

REDUPLICATION OF CONSONANT GRAPHEMES IN *THE ORMLUM*
IN THE LIGHT OF LATE OLD ENGLISH SCRIBAL EVIDENCE

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ABSTRACT

As opposed to previous studies, which usually attempt to refute the traditional interpretation put on the use of double consonants in *The Ormulum*, and attempt to advance an alternative explanation for the abnormally frequent use of <CC> digraphs, the current study primarily focuses on the standard view, which assumes that the scribe of MS Junius 1 applied double consonant graphemes to indicate vowel shortness. However, in this study the evidence comes not from *The Ormulum* but from two Late Old English MSS, as the use of double consonants to indicate vowel shortness is also occasionally attested in some earlier texts (Anderson – Britton 1997: 34, 51, 1999: 305, 317-323; Smith 2007: 107; and Laing 2008: 7-8). The major aim of this study is to show that the use of reduplicated consonant graphemes as indicators of vowel shortness is not confined exclusively to *The Ormulum* because this practice derives directly from Old English scribal tradition, where <CC> sequences were used not only to represent geminate (or long) consonants, but sporadically also for marking short vowels.

1. Introduction

Those who have attempted to reconstruct a systemic feature of a dead language probably know that in most cases the only source of information about the language are the surviving texts, produced when the language was spoken. This is unfortunately also true of Old and Middle English, which have been reconstructed largely on the basis of the existing evidence from the surviving Old and Middle English texts of various types. The great value of the surviving texts as a source of linguistic evidence is obviously indisputable in this case, which has already been shown many times in numerous studies on the development of the

major sub-systems of the English language (including its orthography, morphology, syntax, and phonology).

Amongst all surviving Old and Middle English MSS, there is one Early Middle English MS that has turned out to be extremely helpful in the research on historical phonology of English. The orthographic system preserved in MS Junius 1, also better known as *The Ormulum*, is probably the only orthographic system that has received so much scholarly attention, usually aimed at reconstructing the major quantitative changes of vowels in Late Old and Early Middle English.

The standard dating of MS Junius 1 is ca. 1200 (e.g. White 1852: lxxii-lxxxiv; Holt 1878: lxi-lxix; Thompson 1901: 253; Lambertz 1904: 150; Eilers 1907: 58; Hall 1920: 479; Holm 1922: viii; Wyld 1927: §149; Mossé 1952: 165; Wardale 1962: §§33, 73; Fisiak (1968 [2004]: §2.8); Jones 1972: 55; Jordan 1974: §19 Remark 1; Brink 1992: 21; Phillips 1992: 375). However, the date 1200 is a compromise because more precise dating of MS Junius 1 is problematic (see e.g. Burchfield 1956: 57 and Parkes 1983: 115). For example, Hinckley (1935: 216) in his analysis of the palaeographic traits, linguistic forms, and the local history of MS Junius 1 states that the MS was produced before 1150, or even before 1140. As for the place in which the MS could be produced, he points to Carlisle, though, he admits that if one accepts this location the date of composition must be shifted to the period between 1132 and 1136. In his detailed study of the palaeographic evidence of MS Junius 1, Parkes (1983) suggests that the MS was produced before the early 1180s. The various characteristics of the script that he enumerates, especially the form of the superscript <a> and the use of the Tironian as a sign of syllabic suspension, in his opinion show that the handwriting of MS Junius 1 belongs to the 1170s and the early 1180s (Parkes 1983: 120, 122).

Similarly, establishing the exact provenance of the MS is also problematic. The numerous studies on the MS of *The Ormulum* usually point to South Lincolnshire as its place of origin (e.g. Hall 1920: 486), but two other locations are also sometimes mentioned, namely, the Crowland area and Stamford (e.g. McIntosh 1969: 400 and Jones 1972: 55). According to Parkes (1983: 127), the style of the handwriting is very similar to that of MSS written in the Arroaisian House at Bourne. The more precise date and place of origin proposed by Parkes (1983), who claims that the text was probably composed ca. 1180 in Bourne Abbey, seem more reasonable because his study is primarily based on a detailed comparative analysis of the palaeographic evidence. Moreover, the date proposed by Parkes (1983) is now widely accepted by scholars, especially in more recent studies on vowel quantity in the history of English (e.g. Lass 1992: 31; Phillips 1992: 376; Anderson – Britton 1999: 302; Fulk 1996: 486, 495, 1998: 3, 1999: 201; Bermúdez-Otero 1998: 174 n.6; Murray 1995: 125, 2000: 618;

Page 2000: 245; Horobin – Smith 2002: 163; Hogg – Denison 2006: 66, 71; Zottl 2007: 45 n. 9).¹

Most of the studies of the text preserved in MS Junius 1 focus on the analysis of the abnormally frequent use of consonant digraphs consisting of two identical items, which according to the traditional interpretation were primarily applied to indicate vowel shortness. This view has been most popular since the publication of the whole text in Holt's (1878) edition.² Through Holt's (1878) transcript of the entire text, MS Junius 1 became a "Rosetta Stone" of English historical phonology, especially for all scholars interested in reconstructing vowel quantity of Late Old and Early Middle English.

However, the attempts to explain the abnormally frequent use of double consonant graphemes in *The Ormlum* made in previous studies clearly show that certain methodological problems also perpetuate in more recent publications. Firstly, and most importantly, almost all these studies are based exclusively on the evidence from MS Junius 1 and they notoriously ignore the existing Old English evidence, which, as will be shown in this study, can be helpful in accounting for the use of reduplicated consonant graphemes in *The Ormlum*. Secondly, scholars who have tried to establish the function of <CC> digraphs in MS Junius 1 usually strongly believe that *The Ormlum* is the only surviving text in which such orthographic notations were used to mark vowel shortness. Moreover, they often maintain that the orthographic system of MS Junius 1 is innovatory in this respect and that it was devised by Orm himself. For no apparent reason, they take no heed of sporadic non-etymological reduplication of consonant graphemes in some Old English MSS. However, as Anderson and Britton (1997: 34, 51, 1999: 305, 317-323), Smith (2007: 107), and Laing (2008: 7-8) rightly point out, such sporadic instances of the use of non-etymological <CC> digraphs in Old English texts strongly suggest that the complex orthography of MS Junius 1 must derive directly from Old English scribal tradition.³ In this situation, the major aim of the current study is to show that indeed the use of reduplicated consonant graphemes to indicate vowel shortness is not confined to MS Junius 1 because <CC> digraphs performing this function were readily available in the orthographic inventory of an Old English scribe.

¹ On the sources of the text see Morrison (1984).

² The text of *The Ormlum* was first edited by White (1852), whose work was later thoroughly revised and supplemented by Holt (1878). An electronic edition of the text based on MS Junius 1 is being prepared by the team of *The Ormlum Project*, initiated by Prof. Nils-Lennart Johannesson at Stockholm University. A full description of the project and its goals can be found at <http://www2.english.su.se/nlj/ormproj/ormulum.htm> (date of access: 29 December 2010).

³ The term "non-etymological" refers here to all instances where reduplication of a consonant grapheme is not a result of the process known as West Germanic gemination.

2. Previous studies on reduplicated consonants in MS Junius 1

2.1. Vowel quantity

Since the publication of Holt's (1878) edition much has been said about the frequent use of double consonants in *The Ormulum*. Generally speaking, there are three major views on their function, the first two hypotheses are entirely opposing, and the third is an attempt at a compromise between the first two. Besides these three, there are also a few minor theories, which will be briefly mentioned here. The main assumptions of the theories and their foremost exponents are presented below.

The most common view on the frequent use of reduplicated consonant graphemes in *The Ormulum* is that they were intended to indicate vowel shortness. This interpretation is in fact the earliest explanation proposed by those who first examined the text. The idea that Orm himself devised the orthographic system of MS Junius 1 to show vowel shortness was quite early approved by Ellis (1869a: 55, 1869b: 486-487), Hadley (1871: 68), Sweet (1884: 43, 1888: §§616-617), and Morsbach (1896: §31). There is no doubt that Effer (1884) carried out one of the first larger studies aimed to provide evidence for this theory. The results of his analysis of the use of double consonants in various phonological environments in his opinion show that vowel quantity is the main factor that determines the use of <CC> digraphs. Moreover, Effer (1884: 196) claims that consonant graphemes are most often reduplicated after etymologically short vowels, whereas etymologically long vowels are usually followed by a single consonant grapheme. As for vowels before consonant groups, he points out that the first element of a cluster is often doubled. However, he also adds that there is considerable fluctuation in the spelling of the first element in such consonant groups as <ld>, <rd>, <rn>, <nd>, <mb>, <rp>, <ng>, <rl>, and sometimes in <Cr>, <Cl>. Furthermore, he remarks that consonants which occur after a short vowel in an open syllable in most cases remain single. More importantly, Effer (1884: 196) considers the instances where there is no consonant reduplication after a short vowel as lengthened forms, either due to Homorganic Cluster Lengthening (HCL) or Open Syllable Lengthening (OSL).

The study carried out by Eilers (1907) was also important for later analyses. Following earlier studies, Eilers (1907: 4) obviously argues that double consonant graphemes in MS Junius 1 usually mark short vowels. To support this theory with empirical evidence, Eilers (1907: 58-73) tries to formulate the rules for the use of double consonant graphemes in homorganic clusters. He maintains that the scribe was remarkably consistent in the use of reduplicated consonants in such clusters. In his opinion, the consistency is well reflected in polysyllabic words, when a homorganic cluster is followed by a third consonant, and in unstressed items.

The view that reduplicated consonant graphemes were primarily applied to indicate vowel shortness soon became the most popular interpretation because it was widely advocated in many subsequent accounts of the bizarre orthography of *The Ormlum* (e.g. Thompson 1901: 253; Hart 1907: 10; Wyld 1927: §155, 1919: §149; Wright – Wright 1928: §11; Kurath 1956: 439-440; Wardale 1962: §73; Luick 1921 [1964]: §59 Anm.; Brunner 1967: §5 Anm. 1; Phillips 1983: 883, 1992: 377; Markus 1987: 270, 281; Murray 1992: 131; Bermúdez-Otero 1998; Welna 1998: 476, 1999: 147-148, 2000: 479, 480; Moon 2004: 356). In his detailed description of MSS Bodley 340 and 342 (s. xi in), Sisam (1933: 4-10) states that Orm, “the rigorous phonetician”, doubled consonants after short vowels except in open syllables. Moreover, he also claims that both in MSS Bodley 340, 342 and MS Junius 1 short vowels in open and closed syllables are distinguished in the same way. In his article on the language and orthography of MS Junius 1, Burchfield (1956: 69) argues that “the most obvious feature decided on in advance was the doubling of consonants which fell after short vowels in closed syllables”. Pondering over the possible ways of phonological reconstruction of vowel length in Old and Middle English that would be entirely based on orthographic evidence, Jones (1972: 45-90; 1989: 26-29) concludes that Junius 1 is in fact the only MS which provides such evidence. Jones (1972: 45-90; 1989: 26-29) believes that marking of vowel quantity was Orm’s primary concern, and he says that the orthographic system of *The Ormlum* offers orthographic evidence for such sound changes as OSL and HCL. Furthermore, he avers that the spelling system of MS Junius 1 is so consistent in marking vowel shortness that it clearly shows that all elements in a consonant cluster before which HCL operated must always be voiced. A similar statement appears in Lass (1992: 32), who simply admits that *The Ormlum* is “a very important source of evidence for vowel length in early Middle English”.

Obviously, many scholars have tried to provide convincing evidence to support this theory. In the literature on the orthography of *The Ormlum*, the function of double consonant graphemes is quite often reconstructed on the basis of the presumed output of such sound changes as OSL and HCL. One of those who look for the results of OSL to show that <CC> digraphs mark short vowels is Phillips (1992). She claims that Orm’s orthographic system perfectly distinguishes between long and short vowels in open syllables, and the dialect of the scribe bears traces of OSL in its initial stage. However, one might say that this is a sweeping statement since it is based on the scant evidence of only three words, i.e. *síge* ‘victory’, *sáete* ‘seat’, and *fére* ‘power’, ‘sufficiency’, where there is no reduplication of a consonant grapheme after an open syllable. Both the lack of a <CC> digraph and the use of an accent mark over the root vowel in these words Phillips (1992: 381) construes as a proof which shows that “the

Ormulum may well contain evidence for the beginning of open-syllable lengthening in English” (cf. also Lass 1992: 31-32, 74).

In his discussion of the possible functions of <CC> digraphs in MS Junius 1, Fulk (1996) puts forward a few very convincing counter-arguments to Phillips’ (1992) hypothesis. Fulk (1996: 486) plainly states that it is highly unlikely that OSL was operative in Orm’s dialect because there is no consensus about the first attestations of the change in the area of Northeast Midlands. In his opinion, the fact that in some words consonant graphemes are not doubled in the environment <VCV> does not mean that the root vowel had undergone lengthening. He says that the use of the accent mark and curl in MS Junius 1, and the septenary metre show that OSL probably had not affected short vowels in open syllables (cf. Laing 2008: 7-8).⁴ Fulk (1996: 488-490) also throws into question the evidence adduced by Phillips (1992). He tries to show that both her assumptions about the origin of the three words and the conclusions she draws from her extremely scanty material are entirely wrong. However, he is not sure whether the <CC> digraphs served solely as orthographic indicators of vowel shortness. Instead, Fulk (1996: 497) purports that the reduplicated consonant graphemes used in *The Ormulum* could also serve other “secondary” functions. He postulates that, besides marking vowel shortness, the digraphs indicate geminate (long) consonants as this was their original function in the writing system of Old English. Besides this, Fulk (1996: 499) claims that reduplication of consonants in MS Junius 1 was also applied to indicate syllabication. The lack of double consonants in open syllables in his opinion proves that <CC> digraphs were used by the scribe to mark tautosyllabicity. He discerns, therefore, three different functions for the <CC> sequence. According to him, such strings of consonant graphemes served as indicators of vowel shortness, geminate (long) consonants, and syllabication (i.e. tautosyllabicity). However, despite the fact that for Fulk (1996) the function of such digraphs is at least threefold, he emphasizes that the salient function of double consonants in Orm’s orthography was to indicate vowel shortness.

As one might expect, the reliability of the orthographic system preserved in MS Junius 1 as a source of evidence for vowel quantity has been questioned many times. For example, the way in which vowel length is marked before consonant groups has been questioned by Minkova and Stockwell (1992: 201), who

⁴ The standard view on the use of the accent mark in Old English MSS is that the diacritic was applied to indicate long vowels, both when a vowel is etymologically long and when the feature [+long] is a result of a lengthening process (see e.g. Keller 1906: 50, 1908: 117; Schmitt 1907: 36-37; Luick 1921 [1964]: §54; Brunner 1965: §8; Quirk – Wrenn 1957: 9-10; Hockett 1959: 595; Campbell 1959: §26; Hogg 1992: §2.5). For more details on the function of the accent mark in Old and Middle English MSS see the discussion in Mokrowiecki (2010: 80-125, 147-152).

say that the text “must be treated with much more caution”, and the scribe “was not nearly as consistent and infallible as would appear from the textbook references to his system”. On the other hand, Fulk (1999), who examines the evidence for vowel lengthening before homorganic consonant clusters, tries to show that Minkova and Stockwell’s (1992: 201) doubts are unreasonable. In contrast to the studies of other scholars, Fulk’s (1999) study focuses mainly on the conspicuous exceptions to the rules governing the use of <CC> digraphs in Orm’s orthographic system.

First of all, Fulk (1999) rightly points at the cramped layout and unclear style of the handwriting of MS Junius 1, which always strain the eyes of those who try to read the original text. Obviously, he is fully aware that for this reason producing a flawless transcript of the text is almost impossible, and points out that even Holt’s (1878) revised edition is littered with transcriptional errors. In his opinion, at least half of all examples of irregularities cited from MS Junius 1 are nothing but editorial errors (Fulk 1999: 202). For example, he says that the material presented in Kölbing (1877), Holm (1922), and Burchfield (1956) clearly shows that in many cases the purported exceptions are words that have been transcribed incorrectly. Moreover, in some cases the irregular forms can be easily explained with the phonological principles governing HCL. The use of double consonants in clusters followed by a third consonant, e.g. in *elldre*, *childre*, *lammre*, etc. is acceptable because the lengthening did not occur before /CCC/ clusters. Since most scholars assume that HCL did not affect words under low stress, Fulk (1999: 202-203) believes that this is the reason why the scribe reduplicated consonants in *sinndenn*, *nollde*, *shollde*, *wollde*, *behinndenn*, *unnderr*, *bihonndenn*, *annd*, as well as in prefixes and suffixes. Apart from this, he says that such forms as *allderrmann*, *hinnderrlinng*, and *sunnderrrun* reflect the effects of Trisyllabic Shortening (TRISH). He also points out that in compounds reduplicated consonants appear usually after unstressed short vowels, e.g. *hanndgang*, *hanndfesst* vs. *handewerrc*, *handewritt*. Moreover, Fulk (1999: 203) claims that late borrowings which entered into Old English after the 9th century were immune to HCL, and there are no traces of the lengthening in words in which the conditioning consonant cluster is a result of syncope. He also states that in the dialect of *The Ormlum* most differences in the length of the root vowel in nominal paradigms exhibiting allomorphy had been entirely eliminated, usually in favour of the short variant. Such intra-paradigmatic levellings were also caused by analogy in many verb paradigms. He observes, however, that there are verbs with a conditioning element that sometimes have different spellings. He admits that in a number of cases the exceptions to HCL may be nothing but mere scribal errors. The major conclusion drawn by Fulk (1999: 206) is that despite all the identified flaws both in MS Junius 1 and its transcripts, *The Ormlum* “remains our best witness to the early distribution of lengthening before homorganic consonant clusters”.

Despite the fact that Fulk (1999) himself heavily relies on word collations that are out of date and perhaps are also contaminated with transcriptional errors, like Holt's (1878) edition, he remarks with good reason that most of the exceptions to HCL found in the edition can easily be accounted for either with the rules governing the lengthening or as editorial errors. Nevertheless, the results of a thorough analysis of the latter definitely would be far more reliable if the data were collected not from a transcript but from a photographic reproduction of MS Junius 1.

Although there are many doubts whether marking vowel shortness was the primary function of reduplicated consonant graphemes in MS Junius 1, and some scholars are reluctant to accept this interpretation, most of those whose research is based on the evidence from *The Ormulum* still concur that this is probably one of the most plausible explanations. The same is also implied in more recent publications referring to the orthography of *The Ormulum* (e.g. Page 2000: 245; Horobin – Smith 2002: 165; Corrie 2006: 87-88; Smith 2007: 107; Laing 2008: 7-8).

2.2. Consonant quantity

Since not all scholars were satisfied with the explanation assuming that <CC> digraphs used in *The Ormulum* were primarily applied to indicated vowel shortness, some of them soon proposed a number of alternative interpretations. They quite often focus their attention not on the possible implications for vowel quantity but on quantity contrasts of consonants. In their opinion, it is far more likely that reduplicated consonants in MS Junius 1 were primarily intended to mark the quantitative contrast between /C/ and /CC/ than to distinguish between /V/ and /VV/.

Trautmann (1884, 1896) was probably one of the first who suggested that the consonant digraphs of the structure <CC> were used to designate differences in consonant quantity. He maintains that the exceptions with no consonant reduplication after a short vowel show that “Nicht kürze des vorhergehenden vocals will Orm durch seine doppelungen andeuten; er will, wie meines erachtens nicht zweifelhaft sein kann, lange konsonanten durch dieselben ausdrücken” (Trautmann 1884: 95). In other words, he argues that the orthographic system of MS Junius 1 encodes the difference between single (short) and geminate (long) consonants because in Orm's dialect they still remained fully contrastive. The above statement shows that he cannot accept the fact that in Orm's orthography the function of <CC> digraphs can be at least twofold. Referring to the extremely frequent non-etymological reduplication of consonant graphemes, which obviously cannot be associated only with geminate (long) consonants, he reluctantly endorses that they may indicate either vowel shortness or that a giv-

en syllable is closed. Nevertheless, he inclines to the view that in such instances reduplicated graphemes denote the duration of the consonant sound because “Orm schreibt nicht einfachen konsonanten um länge, und nicht dopelten um kürze des vorhergehenden vokals auszudrücken, sondern er schreibt auf grund des gesetzes: ‘Konsonantischer silbenauslaut ist kurz nach langem und lang nach kurzem vokal’” (Trautmann 1884: 98, 1896: 381).

Similarly to the previous theory, the interpretation advocated by McKnight (1899: 456), who says that “Orm used double consonant to indicate long consonant even in closed syllable”, also gained many supporters. In the concluding remarks to his study, Lambertz (1904: 149) states that the evidence from *The Ormulum* speaks incontestably in favour of Trautmann’s (1884, 1896) interpretation. Björkman (1913) exerted a great deal of effort to show that Trautmann’s (1884, 1896) assumptions about the function of double consonant graphemes were correct. The former concurs with the statement that reduplicated consonants indicate geminate (long) consonants also in closed unstressed syllables. Despite the fact that in final position consonants are usually single (etymologically short), Björkman (1913) postulates that they could easily be geminated (i.e. lengthened), and hence Orm wrote double consonants in final position. The idea that non-etymological <CC> sequences denote geminate (long) consonants is also appealing to Hall (1920: 480). Moreover, in his renowned *Historische Grammatik der englischen Sprache*, Luick (1921 [1964]: §59 Anm.) openly acknowledges that in lexical items in which the final consonant is not a syllable boundary, the final consonant perhaps required considerable force, and therefore was probably phonetically long. This view is also defended by Jordan (1974: §19 Remark 1), who holds that Orm “chiefly aspired to a strong regulation of orthography”, and for this reason he “consistently carried through the designation of consonant length”. Referring to the orthography of *The Ormulum*, Jordan (1974: §19 Remark 1) makes questionable assumptions about Orm’s auditory perception of consonants by saying that “since he heard in the syllabic pronunciation after a short vowel a longer quantity of the consonants belonging to the same syllable than after a long vowel (even in unstressed syllables!), he doubled the consonant in the first instance (*gladd* ‘glad’, *brohhte* ‘brought’) by generalizing the double writing of old long consonants (*sinne* ‘sin’, *beddes* ‘bed’s’)”. He strongly believes that marking vowel shortness was only a secondary function of double consonant graphemes. Surprisingly, similar statements appear sometimes in more recent accounts. A good example is that given by Liberman (1992: 166), who is convinced that those scholars who interpret <CC> digraphs as indicators of geminate (long) consonants must be right, but he does not say why he favours this interpretation so much.

This interpretation is of course in direct contradiction to the view that <CC> digraphs used in *The Ormulum* do not indicate consonant quantity (cf. e.g. Si-

sam 1933: 5, 8; Murray 1995: 128, 2000: 628, 636; Fulk 1996: 499; Mailhammer 2007: 42), and to Kurath's (1956: 438) stance on the operative status of OSL and the loss of geminate (long) consonants in Northeast Midlands and part of the North in Early Middle English. However, since there is no general consensus on when and where precisely each of the two processes began in Middle English, and Kurath's (1956) hypothesis has a number of flaws, his claim does not invalidate the interpretation that geminate (long) consonants existed in the dialect of MS Junius 1.

More importantly, the idea that Orm doubled consonant graphemes to mark geminate (long) consonants soon became the basis of yet another theory, which assumes that <CC> digraphs were applied to indicate both vowel and consonant quantity. In this case, however, the proposed theory presents a slightly different approach to the "idiosyncratic" orthography of MS Junius 1. The interpretation expounded below pivots on the assumption that Orm's orthography is probably a far more complex system, in which reduplicated consonant graphemes were used to indicate quantity of both vowels and consonants.

2.3. Vowel and consonant quantity

Some of those who claim that Orm indicated vowel length with double consonant graphemes often remark that the rise of this function was possible due to the loss of geminate (long) consonants (cf. e.g. Sweet 1884: 43, 1888: §616; Luick 1921 [1964]: §59 Anm; Lass 1992: 38, 82). As has been already said, Kurath (1956: 439-440) in his paper on the loss of geminate (long) consonants in Early Middle English states that "Orm used double consonant letters with remarkable consistency to indicate that a preceding vowel, stressed or unstressed, is short", and further points out that "no one appears to have drawn from this practice the conclusion that Orm would not have used this spelling device if long consonants had still been phonemic in his dialect". However, for some scholars this explanation was not satisfactory because they assumed that the orthographic system of MS Junius 1 is more complex.

Fulk (1996) is definitely among those who have attempted to combine those two interpretations into one coherent theory. Basically, he argues that any digraph consisting of two identical consonant graphemes in the orthographic system of MS Junius 1 could serve at least two different functions. Fulk (1996: 497-499) claims that besides marking vowel shortness, <CC> digraphs also designate geminate (long) consonants, as this was their original function in the writing system of Old English. However, he remarks that the use of such spellings to indicate geminate (long) consonants was not the primary intention of the scribe. In his opinion, this function had been inherited from the orthographic system of Old English, but in Early Middle English of Northeast Midlands it

was presumably on its last legs, and hence <CC> digraphs also appear in items with an etymologically geminate (long) consonant. He also maintains that the orthography of MS Junius 1 shows that in the dialect of the scribe single (short) and geminate (long) consonants were still phonetically contrastive.

Similarly, Anderson and Britton (1997, 1999) are among those who have attempted to reconcile these two interpretations. The major argument they invoke to support their theory is based on the assumption that in Orm's local dialect OSL was no longer active, and geminate (long) consonants were still phonetically distinct from single (short) consonants (cf. also Phillips 1992: 377, 381). Generally speaking, they maintain that short vowels in open syllables do not necessitate the use of reduplicated consonant graphemes because such spellings would overtly violate one of the most basic principles of Orm's orthographic system, i.e. that any <CC> sequence in the environment <VCV> in an open syllable (e.g. *lufe* 'love', *polenn* 'allow') would suggest phonological gemination of a consonant in words in which gemination is non-etymological, and therefore, reduplication of consonants would generate a large number of homographs, e.g. in pairs such as *sunne* 'sun' and *sune* 'son' (Anderson – Britton 1997: 25-26). In their opinion, the absence of <CC> digraphs in open syllables is not due to OSL, as is suggested by some scholars (e.g. Lass 1992: 32), but due to the fact that reduplicated consonants were simply not allowed in this position. They believe that stressed vowels in open syllables remained phonetically short, and a consonant grapheme in intervocalic position usually represents a single (short) consonant. As in their understanding OSL was no longer operative in Orm's dialect, spelling sequences of the structure <VCV> are ambiguous because there are no linear indicators of vowel length. However, in their opinion the functional dualism of <CC> digraphs does not necessarily mean that the orthographic system of *The Ormlum* is dysfunctional. Furthermore, Anderson and Britton (1997: 51-52) assume that the functional dualism allows indication of both quantitative contrasts of vowels (especially in sequences such as <VCCC> and <VCC#>) and consonants (other than those represented by <hh> and <ww>). However, they strongly emphasize that most <CC> digraphs in MS Junius 1 were primarily used to indicate vowel shortness.

They also reiterate these arguments in a similar paper published two years later, where they state that Orm's orthographic system is an example of reapplication of the old inherited system, but in a more limited sense (Anderson – Britton 1999: 317-323). Therefore, in their opinion, any <CC> digraph consisting of two identical elements could be applied not only to show the contrast between single (short) and geminate (long) consonants, but also to indicate vowel shortness. The new orthographic system had to be slightly altered, however, to encode the phonology of the local language as the orthographic system of Old

English was no longer fully capable of reflecting new phonetic contrasts, especially those in quantity of vowels (cf. also Zottl 2007: 46-50).

Their theory explaining the function of reduplicated consonants in MS Junius 1 seems coherent, and the arguments they present sound extremely cogent. As opposed to the previous attempts, which rely solely on the evidence from MS Junius 1, Anderson and Britton (1997, 1999) go much further in their deliberations and employ some evidence from Old English. Unfortunately, they provide no statistics that could show the consistency of the scribe in marking etymologically geminate (long) consonants with <CC> digraphs. Although Lass (1992: 31) states that Orm's spellings are usually etymologically consistent, very little has been done so far to corroborate this consistency.

Other scholars claim that <CC> digraphs in MS Junius 1 indicate neither vowel nor consonant quantity. Some scholars also associate the use of reduplicated consonants with specific syllable and prosodic properties, such as syllabication, syllable weight, and most recently with syllable cut (see e.g. Trautmann 1884: 96; Ten Brink 1876: 213; Morsbach 1896: §15; Luick 1921 [1964]: §59 Anm.; Sisam 1933: 10; Bennett and Smithers 1968: 360; Fulk 1996: 498-499; Murray 1995: 130, 2000: 633; Page 2000: 249; Mailhammer 2007: 50). However, as this study primarily focuses on marking vowel quantity with double consonant graphemes, giving a more detailed outline of the alternative interpretations goes far beyond the scope of the study. Instead, in the following sections more attention will be paid to the use of reduplicated consonant graphemes in Old English texts as the evidence preserved therein can also shed new light on the use of <CC> digraphs in MS Junius 1.

3. Reduplication of consonant graphemes in Old English

The belief that MS Junius 1 is the most authoritative source of information on vowel quantity in (Early) Middle English stems of course from the great popularity of the text among scholars. The fact that the use of double consonant graphemes as markers of vowel length is usually associated with the orthographic system preserved in MS Junius 1 clearly shows that the evidence from Old English MSS has never been given serious consideration. However, as has already been said, double consonant graphemes in this function are also sporadically attested in MSS that pre-date MS Junius 1. This in turn strongly suggests that the orthographic system of *The Ormulum* is not necessarily “innovative”, in the sense that the scribe did not devise this linear notation by himself, but rather heavily relied on Old English scribal practice (cf. Anderson – Britton 1999: 305-306; Smith 2007: 107). Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Orm was probably one of the first scribes who decided to apply reduplicated consonants on such a large scale in just one text.

Despite the fact that spellings with double consonants are frequent in both Old and Middle English MSS, not all scholars recognize this notation as a potential indicator of vowel quantity. According to the traditional accounts of Old English orthography and phonology, in the writing system of Old English <CC> digraphs usually denote geminate (or long) consonant sounds resulting from West Germanic gemination, though, the exact phonemic value of such digraphs in Old and Middle English is still one of the moot points.

The first attestations of the use of reduplicated consonant graphemes as indicators of short vowels are usually dated to the Middle English period (see e.g. Jordan 1974: §19). Venezky (1965: 158-159) argues that the rise of this function of <CC> digraphs was possible mainly due to degemination (or the loss of phonemic length of consonants) in the North around 1200 (cf. also King 1992: 138). The most striking thing here is that the place and time postulated for the loss of phonemic contrast in quantity of consonants correlate closely with the dialectal area and date suggested for the production of MS Junius 1.

However, there is also ample evidence for the diacritic use of <CC> digraphs in Old English MSS. According to the standard accounts of Old English orthography, such spellings are often attested in forms with a short vowel in which due to syncope a single consonant was in the immediate environment of [r] or [l], e.g. *miccle*, *bettra*, *æppel* (Campbell 1959: §453; Hogg 1992: §7.78; Robinson 1992: 159). Surprisingly, similar spellings can also be found in words with an originally long vowel in which the vowel was subsequently shortened e.g. *moddor*, *blæddre*, *næddre*, *swettra* (Campbell 1959: §453; Hogg 1992: §7.79; and Anderson – Britton 1999: 319). Moreover, reduplication of consonant graphemes sometimes occurs in words in which the use of a <CC> digraph is etymologically inexplicable. In such cases it seems that the <CC> sequence obviously cannot represent a geminate (or long) consonant, and therefore, could presumably serve as a linear diacritic for the preceding short vowel. Although for Scragg (2003: 41) such forms as *micclum*, *forweornnion*, and *wittodlice* in Cambridge Corpus Christi College 198 (s. xi¹-xi²) are not particularly intriguing, there are scholars who consider such spellings as orthographic notations that simply encode information about vowel quantity (see e.g. Luick 1921 [1964]: §§670-671; Jespersen 1940: §4.91; Eliason 1948: 2; Kurath 1956: 436, 437, 439, 443; Campbell 1959: §329 n.1; Jordan 1974: §157; Hogg 1992: §2.78 n.1; Fulk 1996: 498, 502, and 1998; Brunner 1965: §5), and most of them concur that double consonant graphemes were sometimes employed by Old English scribes to indicate vowel shortness.⁵ Generally speaking, when the use of a

⁵ The scribal practice of doubling consonant symbols is also common in runic inscriptions. For more details on the possible meaning of double runes in Old English see e.g. Page (1962), on reduplication of consonants in Latin see e.g. Carnoy (1917).

<CC> digraph cannot be interpreted in terms of consonant gemination (or consonant lengthening), the double spelling of a consonant grapheme is probably a linear diacritic for the preceding short vowel.

According to Kniezsa (1988: 21), the first attestations of <CC> digraphs in this function can be traced to the 11th century. She maintains that in Late Old and Early Middle English marking of short vowels in closed syllables with double consonants became very common, regardless of the possible modifications in the phonemic substance represented by such consonant digraphs. Although the evidence that she gives from the first three parts of the *Peterborough Chronicle* is very scanty, the adduced examples are quite illustrative: *riccere*, *ricceste*, *brittig*, *brittiga*, *brittigum*, *nammare*, *nammore*, *tydde*, *tidde*, and *wimman*.

Luick (1921 [1964]: §§670-671) points to the evidence in *Lindisfarne Gospels* and states that doubling of consonants after a short vowel usually occurs on <p>, <t>, <c>, and less often on <m>, <d>, and <s>. As can be seen in the adduced examples, double consonants following a short vowel can be found in both verbs and nouns, e.g. *written* 'written', *slitten* 'slit, torn', *smitten*, 'daubed, smeared' *rioppa* 'sheaf', *grippen* 'to gripe, grasp, seize', *sacca* 'sack', *brecca* 'violator', *sprecca* 'speaker', *cumma* 'guest, stranger', as well as in inflected forms of *writ*, *cot*, *læt*, *fæt*, *met*, *scip*, *sum*, and *ðæcele*, to name but a few.

There is also considerable evidence for diacritic reduplication of consonants in Old English in MSS of Northumbrian provenance. The short vowels in such words as *scip*, *fæt*, *hwæt*, *bæc*, *god* 'god', *glæd*, *gebed*, *clif*, *stif*, *stæf*, *hliþ*, *bæþ*, *pæþ*, *smæl*, *dæl*, *sum*, and *tam* are frequently marked in this way. The findings from the gloss to the *Lindisfarne Gospel* of St. Matthew presented by Foley (1903: §§1-5) seem to corroborate that this type of diacritic reduplication was quite common in the North during the Late Old English period. Foley's examples show that a <CC> digraph can mark a short vowel both in intervocalic and final position, e.g. *gebræcc*, *spræcc*, *sætt*, *sett*, *wæss*, *ðætte* (2×), *geatt*, *bræccecc*, *gegræppde*, *onsacca*, *blaccum*, *wracco*, *waccen*, *gesæcca*, *sæccendum*, *bæccum*, *gebrecceð*, *sprecca*, *ungerecc*, *spræcca*, *auritten*, *toslitten*, *scipp*, *gewritt*, *(grist)bittung*, *gristbiottung*, *wlittig*, *tuigge*, *hrippo*, *rioppas*, *cotte*, and *gebundenn*. In a brief commentary to the findings, Foley (1903: §45) states that reduplication of etymologically single (or short) consonants is far more frequent after short than (etymologically) long vowels. Moreover, she remarks that in the medial position etymologically single (or short) consonants usually remain single before another consonant, though there are some exceptions, e.g. *fyllennda* and *sellennde*, which in her opinion are nothing but scribal errors. Excluding all the possible instances of reduplication caused by West Germanic gemination, and those which are mere clusters of two originally separate consonants, Foley (1903) gives a list of 98 words with <CC> digraphs representing phonemically single consonants. Most of them (i.e. 68 instances) occur after a short vowel,

e.g. *accenned*, *awritten*, *sceaccas*, *nimmende*, *begettes*, *brydloppum*, *cymmeð*, *frumma*, *gebedd*, *genimmæs*, *geocc*, *gewarpp*, *hnædd*, *nomma*, *stocc*, *summun*, and *biðð*. Although such digraphs also occur after long vowels, they are far less frequent in this position (only 30 instances), e.g. *ett*, *gehatten*, *lyttel*, *sellra*, *slittað*, *gebrucca*, *ðreaddende*, and *ecce*.

Furthermore, Luick (1921 [1964]: §§670-671) says that the first attestations of such spellings in Early Middle English come from MSS with the graphemic characteristics of northern texts. In later texts non-etymological reduplication of consonant graphemes appears in texts from the 14th and 15th centuries, e.g. *godd*, *goddes* (*Lazamon*), *backes* (*Havelok*), *goddes* (*Exodus*), *godis*, *goddis* (*Wyclif's Ferial Gospels*) (see e.g. Wright 1960; Riffer-Maček 1966: 133). This scribal practice was continued during the Middle English period and is thought to have laid the foundations for such Modern English spellings as *small*, *back*, *black*, *cliff*, *matted*, *planned*, *hurried*, etc. (cf. also Giegerich 1999: 152).⁶

Regretfully, most of the studies on the use of double consonants focus mainly on the evidence from *The Ormulum*, leaving establishing the reliability of such spellings as indicators of vowel length in Old English texts aside. The examples above clearly show that the evidence from MS Junius 1 can be easily supplemented with data from Late Old and Early Middle English texts. Moreover, as can be seen, reduplication of consonant graphemes in Old English MSS is undoubtedly one of those orthographic notations that can be related to marking vowel shortness.

4. Late Old English scribal evidence

4.1. The analysed manuscripts

The following sections are intended to be another contribution to the whole discussion about the use of <CC> digraphs in Old English MSS in the function of linear indicators of vowel shortness. Although the study is far from extensive, it gives a few interesting examples.

The data for the study come from two Late Old English MSS. One of them is MS Gg. 3.28 (s. x/xi), which contains two books of the catholic sermons of Ælfric. In his *Catalogue of Manuscripts Containing Anglo-Saxon*, Ker (1957: 13 no. 15) remarks that the characteristic unusual forward-sloping hand of the script suggests that this MS was probably produced at the end of the 10th or the beginning of the 11th century (cf. also Sisam 1932: 53; Godden 1979: xliiii; Clemons 1997: 24-25). According to Godden (1979: xliiii), the copy is a work of a single scribe, though, there are also occasional alterations, glosses, and addi-

⁶ Cf. Koekkoek (1979) on consonant reduplication and vowel quantity in Modern German.

tions in another hand (especially on fols. 196r-204r), which Ker (1957: 13 no. 15) dates (s. xi) and (s. xii). On the basis of the palaeographic features of the script, Godden (1979: xliii) states that MS Gg. 3.28 is either an original product of one of Ælfric's scriptoria or a remarkably faithful copy of an exemplar produced in such a scriptorium. Unfortunately, little is known about the exact provenance of the MS. However, it is assumed that Gg.3.28 can be one of the *Omeliaria uetera duo* MSS mentioned in the *Libri anglici*, the 12th century catalogue of Durham Cathedral Priory. The additions written on some leaves, the signature of Leonard Pilkington (prebendary of Durham), and a press-mark at the top of the first page strongly suggest that Gg. 3.28 remained in Durham during the late medieval period, probably until the 12th century. In 1574 the MS was donated to the Cambridge University Library. In this case the data for the analysis come not from Godden's (1979) edition but from a greyscale microfilm reproduction of the whole MS, produced to order by the Cambridge University Library.⁷

The other text which can be helpful in providing evidence for diacritic reduplication of consonant graphemes in Late Old English is that preserved in MS William H. Scheide (s. x/xi) (*The Blickling Homilies*), which is one of the thirteen MSS containing Old English that have survived in American libraries. Fleming (1976: 127), who gives a detailed account of the history of the MS, points out that it is "one of the most important homilies of the Anglo-Saxon Church". The name "Blickling" comes probably from the Blickling Hall in Norfolk (eastern England), where the MS remained for nearly two centuries (Fleming 1976: 131). The first nine leaves contain a *Sarum Kalendar* for use at Lincoln (15th century), and sequences of *Gospels* (16th century), both written in Latin. The rest of the book contains eighteen homilies for Sundays and Saints' days, arranged in the order of the Church year. Besides this, there are extensive marginalia, most of which concern the city government. The first accounts of the MS often suggest that it was probably used as an oath book in the city of Lincoln. Most scholars, including Ker (1957: 451-455, no. 382), who date the MS (s. x/xi), agree that the homilies were written in the late 10th or early 11th century. However, Morris (1880) titled his edition of the text *The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century*. The confusion stems from the fact that in the MS there is a passage with the date A.D. 971. Morris (1880: v) admits that this date "does not necessarily mark the exact point of time in which the present Homilies were composed, but may be a later insertion of the transcriber; that is to say, the date 971 only gives the age of the MS., and not that of the author or compiler". He also says that the language of

⁷ The study was possible partly due to the tremendous financial support from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education (research project No. NN104 178536), which generously funded the author's Ph.D. research project in the years 2009-2010.

the MS, especially the vocabulary and syntactically complex sentences suggest that it conforms much more to Old English of the 9th century. In the most recent edition of the homilies, Kelly (2003: xxix) states that the main part of the MS was written in the late 10th century. However, those whose dating of the MS is based on analysis of the palaeographical evidence usually claim that the MS was produced between 971 and 1025. This is the reason why Ker (1957: 451-455, no. 382) gives it the label (s. x/xi).

The fact that MS William H. Scheide had been circulating in eastern parts of England for a long time before it landed up in the Princeton University Library in the U.S. suggests that this is its place of origin. The same conclusion can be drawn from the orthographic evidence. For example, in some words there is a strong tendency for frequent substitutions of <o> for <a> (representing Gmc. */a/) before nasals in stressed syllables, e.g. <noma> (p. 4. 14), <Ond> (p. 4. 20), <noman> (p. 11. 6), <monnum> (p. 20. 4), <lichoman> (p. 21. 3), <mon> (p. 21. 17), etc. This shows that the MS may indeed have been produced somewhere in the area of the east Mercian dialect as the sound change usually formalized as Gmc. *[a] > EOE *[ɑ̃] or *[ɔ̃] / ____ [+ nasal] probably started in the western parts of Mercia, from where it later spread to the east.

The book was first in the possession of the officials of Lincoln (probably until the beginning of the 17th century). In 1724 it was given to William Pownall of Lincoln, who sold it to Sir Richard Ellys of Nocton (Lincolnshire), who was an ancestor of the Marquess of Lothian. For nearly two hundred years the MS was held in the Blickling Hall in Norfolk. Then in 1932, the 11th Marquess of Lothian because of debt sold the book to Cortlandt Field Bishop. In 1938 the Scheide family from Titusville in Pennsylvania bought the MS, and since then it has been in the Princeton University Library, where the whole Scheide collection is now housed (see Kelly 2003: xxix-xxxi). The data for this study come from the high-resolution colour images of the whole MS available on the website of the Princeton University Library.

4.2. MS Gg. 3.28 (*Homilies of Ælfric*)

Besides acute accents, curls, and double vowel graphemes, the scribe of MS Gg. 3.28 also employed other orthographic notations that can be associated with vowel quantity. The examples adduced below show that some of the <CC> digraphs consisting of two identical consonant graphemes in MS Gg. 3.28 were probably intended by the scribe as linear indicators of vowel shortness.

With the assumption that during the Late Old English period West Germanic gemination was no longer active, and degemination of final geminate consonants had already started (cf. e.g. Campbell 1959: §§407-408; Hogg 1992: §§2.78, 4.11-4.14, 7.81), the use of reduplicated consonant graphemes in some words can be regarded as an attempt to indicate the quantity of the preceding vowel. For example, the scribe of MS Gg. 3.28 uses the sequence <bb> after a

short vowel in <*sibb*> (fol. 7v. 9), where the final geminate consonant had been probably lost by that time, though, in the oblique forms the consonant was probably still geminate (long), e.g. in <*sibbe*> (fol. 7v. 22). The most frequent word with non-etymological reduplication of consonant in the analysed text is <*miccle*> (292×), where the digraph <*cc*> is applied in all case forms of the word, e.g. <*miccle*> (fol. 4r. 7), <*micclū*> (fol. 7r. 9), <*micclan*> (fol. 5v. 16), <*miccles*> (fol. 12r. 18), <*miccla*> (fol. 132v. 16), <*micclum*> (fol. 9v. 3), etc. Similar spellings can be found in, e.g. <*underbæcc*> (fol. 36r. 20), <*blæcc*> (fol. 104v. 29), <*swæcc*> (fols. 147v. 24, 208r. 14), <*sceall*> (fol. 244r. 30), <*begann*> (fol. 15v. 3), <*onn*> (fol. 23r. 20), <*Scipp*> (fol. 84r. 4), <*ðiss*> (fol. 147v. 23), <*lætt*> ‘late’, ‘slow’, ‘sluggish’ (fol. 250v. 24). The only reasonable explanation for the use of reduplicated consonant graphemes in these words is that they serve as linear markers of vowel shortness. Since by the Late Old English period most of final geminate consonants had probably lost their phonemic contrast with single consonants, which is evident from such spellings as <*eal*> (fol. 67v. 23), <*mancyn*> (fol. 27r. 9), etc., the reduplicated final consonant graphemes in, e.g. <*wedd*> (fol. 12r. 22), <*bedd*> (fol. 93v. 19), <*awedd*> (fol. 156v. 6), <*codd*> (fol. 240v. 25), <*Hell*> (fol. 24r. 15), <*eall*> (fol. 67r. 22), <*geswell*> (fol. 74r. 6), <*cnoll*> (fol. 109v. 5), <*toll*> (fol. 111r. 2), <*stánweall*> (fol. 172v. 2), <*godspell*> (fol. 246v. 3), <*womm*> (fol. 52r. 12), <*ðrymm*> (fol. 122v. 6), <*ramm*> (fol. 146r. 15), <*mancynn*> (fol. 2r. 8), <*deorcynn*> (fol. 4r. 14), <*fugelcynn*> (fol. 4r. 14), <*nytcynn*> (fol. 4v. 2), <*gebann*> (fol. 8r. 6), <*ongann*> (fol. 14r. 28), <*anginn*> (fol. 32v. 24) <*cann*> (fol. 35r. 4), <*gewinn*> (fol. 85r. 13), <*torr*> (fol. 83r. 12), <*ƿærr*> (fol. 179v. 30), <*ƿærr*> (fol. 257r. 22), <*bliss*> (fol. 48v. 23), <*sárnyss*> (fol. 106v. 1), and <*sceatt*> (fol. 48r. 8) subsequently became quantity indicators of the preceding vowel. Sometimes, however, reduplication of a consonant grapheme in final position in weak verbs is a result of adding a dental element to form preterits and past participles, e.g. <*gelædde*> (fol. 4r. 14), <*afedde*> (fol. 6v. 1), <*cydde*> (fol. 16r. 8), <*behydde*> (fol. 24r. 14), <*ofdrædde*> (fol. 47v. 26), <*gecydd*> (fol. 64v. 4), <*gelædd*> (fol. 91v. 3), <*gescrydd*> (fol. 196r. 1), <*gesett*> (fol. 11v. 23), and <*brytte*> (fol. 105v. 9). Although in such cases <*dd*> or <*tt*> sometimes follows a long vowel, and these spellings may have nothing to do with marking vowel length, in <*adydd*> (fol. 106v. 25), <*adydde*> (fol. 145v. 13), <*adyddon*> (fol. 194r. 7), and <*gesett*> (fol. 11v. 23) it seems that the <*CC*> digraphs in these forms were intended to show that the root vowel is short. The function of similar spellings in <*ancleowū*> (fol. 101r. 26), <*swæcce*> (fols. 145r. 21, 145v. 3), <*wáccre*> (fol. 147v. 23), <*sléaccre*> (fol. 161v. 9), <*swácc*> (fol. 208r. 24), <*swáccce*> (fol. 162v. 18), <*wédd*> (fol. 5v. 20), <*deaddra*> (fol. 25v. 17), <*góddra*> (fol. 102r. 20), <*goddra*> (fol. 103r. 11), <*goddre*> (fol. 115v. 9), <*góddre*> (fol. 115v. 13), <*widdre*> (fol. 117v. 2), <*afédd*> (fol. 154v. 18), <*awédd*> (fol.

156v. 6), <braddra> (fol. 259v. 23), <befeoll> (fol. 151v. 8), <gebánn> (fol. 7r. 20), <ongánn> (fol. 11v. 12), <wánn> (fol. 28r. 29), <munnuháð> (fol. 115v. 7-8), <oferwánn> (fol. 122v. 2), <upp> (fol. 36v. 20), <úpp> (fol. 37r. 15), <uppligan> (fol. 26r. 11), <deoppre> (fol. 111v. 11), <ytrū> (fol. 28v. 26), and <hwittre> (fol. 238v. 5) is more problematic, though, Hogg (1992: §7.79) allows consonant gemination in at least some of them. Although the exact phonetic properties of many consonants represented by <CC> sequences in medial position are questionable, the <CC> digraphs applied in the following words probably still represent geminate (long) consonants: <waccre> (fol. 1v. 10), <licceteras> (fol. 26v. 5), <riccra> (fol. 28v. 29), <riccetera> (fol. 53r. 8-9), <gereccednysse> (fol. 70r. 24), <liccetende> (fol. 87r. 26), <gereccan> (fol. 123v. 20), <criccū> (fol. 161r. 6), <flocce> (fol. 182v. 5), <floccmælum> (fol. 31r. 2), <tyddernes> (fol. 30r. 18), <næddran> (fol. 42r. 27), <tyddernysse> (fol. 107v. 6), <gewittig> (fol. 77r. 20), <hluttre> (fol. 91r. 2), <hluttur> (fol. 117v. 15), <sceattas> (fol. 98r. 1), <hytting> (fol. 111v. 1), <forgyttol> (fol. 157v. 29), <attor> (fol. 232v. 11).

4.3. MS William H. Scheide (*The Blickling Homilies*)

The results of a cursory analysis of MS William H. Scheide also show that the scribes who wrote the main text of the MS were familiar with Old English scribal tradition and they were fully aware of the quantitative contrasts of vowels, which they also wanted to indicate with linear notations. Besides acute accents and double vowel graphemes, they sporadically attempted to mark vowel shortness with <CC> digraphs.

Although in this MS the evidence is rather scanty, it clearly shows that some reduplicated consonant graphemes were probably intended as linear markers of vowel shortness. The analysed text obviously also contains items in which <CC> digraphs originally represented final geminate consonants. As by the Late Old English period the phonetic contrast between geminate (long) and single (short) consonants in final position had been probably lost altogether, and <CC> digraphs acquired a new function in this position, the consonant digraphs in e.g. <sibb> (p. 60. 19), <cynn> (p. 97. 9), and <gewinn> (p. 124. 5) can also be interpreted as linear markers of vowel shortness. Moreover, it is very likely that gemination of consonants was no longer active during the Late Old English period, and therefore, the <cc> sequences in such words as *micel* and its case forms, e.g. <mycclan> (p. 3. 5), <myccle> (p. 13. 11), <mycclum> (p. 70. 14), <myccla> (p. 216. 6), as well as in its derivatives, e.g. <mycclap> (p. 4. 9) and <gemycclige> (p. 11. 3) were probably intended to signal that the root vowel is short. Similarly, in many words the sequence <cg> is often written <cgg>, where the use of the sequence <gg>, e.g. in <forhycggap> (p. 46. 18), <hycgge>

(p. 46. 21), <asecgge> (p. 48. 3), <secggan> (p. 53. 10), <secggenne> (p. 73. 18), and <licggad> (p. 119. 11), to name but a few, suggests that the scribe wanted to mark the quantity of the preceding vowel. In one case, one of the scribes doubled the first consonant, e.g. <seccge> (p. 91. 21), which shows that these spelling modifications have nothing to do with the pronunciation of the consonant they represent, but were intended to signal that the preceding vowel is short. The fact that there are also instances of purely non-etymological reduplication of consonants, e.g. in <abbiddan> (p. 228. 2), <stocc> (p. 230. 3), and perhaps <ciriccan> (p. 254. 13), proves that the scribe who wrote these words was aware that <CC> digraphs could also serve as diacritics for vowels.

This of course raises the question why the scribe(s) did not apply such consonant digraphs on a larger scale. The only reasonable answer to this question is that some dialects of Late Old English probably still had geminate (long) consonants in their phonemic systems, especially in intervocalic position (see Hogg 1992: §§4.11-4.14, §§7.80-7.81). It is also quite likely that the use of <CC> digraphs to represent geminate (long) consonants in intervocalic position seriously hampered the development of their secondary function, which is far more evident in Middle English MSS.

5. Conclusions

On the basis of the examples adduced in the last three sections, one can draw a few tentative conclusions about reduplication of consonant graphemes in Late Old English texts and MS Junius 1. Firstly, as can be seen, there is also orthographic evidence for diacritic reduplication of consonant graphemes in Late Old English MSS, especially in closed syllables, which has not been thoroughly analysed yet. The examples from the two Late Old English MSS clearly show that MS Junius 1 is not the only MS in which the scribe applied <CC> digraphs to indicate vowel shortness. Secondly, the examples above prove that, as has been already suggested by Anderson and Britton (1999: 305-306) and Smith (2007: 107), the orthographic system of *The Ormulum* is to a large extent based on Old English scribal tradition. The sporadic use of <CC> digraphs in non-etymological environments in the analysed Late Old English MSS obviously throws into question the “idiosyncratic” status of double consonant graphemes in MS Junius 1, and shows that the use of <CC> digraphs as indicators of vowel shortness is deeply rooted in (Late) Old English scribal tradition. In contrast to the MSS analysed in this study, the extensive use of such spellings in MS Junius 1 was probably possible due to the subsequent loss of the phonetic contrast between geminate (long) and single (short) consonants, first in final and then in intervocalic position. The gradual loss of geminate consonants at the beginning of the Middle English period allowed Orm to extend the use of <CC> digraphs

to marking vowel shortness not only in final position, but also in /VCCV/ and /VCV/ environments. This study of course is not extensive enough to explain the rise of the diacritic function of reduplicated consonant graphemes in Late Old English, but the adduced evidence strongly suggests that this function must have originated before MS Junius 1 was produced.

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