealt with. Considerations of space also played a part in the presentation of the data.

Coherent accounts of the state of the language in earlier historical periods, however desirable for a variety of reasons, especially for a fuller

picture of the whole system of the language at a particular developmental stage, of its various sub-systems and of the interrelations between them, would not only have been impossible for reasons of space and other objective reasons but would also have gone far beyond the main purpose of this volume.

The method chosen seems to be a perfectly legitimate procedure if one's main concern is the historical foundations of present-day English rather than the 'grammatical systems' of Old English, Middle English or Early Modern English respectively. It is hoped that this procedure, although requiring additional effort on the part of the student and the careful use of the glossary, will contribute to a deeper understanding of the matter under discussion.

The author is convinced that this manual will be helpful in the would-be English teachers' vocational training inasmuch as it furnishes precisely the kind of information on the historical background of present-day English pronunciation and spelling that is of value in the practical teaching of the language. It can be used in tutorial work on History of English, English Lexicology, in teaching reading and spelling rules.

It goes without saying that a volume like this owes a great deal to the research work of numerous other scholars. It would never have been compiled without the moral, intellectual and material support of countless friends and colleagues and without the sacrifices and unending patience of my own family. My deeply felt thanks are due to all of them.

Naturally, the book is not free from imperfections. Any suggestions that may help to improve it will be welcome.

K.Shadmanov

TO THE LEARNER OF ENGLISH

When you were just beginning to study English, you probably wondered why the vowel letters which look so familiar have such strange names in English, **A** being called [ei], **I** [ai], and so on, and why they stand for sounds different from those you give to the same letters when reading in your native tongue. You may have wondered, too, why one and the same letter is often read in quite different ways in different words, or why there are different spellings for one and the same sound.

You might also be interested to know about the origin of English reading rules in general and about the historical reasons for the peculiar spelling and reading of this or that word which disagrees with the general rules.

Now, the purpose of this manual is to answer your ***whys*** and to explain ***whence*** (which is an old-fashioned word meaning "where from") come the peculiar ways English words are spelt and read.

The explanations are in very simple English. Very few special scientific terms are used, and their meanings are explained the first time you meet them. If you forget the meaning of a term, you can look it up in the ***Vocabulary of Special Terms*** at the end of the book.

Welcome, then, to the **W h e n c e** and **W h y** of English Reading and Spelling!

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

In answering the questions posed in this book we shall have to refer more than once to various times in the history of the English language, and to some events in the history of the English people which are of especial importance for the development of the language and its spelling. It seems better to say a few words here, right at the beginning of the book, about language as a social phenomenon, about the main periods in the history of English and the historical events of which some knowledge is necessary for explaining the origins of certain peculiarities of present-day English spelling, rather than speak about the same things over and over again in answering different questions.

Language is a social phenomenon. It originates and develops in the process of social interaction between the members of a community and is, thus, "genetically and functionally connected with man's practical social activity"[2]. Language activity itself, the use of language in its various social functions, represents a particular kind of social activity. In order to fulfil its basic functions as an instrument of thought and communication and to satisfy the communicative needs of a more or less differentiated speech community, language must possess the properties of variability and systematicity, or, in other words, exhibit 'orderly differentiation' or 'orderly heterogeneity'.

Differentiated needs of communication require differentiated sets of means of expression provided by a differentiated language system- The linguistic system of communication underlying language activity in a complex community has, therefore, also been described as "an orderly heterogeneous system in which choice between linguistic alternants carries out social and stylistic functions"[3].

There is not only 'dialectal variation' and 'stylistic' (including 'functional') variation in the language of a non-homogeneous speech community at every stage of its existence. Language also is a very variable social phenomenon in the sense that it varies through time. For language to keep functioning as an efficient instrument of mutual communication among the members of a continually changing society, it must constitute an 'orderly heterogeneous system' which is non-static, or dynamic, and 'open' in character (and thus distinguished from a 'closed' and static system).

Historical variation or change is a necessary characteristic of any

living language and may "at least to a considerable extent", be said to be "due to an incessant adaptation of the means of expression to the ... ever-changing ..., ever-increasing communicative needs obtaining in the given language community"[4]. Qualitative as well as quantitative changes in the needs of communication for their part — sometimes also called 'expressive and communicative needs' — must obviously be considered as in some way or other resulting from changes in society, in the social life of the language community in question. Language history can, therefore, not be separated from social history.

It is undoubtedly true that further detailed studies are needed before a full picture of the relation between social and linguistic changes in the evolution of individual languages such as English can be given[5]. But this in no way invalidates the thesis of the existence of close and complex relations between the historical development of language and the socio-historical development of the language community.

Socio-historical conditions or changes affecting the requirements of linguistic communication to be met by the language system no doubt include (changes in) the socio-economic groupings, social stratification or social class structure of the community and the relationships between the classes as determined by (changes of) the character of the social system, the coming into existence of new social classes or groups and the passing out of existence of others in the course of the rise of special socioeconomic conditions, and the rise to power of new-classes as the outcome of social revolutions of transformations.

They also include changes in the importance of geographical factors (in comparison to socioeconomic factors) resulting from (changes in) the degree of political and economic unity of the country, such as the development of 'centralized nation States', for example, or (changes in) the size and complexity of the ipcech community and its territorial expansion. This is clear for example in the tremendous increase of the size of the English language community from about one and a half million speakers in the late eleventh century to more than three hundred million people speaking English as a first language in the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and some other parts of the former British Empire, in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Other social factors influencing the conditions of communication prevailing in a particular language community and/or producing changed

communicative needs comprise changes of the importance of rural and urban communities within the society in question as a consequence of (socio-)economic (and cultural) changes. This is exemplified by the development of the productive forces which led to the Industrial Revolution and the accompanying large-scale population shifts from one part of the Country to another, the concentration of large numbers of speakers of divergent varieties of the same language in urban industrial areas.

There are also changes caused by increasing ease of travel and communication between the various parts of the country as an outcome of technical developments (such as those effected, for example, by the introduction of printing or of the modern mass media, the building of railways and motorways, aeroplanes, etc.) or cultural changes (connected with socioeconomic changes) such as the spread of literacy among the members of the speech community.

The socio-economic differentiation within society and with it the differentiation of the language community into 'communicative communities' (groups of individuals interacting both socially and linguistically) is essentially influenced also by the (ever-increasing) degree of division of labour in the course of the development of the productive forces of society. Technological progress, the rise and development of the modern natural and social sciences, the tremendous expansion in knowledge in the wake of it, the technological and scientific revolution, and the phenomena accompanying them, all greatly increase the diversity of social processes or activities in which language plays a part. They lead to a continual extension of the functions that language serves in the society in question and thus create, among other things, new requirements with regard to the functional (or 'stylistic') variability of the language.

The same holds true of many other changes in the historical development of society.

Of especial importance in the history of the English language — but by no means confined to it — were so-called **'contact-induced changes'**, i.e. changes arising from language-contact situations. The broad scale of 'inter-language contacts', to use the more precise term, includes direct contacts between speakers of different — related or unrelated — languages as well as indirect language contacts. It ranges from direct contacts of the most intensive kind - such as the seisure and

settlement of a foreign territory, or foreign invasions, leading to the co-existence of members of different speech communities for a shorter or longer time and the formation of bilingual (or multilingual) communicative communities and/or 'language shift' on a larger or lesser scale — to contacts resulting from the development of foreign trade relations, the exploration of foreign lands, colonial conquests, foreign travel or exposure to foreign cultures (as in the course of Christianization). It also includes indirect contacts via foreign-language learning and education, cultural exchange with other countries or other kinds of cultural encounter, increased international communication, and so on.

Close direct language contacts such as those mentioned above, mostly result in more or less widespread 'inter-language' (or 'cross-language') borrowing, especially on the lexico-semantic level. The historical events giving rise to them may have further linguistic effects. They may, for instance, lead to the introduction of a second or third language as a means of official communication and/or in other uses and thus create special 'outer' conditions of development for the native language by temporarily restricting its functions in the political and cultural life of the society in question. This happened, for example, in medieval England after the Norman Conquest. Recent research has stressed the importance of 'intra-language contacts' as a constant source of language change.

Situations of contact between co-existing varieties of the same language may, for example, result from close geographical proximity (naturally given for certain areas in the case of neighbouring regional dialects) or migration of a larger number of speakers of particular regional or socio-regional varieties and emergence of geographically mixed communities. They also arise in the process of social and linguistic interaction between members of various social classes or groups (as users of socially differentiated language varieties) and must be said to exist likewise in the cases of membership of one and the same individual in several communicative communities (a phenomenon by no means rare in highly differentiated language communities). Contact-induced changes of this kind have been defined as 'intra-language borrowing', 'inter-dialectal borrowing' (phonological, morphological, syntactic, or lexical borrowing between dialects of the same language), or 'inter-social borrowing'. They may consist, for example, in the spread

of certain non-standard linguistic features of particular regional, social, or socio-regional dialects into the standard form of the language.

It is certainly valid with regard to the complex problem of motivation of changes, to say that linguistics is still very far from a fully worked-out theory of language change which would enable us to define precisely the conditioning factors or combination of conditioning factors operating in the case of any particular individual phonological, morphological, syntactic or lexico-semantic changes in the course of the historical development of a language.

There is scarcely any doubt that certain changes in the structure of the language system can be attributed more directly to the influence of social factors than others and that social factors cannot operate without any constraint. One will, therefore, obviously have to accept that "the over-all process of linguistic change may involve stimuli and constraints both from society and from the structure of language"[6], that social and intra-linguistic factors are closely interrelated in the development of language.

Language development - like social development - has to be considered a dialectically contradictory process. Since communicative efficiency, the functioning of language as an adequate means of communication, must be guaranteed at every phase of its existence, language is constantly exposed to conflicting tendencies. The most important of these are the tendency toward linguistic innovation or alteration springing from 'external' as well as 'internal' forces and the counter-tendency directed at maintaining the stability of the system, its – relative - balance or equilibrium, also called the dialectic of development and stability as a necessary condition of language activity.

Changes in the communicative requirements are no doubt most directly reacted to in the semantic sub-system and the lexicon of a language. The action of social conditioning factors can therefore be most clearly traced - and distinctively observed even in the lifetime of a single generation - in the lexicon, in semantic development of words, new word formations, linguistic borrowings, falling out of use of lexical items, or other kinds of lexical change. Modifications like these have been described as serving to increase 'functional efficiency' and thus forming part of a general tendency toward optimization of the linguistic system. Such tendencies to make language a more efficient means of satisfying newly arisen as well as already existent needs of

communication are obviously widely different in kind and difficult to separate from each other with sufficient accuracy. They comprise tendencies for the (functional or other kinds of 'stylistic') variability of the language to be increased as well as levelling and regularization tendencies stimulated by principles of economy.

Tendencies which might be called 'economically motivated' include those whjch are directed towards reduction of what in the course of the history of a language may be said to have developed into a functionally uneconomic diversity of formal means or grammatical rules (whose motivation is no longer felt by the members of the speech community). There are also other tendencies to decrease the over-all effort necessary to achieve particular communicative effects (in a more comprehensive sense perhaps describable as the effort required for efficient speech production and/or perception, or for learning the language).

Tendencies of the first kind, like those towards reducing the number of means avail-able in the system for the expression of one and the same (grammatical) function (for example, in the case of the number-distinguishing contrasts of the nouns), which culminate in tendencies for the establishment of a 'one form - one function' relation-ship, have also been defined as simplifying tendencies, or tendencies toward the reduction of redundancy (or redundant elements). These may be very powerful (and were so in the history of English), but they must not be understood as forces whose operation might ultimately result in complete elimination of redundancy in the linguistic system.

Redundancy is found in all languages and must obviously even be considered as necessary to a certain extent for the functional efficiency of language. "Too great an economy makes a message insecure, and a certain amount of redundancy has a value as insurance against noise'"[7].

'Oplimization tendencies' may also be said to be operating, for example, in the case of semantic or stylistic differentiation of originally more or less synonymous native and 'borrowed' lexical items or in other changes in the lexico-semantic area as well as in what somehow represents the opposite of simplifying tendencies: increase in the {grammatical complexity of the language, or further elaboration of linguistic subsystems, alteration of existing patterns, etc. brought about by the development of new morphological or morpho-syntactic

categories (such as those of 'aspect' or 'correlalion', for instance, in the verbal system of English), by rule addition (in contrast to rule simplification), and so on.

The phenomena described as due to simplification embrace what has traditionally been called 'analogical replacements' (for example, the substitution of grammatical forms with a low(er) frequency of occurrence by higher-frequency forms serving the same function, such as number (plural) markers, (past) tense markers' and others). Such 'analogical changes' are sometimes attributed to the 'tendency to balance or symmetry'. The same might be done in the case of other linguistic developments already mentioned. It seems perfectly justified also to characterize certain changes in the phonological sub-system or in other areas as ultimately aimed at the establishment or restoration, respectively, of systemic balance.

Language, as is generally accepted, does not represent "a perfectly fautless, completely balanced ... system"[8]. It contains, at any stage of its development, elements not (yet) fully integrated into the system (i.e. innovations) as well as elements which no longer form an essential part of the system but are, in a certain sense, relics of earlier developmental stages (as, for instance, certain inflectional forms still to be found in (formal) Standard English, but discarded in informal standard or non-standard English, respectively).

The presence of such 'disharmonious elements' as well as of 'holes' (or gaps) in the system, sometimes described as the 'weak systemic points' or the 'weak spots in the system' of the language or in particular sub-systems of it, has been said to be a source of' dynamic tension' or of 'pressure from the system', or to give rise to 'tendencies for-structural imbalances to be corrected and for holes in a pattern to be filled'.

Certain linguistic changes may, thus, be described as either putting the functional equlibrium of language as a communicative system under stress or as bringing the system (or particular sub-systems) into a new balance, etc.

The causes or reasons why such changes occur at a given time in the history of that language (or why they do not occur at all in spite of the existence of such 'weak spots') can, however, obviously not be found in the linguistic system itself but have to be looked for in the history of the language cnmmity.

Bringing the 'system' into a new - relative - balance in the process

of linguistic development may mean different things. It may refer to any of its sub -systems (or to sub-systems within these sub-systems), e.g. the phonological system (or its vowel system, or the system of long vowels within it, etc.), the morphological sub-system (or the 'number system', 'case system', or others of its sub-systems), and so on.

But it can also mean establishing (or re-establishing) balance or symmetry by interaction of changes in different sub-systems of the language. Balancing effects may, thus, also be achieved, for example, by inter-connected developments in the syntactic and morphological sub-systems, which may result (as in the case of English) in one of these sub-systems being developed ' at the expense' of the other.

It has been pointed out that to understand the nature of particular language changes (whether springing from a tendency toward restoration of systemic balance or not), it is necessary to view them in the larger 'context' of the 'system' (directly) affected by these changes. In a number of cases even this will not be sufficient, since deeper insight can often only be gained if due attention is given to the interrelationships which hold between the various sub-systems of a language, and if “changing syb-systems” are, “as independent and interacting parts of a whole”[9].

CHAPTER ONE

SOME ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY OF THE LANGUAGE COMMUNITY FROM THE ANGLO-SAXON INVASION OF BRITAIN TO THE END OF THE MIDDLE AGES

And now let us dwell upon the historical periods of the English language. The history of the English language begins in the 5th century, when the so-called Anglo-Saxon tribes, coming over from the North Sea coast of Europe, settled in Britain. The speech of each tribe differed somewhat from that of the others, but not much really. It can be said that they all spoke slightly different forms (dialects) of one and the same language - Anglo-Saxon or Old English.

Still, according to the historians, the earliest men inhabiting Britain are considered to be Iberians. The fact is that at the dawn of their history the peoples on this planet lived in primitive societies. These primitive peoples, wherever they lived, began their long path of progress with stone tools, but they did not reach the same level of civilization at the same time in different countries. The ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome were already in existence when the people living in Britain were only at the first stage of social development. So far, it's important now to learn more about the ancient inhabitants of the British Isles.

ENGLAND IN THE PERIOD OF ANCIENT HISTORY

The Pre-Celtic Period

Early maps show a world in which Britain is a remote outpost, a shapeless group of islands in the ocean.

But in some of these maps their South-western coast is close to the North of Spain. This fact shows that centuries before the making of any maps that have survived, Britain lay not outside the world but on a regular and frequent trade route which linked Mediterranean civilization with the amber-bearing North. It was by these long sea route (and not across the Channel) that civilization first reached these shores. In Cornwall, Ireland and along the coast of Wales and Scotland there are the monuments left by Iberian or Megalithic men who reached and

peopled Britain between 3000 and 200 years B. C.

At this time the land subsidence which had begun a thousand or so years earlier was still going on, and the apparently shorter and safer route up Channel and along European coast was closed, as the straits there were narrow, shifting, shoaling and swept by rapid tides. This is, perhaps, the first reason for the settlement of Iberian man in Britain.

Though little is known about these Iberians of the New Stone Age, a good deal may be guessed since they have left their mark upon the face of the land more clearly than either Celt, Roman or Saxon. Moreover, their stock is one of the main contributors to the present population of the British Isles, especially in Ireland, Wales, and the West of England. As far as historical research could establish, the first inhabitants of the British Isles were nomadic Stone Age hunters. A small, dark, long-headed race they settled especially on the chalk downs that radiate from Salisbury Plain. Below the ridges of these hills run their trackways, which are now oldest and most historic roads. On the downs and along the trackways lie the long barrows (курганы), the great earthworks such as crown Cissbury and Dolebury, and the stone circles. It is from these monuments and from the agriculture that we can guess what manner of people these were.

The size and the splendour of their monuments speak of a numerous and well organized people. Thousands must have worked together to raise a great earthworks, and the trackways link settlement to settlement **in an orderly fashion** (надежно).

The downland terraces indicate an intensive agriculture carried on with hoe and spade. There was a certain specialisation and division of labour which enable them **to mine and work flints** (добывать кремень и изготовлять из него орудия) that were traded all over the country.

More direct evidence of the social structure of the Iberians is the long barrows. Often over 200 feet in length, these barrows were burial places and prove the existence of sharply marked class divisions. On the one hand there must have been chiefs or nobles, people important enough to demand such elaborate funeral arrangements, and on the other, an abundance of the men whose cheap, possibly servile labour was available for such works.

Finally there is some evidence that Iberian culture was mainly unwarlike. Few finds that can be classed as weapons have been unearthed of an earlier date than the first Celtic invasions in the Late

Bronze Age; and the downland earthworks usually have the ditch inside the rampart, and not outside as it would be if they had been constructed for defensive purposes.

The diffusion, of certain types of implements and utensils shows that a considerable trade went on along the track ways and by sea between Britain and Spain and even to the Mediterranean. Whether metals, other than gold which was mined in Ireland, were known is uncertain, since it is difficult to draw any clear line between New Stone and Early Bronze Ages.

They probably lived in the dry caves of the limestone and chalk hills. The palaeolithic population, unable with their rude stone tools to cope with the impassable woods and wild tangled bush growth that covered nearly the whole of the land, had to rely entirely on the bounty of nature. They must have lived on what the woods, the ocean and the rivers had to offer. When they finally passed over to agriculture the first farmers had to cultivate some arable patches on the slopes of downs converging on Salisbury plain.

Historians refer to the original population as the Scots and Picts with whom newcomers started merging. It was the geographical position of the land that attracted the newcomers: the way of Mediterranean civilization across the North Sea to Scandinavia, rich in trade amber, lay straight from the Iberian Peninsula between what later came to be Ireland and Britain. Those newcomers must have been a Mediterranean people. Their burial places in Cornwall, in Ireland, in the coastal regions of Wales and Scotland are found to be either long barrows, that is, man-made hills, or huge mounds covering hut-like structures of stone slabs.

Thus one is led to think of them as of very numerous and rather well organized people: tools more sophisticated than stone spades and mattocks do not seem to have been found in the archaeological excavations, so the newcomers must have been very good farmers to be able to feed a huge crowd of stone-hewers engaged in all those giant-like feats with only that primitive equipment at their disposal.

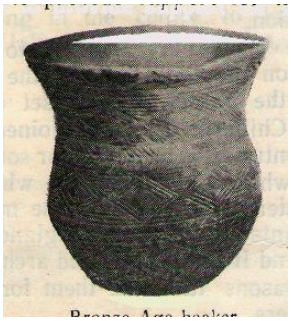
Among the suppositions made by historians and archaeologists about the Late Stone Age population of Britain, those of special interest to us concern the time (the time is usually given as around 2400 B.C.) and the reasons of their migration to the British Isles from the Mediterranean areas, their territorial distribution there, the nature of their civilization.

These people are thought to have settled on the chalk hills of the Cots-wolds, the Sussex and Dorset downs and the Chilterns. They were joined after a few centuries by some similar southern people who settled along the whole of the western coast, so that the modern inhabitants of Western England and Wales and Ireland have good archaeological reasons to claim them for their forefathers.

Their civilization as the monuments show was quite advanced, and the splendour of their burial arrangements can be taken as a sign of class differentiation. An Alpine race came to subdue them, however, about 1700 B.C. from the east and south-east, from the Rhineland and Holland. Historians refer to these later immigrants who settled in the east, south east and up the Thames Valley, as "the Beaker Folk" for they left a characteristic relic of their civilization, an earthenware drinking vessel called "beaker".

They are believed to have been powerful and stocky, they surely had a knowledge of bronze and employed metal tools and weapons.

The two peoples were closely related in culture and the new-comers spread along the East coast, through East Anglia and up the Thames Valley. Iberian and Alpine met and fused in the Wiltshire area which is the focus of all pre-Celtic civilisation in Britain. They gradually merged with the previous arrivals; in the Salisbury plain area evidence of both races was discovered, and the mixture was later supplemented by more arrivals, though never so numerous or important as those described.



Bronze Age beaker

A characteristic monument to this civilization, primordially rude and pri-mordially majestic, made mysterious by the clarity-obliterating centuries, is the so-called Stonehenge, a sort of sanctuary erected by the abovementioned fusion of peoples on Salisbury Plain about eleven hundred years B.C. or somewhat earlier. This circular structure, or rather

semi-circular ruin as it is now, was formed by a mere juxtaposition of tall narrowish slabs standing so as to provide support for the horizontal slab, capping those perpendicular props for all the world like houses built of playing cards by infant architects reckless enough to disregard the seemingly precarious balance of the hanging stones — whence the name of the structure, the "Hanging Stones", Stonehenge.

The structure, however, proved to be quite durable since we are in a position to take pictures of it and wonder about its purpose after all these thirty centuries and more. The purpose was believed to be that of a place of worship, since the circular earthwork around the double horseshoe of the standing and hanging stones did not look like a fortification. The cult was guessed at, and the general supposition placed it as the suncult; the guess was supported by other historical evidence; the geometrikal precision of the structure promoted later hypotheses associating it with astronomical observations. Both guesses may be close to the target, though, for the ancient priests were surely in need of astronomical data to control their less enlightened believers.

Although the respectable level of civilization was reached in the Early and Middle Bronze Ages it was spread over only a small part of Britain. The mountain areas of the West and North were thinly peopled. Much of the lowland area which today is the richest agricultural land was also untouched. These areas were then covered with forests of oak and ash, with a thick underscrub (кустарник). Such forests, on heavy, wet, clay soil were an absolute barrier to men equipped only with stone or even bronze implements. In fact these forests were not seriously attached till the Roman occupation and not finally cleared till the Saxon period. Prehistoric man kept to the dry chalk uplands, not because they were the richest but because they were the best which he could occupy with the tools that he had at his disposal.

The Celts

The thick dark oak and ash woods, thickets of bushes growing in tangled profusion on the damp clay soil made even the east and south-east lands that were not mountainous unfit for cultivation while all the implements the islanders had to combat the thicket and clear the arable land with were unwieldy stone axes or soft bronze ones. Probably, that was the reason why traces of earlier civilization are only found on the

treeless slopes of Western downs.

Iron tools appeared only after a new stream of invaders, tall and fair, poured from the continent, from what is now France and Germany. Whole tribes migrated to the Isles, warriors put under cultivation. Later on, with the advent of the Belgae, the heavy plough was introduced, drawn by oxen, so the slopes of downs could be used only as pasture land, and fertile valleys cleared of forests could be farmed so successfully that soon the south-east produced enough grain and to spare. It could therefore be exported to Gaul and the Mediterranean and luxuries from those lands brought a new brightness to the otherwise austere existence of the tribesmen. Besides, rough crockery-making, hide-processing and the like, were practised.

They must have traded with the Phoenicians (whom a student of history finds mentioned in most historical works as professional traders of the ancient world); in this case the Phoenicians were attracted by the British tin and lead ("the Tin Islands" they called them) which were taken by those traders to the Continent, to Gaul and the Netherlands.

It was a patriarchal clan society based on common ownership of land. Soon the primitive ways of land-tilling began to give way to improved methods. It was then that social differentiation began to develop. Even slight technical improvements created opportunities for the tribal chiefs to use the labour of the semi-dependent native population. Along with the accumulation of wealth the top elements of the clans and tribes showed tendencies of using military force to rob other tribes.

Fortresses were built on hilltops, tribal centers in fact, towns began to appear in the more wealthy south-east; true, they were at first no more than large groups of wattle-and-clay houses encircled by a sort of fortified fence. Among the first towns mentioned are such as Verulamium, Camulodunum, Londinium. The population of the towns grew apace. Some of the inhabitants of the continental countries trading wtth the British Celts, such as the Celts of Gaul, etc. came over to Britain and settled in Kent, contributing to the civilization of that part of Britain since they could teach the British Celts some useful arts. The British craftsmen perfected their skill mostly in bronze work and learned to give an adequate expression to the subtle artisticism of the Celtic spirit. Their characteristic curvilinear design, often a composition in circular shapes, is to be found on weapons, vases, domestic utensils, etc.

The Celts were good warriors, as later invaders had a chance to find out. Celtic war-chariots were famous even beyond the limits of the country. They were reliably built to hold one man standing up to drive and two more to do the fighting.

The chariot itself was a destructive force, the well-trained horses trampling down the enemy and the wheels fixed with sharp knives or swords, rotating with the wheel movement, a grave menace to everything living that chanced to be in the way.

The Celts of the British Isles were heathens until Christianity was brought to them by later invaders, the Romans. Their religion was a weird mixture of heathenism, that is, the worship of certain Gods and Goddesses, with the worship of the Sun and Moon, and of the Serpent, the symbol of wisdom. The priests were called Druids, and their superior knowledge was taken for magic power. Thus, their temples were so superior to the general run of buildings that the believers were sure they had profited by some supernatural assistance in their construction. The Druids themselves must have been well pleased with this sort of reputation and enhanced its spell holding awe-inspiring vigils and observing terrible night rites in open-air temples arranged somewhere in dark woods called Sacred Groves.

The rites were associated with bloody sacrifice usually of animals but sometimes human beings, which increased the Druids' power and authority over the masses.

By the end of the B.C. era there were attempts at unification. At the time of the Romans' first expedition (the middle of the 1st century B.C.) Camulodunum is believed to have been the capital of a powerful chief, **Cassivelaun**; some historians mention the word "king" in this connection. With the beginning of our era royal power in the land of the Britons began to unite great areas. Thus, from 5 A.D. to 40 A.D. the Belgic tribal chief **Cunobelin** (Shakespear's Cym-beline) united the Celtic tribes of southern Britain under his rule and called himself, after the Roman fashion, "Rex Britonum" that is "King of the Britons" — a title which was impressed on the coins that he struck in his capital, Camulodunum.

Coin of Cymbeline, 'King of the Britons'

The act was surely imitative, for formerly the Celts used rude bars of metal for coins, and it shows that Roman influence was penetrating into Britain. It was this king who invited Roman traders and craftsmen to come and settle in Britain. Some historians attribute the origin of London to his reign (the Celtic phrase Llyn-din, "Lake-Fort" is believed by some to have given the town its name) and archaeologists state that the first wooden London bridge was built at that time. The city was called Londi-nium, for this was the time when, after Caesar's first "reconnaissance" raid in 55 B.C. the Romans started infiltrating into the country as immigrants and traders bringing in eastern luxuries and taking out corn, metals and slaves. Thus, ground was prepared for the Roman conquest.

On the eve of the Roman conquest the Brythons were at the stage of decay corroding the primitive community structure; elements of a new, class society were appearing, with patriarchal slavery as a new feature. The rapid economic development of that time led to a weakening of the Celtic clan structure and that to a certain extent may account for the comparative ease with which the conquest was affected.

The Roman Conquest

Many historians attribute the interest that the Romans took in the British Isles to purely strategic reasons. The thing is, that Gaul, at that time but freshly conquered by the Roman Empire, completely subdued and reduced to the status of its province, was restless under the Roman yoke and Britain not infrequently figured as a sort of Celtic resistance centre. Other reasons could also be found, however. Under the Belgic tribes, with the introduction of the heavy iron plough, agricultural advancement elevated Britain to the position of a major corn-producing country. Now, Rome, more and more parasitical with each decade, wanted food badly - hence Caesar's expedition in 55 B.C. when a 10-

thousand-strong Roman army was repulsed by the iron-weapon-possessing Celts with the help of the Channel storms.

A year later the expedition was repeated with an increased army of 25 thousand, and Camulodunum, the probable capital, was taken possession of. However, it led to practically nothing more serious than Caesar's departure with Celtic hostages and a promise of ransom which he doesn't seem to have ever returned to claim. But Roman influence, nevertheless, came in other ways than that of military conquest. Trade contacts were developing all through the ninety years separating Caesar's attempted invasion from the actual conquest. That took place in 43 A. D. when the Emperor Claudius sent a 50-thousand strong army which landed in Kent and crossed the Thames. Since that time up to 410 Britain was one of the remote provinces of the Roman Empire. It was military occupation that the Romans established, and it lasted 4 centuries.

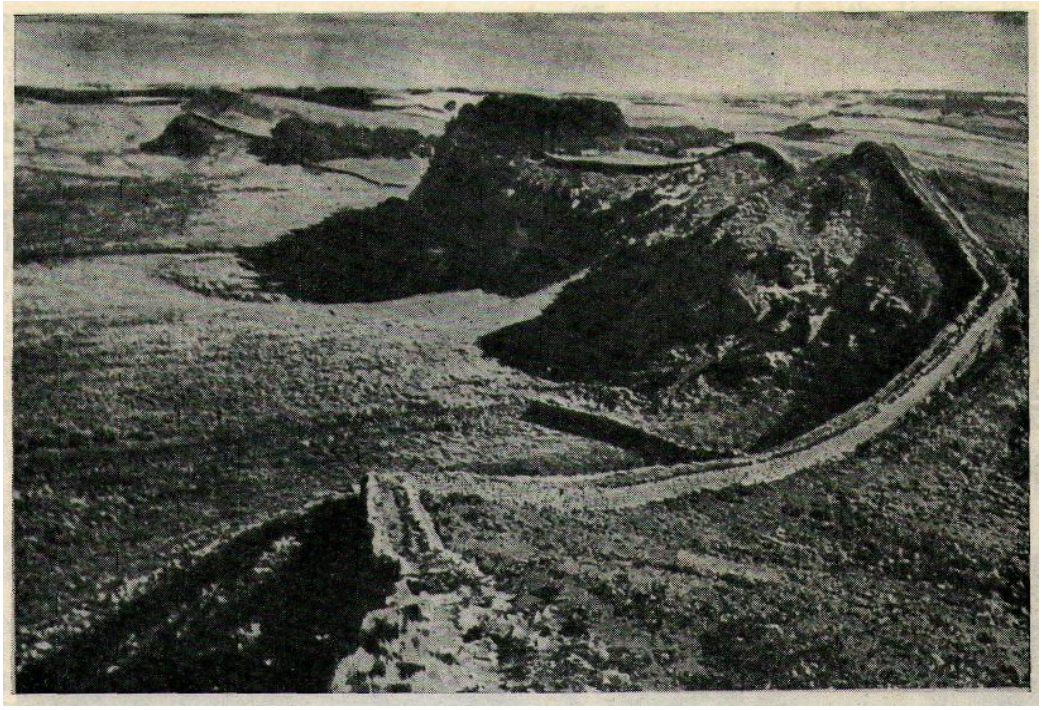
The Celtic tribal chiefs must have been sensible enough to see when they were beaten and so agreed to recognize the Romans as their rulers. That could not be said about the wide masses of the people, though. These openly expressed their discontent caused by the Romans' unabashed and unlimited plunder as well as their endless taxations. In 51 A.D. the wild tribes of the Celtic North headed by **Caradoc** or **Caractacus,** were defeated, and the priests of the Britons, the Druids, were expelled from the island of Mona where they had their religious centre (modern Anglesey off the northern coast of North Wales). But the people's resistance grew to a pitch in 59-61 A.D. when the Celts of what is now Norfolk rallied and, increasing their numbers with their progress like a rolling snowball, in an irresistible avalanche poured upon the Roman strongholds; Roman military camps were razed to the ground, separate Roman detachments were annihilated, and Camulodunum, Verulamium and Londinium were destroyed and burnt down; thousands of Roman settlers and their adherents were killed. The rebellion was headed by Boadicea whom the Celts called their queen (a statue to this brave lady can be viewed as a monument of historical importance in London to-day); she used to rush at the invaders in her war chariot, with her daughters to fight, at the head of the vast army of freedom-loving Celtic people. After the defeat of the uprising, to escape humiliation she took poison together with her daughters.

The suppression of the Celts was a hard enough job; it tasked the

Roman legions to the utmost. Frightened by its scope, the Romans must have decided to think twice before they violated the Celtic people's rights too impudently.

All this while the Romans kept pushing on; at the end of the 1st century A.D. when **Agricola** was the chief Roman governor of Britain (78-85 A.D.), he invaded Caledonia and in the battle of Mons Grampius defeated the chief of the Picts, **Galgacus**. However, the Picts of Caledonia must have produced a strong impression upon the Romans, for in 121 A.D. the Emperor Hadrian caused a wall to be erected from the Tyne to the Solway Firth, that is, in a line cutting through what is Newcastle today. They had erected another wall somewhat earlier, nearer south, so Hadrian's Wall was a step further to the North. From the Forth to the Clyde the wall of Antonine was built (140 A.D.), later called Grime's Dyke.

Ireland was in those days inhabited by the Scots (some of the Scots must have migrated in their fight against the Romans later) in the 4th century. The Romans made no attempt to subdue Ireland; as to Wales, it belonged to the so-called military districts of Roman Britain together with the other mountainous areas of the north and west (as opposed to the civil districts of the east and south where the greater part of large towns were located). The mountainous parts must have seemed prohibitive, inhabited as they were by those disobedient Celts who had retreated there to retain their independence; the same applied to Cornwall, or West Wales as it was called.



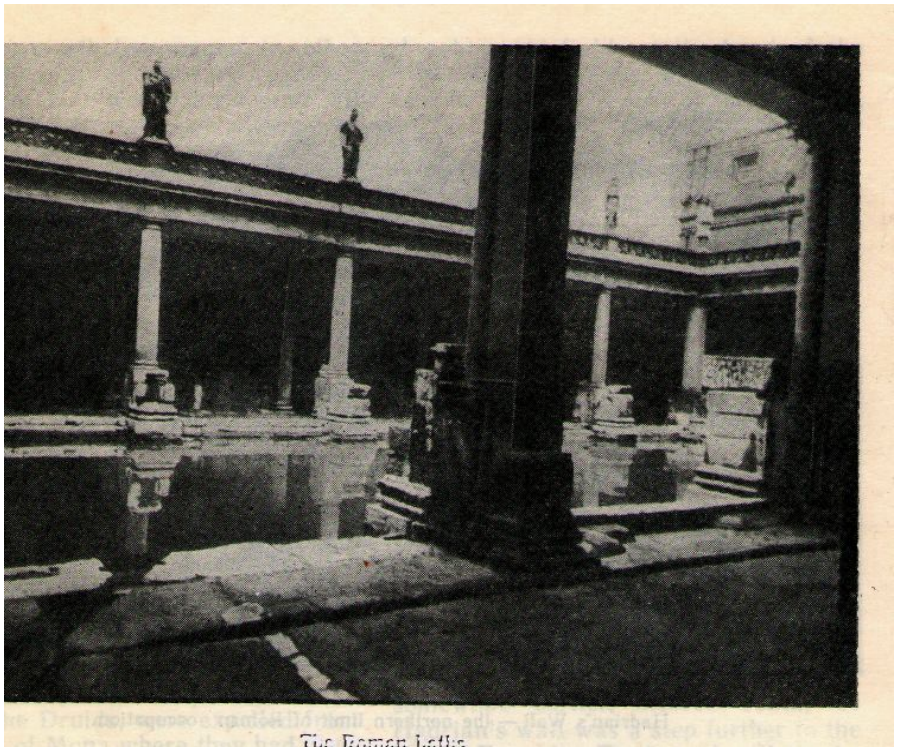
Hadrian's Wall - the northern limit of Roman occupation

So, forts were built at Carleon, Chester and York with a legion in each to ensure the safety of the occupation zone where the towns were restored and walled with ditches supplementing the protective power of walls. Thus, for instance, the wall around Londinium built after the Boadicea fright, was about two and a half metres thick at the base. London was made an inland port and lively trade was concentrated there since Roman Britain exported grain for the needs of the metropolis and of other Roman provinces as well, skins of wild and domestic animals, tin, pearls - and slaves, too.

London's position was especially fortunate for it was a centre of both external and internal trade: the Romans built roads leading to the garrison towns, for they couldn't have kept the country without reliable and efficient means of transportation. Three of those roads converged upon London making it a veritable commercial centre (not administrative centre, however, for though it was by far the largest of the towns, it was not given the Roman municipium status).

There were four principal roads: Ermine Street, leading to Lincoln and York (from York a special road led to Hadrian's Wall); Watling Street from London to Chester; Icknield way connecting London with Cirencester, Gloucester and Caerleon in South Wales, and the Fosse way

that passed through the Cotswolds and connected Lincoln with Exeter, the extreme south-western Roman fort.



The Roman baths

The roads were certainly an improvement on an otherwise impassable territory (though, of course, they made it accesible for numerous future invaders); the extensive cleared areas along the roads and rivers as well as the general improvement on agriculture that the rapacious Romans introduced using the cheap or practically free provincial labour - all that was no doubt beneficial for Britain's agricultural development.

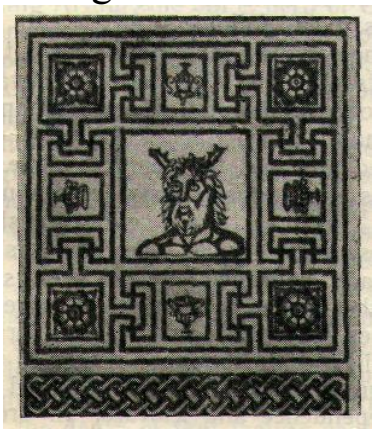
There's something to be said for the cultural influence as well: Christianity was a step forward as compared to the heathenish Druidical rites; there was a handful of Latin words to enrich the Celtic vocabulary. There were some brutal laws that stayed on after the Romans left, chiefly concerned with the institution of slavery, such as the one mentioned by Mark Twain in his "Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court", saying "if one slave killed his master all the slaves of that man must die for it," etc.

For the rest, the imported and therefore superficial civilization was never more than skin-deep with the country since it did not include the

broad masses of the people to whom it was alien, so it evaporated as soon as the importers left, which happened four hundred years after they came.

Those historians who base their observations on the data derived from town life, that is, the life of the roma-nized upper layers of the British Celts, state that Romanization was completed and the Celts forgot they were Britons.

Romanization was nearly non-existent in Ireland and Scotland. In the countryside, the old Celtic way of life was preserved, the Celts continued living in their old Celtic way, suffering from the invaders' exploitation, passing their native customs and traditions from generation to generation and speaking their Celtic dialects enriched by some of the Latin words like "castra" — military camp (found now in names like Lancaster, Winchester, Chichester, Cirencester, Leicester, Chester, etc.), "vallum"— wall (Hadrian's Wall, Auto-nine's Wall), "via strata" — street (Watling street, Ermine street). True, the wealthy British farmers had their lands tilled by slaves in the Roman fashion while the old Celtic social structure of the village coexisted with these imported arrangements.



Roman mosaic pavement with head of a sea god

The decay of Roman power in Britain became apparent already at the end of the 4th c.; the attacks of the wild Celtic tribes from behind the walls that had sealed off those dangerous areas, were no longer so efficiently and promptly repulsed in the latter part of the 5th c. as it used to have been the Romans' way; the usual grain-laden ships were no longer sent to the metropolis. Finally in 407 orders came for the legions to return. Evidently, the safety of Rome itself was in question: its rotten economy based on the sand of slavery, its greed-swollen conquest craze

that lured the Romans on to bite off more than they could chew, its clay-legged military dictatorship aggravated by the bickerings of the would-be emperors who were constantly at each other's throat in their scrambling for power, made the great city an easy prey to any west-migrating barbaric tribes like the Germanic tribes of the period. As it is, there are suppositions to the effect that the British Roman ruler of the time, Constantine, was himself eager to try and get the crown for himself, using the legions at his disposal for the purpose. So the Romans left, and failed to return. .... „

The Anglo-Saxon Invasion

The romanized Celts, with little of their former resistance power left after four centuries of enforced reliance upon their Roman masters, were left to their own resources. They had formidable foes both within and without: barbaric Germanic tribes across the North Sea and the unconquered Gaelic Celts of Scotland and Ireland. The latter, the Celtic tribes of the North and West, were bitterly resentful of their enemy-tamed kinsmen and were fully determined to stage a comeback with a vengeance. They descended upon the now defenceless province and very soon very little was left of the Roman splendour.

The Gaels of Scotland and Ireland had rehearsed the annihilating effect many times before, overflowing the sealing-off walls and having a go at the towns and villas, pillaging and burning down. Thus, London was sacked by the Picts and Scots in 369 A.D. Now they could do it with impunity, laying the civil districts of South Britain waste, which explains to a great extent the rapidity and completeness with which the imported Roman civilization disappeared. The Germanic tribe of the Jutes, believed to have been a Frankish tribe from the lower Rhine reaches, were the first to arrive. They seem to have been in contact with the Romans and were certainly well versed in military matters since they used to serve as hired soldiers in the Roman army. They settled in the southern part of the island for good, founding their state of Kent later on.

Other Germanic tribes that followed in their wake, went about the business of invasion in a very thorough fashion. They were the primitive Angles and Saxons, backward Teutonic tribes from the so-called German coast, that is, from the country around the mouth of the Elbe and from the south of Denmark.

They were land-tillers, living in large kinship groups and having a

special layer of professional warriors to do the fighting. By the 4th c. A.D. the latter were beginning to feel important since their military exploits brought them booty and took them to distant lands, widening their horizons. Their first raids to the British Isles, therefore, were a chance for them to rise higher above the general run of peaceful peasant, plunder and not conquest being the principal object of such raids. The desultory raiders in war-bands began to infiltrate into Britain at the end of the 4th and early in the 5th cc. The traditional date of their wholesale invasion, however, is 449-450 A.D.

This is the time when migrations of people in Western Europe were becoming the normal state of thing, and it was probably as part of this movement that vast Anglo-Saxon hordes poured into Britain, the object being territorial conquest. They came in family groups and in tribes, with wives and children immediately following in the wake of the warriors with personal effects, household possessions and agricultural implements. The ancient organization of blood-relations as a social unit was beginning to decay since the military group was growing in importance though the military leader still surrounded himself with blood-relations: the migrations of kinship groups and tribes quickened this process of decay, since family groups were liable to be scattered and intermixed in the process. Besides, side by side with the family group there appeared another unit of society, a territorial one — the village or the township as it was called. The prevailing form of landownership was characteristic of a free village community: land was common property. The social relations of the Anglo-Saxons (the superstructure) corresponded to the form of land ownership (the basis). The very process of migration, of invading a new country, aided the decay of kinship group structure, formerly homogeneous: it was going to pieces in the process of settling as it was sometimes a whole family group that settled on a certain land plot dividing it in equal shares among the members while side by side with this there could be a settlement where a military leader grasped a plot of land leaving much smaller plots to his followers, etc.

The conquest must have been ruthless in its character. The barbaric invaders not only annihilated all the remnants of Roman culture, they killed and plundered and laid the country waste. The Celts were mercilessly exterminated. The survivors were either enslaved (those who survived were mostly slaves already, degraded into the slave status by

the Romans) or made to retreat to Wales, Cornwall and to the North of the island. So they took refuge in those mountainous regions and retained their independence and culture. In Ireland the Celtic tribes separated from the main island by the sea and never subdued, likewise retained their freedom. They developed crafts and arts showing great skill in metal work, in sculpture and music.

After the first shock even the roma-nized Celts must have rallied to resist. The remoteness of the period makes details hard to obtain, but we do find mention of resistance headed by Ambro-sius Aurelianus early in the 6th c. There were victorious battles where characteristic Celtic endurance must have been displayed to the best advantage but they only served to protract the invasion period for though Anglo-Saxon progress was checked, it was resumed again later on in the course of the 6th c.

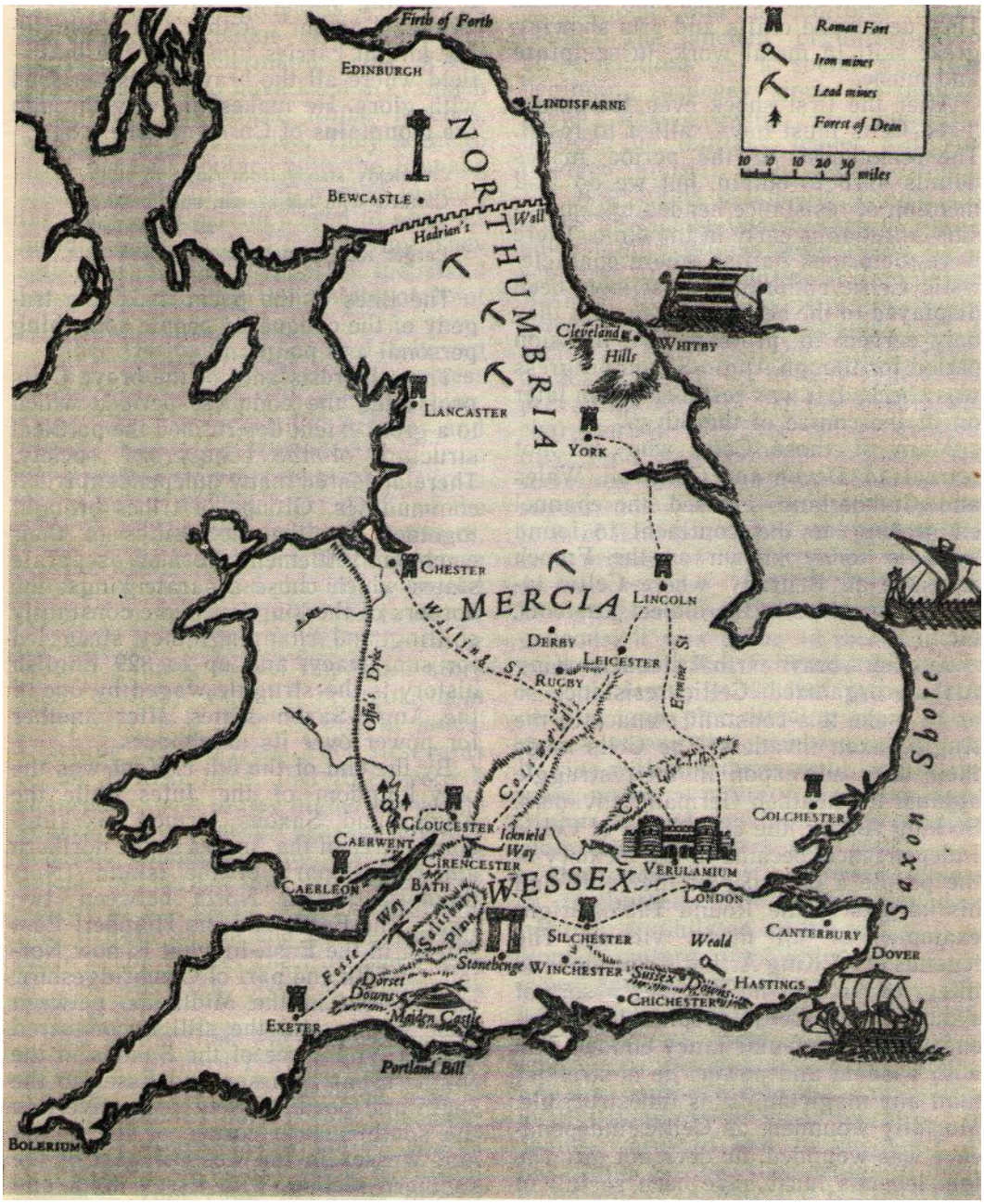
Many of those Celts who did not retreat to Devon and Cornwall, Wales and Cumberland, crossed the channel emigrating to the continent to found what is today known as the French province of Brittany where Celtic influence survives in the dialect, customs, etc.

Another brave tribal leader, **King Arthur**, organized Celtic resistance so as to make it a constant menace to the Anglo-Saxon invaders. The Celts made their faith a weapon in their struggle against the heathen Germanic invaders. So, king Arthur, the 6th century hero of Celtic Independence, became in the memory of the people a defender of the faith, and his knights of the Round Table, bright examples of all moral virtues. The legends extol King Arthur's courage and integrity. In fact he becomes a sort of symbol of the Celtic people's independence and the popular fancy endows him with wisdom and power: he is stronger than any magician, he is indestructible. Mortally wounded, as Celtic independence was wounded, he does not die.

The folk legends must have been so full of genuine feeling that even 13 centuries later the depth of that feeling could be fathomed by a poet, to be crystallized in moving verse. In Alfred Tennyson's "Morte d'Arthur", Arthur's last remaining knight carries him from the battlefield where all the brave Celts perished with glory. He makes his way through the mountains of Cornwall where he ..."quickly strode from ridge to ridge Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walked Larger than human on the frozen hills..." The lines of the poem make the tragedy of the conquered people something personal and poignant. Thus the resistance of the brave Celts protracted the conquest period, which to a

great extent determined the political structure of the conquerors' society. There appeared many independent tribal communities. Groups of tribes brought together by the necessities of their common settlement formed separate states which chose separate kings; the borders of the kingdom were constantly shifting and changing; they struggled for supremacy, and up to 829 English history is the struggle waged by one of the Anglo-Saxon states after another for power over its neighbours.

By the end of the 6th c. Kent was the only kingdom of the Jutes while the Angles and Saxons formed six kingdoms, three of the Angles in the northern and central parts of the island (Nor-thumbria in the North between two rivers, the Forth and the Humber; East Anglia in the East, in what is now Norfolk, Suffolk and part of Cambridgeshire, and Mercia in the Midlands, between East Anglia and the still unconquered Wales), and three of the Saxons in the southern part: Sussex and Essex to the south and north of Kent respectively in the south-eastern corner of the island and Wessex in the western part of the southern section, with Essex, Kent and Sussex for its eastern neighbours and the Devon peninsula with King Arthur's legendary Celtic stronghold in Cornwall, still unconquered, for its western neighbour.



Prehistoric, Roman and Anglo-Saxon England

1.1. **The Formation of 'Anglo-Saxon' England**

Britain, before its southern part was to become ***Enɜla-land***, was a country inhabited, by Cellic tribes most of which had for a period of almost four hundred years formed it province of the Roman Empire. The first attempts of the Romans to subjugate the island date back as far as 55 and 54 B.C. when Roman troops under Julius Caesar invaded southeastern Britain. Systematic conquest of the country began about 43

A.D. at the time of the Roman emperor Claudius. In the end almost the whole of Britain except Scotland (and other parts beyond Hadrian's Wall, a long stone wall built about 121 A.D. during the reign of the Roman Emperor Hadrian to protect the province from the inroads of the 'Picts', the Celtic tribes of Caledonia) was brought under Roman control and became the Roman province of Britannia.

Four centuries of Roman occupation had meant far-reaching Romanization, or Latinization, of life in this country, including Christianization of its inhabitants and the establishment of Latin, besides Brittonic or British (a sub-branch of Common Celtic from which Welsh, Cornish and Breton are said to have been derived), as the language of administration and law as well as of the Church and, possibly, of trade and (at least the second language) of the upper strata among the urban and rural population of Roman Britain. The Roman period came to an end with the withdrawal of the Roman legions from (the island in the early fifth century when Rome itself was threatened by an incursion of the Goths.

The collapse of imperial rule left the country, split up into various kingdoms under the rule of British princes, virtually without protection against the Picts and Scots beyond the northern frontier or against invaders from the continent. It was in this situation that armed bands of adventurers from various Germanic tribes began harassing the country and started what was to end up in the conquest and colonization of by far the greater part of Britain by people of Germanic descent.

Certainly this was the beginning of the period of the migration of considerable numbers of Germanic tribesmen bent on the seizure of land and on becoming permanent occupants of the conquered territory. But to all appearances they were not the first men of Germanic origin to go to Britain. Archaeological findings seem no longer to leave any doubt that the first Germanic people in the North and in other areas of what was later to become England served as soldiers in units of the Roman army Stationed in Britain. The late historian H. P. R. Finberg even went so far as to assume that "by the middle of the fifth century the population of the island in all probability included an appreciable element of Germanic" origin and "speech, and, as a natural sequel, a hybrid Anglo-British intermixture"[10].

If near-conlemporary sources like **Gildas**, one of the native Britons, who wrote in the second quarter of the sixth cenlury can, to

some extent at least, be relied upon, the British rulers in the early post-Roman period followed their Roman precursors in hiring Germanic mercenaries to defend their territory and especially to avert the danger of a new incursion from beyond the northern frontier. According to Gildas, the number of Germanic adventurers arriving in answer to the call soon multiplied to such an extent (and "fixed their terrible claws in the eastern part of the island") that the Britons who had called them, were no longer able to meet their demands and themselves became the victims of Germanic aggression.

Whatever the state of things really was, there can scarcely be any doubt that the fifth century marked the beginnings of a large-scale invasion of Britain, from the east and the south, by Germanic war-bands who, in course of time, established a number of Germanic 'kingdoms' in various parts of the conquered country. The invaders of the fifth and the following centuries quite obviously came from various Germanic tribes referred to as Angli, Saxones and Iutae in Bede's **Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum** (Ecclesiastical History of the English People, completed in 731 monastery of Wermouth), or as **Angiloi and Frissones** in Procopius of **Caesura's** account **De bello gothico** (iv.19).

The is not much difference of opinion concerning the identity of the first two tribes mentioned in Bede's work to all appearances the **Angles** and the **Saxons** whom **Claudius Ptolemaeus**, writing in the second century, placed in the region between the east bank of the river Elbe and the coastal areas of the Baltic (but who later also Spread west- and southwards), sometimes more particularly referred to as the **Holstein Saxons**.There is no general agreement as to whether the third tribe whom Bede had in mind, were the **Jutes** who gave their name to Jutland and had their Original home in this area or whether they represented another Germanic tribe.

The scholars in favor of this placing assume early migration of (those who were later to become) the *English Jutes* from Jutland to "a position in which there was contact with Frisians to the west and north-west, Saxons to the east, and Salian Franks lo the south, i.e. probably in southern Holland, north of the lower Rhine"11. The discovery of grave-goods which seem to have been personal possession of 5th century Frankish warriors, points to the possibility of Salian Franks among the fifth-century settlers south of the Thames[12].

That there were contingents of Frisians among the invaders, who lived along the North Sea coastline and islands between the Elbe and the Rhine, is at least suggested by Procopius. What is out of doubt is the existence of close trade relations, after Ihe Conquest, between Kentish traders and Frisians in whose hands most of the over-seas trade seems to have been.

Whatever the situation was, the conquest of Britain was quite evidently not a migration of entire continental Germanic tribes but a process which involved numerous, mid often probably, mixed bands of many continental tribes. And yet there seem to have been preponderances among the members of the various tribes who settled in particular regions of the conquered country.

The expeditions effecting the conquest and colonization of most of Britain ultimately led to the development of political divisions within the territory of Enzla-lond which quite obviously also affected the linguistic situation and particularly the evolution of varieties of 'English'. The linguistically most relevant division finally to evolve was the four-fold division into northern, central, southeastern and southwestern Enzla-lond. Bul there were also (earlier) subdivisons which continued to be linguistically relevant. As has been mentioned already, the early invasion period saw the appearance of a number of larger or smaller 'kingdoms' or principalities in various parts of the country. These apparently included:

- the kingdom of Kent, which in the later sixth century extended over little more than the modern counties of Kent and Surrey, and was, according to the prevailing opinion, founded by conquerors with various tribal affiliations but a preponderant Jutish' clement among them;
- the kingdom of the South Saxons bordering, in the east, on Kent and said to have been ruled, some time before 560, by a certain Aelli, who is supposed by some historians to have possibly acted as the commander in chief of "a mixed force of Saxon, Frisian, Jutish and Frankish adventurers who successfully established themselves (13) in the area of modern **Sussex** (or thereabout);
- the principality of the **Gewisse** supposedly founded by the leader of a war-band which "seems" to have "consisted mainly of Jutes"(13) whose territory originally comprised southern Hampshire to the west of Sussex, in particular the area around Southampton Water and the Isle of Wight;
- the kingdom of the *West Saxons* (Wessex) who first occupied the

lands immediately south of the middle Thames (northern Berkshire), possibly as early as the beginning of the fifth century, to judge from archaeological findings in the area around Abingdon, and who, before the end of the sixth century, seem to have extended their domain further southwards to include the Gewisse territories in Hampshire with another westward expansion bringing them temporary control of southern and central Gloucestershire (the Cotswold territory). Separate 'kingdoms' had also been established by the conquerors invading Britain from the Thames estuary and the Wash, in particular

- the *East Saxon* kingdom (Essex), with London as its chief town, whose authority at one time seems to have extended over modern Hertfordshire and Surrey as well as over 'the area of the *Middle Saxons* (Middlesex), and
- the *East Anglian* kingdom, founded by the rulers of the East Angles who occupied an area on the south side of the Wash roughly covering modern Norfolk and Suffolk, a kingdom which the recent sensational archaeological finds at Sutton Hoo(14), above the estuary of the Deben near Woodbridge (East Suffolk),reveal as a maritime power with extensive trading contacts overseas in the seventh century, but whose political importance seems to have rapidly declined since the latter half of this century.

At this early period (before the seventh century) nothing but the very first beginnings can be discovered of what was later to become

The powerful kingdom of *Mercia* in central England, which had its origin in settlements of the Mercians, an Anglian people, in the valley of the Trent, at first politically dependent on the kingdom, north of it, whose seventh-century rulers to all appearances succeeded in bringing about a union with the Middle Angles, 8 group of small tribal units who had settled somewhere south of the Trent.

In the uplands of Lincolnshire other invaders of predominantly Anglian origin had, during the early days of the Conquest, founded the kingdom of *Lindsey* which politically, however, never played more than a subordinate role and was, for the most time, more or less dependent on its powerful neighbours to the north or south (west) of it.

Futher up in the north the Germanic invaders, most of them supposedly of Anglian stock, occupied a territory at first split up into two kingdoms: The kingdom of *Deira*, in the area south of the Tees (modern Yorkshire), with its base probably in the East Riding and the plain of York, and the kingdom of *Bernicia*, north of the Tees, where the new

overlords seem to have ruled over largely British subjects, in the fifth and the sixth century. Towards the end of the sixth century the two dominions were united to form the kingdom of *Northumbria*.

Expansion into the remaining British territories was pushed further ahead in the seventh century at the end of which by far the greater part of southern Britain lay under the rule of the Germanic conquerors. Of all the kingdoms and principalities to arise in the course of the conquest, only three, namely *Northumbria, Mercia and Wessex*, were ultimately to develop into powers of major importance which, in succession, exercised supremacy over all England (or much of it). In the southeast, *Kent* had, during the latter half of the sixth and the early seventh century, achieved temporary cultural and political dominance, due, in part at least, to its unique position as a link to the commercial and intellectual life on the continent.

The old trade route from the continent passed through Kent and was extended by Kentish traders northward to Mercia and Northumbria at least as far as York, and with trade cultural innovations spread northwards. As the home of the metropolitan see (the See of Canterbury), founded in the early days of the Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons, Kent also gained considerable ecclesiastical influence. Archbishops like Theodore of Tarsus (669-690) made Canterbury an important centre of learning. However, its political and military ascendancy did not outlast the early seventh century, and even its cultural supremacy was soon to become challenged.

The first of the three major kingdoms to win the struggle for supremacy was *Northumbria*, whose seventh-century rulers not only succeeded in capturing Edinburgh mid extending their frontier as far northward as the Firth of Forth (which remained in English hands until the formal recognition, in the late tenth century, of the Tweed us the northern boundary of England) but, for some time, also reigned as undisputed overlords of all the southern kingdoms.

In the wake of Christianization Northumbria also became the dominant area in learning with renowned intellectual centres such as the monasteries at Lindisfarne, Monk-wearmouth and Jarrow (where Bede [735] wrote his long series of scientific treatises and biblical commentaries as well as his famous Ecclesiastical History of the English People, or at Whitby, and the school of York, a metropolitan see since 735, which became the leading centre of English scholarship in the eighth century known and respected all over Western Europe. In its

cultural achievements Northumbria by far outshone the other kingdoms of England, and cultural life continued to flourish in this area until its rich libraries of manuscripts were ravaged by the Viking invaders of the late ninth century. As a political and military power Northumbria lost its influence over southern England before the end of the eighth century and was superseded by Mercia.

Under a succession of ambitious rulers in the second quarter and the latter half of the seventh century and thereafter, *Mercia* developed from small beginnings in the valley of the Trent into a most powerful kingdom. It expanded its territory into Cheshire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, south-west Warwickshire, Gloucestershire east of the Severn and Worcestershire, conquered the formerly West Saxon territory in Berkshire, detached London and Middlesex from the East Saxon kingdom, made the kingdom of Lindsey into a Mercian dependency (and finally annexed it completely), and also gained authority over East Anglia, Essex and Surrey. Mercia thus acquired a position of absolute dominance in central England. For almost a hundred and fifty years supremacy over central and southern England rested largely with the Mercians until it finally passed to Wessex in the course of the first half of the ninth century.

In the 7th century there occurred a considerable westward expansion of the West Saxon dominion which, before the end of the century, resulted in the annexation of the territories of modern Wiltshire, Dorsetshire, Somersetshire and Devonshire and, probably, at least the beginning of English settlements in Cornwall. Loss of authority over originally West-Saxon held Berkshire and the Cotswolds was thus made up for by considerable gains in the South-West.

But the gradual development of *Wessex* into the strongest kingdom England had yet known, did not really begin until after the accession of King Eczbryht (802-839). During his reign the West Saxons not only gained control over the whole of Cornwall but after victorious battle with the Mercians (825) also annexed Surrey, Sussex, Kent and Essex, and thus became masters of all southern England from Thanet to Lands End. This was followed somewhat later by the recovery of Berkshire from the Mercian kings. Only a powerful kingdom such as this was able to withstand the fierce attacks of the Viking armies in the late ninth century and to gain a position of leadership recognized by all the English in the island. It was in the fight for regaining control over the vast areas occupied by the Vikings (especially the Danes) that, in the tenth century,

the way was prepared for the establishment of a new Anglo-Danish state under the kings of Wessex.

What had begun, in the early Conquest period, with the setting-up of a whole number of larger or lesser Germanic kingdoms on conquered British soil, and then become largely a matter of the three most powerful kingdoms among them, which one after the other played a leading role in the history of the conquered country, finally, and under pressure of a peculiar situation created by the Viking invasions, ended up in the unification of all England under a single crown rooted in the Southwest (with the exception of the 'Danish interlude' from 1017 to 1042, when the country was ruled by the Danish king Cnut and his sons Harold and Harthacnut).

From the time of King Alfred (871-899), and the decline or destruction of the northern centres of intellectual life caused by the Vikings, Wessex also took the lead in the revival of learning and became the area where new intellectual centres developed which gave a powerful impetus to a rich cultural life further promoted by the monastic revival in the latter part of the tenth century."

1.2. The Christianization of the 'Anglo-Saxons'

Efforts to make the heathen English accept Christianity date back as far as 597 when Roman missionaries under Augustine landed in Kent, the nearest kingdom to the continent, which at that time had gained a leading position in the country. After having achieved a limited success in Kent and Essex, which culminated in the establishment of the archbishopric of Canterbury with Augustine as the first primate, the Roman mission extended their activities, in the early seventh century, into Northumbria, the dependent kingdom of Lindsey, and East Anglia, but had to discontinue their efforts after the defeat, in 634, of the Northumbrians by the forces of the Mercian king.

Thereafter, Christianization in the North was carried on not by missionaries from Rome but from Iona, an important Celtic (or Irish-Scottish) centre of Christianity off the West coast of Scotland whence came the Irish missionary Aidan and his followers who, in 635, settled on the island of Lindisfarne and made it the Northumbrian counterpart of Iona. Supported by the Northumbrian kings, whose supremacy extended over much of England during this period, the Irish-Scottish mission

exercised considerable influence in the conversion of the southern kingdoms. Tin development came to an abrupt end, however, with the unconditional decision in favour of Rome at the Synod of Whitby in 663 or 664. By the end of the seventh century England had been almost entirely converted to Christianity and formed a single ecclesiaslical province with fourteen bishops all of which acknowledged the primacy of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

In 735 York was made the second archbishopric. Cristianization powerfully influenced the further development of spiritual and cultural life in England (and affected other spheres of life, too). Acceptance of the Christian faith involved, to a greater or lesser extent, acceptance of things Roman including the acceptance of Latin, the language of Rome, as the language of the Church on the island. The building of cathedrals and the foundation of monasteries and convents such as St. Augustine's (Canterbury), Lindisfarne, Monkwearmouth, Jarrow, Whitby and very many others, often richly endowed with lands and having schools attached to them, greatly contributed to the cultivation of the art of writing in the monastic scriptoria and to the spread of literacy (restricted, of course, to certain strata or groups of contemporary society).

Inextricably linked with the access to the achievements of Christian culture on the continent opened up by this movement was the rise, in the later seventh and the eighth century, of famous centres of English scholarship: Archbishop Theodore's school at Canterbury devoted to the study of Latin and Greek and of scripture, astronomy, music, prosody, and Roman law; the renowned Northumbrian monasteries, or the school of York with Alcuin as its head, who in 782 took charge of the school attached to the Frankish court of Charlemagne. Churchmen substantially supported King Alfred in his successful efforts to arrest the decay of learning in ninth-century England due to a deterioration of monastic life and the destruction of many monasteries during the Danish ravages. And, finally, the Benedictine reform in the later tenth century, which led to the foundation or re-establishment of numerous monasteries and convents south of the Humber, gave a new impetus to the ecclesiastical and intellectual life of the country and the multiplication of books, and bore notable fruit in art and literature.

1.3. The Viking Invasions of 'Anglo-Saxon' England

The conquest of the larger part of Britain, begun in the 5th century

and largely completed by the end of the seventh or in the early eighth century, had brought the members of the various Germanic tribes which participated in the invasion and the settlement of the conquered country, into contact with Celtic-speaking Britons living under their domination. A new language-contact situation was to arise when, in the last third of the 9th century, Viking war-bands, no longer content with harassing and ravaging the east and south coasts (which they had done on several occasions in the late 8th century and almost annually in the three decades since 835), began the systematic occupation of English territory and the settlement of occupied areas in various parts of the country. This resulted in a Scandinavian-speaking community of some considerable size coming into existence in the Viking dominions.

This new phase in the Viking raids on England began in 865 when a great army (consisting mainly of Danish Vikings) landed in East Anglia and, after subjugating it, went on to Northumbria and captured York, then crossed the length and breadth of the English midlands and penetrated deep into Wessex before the West Saxons succeeded in bringing their offensive to a halt. Then the other kingdoms became again the main target of the Viking attacks and, within less than a decade, all of them except Wessex had lost their independence. Northumbria shrank to a much-ravaged Bernicia (including Durham and Northumberland), while its southern half, corresponding broadly with modern Yorkshire, became a Danish kingdom (the York Viking kingdom). The eastern part of Mercia was annexed by the Danish rulers and Western Mercia made dependent upon it.

It was only the defeat inflicted on the Viking army by King Alfred in the battle at Edington (Wiltshire) (878) which prevented the Danes from becoming lords over all England and forced them to conclude a peace treaty. The Danes now devoted themselves to the systematic occupation of East Anglia but hostilities broke out again between them and the English under the King of Wessex. In 886 Guthrum, their leader, entered into an agreement with Alfred, King of Wessex, which defined the southern boundary of the Danish dominions in East Anglia and Mercia as running from the mouth of the Thames, then up the river Lea to its source, thence in a straight line to Bedford, and then up the Ouse to Watling Street.

The treaty of Wedmore practically meant the division of England into two parts one of which comprised the territory of the kingdom of Wessex (i.e. all southern England from Kent to Cornwall) and Western

Mercia (or 'English Mercia') (which recognized the king of Wessex as its overlord) and the other the territories under Danish rule (Danelaw), sometimes subdivided into the 'northern Danelaw' (Yorkshire with parts of the adjoining districts), the 'southern (or central) Danelaw' (or Scandinavian Mercia) and the 'eastern Danelaw' (East Anglia).

To judge from the available historical sources and various other kinds of evidence (including place- and personal names), the major areas of Scandinavian settlement (and, consequently, areas of mixed Anglo-Scandinavian communities) comprised southern Northumbria (especially the East and North Riding of Yorkshire settled above all by Danes, and perhaps chiefly Norwegian settlements in part of the West Kiding), to a somewhat lesser extent the southern part of Durham, the North Midlands especially Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire (in particular the northeast and southeast), and - less marked - east Cheshire (probably the westernmost settlements resulting from the Danish conquest of Mercia)), part of the Central Midland (Leicestershire and the former county of Rutland) and East Anglia (Norfolk and Suffolk, with Scandinavian place-names, however, only predominating in the area north of Yarmouth). In other central midland or southeast midland areas where settlemenls may have occurred, such as Northamptonshire, former Huntingdonshire, Cambridgeshire and Bedfordshire, there is a comparative lack of Scandinavian place-names.

In the early part of the 10th century new settlements of Scandinavians, consisting mainly of Norwegian settlers who were expelled from Ireland, arose especially in the western part of Cheshire (the Wirral peninsula), in the Lancashire coastlands, in Westmorland and in Cumberland. Although opinion about the density of the Scandinavian settlements in England is divided, most scholars agree that the Viking invasions led to a large-scale Scandinavian immigration and that the number of people of Scandinavian stock who became permanent occupants of the conquered territory was considerable. The reconquest of the Danelaw area in the tenth century, completed in 954, when the last Scandinavian ruler in York was finally expelled from the city, to all appearance did not ailed the continued existence of the ethnically mixed communities in the area.

The renewal of the Viking raids on England at the end of the tenth century and in the early years of the following century culminating in the Danish conquest of England by Swein Forkbeard and his son Cnut and the 'Danish interlude' (1017 or 1016 to 1042) obviously did not lead to

further Scandinavian immigration on a larger scale. But at least some of the followers of the new rulers received estates even in areas outside the former Danelaw, such as Dorset and Worcestershire, where in 1042 an episcopal lease was attested by "all thanes in Worcestershire, both English and Danish”[15].

1.4. The Norman Conquest and Its Effects on the Linguistic Situation in England

The defeat inflicted on King Harold's army by the French-speaking followers of William, Duke of Normandy, in the Battle of Hastings on 14 October I066 marked the beginning of another foreign invasion of England which far surlinked the preceding Viking invasions in its effects on the social, economic, cultural and linguistic development of the country. Linguistically, the Norman Conquest meant the dissemination in England of a non-Germanic language, which over u period of almost three and a half centuries was to play a significant (although progressively decreasing) role as a means of oral and written communication among certain section til the population.

Unlike the Germanic Conquest of the larger part of Britain in the fifth and following centuries and the later Scandinavian invasions, the establishment of Norman rule in England did not lead to large-scale immigration and mass settlements of compatriots of the conquerors. Within the population of late eleventh-century England, which has been estimated at about one and a half million, the French-speaking foreigners from Normandy and various other parts of France clearly represented a small minority of less (probably much less) than ten per cent. On the whole, the numerical ascendancy of the islanders of 'Anglo-Saxon' and Anglo-Scandinavian stock was preserved at every stage after the Norman Conquest.

However, there were considerable differences as far as the effects of the Conquest on the ethnic composition of the population were concerned. To some extent, the events of 1066 did lead to the rise of ethnically mixed communities of greater or lesser importance and in certain social classes or strata of the developing Anglo-Norman feudal society even brought about a numerical predominance of foreigners from the French-speaking part of the continent. As a consequence of the Norman Conquest, political and economic power became concentrated in the hands of a small group of great feudal landlords, which included the

king himself, the greater feudal landlords among the clergy - the archbishops, bishops, and the superiors of the more important abbeys - and the vassals of the king, or lay barons (whose number amounted to no more than about 190 in the late 11th century).

At the time of the 'Domesday' Survey (1086) this exceedingly small group, which constituted the feudal aristocracy of Norman England, consisted almost entirely of Frenchborn foreigners. Their economic power secured them the most influential positions in the military and civil administration of the country. They replaced the Anglo-Saxons at the King's Court, which at that time was the most important instrument of central government, and for over a century also held the more prominent positions in the administration of the shires, the local government. The peculiar situation in this group was further characterized by the fact that many members of the baronial class were at the same time holders of lands in Normandy and other parts of northern France and thus maintained close personal relations with their original homeland well into the twelfth or even into the early thirteenth century.

The re-distribution of the conquered land also led to considerable changes within the lower ranks of the ruling class, the numerically larger group of lesser feudal landlords, who held their lands by knight's service or by payment of a fixed rent to the barons or ecclesiastical landlords from whom they had received their lands. There is little doubt that this group, which even at the end of the twelfth century comprised no more than about 10,000 sub-tenants and their families, included a fair number of the kinsmen and retainers of the Norman-French aristocracy. But unlike the latter it obviously represented an ethnically mixed group which, although closely connected with the King and the aristocracy through a class-determined community of interests, was from the very beginning more exposed to influences of its predominantly English surroundings.

The lower ranks of the regular clergy of post-Conquest England were soon joined by foreign monks, mainly from Normandy but also from other parts of France, who were received into those older English monasteries which had been placed under foreign abbots or were sent to look after the vast lands donated to continental abbeys by the king and many of his barons; others came to England in the wake of the monastic revival in the early twelfth century which resulted in the foundalion of larger numbers of new monasteries, priories and smaller cells in different parts of the country. Monastic life in England was thus strongly

influenced by clerics of French extraction, especially during the first century after the Norman Conquest.

For a time a considerable number of the religious houses of England harboured communicative communities with a larger or smaller number of native speakers of French. The latter were probably outnumbered again by people of English stock by the later twelfth or early thirteenth century. But the abbeys of Normandy and other parts of France continued to exert a certain influence upon English monastic life even as late as the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

What the Norman Conquest did not affect, however, was essential changes in ethnic composition of the *peasantry*, which comprised more than 80 per cent of the population, or of the *townspeople* in the urban or semi-urban communities of Norman England. The foreigners among them were relatively few in number and to all appearances, were entirely absorbed by the overwhelming majority of their English-speaking neighbours within a comparatively short time.

The linguistic situation was certainly not only affected by changes in the conquered country itself but also by changes in its relations with the Continent. William the Conqueror's accession to the throne opened a period of almost one and a half centuries during which the King of England was (apart from a brief interval) at the same time Duke of Normandy and, as such, a vassal of the King of France. For half a century hum the accession of Henry II in 1154, the continental dominions of the English king extended down to the Pyrenees and included not only the duchy of Normandy but also the counties of Anjou, Maine, Touraine and Poitou as well as the duchy of Aquitaine.

The loss of Normandy (with the exception of the Channel Islands) to the King of France in 1204 had important consequences especially for the members of the feudal aristocracy who had up to then held lands on both sides of the Channel, since it forced them, with very few exceptions, to make their choice. Those who chose to stay in I upland had to give up their possessions in Normandy and thus became "purely English landowners with no interests at stake in France"[16]. The same happened forty years later to the small group of barons who had managed to retain lands in both countries beyond this date.

The territorial losses in King John's reign (1199-1216), which also included the counties of Anjou, Maine, Touraine and Poitou, drastically changed the relations between England and France, but certainly did not bring about the end of all contacts between the two kingdoms and did not

even mean the loss of all former English fiefs on the continent. Considerable and economically important parts of the former duchy of Aquitaine in the southwest of France still remained in English hands so that the territories held by Edward I during the last quarter of the thirteenth century, for example, still included Gascony as well as the provinces of Agenais and Saintonge north and northeast, respectively, of Gascony, and other possessions such as the county or Ponthieu in the northwest of France. The final loss of all French territories controlled by the English, with the exception of Calais, did not occur until the end of the so-called **Hundred Years' War** (1337-1453).

Throughout the 13th century Englishmen continued to cross the Channel, and long lists of names could be given of English barons, ecclesiastics, knights and clerks who in the king's service spent a shorter or longer time in the civil or military administration of the French territories still controlled by the kings of England. Relations between English priories and Norman or other French abbeys were not broken off. And in spite of the growing importance of the schools of Oxford and Cambridge, large numbers of Englishmen still flocked to the famous universities of France, among them several later archbishops of Canterbury or York, a number of later bishops, famous scholars like Roger Bacon and John Duns Scotus, sons of the feudal aristocracy, and many others.

At the same time, and until the end of the Civil War, traditionally called *the Barons' War* (1258 - 1267), considerable numbers of Frenchmen profiting from the favouritism of John and Henry III crossed the Channel in the opposite direction and were in many cases given influential positions as constables or sherriffs, at Court, in the central administration of the country, as church dignitaries, or were employed in the king's Wardrobe, which developed more and more into a new centre of administration and seems, for a certain time, to have been dominated by foreign clerks.

But the situation around the middle of the 13th century and in its latter half , was no longer comparable to the early days of the Conquest, since by now even the baronial upper class, or at least the majority of its members, had obviously come to regard themselves as 'Englishmen' — 'viri de terra Anglorum naturales et ingenui'. They united with other sections of the population to expel the foreigners from the country, and so put an end to what some historians have called the 'second French invasion of England'.

There can be no doubt that the Norman Conquest also changed the linguistic situation in England. It brought members of another speech community to England and extended the diffusion of the French language beyond the Channel.Engllish thus no longer played the same role as it had done in pre-Conquest times. However its position as the means of communication of the vast majority of the population was never challenged.

The Norman Conquest did not create conditions which could in any way make the native peasants give up their own language or adopt the French language of the Conquerors as a second tongue. Circumstances almost certainly compelled the small minority of peasants among the foreigners to adapt themselves soon to their surroundings and to acquire some knowledge of English. 'Language shift', in their case, probably took no more than one or two generations. To all appearances the peasantry of England had again become an entirely and exclusively English-speaking class as early as the early 12th century. The '**rusticanus tocius eloquii alterius Anglici nescius**' — the peasant ignorant of any other language than English — remained the typical representative of his class throughout the middle Ages (and beyond).

The assimilation of natives and foreigners, such as craftsmen and traders in the urban communities of post-Conquest England, although probably proceeding at a somewhat slower pace, was obviously no different in its outcome from that in the ranks of the peasantry. The sparse information available concerning the end of the 12th century scarcely admits of any other conclusion than that English, and not French, was the normal means of communication of the townspeople or 'burgenses' (burgesses) of England at this time. The mere numerical preponderance of unilingual speakers of English did not, however, prevent the language of the Conquerors from playing an important role in certain spheres of communication and communicative communities of England over a period of several centuries.

The particular conditions which had arisen after the Norman Conquest were anything but unfavourable to the maintenance (and even extension) of the use of French in the circles of the new ruling class of England. The feudal aristocracy, almost exclusively Norman-French in origin and closely connected for nearly one and a half centuries with their continental homeland through territoral possessions and family lies, to all appearances retained French as their native tongue into the thirteenth century. For the members of the royal house of England, for

whom it was almost the rule to contract marriages with noblewomen of French-speaking royal or aristocratic houses on the continent, French remained the 'mother tongue' in the most literal sense of the word until the end of the 14th century (and partly even beyond it).

The dominant role of the French language in the Royal Court and the baronial households explains, among other things, the great number of literary works in (Norman) French which were written in England during the 12th century (and which, in its latter part, actually outnumbered those composed in France itself). Such works were, to a large extent, expressly designed for just these circles.

The *lesser nobility* had from the early days of the Conquest obviously not only consisted of native speakers of French but also included a certain number of people who had English as their mother tongue. The ethnic composition of this group and its particular position in society — marked by more or less close connections with the King and the feudal aristocracy on the one hand and closer contacts with the peasantry, especially its upper ranks on the other — seems to have favoured the early rise of bilingualism among its members. It is highly probable that those lesser feudal landlords who were of purely Norman-French stock or had sprung from mixed marriages (or not a few of them, at any rate), adopted English as their first language at some time in the twelfth century though for quite a time retaining French as a second language for the same 'social reasons' which made the English-born among them acquire additional knowledge of the language of their social superiors.

Bilingualism obviously remained a more or less widespread phenomenon in the ranks of the lesser nobility throughout most of the thirteenth century and could even be found among (a progressively decreasing) proportion of its members in the fourteenth century (especially with persons who were in attendance upon members of the royal family or other great lords, or exercised important police, judicial or administrative functions as Crown officials, or held other influential positions).

The other social circles where French had gained ground, as a native or a second language, after the Norman Conquest comprised the *upper ranks of the secular clergy* (influential diocesan officials, such as archdeacons and deans or other cleribs in attendance on bishops and archbishops; private chaplains of the royal family or of members of the feudal aristocracy or the knighthood; and others) as well as the larger

part of *the regular clergy* (in addition to the Church barons of England, the archbishops, bishops and abbots of the more important monasteries, who did not differ essentially from the non-clerical feudal aristocracy as far as their proficiency in French was concerned).

The shorter or longer presence of larger or smaller numbers of French-born members of the religious orders in (some of) the monastic communities of the conquered country, especially during the late 11th and the 12th century, sufficed to make the monastic establishments of England (or at least the more important ones among them) and the monastery schools into places devoted, among other things, to the cultivation of the French language and French culture.

In a great number of religious houses in 12th century England, English and French existed side by side, as native or second languages, and were, together with Latin, used in the writing of the numerous manuscripts produced in these places.

The monastic establishments in the 13th century and thereafter with the exception of the so-called 'alien priories', which were actually branches of French religious houses, were for the most part (if not entirely) made up of native speakers of English. Nevertheless there is clear evidence that bilingualism (or, if Latin is included, even trilingualism) was still characteristic of at least the better educated inmates of - some if not all of - the abbeys, priories, and nunneries of England throughout the thirteenth and into the fourteenth century (when French was losing more and more of the special status which it had held in the monastic establishments for such a long time).

The clergy in those days, it has to be borne in mind, not only comprised the secular clergy directly engaged in the 'regimen animarum', the cure of souls, or the people who spent all their time in the monasteries. It also included scholarly circles and the important body of men, usually in minor orders, who were not concerned with ecclesiastical duties at all but engaged in administrative activities in the services of kings or members of the feudal aristocracy. This section of the clergy included part of the king's judges, clerks in the royal law courts, the king's clerks of the royal Chancery or other administrative institutions of the central government, stewards and bailiffs on the great estates of lay and clerical landlords, officials in local government, sheriffs, constables of castles or their subordinate officers, sheriff's clerks, clerks in city administration, etc.

It was people of these circles who were responsible for most of the

administration in medieval English feudal society and for all or at least most of the written communication connected with it. There is evidence, at least from the latter half of the 13th century and, especially from the fourteenth and the early fifteenth, that the kind of vocational education offered to people like these included linguistic in addition to more 'technical' training. More precisely, this involved the learning of French, of the arts of writing, dictating and speaking French [17].

' Language shift', in the sense of the adoption of English, the native tongue of the vast majority of the population, as their first language also finally occurred among the English born members of the feudal aristocracy, whom the loss of Normandy had at last made info a class of 'purely English landowners'. The 'shift' seems to have begun before the end of the first half of the thirteenth century in some baronial families and to have reached something like completion by the reign of Edward I (1272-1307).

However important this change undoubtedly was, it did not yet make the members of the English feudal aristocracy unilingual. They, or a great many of them, still continued to cultivate the French idiom of their ancestors and retained it as their second language for some time to come. For although the severance of Normandy had, in a certain way, made French less important to them, there were still a number of factors favouring its continued use in these circles or making it something like a *'conditio sine qua non.'*

Quite a number of English magnates did still spend some of their time in France. Others were married to French-born partners. Even those for whom none of this held true might (at least in the days of John and Henry III) come together with French-speaking foreigners whether at the royal Court or in other places. Much more decisive, and of importance also to the lesser nobility were other factors, however: the 'example' of the royal house as well as the persistence of customary linguistic habits developed especially amongst the upper circles of the ruling class of England in the course of a period of almost one and a half centuries during which knowledge and use of French had come to be connected with the idea of ‘social distinction’ - an idea which later found expression in the saying, **'Jacke would be a gentleman, if he could speak Frenche'.**

The effect of factors like these was further strengthened by a kind of 'gallomania’ which in the second half of the thirteenth century had seized the ruling circles (and partly also the educated) of many Western

European countries from Norway down to Italy and had made French a "fashionable language ... whose use" was "thought to he a sign of highest politeness and refinement"[18]. Under circumstances like these it was only natural that the vast majority (if not all) of the feudal aristocracy of England were still anxious to acquire a more or less perfect knowledge of French even lifter they had adopted English as their native tongue.

There are also clear indications that they did so until far into the fourteenth century and in some cases even longer than that, either by having their children taught the language with the aid of teaching materials like *Walter of Bibbesworth's* mid-thirteenth century manual for instructing 'the sons of noblemen in the language' and later manuals, or even by sending their sons to France 'to learn French' (pour la F'ranchois aprendre) [18].

Only during the last quarter of the 14th century was French obviously on the wny towards losing its status as a 'language of preference' in these circles and becoming more and more a foreign language to the members of the younger generation born at this time. Contemporaries like John of Trevisa point out in 1385 that *'also gentil men haueth now moche i-left for to teche here children Frensche'* [19].

Not much earlier, apparently, than the last third or quarter of the 14th century did the long period come to an end during which French had been the chief language of the royal Court or held a privileged position as a means of communication in other other highest bodies of state, for instance in Parliament or the feudal institutions preceding it.

The role of French as an administrative language in the post-Conquest period had at first been mainly confined to spoken communication, since official writing in early Norman England was, after the replacement of English as an official idiom, almost exclusively done in Latin. In the thirteenth century, however, and especially during its latter half, French was rapidly gaining ground also as a written administrative language alongside Latin - parallel to similar changes in France and promoted, perhaps, by the temporary presence of a strong French element in the administrative institutions of the central government of England round about the middle of this century.

For a considerable time, professional administrators and 'clerks' well-trained in the "arles scribendi et dictandi loquendique Gallicum ydioma' thus made extensive use of French for purposes of official written communication (as well as in semiofficial, business and private correspondence) before 'Standard Written English,' emerged in the early

fifteenth century to take over the function of the Romance idiom.

In 1362 Parliament enacted a statute directing that oral pleading in the law-courts of the King and of other feudal lords should no longer be conducted in the French language (which the litigants could not understand since it was 'too unknown in the said Realm') and equally enjoined that the other departments of government, too, should conduct their general inquisitions and discussions in English. The statute was not enforced, and French remained the 'language of law', to some extent, until a very similar statute was passed under George II in 1733.

But on the whole, the importance of French in England was declining rapidly in the course of the 14th century (especially the latter half) until it approached the status of an 'ordinary' foreign language in the early 15th century, that is about three hundred and fifty years after the Battle of Hastings. Its decline was, no doubt, speeded up by the economic and social changes in fourteenth-century England and (hereafter, which were bringing forth new social forces, or strengthening their position, and, among other things, also leading to a marked development of national feeling in England paralleled by the growing awareness of the unifying effect of the vernacular, the 'lingua hujus nationis' (language of this nation). As a result, the language of the 'comune folk of Engelond', itself changed under the influence of the Romance idiom of the Conquerors, especially in its lexicon, was re-established as the means of communication 'par excellence' of all strata of English society and again became the language 'of the whole English, nation', ‘de tote la Nation Engleys’[20].

*** *** ***

To sum it up, we can state that in the course of the 7th century most Anglo-Saxons adopted Christian religion. The Roman missionaries who brought Christian faith to Britain used religious books written in Latin. That is how the Anglo-Saxons became acquainted with Latin writing and began to use the Latin alphabet for writing in their own language.

So, English letters came from Latin. The time in the history of English from the 5th to the llth century is called the Old English period. The end of Old English and the beginning of the Middle English period, which covers the 12th - 15th centuries, is marked by the Norman Conquest of England.

The Norman conquerors came from Northern France (Normandy) and spoke a northern form (dialect) of French - Norman French. Norman

French, which changed in course of time on the British soil, so that it is more accurately named Anglo-Norman or Anglo-French, was the official language of England for several centuries after the Conquest.

A large number of French words came into English from French during the Middle English period. Such "borrowed" words, as they are called, are usually spelt as in French. English words, too, began to be spelt after the French fashion, because most writing was done by French scribes (people who wrote documents and copied manuscripts).

The Middle English period ended with the introduction of book-printing in England in the last quarter of the 15th century. In the 16th century the Modern English period begins.

The time from the beginning of the 16th to the middle of the 17th century is called the Early Modern English period, and the English language of that time, Early Modern English.

The introduction of book-printing on the eve of the Modern English period was a great event in the cultural life of the English people. Among other things, it had considerable impact on the development of English spelling.

The spelling of words became fixed in print, and few changes took place init during the Modern Period. English words are for the most part spelt nowadays as they were spelt at the end of the Middle Period, though the pronunciation of most words has changed. That is the main reason why present-day English spelling and reading is so difficult.

Notes:

I. from Ch. Barber (1976), p. 128.

2. Schaff A., 'Language and Reality', (1965), p. 151.

3. Weinreich U., Labov W. and Herzog M. L. 'Empirical Foundations for a Theory of Language Change', in: W. P. Lehmann and Y. Malkiel, Direction for Historical Linguistics. A Symposium, Austin 1968, p. 162.

4. Vachek, J. ' Some remarks on the historical development of English seen from the functionalist perspective', in: J. M. Anderson and Ch. Jones (eds.), Historical Linguistics I, Amsterdam 1974, p. 315; and J. Vachek (1976), p. 314.

5. Cf. M. L. Samuels (1975), p. 180.

6. Weinreich, U., Labov, W. and Herzog, M. I., op. cit., p. 186.

7. Pande, G. Ch., 'The Life and Death of Language', (1965), p. 199.

8. Vachek, J., in: J. M. Anderson and Charles Jones (eds.), op. cit., p. 323.

9. M. L. Samuels (1975), p. 134.
10. Finberg, H. P. R., The Formation of England, 550-1042, Bungay, Suffolk ,1977, p. 15.
11. Samuels, M. L., 'Kent and the Low Countries: Some linguistic evidence', Edinburgh Studies in English and Scots, London 1971, p. 7.
12. See: Evison V. The Fifth-Century Invasions south of the Thames, London, 1965.
13. Finberg, H. P. R., op. cit., p. 16.
14. Cf. Graband G., 'Sutton Hoo', Zeitschriftfiir Anglistik und Amerikanistik 2 (1954), pp. 201-209.
15. Finberg H. P. R., op. cit., p. 195.
16. Sharp McKechnie W., Magna Carta. A Commentary on the Great Charter of King John, Glasgow, 1942, p. 22.
17. Wace. Roman des Dues de Normandie, ed. Hugo Andresen, Heilbronn 1877-79, p. 36, 11; Statuta Antigua Universitatis Oxoniensis, ed Strickland Gibson, Oxford, 1931-40, p. 240.
18. Freeman E. A. The History of the Norman Conquest of England, Vol. V, Oxford 1876, p. 533; Oeuvres poetiques de Philippe de Remi, Sire de Beaumanoir, ed. Herman Suchier, Societe des Anciens Textes Francois, Tome II, Paris 1885, p. 7.
19. Polychronicon Ranulphi Higden ... Together with the English Translation of John of Trevisa ..., ed. Ch. Babington, R. S. 41, Vol. //.London 1869, pp. 159.

R E V I S I O N M A T E R I A L

Suggested assignments on chapter I

“Some Aspects of the History of the Language Community from the Anglo-Saxon Invasion of Britain to the End of the Middle Ages”

1. Be ready to discuss the subject-matter of the history of the English language.
2. Discuss the statement that history of the language must be viewed in relation to other aspects of the language learning.
3. Be ready to discuss the relationship between history of the language and lexicology.

4. Give comment on the statement that language is a social phenomenon.
5. What do we mean by historical variation or change?
6. Can language history be separated from social history? Prove your position.
7. What kinds of socio-historical conditions affect the requirements of linguistic communication to be met by the language system?
8. Comment on the other social factors influencing the conditions of communication prevailing in a particular language community.
9. What do we mean by the "contact-induced changes"?
10. Dwell on the close direct contacts resulting in more or less widespread cross-language borrowing especially on the lexico-semantic level.
11. Prove the statement that "language development has to be considered a dialectically contradictory process".
12. Discuss the tendencies which might be called "economically motivated".
13. What is the role of redunduncy for the functional efficiency of language?
14. What do we understand by "optimization tendencies"?
15. Explain the meaning of "analogical replacements".
16. What is needed to understand the nature of particular language changes?
17. Give some vivid examples to illustrate language history.
18. Test your knowledge of the aspects of the history of the language community from the Anglo-Saxon invasion of Britain to the end of Middle Ages: a. Who were the first inhabitatnts of the British Isles? b. Who were Iberians? When did they settle Britain? c. Who were the first wave of invaders enter Britain after 700 B.C.? d. Name the first Celtic invaders in Britain.
19. Dwell on: a. the Romans in Gaul
    b. the Roman province of Britain
    c. Britain after the departure of Romans
20. Characterize the structure of the Anglo-Saxon society.
21. How many kingdoms emerged by the end of the 6th century? Name them.
22. Speak on the Christianization of the Anglo-Saxons.
23. Dwell upon the Norman Conquest and its effects on the linguistic situation in England.

CHAPTER TWO

ENGLISH SOUND SYSTEM AND ITS RELATION TO SPELLING IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1. Introductory remarks

Perhaps no other peculiarity of English strikes and puzzles a learner of this language to the same extent as do the peculiar ways vowel letters are read in English, each vowel letter having several entirely different sound values (e. g. **a** in **name**, **cat**, **arm** and **hare**), and some of these values widely different from what the same letters stand for in other languages (e. g. **a** for [ei], **e** for [i:], and so on). An explanation of these and other peculiarities of Modern English pronunciation and spelling, which often puzzle learners of English and arouse their curiosity, is to be sought in the history of English sounds and spelling. During the 13th – 14th centuries many changes were made in the English alphabet and the graphic system. They pertain to the number of letters used by the scribes, the shapes of lettrs and their sound values. These innovations brought the written form of the word much closer to what we are accustomed to in Modern English. Since for quite a long time practically all writing was in the hands of Anglo-Saxon scribes many of the changes – though not all – appeared due to French influence.

In particular, with regard to the reading of English vowel letters, historical study shows that in older times these letters, Latin by origin, stood for sounds similar to those which were assigned to them in Latin and which they still represent in modern West-European languages using the Latin alphabet, for instance, in German. They changed their sound values as a result of historical changes in the English vowel sounds which they spelt.

But before tracing the changes that took place in the sounds and spelling of the English language in the course of its long history, some idea must be given as to what the spelling and the sound system of English was like at the outset, or, to be more precise, at the time Old English texts which have come down to us date from.

2.2. Old English Spelling and Sound System

Since Old English times English writing has been based on the Latin

alphabet. The Latin system of writing was adopted (with certain changes) by the Anglo-Saxons as a result of the Introduction of Christianity in Britain by Roman missionaries.

In Old English writing Latin letters were used to represent those Old English sounds which most closely resembled the Latin sound values of the letters. But there were more distinct sound types (phonemes) in Old English than letters in the Latin alphabet, and some letters were used for two or more phonemes (e. g. the letters **c** and **g**). Besides, the runic characters[1] «p» for [ɵ, ð] and p for [w], as well as the ligature æ for [æ, ǽ] were added to the alphabet.

Let us remind you that:

1. The sounds [ɵ] and [ð] were also spelt **ð** (a modified form of **d**).
2. In modern editions of Old English texts **p** is replaced by the letter **w**.
3. The ligature **æ** is a combination of the letters **a** and **e** blended together.

The general tendency of the Old English spelling was to represent each distinct phoneme by one particular letter (or letter combination in the case of diphthongs). It is, therefore, convenient to use these letters in discussing Old English sounds, reserving phonetic transcription symbols for a few special cases, particularly when a letter had more than one distinct sound value in Old English texts (i. e. stood for different phonemes) or when it represented two or more sound types which subsequently became distinct phonemes.

The vowel system of Old English comprised the following pairs of short and long simple vowels (monophthongs) and diphthongs.

	front	back
Short monophthongs:	y i e æ	a o u
Long monophthongs:	ý ī ǽ ē	ā ō ū
Short diphthongs:	ea eo (io)	
Long diphthongs:	ēa ēo (īo)	

Let us remind you thats:

[1] The runic writing is a system of writing used by ancient Germanic tribes befoe they adopted the Latin alphabet

1. The vowels **y** and **ý** were pronounced like German short and long **ü** respectively, i. e. they were rounded close front vowels, such as will be produced if we try to articulate [i:] and [ij with lips protruded and rounded.

2. Before nasals **a** became **á** (a back vowel apparently varying from **a** to an open **o** and written now **a** now **o**, e.g. *land, lond; nama, noma* 'name'). In early Old English the vowel must have been nasalized. But later it lost its nasal quality.

3. Old English diphthongs were falling (stressed on the first element).

4. The first element of the diphthongs **ea**, **ēa** was open, so that these diphthongs can be transcribed phonetically as [**æa**], [**ǽa**].

5. The diphthongs **io** and **īo** occur mainly in the northern and south-eastern (Kentish) dialects of Old English. In the West Saxon dialect they were for the most part replaced in the 9th century by **eo** and **ēo** respectively, e, g. *deop **'deep'**, seofon **'seven'** for dīop, siofon.*

6. In early West Saxon there were two more diphthongs: **ie** and i**e.** But in the 9th century they changed into **ý** or **í**, e. g. ieldra>yldra, ildra ('elder'), hīe>hý,hī ('they').

It is easy to see from what is said how much the Old English system of phonemes differed from that of Modern English, concretely:

1) As distinct from Modern English, Old English had two rounded front vowels - **y** and **ý.**

2) Old English diphthongs were different from those we find in Modern English.

3) The voiced fricatives [v], [ð] and [z] were not separate phonemes, but positional variants of the phonemes **f**, **þ** and **s,** and [ŋ] was a variant of the **n-**phoneme.

4) The sibilant phonemes [ʃ , ʒ , ʧ , ʤ] did not exist during most of the Old English period.

A regular opposition of long and short phonemes ran through the consonant as well as the vowel system of Old English.

Conclusions

What is described above in the briefest outline as the vowel sound system of Old English, is essentially the phonemic system of the West Saxon dialect, as represented in texts dating from the late 9th and the 10th century - the time when a large number of works were written in

that dialect and it attained something of the position of a literary standard.

This system differs in some particulars from that which existed earlier in the history of English (for quite a number of changes had taken place in the Anglo-Saxon dialects before the 9th century), and most naturally it did not remain unchanged in the centuries that followed.

In fact many English sounds, especially long vowels, have undergone radical transformations between the late Old English period and the present day, and the phonetic structure of a large proportion of English words has changed beyond recognition.

The historical changes in English sounds have been too many to be discussed in this book. We shall therefore deal only with those of which some knowledge is absolutely essential for understanding the most typical or most striking features of the phonetic or phono-morphological structure, reading and spelling of words in present-day English.

2.3. C h a n g e s in v o w e l s
Old English
(5^{th}-11^{th} cc.)

The sound changes which took place in Old English were almost all of a combinative, or positional, nature, that is to say they were caused by the influence of the neighbouring sounds in the word.

2.3.1. Palatal Mutation

Of the Old English changes in vowels by far the most important is the so-called **palatal mutation** or **i-umlaut** ['umlaut]. This change was completed in what niiiy be calle'd pre-literary times, that is before the .ippi'arance of the earliest known Old English texts, which date from the 8th century.

Palatal mutation affected stressed vowels followed by nit unstressed syllable containing an **i-**element - a close front vowel, which easily became non-syllabic before another vowel and then passed into the palatal semi-vowel [j]. This element influenced the articulation of the vowel in the preceding stressed syllable, narrowing it if it was open and shifting it to the front in the case of a back vowel.

Let us remind you that:

1. The basic mechanism of this, as of many other positional sound changes, lies in anticipating the articulation of the following sound: while articulating a sound, the speaker at the same time prepares his speech organs for the position required tor producing the next sound. A similar phenomenon in observed, for example, in Russian vowels before palatalized consonants. In English the mutated vowels became different phonemes thar the unmutated vowels they came from, as the unstressed [i] or [j] which caused the mutation was reduced to a weak **e** or lost altogether, and some related words or word forms came to differ in the root vowel only, so that distinctions of meaning were attached to the difference in the vowel.

The various Old English vowels were mutated as follows:

æ>e: sætian>settan 'to set, make sit';
a>e: langira>lengra 'longer';
ā>ǽ: hālian>hǽlan 'to heal';
o>e: dohtri>dehter "to the daughter' (D. Sg.);
ō>ē: dōmian>dēman 'to judge';
u>y: fullian>fyllan 'to fill';
ū>ý: cūþian>cýþan 'to proclaim, to make known';
ea>ie: earmiþu> iermþu 'poverty';
ēa>īe: hēarian>hīeran 'to hear'.
eo>ie: afeorrian>afierran 'to move away';
ēo>īe: cēosip>cīesp 'chooses';

As can be seen from the above examples, mutation of vowels resulted in vowel alternations (interchange) which in Old English times acquired morphological va-inti, serving to distinguish grammatical forms of certain words, as well as related words, i.e. words having a common root.

Some of the alternations produced by mutation survive in Modern English (with certain modifications due to later phonetic changes). These occur in the following series of forms:

1) Nouns with "irregular" plural forms such as

man — men: OE man(n) — men(n)
foot — feet: OE fōt — fēt
goose — geese: OE gōs — gēs
tooth — teeth: OE tōp — tēp
mouse — mice: OE mūs — mýs.

The mutation in the plural forms of these nouns was caused by the **i** in the Old Germanic nominative plural endling, as in manniz, fatiz, etc.

2) The "irregular" degrees of comparison of the adjective **old — elder — eldest**: OE aid — eldra (<aldira) — eldest (aldist)

3) In word-building series such as

hale - to heal: OE hāl - hælan (<hælian)
hot – heat - to heat: OE hāt - hætu (<hātin) - hætan
blood — to bleed: OE blōd — blēdan (<blōdian)
brood — to breed: OE brōd — brēdan (<brōdian)
doom — to deem: OE dōm — dēman (<dōmian)
food — to feed: OE fōda — fēdan (<fōdian)
gold — to gild: OE gold — gyldan (<guldian)[
full — to fill: OE full — fyllan (<fullian)
long — length: OE læng — lengþu
strong — strength: OE strāng — strengþu
broad — breadth: cf. OE brād — brǽdu

Middle English the word became **brede** and subsequently took the suffix **-th**).

Let us remind you that:

Palatal mutation or i-umlaut of vowels took place not only in Old English but in other Germanic languages as well. In fact, it is the most characteristic common feature in the phonetic development of this group of languages. Those who have studied Modern German know what an important part vowel alternations which originated in umlaut play in the morphology of that language — much more important indeed than does this kind of vowel interchange in Modern English.

Not all vowel alternations observed in Old English were due to mutation. The ultimate origin of some is to be sought in phonetic changes of the pre-historic Indo-European language, which was the ancestor of Germanic languages, including English.

This kind of vowel alternation, called **vowel gradation** or **ablaut** is found in the principal parts of the so-called strong verbs, as well as in some word-building series (verbs and nouns derived from them).

E. g. wrītan ‘to write’ — wrāt (past sg.) — writon (past pl.) — writen (participle II) — writ 'a writing', whence the allternation [ai] — [ou] — [i] in the Modern English forms of the verb **write — wrote — written** and the noun **writ**.

The original Indo-European alternation seems to have been **e/o/zero** (i. e. no vowel at all): cf. Russ. (со)беру — (с)бор — (со)брать (no root vowel).

But it is hardly recognizable in Old English, because the alternating vowels had undergone various changes.

2.3.2. Lengthening of Vowels

Another vowel change which is of interest took place towards the end of the Old English period: short stressed vowels became long before **ld, nd, mb**, provided no other consonant followed. That explains the long (alphabetic) reading of vowel letters before these groups of consonants and the use in some words of the digraphs **ic** and **ou** introduced by French scribes during the Middle English period for the long **e** and **u** respectively. This is quite understandable because after the Norman Conquest in he late 11th century, which ushered in the Middle English period, most writing was done in England by scribes came from France.
E. g. **child** (but **children** with a short [i], because l**d** is followed by the consonant **r**, **mild, wild** (but **bewilder** with a short [i] from OE **bewildrian**; **bold, cold, fold** (u, v),**hold, old; field** (OE **feld**), **shield** (OE **sceld**); **bind, blind, find, grind, kind, rind, wind**; **bound** (OE past pl. bundon, pple II bunden), **found** (OE past pl. fundon, pple II funden), **hound** (OE hund), **pound** (OE), **sound** 'healthy' (OE gesund), **wound** [au] (OE past pl. wundon, pple II wunden); **wound** [u:] “jarohat” (OE wund), **climb, comb.**

The lengthened vowels remained long before **ld**. So did in most words the close vowels **ī, ū** before **nd, mb**. But other vowels were for the most part shortened in this position during the Middle English period, so that now such words as **end, hand, land, lamb** have short vowels.

In some words the shortening may have been favoured by the influence of those grammatical forms of the same word in which the vowel remained short before **mb, nd**, because these consonant groups were followed by another consonant, as in the plural of **lamb** (OE lambru, ME lambren) and in the old inflected forms of the verb **send** (the 2nd pers. sg. sendst and the 3rd pers. sg. sent<sendþ). The short [i] in **wind** 'shamol' may be chiefly due to its frequent use in compounds like **windmill** and to the analogy of the adjective **windy**. **Limb** has a

short [i] because it comes from OE **lim**, where there was no **mb** group. **Bomb** with short [o] is not native, but borrowed from French.

Note: The noun **wind** has a pronunciation variant [waind] with [ai] from the lengthened **i**. This variant is now found only in poetry, as an archaism. But in the 18th c. the pronunciation [waind] was still quite common. The famous satirist Jonathan Swift gave preference to it and ridiculed those who pronounced [wind]. "I have a great m**i**nd to f**i**nd why you pronounce it **wind**", he used to say, meaning, of course, that it was absurd to pronounce [ai] in **mind** and **find**, but [i] in **wind**.

2.4. Vowel Changes in Middle English
(12^{th} - 15^{th} cc.)

An important point to be borne in mind in reviewing the vowel changes that took place during the Middle English period is the ever more pronounced effect of the strong word-stress on the phonetic structure of words, the increasing difference between the articulations of vowels in stressed syllables, on the one hand, and in unstressed position, on the other.

Unstressed vowels develop along lines totally different than those under stress. Changes in stressed and unstressed vowels must therefore be considered separately.

2.4.1. Changes in Unstressed Vowels

In languages with a strong stress accent twntressed vowels are shorter than those under stress. That is to say, absence of stress on a vowel reduces its length. Such reduction was already apparent in Old Un^lish, where we find only short vowels in unstressed syllables following the stressed one. However, they were full vowels, which did not differ qualitatively from the short vowels in stressed syllables.

Towards the end of the Old English period and especially in Middle English the tendency towards reduction of unstressed vowels became more pronounced and affected their quality: in unstressed syllables Old English full vowels changed for the most part into a weak neutral vowel resembling ModE [ə] (usually spelt **e**). Before dental consonants the unstressed vowels sounded apparently like [i] (spelt **e** or **i, y**}.

Cf. OE sun**u** — ME sun**e**, son**e** “son”

OE bind**a**n — ME bīnd**e**n 'to bind'

OE stan**a**s — ME stōn**e**s, stōn**i**s, 'stones'

The reduced vowels of unstressed final syllables were lost altogether by the end of the Middle English period. But the letter e which used to stand for the reduced vowel continued to be written in most cases. That is how this letter came to be silent. Sometimes it was even added to those word forms which had never had a final vowel sound.

2.4.2. Changes in Stressed Vowels. Quantitative Changes (Shortening and Lengthening)

Rather early In Middle English a certain depenj dence of the quantity (length or shortness) of vowels or their phonetic position manifests itself: stressed vowels are, as a rule, short before a group of consonants and long in open syllables. It is this dependence that underlies the well-known rules for the "short" and "long" reading of vowel letters in Modern English.

Let us remind you that:
The emergence of the above principle regulating the quantity of stressed vowels is connected witl the increasing concentration of stress on the initial part of the word. While unstressed syllables weaken and shorten, the stressed ones increase their duration. In a closed syllable part of its duration falls to the consonant or consonants following the vowel. In an open syllable, on the other hand, the increased length is allotted to the vowel, so naturally the vowel is long.

In accordance with the principle formulated in the preceding paragraph, long vowels were shortened when followed within a word by two or more consonants; no matter whether different or identical. This shortening of vowels before groups of consonants accounts, among] other things, for the vowel alternation [i:/e] in the principal parts of the verb to keep and a number of other verbs in Modern English: the shortened **e** in **kept** remains, while the long **e** of ME **kepen** became [i:] in MoE ***keep***. It also accounts for the short vowel in the first syllable of the numerals **fifteen** (OE fiffene) and **fifty** (OE fīftig), which alternates with [ai] (<ī) in the simple numeral **five** (OE fīfe).

Let us remind you that:

Vowels remained long before **ld**, partly before **mb**, and, in the case of the close vowels **ī, ū**, before **nd**, as well as before groups of

consonants (especially **st**, and noise consonant + **1** or **r**) belonging to the following syllable (since in this case the syllable containing the long vowel remained open).

Thence the long vowels in Modern English words which evolved from those Old English and early Middle English forms where the consonant groups were followed by a vowel: **least** (OE læsta), **most** (OE masta), **east** (ME esten<OE eastan 'from the East'), **ghost** (from the inflected forms of OE gāst, where **st** was followed by a vowel), **needle** (from the inflected forms of OE nædl}. But the vowel was shortened in Middle English in the words **breast, dust, fist** from Old English forms with a final **st** (brēost, dūst, fýst).

In the word **friend** the long **e** (spelt **ie**) from OE **ēo** may have been replaced by the short **e** on the analogy of the related word **friendship** (ME friendshipe<OE frēondscipe), where **ē** was shortened because the group **nd** was followed by a consonant, and because the stressed syllable containing the vowel under consideration was followed by two unstressed syllables. This explains the unusual short reading of the digraph **ie** in the two words.

Long vowels also became short (and short vowels remained so) before a single consonant in a stressed syllable followed by two or more unstressed syllables, mostly in trisyllabic words or word-forms ("the three-lyllablerule").

Cf. OE hāligdæg > ME holidai

OE sūþerne > ME southerne ['suðərnə].

This explains the short stressed vowels in ModE holiday and southern, which differ from the corresponding vowels in holy (OE hālig) and South (OE sūþ), where no shortening took place.

By analogy with native trisyllables, numerous polysyllabic words of Latin and Greek origin with the stress on the third syllable from the end have a short vowel in that syllable, even if the latter looks open in writing, there being only one consonant between the stressed and the following unstressed vowel, e. g. analogy, economy, heroism, etc.

Let us remind you that:

Actually the stressed syllables in words of the type considered here are closed. The fact is that English short vowels under stress occur in closed syllables only, because such vowels are checked, i. e. they end abruptly, as if interrupted by the following consonant, which therefore closes the

syllable.

The long vowels, on the other hand, mostly occur in open syllables, as they are free, i. e. they weaken towards the end and make no close contact with the following consonant, if there is any.

In the 13th century most short vowels were lengthened in stressed open syllables, unless the stressed vowel was followed by more than one unstressed syllable.

E. g. OE talu > ME tale 'tale'.
OE nosu > ME nose 'nose'.
OE bapian > ME bāthen 'to bathe'.

Let us remind you that:

In the noun bath the vowel remained short in Middle English, since it was in a closed syllable: OE bæþ > ME bath. As ME **ā** became ModE [ei], and ME **a** developed into ModE [a:] before [ɵ], a vowel alternation [ei/a:] arose in the related words bathe -— bath. Compare a similar development in **graze** [ei] (OE grasian) — grass [a:] (OE græs).

The lengthened (or originally long) vowel of an open nyllable remained long, i. e. free, even though the syllable became closed with the loss of the reduced vowel of the unstressed final syllable.

Since the letter **e** which usually spelt the reduced vowel sound continued to be written in most cases after that sound was lost, this silent letter came to be regarded as an indication that the preceding vowel letter should be read long. As a means of indicating vowel length it was added even to those monosyllables with a long vowel which originally had no final **e**, e. g. **house** (OE hūs), stone (OE stān), etc.

The silent **e** makes words of one closed syllable look as if they consisted of two open syllables. Such syllables may be called "graphically open" — a term preferable to "historically open", because, unlike the latter term, it includes those forms which have always made closed syllables in actual pronunciation, e. g. **house, mouse - mice**, etc.

The Middle English lengthening in open syllables affected in the first place open and half-open vowels. The close vowels **i** and **u** remained for the most part short, as in **love, son** (ME sone ['suna]), and the participles **come** (ME comen ['kuman]), **driven, risen**.

Let us remind you that:

The infinitive stems **drive** and **rise** kept their OE **ī** in Middle

English, whence ModE [ai], while **give**, which had a short vowel both in the Old English infinitive and in participle II, has kept it short in both forms.

The shortness of stressed vowels in originally open syllables of some disyllabic words may be due at least in part to the analogy of inflected forms which were; either trisyllabic or, if the unstressed middle vowel was lost, disyllabic, with two consonants following the stressed vowel. Thus the modern pronunciation of the word **heaven** with a short [e] stems from a Middle English form where the vowel was short by analogy with the inflected forms, such as G. **hev(e)nes**, while the spelling with the digraph **ea** reflects the phonetically regular uninflected form with a long **e**, which was ousted in Modern English by the short **e** form.

Similarly, the short vowel prevailed in some other words ending in sonorants, such as **seven, leather** and **weather**, as well as in a number of words ending in **-y** «OE -ig [ij]).

Some of the words in **-y**, such as **any, pretty, ready** had a long root vowel in Old English. But in their Old English and early Middle English inflected forms the stressed vowel was either followed by two unstressed syllables, or, with the unstressed **i** of the suffix **-ig** dropped, by a consonant group. This may have caused the shortening. A contributory cause of the vowel shortening in any may be the fact that it was (and is) often unstressed in speech.

As for those disyllabic words in **-y** which had a short; root vowel in Old English, e. g. **many, merry, penny, body, poppy** (OE manig, myrige, penig, bodig, popig), there is yet another explanation of that vowel remaining short in what looked like an open syllable. The vowel lengthening in the stressed open syllable of disyllabic words was probably caused by the reduction (but not yet complete loss) of the unstressed final vowel, which, as it were, gave part of its length to the preceding stressed syllable. Nothing of the kind happened in the **-y** words, where the final syllable retained some degree of stress and had a long **i** (<[ij]) in Middle English.

Let us remind you that:

1. The unusual reading of the letter **a** as [e] in **any** and **many** in due to the fact that each of these words had variants with **a** and with **e** in Middle English: the **a-**variants are reflected in the modern spelling,

while the pronunciation continues the **e**-variants. The variation in many goes back to OE manig, menig. In ME **eni e** was shortened from **ē** (<OE ǽ), while **a** in **ani** (any) seems to have resulted from an earlier shortening of ǽ in OE **ǽnige** to **æ**, which then changed to **a**.

2. In **pretty e** was narrowed to [i] early in Modern English, presumably under the joint influence of the narrow vowel [i] in the following syllable (a phenomenon resembling the Old English mutation of vowels), of the surrounding consonants articulated with the tip of the tongue raised, and of the high pitch under emphasis, which is quite common with this rather emotional word: vowels are generally narrowed when pronounced on a high pitch.

Quite a number of loan-words have short vowels in stressed syllables which look open in writing.

In dissyllables of French origin, like **city, pity, very, novel**, etc., the shortness of the vowel in the stressed (initial) syllable may be due to the fact that it was originally unstressed, for in French the stress falls on the final syllable of an isolated word, and when the stress was shifted to the initial syllable, its vowel remained short, as the final syllable still kept some of the original stress and had a full, unreduced vowel.

In many learned words of Latin and Greek origin the shortness of the stressed vowel in the originally open syllable is to be explained by the extension of the "three-syllable rule" to the pronunciation of Latin in England. Thus words in **-ic**, such as **alle'goric, bar'baric, 'cleric, 'critic**, etc., as well as adjectives in **-id**, e. g. **'rapid, 'solid, 'timid** and the like, have a short stressed vowel, because in the original Latin forms that vowel was followed by two unstressed syllables ('clericus, 'rapidus, etc.), which made it short.

Qualitative Changes

Middle English changes in the quality of vowels for the most part do not depend on the nature of the neighbouring sounds: they are what is called "spontaneous", or "free".

The following vowels changed their quality early in Middle English.

1. **y, ȳ** got unrounded to **i** in the North-East (including the East-Midland dialect, which formed the basis of standard English), and lowered to **e** in the South-East, but remained in the Western dialects (spelt **u** or **ui** after the French fashion). This development may be

graphically! represented as follows:

OE	ME	OE	ME
	ī		fillen, fīr (North-East)
ȳ	**ē**	E. g. fyllan, fȳr	fellen, fēr (South)
	ȳ		fullen, fūr, fuir (West)

Let us remind you that:

1. After the unrounding of **ý** the letter **y** came to be regarded as a variant of the letter **i.**

In most cases it was the **i**-variant that prevailed, becoming part of standard English, e. g. **to fill, fire**. There are, however, a few words in modern standard English which show the Southern **e** in place of the OE **y**, such as **merry** (<OE myrige) and **to bury** (<OE byrgan). The spelling of the latter word, on the other hand, goes back to a Middle English form which kept the rounded vowel.

The stressed vowel in **bury** remained short, because in the Old English and Middle English forms of this word it was followed by two consonants.

In **busy** (OE bysig) and **to build** (OE byldan} the vowel [i] comes from the East-Midland and Northern forms, while the spelling **u, ui** reflects the Western forms.

OE ǽ was narrowed to ē (long open **e**), e. g. rǽdan>rēden 'to read', sǽ>sē (spelt **se, see**) 'sea'.

OE **æ** changed to **a**, e. g. æfter>after, wæs>was.

OE **å** split into two sounds: **a** (in most dialects) and **o** (in the West).

Modern standard English forms go back for the most part to Middle English **a**-forms, e. g. **can, lamb, land, man**, etc. However, Western **o**-forms have prevailed in most cases before the velar nasal [n], cf. **belong, long, song, strong**.

OE **ā** was rounded to **ō** (long open o), e. g. hālig>hōly, stān>stōn "stone', wrāt>wrōt 'wrote'.

Apart from "spontaneous" qualitative changes, which affected a

large number of words, some vowels changed their quality in Middle English under the influence of neighbouring sounds. These changes affect only a few words and are usually overlooked in elementary books on history of English. But we shall mention those which account for anomalies in the reading of some very common words and are therefore of undoubted interest to the learner of English.

Thus the reading e = [i] in the words **English** and **England** is accounted for by the narrowing of **e** to i before [ŋ]. The spelling of the two words did not follow Iliis change and continues to reflect the old **e** sound.

After **w i** changed to the rounded back vowel **u** (spelt **o**) in the word **woman**<wimman<QE wifman (with **f** [v] assimilated to **m** and the vowel shortened before the double consonant). In the plural form **women** [i] prevailed (apparently because of the front vowel in the second syllable), but it is spelt **o** by analogy with the singular.

In the pronoun **who** (whom, whose) **o** (<OE **a**) was narrowed under the influence of **w** to **o**, whence Mod E [u].

Monophthongization of Old English Diphthongs

All the Old English diphthongs were simplified through weakening and loss of the unstressed element at the very beginning of the Middle English period (as a matter of fact, the process began in late Old English):

ea> **æ** >a e.g. healf>half
ēa> **æ** >ē e.g. S strēam>strēm 'stream'
eo>e, e. g. heorte>herte 'heart'
ēo>e e. g. dēop>dēp 'deep'

The diphthongs **eo**, **eo** were first simplified into rounded vowels resembling German **o** (short and long), which were subsequently unrounded to **e**, e.

Emergence of New Diphthongs and Related Phenomena

A new type of diphthongs with a close second element emerged in Middle English from combinations of vowels with the non-syllabic **i** (mostly from OE [j],[spelt **g**) and the non-syllabic **u** .

1. i-diphthongs: **ai** (also spelt **ay**) < **æ**j (**æ**g), e. g. dai, day < d**æ**g;

	(**æ**g), e. g. grei, grey < gr**æ**g
ei (also spelt **ey**)	ēj (eg), e. g. hei, hey 'hay'< (North.) heg
	ej (eg), e. g. wei, wey 'way' < weg

In later Middle English the two diphthongs merged in-one,- presumably pronounced [ai] or [**æ**i]. This led to confusion in spelling, the spellings **ei** (**ey**) and **ai** (**ay**) being indiscriminately. As a result, the words **hay** and **way** came to be spelt like **day**, though originally they had a different vowel, and grey still has two spelling variants: **grey** and **gray**.

The word **grey** (as well as some other words) had two pronunciation variants in Middle English, going back to the Old English dialectal variants **græg** and (North.) **greg**, which contributed to the fluctuation in spelling.

In some words the second element of the diphthong **ei** originated as a glide between **e** and the palatal fricative consonant spelt **h** in Old English, **gh** in Middle English: eahta > ehta1 > eighte > eight, "weht (wiht) > weight.

2. u-diphthongs:

au (spelt **aw**) < ag, e. g. drawen 'to draw' < dragan

	ag	e. g. owen 'own' < āgen
	og	e. g. bowe 'bow' (curve, weapon for shooting arrows)<boga
ou (spelt **ow**)	aw	e.g. knowen 'to know' < cnāwan
	ow	e.g. blowen 'to blow' (blossom) < blōwan

ēu (spelt **ew**) < ēaw e. g. fewe 'few' < fēawe

ēu, iu (spelt **ew, iw**) < ēow, iw,

e. g. newe, niwe 'new' < nēowe, nīwe,

knew, kniw 'knew' < cnēow

The Middle English diphthong [ou] also evolved from **o+u** which developed as a glide before [x] (spelt **h** in Old ' English, **gh** in Middle English), e. g. OE **bōhte** > ME **boughte**. This diphthong changed to

[o:] by the end of Middle English period (the 15th c.) but the spelling **ou** remains, which accounts for the unusual reading of the digraph **ou** in the Modern English forms **bought, brought, sought, thought**.

The close vowels **i** (<OE **ī, ȳ**) and **ū** in the types of combinations described above did not give rise to diphthongs, but to Middle English long vowels **ī** and **ū** respectively (the latter usually spelt **ou, ow**):

OE	ME
tigele	> t **ī**le **'tile'**
st**ī**gan	> st**ī**en **'to climb'**
bygeþ	> b**ī**eth, (West.) buieth **'buys"**
fugol	> foul **'fowl'**
b**ū**gan	> bowen **'to bow or bend'**.

Let us remind you that:

1. The modern pronunciation of **buy** goes back to the Middle English form with the root vowel **ī** (which subsequently became [ai]), spelling, to the Western form with [yi] (spelt ui).

2. Owing to the change [ug>ū], the noun **fowl** coincided in sound with the adjective **foul** (OE fūl), but the two homophones are now differentiate in spelling. On the other hand, the verb **to bow** [bau] (<ME **bowe(n)** ['b**ū**ə(n)]) and the noun **bow** [bou] (< ME **bowe** ['bouə], coincided spelling, as both **u** and **ou** came to be spelt **ow** in Middle English.

In addition to the diphthongs resulting fror phonetic developments in English words, new diphthong were imported into Middle English in words borrowed from other languages, especially from French, thus **au** in **cause** and **oi** as in **voice** (the latter diphthong is fount almost exclusively in French words).

2.5. Middle English Vowel System Compared to Old English

The changes described above altered the stock of ualisli vowel phonemes. The vowel system of Middle i ntfllsh lacks some of the phonemes that were part of the the English vowel system, such as the Old English diphthongs, the two open front vowels se and a, and the rounded close front vowels **y, y**. On the other hand, it comprises some

new vowel phonemes: the diphthongs in **i** and **u**, and two new long vowels - the open **ē** ([ɛ :]) (OE **æ**, ea)1 distinct from the long close **e** ([e:]) (in which OE **ē** and **ēo** had coincided), and the open o ([> ɔ:]) OE ā) distinct from the long close **ō** ([o:]) (which continues OE **ō**).

The emergence of **e** and o broke the regular parallelism I long and short vowels which was a characteristic feature of Old English.

Let us remind you that:

The two **ē**-phonemes were not clearly distinguished in spelling. They were both written **e, ee**, sometimes **ie**. But **e** was also spelt **ea**, since in many words it had developed from the Old English diphthong spelt so. The two **o**-phonemes were both spelt **o, oo**, but in late Middle English the digraph **oa** is sometimes written for **ō** (with the letter **a** added to **o** to indicate the open articulation of the **o-**sound).

The vowel system established in Middle English following the changes that took place during the transition from Old English to Middle English and early in Middle English did not remain unchanged. It was further altered in the course of the sound changes which occurred during transition period between Middle and Modern English (15th c.) and in the modern period.

R E V I S I O N M A T E R I A L

Suggested assignments on chapter II

"**English Sound System and Its Relation to Spelling in Historical Perspective"**

Test your knowledge of the sources of the English sound system and its relations to spelling in historical perspective. Be ready to dwell on the following issues:

1. Old English Spelling and Sound System
2. Changes in Vowels. Old English
3. Palatal Mutation
4. Lengthening of Vowels
5. Vowel Changes in Middle English
6. Changes in Unstressed Vowels
7. Changes in Stressed Vowels

8. Middle English Vowel System Compared to Old English
9. What was the position of word stress in Old English?
10. Find some ME examples with new positions of the stress which could not have existed in OE.
11. What is the basic difference between the development of vowels in stressed and unstressed syllables?
12. Determine the length of vowels in the ME words below:
    a. OE **findan**, ME **finden** (NE find);
    b. OE **fedde**, ME **fedde** (NE **fed**);
    c. OE **talu**, ME **tale** (NE **tal**l);
    d. OE **cild, cildru**, ME **child, children** (NE **child, children**)
    e. OE **nosu**, ME **nose** (NE **nose**).
13. In what respect did the feudal system affect the development of the language?
14. What can you state on the Middle English vowel system compared to Old English?
15. What new diphthongs were imported into ME from French?
16. Dwell on a new type of diphthongs with a close second element emerged in ME.
17. What were the two diphthongs merged in one in later ME?
18. Can we state that all the OE diphthongs were simplified through weakening and loss of unstressed element? When did it happen? Prove your statement.
19. What are the so-called “spontaneous” or “free” vowels?
20. How many vowels changed their quality early in ME?
21. Did the vowel system established in ME remained unchanged? Prove your statement.
22. Dwell on the most important OE changes in vowels.
23. What is i-umlaut? Give examples to prove your statement.
24. Name the vowels which changed their quality in ME under the influence of neighbouring sounds.
25. Explain the shortness of the vowel in the stressed syllable in words like **city, pity, very, novel.**
26. How can you explain the shortness of the stressed vowel in the originally open syllable in many learned words of classical origin?

CHAPTER III

THE WHENCE AND WHY OF ENGLISH LETTER NAMES

1. Why are the letters A, E, I, O called [ei], [i:], [ai], [ou]?

As is known, the English letters came from the Latin alphabet. The vowel letters **A, E, I, O** were named after the vowel sounds they stood for in Latin. In English they still kept their old names [a:], [e:], [i:], [ɔ:] a few centuries ago, and the letter **O** was called [o:] as late as the 18th century.

The question arises: why and how then have **A, E, I** and **O** changed their names in English? Can it be that at some time or other someone by chance or accident decided to give them new names because the old ones seemed unsuitable? No, nothing of the kind. The names of the letters have changed because the vowels they were written for have changed in course of time: the letters are still named after the sounds they represent, but the sounds have become different.

The matter is that when vowels were used as names of letters they were long, because they made stressed open syllables, and English vowels cannot be short in such syllables, at least, they have not been short in this position for many centuries. In the course of time English long vowels generally become closer (narrower), that is, they are pronounced with the tongue higher in the mouth, which makes them sound different.

The long vowel [a:], which was the name of the letter **A**, changed to [æ:] in the 15th century. Later it narrowed to [e:]. Then the end of this long vowel became still closer and began to sound like [i].

So [e:] changed to [ei]. That is why the name of the letter **A** is now pronounced [ei]. Similarly, as [e:] became a closer vowel [i:], the letter E came to be called [i:].

[ɔ :], the name of the letter **O**, also changed to a closer vowel, [o:], and then the end of the vowel narrowed to [u], so that the name of the letter began to sound [ou].

The long vowel [i:] was as close as could be. It could not change to any closer vowel. Instead, its beginning came to he pronounced with the tongue lower and lower in the mouth, till [i:] changed to [ai], and that is now the name of the letter **I**. All these changes in long vowels are part of the so-called **Great Vowel Shift.**

2. **Why do the English names of the letters *B, C, D, G, P, T, V* end in [i:]?**

Once all these names ended in a vowel. The vowel was long, because it was at the aid of the syllable, that is to say, the syllable was open, and English vowels are never short in stressed open syllables. Then the vowel [e:] changed to [i:] and so [be:], [se:], [de:], and the like, became [bi:], [si:], [di:], and so on.

3. **Why is *K* called [kei]?**

Until about the 15th century **K** was called [ka:] in English, as in other languages. But, as between the 15 th and 18th centuries the English [a:] changed first to [æ:], then to [e:] and to [ei], the name ther mane of the letter **K** in Modern English became [kei].

4. **Why is *R* called [a:]?**

Until the 15th century the name of the letter **R** in English was [er], as in other languages. Then the short vowel [e] changed to [a] before [r], because that consonant caused the preceding vowel to be formed with the tongue lower in the mouth, and [e] was pronounced with the tongue lower and lower, till it sounded rather like [a] (a front **a** sound, a vowel made with the bulk of the tongue moved to the front part of the mouth, almost as in pronouncing [æ]). So [er] became [ar].

Later in Modern English the consonant [r], when not followed by a vowel, changed to a weak vowel sound, a kind of [ə]. This happened because [r] began to be made with less energy, the tongue was raised less high, the air passage between the tongue and the roof of the mouth became wider, and so a vowel was produced instead of a consonant: vowels are pronounced with a free air passage, while to produce a

consonant the air passage must be temporarily closed or very much narrowed. The weak vowel sound which developed from [r] merged with the preceding a sound, making it longer. In time the long vowel began to be produced with the bulk of the tongue in the back part of the mouth and so changed to [a:].

Now the long vowel [a:] is pronounced instead of [ar], whether it is part of a word (as in **arm**, once pronounced [arm], now [a:m]) or the name of the letter **R**.

5. Why is *U* called [ju:]?

In Old English, as in Latin, the letter **U** was used for the long and the short **u** vowels [u:], [u], and was called [u:]. But in French the same letter came to be read (and called) [y(:)]. This kind of vowel is formed in the front part of the mouth like [i(:)], but with lips rounded, as when pronouncing [u(:)].

In the second half of the llth century England was conquered by the Normans, who came from Normandy in Northern France. For some time after the Conquest the new rulers and most educated people of England spoke and wrote French. English words, too, began to be written to some extent after the French fashion, and French letter names, including that of the letter **U**, were taken over by the English. But instead of [y:] most English people pronounced [iu] or [i'u:]. The unstressed [i] before the stressed [u:] changed to [j], as it often does before vowels, and so the name of the letter U began to be pronounced [ju:].

6. Why is *W* called "double U"?

The name "double U" was given to the letter **W** because this letter was formed by combining two **U** or **V** signs (UU or VV), which until the 17th century were regarded not as different letters, but as two different ways of writing the same letter (**U**).

7. Why is *Y* called [wai]?

In Old English the letter **Y** was written for the long and short vowels [y:], [y].

In Middle English [y(:)] changed to [i(:)]. But instead of naming **Y** [i:] after the vowel this letter now represented, it was given a new name [ui:] to distinguish it from **I.** Perhaps it was thought that **Y** was made of an **U** (which was often given the angular shape **V**) resting on an **I**. The unstressed [u] changed to [w] before the stressed vowel [i:] (just as unstressed [i] changed to [j] before [u:]: [ui:] became [wi:]. Then [i:] changed to [ai], as described in answer to question 1, and the name of **Y** became [wai].

R E V I S I O N M A T E R I A L

Suggested assignments on chapter III
"The Whence and Why of English Letter Names"

1. Why are the letters ***A, E, I, 0*** called [ei], fi:], [ai], [ou]?
2. Why do the English names of the letters ***B, C, D, G, P, T, V*** end in [i:]?
3. Why is **K** called [kei]?
4. Why is ***R*** called [a:]?
5. Why is ***U*** called [ju:]?
6. Why is ***W*** called ['d ʌblju] ("double U")?
7. Why is **Y** called [wai]?
8. What is the origin of the English letters?
9. Why and how have letters **A, E, I,** and **O** changed their names in English?
10. When did the long vowel [a:] change to [æ:]?
11. Why do we now pronounce the name of the letter **A** as [ei]?
12. What do we mean under the "whence and why of English letter names"?

CHAPTER I Y

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PRESENT-DAY ENGLISH READING OF VOWEL LETTERS AND LETTER COMBINATIONS

1. When and why don't we read the letter *e* at the end of an English word?

The letter e is read at the end of those words of one syllable which contain no other vowel letter, such as be, he, me, we and a few others. But when the word does contain another vowel letter (or letters), then e at the end of it i: not read, it is mute (except in some learned words of foreigi origin, such as *apostrophe, catastrophe*, and the like). The explanation is as follows.

Most of those English words that are now written with a mute **e** at the end, that is, an **e** which is not read, one ended in a weak unstressed vowel [ə], spelt **e**. For instance, the words ***name, time*** were pronounced ['na:ma], ['ti-.ma]. In the 13th-14th centuries the weak final vowel sound was lost (stopped being pronounced). But the letter **e** usually continued to be written, even though it was no longer read.

In words of two syllables ending in [ə] (spelt **e**) the stressed vowel was long, as a rule, when there was only one consonant after it, or two consonants which went to the unstressed syllable, leaving the stressed syllable open. Such a stressed vowel remained long when the final [ə] was lost and the letter **e** at the end of the word became mute.

So, people got used to finding a mute **e** at the end of words with a long vowel and began to write it even in those words of one syllable with a long vowel which had never had another vowel at the end, such as **bone, house, mouse, stone, wine** (earlier **bon, hus, mus, ston, win**).

Besides, quite a number of words with a mute **e** at the (such as

cigarette, scene, vase and others) came from French, where the final **e** became mute in more or less the same way as in English.

2. Why is the reading of English vowel letters quite different in different words?

First of all, it must be noted that each vowel letter was from the very start used both for a long vowel and for a short one. As a matter of fact, that kind of difference between the vowels spelt by the same letter was small in comparison with the difference we now find, for instance, between the vowels spelt **i** in **pin** ([i]) and in **pine** ([ai]).

The difference between the long and the short vowels increased in the cource of time as the long vowels changed very noticeably in the so-called **Great Vowel Shift,** while the short vowels either remained almost unchanged or changed in different ways from those in which the long vowels developed. In Chaucer's time (the second half of the 14th century) the vowel spelt **a** was longer in **bake** [‘ba:kə] than in **bak** [bak] (now written **back**), but othewise it sounded almost the same in the two words. Now even the dullest ear will easily make out the difference between the [ei] in **bake** and the [ae] in **back**.

But that is not all. Indeed, each vowel letter in present-day English is used for more than two vowels, that is to say, is read in more than two different ways in different words. For instance, **a** stands not only for [ei], as in **Kate**, **name, take** and [æ] as in **bad, cat, pan**, but also for [a:], as in **arm, car, fast, half**, [ɛ ə], as in **care, hare**, [ɔ], as in **want, wash, what**, [o:], as in **all, salt, war**, and so on. A similar variety of readings ("sound values") is observed with other vowel letters.

Whence comes this variety? The explanation is that a vowel, whether long or short, may develop in different ways depending on the nature of the neighbouring sounds, especially consonants. We shall speak about that in more detail when explaining the various tendings of each individual vowel letter. Here we shall deal only with the influence of [r] — the consonant which has had the greatest effect on the development of vowels in English.

For one thing, under the influence of [r] the preceding vowel is formed in a somewhat different way: more towards the middle part of the mouth (where [r] itself is produced) and with the tongue in a lower

position. It becomes what is called more open. Secondly, between a stressed vowel and the following [r] there often develops a very weak short [ŋ] — like sound — the glide [ə].

Lastly, in the 17th-18th centuries [r] in wordfinal (at the end of the word) and before consonants changed to a weak vowel [ ] which merged with the preceding vowel. If that vowel had been short, it became long; if it had been long, it formed a diphthong with the glide [ə]:

[ar] became [a:], as in **car,**

[or] became [o:], as in **port,**

[ur]
[er] } became [a:], as in **fur, her, girl,**
[ir]

[i:r] became [iə], as in **here**,

[ɛ :r] became [ɛ ə], as in **there**

[o:r] became [ɔ ə], as in **more**,

[u:r] became [u ə], as in **sure.**

As a result of these changes, the reading of vowel letters in combination with the following **r** is different from the way they are read when there is no **r** after them.

So far we have considered the reading of vowel letter in stressed syllables.

In unstressed syllables the letters **a, o, u,** and the letter combination **er** usually stand for the weak vowel [ə] (as ir **a**'bout, 'pil**o**t, 'diffic**u**lt, 'work**er**), the letters **e** and **i**, for a weak short [i] (as in **e**'lectr**i**c). The reason is that the vowel for which the letters were originally written have changed to the weak sounds [ə], [i] in syllables pronounced without stress, that is, with very little force. As a rule, [ə] takes the place of back vowels (those formed with the bulk of the tongue in the back part of the mouth), while the front one (produced with the bulk of the tongue moved to the front part of the mouth) weaken to the front sound [i].

While considering the various developments describe here, it should be born in mind that changes in vowel sounds by themselves could not have produced all the variety of readings that we now find in English vowel letters. Th decisive fact is that English spelling has not kept pace with pronunciation. Many English words are still spelt as they were in the 14th -15th centuries, while their pronunciation has changed almost beyond recognition. Just compare [knif] and [naif] (**knife**), ['na:m] and

[neim] (**name**), and so on.

Though a vowel changed to a new sound, the same letter was written for it, and when two or more vowels developed from one old vowel, one and the same letter continued to be written for all of them.

Some readings of English vowel letters developed under a foreign influence, for instance, the reading [ju:] for **u**.

3. When and why are English vowel letters read as they are called in the alphabet?

Our answer to the first question about English letter unities should make it clear that these names, except those of **U** and **Y**, are long vowels or diphthongs which developed from earlier long vowels in the course of the ***so-called*** **Great** ***Vowel Shift***. It is then an easy guess that the vowel letters have their alphabetical sound values, i.e., are read as they are called in the alphabet, when the vowels they are written for come from earlier long vowels which existed before the Great Vowel Shift:

a is read |ei] in those words where in the 13^{th} – 14^{th} centuries it was read [a:] (as in **tale**), **e** is read [i:] where once it was written for [e:] (as in **he**), **i** is read [ai] in place of an earlier [i:] (as in **time**), **o** is read [ou] for an earlier [o:] (as in **go**).

But under what conditions were vowels long at the start of the Great Vowel Shift?

The most general rule is that vowels were long in open stressed syllables, particularly in those words of two syllables where the stressed vowel of the first syllable was followed by one consonant, as in **name** |'na:ma], **writen** or **write** ['wri:t.(n)], and so on, or by a group of consonants (such as [bl], [pl], [fl], [dl], [tl], [gl], [kl], and combinations of certain consonants with [r]) which behaved like one consonant, that is to say, went with the final unstressed syllable, leaving the first syllable open, as in **table** ['ta:bl ə], **title** ['ti:tl ə] and the like.

Some of the words which had two syllables in Middle English still keep them: **basin** [bei-sn], **bugle** [bju:-gl], **cradle** [krei-dl], **cycle** [saikl], **table** [tei-bl], **title** [tai-tl], **metre**-[mi:t ə], **paper** ['pei-p ə], **Peter** ['pi:-t ə], **tiger** ['tai-g ə], etc.

The most of those words that ended in the weak unstressed vowel [ə] (spelt **e**) have lost the second syllable with the loss of the final [ə] and the remaining syllable has become closed. For instance, ['na:ma] has

changed to [neim] (**name**), ['li:-na], to [lain] (**line**), and so on.

The same goes for infinitives, which ended in **-en** [ə n], except that they lost the weak final [n] before losing the unstressed vowel. So ['ta:-kə n] is now [teik] (**take**), ['wri:-tan] has become [rait] (**write**), and so on, and so forth. As can be seen from the examples, the vowels of the new closed syllables have not become short, and have developed as if they still were in open syllables.

The mute **-e** which continues to be written in place of the lost vowel is now a mark of the "long", or alphabetical, reading of the preceding vowel letter.

Such is the explanation of the alphabetical reading of vowel letters in words of two syllables and in those like **face, name, place, take, tale, line, time, write,** and so on, which now consist of one closed syllable but look in writing as if they were made of two open syllables, and which once actually had two syllables.

It must be noted, however, that some words of one syllable, which are now written with a mute **e** at the end and in which vowel letters are given their alphabetical values, have never had a final vowel and a second syllable in their basic form (the nominative, later the common case singular), and their only syllable has always been closed.

The final **e** in such words as **bone, home, stone, life, wife, wine** and some others has never been read. It came to be written to show that their vowels were long. The fact is, these vowels had remained long since Old English times till the **Great Vowel Shift** began, and in the **Shift** they changed in the same way as long vowels did in open syllables.

So, naturally, the letters which spell them are also read in the same way. That explains the alphabetical reading of vowel letters in this kind of words.

Now, what about those words which appeared in English during the Modern Period, after the Middle English long vowels had changed in the **Great Vowel Shift**?

In such words vowel letters are mostly read as in older words, which serve as models as it were. For instance, in **basis, crisis, motor, scene** the letters **a, i, o, e** in stressed syllables have the same alphabetical values [ei], [ail, [ou], [i:] as in words like **basin, tiger, sober, Pete**.

The matter of the "long" (alphabetical) and short reading of vowel letters in English is not all that simple, really. There are some groups of

words and individual words which require special explanation.

4. When are English vowel letters read short?

To put it in a nutshell, vowel letters are read short when they are written for vowels which have remained short from old times, (as in **back, bed, box, sit, sun**) or were shortened at some time or other.

1. First of all, a shortening of English stressed vowels took place very long ago (perhaps as early as the 11th or 12th century) before two or more consonants. For instance, [e:] became short in the past tense form **kepte**, now **kept**, while the same vowel remained long in the open syllable of the infinitive **kepen** (pronounced ['ke:pən] in Middle English), where it later changed to [i:] (now spelt **ee**: **keep**).

2. Long stressed vowels were also shortened (and short ones remained so) when the stressed syllable of a word was followed by two or more unstressed syllables. That explains why the letter **o** is read short in **holiday**, while in the adjective **holy**, from which comes the first part of the word **holiday,** the same letter is read [ou]. The matter is that **holy** has only two syllables, and the first syllable, which bears the stress, is open. In this syllable the vowel [o:] remained long and in the Great Vowel Shift changed to [ou].

3. On the model of the older words of three syllables with a short stressed vowel, a short vowel is pronounced in the stressed syllables of learned words from Latin and Greek with the stress on the third syllable from the end, such as **analogy** [ə'nælədgi], **economy** [i'konəmi], **telegraph** ['teligra:f], and the like.

Note particularly the short [e] in **heroine** and **heroism**. Learners of English often pronounce these words, quite wrongly, with [i:] or [iə] in the first syllable, because it looks open in writing, and especially because the word **hero**, consisting of two syllables, is pronounced with [iə] (which developed from [i:] before [r].

4. In verbs like **dis'cover, de'liver, 'study** the vowels of the stressed syllables are short, because in Middle English, before the unstressed endings were lost, the stressed syllable in each of these verbs was followed by two unstressed ones: **discoveren, deliveren, studien**.

5. In the last but one (second from the end) stressed syllable of words ending in **-ic**, such as **'comic, 'cynic, dra'matic. fa'natic, his'toric,**

'logic, and the like, mostly of Greek and Latin origin, as well as of adjectives in **-id**, such as **rapid, rigid, solid, timid, vivid** and a few others, which come from Latin the vowel is short, because in the Latin forms **'comicus' 'rapidus**, and so on, that syllable is third from the end followed by two unstressed syllables, and English people pronounced these forms with a short stressed vowel.

6. In words of two syllables from French, such as **city copy, damage, desert, famine, figure, finish, honour, legend, metal, model, moral, novel, pity, planet, present, prison, pu nish, river, satin, second, solemn, talent, very**, and others the stressed vowel is short before one consonant, because originally it was unstressed: in French these words have the stress on the second syllable.

7. For the short reading of vowel letters in words of two syllables ending in **-y** which are not of French origin but of the Old English word stock, for instance, **any, many, body**, two explanations have been suggested. According to one, the short vowel in these words comes from early Middle English forms with grammatical endings, where the stressed syllable was followed by two unstressed ones: **anie, bodie**. The other explanation is that in Middle English the final (last) syllable of the words in **-y** had a long vowel and a secondary stress That means it was pronounced with considerable force not leaving enough energy to make the preceding stressed syllable (and its vowel) long.

Here, we have dealt only with the most typical cases, leaving some more special cases to be explained later.

5. Why are vowel letters in words like *child, find, comb* read as they are called in the alphabet?

As a rule English vowel letters are read short before groups of consonants. But before **ld, nd** and **mb** some vowel letters are read according to their alphabetical names [ai] for **i**, [ou] for **o**. That means that the Modern Englisl vowels in such words come from earlier long vowels.

Indeed, in Old English (probably in the 9th century) vowels became long before [ld], [nd] and [mb], when no other consonant followed. When, however, there was yet another consonant after these consonant combinations, the vowel before them remained short, as in the plural form **children**. That explains why the vowels are different in the

singular form **child** [ai] and the plural **children** [i]: in the singular form the vowel [i], followed only by the two consonants [ld], became long, and the long [i:] later changed to [ai], while in the plural [i] remained short before three consonants.

Two more things are to be noted. Firstly, the lengthened vowels remained long before [ld], as in **mild, wild, field, shield** and some other words. Before [nd] and [mb], however, only [i:] and [u:] regularly stayed long, changing in Modern English to [ai] (as in **behind, bind, blind, find, grind, kind, mind, climb**, etc.) and [au] (spelt **ou** as in **pound** and in the adjective **sound** meaning "healthy", as well as in the participle and past tense forms **bound, found, wound**). Other vowels seem mostly to have been shortened again, as in **end, hand, land, sand, lamb**, though not in **comb**.

It must be noted at this point that the noun **sound** ("*that which can be heard*") does not belong, historically speaking, among the words discussed here. This noun came into English from Old French in the form [su:n] (spelt **sun**, **sune, soun** or **soune** in Middle English and had its [d] added later, in the 15th century).

Secondly, although Old English [a], spelt **a**, became long before [ld], the letter **a** is not read [ei] (which is its alphabetical name) before this group of consonants in present-day English, because Old English [a:] changed to [o:] in Middle English, and this was written **o**, not **a**. That is why we now find the letter **o** in words which had **a** in Old English, such as **bold, cold, hold, old** and a few others. As should be expected, this letter is now read [ou], in accordance with its alphabetical name, because Middle English [o:] has changed to [ou] in Modern English. Similarly, we have **o** read [ou] in place of Old English **a** before **mb** in **comb**.

The word **wind** (the noun [wind], not the verb **to wind** [waind] deserves special attention. In earlier times it was commonly pronounced with a long vowel, which changed to [ai] in Modern English. Some people (among them the famous writer Jonathan Swift, author of the "Gulliver's Travels" still pronounced [waind] at the beginning of the 18th century. But [wind], with a short [i], became the usual Modern English pronunciation, perhaps under the influence such wods as **windmill** and **windy**, which have a short [i].

The pronunciation [waind] is now found only in older poetry, for instance, in Byron's poem"Childe Harold's Pilgrimage":

Yet, Freedom! Yet thy banner, torn, but flying,
Streams like the thunder-storm against the wind;
Thy trumpet voice, though broken now and dying,
The loudest still the tempest leaves behind...

6. Why is ***a*** read [æ] (as in **back**), [ei] (as in **name**), [a:] (as in **far, fast, half, dance**), [ɛ ə] (as in **Mary**), [o] (as in **want**), [o:] (as in **war, all, walk**)?

1. In Old and Middle English the letter **a** was written for the long vowel [a:] and the short [a]. The most usual conditions under which vowels were long in later Middle English are described in answer to question 3, those which made vowel short, in answer to question 4 in this chapter.

Some time around the beginning of the Modern Period short [a] changed to [æ]. That is why the letter is now read [æ] in those words where it stands for a short vowel, as in **back, bad, can, hat, man, pan, fad, factory, family**, and so on

2. In **name**, as well as in **bake, cake, take, tale** and a number of other words, [a] became long, because till about the 14th century it was in an open stressed syllable: the letter **e** at the end of such words stood for a weak unstressed vowel which, together with the preceding consonant, made the second syllable. When the unstressed vowel was lost, the stressed syllable became closed, but its vowel [a:] remained long and later changed to [ei]. As the letter **a** continued to be written for the changed sound, it came to be read [ei].

Of course, [a:] changed to [ei] also in the open stressed syllable of words like **basin, table**, and so on, which have kept the second syllable. So, here, too, the letter **a** is read [ei].

3. In **far**, as well as in numerous other words where **a** is followed by **r** at the end of the word or before a consonant (**car, dark, farm, garden, hard, harm, harvest, large, March, market, parcel, pardon, park, parliament, part, starve,** etc. **a** was once read [a]. This vowel became long as [r] weakened and then was lost altogether. The new long vowel began to be formed further back in the mouth and so became the back vowel [a:], which is now pronounced wherever the spelling has **ar** without a vowel letter following.

4. The letter **a** is also read [a:] in some words where it is not followed by **r**. In particular, the long vowel [a:] spelt **a** has developed in place of short [a] in words like **after, ask, basket, mask, task, cast, castle, fast, last, mast, master, nasty, finat, vast, grasp, glass, grass, pass, bath, path**, and so on. As can be seen from the examples, [a:] is pronounced in closed stressed syllables before the voiceless fricative consonants [s], [ɵ], [f]. As to why the voiceless fricatives make the preceding vowel long, several explanations have been suggested. But none of them seems to have been proved correct quite conclusively, so it is hardly worth while quoting them here.

5. In words like **palm, half, calf, to calve** the vowel [a:] written **a** has developed in a yet another way. In Middle English the letter **a** in such words was read [a]. The vowel was short because it was followed by two consonants. The peculiar nature of the consonants influenced the development of the vowel. First of all, an [u]-like sound (the back glide-vowel [u]) developed between the vowel [a] and the consonant [l], which is formed with the back part of the tongue raised when it is before a consonant or at the end of a word (this is the so-called "dark" [1], which is more. So [*palm*] became [paulm], [*half*] changed to [haulf], and so on. Then [l] itself changed to an [u]- like sound under the influence of the preceding glide [u] and the following labial (lip) consonant (that is a consonant formed by lips, such as [m], or by a lip and teeth, such as [f], [v]).

It happened like this. Both [u] and the labial consonants are pronounced with some lip-rounding, and the lips remained rounded between these sounds, while the speaker tried to say [1], so that the rounded vowel [u] was produced instead of [1]. The vowel was absorbed by the glide [u]. Then [u] was lost between [a] and the labial consonant (merging with that consonant as it were), and [a] became long, because the energy which used to be spent on producing [u] now went into making the **a** vowel. That is why we now pronounce [pa:m], [ha:f], etc., with a long **a** vowel.

6. Lastly, the letter **a** is read [a:] in words like **advance, chance, dance, branch, advantage, grant, plant, command, demand, example, sample**, where it is followed by **n** or **m**+**another consonant**.

In these words [a:] also resulted from the simplification of the diphthong [au]. Most such words have come into English from the Northern French dialect spoken by the Norman conquerors of Britain. In

Central French which formed the basis of literary Modern French they had, and still have, a nasal vowel [a], a kind of **a** sound pronounced through the nose and spelt **an, am**. But in Norman French (or Anglo-Norman) spoken by the ruling class of England after the Norman Conquest, and in the English language of the Middle Period, [aun] or [aum] was pronounced instead of [a] : **daunce, exaumple**, and so on. In Modern English the diphthong [au] lost its second part and developed into the simple vowel [a:]. As for the spelling, these words were often spelt without **u** (**dance**, etc. in Middle English, on the model of the literary French forms. In Modern English this spelling became established as the only correct one. So words like **dance** are now spelt with **a** and pronounced with [a:].

The letter **a** is also read [a:] before **[n] + another consonant** in the native English word **answer**. Here [a:] also comes from [au]: it is known that this word was pronounced with [au] in the 16th century and was spelt **aunswer,** though Old English it had a simple vowel in the first syllable. Perhaps it was influenced by the numerous words of Norman-French origin pronounced with [aun].

The famous Danish scholar Otto Jespersen suggested, however, another explanation. According to him, [u] developed after [a] in **answer** under the influence of [w] in the following syllable: ['answar] became ['aunswar]. Then [au] changed to [a:] and [w] disappeared.

7. The reading of the letter **a** as [ea] in words like **bare, care, dare, hare, Mary, parent** and others, where **a** is followed by **r** + *a vowel letter*, is to be explained as follows The letter **a** in such words was originally written for [a:], or for [a] which became long in the 13th century because it was part of an open stressed syllable. At the end of the Middle English period [a:] changed to [æ:] and later to [ɛ :] the kind of vowel described in answer to question 7. If there had been no [r] after it, this vowel would have been further narrowed to [e:] and then changed to [ei], as in **name**.

But [r] prevented its further narrowing. Instead, a glide [a] developed between [e:] and [r], and in the 17th-18th centuries [r] itself was weakened to [a], whenever not followed by a vowel. The weak [a] sound merged with the preceding vowel into the diphthong [ea]. That is how the letter **a**, which once stood for [a:], came to be read [ɛ ə].

8. In words like **want, was, wash, watch, what, swallow, swamp,**

quality, quantify, quarrel the letter **a** was originally mid [a]. But around the 17th century [a] changed to [d] under the influence of the preceding [w]: [w] is pronounced with lips rounded, so the following vowel became rounded too. [a] must have been slightly rounded after [w] long before the 17th century, only the difference between the rounded and the unrounded [a] remained unrecognized.

When, however, [a] changed to [ae] where there was no [w] before it, the difference became more obvious. The slightly rounded vowel after [w] became identified with [ɔ] (that is, people began to hear and to pronounce it as [ɔ], which by that time had become very open and practically lost its rounding, so that it sounded rather like [a], the kind of vowel now pronounced in America in place of British English [ɔ]). But the short vowel [o] which developed from [a] after [w] continues to be spelt **a**. That is why the letter **a** in the kind of words discussed here is now read [ɔ].

Before the back consonants [k] and [g] [a] has not changed to [ɔ]: it has developed in the usual way to [ae], so that in words like **wax** and **wagon** the letter **a** is read [æ].

9. A long rounded vowel [ɔ :] developed after [w] from [ar]. That's why the letter combination **ar** is read [ɔ :] after **w** and **qu** [kw], as in **war, warm, warn, quarter**.

10. In words like **all, ball, call, fall, hall, small, tall, wall, Mil, chalk, talk, walk**, where the letter **a** is followed by **l** + *consonant*, **a** originally stood for [a]. In the 15th century a glide [u] developed between [a] and the following [l], as in words like **half** (see item 5), and later [au] was simplified to [o:]. But the letter **a** continued to be written for [au] ([u] was not reflected in writing), and is still written for [ɔ :] in this kind of words.

7. Why is **e** read [e| in **bed**, but [i:] in **evening**, [a:] in **bar**, [iə] in **hero**, [ɛ ə] in **there**?

1. Originally the letter **e** was written in English for the short and the long **e** sounds.

The short [e] has as a rule remained practically unchanged since Old English times in closed syllables, so that words like bed, set, tell are still pronounced with [e], as they were a dozen of centuries ago.

2. In stressed open syllables [e] became long for the most part, probably in the 13th century. Later, when the Great Vowel Shift began, the lengthened **e** vowel underwent further changes, like the other Middle English long e vowels, of which there were two kinds: the close [e:] and the open [ɛ :]; [e:] was pronounced with the front part of the tongue raised higher and the air passage between the tongue and the roof of the mouth closer (narrower) than in pronouncing [ɛ :].

In course of time [e:], which already in Middle English sounded very much like [i:], becamestill closer andsochanged to [i:] as early as the 15th century. As for [ɛ :], in London English, it first narrowed to [e:] and only later changed to [i:] or rather was replaced by [i:] which had developed from Middle English [e:] in words that in the Middle English period had [e:] in the northern and eastern dialects.

As a result of the change of the long **e** vowels to [i:], the letter **e** is at present read [i:] in the stressed syllables (which are open now or were open before the loss of unstressed vowels — see answers to questions 1 and 3 in this chapter) of a number of words, such as **be, he, me, she, we, eve, even, evening, metre, Peter**.

It must be noted, however, that **e** is written for [i:] chiefly in words which came into English as **learned, bookish terms from French, Latin and Greek, such as complete, equal, fever, legal, scene, theme**. In native words, which come down to us from Old English, as well as in more common words of French origin, [i:] is usually spelt **ee** or **ea**. The use and reading of these letter combinations will be explained later.

3. Both the short [e] and the long [i:] which replaced the earlier [e:], developed in Modern English in a peculiar way when [r] came after them.

The short vowel [e] followed by [r] at the end of a word or before a consonant began to be formed with a wider air passage and further back in the mouth, and in course of time changed to [ə]. In turn, the consonant [r], when there was no vowel after it, weakened to an [ə] like sound, which merged with the preceding vowel in a long [ə :]. That's why we now read **er** in words like **her, certainly, perfect, person, service, university** as [ə :].

4. In place of [i:] from [e:] followed by [r] we now find [iə] for the

letter **e** in words like **here, hero, interfere, severe**.

5. The words **there** and **where** kept their Middle English [ɛ :] in early Modern English. The following [r] prevented It from narrowing. Then, with the weakening of [r], [ɛ :] was replaced by the diphthong [ɛ ə], as explained in answer to question 2.2. That is why these words are now read with [ɛ ə].

8. Why is **i** read [i:] in **sit**, but [ai] in **time**, [i:] in **machine**, [ə :] in **first**, [ai ə] in **irony**?

1. The letter **i** in English used to be written for the short [i] and the long [i:].

The short [i] has, as a rule, remained practically unchanged all through the history of English, so that words like **fist, his, it, lid, lip, live, mist, pin, sit, still**, and others, still have [i] (spelt **i**), as in Old English, and **history, picture**, and others keep their Middle English [i].

2. The Middle English long [i:], on the other hand, changed to [ai] in the course of the Great Vowel Shift. This [ai] continues to be spelt **i**, as was the long [i:] it developed from. That is why the letter **i** stands for [ai] in words like **bind, blind, bite, child, find, five, like, nine, rise, side, time, white, wise, write**, and so on.

On the model of older English words, **i** is also read [ai] in stressed open syllables, and in syllables which look open in writing, being spelt with a mute **e** at the end after a single consonant, of a number of words which appeared in English in modern times: **bronchitis, file, silent, silo,** and others.

3. However, some words taken over from French during the Modern English period keep their **i** vowel spelt **i**, instead of replacing it with [ai]. That is why **i** is read [i:] in such words as **caprice, fatigue, intrigue, machine, marine, police, prestige, regime, routine, sardine, technique, unique**, and a lew others.

4. In combination with the following **r** in word-final (at the end of a word) or before a consonant, as in **bird, circle, circumstance, dirty, fir, firm, first, girl, sir, shirt, skirt, third, thirty**, and so on, **i** is read [ə :].

The vowel [ə :] developed from short [i] + [r] in a manner similar to the development of the same vowel from short [e] + [r] (see answer to

the preceding question): [i] changed to [ə] under the influence of the following [r], and this [ə] became long, merging with the [ə] sound which developed through the weakening of the [r]. The new vowel is still spelt **ir**, as was the sound combination [ir] it developed from. That is why the letter combination **ir** is now read [ə :].

5. When the letter **i** in combination with **r** is followed! by another vowel letter, it is read [aiə], as in **desire, fire, Irish, irony, tired, wire,** and the like, [ai] in such words comes from [i:], and [ə] developed as a glide between the diphthong and [r], and later also from [r] itself, through its weakening to a vowel sound in word-final and before consonants.

9. Why is **o** read [ɔ] in **box**, but [ou] in **home**, [ɔ :] in **morning**, [ɔ :] or [ɔ ə] in **more**, [u:] in **do**, [ʌ] in **come**, [ə :] in **work**?

1. The letter **o** was originally written in English for the short and the long **o** vowels. In present-day English this letter still stands for short [ɔ] in quite a number of words, such as **box, copper, hot, not, pot, sorry**, and others. But in most of those words where 5—6 centuries ago **o** was read [ɔ :] it is now read [ou], as in **ago, alone, bone, clothes, go, home, hope, no, stone, toe,** and a large number of other words. This is a result of the Great Vowel Shift — a change in long vowels in the course of which they became closer (narrower) and changed to diphthongs.

In particular, [ɔ :] became [o:] (which is pronounced with the tongue raised higher in the mouth, and the air passage between the tongue and the roof of the mouth narrower than in pronouncing [ɔ :]), and then, narrowing still more at the end, changed to [ou] in the 19th century.

2. As a matter of fact, a close long **o** vowel [o:] also existed in Middle English. It sounded rather like [u:] and, becoming still closer, actually changed to [u:] as early as the 15th century. This [u:] is mostly spelt **oo** (see answer to question 19 in this chapter). Only in some words (**do, move, prove, approve, improve, shoe, tomb, two, who**) it is spelt **o**.

So, these words are written with **o** because once they were pronounced with [o:]. But now the letter **o** is read [u:] because Middle English [o:] has become [u:].

To lose is pronounced with [u:] for **o**, in all probability, under the

influence of the adjective **loose** and the verbs **loose** and **loosen**.

3. In combination with the following [r] both the short and the long **o** vowels developed into present-day English [ɔ :].

The short [ɔ] became long with the weakening and loss of the following [r]. This happened where [r] was not followed by a vowel, that is, at the end of the word or before a consonant, as in **for, or, born, corn, form, horn, horse, looming, order, port, sort, sport, storm, torn**, and so on. That's why **or** in such words is read [ɔ :].

The combination of the long [ɔ :] with the following [r] first changed to a diphthong ending in [a], as did combinations of other long vowels with [r]. In the pronunciation of most English speakers [ɔ ə] is simplified to [ɔ :]. But the pronunciation [ɔ ə] is also possible in words with **o + r + a vowel letter**, especially mute **e**, as in **bore, boredom, more, ore, sore, store**. So, the letter combination **ore** can now be read both [ɔ :] and [ɔ ə].

4. In some words, such as **above, among, become, come, honey, love, some, son, sponge, ton, tongue, wonder, worry**, which come from Old English, and **colour, comfort, company, constable, cover, dozen, front, govern, money, onion, stomach**, from Old French, the letter **o** is read [ʌ]. Such words were once pronounced with [u]: Modern English [a] comes from an earlier [u]. In Old English this vowel was written **u**: **cuman** (come), **sunu** (some), **sunu** (son), **wundor** (wonder), and so on.

But this made reading difficult when **u** came before letters consisting, like **u** itself, of vertical strokes, such as **n** and **m**, and also in the neighbourhood of **v** and **w**, when these were written **u** and **uu**: in Middle Ages **v** and **u** were regarded as two different ways of writing one and the same letter, and **w** was a double **u** (**uu**). In medieval writing vertical strokes were often not joined, so that **n** and **u** were shaped as ∫ ∫ **,** and **m** looked like this ∫ ∫ ∫ .

So, people hit at the idea of writing **o** instead of **u** in such words, though actually the words were pronounced with [u]: **comen** (come) ['kuma(n)], etc.

As a matter of fact, the idea did not come from the English people themselves. The spelling ofor [u] was introduced by the French scribes (copyists) in England. In the Anglo-Norman form of Old French (see Introduction) [o] became very close, practically changing to [u]. But **o**

continued to be written by tradition. So it seemed quite natural to use the spelling **o** for [u] when it made reading easier.

5. It must be noted, however, that in some words where, **o** is now read [a], it once stood for an **o** sound in English. Such words as **brother, glove, Monday, month, mother, none, nothing, one, once**, other are spelt with **o** because in Middle English they were pronounced with [o:].

In the 15th century [o:] changed to a closer vowel [u:], and this was shortened; during the next century to [u]: in the 16th century [e:] and; [u:] were shortened in many words before those consonants that are formed with the tip of the tongue at or near the teeth (they are called dental consonants). In the words **Monday** and **month**, and perhaps in other words as well, the Old English [o:] may have been shortened to [u] earlier in Middle English.

In **twopence** and **twopenny** the long vowel [u:] from Middle English [o:] was also shortened, because this stressed vowe was followed by two unstressed syllables in **twopenny** ancd by a rather "heavy" syllable with a consonant group at the end in **twopence**. In both words the part which followed the stressed syllable claimed a considerable share of the energy that went into making the word as a whole, and this made the stressed vowel shorter.

In all the words discussed here the shortened vowel like the Middle English [u], has changed to [ʌ], so that the letter **o**, once written for a long **o** vowel, is now read [ʌ].

6. Knowing that in Middle English times **o** was often written instead of **u** after **w** (as in the word **wonder** already mentioned), it is not difficult to guess why the letter combination **or** after **w** is read [ə:] in **word, work, world, worm, worse, worst, worship, worth, worthy**. Though spelt with **or** these words were pronounced with [ur] in those Middle English dialects their standard modern forms come from (they were also spelt with **ur** in Middle English), and in Moden English [ur] changed to [ə:].

For a somewhat similar reason **or** is read [ə:] in the word **attorney** (of French origin), even though here there is no ***w*** before **or**. In Middle English and at the beginning of the Modern Period the word was pronounced with [ur] and often written **aturne** (as in Old French). But the spelling with **o** got the preference, because the Latin verb from which the old French word **atorne** or **aturne** originated is spelt **attornare**. So now **attorney** is spelt with **or** but pronounced

with [ə:], like **turn**. This pronunciation is supported by the interpretation of the word as meaning "*one who acts in the turn of another*": that is precisely the way the word is interpreted in some law dictionaries.

10. Why is **u** read [u] in **put**, but [ʌ] in **cut,** [ju:] in **duty,** |u:| in **rule**, [juə] in **during**, [uə] in **jury**, [ə:] in **fur**?

1. **U** was originally written in English for the short and the long **u** vowels.

In present-day English the letter **u** still stands for [u] in **bull, bullet, bulletin, bullion, bully, bulwark, bush, butcher, lull, pudding, pull, pulpit, push, puss, put,** and a few other words. If you compare these words to one another, you will find they all have one thing in common: a labial consonant before[u]. In pronouncing such consonants lips are more or less rounded, and so they are in pronouncing [u]. The lip rounding of the consonant helps as it were to keep the following vowel rounded.

2. In those words which had no labial consonant before |u|, e.g. **cup, cut, duck, dust, hut, judge, jump, just, lunch, nut. run, subject, such, summer, sun, supper, uncle, under,** and others, [u] became unrounded and changed to [ʌ]. The letter **u** is still written in such words, but it is now read [a] instead of [u].

As a matter of fact, in some words, namely, **bud, budge, bulb, bulge, bulk, butter, button, fun, pulp, puzzle,** and a lew others, **u** stands for [ʌ] after a labial consonant. Probably, in most cases this pronunciation comes from a type of English speech in which [u] changed to [ʌ] without exceptions, even after labial consonants. In words of a more or less bookish character (such as **public, publish, republic, pulse**) the reading [ʌ] for u may be a "spelling pronunciation": **u** may be read [ʌ] in spite of the preceding labial consonant because it is usually read that way in stressed closed syllables. The unrounding of [u] after the labial consonant in **but** may have been favoured by the word being usually unstressed in speech. A similar explanation might apply to the word **bus**, which comes from a weak-stressed syllable of **omnibus**. But [ʌ] in **bus** can also be explained as a spelling pronunciation: the Latin word **omnibus**, colloquially shortened to **bus**, first appeared in English as late as the 19th century in the written form which suggested the pronunciation [omnibʌs].

It must also be noted that [u] has changed to [ʌ] after the labial consonant [m], as in **much, mud, must**.

3. The alphabetical reading of the letter **u** as [ju:] can be explained in the following way.

After the conquest of Britain by the French-speaking Normans a large number of words came into English from French. In these words (as well as in Latin words, which were read after the French fashion) the letter **u** often stood for [y:]. This vowel had also existed in Old English, but in most parts of England it had changed to [i(:)] by the beginning of the Middle English period. So, most English people no longer used the sound [y:] in their speech and in words from French and Latin they pronounced [iu] instead. For instance, the French word **due** came to be pronounced [diu] in English. As [iu] changed to [ju:], the letter **u** came to be read [ju:] in words like **amuse, due, duke, duty, music, mute, numerous, pupil, pursue [pa'sju:], student, tube, union, unity, use, usual**, and so on.

After [ʤ], [ʃ], [r], and mostly also after [1], the consonant [j] is lost (it merges with the preceding consonant). That's why the letter **u** is read [u:], instead of [ju:], after the letters **j, ch, r, l**, as in **jubilee, June, parachute, rude, rule, true, truth, blue, flu**.

Incidentally, in **blue** (from French **bleu**), **true** and **truth** (from Old English **treowe** and **treowth**) **u** is written in place of Middle English **ew**, which also came to be read [iu] and then [ju:] (see answer to question 17 in this chapter).

It should be obvious from what has been said here that the letter **u** is now read [u:] in those words which at one time were pronounced with [iu]. As for the words that had [u:] in Old and Middle English, they are now spelt with **on** or **ow**, but not **u**, and read with [au] in place of [u:] (e. g. **house, how** — see answers to questions 21 and 23 in this chapter).

4. In combination with the following [r] long [u:] has been replaced by [uə] in Modern English, as explained in answer to question 2.2 in this chapter, with the result that the letter **u** followed by **r** before a vowel letter is read [juə], as in **cure, curious, during, furious, pure, security**, and other words, or [uə] (after **j, r**, usually after **l**, and sometimes after [ʃ], as in **jury, rural, plural, sure**.

5. When the letter **u** in combination with **r** is not followed by another vowel letter (that is, at the end of a word or before **n** consonant), it is

read [ə:], as in **burn, burst, curtain, fur, furniture, nurse, purpose, purse, turn**, and so on. [ə:] in such words comes from [ur]: the short vowel [u] changed to [ə] under the influence of the following [r] (it began to be formed closer to the place where [r] is produced, that is, not at the back, but in the central part of the mouth, and with a wider air passage between the tongue and the roof of the mouth, and [r] in turn was weakened to [ə], which then merged with the preceding vowel into a new long vowel [ə:].

11. Why is **y** used both as a vowel and a consonant letter in English, and why is the vowel letter **y** read like **i**?

The letter **y** has a curious history. Historically speaking, it is the same letter as Russian and Uzbek **y**, although its reading is so different from that of our **y**. Both the Slavic and the English **y** can be traced back to the Greek alphabet.

In Greek, **V, Y** was at first written for [u(:)], as **y** is in Russian. But Old Greek [u(:)] changed to [y(:)] (the type of vowel described in answer to question 5), and so the Greek letter **Y** came to be read [y(:)].

Into English the letter **Y** came not directly from Greek, but from Latin, where it was used in spelling words from Greek. As the learned men of old England adapted the Latin alphabet for Old English writing, they used this letter for Old English [y] and [y:], because they knew that it stood for that type of vowel in Greek. But in course of time the Old English **y** vowels, which were pronounced with rounded lips, lost their lip-rounding and changed to [i(:)], so that the letter **y** came to stand for the same sounds as **i**.

No wonder, then, that during the Middle English period and even in later times, as late as the 17th century, **y** was regarded not as a letter in its own right, but rather as a peculiar way of writing **i**.

So, for instance, the words **many** and **time** were also written **mani** and **tyme**. Naturally, a sound developed in the same way whether it was spelt **i** or **y** is still read practically the same as **i**, though the two signs now differ somewhat in their use and are regarded as two different letters.

In present-day English **y** is regularly written in word-final for [ai], as in **my**, and usually also for [i] (which is unstressed), as in **happy**: **i** is rarely found at the end of a word nowadays, and then it stands only for

an unstressed vowel, usually [i], as in **taxi**, but not for a stressed [ai].

Y has long been preferred in word-final, being larger and more ornamental than **i.** It was also treated in Middle English and in early Modern English as a sort of double **i** (*ii-ij*, or rather **y**, for both signs, **i** and **j,** regarded as variants of the letter **i,** were usually written without the dot as late as the 15th century) and was therefore often used to spell the long **i** vowel, which changed to [ij] and then to a diphthong, now pronounced [ai].

It is interesting to note that in the name of the month **July y** stands for the **ii** of the Latin genitive case **Julii** (in the ancient Roman calendar it was the month of Julius, so named after Julius Caesar), and that words like **melody** were pronounced with the diphthong at the end in early Modern English. The pronunciation ['melodai] is still found in the 18th - 19th century poetry, and the 18th century poet William Blake obviously intended symmetry to rhyme with **eye** in these well-known lines:

Tiger! Tiger! Burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

The use of **y** for the vowels [i] and [ai] in non-final position (not at the end of a word) is less frequent.

As for the consonantal use of **y** in English to spell [j], it won't look so surprising if we consider that [j] is not an ordinary consonant but a semivowel, that is, a vowel-like sound. Indeed, to make [j] we put the tongue in almost the same position as for making [i], and a weak unstressed [i] followed by another vowel often does not make a syllable, and easily becomes [j]. So it often happens that **i** is actually read [j], as for instance, in **union** ['ju:njən].

In Middle English, as in Old and Medieval Latin, **i** was written both for [i (:)] and [j], there was no special letter for [j], and **y**, being regarded as just a variant form of **i**, was used in the same way in Middle English writing. For instance, **yes** was spelt either as it is now or **ies**.

In Modern English **y** is not written bfor every [j], but only for the stable [j], which does not develop from an unstressed [i] before a vowel and does not change back to [i] in very slow and careful pronunciation. Such a stable [j] is found before vowels at the beginning of a word, or of a syllable, and that is precisely where **y** is a consonant letter standing for [j], as in **year** and **lawyer**.

12. Why do we read **ai**, **ay** and **ey** like **ei** and in the same wny as the letter **a**?

Remembering that in Middle and early Modern English **y** was regarded as just another way of writing **i**, one should not be surprised to find that **ay** is read in the same way as **ai**, and **ey** is read like **ei**: compare **day** and **daily**, **they** and **eight**. But why should **ay** and **ai** be read like **ei** and like the letter **a**? The answer is as follows.

In Middle English the spellings **ai, ay**, on the one hand, and **ei, ey**, on the other, were at first used for different diphthongs: [ai] (as in **dai**, **day**] and [ei] (as in **wei, wey**). But later in the Middle English period these diphthongs coincided in one, pronounced [æi] or [ai] (with [a] produced close to the front part of the mouth where [æ] is made). The diphthong was spelt **ey, ei,** or more commonly, **ay, ai.** So, the word **once** written **wei** or **wey** began to be spelt **way**, like **day**.

Still later the diphthong seems to have changed to a long simple vowel, as the weak unstressed second part of the diphthong was lost and the energy no longer spent on it went to make the remaining vowel longer. Something similar is happening in colloquial pronunciation today: for instance, **fire** is pronounced [fae], [fa:] instead of [faie]. In Modern English the vowel which developed from the Middle English diphthong coincided with the long vowel developing from Middle English [a:] (the development of Middle English [a:] is described in answer to question 1). It became closer and closer, and in the 18th century changed to the diphthong [ei]. That's why we now read **ai, ay, ei** and **ey** in one and the same way, as [ei], which is also the alphabetical reading of the letter **a,** so that in pairs of words such as **tail** and **tale**, **veil** and **vale** both words sound exactly the same.

13. Why do we read the digraphs **au** and **aw** as [ɔ :]?

First of all, it must be made clear what a digraph is. A digraph is a combination of two letters which are not read separately but as one unit. **Au** and **aw** are such combinations in Modern English: the letters **a** and **u**, or **a** and **w**, are not read separately, but together spell one vowel

[ɔ:].

A person who does not know English, but knows the Latin alphabet and can read Latin or, say, German, would most likely read the letter combination **au** as [au]. And that is how **au** was in fact read in earlier English, even as late as some four centuries ago. But the difference between the two elements of the diphthong [au] diminished, as its first element became more like the second, and the second, more like the first, till [au] was simplified into [ɔ :]. The digraph **au**, however, continued to be written for the new simple vowel. So, **au** came to be read [ɔ :], as in **audience, August, author, autumn, cause, because, fault, pause,** and so on, because the diphthong [au], for which it used to be written, changed to [ɔ :].

The letter combination **aw** was originally written for the sound combination [aw]. But Old English [w] after a vowel changed to [u]. It was not much of a change really, because [w] and [u] (when it does not form a syllable) are very similar sounds. Anyway, as a result of this change the spelling **aw** came to stand for [au]. It began also to be used in words where the diphthong [au] did not come from Old English [aw] but had a different origin. **Aw** was still read [au] at the beginning of the Modern Period. Naturally, when [au] changed to [ɔ :], the digraph **aw** which continues to be written for the new simple vowel in words like **crawl, draw, gnaw, jaw, law, lawn, raw, saw, straw**, came to be read [ɔ :], just as the digraph **au** did.

14. Why are the digraphs **ea, ee, ei, ie** all read [i:]?

All these digraphs came into use in Middle English. They were used to spell the long **e** vowels described in answer to question 7. As explained there, the Middle English long **e** vowels have changed to [i:].

That's why the digraphs **ea, ee, ei, ie** now stand for [i:] in those words where they continue to be written, such as **appeal, beat, cease, cheap, clean, cream, deal, defeat, dream, each, eager, eagle, east, easy, eat, feat, feature, heap, heat, lead (**name of action, not that of a metal**), leaf, league, leap, least, leave, meal, mean, meat, neat, peace, please, reach, read, reason, repeat, sea, seal, seam, season, seat**, **speak, steal, steam, stream, tea, teach, team, veal, weak, wheat, agree, bee, beet, cheek, cheese, deed, deep, degree, feed, feel, free, freeze, green, greet, heel, keen, keep, knee, meet, need, needle, see,**

seek, seem, sheep, sheet, speech, speed, steel, street, sweet, tree, week, wheel, ceiling, deceive, receive, seize, achieve, believe, chief, field, niece, piece, shield, shrick, thief, yield, and the like.

15. Why do we read **ea** as a short vowel [e] in words like **bread** and in some other words?

I. When a word is spelt with **ea**, that is a fairly sure sign that it was formerly pronounced with a long **e** vowel, usually [e:] (described in answer to question 7). The letter **a** was added to **e** in the 15th and, with more regularity, in the 16th century to show that the **e** vowel was long (this was symbolized by writing two letters for it) and rather open — after all, the **a** vowels were very open, so it was not unnatural to add **a** to another letter to mark the open character of the vowel spelt by that letter.

As a rule, Modern English has [i:] in place of Middle English [e:], that's why the digraph **ea**, which once stood for [e:], is now generally read [i:] (see the preceding answer). But before final dental consonants, especially before [d], [O]|, and less commonly before [t], the long **e** vowel was shortened to [e], which has remained practically unchanged since. So, when a word with such a shortened vowel keeps the **ea** spelling, the digraph **ea** is now read [e], as in **bread, dead, dreadful, head, instead, lead (**a metal**), spread, thread, tread, breath, death, sweat, threat, deaf.**

2. In **breakfast, breast, cleanly** (the adjective, not the adverb), **cleanse, dealt, dreamt, leant, leapt, meant, health**, with the long **e** vowel (Middle English [ɛ :]) has become short before two consonants (see answer to question 4).

3. Some words now spelt with **ea** and pronounced with [e] must have had two different pronunciations in Middle and earlier Modern English, one with a long **e** vowel reflected in the spelling **ea**, the other with the short [e] which survives in the present-day pronunciation. A common feature of a group of such words is that they have two syllables of which the second ends, or once ended, in a vowel-like consonant, [n] or [r]: **heaven, weapon, feather, leather, weather**.

The stressed vowel of the first syllable seems to have been short In Middle English when the [n] or [r] was followed by the vowel of the grammatical ending (for instance, hevnes — "of heaven, heaven's"), for

in such cases the unstressed vowel before [n] or [r] was usually dropped (as in hevnes), so that two consonants came after [e], and the first of them closed the syllable [e] belonged to. The vowel after [n] or [r] could also belong to the next word in connected speech, added without a pause (for instance, **heven is..**.).

This also made the **e** vowel short in Middle and early Modern English. But when no vowel followed [n] or [r] without a pause, the consonant following the **e** vowel went to the second syllable, leaving the first syllable open, and the **e** vowel was long as a rule, though sometimes it remained short, as it had been in Old English in most of the words discussed here, or was shortened under the influence of those cases where the word was pronounced with a short [e] before two consonants.

The word **meadow**, which now has a short [e], comes from Old English **maedwe**, an inflected form (that is a form with a grammatical ending) of **mæd**. The vowel was long in Old English, but became short before two consonants by the end of the Old Period. However, it could also be long in Middle and earlier Modern English under the influence of Middle English **med** [mɛ :d], Modern English **mead** (now used as a poetic word for **meadow** and pronounced [mi:d]), which came from the Old English nominative case **maed** [mæ:d] and kept its vowel long before a single consonant. That explains the spelling **meadow,** while in pronunciation only [e] is now heard in this word.

4. Another group of words with **ea** read short (as [e]) are those ending in **-y: heavy, ready, steady**. The spelling suggests that they were pronounced in earlier English with a long **e** vowel, as might be expected in words of two syllables with one consonant after the first vowel: a single consonant usually went to the second syllable, leaving the first syllable open and its vowel long.

But the more usual pronunciation of the words in **-y** we are considering here, as far as Middle and early Modern English is concerned, was that with short le], and this is now their only accepted pronunciation.

The short [e] in **heavy** and **ready** may come from the Middle English inflected forms, where the stressed first syllable was followed by two more syllables: **hevie, redie** (under such conditions stressed vowels were short in Middle English, as explained in answer to question 4). But other explanations have also been suggested. One likely

explanation is that in Middle English the second syllable in such words had a long vowel ([i:]) and a secondary stress: the stressed vowel was long, as a rule, in those words of two syllables where the final syllable was unstressed and had a short weak vowel, so that little energy went into making it, but not in words with a "heavier" second syllable, which claimed a larger share of the energy allotted to the word as a whole (see answer to question 4.7).

The word **steady** was made in the 16th century, probably by adding **-y** to the noun stead ("place"), which had a long **e** vowel at the beginning of the Modern Period. At first **steady** was often pronounced with the same vowel, which explains the **ea** spelling. But the pronunciation with short [e] became the more usual and then the only accepted one for this word, because other words in **-y** had a short vowel, and the long vowel was no longer supported by the influence of the words **stead** and **instead**, in which the long **e** was also shortened before the final [d], as in **bread**.

5. The short reading of **ea** may also be explained by earlier variation between short and long **e** vowels in a number of words taken over from French in Middle English, such as **jealous, jealousy, treacherous, treachery, peasant, pheasant, pleasant, pleasure, measure, treasure**, and some others.

16. Why do we read **ea** + **r** as [ie] in words like **hear**, [iə] in words like **bear**, and [a:] in words like **earth**?

You may well have wondered why **ea** followed by **r** is read [iə] in some words, e. g. **appear, beard, clear, dear, ear, fear, hear, near, rear, tear** (meaning "a drop of salty water that comes from the eye", not name of action), **weary, year,** but [ie] in others, such as **bear** (name of animal as well as the verb **to bear**), **pear, swear, tear** ("pull to pieces or make a hole"), **wear**.

Now, it ought to be clear from the explanations in answers to questions 2.2 and 7.4 that [ɛ ə] comes from [ɛ : + r], and [iə] from [i: + r]. That, in its turn, suggests that **ea** + **r** is read [iə] in those words in which long **e** had changed to [i:] by the time when [r] weakened and an [9] sound developed between it and the preceding vowel, while [ea] is now pronounced in words which had [ɛ :] at that time. It was explained

in answer to question 7 that of the Middle English long **e** vowels the close [e:] changed to [i:] as early as the 15th century, and the open [ɛ :] remained an **e** vowel as late as the 17th century. So, it would seem that [iə] should now be pronounced in those words which had [e:] in Middle English, and [ɛ ə], in those with Middle English [ɛ :].

But in fact things are not as simple as that. Indeed, those words where ea is now read [ɛ ə] had [ɛ :] in Middle English. On the other hand, some of the words that now have [ia] are also found in Middle English with open [ɛ :]. The probable explanation of this irregularity is that one and the same word might be pronounced with the more open vowel in some parts of the country, in some varieties of the English language, and with the closer one in others. Sometimes the pronunciation with the diphthong [iə], which developed from the closer vowel, was accepted as standard by educated people in later Modern English, although the word had a more open vowel in earlier London English.

In some words, such as **earn, earth, learn, search**, and a few others, the letter combination **ear** is read [ə :]. The spelling **ea** shows that these words had a long **e** vowel in the 16th century (see answer to question 15). But this pronunciation was replaced by one with short [e], as was to be expected before two consonants, and [e] in combination with the following [r] changed to [ə :] (see answers to questions 2.2 and 7.3 in this chapter).

The word **year** can also be pronounced with [ə :]: [je:] (this is actually the more common pronunciation). Here [a:] developed from [iə], as the stress was shifted from the first part of the diphthong to the second: [ə] became long under stress, and the unstressed [i] before that vowel changed to [j], which merged with the older [j] the word began with. The change of [iə] to [jə] is very similar to the development of [iu] to [ju:] described in answer to question 5.

17. Why do we read both **eu** and **ew** as n ([(j)u:])?

In Middle English the letter combinations **eu** and **ew** were written for [eu], just as both **au** and **aw** stood for [au], and **ou, ow**, for [ou]. For instance, the word spelt **fewe** (few)

was pronounced ['feua]. But [eu] changed to [iu] as [e] became closer, and [iu] changed to [ju:] (as explained in answer to question 5, Ch I). The spelling, however, is still **eu** (in learn ed words of Latin and Greek origin, such as **neuter, neutral, pneumonia**) or **ew** (mostly in native English words, such as **dew, few, knew, new**, but also in some older words from French, for instance, **view**).

On (he model of older words, **eu** is read [ju:] in words of Greek origin which came into English later in the Modern Period, e. g. **eucalyptus, neurosis**.

As the letter **u** was also written in Middle English and at the beginning beginning of the Modern Period for [iu] which changed to |ju:] (see answer to question 10.3 in this chapter), this leter and the digraphs **eu** and **ew** all stand for the same sounds.

Like the letter **u**, and for the same reasons, the digraph **ew** is read [u:] (without [j]) after **ch, j, r**, and often after **l,** as in **chew, Jew, jewel, crew, blew**, and **eu** is read [u:] after **rh** and often after **l**, as in **rheumatism, leucocyte**.

Like the letter **u** (see answer to question 10.4), both digraphs are read [jug] before **r**, as in **Europe, sewer**.

18. Why do we read the digraph **oa** as **o** ([ou]), and **oar** as **or** ([ɔ :])?

1. It has already been mentioned in answer to question 9 in this chapter that in Middle English there were two different long **o** vowels: the close [o:] and the open [ɔ :]. The closer vowel changed to [u:[in the 15th century, while the more open remained an **o** vowel. To distinguish the two vowels in writing, the closer one was usually spelt **oo**, and the more open was often spelt **oa** in the 16th century. It is not at all surprising, really, that the letter **a** was used to indicate the more open character of the vowel spelt **o**, for **a** itself spelt open vowels.

In the course of the Modern English period [o:] changed to [o:|, and this to [ou], as explained in answer to question 9.1. So, now the digraph **oa**, where it is still written (as in **approach, boat, coal, coast, coat, foal, foam, goal, gmt. load, loan, oat, oath, road, roast, soap, throat, toast**), is read [ou], like the letter **o** in words with a mute final **e** — most such words also had [ɔ :] in Middle English (see answer lo

question 9).

2. In combination with the following [r] [ɔ :] developed to [ɔə] (see answer to question 2.2), and [09] easily changes to the simple long vowel [ɔ:]. That's why the letter combination **oar** is now read [ɔ :], as in **board, hoarse, oar** and a few other words, where **r** is not read by itself (because the sound [r] has been lost, but indicates that **oa** stands for [o:].

It may be of interest to note that in the word **coarse** the vowel [ɔ:] spelt **oa** comes from Middle English [u:], which became more open before [r], changing to [o:], and then to [ɔ:]. By origin, it is the same word as **course**, which has also changed its pronunciation from [ku:rs] to [k ɔ :s], but keeps its French spelling.

19. Why is **oo** read [u:] (as in **moon**), [u] (as in **book**), and [ʌ] (in **blood** and **flood**)?

1. The digraph **oo** came into use in Middle English. It was used to distinguish the long **o** vowels from the short [ɔ].

In Middle English **oo** was written for both long **o** vowels mentioned in answer to question 9 in this chapter: the close [o:] and the open [ɔ :].

But in the 15th century the close [o:], becoming still closer, changed to [u:], so that the difference between the two vowels became more obvious, and in the 16th century **oo** is the usual spelling for the closer vowel, while the more open vowel (Middle English [ɔ :]), is spelt **oa** (as explained in answer to the preceding question) or **o**. As a result of these developments in pronunciation and spelling, **oo** is now read [u:], for instance, in **boot, cool, food, fool, goose, hoof, loose, mood, moon, noon** (and, of course, **afternoon**), **pool, proof, roof, root, shoot, soon, spoon, too, tool, tooth, troops**, and so on.

2. In the 16th century |u:] (like [ɛ :], on which see answer to question 15) was shortened in some words before dental consonants. Like the older [u], the new [u] was unrounded to [ʌ] (see answers to questions 9.5 and 10.2 in this chapter). Naturally, in those words where the shortened and unrounded vowel is spelt **oo**, this digraph is now read [ʌ]: **blood** [bl ʌ d], **flood** [fl ʌ d].

3. In some other words [u:] changed to short [u] later, in the 17th — 18th centuries, before [k] and in a few words before [t], [d], as in **book, brook, cook, crook, hook, look, rook, shook, took, foot, soot, good, hood, stood**. In these words the short [u] has not been unrounded (the early Modern English unrounding of [u] was over before their [u:] had changed to [u]). So, here the digraph **oo**, which originally stood for [o:] and then for [u:], is now read [u].

The digraph **oo** is also read [u] in the words **wood** and **wool**. But historically speaking, they do not exactly belong to the group of words considered here: they had [u], not [o:], in Old and Middle English, and were spelt with **u**. This spelling was replaced by **oo** under the influence of those words in which [u] developed from [o:]. It must be noted, though, that in some parts of the country wood was pronounced with a long close vowel [o:] changing to [u:] in late Middle English.

20. Why is **oo+r** read [ɔ :] in **door** and **floor**, but [uə] in **poor**?

From what was said in answer to questions 2.2 and 19 we should expect **oo** in combination with the following **r** to be read [uə], for words spelt with **oo** were pronounced in Middle English with [o:], which narrowed to [u:] in the 15th century, and later in Modern English the sound combination [u:r] I to [uə (r)].

Now, the letter combination **oor** is indeed read [uə] in **poor**, but in **door** and **floor** the same letter combination is read [ɔ :] or [ɔ ə]. The explanation of this reading is to be sought in the influence of the weakening [r] on the preceding vowel in Modern English: it made the vowel more open. For one thing, it changed the preceding [u:] to an **o** vowel, and this developed to [ɔ ə] as the following [r] weakened and was lost (see answer to question 2.2). With most English people [ɔ ə] has changed to the simple long vowel [ɔ :], and nowadays the most common pronunciation of the two words [d ɔ :] and [fl ɔ :].

The present-day English pronunciation of the word **door** may also come in part from a Middle English form with [o:] in place of [o:].

As a matter of fact, **poor** is also pronounced by a good many people with [ɔ ə] and [ɔ :]: [pɔ ə , p ɔ :]. The more usual pronunciation

[pue] probably comes from a dialect which kept the closer vowel before [r]. Perhaps the labial consonant [p] helped to keep it: after all, [u] survives after [p] in **pull**, **put** and other words.

21. Why is **ou** read [au] (as in **house**), [u:] (as in **soup**), [ʌ] (as in **enough**), [ou] (as in **shoulder**), [ɔ :] (as in **thought**)?

I. Most of the various readings of the digraph **ou** mentioned in this question have their origin in the French and Middle English use of the digraph for the long **u** vowel.

In Old English [u:] was spelt **u** (or **u**, with an accent mark to show that the vowel was long). But in the Middle English period, after the conquest of England by the French-speaking Normans, **ou** began to be written for this vowel, as in French. For instance, the words which in Old English were spelt **hus**, **mus** began to be spelt **hous, mous**, later **house, mouse.**

In the so-called Great Vowel Shift (see answer to question 1) the simple vowel [u:] changed to a diphthong: the difference between the beginning and the end of the vowel increased, the beginning becoming more and more open, till [u:] changed lo [au]. But the spelling **ou** remains unchanged. That's why ou is read [au] in words like **about, cloud, (i(>iini'il, count, doubt, fountain, ground, house, loud, mouse, mouth, noun, out, pound, round, scout, shout, sound, south, fliinisii/nl, trousers,** and so on.

2. Words which have come into English from foreign languages (especially French) in modern times, when Middle English [u:] had already changed to a diphthong, usually keep their **u** vowel.

In such words **ou** is read [u:], e. g. in **group, soup, route** (from French), **rouble** (from Russian), and a few others.

The digraph **ou** is also read [u:] in some old English words. The words **you** and **youth** have kept their simple long vowel [u:] (from an earlier **foul**) since Middle English times because of the preceding [j]: [j] is a close sound, and it made the beginning of the vowel closer, changing [ou] to [u:] and then preventing [u:] from changing to [au].

In **wound** (noun and verb) [u:] has survived since Old English times: it has not changed to [au], because the preceding [w] kept the beginning of the vowel close and rounded. But when **wound** is the past tense or the participle of the verb **to wind**, it is pronounced [waund],

probably after the analogy (under the influence) of such forms as **bound** and **found**.

3. In some words which had [u:] spelt **ou** in Middle English, the **u** vowel became short. In words like **enough, rough, tough** this may have happened because of the following labiodental (lip-teeth) consonant [f] (see answer to question 19.2 in this chapter), in **southern**, because the stressed syllable containing the vowel [u:] was followed by two unstressed syllables in the Middle English form **southerne** ['suðə rnə] (on the shortening of vowels in this position see answer to question 4).

Then the short [u] was unrounded to [ʌ]. That is how the digraph **ou**, which continues to be written in these words, came to be read [ʌ].
The vowel [u] spelt **ou** was also unrounded in some words which came into Middle English from French, such as **country, couple, courage, cousin, double, nourish, touch, trouble**. Naturally, the digraph **ou** now stands for [ʌ] in these words as well.

4. The reading [ou] for **ou** has different origins in different words.
In **dough** and **though** the spelling **ou** was introduced for the diphthong [ou] which developed in Middle English from an earlier **o** vowel and the glide [u] that arose between that vowel and the consonant [x] spelt **gh**.
In **mould** — "loose earth" (Middle English **molde**), "pattern, form for molten metal" (Middle English **modle, molde**), and **smoulder** (Middle English **smolder**) the glide [u] developed between [ɔ] and the so-called "dark" [l], just as it did between [a] and [i] (see answer to question 6.5 In thils chapter).

In the word **shoulder** the first vowel was [u] in Old and English. Towards the end of the Middle English period this [u] changed to an **o** vowel and a glide [u] developed between it and [l] (as in **mould**), forming a diphthong, for which **ou** has been written in **shoulder** ever since.

In **poultry** the diphthong [ou] developed before the "dark" [l] in practically the same way, only in this word the short [u] which changed to [o] came from a French **u** vowel (**poultry** is a word of French origin) shortened in Middle English before a group of consonants (on such shortening see answer to question 4 in this chapter).

In **soul** [ou] comes from the Middle English diphthong [ɔ u], which developed from Old English [a:w], as OE [a:] changed to a closer

back vowel [ɔ :] (it has long been characteristic of English long vowels that they become closer in course of time), and Old English [w] after a vowel changed to [u] (see answer to question 13 in this chapter), which did not muke a separate syllable, but formed a diphthong with the preceding vowel.

I. In combination with the following **r ou** is read [aua] in those words where Middle English [u:] underwent the usual change to [au] (as described in answer to the preceding question), for instance, in **flour, hour, our, sour**, and so on. The glide [ə] resulted from the weakening of [r] (see answer to 2.2 in this chapter).

2. In some words taken over from French when Middle English [u:] had already changed to [au] (or at least was well on the way to becoming [au]), the vowel [u:] (spelt **ou**) did not take part in this development, and in combination with him following [r] changed to [uə] (on the origin of the diphthong [ue] (see answers to questions 2.2 and 10.4). That's why the letter combination **our** is read [uə] in words of French origin like **tour, tourist, bourgeois**.

3. In still other words, both of French and of "Anglo-Saxon" (Old English) origin, Middle English [u:] became a more open vowel, an **o** vowel, before [r]. In Modern English this long **o** vowel in combination with [r] developed to which in turn was simplified to [ɔ :] (see answer to question 20 in this chapter).

That's why **ou + r** is now read [ɔ :] it such words as **course, court, source, pour, your.**

In the word **four ou** must have been written originally for Middle English [ou], which also changed to [ɔ :] in combination with the following [r].

4. In a few words from French (**adjourn, courteous, courtesy, journal, journey, scourge**) the letter combination **our** now stands for [ə :], which, of course, has developed from earlier [ur] (see answer to question 10.5). It seems that Middle English the **u** vowel spelt **ou** in these words could be either short or long. In present-day English the word **courteous** and **courtesy** are often pronounced with [ɔ :] for **our.** This [ɔ :] probably comes from Middle English [u:r], as in **court.**

22. Why is **ou + r** read [auə] (as in **our**), [uə] (as in **tour**), [ɔ :] (as in

court), [ə :] (as in **journey**)?

The letter combination **ow** has had two different readings since Middle English times.

In Middle English **ow** was written, on the one hand, for the diphthong [ou] or rather [ɔ u] (with a more open first part than in Modern English [ou]), which in some words developed from the Old English sound combinations [ow], [o:w], [a:w] (see answers to questions 13 and 21.4 in this chapter) and in others had a different origin; on the other hand, was often used instead of the digraph **ou** to spelt [u:] (see answer to question 21).

The spelling **ow** was especially preferred in word-final (as in **now**), because **w**, being taller and more ornamental than **u**, marked the end of a word more distinctly.

As [u:] has become [au] in Modern English, the digraph **ow** is now read [au] in those words where it stood for [u] in Middle English, such as **allow, brown, cow, coward, crowd, crown, down, flower, fowl, frown, how, howl, now, owl, powder, power, shower, towel, town, vowel**. But in those words where **ow** was written for [ou], [ou] in Middle English, it is now read [ou], as in **blow, crow, flow, glow, grow, know, low, mow, owe, own, row** (both "people or things in a line" and "move ....a boat with oars"), **show, slow, snow, sow, throw**.

Knowing all this, it should be no surprise to you that the word **bow** meaning "bend the head or body" is now pronounced [bau], while the word with the same meaning “weapon for shooting arrows" sounds [bou]: [bau] comes from Middle English ['bu: ə n] (spelt **bowen**), and [bou] (spelt **bowe**) in Middle English.

R E V I S I O N M A T E R I A L

Suggested assignments on chapter IY

“Historical Background of Present-day English Reading of Vowel Letters and Letter Combinations”

1. When and why don't we read the letter **e** at the end of an

English word?

2. Why is the reading of English vowel letters quite different in different words?
3. When and why are English vowel letters read as they are called in the alphabet?
4. When are English vowel letters read short?
5. Why are vowel letters in words like **child, find, comb** read as they are called in the alphabet?
6. Why is **a** read [æ] (as in **back**), [ei] (as in **name**), [a:] (as in **far, fast**, **half, dance**), [eə] (as in **Mary**), [o] (as in **want**), [o:] (as in **war, all**, **walk**)?
7. Why is **e** read [e] in **bed,** but [i:] in **evening**, [ə:] in **her,** [iə] in **hero**, [eə] in **there**") ……..
8. Why is **i** read [i] in **sit**, but [ai] in **time**, [i:] in **machine**, [ə:] in **first**, [aiə] in **irony**?
9. Why is **o** read [o] in **box**, but [ou] in **home**, [ɔ:] in **morning**, [ɔ:] or [oə] in **more,** [u:] in **do**, [ʌ] in **come**, [ə:] in **work**?
10. Why is **u** read [u] in **put**, but [a] in **cut**, [ju:] in **duty**, [u:] in **rule**, [juə] in **during**, [uə] in **jury**, [ə:] in **fur**?
11. Why is **y** used both as a vowel and a consonant letter in English, and why is the vowel letter **y** read like **i**?
12. Why do we read **ai, ay** and **ey** like **ei** and in the same way as the letter **a**?
13. Why do we read the digraphs **au** and **aw** as [o:]?
14. Why are the digraphs **ea, ee, ei, ie** all read [i:]?
15. Why do we read **ea** as a short vowel [e] in words like **bread** and in some other words?
16. Why do we read **ea** + **r** as [iə] in words like **hear**, [eə] in words like **bear**, and [ə:] in words like **earth**?
17. Why do we read both **eu** and **ew** as **u** ([(j)u:])?
18. Why do we read the digraph **oa** as **o** ([ou]), and **oar**, as **or** ([o:])?
19. Why is **oo** read [u:], (as in **moon**), [u] (as in **book**), and [ʌ] (in **blood** and **flood**)?
20. Why is **oo+r** read [o:] **indoor** and **floor**, but [uə] in **poor**?
21. Why is **ou** read [au] (as in **house**), [u:] (as in **soup**), [a] (as in **enough**), [ou] (as in **shoulder**), [o:] (as in **thought**)?
22 Why is **ou** + **r** read [auə] (as in **our**), [uə] (as in **tour**), [ɔ:]

(as in **court**), [ə:] (as in **journey**)?

23. Why is the digraph **ow** read [au] in some words and [ou] in others?

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A. accusative (case)
cf. confer, compare
D. dative (case)
e.g. for example
EModE Early Modern English
Q. genitive (case)
ibid. in the same place
i. e. that is (Lat. id est)
ME Middle English
ModE Modern English
ModG Modern German
O. objective (case)
OF Old French
pl. plural
pres. present (tense)
sg singular
RP Received Pronunciation
c. century
cons. consonant
f. feminine
foll. following
Fr. French
I. instrumental (case)
Lat. Latin
m. masculine
n. noun
N. nominative
North. Northern
OE Old English
p., pers.person
pple participle
p. t. past tense
Russ. Russian
v. verb

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Barber Ch. Early Modern English. – London, 1976.
2. Berndt R. Einfuhrung in das Studium des Mittelenglischen. – Halle, 1960.
3. Bynon Th. Historical Linguistics. – Cambridge, 1977.
4. Campbell A. Old English Grammar. – London, 1959.
5. Dobson, E. J. English Pronunciation 1500-1700, 2 vols. - Oxford, 1968.
6. Faiss K. Aspekte der englischen Sprachgeschichte. –Tubingen, 1977.
7. Firbas J. Some Thoughts on the Function of Word Order in Old English, 1957. pp. 72-100.
8. Fisiak J. A Short Grammar of Middle English, Part One: Graphemics, Phonemics and Morphemics. – Warsaw, 1968.
9. Sociolinguistics and Middle English. Some Socially Motivated Changes in the History of English, 1977, pp. 247-259.
10. Fries, Ch. On the development of the structural use of word-order in Modern English// Language, 16 (1940), pp. 199-208.
11. Gorlach M. Einfuhrung in die englische Sprachgeschichte. – Heidelberg, 1974.
12. Horn-Lehnert: Horn, W. Laut und Leben. Englische Lautgeschichte der neueren Zeit (1400-1950), bearbeitet und herausgegeben von Martin Lehnert, 2 vols. - Berlin, 1954.
13. Ilyish B. A. History of the English Language. – Leningrad, 1973.
14. Ivanova I.P., Chakhojan L.P. Istorija anglijskogo jazyka. – M., 1976.
15. Jones Ch. An Introduction to Middle English. – L. - N.- Y., 1972.
16. Kastovsky D. Studies in Morphology. Aspects of English and German Verb Inflection. -Tubingen, 1971.
17. Kisbye T. A Historical Outline of English Syntax, 2 vols. -Aarhus, 1971-72.
18. Lehnert M. 'Slawisches Wortgut im Englischen. Eine sprach- und gesellschaftswissenschaftliche Studie', Sitzungsberichte der

Akademie der Wissenschaften der DDR, Gesellschaftswissenschaften, Jg. 1977. Nr. 8/G, pp. 17-61.
19. Marchand, H. The Categories and Types of Present-Day English Word Formation, a Synchronic-Diachronic Approach. - Munchen, 1969.
20. Mitchell, B. A Guide to Old English. – Oxford, 1971.
21. Mustanoja Tauno F. Middle English Syntax. Part I: Parts of Speech. - Helsinki, 1960.
22. Pilch H. Altenglische Grammatik. Dialektologie, Phonologie, Morphologie, Syntax. - Munchen, 1970.
23. Pinsker H. Historische Englische Grammatik. - Miinchen, 1969.
24. Pinsker H., Fries U., Bierbaumer, P. Altenglisches Studienbuch, Studienreihe Englisch Bd. 10, - Diisseldorf-Bern, 1976.
25. Plotkin, V. Y. Ocerk diachroniceskoj fonologii anglijskogo jazyka. -Moskva, 1976.
26. Rybarkiewicz, W. 'The Word Order in Old English Prose and the Functional Sentence Perspective', Stadia Anglica Posnaniensia IX (1911), pp. 87-93.
27. Shadmanov K. Jazyk-Ideologija-Semantika. – Tashkent, 1992.
28. Shadmanov K. Anglijskaja duhovnost i jazyk. – Bukhara, 2010.
29. Salmon V. Sentence Structures in Colloquial Shakespearian English, Transactions of the Philological Society, 1965, pp. 105-140.
30. Samuels M. L. Linguistic Evolution with special reference to English. - Cambridge, 1975.
31. Schlauch M. The English Language in Modern Times (since 1400). -Warsaw, 1959.
32. Scragg D. G. A History of the English Spelling. -Manchester, 1974.
33. Srebrennikov B. A. et al. Obscee jazykoznanie: formy sushestvovanija, funksii, istorija jazyka. - Moskva, 1970.
34. Swieczkowski W. Word Order Patterning in Middle English. -The Hague, 1962.
35. Vachek, J., Selected Writings in English and General Linguistics. - Prague, 1976.
36. Visser F. Th. A Historical Syntax of the English Language, 3 parts in 4 vols. - Leiden, 1963-1973.
37. Weinstock H. Mittelenglisches Elementarbuch, Sammlung Goschen. -Berlin, 1968.

38. Wetna J. A Diachronic Grammar of English. Part 1: Phonology. - Warsaw, 1978.
39. Williams J. M. Origins of the English Language. A Social and Linguistic History. - N.-Y., - L., 1975.

DICTIONARIES

1. Hall J. R. C. A Concise Anglo-Saxon Dictionary, 4th edition with a supplement by H. D. Meritt Cambridge 1960.
2. Holthausen P. Altenglisches etymologisches Worterbuch. - Heidelberg, 1963.
3. Lehnert M. Poetry and Prose of the Anglo-Saxons. -Berlin 1955-1956.
4. Kurath H., Kuhn, S. M., Reidy, J. Middle English Dictionary, Ann Arbor, Mich., 1954.
5. Stratman F. H., Bradley H. A Middle English Dictionary. - Oxford 1891, repr. London, 1967.
6. Murray J. A. H., et al. (eds.), The Oxford English Dictionary, 12 vols plus Supplement. - Oxford 1933, repr. 1961.
7. The compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary. Complete Text Reproduced Micrographically, 2 vols. - Oxford, 1971.
8. Burchfleld, R. W. (ed.), A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary, 3 vols. -Oxford, 1972.
9. Onions C. T., Friedrichsen, G. W. S. and Burchfleld, R. W. The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology. - Oxf., 1967.
10. Klein E. A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language, 2 vols. - Amsterdam-London-New York, 1966-1967.
11. Skeat W.W. A Concise Etymological Dictionary of the English Language. Perigee Books. - N.-Y., 1980.
12. The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English, adapted by H.W.Fowler and F.G.Fowler from **The Oxford Dictionary**. – Oxford, 1924.
13. Daniel Jones. Everyman's English Pronouncing Dictionary. – M., 1964.
14. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. The Complete Guide to Written and Spoken English. New Edition. Longman Group Ltd., 1997.

GLOSSARY OF SPECIAL TERMS

Back vowels and consonants:

Vowels and consonants produced with the bulk of the tongue in the back part of the mouth. In Modern English the back vowels are [u:], [u], [ɔ:], [ɔ], [a:]; the back consonants are [k], [g], [ŋ].

Close vowels (also called high vowels):

Vowels (such as [i:], [i], [u:] [u]]) made with the tongue raised rather high in the mouth, so that the passage for the air between the tongue and the roof of the mouth is rather close (narrow). That is what distinguishes close vowels from the so-called **open** ones.

There are various degrees of closeness and openness. The vowels [e:], [ɛ:], [o:], [ɔ:] in earlier English were neither quite close nor quite open. But [e:] was closer than [e:] (that is, pronounced with the tongue higher in the mouth), and [o:], closer than [ɔ:], so [e:] and [o:] are called the close long **e** and **o**, while [ɛ:] and [ɔ:] are referred to as the open long **e** and **o** vowels.

In course of time a vowel may become closer. This is called **narrowing** of the vowel, as when [ɛ:] narrows to [e:], and [e:] narrows to [i:].

Dental consonants:

Consonants made with the tip or the front part of the tongue at or near the teeth. Strictly speaking, only [ɵ] and [ð] should be called dental in Modern English. English [t], [d], [n], [s], and [z], unlike the Russian and Uzbek dental consonants [т], [д], [н], [с], [з], are pronounced with the tip of the tongue not exactly at the teeth, but somewhat behind them, at the so-called teeth-ridge or alveoli. A more accurate name for them is **alveolar** consonants.

Dialect (local dialect):

The form of a language spoken in a certain (definite) part of the country.

Digraph:

A combination of two letters standing for a simple vowel, a diphthong or a consonant, e.g. **au** and **aw** for [ɔ :], **ow** for [ou] and [au], **sh** for [ʃ], and so on.

Diphthong:

A close combination of two vowel elements which is produced with the organs of speech gradually changing their position and which belongs to one syllable, such as [ei], [ai], [ɔ i], [ou], [au], [i ə], [ɛ ə], [ɔ ə] [uə] in Modern English.

Fricative consonants (fricatives):

Consonants produced not by the air breaking through a stop formed by the organs of speech (the lips, the teeth, the tongue and the roof of the mouth), as **stop consonants** are, but by the air passing through a narrow opening between speech organs and rubbing against them. It is the noise of the friction that is heard as a fricative consonant, such as [f], [v], [ɵ], [ð], [s], [z], [ʃ], [ʒ].

Front vowels:

Vowels produced with the bulk of the tongue moved to the front part of the mouth. In Modern English the front vowels are: [i:l, [i], [e], [æ].

Glide:

A very short weak vowel or vowel-like sound which does not form a syllable and often makes a diphthong with the neighbouring vowel, as [ə] in **during** ['djuəriŋ] or [u] in **gold** [gould].

Labial consonants (lip consonants):

Consonants formed by the lips (such as [p], [b], [m], [w]) or by the upper teeth and the lower lip [[f] and [v]).

Mute letters (also called silent letters):
Letters which are not read (pronounced).

Native words:
Words which have not come into English from any foreign language.

Open vowels (also called broad or low):
Vowels (such as Modern English [æ], [a:] and earlier English [a], [a:]) made with the tongue lying low in the mouth, so that a wide passage is left for the air between the tongue and the roof of the mouth. Compare what is said about **close vowels.**

Rounded (labialized) vowels:
Vowels made with the lips rounded, such as [u:], [u], [ɔ:], [ɔ]. A rounded vowel can become unrounded in course of time, as did English [u], which changed to [ʌ]. This is called the **unrounding** of a vowel. On the other hand, vowels can become rounded under the influence of neighbouring sounds, as when English [a] changed to [ɔ] after [w].

Sibilant:
(A) hissing (consonant). The sibilant consonants in English are [s], [z], [ʃ], [ʒ], [ʧ], [ʤ]

C O N T E N T S

CHAPTER I I I

THE WHENCE AND WHY OF ENGLISH LETTER NAMES

CHAPTER I Y

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PRESENT-DAY ENGLISH READING OF VOWEL LETTERS AND LETTER COMBINATIONS