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## NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF WORD DIVISION IN ENGLISH

*Josef Hladký*

Word division at the end of a line is met with in nearly every written or printed text and the rules governing it in English obviously differ from the rules in other languages. The present notes, however, are not concerned with the contemporary rules (see Hladký 1984). Instead, a few observations will be offered on word division in some older texts. (For the sake of brevity, the texts will be referred to by the year in which they were written or the year of publication).

### *970—990*

The oldest text in which the boundaries of word division have been studied is the *Exeter Book*. When looking at the ends of lines, however, we must bear in mind the fact that word boundaries within the lines of the manuscript reflect the practices that differ from later usage. Compounds, prefixed and derived words are sometimes written as two words' (*ael mihtig, sorg lease, a wyrgde, ge dringan*). Grammatical suffixes are also found separate from the stems (*us ic, dryht nes*). On the other hand we can find prepositions, pronouns, the conjunction *ond* and the negative particle *ne* written together with the following word (*wende toworulde bison sewitþa song: hewaes upp hafen enþla faedmun; Crist 650—1*). This usage (though not systematically applied) and the fact that no hyphen was used mean that a case of division at the end of a line may not in fact be a case of division at all, because the word might well have been written in two parts even within the line. But as we are not concerned here with any statistical analysis of the frequency of word division in 970—990, we may still use all words divided at the ends of lines in the search for the boundaries of division.

From what has been said above, it is clear that one of the main word-division principles in 970—990, both at the ends of lines and within the lines, is the morphological principle. Thus we find divisions like *geworh-te, gehyrw-don, dryht-ne, sylf-ne, min-re* (all these examples and the examples used further on have been drawn from division at the ends of lines only). The morphological principle, however, does not operate with all endings. We find divisions at the end of an open syllable (this rule will be referred to as the CV-CV rule), e.g. *myce-le, gie-fe bio-was*, and between two consonants (the C-C rule), e.g. *lon-ge, gedrin-gan, bear-*

-nes, *singen-de*, *leofes-tan*, *stron-gum*, *swear-tan*. There are cases where the morphological rule and the C-C rule overlap, e.g. the above-mentioned *min-re*, or *seles-te*, *geslaeh-te*. The C-C rule is not without exceptions either. If the second consonant is a liquid, the two consonants are not separated. Thus we get boundaries like *sa-wla*, *fu-gles* (but also *fug-les*), *deo-fles*, *fro-fre*, *bi-trum*, *ty-dran*, *hleop-prade*, *fi-brum*, *fae-grestum* (but also *hleop-res*, *fip-rum*, *faeg-ran*). The consonant + liquid pairs (the CL pairs, for short), are kept together even in groups of three consonants, e.g. *eal-dre*, *wul-dres* (but also, exceptionally, *wuld-res*), *ear-gra*, *tem-ples*. There is, however, a rule stronger than the CL rule in groups of three consonants: if there is an *ng* sequence, it is not separated, e.g. *eng-la*, *tung-lu*, *fing-ras*. Similarly, *s* and *t* are not separated: *gefaest-nad*, *blost-mum*, *for-ste*, *dyr-stig*.

Two final points should be made about the operation of the CV-CV rule in 970—990: (i) the CV-CV rule applies even if the word begins with a vowel (we get a V-CV rule), e.g. *o-per*, *a-num*, *ae-peling*, and (ii) the CV-CV rule does not decide the division boundary if there is an *x* involved, e.g. *weax-an*. (There is another case of division after *x*, *wrix-lan*, but that might be also explained by the C-C rule.)

970—990, like some other later texts, contains instances of division inside syllables: *dre-am*, *bartholome-us*. This division may indicate full pronunciation of the two vowels.

### 1483

1483 comprises six Latin letters exchanged between Pope Sixtus IV and John Mocenigo, the Doge of Venice, as printed by William Caxton. Although in Latin, the text of the letters deserves mentioning as the only available specimen of 15th-century printing (and, unfortunately, also the only specimen of texts printed by Caxton). Division is very frequent in 1483; depending on the space available, this is either shown by a division mark or simply not indicated. (It seems that the unequal spacing familiar in modern times was not technically possible in the early days of printing.) The rules in 1483 can be arranged in the following way:

- (i) do not divide before *x* (*predix-imus*, *vex-et*, *max-ime*, but also *maxi-me* according to rule (ii), the CV-CV rule);
- (ii) divide after an open syllable, even if not complete (the CV-CV rule: *diui-na*, *a-lios*);
- (iii) do not separate a liquid from the preceding consonant (the CL rule: *cala-brie*, *perpe-trate*, *pro-fligatus*, *sa-cre*, *exem-plo*, *con-tra*, *nos-tri*);
- (iv) divide between two consonants (the C-C rule: *an-no*, *ur-bis*, *relic-to*, *res-pondebas*); there are a few infrequent exceptions to this rule (*indi-gnatus*, *re-sponsione*: the second may be a case of division at a morphological boundary).

There are not enough divisions of three or more consonants in 1483 and so no other rules for consonantal clusters besides rules (iii) and (iv) can be found.

### 1592

The first English printed book available for analysis is the 17-page story *The Sea-Mans Triumph*. The rules are the same as rules (ii) to (iv) in the Latin 1483, with an extension to rule (iii). The rules are stronger than any concern for a morphological boundary: (i) open syllable: *ano-ther*, *go-uerned*, *a-gainst*, *ta-king*, *excee-*

-*deth*; (ii) preserve a CL pair and preserve *ct* and *st*: *trou-ble*, *gen-tleman*, *hum-bly*, *re-steth*, *vi-ctory* (the rule about *ct* and *st* may have a connection with ligatures used in manuscripts and then in printing); (iii) divide C-C: *wil-ling*, *accep-ted*.

### 1623

The *First Folio* of 1623 is a text long enough for a thorough analysis of word-division boundaries. The rules for the determination of the boundaries can be summarized as follows (the sequence of rules is deliberate: it indicates a hierarchy whereby rule (i) does not give way to rules (ii) to (v), etc.):

- (i) do not split *st*: *que-stion*, *di-stance*, *di-stinguish*, *mi-stook*, *arre-sted*;
- (iia) preserve the suffix *-tion* (*ac-tion*, *expecta-tion*) and the following prefixes: *con-flict*, *dis-cover*, *ex-alted*, *in-vre*, *per-aventure*, *re-spect*, *sub-urb*;
- (iib) preserve recognizable words in compounds: *know-ledge*, *with-out*, *vp-on*, *Eng-land* (and *Eng-lish*);
- (iii) divide after an open syllable, even if not complete: *lea-ther*, *o-uer*, *ano-ther* or *a-nother* (rule (iib) does not operate here), *ha-uing*, *obtai-ned*, *reaso-nable*, *assu-rance*, *roa-rers*, *dange-rous*;
- (iv) preserve *ct* and CL: *do-ctor*, *distra-cted*, *pra-ctised*; *no-ble*, *trem-ble*, *cir-cle*, *peo-ple*, *gen-tleman*, *Pem-broke*, *se-cret*, *chil-dren*, *de-gree*, *par-tridge*;

There are exceptions to this rule in 1623: *pic-ture*, *perspec-tively* and *doub-let*. They may be cases of division under rule (iia) but this explanation cannot be supported by any other occurrence of *-ture*, *-tive* and *-let* as recognizable morphemes.

- (v) divide between two consonants: *thin-king*, *han-ging* (but also *stink-ing*, *hang-ing*), *defor-med*, *gol-den*, *of-ten*, *hus-band*, *bas-ket*, and even *rec-kon* with a digraph.

The above rules do not preserve any other suffix than *-tion*. Even with the most frequent suffixes like *-ing*, *-ed*, *-able*, the boundary in 1623 is decided by one of the three last rules.

Not included in the survey is the division after *w* (*draw-er*, *cow-ardise*, *stew-ard*, but also *ste-ward*) because the occurrence of only three words does not guarantee a safe rule (there was no *w* in the pronunciation of these words at that time, and this may be reflected in the division).

### 1640, 1642, 1644, 1661

The rules in these short texts are similar to those in 1592: (i) divide after an open syllable, even if not complete (*transla-ted*, *mee-ting*, *ri-chest*, *e-lection*), (ii) preserve CL, *ct*, *st*, *tw* (*resem-ble*, *bre-thren*, *do-ctor*, *ma-ster*, *be-tween*), (iii) divide C-C (*transpor-ted*, *stret-ched*, *indig-nation*, *lan-thorne*). Owing to the limited number of cases of division it is impossible to decide whether *di-gression*, *con-fer*, *com-pany*, *im-pair*, *dis-charge*, *ob-scene* are cases of division made solely according to rules (ii) and (iii) or whether they are cases of division at the morphological boundary. There are no instances like *in-vre* in 1623 to confirm the existence of the morphological rule.

A similar lack of clarity as to which of the rules is hierarchically higher prevails in the case of *belong-ing* and *Eng-land*: *belong-ing* is the only case among the *-ing* forms where the stem and the suffix are preserved (in contrast to *mee-ting* or *spea-king*) and *Eng-land*

is the only instance of etymological division which does not coincide with points of division according to the CL and C-C rule (as in *out-cry*, *loth-some*, *thred-bare* or *up-ward*). As there are no other cases of division inside, before or after *ng*, *belong-ing* and *Eng-land* are cases where the morphological boundary is exceptionally observed.

### 1691

1691 presents a pattern of word division similar to that found in other 17th-century books quoted above. Prefixes are observed (*dis-orderly*), single letters are left at the ends of lines (*o-ver*), two vowels inside a syllable are separated (*anci-ent*), two consonants are divided, with the exception of the CL, *tw*, *st*, *ct* pairs and of digraphs (*wil-lains*, *trou-ble*, *be-tween*, *ma-ster*, *stru-cture*, *bi-shop*, *nei-ther*).

1691 is long enough to provide a sufficient number of divisions before suffixes. The *-ing* suffix is usually preserved if the form of the verb has not been changed owing to the addition of a suffix, e.g. *look-ing*, *build-ing*. If the verb form has been changed, usually through the loss of the final *-e*, the *-ing* carries over the preceding consonant, e.g. *ta-king*, *ri-ding*. (Both types of division are used with *to have*: *ha-ving* and *hav-ing*.) The suffix *-ed* is usually divided from the stem in the same way as *-ing*: *shew-ed*, *build-ed*, but *increa-sed*, *ru-led*. Again, there are cases of vacillation: *liv-ed* — *li-ved*. Of the other suffixes, only *-er* has one type of division boundary (*spea-ker*, *gao-ler*, *ma-ker*, *priso-ner*).

1691, just like other texts before and after it, is rather rigorous in preserving the CL, *st*, *ct* and *tw* pairs. While the last named is still preserved even today (*be-tween*, *be-twixt*), the other pairs have survived to only a limited extent. If we compare some of the words found in 1691 with the entries in the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, we find agreement between the two in words like *consta-ble*, *terri-ble*, *bea-dle*, *peo-ple*, *cathe-dral*, *li-brary* but not in words like *trou-ble*, *se-cretary*, *bre-thren* (1691) — *troub-le*, *sec-retary*, *breth-ren* (LDCE). The LDCE divides between the two consonants if the preceding vowel is short and stressed. The *st* and *ct* pairs have not survived, unless there is a morphological boundary: the division boundary according to the LDCE is between the two consonants in words which in 1691 were divided after or before the pair, e.g. *doct-rine* (1691) — *doc-trine* (LDCE), and similarly in *wrest-ling*, *stru-cture*, *pi-cture*, *ju-stice*, *ma-ster*, *mini-ster*, *Chri-stian*.

### 1705

A marked feature of word division in 1705 is the frequent occurrence of two different division boundaries, e.g. *Eng-land* — *En-gland*, *En-glish*, *hos-pital* — *ho-spital*, *pros-pect* — *pro-spect*, *found-er* — *dissen-ter*, *end-ed* — *condem-ned*.

Other features of 1705 are in agreement with the 17th-century texts discussed above: the morphological boundary is observed regularly with the prefixes (*un-equally*) but less frequently with the suffixes (*Christia-nity*), and the (C)V-CV, C-C, CL, *tw*, *st*, *ct* rules are observed, sometimes overriding the morphological rule (*e-equal*, *malig-nity*, *inte-grity*, *be-twixt*, *mona-stery*, *pra-ctised*).

We also find instances of the above-mentioned division inside a syllable, e.g. *demonstrati-on*, *nati-on*. A possible explanation is that the written or printed texts lag behind the spoken language and reflect the earlier unreduced pronunciation with an unreduced vowel, which might have led to the interpretation of *-siun*

as two syllables (an interpretation that was in fact phonologically incorrect by that time).

### 1720, 1723, 1735

If we take three other printed books from the first half of 18th century, we find that many of the word-division boundaries are identical with those in 1705: there are single letters at the ends of lines (*a-orable, o-ther, u-sed*), two identical letters are divided (*at-tention, dif-ferent*), prefixes and suffixes are either preserved intact (*dis-position, alter-ed, hear-er, ask-ing, rich-es, larg-est, rich-est*) or succumb to other rules or lack of system (*pla-ced, pain-ters, rea-der, wri-ter, recei-ving, pla-ces*). Another feature common with 1705 is division inside what in present-day pronunciation is a single syllable: *religi-on, passi-on, espec-i-ally, carri-age, champi-on, educati-on*.

The situation with groups of two or three consonants in 1720, 1723 and 1735 is also similar to that in 1705. As there are more examples available, we can distribute them according to the composition of the groups:

- n-C: chan-ge, dan-ger, lon-ger, lan-guage, stran-ger, ven-geance, advan-tage, men-tion;*
- n-CC: can-dle, dwin-dle, an-gry, gen-tleman, coun-try, hum-dred, mon-ster, Westmin-ster, distin-ction; prefixes in-credible, con-stant; but Eng-land in 1735;*
- r-C: adver-bially, cir-cumstance, mur-der, per-haps, ear-nest, per-son, impor-tant, pover-ty, fur-ther, ser-vice;*
- cC: affe-cted, chara-cter, pra-cticable, spe-ctacles, a-ction, sa-cred, se-cret (but doc-tor, elec-tion, convic-tion, in 1735);*
- sC: e-steem, mi-stake, ma-ster, my-stery, pede-stal, prote-stant, we-stern, que-stion, di-stinct, be-stow, di-sturb, po-sture, maje-sty, mode-sty, cha-stity; assi-stance (1720, 1735);*
- s-C: dis-mal, pis-toles, Chris-tian, fres-co; assis-tance (1723);*
- s-CC: ca-stle, apo-stle, mi-stris;*
- tC: be-tween, be-twixt;*
- p-C: recep-tacle, scrip-ture;*
- Cp-C: contemp-tible, sculp-tor, temp-tation, tramp-ling;*
- Cl: can-dle, dwin-dle, gen-tleman, hum-ble, mar-ble, accounta-ble, possi-bly;*
- Cr: so-briety, qua-drille, cele-brated; sa-cred, se-cret (also under -cC);*
- C-Cr: chil-dren, cham-bre.*

The above survey shows that there are consonantal group pairs where the division boundary is clearly placed between two consonants (*n-C, r-C, p-C*, e.g. *lan-guage, per-haps, scrip-ture*, and other less frequent combinations like *af-ter, em-peror*) and pairs where the boundary is before them: *-cC affe-cted, -tC be-tween, -Cl cou-ple, -Cr so-briety*. The rules for *sC* and *sCC* are not universal and we find division before the consonants (*e-steem, mi-stake, di-sturb*) and between them (*mis-take, dis-turb*). Some cases in the latter group can be explained by the morphological principle (to which *dis-mal* may have been assimilated) and other cases may be regarded as exceptions to the rule (the number of exceptions of this type was to rise in later periods). The number of *s-C* divisions seems to be higher in 1735 because there the morphological rule takes priority over the *-sC* rule in a number of cases (against *di-sturb* (1720) and *mi-stake* (1720, 1735) we come across *dis-turb, mis-take*).

The different ways some of the suffixes in the above four books (1705, 1720, 1723, 1735) are divided from the stems can be summarized as follows: (i) the

boundary is decided by the rule of open syllables (*rui-ned, rea-der, ha-ving*), (ii) the boundary coincides with the morphological boundary (*treat-ed, hunt-er, warn-ing*), (iii) the suffix is preserved intact (*mak-ing*), (iv) the rule about division between two consonants decides (*prin-ted, lear-ning*).

1735, however, seems to be a text where the morphological boundary carries more weight than in the other texts so far examined. The *-ing* ending is usually preserved or takes the added consonant (as in *win-ning*) and so are the suffixes *-ity* and *-ous*, where the CV-CV rule does not decide.

Some of the divided words above have been quoted twice because the division boundary in them springs from two rules: *can-dle* can be classified either as a case of division after *n* or as a case of division before CL.

The letter *x* is always retained with the preceding vowel (*Sax-ons* in 1705, *lux-ury* in 1723, *tax-es, ex-amine* in 1735 and *lax-ative* in 1747, discussed below). The reason is probably the non-existence of *x* at the beginning of current English words at that time (Johnson's Dictionary says: "X is a letter, which, though found in Saxon words, begins no word in the English language.") The non-existence of a letter or of a group of consonants at the beginning of a word, or the impossibility of pronouncing such a group at the beginning of a word, is a criterion that may decide a division boundary. We may put this another way by saying that a probable or a potential division boundary exists before consonantal groups that occur quite often at the beginning of English words, e.g. *br-*, *tr-* (opposed to *pt-*).

#### 1747

In the last book from the first half of the 18th century a slightly higher degree of suffix independence and a partial breakaway from the *-ct* division is observable: *-ed* (with one exception), *-ing*, *-en* and *-ous* are always separate, e.g. *ob-liged, ob-stinate, attend-ed, cas-ing, tast-ing, take-ing, clog-ging, strength-en, poison-ous, cutane-ous, spiritu-ous*. We still find divisions like *pe-ctoral, deco-ctions* but we also find *infec-ted, effec-tual, produc-tion*. In other respects 1747 does not differ from the earlier books mentioned above: (i) the *st* group is not split, aside from morphological reasons in some cases: *plai-ster, cly-ster, hy-stericks, cu-stom, au-stere, di-stemper* (but also *dis-temper*), (ii) we find unsystematic variations with some suffixes: *observ-able, admira-ble* (in this case we might speak of a rule of space or of technical simplification: the boundary oscillated with some suffixes depending on the space available or the ease with which the line could be re-arranged), (iii) divisions inside present-day syllables still exist: *qui-et, indigesti-ons*.

#### 1765

In several respects, 1765 represents substantial shifts in the word-splitting boundaries in comparison with the earlier books. The main novelty is the decisive role of the morphological boundary. Other changes, partially coupled with the primacy of the morphological boundary, are the splitting of the *ct* and *st* pairs and the non-existence of division inside *-tion*. Single letters are less frequent at the ends of lines. There are still some deviations from the rules but they do not occur so often as in some of the older books. The rules governing word division in 1765 can be hierarchized in the following way:

- (i) no division inside a syllable;

- (ii) divide after *x* (*Alex-ander, lux-ury*);
- (iii) split a group of three consonants either by preserving the CL pair (*trem-bled, an-gry*) or, in case of *-ing*, by adding the last consonant to the suffix (*tremb-ling, spark-ling, rust-ling, light-ning*);
- (iva) keep intact *-ing, -tion, con-, dis-, ex-, ob-, re-* and other prefixes (*produc-tion, distinc-tion, in-imitable*);
- (ivb) keep intact elements of compounds (*with-out*);
- (v) divide after an open syllable, even if not complete (*ho-nour, rea-der, bro-ken, a-lone*);
- (vi) preserve the CL and *tw* pairs (*fee-ble, peo-ple, esta-blish, se-cret, cele-brate, de-gree, Pa-trick, be-tween*);
- (vii) divide between two consonants (*lan-guage, stran-ger, ob-servation, charac-ter, his-tory, dig-nity, atten-dant*).

Not included in the above rules are other suffixes. The reason is that either the division is not systematic (e.g. *advan-ced* — *advanc-ed, trem-bled* — *troub-led, rol-led* — *roll-ed, confor-mable* — *remark-able*) or the number of instances is too low to guarantee formulation of a rule (*threat-en, bright-en, light-en; appear-ance, assu-rance, perfor-mance*) or the division is governed by rules (i) to (vii), e.g. *indo-lence* — *excel-lence, indepen-dent*. There are cases where the morphological boundary is not preserved (*trans-lator* besides *tran-slator, dis-tinguish* besides *di-stinguish*). Nor is the rule about *-ing* complete. Although the number of instances is very high and the basic rules can be formulated (see under (iii) and (iv)), there is no case in the analysed text where a consonant is added with the suffix as in *win-ning*.

#### 1774

The main characteristic of 1774 is the importance of some suffixes and prefixes for the word-splitting boundaries. The suffixes *-ing, -ed, -able, -ous, -tion* and the prefixes *de-, con-, dis-, mis-, ob-, re-, sus-* are always kept distinct. The two main rules are the CV-CV rule and the C-C rule, the former with the exception of *x* (*lux-ury*) and the latter with the exception of the CL pairs (*trou-ble* etc., but *pub-lick, pub-lish*). The members of compound words are also kept distinct. There is one instance of divided consonants not giving way to non-English etymology: *physiog-nomy*.

#### 1784 (1755)

Johnson's *Dictionary* was available in its fifth edition. The dictionary does not indicate syllabification nor is there any discussion of it in the preface. Thus the rules are derived from the text covering the letters A to L.

There are single letters left at the ends of lines, and there are no divisions inside syllables. Members of compounds, prefixes *ac-, com-, de-, dis-, ex-, mis-, ob-, re-, trans-, un-*, and suffixes *-ed, -ing, -able, -ance, -tion, -ous* are preserved intact (in the case of *-ing* this is extended by divisions like *admit-ting, wrang-ling*). *Eng-land* is a division before a recognizable word in a compound and *En-glish* is a division preserving the CL pair (and copying the pronunciation).

Three volumes of 1788 provided numerous instances of word division and thus many of the rules and exceptions to them or instances difficult to explain can be placed in proper quantitative perspective. The main characteristic of 1788 is a high percentage of morphological boundaries. There are even cases of division before a pseudo-suffix, similar to cases occasionally found nowadays in computer divisions which have not been prepared with every detail in mind: *wond-erful*, *overpow-ered*, *inter-est*, *earn-est*, *sever-al*. The rules in 1788 can be hierarchized as follows:

- (i) do not divide after a single letter;
- (ii) do not divide inside a syllable;
- (iii) divide
  - between recognizable words in compounds: *with-out*, *up-on*, *an-other*, *no-thing*,
  - after prefixes: *ab-use*, *circum-stance*, *com-pose*, *con-formity*, *de-scription*, *dis-agreeable*, *in-stance*, *per-spiciousity*, *re-commend*, *sub-stantive*, *sus-pence*, *trans-action*,
  - before suffixes: *favour-able*, *natur-al*, *attend-ance*, *passion-ate*, *prefer-ence*, *hear-er*, *soft-er*, *great-est*, *character-ize*, *danger-ous* (but *humo-rous*, *sono-rous*), *preci-sion*, *produc-tion*;

With some suffixes the number of instances is too low for a distinction to be made between a rule and an exception: *giv-en*, *cho-sen*, *writ-ten*; *differ-ent* — *appa-rent*; *instruct-or* — *inven-tor*; *solemn-ity* — *confor-mity* — *enormi-ty*. The division before *-able* is very precise, because the boundary in *capable* is *capa-ble*. In contrast to *-able*, there is no division before *-ible*: *forci-ble*, *sensi-ble* etc.

- (iv) divide after *x*: *deflex-ion*, *ex-istence*;
- (v) divide after an open syllable (the CV-CV rule): *ori-ginal*, *wh-e-ther*. A systematic deviation from this rule is the word *char-acter* and its derivatives. Other deviations can be explained by pseudo-suffixes: *fin-ish*, *encour-age*.
- (vi) preserve the CL and *tw* pairs: *sylla-ble*, *bre-thren* etc. as in 1765, *be-tween*. An exception, also found in 1765, is *pub-lic*.
- (vii) divide between two consonants (the C-C rule): *ton-gue*, *struc-ture*, *his-tory*, *phleg-matic*.

### *British books 1800 to 1850*

Five books selected to show the development of word-division boundaries after 1800 should be sufficient, for the discussion will concentrate on the main points.

In contrast to books of the 18th century and before, the books of the first half of the 19th century (and from then on up to the present time) do not preserve the boundary before or after the *st* and *ct* pairs, which was probably inherited from the old handwritten ligatures. In 1800 to 1850 we find divisions like *mys-terious*, *his-tory*, *pic-ture*.

Another difference in comparison with most of the earlier books is the strong adherence to the morphological division. While there had been tendencies towards the use of the boundary between morphemes before, especially with prefixes, in 1800 to 1850 we find a number of suffixes distinctly preserved, e.g. *giv-en*, *infirm-ity*, *inform-ant*, *assur-ance*, *prefer-ence*, *differ-ent*, *novel-ist*, *monk-ish*. The

verbal suffix *-ing* is separated quite freely, while the *-ed* suffix is usually not carried over. Only the first of the books, *1805*, contains a number of *ed*'s at the beginnings of lines, while there are very few cases of this in two books of the four remaining and no instances at all in the other two.

### *American books 1850 to 1900*

To introduce a new element in word-division boundaries we have chosen eleven books printed in the United States in the second half of the 19th century.

William G. Webster says in the preface to the 1866 revised edition of his father's *The Elementary Spelling Book*: "In Syllabication it has been thought best not to give the etymological division of the Quarto Dictionary, but to retain the old mode of Dr. Webster as best calculated to teach young scholars the true pronunciation of words." This means divisions like *democ-racy*, *anat-omy*, *mythol-ogy*, *chirog-raphy* etc. according to the rule that a short stressed vowel takes the following consonant (we shall refer to this rule as the SSVC rule). This rule guides division even in words where there is no clash with etymology: *hab-it* — *ha-lo*, *lim-it* — *limy* etc.

The SSVC rule is found to operate in nine out of eleven American books published in the second half of the 19th century and listed in the references below. (The two exceptions are *1888b* and *1890*.) The differences that do exist inside the group of nine are differences in the extent to which the SSVC rule operates, i.e. how far it gives way to other criteria, e.g. to the preservation of certain endings like *-sure*, *-tion*, *-gion* etc.

Etymology gives way to the SSVC rule not only in words of foreign origin but also in words of Germanic origin, e.g. *noth-ing*. Of the rules mentioned in the historical survey, we find still valid divisions like *be-tween*, *Alex-andria*, *obsta-cles*. As for the morphological boundary, there is no doubt about the division before *-ing*, with the now standard addition of the doubling consonant.

### *British books 1850 to 1900*

None of the eighteen books published by different British publishers in the second half of the 19th century uses the SSVC rule for word division. There are, however, a few cases of division after a short stressed vowel, even in the books of the first half of the 19th century: *Beck-et* (*1805*), *Thack-eray*, *reck-oning* (*1879a*), *Buck-ingham* (*1882*), *gen-eral*, *char-acter* (*1870*), *prob-ably* (*1890*, *1900*). These are very rare instances and partly explainable by the fact that *ck* is a digraph and does not occur at the beginning of English words (an aspect already mentioned here in connection with *x*).

Of the most frequent suffixes, *-ed* seems to be kept intact only very rarely, while *-ing*, *-able*, *-ance*, *-tion* are usually preserved.

One of the differences between American and British books of this period lies in the different frequency of division at the morphological boundary. The British books in the survey show a higher percentage of divisions at the morphological boundary than the American ones. The exact percentage is 72.3 in the British books and 63.2 in the American ones.

## SUMMARY

The paper shows the development of word-division rules in some English texts beginning with the Exeter Book. The main developments in the rules deciding the division boundaries are (i) the gradual disappearance of divisions related to handwritten ligatures, (ii) the increase in the use of the morphological boundary, (iii) the increase in the systematic use of the rules, (iv) the appearance of pronunciation as a criterion, especially the introduction of divisions like *trav-els* in American books.

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## K HISTORII DĚLENÍ SLOV V ANGLIČTINĚ

Dělení slov v angličtině se liší od dělení v jiných jazycích. Přitom existuje velmi málo popisů pravidel pro dělení a hlavním vodítkem je označení sylabifikace v heslech slovníků (především amerických). V příspěvku se sleduje dělení v anglických psaných a tištěných textech od 10. století a hledá se hierarchie hledisek určujících dělení (morfologie, etymologie, výslovnost a technická stránka tisku).

