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Cut from the same CLOTH? Variation and change in the CLOTH lexical set

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ABSTRACT

With reference to what Wells (1982) subsequently termed the cloth set in English, Barbara Strang stated “[I]t is difficult to know how far the recent history of words of the type *cloth*, *lost*, *cross*, *off* represents sound-change, and how far conflict of analogies and varieties” (1970: 85). Strang is here referring to the fact that, like the change from ME short *a* to present-day RP /ɑː/ in Wells’s BATH set, the lengthening of ME short *o* to /ɔː/ in CLOTH words begins in the late seventeenth century and in pre-fricative environment, yet CLOTH words have subsequently reverted to the short vowel in RP whilst BATH words have not. Furthermore, CLOTH words have /ɔː/ in US English, whilst BATH words have /ɑː/.

In this study, we discuss the results of an examination of entries for all the words in Wells’s CLOTH set that appear in a range of eighteenth-century pronouncing dictionaries, along with metalinguistic comments on the pronunciation of these words from the same dictionaries. The dictionaries chosen cover approximately a fifty-year period, the second half of the eighteenth century, and include dictionaries written by authors from various parts of the British Isles and from America. This reveals the extent and nature of the “conflict of analogies and varieties” alluded to by Strang.

1. Introduction

The history and present-day distribution of variants in what Wells (1982) calls the CLOTH lexical set are, to say the least, somewhat complicated. The majority of words in this set would have had a short *o* in Middle English, which could be transcribed as /ɒ/. Subsequently, they were subjected to changes in quality, from /ɒ/ to /ɔ/ and of quantity, from /ɔ/ to /ɔː/ but, at least in mainstream RP, the quantitative change appears to have been reversed in the course of the

twentieth century. Different editions of Daniel Jones's *English Pronouncing Dictionary* track this change: in the 1937 edition the variant /ɔ:/ is given as the more usual pronunciation in RP for the vowel in words such as *off*, with /ɒ/ as an alternative, but in the 1967 edition edited by Gimson, /ɒ/ is presented as the more usual RP variant, with /ɔ:/ described as "old-fashioned" (1967: 349). The lengthened variant is increasingly indexed as not only old-fashioned but associated with older aristocrats or even royalty. As early as 1982, Wells was able to state that "the use of /ɔ:/ in CLOTH is perceived as a laughable archaism of "affected" or aristocratic U-RP" (1982: 234) and Hughes et al. describe pronunciations of words such as "*off, cross, across, soft, cloth*" as "now very rare among RP speakers as a whole and [...] generally considered affected" (2012: 50). Popular representations of these variants likewise mark them out as different from the norm. The political cartoonist Steve Bell regularly uses representations of this variant as a stereotype of "royal" English. An example of this can be found in the cartoon published in the *Guardian* on 18th June 2012. In this cartoon, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, asks the Queen for an earldom, to which she replies "I warn you, it could **corst**" and "Can you deliver **bedgers orff** one's land by Christmas?"¹. The semi-phonetic spelling of the words in bold, along with the use of the impersonal "one" with first-person reference, represent the most salient stereotypes of "royal" speech, the ultimate example of Wells's "aristocratic U-RP". The use of <e> in "bedgers" represents a raised variant of /a/, whilst the <or> spelling in "orff" and "corst" indicates /ɔ:/. The very fact that these variants are represented in semi-phonetic spelling singles them out as different from "normal" RP and contributes to their enregisterment as stereotypical of royal speech.

What appears to have happened in the CLOTH set in RP is a reversal in the twentieth century of an earlier lengthening. Barber explains this as follows:

The fact is, this change of ɔ: to ɒ is not a phonemic change going on at the present time: a change took place almost two centuries ago in certain styles of speech, and two kinds of form, one with a long vowel and one with a short, have existed side by side in the language ever since; what is happening now is that one style is becoming fashionable at the expense of the other [...]. This is the kind of thing that happens when social groups go up or down in the world, and it is possible that

¹ See www.belltoons.co.uk/bellworks/index.php/if/2012/6903-180612_EARLDOM, accessed 30th January 2015.

the spread of the *ɒ*-forms in the present century is the result of social changes, especially the rise of democracy. (1964: 43)

Strang presents this reversal as an example of the complexity of phonological variation and change in Late Modern English, stating that “[I]t is difficult to know how far the recent history of words of the type *cloth*, *lost*, *cross*, *off* represents sound-change, and how far conflict of analogies and varieties” (1970: 85). By “sound change”, Strang means regular sound change of the “neogrammarian” type, and, indeed, Lass describes the history of the CLOTH set as “a very complex and unsatisfactory history (at least if one is trying to operate in Neogrammarian mode)” (2000: 228). In this paper, we examine detailed evidence from eight eighteenth-century pronouncing dictionaries and discover that long and short variants of words in the CLOTH set have existed side by side for over 300 years. The changes observed represent, not the reversal of a merger but shifts in the prestige of these variants. In Section 2, we discuss the membership of the CLOTH set and the sound changes involved. Section 3 outlines existing scholarship on the CLOTH set in the Late Modern period, whilst Section 4 sets out the findings from our detailed and systematic comparison of eight eighteenth-century sources. Finally, Section 5 looks at the evidence for pronunciation of words in the CLOTH set in nineteenth and early twentieth-century RP and presents our conclusions.

2. The CLOTH set

Wells divides his CLOTH set into two major subsets as set out in Figure 1: subset *a*, consisting of words in which both conservative RP and General American English have the same vowel as in the THOUGHT lexical set, and subset *b*, for which General American English has the vowel of THOUGHT, but, according to Wells, RP “never had” this pronunciation.

| <i>A</i> | <i>B</i> |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off, cough, trough, broth, froth, cross, across, loss, floss, toss, fosse, doss • Soft, croft, lost, oft, cost, frost, lost, • Often, soften, lofty • Australia, Austria, Austen, Austin, gone | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moth, boss, gloss, joss, moss, Ross, • Long, strong, wrong, gong, song, thong, tongs, throng, • Accost, coffee, coffer, coffin, offer, office, officer, glossy, foster, Boston, Gloucester, sausage • wash |

Figure 1. The CLOTH set (after Wells 1982: 136-137)

Wells's CLOTH set also includes a group *c*, which involves words with post-vocalic /r/. The history of this subset is less complicated so we will not be considering these words. Indeed, as the examples from Steve Bell in Section 1 demonstrate, the spelling <or> is used to indicate the THOUGHT vowel, which suggests that, at least for a British readership, the pronunciation with /ɔ:/ is taken for granted in group *c* words. The examples provided by Wells are not intended to give a complete inventory of words in a lexical set, but to provide examples of the types of phonological environments in which the vowel concerned occurs and the different historical origins of the words. Most of the words in the CLOTH set would have had the short *o* in Middle English, but *wash* had short *a*; some words, such as *coffee*, *Australia*, did not exist in Middle English; and others had ME *au* (*sausage*) or short *a* (*wash*). In the latter two cases, monophthongization of ME *au* and rounding of ME *a* after /w/ resulted in these words having the same vowel as *off*, *soft* etc. and so becoming subject to the same sound changes.

All the words in subset *a* except *gone*, and the majority of words in subset *b* have a voiceless fricative following the vowel and involve a process which Wells (1982: 136) calls "pre-fricative lengthening". This sound change affects ME *ō* (along with monophthongized reflexes of ME *au*) and ME *ǣ* in parallel and in both cases the first evidence for lengthening appears in the late seventeenth century, as reported by Dobson:

The only evidence comes from Cooper, who shows lengthening in *lost*, *frost*, and in other words before *st*, and in *off*, but not before final *s* in *loss*; his evidence on the lengthening of ME *ō* and ME *ǣ* before voiceless spirants is thus exactly parallel [...]. Cooper further shows clearly that the lengthened sound developed from ME *ō* was identical with the monophthong developed from ME *au*. (Dobson 1957: 527)

Dobson goes on to note that "lengthening occurs occasionally in StE before other front consonants" including [ʃ] and [n] and that "when a bilabial or labiodental (especially [w]) precedes ME *ǣ*, there is commonly rounding and retraction to [p:]" (1957: 529). Although Dobson finds no evidence for the lengthened vowel in *gone* in his sources, he notes this as a variant in the English of his own time. For *wash*, which has two environmental factors favouring lengthening, he finds evidence for [p:] in Daines (1640) and in the anonymous *Writing Scholar's Companion* (1695). This account covers all the words in subset *a* and all in subset *b* except for those in which the vowel is followed by /ŋ/. Dobson includes *tong* and *wrong* in a set of words for which

“the dialects show lengthening in cases for which there is no StE evidence” (1957: 533).

By the end of the seventeenth century there is thus evidence that the process of pre-fricative lengthening had begun, but only regularly before /st/ and /f/. To account for the inclusion of *broth*, *froth*, *cross*, *across*, *loss*, *floss*, *toss*, *fosse*, and *doss* in Wells’s subset *a*, the lengthening must have been extended to other environments after 1700. In the next section, we discuss the accounts of pre-fricative lengthening in Late Modern English presented by MacMahon (1998) and Lass (2000) before going on to present our own findings in Section 4.

3. The CLOTH set in Late Modern English

Although his account deals only with seventeenth-century evidence for pre-fricative lengthening, Dobson writes that “the unlengthened pronunciation continued in use beside the new lengthened one, for which there is a considerable body of eighteenth-century evidence” (1957: 528). He is somewhat dismissive of Walker’s (1791) “evidence of a reaction against the lengthened pronunciation”, noting that “the lengthened pronunciation [...] remained common throughout the nineteenth century” (1957: 528). A more thorough discussion of pre-fricative lengthening in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is provided by MacMahon (1998: 433-438), who reports the conclusions drawn by Ward (1952: 95-97), based on “a close examination of words containing “short a” and “short o” (and potentially “long a” and long “o”) in the works of ten orthöepists from the mid-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth centuries” (MacMahon 1998: 432-433)². MacMahon summarises Ward’s points as follows:

The lengthened vowels became more and more common in ‘good’ speech, until by 1784 and the publication of Nares’ *Elements of Orthoepy*, they were regarded as the norm. However, Sheridan’s usages (1780) differ markedly from those of Nares.

By the end of the century, there was a limited tendency to revert to the short sounds – possibly to achieve, or avoid, a sense of affectation.

² The orthöepists selected by Ward were: Ash, Batchelor, Buchanan, Elphinston, Johnston, Kenrick, Nares, Sheridan, Tiffin and Walker.

There was a difference in the contexts in which the lengthened vowels occurred. Lengthening was frequent before word-final /f/, /θ/, and /fC#/, sC#/. Less common was lengthening before inter-vocalic /f/, /θ/, and /s/. (Ward 1952: 95-7, cited in MacMahon 1998: 433)

MacMahon then draws on a wider range of Late Modern English sources to account for the distribution of long and short variants. Noting that there is a “lack of any clear preference” for long or short variants of CLOTH words, MacMahon nevertheless considers it “possible to discern a certain number of patterns” with the proviso that “in the absence of a fully comprehensive survey of all available sources” these “should be treated as provisional” (1998: 433). We have summarised MacMahon’s account of environments favouring long and short variants respectively in Figures 2 and 3 below.

Figure 2 shows evidence for lengthening in environments not attested by Dobson’s seventeenth-century sources, which would indicate an extension of the sound change, but Figure 3 suggests a reversal of the change before /f/ and /st/, precisely the environments in which Cooper (1687) showed lengthening. In his account of pre-fricative lengthening, Lass refers to “a curious see-saw development” by which “from the 1680s to the 1780s the use of the lengthened vowels expands; in the 1780s -90s a reaction sets in” (2000: 225). This “reaction” noted by Ward in the extract cited above as “a limited tendency to revert to the short sounds” is articulated by Walker as follows:

What was observed of the *a*, when followed by a liquid and a mute, may be observed of the *o* with equal justness. This letter, like *a*, has a tendency to lengthen, when followed by a liquid and another consonant, or by *s*, *ss* or *s* and a mute. But this length of *o* in this position, seems every day growing more and more vulgar: and as it would be gross to a degree to sound the *a* in *castle*, *mask* and *plant*, like that in *palm*, *psalm*, &c. so it would be equally exceptionable to pronounce the *o* in *moss*, *dross* and *frost*, as if written *mawse*, *drawse* and *frawst*. (Walker 1791: 22)

Walker here specifies that the lengthened vowel is “every day growing more and more vulgar” in two of the environments included in Figure 3: before final /s/ and before /st/. His choice of words implies that the lengthened pronunciation was not always considered vulgar and that the reaction against this lengthening was, in 1791, a change in progress. The additional evidence provided by MacMahon (see above) shows that Dobson was

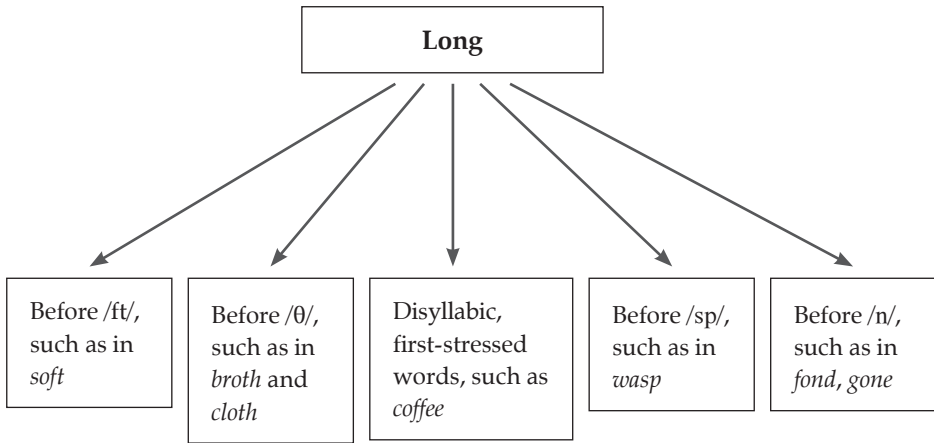


Figure 2. Environments in which long variants are favoured in Late Modern English (after MacMahon 1998: 433-438)

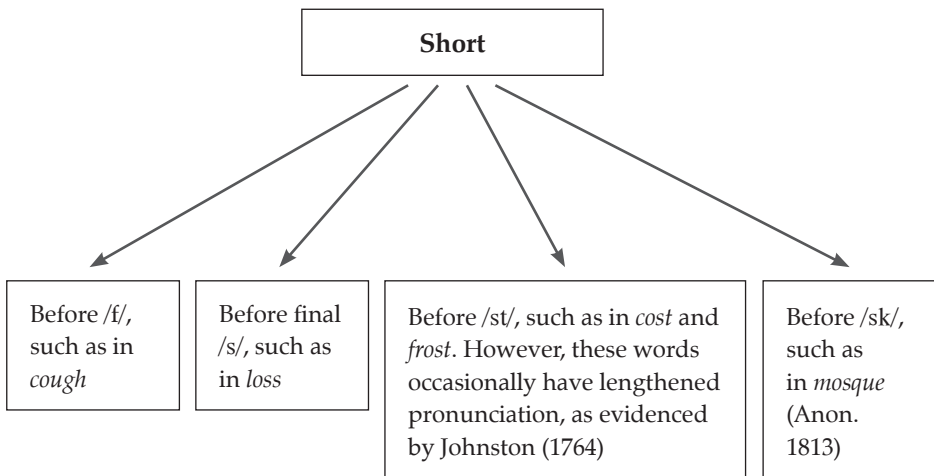


Figure 3. Environments in which short variants are favoured in Late Modern English (after MacMahon 1998: 433-438)

wrong to dismiss Walker's comment since other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources also favoured the short variant in these environments. *Vulgar* is a keyword for Walker: this and its derivatives such as *vulgarly*, *vulgarity* occur no less than 94 times in the remarks which accompany the entries in his *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary*, always referring to the speech of the lower classes. What Walker is saying in the above citation is that the

lengthened pronunciation, though formerly acceptable, was increasingly being associated with lower-class speech. Given that these variants are now indexed as “royal”, Lass’s description of the “see-saw development” of pre-fricative lengthening seems particularly apt. In the next section, we revisit the eighteenth-century evidence by means of a systematic comparison of entries for words in the CLOTH set in eight eighteenth-century sources.

4. Systematic comparison of eight eighteenth-century sources.

The data sources used for our study are listed in Table 1. These sources were selected to provide a chronological spread through the second half of the eighteenth century. All the sources are pronouncing dictionaries, because, as noted in Beal (1999: 96), these provide evidence for variation across the entire lexicon, whereas grammars and other orthoepical works provide isolated examples.

Table 1. Sources used for comparison of pronunciations of words in the CLOTH set

| Author | Title | Date of publication | Author’s birthplace |
|----------|---|---------------------|---------------------|
| Johnson | <i>Pronouncing and Spelling Dictionary</i> | 1764 | unknown |
| Kenrick | <i>New Dictionary of the English Language</i> | 1773 | Hemel Hempstead |
| Perry | <i>Royal Standard English Dictionary</i> | 1775 | Scotland |
| Spence | <i>Grand Repository of the English Language</i> | 1775 | Newcastle |
| Sheridan | <i>General Dictionary of the English Language</i> | 1780 | Dublin/ Quilca |
| Walker | <i>Critical Pronouncing Dictionary</i> | 1791 | London |
| Jones | <i>Sheridan Improved</i> | 1797 | London |
| Scott | <i>A New Spelling, Pronouncing and Explanatory Dictionary</i> | 1799 | Scotland |

Table 1 shows the author and title of each dictionary used for our study, along with the date of publication and, where known, the author’s birthplace. It is worth noting that only Walker and Jones were born in London and, whilst Kenrick’s birthplace is close to London, all the other authors except Johnston, whose birthplace is not known, would have been considered “provincial”, hailing as they did from Scotland, Ireland, and the far north of England. Although all these authors provided what they considered to

be “correct” pronunciations, our analysis may well demonstrate diatopic as well as diachronic variation (see Beal 1999: 105-111 for a comparable account of pre-fricative lengthening in BATH words).

Since these dictionaries vary in size, rather than selecting all words which could potentially belong to the CLOTH set, we decided to confine our comparison to those words provided by Wells (1982: 136-137) as examples of subsets *a* and *b* of the CLOTH set, or at least as many of these as appear in eighteenth-century dictionaries. This study is also intended as a pilot for the *Eighteenth-century English Phonology* database project (Beal – Sen 2014), which will provide a full account of eighteenth-century English phonology in the form of IPA Unicode transcriptions of all entries corresponding to Wells’s examples for all his keywords³. Of course, eighteenth-century authors did not have access to IPA: in order to convey their recommended pronunciations, they used various methods, ranging from various types of diacritics, the most popular of which were the superscripted numbers used by Kenrick (1773), Sheridan (1780) and Walker (1791), to respelling in idiosyncratic phonetic alphabets such as that devised by Spence (1775). Walker’s system is illustrated in Figure 4 and Spence’s in Figure 5 below.

A Table of the Simple and Diphthongal Vowels referred to by the Figures over the Letters in this Dictionary.

| ENGLISH SOUNDS. | FRENCH SOUNDS. |
|---|---|
| 1. \hat{a} . The long slender English <i>a</i> , as in <i>fâ-te</i> , <i>pâ-per</i> , &c. (73) - - - | \hat{a} in <i>fâ-te</i> , <i>épîe</i> . |
| 2. \hat{a} . The long Italian <i>a</i> , as in <i>fâ-ther</i> , <i>pa-pâ</i> , <i>mam-mâ</i> , (77) - - - | <i>a</i> in <i>fable</i> , <i>rable</i> . |
| 3. \hat{a} . The broad German <i>a</i> , as in <i>fâll</i> , <i>wâll</i> , <i>wâ-ter</i> , (83) - - - | \hat{a} in <i>âge</i> , <i>Châlons</i> . |
| 4. \hat{a} . The short found of this Italian <i>a</i> , as in <i>fât</i> , <i>mât</i> , <i>mâr-ry</i> , (81) - - - | <i>a</i> in <i>fat</i> , <i>matin</i> . |
| 1. \hat{e} . The long <i>e</i> , as in <i>mê</i> , <i>hêre</i> , <i>mê-tre</i> , <i>mê-dium</i> , (93) - - - | \hat{e} in <i>mitre</i> , <i>épître</i> . |
| 2. \hat{e} . The short <i>e</i> , as in <i>mêt</i> , <i>lêt</i> , <i>gêt</i> , (95) - - - | <i>e</i> in <i>mette</i> , <i>nette</i> . |
| 1. \hat{i} . The long diphthongal <i>i</i> , as in <i>plne</i> , <i>tl-tle</i> , (105) - - - | \hat{e} in <i>laïque</i> , <i>naif</i> . |
| 2. \hat{i} . The short simple <i>i</i> , as in <i>pîn</i> , <i>tl-tle</i> , (107) - - - | \hat{i} in <i>inné</i> , <i>titre</i> . |
| 1. \hat{o} . The long open <i>o</i> , as in <i>nô</i> , <i>nôte</i> , <i>nô-tice</i> , (162) - - - | \hat{o} in <i>globe</i> , <i>lobe</i> . |
| 2. \hat{o} . The long close <i>o</i> , as in <i>môve</i> , <i>prôve</i> , (164) - - - | \hat{o} in <i>mouvoir</i> , <i>pouvoir</i> . |
| 3. \hat{o} . The long broad <i>o</i> , as in <i>nôr</i> , <i>fôr</i> , <i>ôr</i> ; like the broad \hat{a} , (167) - - - | \hat{o} in <i>or</i> , <i>for</i> , <i>encor</i> . |
| 4. \hat{o} . The short broad <i>o</i> , as in <i>nôt</i> , <i>hôt</i> , <i>gôt</i> , (163) - - - | \hat{o} in <i>holle</i> , <i>colle</i> . |
| 1. \hat{u} . The long diphthongal <i>u</i> , as in <i>tôbe</i> , <i>cû-pid</i> , (171) - - - | \hat{e} in <i>Cloutat</i> , <i>chourme</i> . |
| 2. \hat{u} . The short simple <i>u</i> , as in <i>tâp</i> , <i>câp</i> , <i>sâp</i> , (172) - - - | \hat{e} in <i>neuf</i> , <i>veuf</i> . |
| 3. \hat{u} . The middle or obtuse <i>u</i> , as in <i>bâll</i> , <i>fâll</i> , <i>pâll</i> , (173) - - - | \hat{o} in <i>boule</i> , <i>foule</i> , <i>poule</i> . |
| \hat{o} . The long broad \hat{o} , and the short \hat{i} , as in \hat{o} il, (200) - - - | \hat{o} in <i>cyclade</i> , <i>heroïque</i> . |
| \hat{o} . The long broad \hat{o} , and the middle obtuse \hat{u} , as in <i>thôd</i> , <i>pôdand</i> , (313) \hat{a} in <i>Adâs</i> . | |

Figure 4. Walker’s “Table of the Simple and Diphthongal Vowels”

³ This project concerns some 1,700 words in all, taken from all available eighteenth-century pronouncing dictionaries; it will include bio-bibliographical information on the authors and the dictionaries, in addition to metalinguistic data in the form of comments such as that cited from Walker above.

The NEW ALPHABET.

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| <p><i>Capitals. Letters.</i></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>A</td><td>ā</td><td>as in mane, (MAN)</td></tr> <tr><td>À</td><td>â</td><td>as in man, (MAN)</td></tr> <tr><td>À</td><td>ah</td><td>as in father, (FAHIR)</td></tr> <tr><td>À</td><td>au</td><td>as in wall, (WÀUL)</td></tr> <tr><td>B</td><td>ib or bī</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>D</td><td>id or dī</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>ē</td><td>as in mete, (MET)</td></tr> <tr><td>F</td><td>ē</td><td>as in met, (MET)</td></tr> <tr><td>F</td><td>if</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>G</td><td>ig or gī</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>H</td><td>hā</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>I</td><td>ī</td><td>as in site, (SIT)</td></tr> <tr><td>İ</td><td>Y</td><td>as in sit, (SIT)</td></tr> <tr><td>J</td><td>idge or jī</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>K</td><td>ik or kī</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>L</td><td>il</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>M</td><td>im</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>in</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>O</td><td>ō</td><td>as in note, (NOT)</td></tr> <tr><td>C</td><td>ō</td><td>as in not, (NCT)</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>ip or pī</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>R</td><td>ir</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>ifs</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>T</td><td>it or tī</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>U</td><td>ū</td><td>as in tune, (TUN)</td></tr> <tr><td>U</td><td>ū</td><td>as in tun, (TUN)</td></tr> <tr><td>V</td><td>iv</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>wī</td><td>as in way, (WA)</td></tr> </table> | A | ā | as in mane, (MAN) | À | â | as in man, (MAN) | À | ah | as in father, (FAHIR) | À | au | as in wall, (WÀUL) | B | ib or bī | | D | id or dī | | E | ē | as in mete, (MET) | F | ē | as in met, (MET) | F | if | | G | ig or gī | | H | hā | | I | ī | as in site, (SIT) | İ | Y | as in sit, (SIT) | J | idge or jī | | K | ik or kī | | L | il | | M | im | | N | in | | O | ō | as in note, (NOT) | C | ō | as in not, (NCT) | P | ip or pī | | R | ir | | S | ifs | | T | it or tī | | U | ū | as in tune, (TUN) | U | ū | as in tun, (TUN) | V | iv | | W | wī | as in way, (WA) | <p><i>Capitals. Small Names. Letters.</i></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr><td>Y</td><td>yī</td><td>as in young, (YUNG)</td></tr> <tr><td>Z</td><td>z</td><td>iz</td></tr> <tr><td>∞</td><td>oo</td><td>as in moon, (MOON)</td></tr> <tr><td>∞</td><td>oi</td><td>as in oil, (OIL)</td></tr> <tr><td>∞</td><td>ou</td><td>as in house, (HOUSE)</td></tr> <tr><td>∞</td><td>ish</td><td>as in shell, (SHELL)</td></tr> <tr><td>∞</td><td>izh</td><td>as in vision, (VISION)</td></tr> <tr><td>∞</td><td>itch</td><td>as in child, (CHILD)</td></tr> <tr><td>∞</td><td>ith</td><td>as in think, (THINK)</td></tr> <tr><td>∞</td><td>ith</td><td>as in they, (THEY)</td></tr> <tr><td>∞</td><td>whī</td><td>as in which, (WHICH)</td></tr> <tr><td>∞</td><td>ing</td><td>as in loving, (LOVING)</td></tr> </table> <p>*** The vowels in this alphabet are A À Ä Å Ö Ü ∞ ∞ ∞; and the consonants B D F G H J K L M N P R S T V W Y Z Š Ź Œ Œ H W NG.</p> <p>To read what is printed in this alphabet, nothing is required but to apply the same sound immutably to each character (in whatever position) that the alphabet directs.</p> <p>N. B. In the following work, n. stand: for name, or substantive;—q. for quality, or adjective;—v. for verb;—part. for participle;—ad. for adverb;—conj. for conjunction;—prep. for preposition;—interj. for interjection.</p> | Y | yī | as in young, (YUNG) | Z | z | iz | ∞ | oo | as in moon, (MOON) | ∞ | oi | as in oil, (OIL) | ∞ | ou | as in house, (HOUSE) | ∞ | ish | as in shell, (SHELL) | ∞ | izh | as in vision, (VISION) | ∞ | itch | as in child, (CHILD) | ∞ | ith | as in think, (THINK) | ∞ | ith | as in they, (THEY) | ∞ | whī | as in which, (WHICH) | ∞ | ing | as in loving, (LOVING) |
| A | ā | as in mane, (MAN) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| À | â | as in man, (MAN) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| À | ah | as in father, (FAHIR) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| À | au | as in wall, (WÀUL) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B | ib or bī | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| D | id or dī | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| E | ē | as in mete, (MET) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| F | ē | as in met, (MET) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| F | if | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| G | ig or gī | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| H | hā | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I | ī | as in site, (SIT) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| İ | Y | as in sit, (SIT) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| J | idge or jī | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| K | ik or kī | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| L | il | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| M | im | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| N | in | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| O | ō | as in note, (NOT) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| C | ō | as in not, (NCT) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| P | ip or pī | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| R | ir | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| S | ifs | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| T | it or tī | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| U | ū | as in tune, (TUN) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| U | ū | as in tun, (TUN) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| V | iv | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| W | wī | as in way, (WA) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Y | yī | as in young, (YUNG) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Z | z | iz | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ∞ | oo | as in moon, (MOON) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ∞ | oi | as in oil, (OIL) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ∞ | ou | as in house, (HOUSE) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ∞ | ish | as in shell, (SHELL) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ∞ | izh | as in vision, (VISION) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ∞ | itch | as in child, (CHILD) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ∞ | ith | as in think, (THINK) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ∞ | ith | as in they, (THEY) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ∞ | whī | as in which, (WHICH) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ∞ | ing | as in loving, (LOVING) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Figure 5. Spence's "New Alphabet"

A comparison of Figures 4 and 5 reveals that Spence's system of respelling is much more phonemic than Walker's. As Spence himself claims "nothing is required but to apply the same sound immutably to each character" in his system: thus words in the CLOTH set are transcribed with *U* if a long pronunciation is intended or *C* if a short one is, regardless of the spelling in traditional orthography. Walker, on the other hand, whilst noting that "the long broad *o*" transcribed in his system with a superscript 3 is "like the broad *a*", respells words pronounced /ɔ:/ <a³> or <o³> according to whether they have <a> or <o> in conventional orthography. Since the authors listed in Table 1 have so many different ways of representing the long and short variants of CLOTH words, we have simply noted in each case whether the word has a recommended pronunciation that is long or short. The full list of words from Wells's CLOTH subsets *a* and *b* as pronounced according to the dictionaries listed in Figure 4 can be found in the Appendix at the end of this paper.

Our findings are summarised in Table 2, and Figure 6 below. Table 2 shows the environments in which long or short variants occur in each source, whilst Figure 6 shows the number of short and long tokens in each source.

Table 2. Distribution of long and short variants by phonetic environment

| Source | Long before the following sounds: | Short before the following sounds: |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Johnston (1764) | /θ/, /s/, /ft/, /st/, /ʃ/. <i>sausage</i> | /f/, /n/, /ŋ/. |
| Kenrick (1773) | /f/, /θ/, /s/, /ft/, /st/. | /f/, /s/, /n/, /ŋ/, /ʃ/. |
| Perry (1775) | /ʃ/. | /f/, /θ/, /s/, /ft/, /st/, /n/, /ŋ/. |
| Spence (1775) | /ʃ/. <i>sausage</i> | /f/, /θ/, /s/, /ft/, /st/, /ŋ/. |
| Sheridan (1780) | /θ/, /ft/. | /f/, /θ/, /s/, /st/, /n/, /ŋ/, /ʃ/. |
| Walker (1791) | /f/. | /θ/, /s/, /ft/, /st/, /n/, /ŋ/, /ʃ/. |
| Jones (1797) | /f/, /θ/, /ft/. | /f/, /θ/, /s/, /ft/, /st/, /n/, /ŋ/, /ʃ/. |
| Scott (1799) | /ʃ/. | /f/, /θ/, /s/, /ft/, /st/, /ŋ/. |

Table 2 shows a reduction after 1775 in the number of environments in which long variants occur. Johnston and Kenrick have long variants in almost all pre-fricative environments, though for Johnston only short variants occur before /f/ and for Kenrick both short and long variants occur before /f/ and /s/, whilst *wash* has a short vowel. Perry and Spence in 1775 and Scott in 1799 effectively have the long vowel only in *wash* (and, for Spence, in *sausage*), whilst Sheridan, Walker and Jones all have a restricted range of environments in which long variants occur. The diachronic trend is clearly towards an increasing restriction of long environments, but Perry and Spence, both published in 1775, appear advanced compared to Sheridan and Jones. Diatopic variation may well be a factor here, as Perry, Spence and Scott are all “northern” authors: Perry and Scott having been born in Scotland and Spence in Newcastle. It could well be the case, as with the parallel pre-fricative lengthening in the BATH set, that the lengthening in CLOTH words from Wells’s subsets *a* and *b* never happened in the north of England or in Scotland.

When we consider the overall numbers of long and short variants in the sources examined, as shown in Figure 6, the trend towards a decline in long variants is even clearer. Only Johnston, the earliest of our sources, has noticeably more long than short tokens. Kenrick’s figures show a decline in the number of long tokens, but these are still slightly in the majority. There is then a sharp plunge, with Perry having only one long token and Spence only two, but, as we have noted above, this may be due to their northern origin.

However, the decline in long tokens continues from Sheridan (1780) onwards, with no other source reaching double figures for short tokens. This confirms Lass's statement that "in the 1780s -90s a reaction sets in" (2000: 225), but suggests that the expansion of lengthened variants had ceased before 1780.

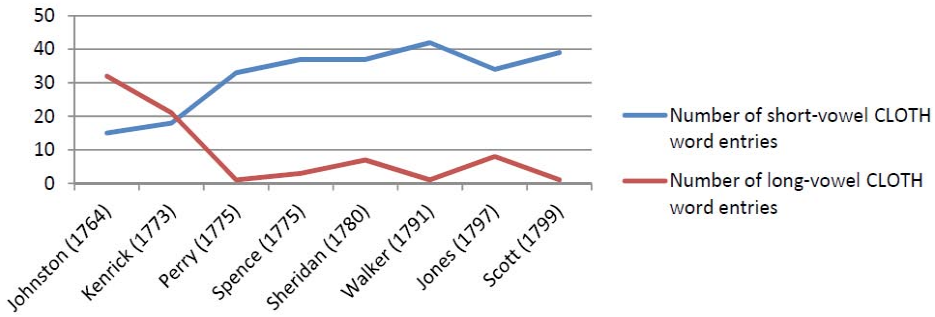


Figure 6. Numbers of long and short variants in each source

Figure 7 shows the overall percentages of short tokens in all of the sources examined for each phonetic environment. What is immediately apparent here is that in every environment, at least half of the tokens are short, or in other words, evidence from the second half of the eighteenth century suggests that, as far as words in Wells's CLOTH subsets *a* and *b* are concerned, no environment favours lengthening.

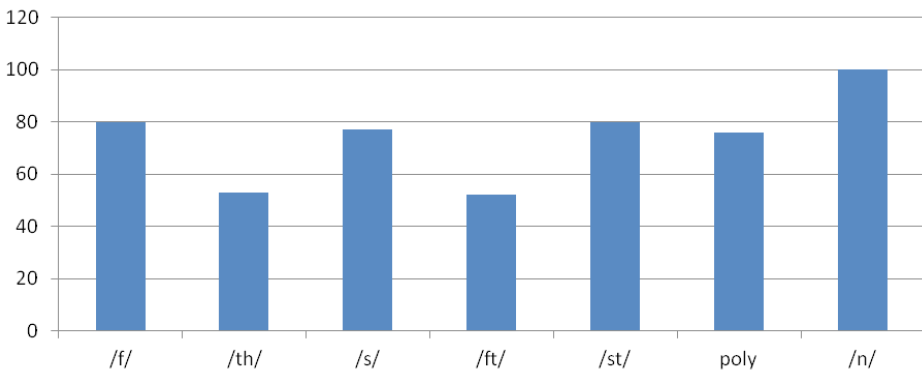


Figure 7. Overall percentages of short tokens of CLOTH words in eight eighteenth-century sources ("poly" = polysyllabic words)

In Figures 8 and 9 we have superimposed the percentages from Figure 7 onto the representations of MacMahon's summary of environments favouring long or short variants as shown in Figures 2 and 3 above.

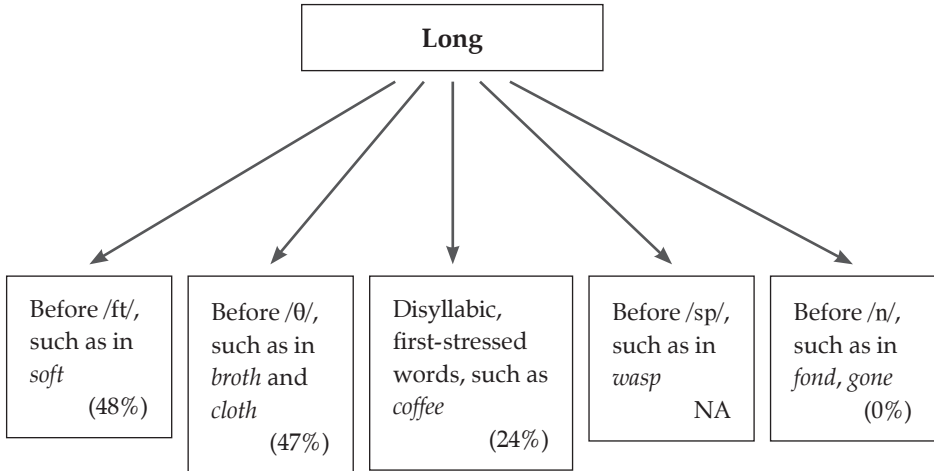


Figure 8. Percentages of long tokens of CLOTH words in eight eighteenth-century sources for environment favouring long tokens according to MacMahon (1998)

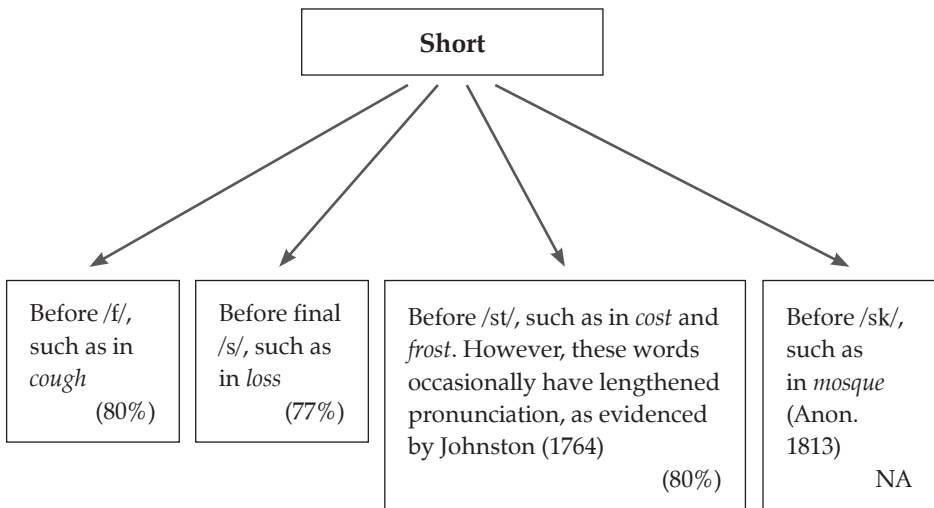


Figure 9. Percentages of short tokens of CLOTH words in eight eighteenth-century sources for environment favouring short tokens according to MacMahon (1998)

Whilst Figure 9 reveals that MacMahon's identification of environments favouring short variants is robust, with figures of 77% and 80% short tokens in these environments in the sources studied here, Figure 8 suggests that MacMahon's summary over-emphasises the predominance of long tokens in the environments specified there, as the highest proportion of these are in the environments /-ft/ and /θ/ with 48% and 47% long tokens respectively.

Of course, the differences between our findings and MacMahon's could well be explained by our choice of different sources and/or the fact that we have concentrated on a different set of tokens. Our findings support the comments made by Ward (1952), MacMahon (1998) and Lass (2000) concerning the decline of lengthened variants in the late eighteenth century, but go further in revealing that in no source after 1773 are long variants in the majority, and in no single environment are they in the majority in our data overall. Since Cooper's (1687) evidence shows only a few examples of lengthening in a restricted number of environments, we conclude that the CLOTH set has always been variable in RP and its predecessors, at least with regard to Wells's subsets *a* and *b*. In the next section, we briefly discuss the later history of the CLOTH set before concluding with the implications of our findings.

5. The CLOTH set in nineteenth and twentieth-century RP

We saw in the previous section that lengthening of the vowel in CLOTH words, except for those in which the vowel precedes <r>, was variable and probably recessive throughout the second half of the eighteenth century. Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century accounts of these words in RP likewise suggest that the pronunciation with the vowel of THOUGHT was already considered "old-fashioned". Lass notes that "for Sweet's [1877] corner of RP-shire, lengthening of /o/ appears [...] somewhat recessive" (Lass 2000: 227), and cites Wyld (1921) as giving [ɔ:] in *cloth* "but not among all speakers" and Ward (1929) as stating that "educated speakers who use [ɔ:] at the present day are mainly middle-aged or conservative" (all cited in Lass 2000: 227-8). It would appear that the lengthened pronunciations of CLOTH words in Wells's subsets *a* and *b* have been considered "marked" at least since the late eighteenth-century, but the type of marking shifts. For Walker, the lengthened variants are enregistered as "vulgar", whereas for late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century commentators they are considered old-fashioned and conservative, and by the late twentieth to early twenty-first-century they are associated with the "conservative U-RP" of older members of the British royalty. The trajectory of lengthened pronunciations of CLOTH words in RP is that of Labov's category of "stereotype". Labov defines stereotypes as "socially marked forms, prominently labelled by society" (1972: 314) and suggests that "under extreme stigmatization, a form may become the overt topic of social comment, and may eventually disappear. It is thus a *stereotype*, which may become increasingly divorced from the forms

which are actually used in speech" (1972: 180). Although the indexicality of long vowel pronunciations of CLOTH words shifts from "vulgar" (and therefore fitting in with Labov's notion of "extreme stigmatization" in the late eighteenth century to "posh but old-fashioned" in the late nineteenth-to early twentieth centuries, and "royal" in the twenty-first, these variants are, at least since the late eighteenth century, certainly marked out as different from the norm. There are indications that even Steve Bell's depiction of the Queen's pronunciation no longer corresponds to reality. Harrington et al. (2000) noted from a diachronic study of the Queen's Christmas speeches that "the Queen's vowels have shifted in the direction of a more mainstream form of Received Pronunciation" (2000: 63).

This study has been limited in scope, concentrating as it does on evidence from eight late eighteenth-century sources and a restricted set of words, so MacMahon's call for a "fully comprehensive survey of all available sources" (1998: 433) is still relevant. Nevertheless, the evidence presented above strongly suggests that both long and short versions of *off*, *cloth* etc. have co-existed since the late seventeenth century and supports Lass's assertion that "restoration of /ɒ/, [...] is not a reversed merger, but a shift of prestige in a set of coexisting variants" (Lass 2000: 224).

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APPENDIX

This section contains two tables, which collect some of the CLOTH words in Well's word set (1982: 136). The first table contains words from Well's (a) subset and the second table contains words from Well's (b) subset. The abbreviation N.A. means that the entry is not found, not readable or not specified. The words from (a) and (b) subsets which have not been found in any of the dictionaries selected have not been included: these are *floss*, *Austria*, *Austen*, *Austin*, *joss*, *Boston* and *Gloucester*.

(a)

| Word | Dictionary | Pronunciation |
|------|-----------------|---------------|
| Off | Johnston(1764) | Short |
| | Kenrick (1773) | Long |
| | Perry (1775) | Short |
| | Sheridan (1780) | Short |
| | Walker (1791) | Long |
| | Jones (1797) | N.A. |
| | Scott (1799) | Short |
| | Spence (1775) | Short |

(b)⁴

| Word | Dictionary | Pronunciation |
|------|-----------------|---------------|
| Moth | Johnston (1764) | Long |
| | Kenrick (1773) | Long |
| | Perry (1775) | Short |
| | Sheridan (1780) | Short |
| | Walker (1791) | Short |
| | Jones (1797) | Short |
| | Scott (1799) | Short |
| | Spence (1775) | Short |

⁴ Although Wells describes subset *b* as consisting of words which have the vowel of thought in General American, but never had this in RP or its predecessors, our

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| Cough | Johnston (1764) | Short | Boss | Johnston (1764) | Long |
| | Kenrick (1773) | Long | | Kenrick (1773) | Short |
| | Perry (1775) | Short | | Perry (1775) | N.A. |
| | Sheridan (1780) | Short | | Sheridan (1780) | Short |
| | Walker (1791) | Short | | Walker (1791) | Short |
| | Jones (1797) | N.A. | | Jones (1797) | Short |
| | Scott (1799) | Short | | Scott (1799) | Short |
| Spence (1775) | Short | Spence (1775) | Short | | |
| Trough | Johnston (1764) | Short | Gloss | Johnston (1764) | Long |
| | Kenrick (1773) | N.A. | | Kenrick (1773) | Short |
| | Perry (1775) | Short | | Perry (1775) | Short |
| | Sheridan (1780) | Short | | Sheridan (1780) | Short |
| | Walker (1791) | /u:/ | | Walker (1791) | Short |
| | Jones (1797) | Long | | Jones (1797) | Short |
| | Scott (1799) | Short | | Scott (1799) | Short |
| Spence (1775) | Short | Spence (1775) | Short | | |
| Broth | Johnston (1764) | Long | Moss | Johnston (1764) | Long |
| | Kenrick (1773) | Long | | Kenrick (1773) | Short |
| | Perry (1775) | N.A. | | Perry (1775) | Short |
| | Sheridan (1780) | Long | | Sheridan (1780) | Short |
| | Walker (1791) | Short | | Walker (1791) | Short |
| | Jones (1797) | Long | | Jones (1797) | Short |
| | Scott (1799) | Short | | Scott (1799) | Short |
| Spence (1775) | Short | Spence (1775) | Short | | |
| Froth | Johnston (1764) | Long | Ross | Johnston (1764) | Long |
| | Kenrick (1773) | Long | | Kenrick (1773) | Short |
| | Perry (1775) | Short | | Perry (1775) | Short |
| | Sheridan (1780) | Short | | Sheridan (1780) | Short |
| | Walker (1791) | Short | | Walker (1791) | N.A. |
| | Jones (1797) | Long | | Jones (1797) | N.A. |
| | Scott (1799) | Short | | Scott (1799) | N.A. |
| Spence (1775) | Short | Spence (1775) | N.A. | | |

findings here suggest that some of the words in this set did have a long variant in some eighteenth-century accounts, most notably sausage and wash, which are the only words with a long vowel for the northern and Scottish sources. It is worth noting that *sausage* and *wash* both have orthographic <a>. For *sausage*, the 'vulgar' pronunciation to avoid in the eighteenth-century was /sasiðz/ and for Spence at least, /a/ after /w/ would be the local pronunciation, so maybe in the north of England and in Scotland *wash* with the THOUGHT vowel was hypercorrect. Also, as we can see in Figure 6, for Spence, THOUGHT is primarily a reflex of ME a.

| | | | | | |
|--------|--|---|--------|--|--|
| Cross | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Short Long Short Short Short Short Short Short | Long | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Short Short Short Short Short Short Short Short |
| Across | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Long Long Short Short Short Short Short Short | Strong | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Short Short Short Short Short Short Short Short |
| Loss | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Long Long Short Short Short Short Short Short | Wrong | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Short Short N.A. Short Short Short Short Short |
| Toss | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Long Long Short Short Short Short Short Short | Gong | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Short N.A. N.A. Short N.A. N.A. N.A. N.A. |
| Fosse | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Long Long Short Short Short Short Short Short | Song | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Short Short Short Short Short Short Short Short |

| | | | | | |
|-------|--|---|--------|--|--|
| Doss | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Long N.A. Short N.A. N.A. Short N.A. N.A. | Thong | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Short Short Short Short Short Short Short Short |
| Soft | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Long Long N.A. Long Short Long Short Short | Tongs | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Short Short N.A. Short Short Short Short Short |
| Croft | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Long N.A. N.A. Long Short Short Short Short | Throng | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Short Short N.A. Short Short Short Short Short |
| Lost | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Long N.A. N.A. Short Short Short Short Short | Accost | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Long Long N.A. Short Short Short Short Long? |
| Oft | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Long Long Short Long Short Long Short Short | Coffee | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Short Short Short Short Short Short Short Short |

| | | | | | |
|--------|--|--|---------|--|--|
| Cost | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Long Long Short Short Short Short Short Short | Coffer | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Short Short Short Short Short Short Short Short |
| Frost | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Long Long Short Short Short Short Short Short | Coffin | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Short Long Short Short Short Short Short Short |
| Lost | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Long N.A. Short Short Short Short Short Short | Offer | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Short Long Short Short Short Short Short Short |
| Often | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Long Long Short Long Short Long Short Short | Office | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Short Short Short Short Short Short Short Short |
| Soften | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Long Long N.A. Long Short Long Short Short | Officer | Johnston (1764) Kenrick (1773) Perry (1775) Sheridan (1780) Walker (1791) Jones (1797) Scott (1799) Spence (1775) | Short Short Short Short Short Short Short Short |

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------|-----------------|-------|
| Lofty | Johnston (1764) | Long | Glossy | Johnston (1764) | Long |
| | Kenrick (1773) | Long | | Kenrick (1773) | Short |
| | Perry (1775) | Short | | Perry (1775) | Short |
| | Sheridan (1780) | Long | | Sheridan (1780) | Short |
| | Walker (1791) | Short | | Walker (1791) | Short |
| | Jones (1797) | Long | | Jones (1797) | Short |
| | Scott (1799) | Short | | Scott (1799) | Short |
| Spence (1775) | N.A. | Spence (1775) | N.A. | | |
| Gone | Johnston (1764) | Short | Foster | Johnston (1764) | Long |
| | Kenrick (1773) | Short | | Kenrick (1773) | Long |
| | Perry (1775) | Short | | Perry (1775) | Short |
| | Sheridan (1780) | Short | | Sheridan (1780) | Short |
| | Walker (1791) | Short | | Walker (1791) | Short |
| | Jones (1797) | Short | | Jones (1797) | Short |
| | Scott (1799) | N.A. | | Scott (1799) | Short |
| Spence (1775) | N.A. | Spence (1775) | Short | | |
| Sausage | Johnston (1764) | Long | Sausage | Johnston (1764) | Long |
| | Kenrick (1773) | N.A. | | Kenrick (1773) | N.A. |
| | Perry (1775) | N.A. | | Perry (1775) | N.A. |
| | Sheridan (1780) | /a/ | | Sheridan (1780) | /a/ |
| | Walker (1791) | Short | | Walker (1791) | Short |
| | Jones (1797) | N.A. | | Jones (1797) | N.A. |
| | Scott (1799) | N.A. | | Scott (1799) | N.A. |
| Spence (1775) | Long | Spence (1775) | Long | | |
| Wash | Johnston (1764) | Long | Wash | Johnston (1764) | Long |
| | Kenrick (1773) | Short | | Kenrick (1773) | Short |
| | Perry (1775) | Long | | Perry (1775) | Long |
| | Sheridan (1780) | Short | | Sheridan (1780) | Short |
| | Walker (1791) | Short | | Walker (1791) | Short |
| | Jones (1797) | Short | | Jones (1797) | Short |
| | Scott (1799) | Long | | Scott (1799) | Long |
| Spence | Long | Spence | Long | | |