

The Salamanca Corpus: "Dialects: and a Word  
about Improper Diphthongs". *Logonomia Anglica* (1619)

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ALEXANDER GILL'S  
LOGONOMIA ANGLICA  
(1619)  
PART II  
BIOGRAPHICAL AND  
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTIONS

NOTES

BY BROR DANIELSSON

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**VI. Dialects: and a word about Improper Diphtongs**

*There are six major dialects: the general, the Northern, the Southern, the Eastern, the Western, and the Poetic. I do not know (nor have I myself heard) all the idioms of these, but as my memory serves me, I shall say what I can. The use of ai for j is a Northern feature as in faier for fjer <ignis>, as is au for ou in gaun (or even geaun) for gown <toga>, and au for ü in waund for wünd **wound** <vulnus>. Northerners also often use ea for e, as meat for mēt <cibus>, and ea for o in beað for both <ambo>. Amongst speakers of my own dialect in Lincolnshire you can hear toaz and hoaz for tōz <digiti pedum> [toes] and hōz **hose** <caligae>, and Northerners will say kest and even kusun for kast <iactus>, fula for folōu, klōth for kloth <pannus>, and yet they say spokn for spōkn <dictus>, dūn for dun <factus>, tūm for tjm <tempus>, rjch for rich <dives>, ðōr for ðēr <illic>, brīks for briches <braccæ>, seln for self, hez for hath, aus for āslo, sud for shūld, J'l and Jst (or even ai'l, aist) for ðou wilt, ðou shalt, and for the rest, hi'l or hist, wil, you'l or*

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*youst, ðei'l, ðeist or ðei sal. In words with ai, they reject the i, thus pā for pai <solvo>, sā for sai <dico>, and sed for said. Instead of u and ü they have v, as gvd-kvk for gud kük <bonus coquus>. Also they [Northerners] have created several words for more familiar ones, such as strunt and runt for rump <cauda>, sark for shirt <camisia>, gang for go <ito>, hence gangrel <mendicus>, and even at this time they retain the ancient forms yed or yöd for went <ibam>.*

*Southerners use ü for i, as hü for hī <ille>; v for f, as vil for fil <impleo>, tu vech for fech <affero>, and on the contrary f for v, as fineger for vineger <acetum>, ficar for vicar <vicarius>. Also they use o instead of a, as ronk for rank <rancidus> or <luxurians> as an adjective; as a noun it means <ordines in acie>, or other things. For s they use z, as zing for sing <cano>. Also they say Ich for J <ego>, cham for I am <sum>, chil for J will <volo>, chi vör yi for I warant you <certum do>. In separating the elements of the diphtong ai they lengthen the a unpleasantly, thus päi <solvo>, and ðäi <illi>.*

*The Easterners, in the other hand, generally attenuate their speech, and say fir for fjer <ignis>, kiver for kuver <tegmen>; also they use ea for a, as to deans for dans <saltare>; v for f, as velōu for felōu <socius>; z for s, as zai for sai <dicito>. Also our fashionable ladies (πυγιστόλοι 'with trailing dresses') particularly affect a thin voice which so diminishes all sounds that they seem to tremble at a and o as much as Appius Claudius did at z. Thus our fashionable ladies do not buy laun and kāmbrīk <sendonis species>, but lēn and kembrik, do not eat kāpn <caponem> but kēpn and almost kīpn. Nor do they ever feed on bucherz mēt **butchers meate** <carnem a lanijs>, but biccherz mīt. And since all of them are zintlimin not zentlwimen <matronae nobiles>, they do not call servants maidz but mēdz. Yet what I have said about a I withdraw, for when ô ought to be heard forcibly, they use instead a, and thus constantly chirp at me I pre ya gī yar skalerz liv ta plē for I prai you giv yūr skolarz lēv to plai <quaeso concede tuis discipulis venian ludendi>.*

*But of all the dialects the Western has the most barbarous flavour, particularly if you listen to rustic people from Somerset, for it is easily possible to doubt whether they are*

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speaking English or some foreign language. For even now they still use certain ancient sounds, as sax for <cultro>, nem or nim for <accipe>, and English words are replaced by their own, as lax for <parte>, toit for <sedili>, etc. Furthermore they corrupt proper words, some in meaning, some in pronunciation, as wīz wai for <fraeno>, wītpot for <farcimine>, ha vang <huc projice> or even <arripe projectum>; also, hī vangd tu mi at ðe vant <in baptisterio pro me suscepit>, zit am <sede>, zadrauh for assay ðerof <gusta>, hj iz gön avisht for a fishing <abiit piscatum>. Again, they say throttin for thirtin '13', narger for naröuer <angustior>, zorger for mör soröuful <tristior>. Before past participles beginning with a consonant they put an i, as ivrör for frözn <gelu concretus>, hav yi idü for dun <perfecisti?>. Also they have this peculiarity, that they alter certain irregular nouns of either number ending in z in order to distinguish the number, e.g. hooz **hose** (singular and plural) <caliga> or <caligae> with them remains as höz in the singular, but is hözn in the plural, and pëz (both <pisum> and <pisa> has the plural form pëzn.

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The "general" dialect is sometimes ambiguous, and you will hear inuf or inuh **inough** <satis>, ðai or ðei **they** <illi>, to flit or to flöt **floate** <aquae innatare>, hâlberd, halberd or hölberd <bipennis>, toil or tüil, soil or süil, bjld, bild, bvld, as has been already mentioned.

Of all writers, only poets are permitted to use dialects, yet they abstain from using them (except the general use), unless they use the Northern dialect, quite frequently for the purpose of rhythm or attractiveness, since that dialect is the most delightful, the most ancient, the purest, and approximates most nearly to the speech of our ancestors. But because everyone defends the irregularity of his one dialect solely on the grounds of licence, more will be said about that when we deal with prosody.

What I say here regarding the dialects, you must realise, refers only to country people, since among persons of genteel character and cultured upbringing, there is but one universal speech, in pronunciation and meaning. Regarding that venomous and disgusting ulcer to our nation [i. e. cant] I am embarrassed to say anything at all. For that detestable scum of wandering vagabonds speak no proper dialect but a cant jargon which no punishment by law will ever repress, until its proponents are crucified by the magistrates, acting under a public edict. But since this entire jargon, together with the filthy language of criminals, has been described in a strange book, and because it offers not benefit to foreigners, I shall exclude it from my discussion.