LINGUISTICS

ON VOICING OF INITIAL FRICATIVES IN MIDDLE ENGLISH*
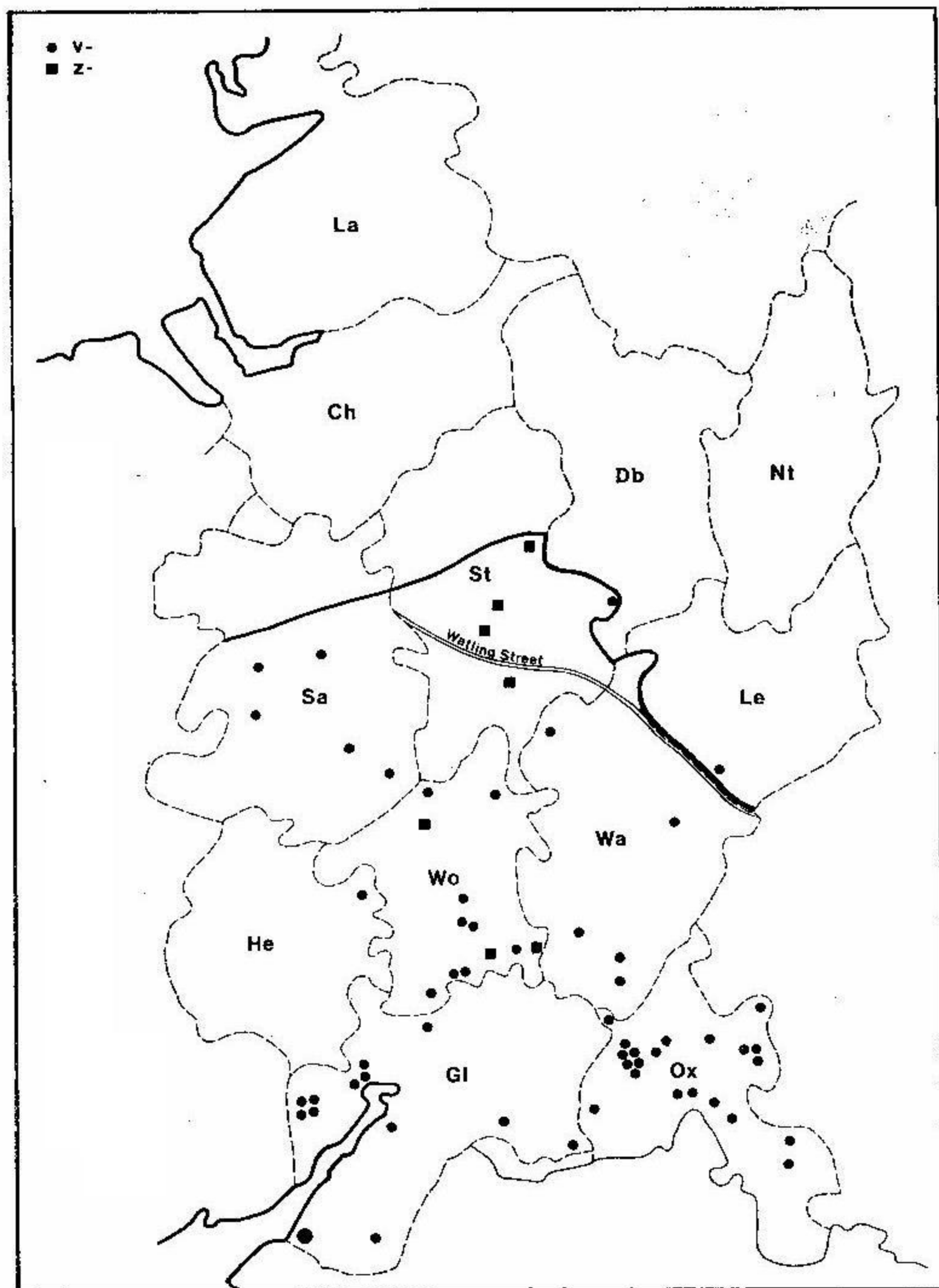
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In an article in *Studia Anglica Posnaniensia 17* (1984) Professor Fisiak discusses the voicing of initial fricatives in Middle English from different points of view. This is the first time the phenomenon concerned has been taken up for full-scale treatment, and Fisiak's thorough and well-balanced discussion forms an admirable summing-up of a century's research on the subject. The article reveals that the area for initial /v/ and /z/ in Middle English extended considerably further to the north than had earlier been known. McIntosh- -Samuels's isophone for /v/ (Fisiak 1984: Map 5) is of undoubted evidential value in this respect. The isophone is supported by a solid body of forms whereas Oakden's and Moore-Meech-Whitehall's more southerly isophones (Fisiak 1984: Maps 2 and 4) rest on tenuous evidence.

Fisiak's article also incorporates material which derives from my excerption of forms for *A Survey of Middle English Dialects 1290-1350* and which suggests that the isophone for initial /v/ and /z/ was even further to the north in the early 14th century than demonstrated by McIntosh-Samuels for the period 1350—1450. Since 1981, when my material in its state at that time was imparted to Fisiak and published by him, I have completed my excerption of the material for the West Midlands, and come across forms that I did not know of in 1981. As a sequel to Fisiak's article all the relevant material is therefore presented in the following pages and Map 1.

The material is taken from the Lay Subsidy Rolls of the early 14th century. These documents contain lists of taxpayers and cover the whole area fairly evenly. In their capacity of legal documents they can be expected to reflect

Map 1

local usage better than any other Middle English documents (except perhaps Court Rolls which, however, suffer from the drawback of being unevenly distributed). The Lay Subsidy Rolls thus provide first-rate sources for investigations along the lines of linguistic geography[1].

The material below includes all forms that display ⟨V⟩, ⟨Z⟩ in words with OE or ON initial /f/ or /s/[2]. No such forms are found in Cheshire, Derbyshire or Nottinghamshire. All forms adduced are dotted on Map 1. The large dot on Map 1 indicates 18 forms (in Bristol).

Material

I. /f/ > /v/:

Sa: *atte Vaston* (p) 1327 8[3] (=*de Vaston* (p) 1332 8) (OE *fæst(en)*, *tūn*); *le Veyr(e)* (p) 1327 4 (2×), 5 (OE *fæger*); *Boleuych* (p) 1327 2 (=*Bolefynch* (p) 1332 2) (last el. OE *finc*).

St: *le Valang* (p) 1332 106 (OE *fælging* 'ploughed land' or OE *fælling* 'clearing').

He: *Yedeven* 1332 17[4] (mod. Edvin Loach PNWo 49) (last el. OE *fenn*).

Wo: *Forvelde* 1327 39 (mod. Fairfield PNWo 275) (last el. OE *feld*). *Varmo* (p) 1327 27 (ON *Farmann*); *Le Vithelere* (p) 1327 33, *le Vythelar* 1327 5, *Vythelare* (pr. *Wythelare*) 1332 12 (OE *fiðelere*); *le Vrence* (p) 1327 4 (OE *Frencisc*); *(le) Vynch* (p) 1327 31, 50, 1332 11 (OE *finc*); *Bolvynch* (p) 1327 16 (last el. *finc*).

Wa: *Atte venne* (p) 1332 102[5] (OE *fenn*); *atte Vloddre* (p) 1327 13[6] (OE **flōdor*); *le Vorn* (p) 1332 38[7] (ON *forn* or OE *forn*); *Vot'* (pr. *Votes*) (p) 1332 10 (=*Fot* (p) 1327 14)[8]; *Buluynch* (p) 1332 15 (last el. OE *finc*).

Le: *le Veer* (p) 1327 9[9] (OE *(ge)fēra*).

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[1] On the value of the Lay Subsidy Rolls as sources for linguistic geography, v. Kristensson 1965 (pp. 138—56), Kristensson 1976 (pp. 51—59), and "Introduction" in Kristensson 1987 (pp. IX-XIII).

[2] No unequivocal example of ⟨V⟩ or ⟨Z⟩ in OFr loan-words with initial /f/ or /s/ has been found. The form *le Vole* in Ox is tentatively taken to be from OFr *fol* but may simply be a reflex of OE *fugol* 'bird'.

[3] Each example is followed by date, reference to page or — in the case of unpublished sources — to membrane. References to membranes are in italics.

[4] The form is found in the Wo roll.

[5] The form is found in the St roll.

[6] The form is found in the Gl roll.

[7] Cf. *Richard Forn* 1332 43.

[8] The forms are found in the *Wo* rolls.

[9] The person was assessed in a village whose name was *Hemsby, Homsby* or *Houisby*. The place is lost. Probably it is identical with the lost *Houobig* in the Anglo-Saxon Wills, v. Fellows Jensen 1978: 54.

Gl: *atte Vairoke* (p) 1312 263 (OE *fæger*); *atte Venne* (p) 1327 23, 27 (OE *fenn*); *le Vatte* (p) 1327 8 (OE *fætt(ian)*); *le Veltare* (p) 1312 258, 259, 1327 1, 270 (2x), 271, *le Veltere* (p) 1312 256, 257, 258 (2x), 260, *le Velt'* (pr. *Veltere*) (p) 1312 248, 250 (2x) 253 (pr. *Voltere*)) (der. of OE *felt*); *le Vennare* (p) 1312 17, *Vennar'* (p) 1327 2 (der. of OE *fenn*); *le Visshare* (p) 1327 15, *Vischar* (p) 1312 14 (OE *fiscere*); *le Vorn* (p) 1327 5 (ON *forn* or OE *forn*); *Vremõ* (p) 1312 14; *Vrewyne* (p) 1312 14 (2x) (OE *frēo*); *le Vrynsh* (p) 1312 242 (OE *Frencisc*); *vynch* (p) 1327 22 (OE *finc*); *Vysshe* (p) 1327 276 (OE *fisc*).

Ox: *atte Venne* (p) 1316 1, 2 (2x) (OE *fenn*); *atte Vente* (p) 1316 4 (2x) (ME *fente* 'a split'); *atte Vortheye* (p) 1316 1 (= *atte Fortheye* (p) 1327 2)(OE *forðtēag*); *le Vatte* (p) 1327 3, 12 (OE *fætt(ian)*); *le Venner* (p) 1327 11 (OE *fenn*); *le Vinch* (p) 1316 1 (OE *finc*); *le Visschere* (p) 1316 1 (OE *fiscere*); *le Vithelere* (p) 1327 2 (OE *fiðelere*); *le Vole* (p) 1316 1 (3x) (OFr *fol*); *le Voul* (p) 1327 6 (= *Le Fowel* (p) 1316 3), 7 (2x), 8 (OE *fugol*); *le Vouler* (p) 1316 1, 2 (= *le Foulare* (p) 1327 5) (der. of OE *fugol*); *le Vrend* (p) 1316 2 (= *Le Frende* (p) 1327 14) (OE *frēond*).

II. /s/ > /z/:

St: *Zalewey* (p) 1327 234 (OE **Sælwig*); *Zelymon* (p) 1327 199, 214, 216 (OE *sǣlig, monn*).

Wo: *Zely* (p) 1327 62 (OE *sǣlig*); *Zalewy* (p) 1327 50 (= *Salewy* (p) 1332 23) (OE **Sælwig*); *Zelimon* (p) 1332 21 (= *Selimon* (p) 1327 70) (OE *sǣlig, monn*).

The material (v. Map 1) provides incontrovertible evidence for initial /v/ in Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Warwickshire and the southern and middle parts of Shropshire and Staffordshire. In Shropshire we find *Johe Veyr* 1327 5 in Hanwood, *Rico Boleuch* 1327 2 in Rodington, *Johe le Veyre* 1327 4 in Ratlinghope, *Willo le Veyr* 1327 4 in Ditton Priors and *Willo atte Vaston* 1327 8 in Chelmarsh. In Staffordshire one *Willo le Valang* 1332 106 was assessed in Burton upon Trent, but in Staffordshire we also find four instances of initial /z/: *Robto Zelymon* 1327 216, *Roberto Zelymon* 1327 199 in Enson, *Robto Zelymon* 1327 214 in Stafford, and *Rico Zalewey* 1327 234 in Norton[10]. In Leicestershire there is one instance of initial /v/: *Isolda le Veer* 1327 9 assessed in a village which is lost but is probably identical with *Houcbig* in the Anglo-Saxon Wills (and very close to the Warwickshire boundary).

It is remarkable that initial /z/ crops up in Staffordshire whereas evidence for initial /z/ is otherwise scarce. The occurrence of initial /z/ as far north as

[10] To the forms adduced can be added *Galfr' de Zeveleye* 1327 220 and *Johe de Severleye* 1327 240. The place referred to cannot be ascertained, but in any case the first-mentioned form illustrates the change /s/ > /z/ in initial position.
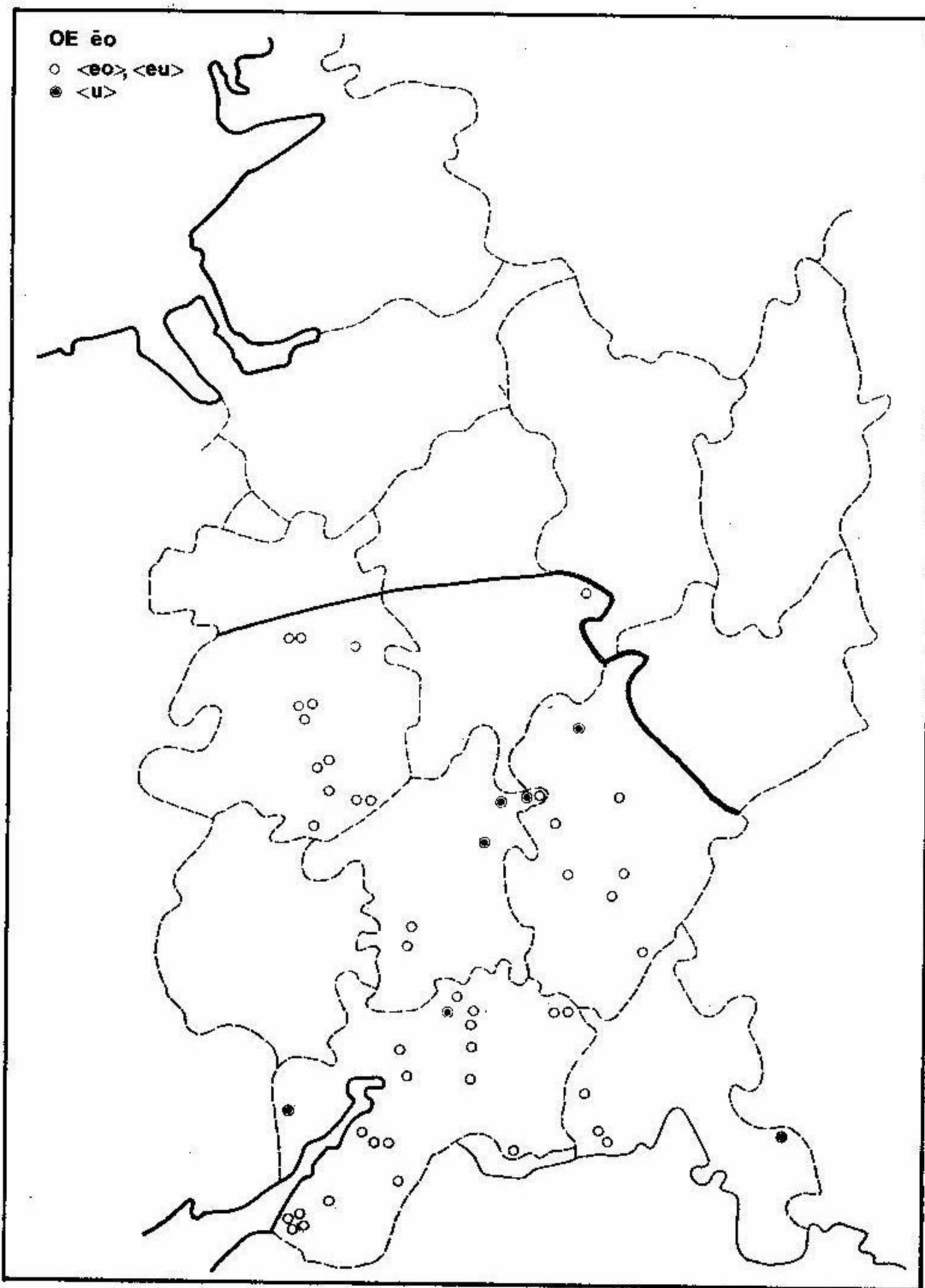
Staffordshire demonstrates that voicing of initial /f/ and /s/ had largely the same sphere of operation. Whether /θ/ was also voiced, it is impossible to decide. But in the modern dialects initial /v/, /z/ and /ð/ cover much the same area, and this leads one to assume that voicing of initial /f/, /s/ and /θ/ was a unitary process. This assumption is strengthened by the fact that Wakelin and Barry (1968: 56) note /ð/ in *Thursday* (in the SED material) as far north as southern Shropshire and southern Staffordshire.

It is conspicuous that the /v/, /z/ isophone runs along or — in Staffordshire — slightly north of Watling Street. It is true that there is one example of /v/ in Leicestershire (very close to the Warwickshire boundary), but this may be a case of overlapping. In Staffordshire there are some forms north of Watling Street, but the boundary between the Danes and the Anglo-Saxons is here largely unknown. Evidence of Danish settlement is slight in Staffordshire; in Shropshire there is none. In Leicestershire, on the other hand, Danish settlement was considerable. We can thus infer that, as far as the West Midlands are concerned, voicing of initial /f/, /s/ (and /θ/?) took place in the area which was not occupied by the Danes, but did not spread into the Scandinavianized territory.

The boundary between /v/, /z/ and /f/, /s/ largely coincides with that between *heo* 'they' and *they* 'they' as outlined by Samuels (1963: 82). The dividing-line between /v/, /z/ and /f/, /s/ also forms the southern boundary of the area where OE -*um*, the dat. plur. ending, lived on in place-names. In the /v/, /z/ area, on the other hand, OE -*um* in place-names appeared as ME -*un*, -*en*, -*e*. It is true that mod. Lydham in southern Shropshire is *Lydom* in the Lay Subsidy Rolls of 1327 and 1332, but this is probably a case of overlapping in a boundary-area. Just north of the said boundary is Ilam (*Hilum* 1002) in Staffordshire. In Cheshire, Statham (*Statham* 1285) and Stockham (*Stoccum, Stockum* 1288) exhibit -*um* in Middle English, and Nottinghamshire abounds in place-names in ME -*um*, -*om*, v. Wrander and Kristensson (1981, footnote 16).

The isophone drawn on Map 1 is a tentative one. After all, the evidence is slight. The large majority of forms exhibit ⟨F⟩ and ⟨S⟩. But in the territory where ⟨V⟩ and ⟨Z⟩ are found, we must assume that initial /v/ and /z/ occurred. It is possible — in my opinion likely — that the /v/, /z/ (and /ð/?) area extended somewhat further north than is indicated on Map 1. If so, the line would coincide with the modern boundary between northern *aught* and southern *anything*, and would be just south of the modern boundary between *hoo* 'she' and *her* 'she' (v. Orton, Sanderson and Widdowson 1978: Maps L44 and M68).

In Kristensson (1985) I have dealt with the appearance of OE *ēo* in the West Midlands in the early 14th century. The conclusions of the article were (i) that OE *eo* had become /e/ in the West Midlands, but (ii) that OE *ēo*, at least partly, lived on as /ø:/, v. Map 2. It is conspicuous that the area where there

OE ēo

○ <eo>, <eu>

◉ <u>

Map 2

are traces of /ø:/ is almost exactly coterminous with the area where there are traces of initial /v/ and /z/. In both cases we are concerned with recessive isophones, but the coincidence of the isophones can hardly be due to mere chance. The concurrent evidence of Maps 1 and 2 warrants us to look upon the isophones as a rough divide between a northern and a southern part of the West Midland dialect area.

Sources

I. Unpublished Lay Subsidy Rolls (preserved at the Public Record Office): *Sa* 1327 (166/1)[11], 1332 (166/2); *Le* 1327 (133/1); *Gl* 1312 (113/4), 1327 (113/5); *Ox* 1316 (161/8), 1327 (161/9).

II. Published Lay Subsidy Rolls: *St* 1327, 1332: *Collections for a History of Staffordshire edited by the William Salt Archæological Society, Old Series 7, 10 (1886—90)*; *Wo* 1327, 1332: *Worcestershire Historical Society I (1893——1902)*; *Wa* 1327: *Transactions of the Midland Record Society 6 (1902)*, 1332: *Publications of the Dugdale Society 6 (1926)*; *Gl* 1312, 1327: *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archæological Society 19 (1894—95)*.

Abbreviations

cf.	= compare,	OFr	= Old French,
Ch	= Cheshire,	ON	= Old Norse,
Db	= Derbyshire,	*Ox*	= Oxfordshire,
der.	= derivative,	(p)	= personal name
Gl	= Gloucestershire,	pr.	= printed,
He	= Herefordshire,	*Sa*	= Shropshire,
La	= Lancashire,	*St*	= Staffordshire,
Le	= Leicestershire,	v.	= see,
ME	= Middle English,	*Wa*	= Warwickshire,
Nt	= Nottinghamshire,	*Wo*	= Worcestershire.
OE	= Old English,		

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[11] The figures in round brackets refer to the catalogue number at the Public Record Office.

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PNWo=Mawer, A. and F. M. Stenton. 1927. *The place-names of Worcestershire.* English Place-Name Society 4. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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SED=Orton, H. and M. V. Barry. 1969—71. *Survey of English dialects. Vol. II. The West Midland counties. Parts 1—3.* Leeds: E. J. Arnold & Son Limited.

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