

# Foreword

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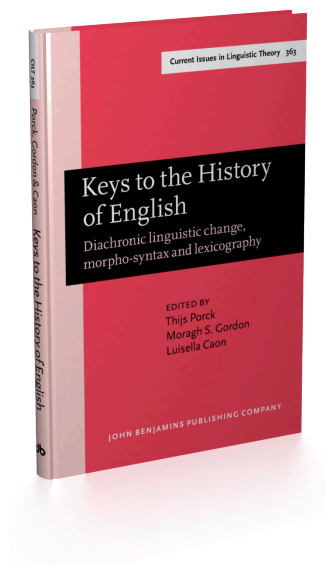
**Keys to the History of English. Selected papers from the 21st ICEHL : Diachronic linguistic change, morpho-syntax and lexicography**

**Edited by Thijs Porck, Moragh S. Gordon and Luisella Caon**  
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## Foreword

The twenty-first biennial meeting of the International Conference on English Historical Linguistics (ICEHL) took place online 7 to 11 June 2021. Originally, we planned for the conference to take place in 2020. Due to the world-wide Covid-19 restrictions on travelling and holding large-scale meetings, we decided to postpone the conference to 2021 in the hope that we could all meet in the historic town of Leiden with its 88 canals, 2800 historical buildings – including windmills, churches, city gates, inner courts, museums, and botanical garden – and two keys in its coat of arms. Alas, this was not to be. Covid-19 still held the world in its grip, and we were forced to rethink and replan the conference.

It is because of the flexibility and enthusiasm of the organising team and dedicated student assistants that we managed to find an online platform and other necessary facilities that enabled us to organise an online conference with more than 150 attendees from all parts of the world. The conference started with four different workshops with 28 speakers. The next three days, 95 speakers presented stimulating papers – sometimes pre-recorded – always with ample time for discussion. Each day ended with a plenary lecture. In between the parallel sessions, we organised virtual events and wonder.me meeting rooms, so that attendees could meet each other during breaks. We also showed an impression of key spots in Leiden that participants would have been able to visit had the conference taken place on location. Despite its online format, the ICEHL conference proved to be successful and provided an opportunity for exchanging ideas on how the field is moving forward. We were very pleased to see that the conference also appealed to the younger generation of MA- and BA-students.

Luisella Caon, Lauren Fonteyn, Moragh Gordon, Thijs Porck, Ingrid Tieken-Boon van Ostade, and I would like to thank all those who presented their papers under sometimes challenging online-circumstances. We owe special thanks to our student assistants who did their utmost to help the sessions run smoothly. We are very grateful to our plenary speakers Claudia Claridge, Bette Los, Peter Petré, and George Walkden for sharing their insights into various aspects of the history of the English language. We would also like to thank the publishers John Benjamins, Brill, and Edinburgh University Press as well as the Leiden University Centre for Linguistics (LUCL) for their support.

Leiden, December 2022 Janet Grijzenhout

