

## PREFACE

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The establishment of English Studies in Spain dates back to 1952, when the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science sanctioned the first university syllabus of English Philology, initially at the University of Salamanca (1952), and from 1954 also at the Complutense University of Madrid. From the very beginnings, the initial connections of English Studies with departments of Romance languages, where the philological component was strong, ensured that the English curricula offered at Spanish universities comprised several compulsory courses on the history of English. Interest in the field was also assisted by the creation of a panel on English historical linguistics at the conferences of AEDEAN, the Spanish Association for Anglo-American Studies, and by the founding, in the 1980s, of the Spanish Society for Medieval English Language and Literature (SELIM) and the Spanish and Portuguese Society for English Renaissance Studies (SEDERI). These organisations served as convenient fora for the presentation of historical research by Spanish scholars.

The outcome of these various developments is that over the last twenty or thirty years innovative research on English historical linguistics has been carried out in Spain, an area which had traditionally been outside the centre of gravitation of the discipline. A new generation of scholars has emerged who have published a significant number of high-quality books and articles, both in the more traditional fields of English historical linguistics (historical lexicology and lexicography, dialectology, textbooks and teaching materials, textual editing) and in new research fields, such as grammaticalization and mechanisms of change, text types and specialized discourse, historical sociolinguistics, historical pragmatics, and corpus linguistics.

With regard to the area of corpus linguistics in particular, Spanish scholars were among the first to make use in their investigations of the Helsinki Corpus of English Texts (1991) and other pioneering historical corpora of the English language; witness in this regard early research such as Seoane (1993), Fanego (1996), López-Couso (1996) and Núñez-Pertejo (1996), all based on data retrieved from the Helsinki Corpus. However, the

establishment in 2008 of the Spanish Association for Corpus Linguistics (AELINCO) has no doubt greatly contributed to enhancing the visibility of corpus-based research in Spain and giving it a new dimension, in that AELINCO has actively promoted the compilation of both historical and non-historical corpora.

The present volume, edited by Nila Vázquez, testifies to this fact. The essays in Part I ('Creation of historical English corpora') detail the compilation of seven historical corpora remarkably diverse: British legal texts, Early English recipes, Middle English scientific prose, Northern English, astronomy texts, Late Modern English literary dialects, and Late Modern English British and American Prose. No less specialized are the studies comprised in Part II ('Use of historical English corpora'), which approach topics such as the complementation of adjectives in OE, verbs of saying in Late Modern English, relativization in New Englishes across the diachronic dimension, lexis and semantics in Middle English medical texts, gender distinctions in earlier English, evidentials in medical texts, determiners in Lancashire English, etc. One can only hope that such concerted activity will continue, serving to consolidate and strengthen Spanish research into historical corpora and historical linguistics for the future.

### References:

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