

Foreword

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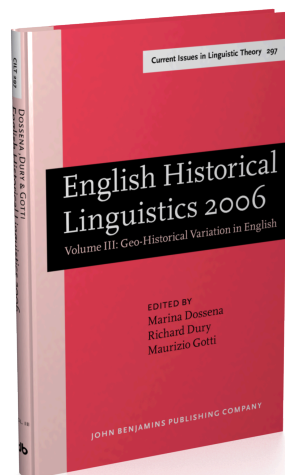
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Foreword

The conference at which the papers in this volume were first presented took place on 21–25 August 2006 at the University of Bergamo (Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures). This was the 14th biennial meeting of the International Conference on English Historical Linguistics (ICEHL), which has been held each time in a different European country and, until then, had never been hosted by an Italian institution. The choice of Bergamo was found to be appropriate, as this University has a strong tradition in English historical linguistics, international scholarly exchanges and has held three important conferences dedicated to English Diachronic Syntax (1992) and English Historical Dialectology (2003 and 2007).

The ICEHL conference proved to be very successful, as over 220 well established as well as younger scholars, from Europe and from as far away as the United States, Canada, New Zealand and Japan, took an active part in both presenting a wide range of stimulating papers and participating in the ensuing discussions. The various conference events – which included plenary lectures, papers, panels and workshops – provided an excellent opportunity for the assessment of how research in this field had progressed and what results had been obtained, giving evidence of the many ways in which linguistic, textual and cultural aspects have characterized the development of the English language. We would like to thank all those who presented a paper, and especially the plenary speakers for offering main theoretical guidelines to the various sections of the conference.

We are particularly indebted to colleagues and staff in Bergamo who made this conference possible: in particular, Professor Alberto Castoldi, Rector of our University, Professor Giuliano Bernini, Dean of the Faculty of Foreign Languages and Literatures, and Professor Angela Locatelli, then Head of the Department of Comparative Languages, Literatures and Cultures. We are also very grateful to our colleagues in the English Language branch of our Department, for their great help and support in the organisation and management of this conference.

From the academic point of view, this conference proved to be a very rewarding experience. Indeed, the generally high quality of the presentations led to our decision of offering more than one volume of selected, peer-reviewed and revised papers for publication in an internationally renowned series, in order to secure the widest distribution possible and thus contribute to the advancement of our understanding of the structure and development of the English language. All the numerous papers that were submitted underwent a thorough refereeing process,

and we are very grateful to senior members of the scholarly community, including of course the anonymous readers consulted by the Series Editor, for devoting so much of their time to this task. Their comments and suggestions proved to be extremely useful already in the selection process, which led us to the identification of three well-structured and cohesive volumes, the first of which is devoted to syntax and morphology, the second to lexis and semantics, and the third (the present one) to geo-historical variation. We are extremely grateful to Prof. Dr. E.F.K. Koerner, General Editor of “Current Issues in Linguistic Theory” (CILT), for having agreed to include these three volumes of selected papers in his prestigious series, as well as for his advice and constant support. Our special thanks are also due to Ms. Anke de Looper and Martine van Marsbergen at John Benjamins for their patience, great care, and assistance.

Bergamo, January 2008

The Editors