

Looking for regional words in late seventeenth-century  
England:  
Bishop White Kennett and his glossary to *Parochial  
Antiquities* (1695)<sup>1</sup>

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ABSTRACT

The analysis of regional dialects in the Early Modern period has commonly been disregarded in favour of an ample scholarly interest in the 'authorised' version of English which came to be eventually established as a standard. The history of regional 'Englishes' at this time still remains to a very great extent in oblivion, owing mainly to an apparent dearth of direct textual evidence which might provide trustworthy data. Research in this field has been for the most part focused on phonological, orthographical and morphological traits by virtue of the rather more abundant information that dialect testimonies yield about them. Regional lexical diversity has, on the contrary, deserved no special attention as uncertainty arises with regard to what was provincially restricted and what was not. This paper endeavours to offer additional data to the gloomy lexical setting of Early Modern regional English. It is our aim to give a descriptive account of the dialect words collated by Bishop White Kennett's glossary to *Parochial Antiquities* (1695). This underutilised specimen does actually widen the information furnished by other well known canonical word-lists and provides concrete geographical data that might contribute to bridging the gaps still existing in the history of lexical provincialisms at the time.

KEYWORDS: regional vocabulary, Early Modern English, dialects, Bishop White Kennett, lexicography, lexicology.

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of this paper for their suggestions and comments on an earlier draft of these pages. Needless to say, any shortcomings are mine alone.

## 1. Introduction

It is a widely held fact that our knowledge of the regional 'Englishes' during the Early Modern period (henceforth EModE) is still patchy, as no extensive research has hitherto been undertaken. Over the past two decades, scholarly concerns for this intervening stage in the history of English have notably been biased, thereby providing a restricted and partial account of the linguistic setting during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (*cf.* Milroy 2007: 33). The privilege granted to the 'authorised' version of English has undoubtedly silenced the history of provincial speech, thus casting it aside into the margins. Fortunately for linguistic purposes, recent research has brought into focus the necessity of putting a remedy to this deficiency and has told the story of other varieties accordingly (e.g. Wales 2006). However, the reality of provincial speech in EModE remains to be thoroughly investigated. What little interest there has been shows a traditional concern for phonological or orthographical issues, whilst lexis has not been worthy of any in-depth analysis but for a few examples.<sup>2</sup>

There is a widespread misconception suggesting that the lack of lexical data from this period is due to a scarcity of sources. Indeed, precise geographical information is largely absent from EModE dictionaries; literary renditions of provincial speech very often furnish dialect passages with words broadly associated with southern or northern varieties; and derogatory comments cast by linguistic authorities of the time incidentally uncover the geographies of some branded words.

Yet it should be pointed out that the emergence of a linguistic standard was paralleled by an outstanding and seldom

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<sup>2</sup> Osselton (1958), Wakelin (1987) and Görlach (1995; 1999: 499-506) are the most relevant sources where regional lexis presented by EModE dictionaries and glossaries is tackled more attentively. Weiner (1994; 1997) deals with the evidence supplied by probate inventories from a stimulating and challenging perspective. Fox (2000: 64-72) devotes a few pages of his illuminating chapter on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century popular speech to different glossaries and sources where lexical data may be attested. He mentions the specimen here evaluated too. Unfortunately, he refers to it in passing. Eckhardt (1910), Blake (1981: 63-107) and Blank (1996; 2006: 212-230) comment on the words used in literary portrayals of dialect. Wales (2006: 67-114) also refers to regional terms as evidenced by EModE literary dialects; some references to seventeenth-century glossaries of provincial vocabulary are made too.

acknowledged archaeological interest in alternative ‘Englishes’ which extends beyond the first general dialect dictionary *A Collection of English Words Not Generally Used* (1674) by John Ray. Most telling perhaps of this antiquarian fashion is Bishop White Kennett’s glossary to *Parochial Antiquities attempted in the History of Ambrosden, Burcester, and adjacent parts in Oxford and Bucks.* (1695). This was printed at Oxford in 1818, and later issued by the Rev. Walter W. Skeat for the English Dialect Society (EDS) with the title *Dialectal Words from “Kennett’s Parochial Antiquities”* (1879). As is true of Ray’s enterprise, Kennett provides localised regional data, although his southern and eastern words clearly outnumber northern terms. Furthermore, the author, albeit his indebtedness to Ray for a certain amount of his provincialisms, expands the available information supplied by earlier sources, therefore becoming a reliable repository of regional dialect words underutilised to date.

This paper seeks to bridge the gaps which have traditionally stretched from the Middle English period up to the late eighteenth century in terms of regional vocabulary. In so doing, it is our endeavour to repair a linguistic need in some measure, for, as Wakelin (1987: 174) claims, “all through the history of English, up to the nineteenth century, we are bedevilled by a less than perfect notion of what was and what was not regionally restricted.”

## 2. Dignifying forms of self-expression: EModE scholarly interest in regional vocabulary

It is well known that the gradual diffusion and supremacy of a standard model in England made learned scholars anxious about its codification, correctness and refinement. Peripheral forms of expression were consequently marginalised, as they would not form part of the ‘authorised’ language. Nonetheless, these subordinate dialects of English were not seen through disdainful filters by some scholars, and they even became the objects of worthy attention. Suffice it to say that the linguistic controversy which arose in the mid-sixteenth century as a result of the disputes over the use of inhorn terms stimulated many to take nationalistic stands on lexical grounds in a serious attempt to recover the original linguistic purity of English. So much so that regional varieties, especially northern, were regarded as rich repositories of relics of the ancient Anglo-

Saxon past. Besides, the overwhelming development of historical and topographical investigations brought an interest in old words and etymologies.<sup>3</sup>

It is therefore not surprising that Laurence Nowell's *Vocabularium Saxonicum* (c.1567), the first extant dictionary of Anglo-Saxon published in 1952, made explicit reference to one hundred and seventy-three regional words which he marked as genuine to his native Lancashire. Amongst them, emphasis should be laid on *to dree* 'to endure', *pleck* 'a place', or *rowne* 'to whisper'. In addition, northern words –*gang* 'to go' or *gersume* 'reward'– also deserve attention, for, as Blank (2006: 221) states, "the rubble of northern English could be mined for fossils of the older language." Kentish and Wiltshire vocabulary was also included: *hawe* 'measure of land' or *sullow* 'plow' (Marckwardt 1947: 182).

In parallel, Richard Carew exhibited a similar linguistic pride when pointing at differences of vocabulary as indicative of his own country's rich lexical variety in "The Excellencie of the English Tongue":

Moreouer the copiousnesse of our language appeareth in the diuersitie of our Dialects, for wee haue Court and wee haue Country English, wee haue Northerne, and Southerne, grosse and ordinarie, which differ each from other [...] in many words, termes, and phrases, yet all right English alike, neither can any tongue (as I am perswaded) deliuer a matter with more varietie then ours. (1614: 42)

These lexical nationalistic affinities were further strengthened in *The Survey of Cornwall* (1602) where Carew listed eleven words which "require a speciall Dictionarie for their interpretation" (56): *bezibd* 'fortuned', *road* 'ayme', *scrip* 'escape', *pridy* 'handsome', *boobish* 'lubberly', *dule* 'comfort' or *lidden* 'by-word'.

As is true of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, the second half of the seventeenth century witnessed the continuation of this archaeological trend. Stephen Skinner, John Aubrey, John Ray and Thomas Browne looked for regional forms of

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<sup>3</sup> The Society of Antiquaries was founded as early as 1572 by Bishop Matthew Parker, Sir Robert Cotton or William Camden with the aim of preserving English antiquities. It existed until 1604 when James I abolished it for alleged political purposes. See further Wakelin (1991: 36-37).

self-expression to suit their etymological or antiquarian purposes. Actually, Shorrocks (2000: 85) avers that "No doubt the conservative tendencies of many of the regional dialects were felt to be interesting, and the dialectal evidence valuable for the light that it might throw on the history of standard English."

Firstly, Skinner's *Etymologicon Linguae Anglicanae* (1671) made provision for provincialisms. A careful analysis of the dictionary entries reveals a profuse incorporation of northern words which he, as an inhabitant of Lincoln, localised for the most part to this county. Secondly, John Aubrey's survey of Surrey's history and antiquities begun in 1673 (1719) also referred to genuine provincial items as part of his archaeological enquiry. According to Fox (2000: 65), he "was unusual among antiquaries of his generation in a research method which relied heavily on oral sources." Thirdly, the work of John Ray has been and still is the mandatory reference whenever and wherever the lexicon of EModE regional dialects is approached. His *A Collection of English Words Not Generally Used* (1674) has deservedly been dignified as the cornerstone of English dialect lexicography by virtue of his innovative method of word-gathering and the abundant amount of lexical data recorded (Gladstone 1991; Ihalainen 1994: 200-205). As it is well known, its scientific impact is notably felt in later dialect treatises and contemporary dictionaries which consciously introduced regional words. To name but a couple of them, Elisha Coles' *An English Dictionary* (1676) or John Kersey's revision of Edward Philip's *The New World of Words* (1706) (Starnes & Noyes 1946: 58-63; Bateley 1967; Wakelin 1987: 160-163; Görlach 1995: 93-94). Finally, Sir Thomas Browne collected twenty-six words "of no general reception in England but of common use in Norfolk, or peculiar to the East Angle Countries" (146) in his eighth treatise of *Certain Miscellany Tracts* (1683) entitled "Of Languages, and particularly of the Saxon Tongue."

Side by side with this scholarly interest in provincialisms, the flowering of dialect literature went hand in hand with the appearance of short provincial glossaries appended to literary specimens. Their purpose was linguistic and literary at one and the same time: "instruction and entertainment were not felt to be mutually exclusive" (Shorrocks 2000: 86). It goes without saying that the question of regional lexis does loom large here. By way of illustration, George Meriton's "Clavis" to his celebrated second

edition of *A Yorkshire Dialogue* (1685) offers numerous Yorkshire words which testify to the lexical history of the county. Also, the hitherto unpublished *A Yorkshire Dialogue between Will a Wally, and his Wife Pegg, & her Brother Roger, their Son Hobb, their Daughter Tib, their Neece Nan and their Landlord* (c.1690-1730), currently held at the Folger Shakespeare Library in MS V.a. 308, contains a list of provincial terms that shed light upon the lexical ascendancy of the region.<sup>4</sup>

Within this traditionally shadowed context where peripheral words held attraction for a modest but significant number of scholars and literary authors, Bishop White Kennett annexed a list of words to his *Parochial Antiquities* (1695). Despite Fox's (2000: 65) contention that they are all archaic words, it is a fact that the Vicar of Ambrosden collated northern, Midland, southern and eastern terms which were not all plundered from Ray's collections. In what follows, a close examination will be made of the evidence supplied by this list as regards regional vocabulary, its indebtedness to earlier lexicographical sources, and the interesting data it provides on EModE provincial varieties.

### 3. Bishop White Kennett's *Parochial Antiquities* (1695): a lexical survey

Born at St. Mary (Dover) in 1660, White Kennett was educated at Westminster School and St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, where he published the translation of Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly*. In 1685 he was appointed Vicar of Ambrosden (Oxfordshire) where he held his living until he became the rector of St. Botolph's, Aldgate (London), in 1700. In 1701 he became Archdeacon of Huntingdon (Cambridgeshire), Dean of Peterborough, and was finally made Bishop of this city in 1718. He died at Westminster in 1728. Kennett

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<sup>4</sup> I would like to express my gratitude to Miss Bettina Smith (Image Request Coordinator of the Photography and Digital Imaging Department, Folger Shakespeare Library) for access to the microfilm printouts of this regional specimen, as well as detailed information on MS V.a. 308. This *Yorkshire Dialogue* and the glossary which is appended to it will be analysed in depth elsewhere. See Ruano-García (2008) for a thorough linguistic description of a Lancashire piece contained in this manuscript: *A Lancashire Tale* (c.1690-1730). This appears to antedate any other known written reproductions of genuine Lancashire speech before John Collier's celebrated *A View of the Lancashire Dialect* (1746).

published fifty-seven works and left behind several manuscripts which are held at the British Library as the Kennett Collection, Lansdowne MSS 935-1041.

*Parochial Antiquities* appeared in 1695 when the author moved to the small village of Ambrosden. Not republished until 1818, the word-list annexed to this work was issued separately in 1816 with the title 'A glossary to explain the original, the acceptance, and obsolescence of words and phrases; and to shew the rise, practice, and acceptance of customs, laws and manners'. To my knowledge, this glossary has gone relatively unnoticed for scholars and has considerably been ignored in recent times as a source for late seventeenth-century regionalisms. Yet, the importance of this work is clearly felt in view of its impact on later lexicographers and glossarists. As a matter of fact, it is referenced as a source in Halliwell's *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words* (1847), Baker's *Glossary of Northamptonshire Words and Phrases* (1854), Dartnell & Goddard's *A Glossary of Words Used in the County of Wiltshire* (1893) or Joseph Wright's monumental *English Dialect Dictionary* (1898-1905) (Ruano-García 2009b). It is likewise referred to by Wright (1901) (Shorrocks 1988) and Kennedy (1927) as an important glossary. Skeat's (1879) reprint of the glossary for the EDS or Fox (2000: 65) are amongst the very few for whom this has deserved scholarly merit. Kennett's glossary was conceived as a collection of Latin terms which, in keeping with other contemporary treatises, were listed with a view to explaining some words scattered through the text, and to shedding light upon ascendancies. Indeed, English items were introduced by way of etymological illustrations which, according to Skeat (1879: 2), are erroneous in virtually every instance. The glossary was thus reshaped in its reprint to suit Skeat's interests in regionalisms themselves: four hundred and twenty-eight words were picked up and listed alphabetically, favouring regional lexical data to the detriment of etymologies. Cross-references to the Latin originals and some remarks were also added. This is the edition which has been used for this paper.

### 3.1. Classification of words

As the title suggests, the lexical antiquities collected very much pertain to the county of Oxfordshire and neighbouring areas such as

Buckinghamshire, both in the South-East. However, Kennett made use of other English words –regionally restricted and of a wider non-standard distribution– so as to illustrate the etymological connexions he proposed. A detailed evaluation of the entries indicates that items fall into different strands:

(a) (Un-)marked words which were seemingly natural to regional speech, whether southern, eastern, northern / Scottish, or Midland.

(b) Unlabelled lexical elements that probably had a wider distribution and did not reflect restricted provincial usages. It is worth noting that some of them were apparently distinguished by a colloquial flavour: *hobs* 'clowns, [...] or jolt-headed country fellows'<sup>5</sup> or *hopper-arsed* 'lame in the hip' which Grose (1787 s.v. *hoppet*) would mark as vulgar. Names of household utensils were also collected: *porringer* 'a pottage-dish' or *posnet* 'a small metal pot or vessel for boiling, having a handle and three feet' (*Oxford English Dictionary*, henceforth *OED*).<sup>6</sup>

(c) Terms that neither point to properly regional nor to more widespread non-standard vocabulary, namely 'accepted' words. For instance, *blur* 'a blot, a blotch, a spot of deep tincture', *bonnet* 'a little cap or hat, or other covering for the head', *plug* 'a piece of wood to stop a hole', or *slap* 'a flat box [blow] with the open hand'.

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<sup>5</sup> If not otherwise indicated, all definitions are taken from Skeat (1879). The names of English counties correspond to pre-1974 administrative boundaries. See Upton & Widdowson (2006: 12-13). Conventional abbreviations for English dialects are used; see Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* (1981 (1898-1905)) (henceforth *EDD*).

<sup>6</sup> These and other items are indeed interesting cases of study, for Skeat might have adduced them on account of the regional dialect status they had by the end of the nineteenth century. In fact, the *EDD* localises these examples to very specific areas in the light of available eighteenth- and nineteenth-century data. Still, the EModE linguistic setting was not necessarily identical, which implies that careful evaluation is strongly needed and comparison with contemporary evidence recommended. By way of clear illustration, *posnet* is quoted by the *EDD* in Dur., Cum., Wm., Yks., Lan. and Chs. Conversely, EModE dictionaries by no means suggest a northern and Midland restriction as evidenced by bilingual and monolingual treatises such as Cooper's *Theaurus Linguae Romanae et Britannicae* (1584), Florio's *A World of Words* (1598), Coles' *An English Dictionary* (1676), or Kersey's *English Dictionary* (1702). See further Weiner (1994, 1997) for an illuminating discussion on the widespread distribution of this kind of household vocabulary in EModE.



(d) Miscellaneous items that belonged to more technical domains such as architecture and building –*boltel* ‘a piece of timber that overlays upon a beam’, *bracket* ‘a small piece of wood to support a shelf’–, or husbandry: *soul* ‘a rope or halter to tie cattle in the stall’.<sup>7</sup>

### 3.2. Lexicographical sources

Given the scope of this paper, our attention will be focused on the first group of words in view of the regional data they provide. Nevertheless, it is worth stressing that many of them were plagiarised from other sources, namely Skinner’s etymological dictionary, Ray’s collections and Meriton’s glossary.

#### 3.2.1. Items taken from Skinner’s *Etymologicon Linguae Anglicanae* (1671)

Three of Kennett’s words were also listed in Skinner’s dictionary where they were defined in Latin with exactly the same meaning: *hogs and hoggrels* ‘sheep of the first or second year’, *slape-ale* ‘plain ale’ and *cobbe* ‘a sea-cobbe, or coppe, is a bird with a tuft of plumes in the head’. It is somehow complex to ascertain precisely whether the Vicar relied on Skinner for these words or the information was directly taken from Ray’s lists, as the first two are quoted by the botanist. Yet, the fact that *cobbe* is not listed by Ray makes it plausible that Kennett could have had a first hand knowledge of the *Etymologicon* (1671).

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<sup>7</sup> A thorough evaluation of these words in the *EDD*, the *OED* and other EModE dictionaries suggests that they were not provincially restricted at the time. Indeed, the *OED*’s contemporary records for *boltel* and *bracket* point to their more widespread usage. Husbandry items also seem to have been distributed in general country usage. As a matter of fact, Tusser’s *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandrie* (1573) and Worlidge’s *Dictionarium Rusticum* (1668) gather *soul* as a common word all over England.

### 3.2.2. Words gathered from Ray's *A Collection of English Words not Generally Used* (1674, 1691)

A summary comparison between *Parochial Antiquities* (1695) and Ray's lists discloses that Kennett relied heavily on them for a great deal of his terms. It appears quite likely that he could have been well acquainted with the first edition. Moreover, many of the items which were later incorporated into the second reprint were present in Kennett's glossary too, which makes it certainly possible that he also had a first-hand knowledge of the 1691 list.

For obvious reasons we cannot account here fully for every single word copied. In short, Ray's imprint is attested in one hundred and fifty-one terms, out of which ninety-two belong to northern counties and fifty-nine to southern and eastern dialects. Surprisingly, Kennett only marked sixty-six items as properly northern, and thirty-seven as southern / eastern. The rest were not assigned to any area; however, Ray's data suggest that they were distinguished by a regional restriction. Although it is clear that Kennett's purpose was not to differentiate between regional areas as Ray systematically did, it is not easy to elucidate why the Vicar omitted certain geographical data.

It is worth emphasising that Kennett's biographical connections with southern and eastern counties improved some of Ray's labels as he localised words to very particular dialects. For instance, *gibbet* 'any great cudgel thrown up in trees to beat down the fruit', *pitch* 'a pick-axe', *riddle* 'a hurdle', *seam* 'eight bushels, or a quarter' and *wind-row* 'the swaths of grass when turned a little dried are cast into *wind-rows*' were specifically quoted as Sus. or Ken. words. Also, the author supplied detailed information on the use of some items in other places. Firstly, *barken* 'a yard or backside' was given as a Wil. term (Ray cited it as a Sus. item). Secondly, *to heal up* '(i.e. cover up) a child in a cradle, or any other person in a bed', *lees* 'most of the wide common heaths or pastures', or *sheat* 'a young hog of the first year' were quoted as Ken. words (Ray labelled them as Sus. and Suf. terms). Thirdly, *shote* 'a young hog of the first year' apparently belonged to Sus. speech too (Ray localised it to Ess.). In a similar fashion, *aver* 'a sluggish horse or lazy beast' and *cod* 'a bolster or

pillow' were, according to Kennett's data, Wm. lexical items.<sup>8</sup> Besides, *hoppet* 'a little hand-basket' and *ing* 'any open field or common' were assigned to Lin. (Ray marked all of them as generally northern).

### 3.2.3. Terms quoted from Meriton's 'Clavis' to *A Yorkshire Dialogue* (1685)

It is not a simple task to ascertain whether Kennett borrowed some terms and definitions from Ray (1691), or, on the contrary, relied directly on Meriton's information. There are a few words which were listed both by Meriton and Ray (1691) with virtually the same definition. Amongst them, *aud-farand* 'children when they are pert and witty beyond their years', *brake* 'an instrument with which they break flax or hemp', *dike* 'a ditch to dry a hedge', *feal* 'to hide any thing surreptitiously gotten', *gobble* 'to open the mouth wide and swallow greedily', *poke* 'the general word applied to all measures', *sock* 'a plough-share' or *steg* 'a gander'. Needless to say, the aid lent by Sir Francis Brokesby as regards the East Riding of Yks. helped John Ray augment his own data about this variety. By way of hypothesis, Kennett's access to Meriton's words might have been facilitated through Ray (1691) and, consequently, Brokesby. Nonetheless, there are two items, *garn* 'a yarn' and the metathetic variant *gers* 'grass', which are absent from Ray (1691) and therefore suggest that the Vicar could have known Meriton's work.

### 3.3. Additional dialect data

It is of obvious appeal to linguistic research in this field that Kennett referred to seventy-nine items of seemingly provincial usage that fill some documentary *lacunae* of EModE regional vocabulary. Unfortunately, the author did not tell about their geographical distribution as a rule. Still, unmarked words are sensibly less in

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<sup>8</sup> Notice that *cod*, for example, is marked as commonly northern by Skinner (1671), Coles (1676) or the anonymous *Gazophylacium Anglicanum* (1689). Kennett's information appears to improve the geographical vagueness provided by such labels. Interestingly, the noun is documented in an inventory dated to 1600 which was included in *The Account Book of William Wray*. *Cod* is listed as part of the everyday lexicon of William Wray, a native of Ripon, in the North Riding of Yks. (Ruano-García 2009a).

number; their dialectal status has been assessed in the light of regional data from contemporary and later periods. These regionalisms might be ordered into distinct groups that run as follows.

### 3.3.1. Northern words

#### (i) Unmarked items

Fourteen northern terms were not labelled by Kennett. They may be classified according to different semantic fields:

(a) Farming: *ern* 'the same as to glean'; *ernes* 'the loose scattered ears of corn that are left on the ground after the binding of the cocking of it'; *gise* 'when the tenant feeds the ground not with his own stock, but takes in another cattle'; *gisement* 'cattle which are taken in to graze at a certain price; also the money received for grazing cattle' (*OED*).

(b) Fishing: *brokling* 'for eels; a fishing term'; *garth-men* 'poachers'; *garths*, *fish-garth* 'nets and unlawful engines for catching fish'.<sup>9</sup>

(c) Measures: *swathe* 'a swathe of meadow was a long ridge of ground, like a selion in arable land'.

(d) Mining: *bing* 'the kiln of the furnace wherein charcoal is burnt for the melting of metals'.

(e) Miscellaneous: *coggles*, *cobbles* 'the beach or pebbles with which they ballast a ship'; *cogue* 'a little drinking-cup in the form of a boat, used especially at sea, and still retained in a *cogue* [keg] of brandy'; *hoppet* 'a young child danced in the arms'; *snod* 'to lie *snod* and *snug*, to lie close';<sup>10</sup> *sowl* 'to pull and tie up'.

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<sup>9</sup> Coles (1676 s.v. *garth*) records *garth-man* and *fish-garth*, although no geographical label is provided. The northern usage of *garth* suggests that these compounds may have been characterised by a similar distribution. Indeed, the *EDD* quotes the former in a nineteenth-century example from Lin. (s.v. *garth*, 2 (1)) and the latter in a Nhb. glossary dated to 1842 (s.v. *fish sb*<sup>1</sup>, 1 (9)).

<sup>10</sup> Ray (1691 s.v. *snod* and *snog*) cites *snod* with the meaning 'neat, handsome' in collocation with *gear* and *malt*: '*snogly* gear'd, handsomely drest: *Snog* Malt, smooth with few Combs'. This is also marked as northern by Kennett in collocation with *tree*

(ii) Marked items

The geographical accuracy which characterises Kennett's southern and eastern terms also applies to some of the labels that he assigned to the sixteen words of this group. Firstly, *bing* 'the cistern into which crystallized allum is thrown, for the water to drain from it' was quoted as proper to Whitby, in the North Riding of Yks. Secondly, *ram-raise* 'the motion of stepping backward for the better advantage of taking a leap forward' was said to belong to the uppermost northern areas near Scotland. Thirdly, *slot* 'the bolt of a door' was localised to Nhb. Finally, *flecked* 'spotted', *miln* 'a mill',<sup>11</sup> *slape* 'smooth' and *stall* 'to feed or fill to make fat' were marked explicitly as Lin. terms. The other items were generally labelled as northern; these might be classified into several domains:

(a) Farming: *intock* 'any corner or out-part of a common field ploughed up and sowed (and sometimes fenced off) within that year wherein the rest of the same field lay fallow'; *sull* 'a plough'.<sup>12</sup>

(b) House: *hilling of a bed* 'the bed-clothes or covering'.

(c) Religion: *raises* 'the risings, the barrows or hillocks raised for the burial of the dead'.

(d) Miscellaneous: *copt* 'high'; *leasow* 'a meadow'; *sconce* 'a screen'; *snod* 'smooth'; *sporling* 'the *sporling* of a wheel, a wheel-track'.

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(see below): 'A tree is *snod* when the top is cut smooth off'. The combination with the verb *to lie* is not recorded by Ray (1691).

<sup>11</sup> In spite of the fact that *miln* is a phonological and orthographic variant of the standard *mill*, it has been arranged into this group, for it is specifically localised to the county of Lin. Notice that this dialect is quoted as belonging to the North in this paper, since some areas of Lin. are certainly distinguished by linguistic traits natural to northern English. Indeed, Samuels (1989: 108) demonstrates that the Norse impact on northern England was also felt in Lin.: "spoken Scandinavian survived longer north of the Humber than south of it (with the exception of Lincs.)." Gil's description of northern dialects in his *Logonomia Anglica* (1619) also reveals that some of the features described correspond to his native Lin. speech; see Dobson (1968, vol. I: 131,142-143). In parallel, Skinner's localisation of many northern terms to Lin. in his etymological treatise does emphasise that the county shared a common linguistic background with neighbouring dialects.

<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, Worlidge (1668) and Coles (1676) mark this term as western.

### 3.3.2. Southern, eastern words

#### (i) Unmarked items

Nine terms and expressions are ordered within this group in view of their apparent southern distribution:

- *coul* 'a vessel carried between two persons with a *coul-staff*'
- *fodder* 'to *fodder* a room; i.e. to throw things loose about it'
- *keep a fodder* 'to fling or scatter about'
- *oste-cloth* 'the hair cloth on which the malt is laid'
- *pout* 'a hay-cock'
- *puttock* 'the same as *Buttock*'
- *scry* 'to cleanse and separate corn'
- *seddle* / *settle* 'the frame of wood to support the barrels in a buttery or cellar'
- *tass* 'the yard of a man'<sup>13</sup>

#### (ii) Marked items

Kennett's close acquaintance with southern, eastern speech is again well demonstrated. He referred to thirty-seven genuine terms. Remarkably, the author appears to have a sound knowledge of Ken., Wil. and Oxf. varieties; Ess., Sur., and Cmb. lexical items are documented too.

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<sup>13</sup> The scarcity of direct textual evidence from the period that may throw light on the status of these words has made our decisions depend on data from later stages. Hence, *fodder*, for instance, is quoted by the *EDD* only once in an example from eastern Suf.; the *OED* does not collect the sense indicated by Kennett. Likewise, *pout* is recorded by the *EDD* in Ken.; the *OED* (s.v. *pout* n<sup>3</sup>) cites its first occurrence in Plot's *Nat. Hist. Staffs.* (1686), later examples suggesting a Ken. distribution: Pegge's *Alphabet of Kenticisms* (c.1736) and Parish and Shaw's *Dict. Kentish Dial.* (1887). Other items such as *puttock* may be traced to southern counties too, as *buttock* is assigned to London speech by Kennett himself. Significantly, the *OED* (s.v. *buttock* n., 5) gathers seventeenth-century documentations in which *buttock* seems to have been used in colloquial English. Actually, the dictionary labels it as a slang term in view of its attestation in canting dictionaries and Shadwell's *The Squire of Alsatia* (1688).

(a) Twenty-one terms and expressions are marked as Ken.:

- *blouse* 'a red-faced wench' (s.v. *bloat-coloured*)
- *blousing colour* 'sanguine and high-coloured' (s.v. *bloat-coloured*)
- *cade* 'a *cade* of beef is any parcel or quantity of pieces under a whole quarter'
- *cantell* 'any indefinite number or dimension; [...] a *cantell* of people or cattle'
- *clodge* 'a lump of lay or dirt'
- *cop* 'a *cop* of hay, a *cop* of pease, a *cop* of straw, &c., a high rising heap'
- *dag-wool* 'lucks'
- *guzzle* 'a gutter'
- *hake* 'a kind of fish dried and salted, [...] A proverb in Kent "as dry as hake"'
- *horse-bin* 'that apartment of a stable where the chaff and cut meat is secured by a partition of boards' (s.v. *bin, bing*)
- *keeler* 'a broad shallow vessel of wood wherein they set their milk to cream, and their wort to cool'<sup>14</sup>
- *lees* 'most of the wide common heaths or pastures'
- *lucks* 'locks and flocks of coarse and refuse wool'<sup>15</sup>
- *make-weight* 'the least candle in the pound, put in to make weight'
- *nod of the neck* 'the nape of the neck'
- *sessle* 'to *sessle* about is to change seats very often'

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<sup>14</sup> Significantly, the *OED* (s.v. *keeler*<sup>2</sup>, 1) records a quotation from *Richmond Wills* (1567) where *keeler* is also attested. In this vein, it is thus possible that this noun was not restricted to Ken. only.

<sup>15</sup> *Lucks* seems to be an orthographic variant of *lock*; it might probably be suggestive of a Ken. pronunciation. The *OED* (s.v. *lock*, n<sup>1</sup>) cites it as an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century dialect spelling.

- *swaddle your sides* 'I'll swaddle your side', i.e. with a whip or wand I will strike and make it bend and meet round your body'

- *swink* 'a hard labourer is said to *swink it away*'

- *toss* 'a mow of corn in a barn'

- *trush* 'a cushion of flags, for kneeling [upon] in churches'

- *whetkin* 'a treat given to the tenants and labourers at the end of the wheat-harvest'

(b) Six words are quoted as natural to Wil.:

- *comb* 'the bottom or lower ledge of it [a window]'

- *ear* 'to plough'

- *fardingale* 'the fourth part of an acre; called *fardingale* in Wiltshire'<sup>16</sup>

- *gushill* / *gooshill* 'a gutter'

- *log* 'sixteen foot and a half in length and four in breadth make one acre of land'

- *pissing-candle* 'the least candle in the pound, put in to make weight'

(c) Six items are localised to Oxf.:

- *evenings* 'the delivery, at even or night, of a certain portion of grass or corn to a customary tenant [...]'<sup>17</sup>

- *hitching* 'any corner or out-part of a common field ploughed up and sowed [...] within that year within the rest of the same field lay fallow'

- *martin* 'a spoiled heifer'<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> As is the case with some previous examples, *fardingale* apparently represents a spelling variant characteristic of the Wil. dialect. In fact, Kennett refers to *fardingel*, *farundel*, and *farthindale* as alternatives of *ferling* which the *OED* gives as lemma. It is likely therefore that this term was not geographically restricted; rather, an indication about a Wil. variant is simply provided.

<sup>17</sup> Although omitted by Skeat (1879), it is indicated in the 1818 edition of this work (s.v. *evenyngs*) that this noun appears to have been natural to Burcester. In fact, *evenings* is quoted by the *EDD* as an Oxf. word; in particular, the dictionary provides a definition which also informs on its usage in the manor of Burcester.



- *seed-lip* 'a seed-cod'<sup>19</sup>
- *tod* 'a parcel of wool containing 29 pounds'
- *woddenel* 'a course sort of stuff used for the covering of cart-horses'

(d) Other counties:

- Ess.: *doke* 'a small brook or stream, of water'
- Sur.: *esh* 'the stubble after the corn is cut'
- Cmb.: *sizar* 'a servitor or one who is to live upon such an assized allowance'; *size of bread* 'the weight of bread prescribed by the Vice-Chancellor, and supervised by the clerk of the market'

This significant information may be arranged into several groups as well. Needless to say, further data are hereby added to some semantic fields hitherto, and still also, greatly incomplete. Amongst them, special notice should be given of measures and dimensions –*cade*, *cantell*, *fardingel*, *log*, *tod*–, farming words –*ear*, *hitching*, *lees*, *toss*, *whetkin*–, raw materials –*dag-wool*, *lucks*–, kinds of vessel –*keeler*, *seed-lip*–, animals –*martin*–, or kinds of tack: *woddenel*.

The hard retrieval of lexical data that might inform on the distinct names which were used to designate the same object in old provincial language is here little remedied. Yet, these data confirm Kennett's close acquaintance with southern vocabulary as *gushill* / *gooshill* and *guzzle* were given as Wil. and Ken. synonyms to indicate a gutter; *make-weight* and *pissing-candle* referred to 'the least candle in the pound' in Ken. and Wil., respectively; or *dag-wool* and *lucks* named the flocks of refuse wool in Ken.

### 3.3.3. Midland words

Only three instances of Midland vocabulary were recorded by Kennett. The information provided about them appears somehow unreliable, for contemporary evidence sometimes informs that these terms were not common to Midland districts only. Firstly, *leap* 'a

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<sup>18</sup> Notice that the *EDD* (s.v. *martin sb*<sup>3</sup>, 2) quotes this noun in North-East Lan. as well. It is also marked as an obsolete term.

<sup>19</sup> This is also quoted by Worlidge (1668), although no geographical label is given.

'weel' made of willows or osiers, to catch fish' was localised to Lei., at the same time as this was also attested in Best's *Farm. Bks.* as a Yks. word (*OED* s.v. *leap r<sup>2</sup>*, 1). Secondly, *groover* 'a miner' was said to belong to Der. It is worth indicating that *grove* 'a gripe, grip, or ditch', recorded by Kennett and Ray (1691) as a Lin. word, was listed in a late seventeenth-century glossary of mining terms appended to Thomas Houghton's *Rara Avis in Terris: or the Compleat Miner* (1681) where it was quoted as a term natural to the Wapentakes of Wirksworth (Der.). A third item, *twinter* 'an heifer of two winters', was recorded as a general Midland noun. This rather contradicts the information supplied by the 1674 edition of Blount's *Glossographia* that quoted it as a Bfd. word, or that provided by some non-literary texts that testify to its northern distribution (*OED* s.v. *twinter*, B). It is not clear whether the noun was used in the Midlands, as Kennett indicates, or, more plausibly, *twinter* was used in different areas over the country.<sup>20</sup> This does not mean that Kennett was wrong in his recognition of dialect terms, but rather that some of his dialect ascriptions should be taken with the necessary care, for words like these were in fact used in other districts as well.

#### 4. Concluding remarks

It will be evident from this descriptive illustration that, despite some plagiarised words and a certain amount of irrelevant data for the present purpose, Kennett's terms give us a considerable amount of dialect information that narrows the lexical gap extending from the Middle English period to later documented periods. The remarkable northern data hitherto provided by well known collections such as Ray (1674, 1691) or Meriton (1685) are further enriched by virtue of a few regionalisms which were not included in them. Also, Kennett's southern, eastern linguistic background facilitates our access to a substantial number of genuine terms which are for the most part localised to Ken., Oxf. and Wil. dialects. In addition, the Vicar's list seemingly improves some geographical labels of earlier works, which dignifies this glossary as an important store of provincial lexis useful for regional dialect investigation.

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<sup>20</sup> Coles (1676) also localised it to Bdf., although his definition might have been copied from Blount's (1674) treatise. The *OED* marks it as chiefly northern and Scottish. In particular, the dictionary quotes from the following EModE northern non-literary sources: *Durham Acc. Rolls* (1536), *Richmond Wills* (1567) and *Wills & Inv. N.C.* (1570).

Bishop White Kennett's glossary to *Parochial Antiquities* (1695) is in a nutshell another valuable lexical specimen which echoes archaeological and antiquarian trends commonly overlooked by linguistic tradition. All in all, it decidedly adds to our understanding of EModE regional vocabulary, and allows us to have a somewhat better knowledge of alternative 'Englishes' on the margins of standardisation.

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*How to cite this article:*

Ruano-García, Javier. "Looking for regional words in late seventeenth-century England: Bishop White Kennett and his glossary to *Parochial Antiquities* (1695)." *SEDERI* 19 (2009): 151-173.

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*Submission:* 31/10/2008

*Acceptance:* 24/03/2009