

On the new Middle High German grammar.¹

Nils Langer, Bristol
nils.langer@bris.ac.uk

Sammlung Kurzer Grammatiken Germanischer Dialekte (founded by W. Braune)
Gothic (1880), Middle High German (1881), Old English (1882), Old Norse (1884), Old
High German (1886), Old Saxon (1891), Middle Low German (1914)

Revisions are planned and in progress for

Frank Heidermanns	Gothic
Hans Fix-Bonner	Old Norse
Heinrich Tiefenbach	Old Saxon
Dieter Möhn, Ingrid Schröder, Heinz Menge	Middle Low German
Ingo Reiffenstein, Richard Schrodtt	Old High German
Thomas Klein, Hans-Joachim Solms, Klaus-P. Wegera	Middle High German

two new grammars

Oskar Reichmann & Klaus-Peter Wegera (eds.)	Early New High German
Vilmos Ágel	New High German (from 1650)

Periodisation of German (Grimm, Scherer)

Old High German	750? – 1050
Middle High German	1050-1350
Early New High German	1350-1650
New High German	since 1650

Choosing the right period

Choosing the right language

Four problematic fields:

Problem 1: target audience, intended user

Problem 2: *Quellenkritik*

- => Three types of text quality:
 - A = all texts where geographic origin and author, as well as date are fairly certain, and where the actual manuscript is not older than 50 years than the text,
 - B = all other texts of sufficient length;
 - C = texts of less than 1 full page length which can be consulted for salient features but not for the overall picture

Problem 3: What's included and how

new MHG grammar: *Bochumer Korpus* (Wegera, Solms, Klein)

Overall corpus: some 300 texts;

Morphology: 102 manuscripts, each with 30 pages of c. 400 words (either complete shorter texts or excerpts from longer texts).

Phonology: further, but shorter texts

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Syntax: some of the large texts were used in their entirety (cf. Prell 2003). 24 texts, with about 300 sentences each, 1015-1350 (Prell 2003: 242)

Problem 4: Corpus selection

- “Auswahlkorpora sind [...] subjektiv gefärbte Bilder, Metaphern der Sprachwirklichkeit.”
- The actual text types of the new MHG grammar: sermons, Biblical texts, poetry, chronicles, scientific, legal texts, prose, constitutions,
=> but with more general categorisation into Prose, Poetry, Legal (*Urkunde*)
- Korpus: “Grundlage einer solchen Grammatik muss ein zumindest nach Raum- und Zeitaspekten, sowie ein nach Sprachhandlungszusammenhängen (Textsorten) strukturiertes Korpus sein.” (Wegera 2003: 233). This has already happened for the ENHG grammar.

A case study

two diminutive suffixes in German: k-variant (*chen / ken*) vs l-variant (*lein, le, el*)

new MHG corpus

1150-1200	20% are <i>chen</i>	2 examples
1200-1250	11% are <i>chen</i>	1 example
1250-1300	3.8% are <i>chen</i>	2 examples
1300-1350	2.9% are <i>chen</i>	5 examples

Jacob Grimm *k-variant* most prominent in Middle Ages “am Rhein, Main, in Oberhessen, einem theile Thüringens und Frankens, wie es daselbst noch heutigestages in der volkssprache lebt” (Grimm 1890: 679).

BONN corpus

1350-1400	4.2% are <i>chen</i>	3 examples
1450-1500	8.0% are <i>chen</i>	11 examples
1550-1600	3.2% are <i>chen</i>	6 examples
1650-1700	6.8% are <i>chen</i>	10 examples

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