Book Review

Susan Baddeley & **Anja Voeste** (eds.). 2012. *Orthographies in Early Modern Europe*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. ISBN 9783110288124 (hardback), vi, 383 pp. €119.95

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DOI 10.1515/jhsl-2015-0019

This volume comprises twelve contributions. The editors' "Introduction" is followed by eleven papers devoted to the development of the orthographic systems in selected languages, mostly Indo-European. The first three articles are on Romance tongues, Spanish (Elena Llamas Pombo), Italian (Andreas Michel), and French (Susan Baddeley). Another three of the papers deal with Germanic languages, namely English (Terttu Nevalainen), German (Anja Voeste), and Swedish (Alexander Zheltukhin). The Slavic language family is represented by Polish (Daniel Bunčić), Czech (Tilman Berger), and Croatian (Roland Marti). The remaining two articles are devoted to languages which belong to the Finno-Ugrian family, namely Hungarian (Klára Korompay) and Finnish (Taru Nordlund). Korompay's paper has been translated from French into English by Baddeley. Because certain topics are dealt with by nearly all these authors, this review has been organised content-wise rather than according to the order of the papers presented in the volume.

The main focus of the papers in the volume is on orthographic standardisation, which, for most languages under consideration, took place between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. The sixteenth century proved to be of particular importance for the formation of modern vernacular standards, which became a significant element in building national identities in the emerging modern states in Europe. However, where relevant, the authors of the papers analyse also earlier and later developments. The apparent lack of full compatibility between the contributions with regard to chronological scope stems from the fact that orthographic standardisation was largely determined by the wider historical context of the countries and nations whose languages are discussed here. In some languages, standardisation started relatively early. For example, in Spanish, the first efforts aiming at regularising orthographic practices were made in the thirteenth century (Llamas Pombo, pp. 29–32). By contrast, in Croatian, Finnish, and Hungarian, standardisation was complicated and slowed down by the complex extra-linguistic situation (see contributions by Marti, Nordlund, and Korompay).

In all the vernaculars, the standardisation of spelling was preceded by a period of high variation. As can be understood from Voeste's contribution, the availability of variants was crucial for the process of standardisation, because it made the selection of future standard forms possible. In this context, according to Llamas Pombo (pp. 26–28), Baddeley (p. 97), and Voeste (pp. 170–173), orthographic variation should not be viewed as the result of chaos, but rather the expression of the idea of *Variatio delectat*, a medieval aesthetic principle according to which the availability of spelling variants, similarly to variation at the other linguistic levels, for example lexical and syntactic, was perceived as stylistically desirable. Evidence for the structured character of variation and for the coexistence of several systems (or traditions) rather than a complete lack of rules, is provided for virtually all the languages considered in the volume. The system selected and accepted as the standard was, as a rule, associated with prestige and used by established authorities. For instance, in Italy, the literary language of Florence of the fourteenth century was chosen (Michel, p. 64), in Spain, the Castilian vernacular (Llamas Pombo, pp. 25, 30), and in England, the Chancery language (Nevalainen, pp. 134–139). Nonetheless, the selection of one variety did not preclude influences from the other available traditions, including both local and foreign ones, often dependent on register (see e.g. Nevalainen, pp. 137, 144–146; Zheltukhin, pp. 204–211; Bunčić, pp. 224–225). Such mutual influence could even lead to the formation of hybrid orthographic codes or "code-switching" (see Zheltukhin, p. 206).

As can be learned from the articles in the reviewed volume, the process of standardisation of national spelling systems was nearly always accompanied with debates about the principles on which this system should be based (perhaps with the exception of Swedish for which no evidence of this kind is reported by Zheltukhin). Spelling reformers usually advocated the adoption of either the phonological (phonemic) principle or the morphological one in the vernacular orthographic systems. The former consists of establishing one-to-one correspondences between phonemes and graphemes, whereas the latter emphasises the need to spell morphemes consistently, irrespective of their different phonetic or phonological realisations. Eventually, all the languages in question have adopted mixed orthographic systems, with both principles represented to some extent. However, in individual languages, one principle tends to predominate in the orthography. For instance, the orthographic systems of Italian, Spanish, Croatian, Hungarian, and Finnish are based predominantly on the phonemic principle, whereas in German, Polish, French, and English, the morphemic principle has gained more importance. Additionally, in French and English (and temporarily in Spanish), there was a strong etymologising (or historical) trend, aiming at the reconstruction of the graphemic link of a given

word with its etymon in Latin (or Greek). This trend was also advocated as a means of graphic distinction between homophones. The etymologising tendency did not appear at the same time in all the languages. For example, in Spanish, it emerged in the fifteenth century (Llamas Pombo, p. 16), whereas in English, it is recorded for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Nevalainen, pp. 155–156).

The models for the standardisation of the vernaculars were provided by exoglossic, often historical, standards, mainly Latin, which were gradually replaced by the endoglossic ones (see Nevalainen, pp. 129–132, for a theoretical overview). The formation of the standard in Croatian was also influenced by Old Church Slavonic (Marti, pp. 274–275). In certain cases, the role of the exoglossic standard (or one of the standards) was taken by a modern language. For instance, Finnish had to compete with Swedish for a few centuries before it finally secured its position as the endoglossic written standard in the nineteenth century (Nordlund, pp. 361–367).

All of the languages discussed in the volume have adopted the Latin alphabet (with a time lag in the case of Croatian), and consequently, they had to deal with the problems connected with the lack of a sufficient number of graphemes needed to render all the phonemes of the vernaculars. This problem was solved using one of two strategies, digraphic and diacritic, or a combination of both (in different proportions), as in Polish, Czech, Hungarian, and French (see Bunčić, Berger, Korompay, and Baddeley).

Another aspect of orthographic standardisation shared by the languages examined here is the impact of such extra-linguistic factors as the establishment of printing presses or the Reformation. The proponents of the latter expedited the spread of the printing technology, treating it as a good way of promoting their ideas (see e.g. Baddeley, pp. 111–114; Korompay, pp. 329–332). With regard to, for example, Czech and Hungarian, a significant role was played by Protestant translators and editors of the Bible (see Berger, pp. 263–264; Korompay, pp. 330–331) in the standardisation process. Interestingly, spelling reformers likewise tended to be adherents to Protestantism (see especially Baddeley, pp. 111–114; Berger, pp. 258–260; Korompay, pp. 330–331).

Despite the generally high level of variation in the earliest printed documents, in the long run, the gradually expanding access to printed books supported and enhanced standardisation. The evidence for the significance of printing and printers in the process of standardisation can be seen in that printed books reached a relatively high level of spelling regularisation much earlier than handwritten documents which preserved idiosyncrasies for decades or even centuries longer. In fact, in several languages, two separate systems have been identified, one in printed books and the other in manuscripts, for

example in English (Nevalainen, pp. 141–146), Polish (Bunčić, pp. 224–225), and Czech (Berger, pp. 264–265).

Voeste (pp. 173–176) relates the importance of printing technology for spelling regularisation to the professionalisation of book production connected with the efficiency requirements. It appears that printers themselves established the generally accepted spelling practices. Baddeley (pp. 101–105), Nevalainen (pp. 147–150), and Bunčić (pp. 229–231) maintain that major printing houses had already developed their own house styles or stylesheets regarding orthographic practices by the sixteenth century. The printers also gradually reduced the number of spelling variants in their output, probably as part of the trend towards greater efficiency in their work. Both claims confirm and support the findings of recent studies regarding English (see Aronoff 1989; Howard-Hill 2006; Rutkowska 2005, Rutkowska 2013). Moreover, not infrequently, the printers and the theoreticians interested in reforming spelling systems cooperated with each other rather closely (Baddeley, pp. 111–113; Bunčić, p. 230).

Some authors go beyond spelling in their analyses, examining the systematization of punctuation (e.g. Michel, pp. 69, 73–75, 80–81; Bunčić, p. 242; Korompay, pp. 343–344). Michel (pp. 72–74, 77–78) and Voeste (pp. 173–176) pay attention to issues regarding the interrelation between orthography and typography such as capitalisation, alignment of text and word-separation, as well as the gradual disappearance of abbreviations and ligatures (inherited from the manuscript traditions) from printed books in the course of the sixteenth century. It can probably be assumed that the increasing resolution of abbreviations was generally shared by printers in the sixteenth century, but, apart from Michel and Voeste, the authors in the volume do not provide information relevant to this topic.

As regards the influence of institutions and normative works (e.g. dictionaries and spelling books) on orthographic standardisation, the opinions of the authors seem divided. On the one hand, Voeste (p. 186) claims that, in German, and presumably also other European languages, "spelling changes were neither planned nor controlled by institutions" and "grammarians did not trigger the standardization themselves", because their comments on good usage refer to the already existing variants used by "established writers". Similar comments can be found in Marti (pp. 286–291) with regard to Croatian. On the other hand, one learns from Nevalainen (p. 154) that "[t]eaching manuals and spelling books had a direct impact on how English orthography was taught and learned". Besides, Zheltukhin argues that the abruptness of certain spelling changes (at least in Swedish) "suggests a formal act of linguistic planning". Presumably, this aspect of standardisation still requires more in-depth research, including detailed quantitative studies, based on sizeable samples, which are apparently still not

available for most languages. Indeed, apart from Baddeley, Nevalainen, and Zheltukhin, who make use of the existing quantitative studies (including their own research), all the authors of the papers considered here take a qualitative approach to orthography.

A few papers in the collection contain elements that contribute to a discussion about the theory of orthography and its standardisation. The discussions on this topic are particularly elaborate in the articles by Llamas Pombo, Baddeley, Nevalainen, and Marti. Other authors, for example Michel and Berger, provide little or no reflection on purely theoretical aspects. What seems missing is a theoretical chapter (or perhaps a section within the "Introduction"), where the agreed terminology to be used throughout the volume could be presented and explained. In the actual state of affairs, the theoretical approaches assumed by individual authors are not always fully compatible. One instance of the terminological ambiguity present in the volume concerns the use of the term *consonant*. It is primarily used to refer to a type of sound, but in Baddeley's paper it denotes also a letter, as is evident in the passage from p. 99: "[t]his problem was remedied by inserting a number of mute letters, mostly consonants, which had several functions". A similar usage can be found in the passage "some consonants, such as <t>, <l> or <f> are easily doubled", by Voeste (p. 180). Employing separate terms, such as *a consonantal* and *a vocalic* (see Wełna 1982: 10), to refer to graphemes representing consonants and vowels, respectively, would help avoid unnecessary confusion with sounds.

Additionally, the impression of some deficiency of editorial consistency is visible in the considerable difference in length between the shortest contribution (by Berger), covering fourteen pages, and the longest one (by Marti), covering fifty-two pages. Similarly, no apparent policy concerning endnotes can be identified in the volume. They range from highly elaborate and detailed lists of diverse linguistic and extra-linguistic details (see especially Marti, Baddeley, and Llamas Pombo), through a list of the website addresses used as sources of primary texts (Michel) to a small number of extra remarks (most other authors). In Berger's and Korompay's papers, they are not used at all.

Moving on to the general evaluation of Baddeley and Voeste's book, in spite of a few weaknesses, as mentioned above, it must be emphasised that this volume is a very valuable contribution to the field, and it fills a gap in the existing literature on the standardisation of orthographic systems. So far, such literature has normally dealt with one particular language at a time, and is often not available in English. Even if a comparison of the issues relevant to orthographic standardisation across the languages (in the available papers) is sometimes difficult due to the different perspectives taken by particular authors and due to the diversity of language-external contexts, I believe that the editors' aim "to

promote a better understanding of the development of national orthographies in Europe during the pivotal period constituted by Early Modern times" (p. 1) has been achieved.

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