

On *Alway(s)* and *Algate(s)* in Middle English Again¹

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1. Introduction

The present study explores the historical development of the adverb *always* and its related forms. More specifically, it deals with the following forms in later Middle English: *alway(s)* (with and without -s) and *algate(s)* (with and without -s).² As noted in previous studies, the establishment of the form *always* took place only during the course of the Modern English period, before which the accusative form *alway* (without -s) was dominant (cf. Iyeiri 2014). It is also known that Middle English gives *algate(s)*, where *gate* ‘way’ goes back to Old Norse, side by side with *alway*. Both *algate* and *algates* are now obsolete: their latest quotation in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (henceforth *OED*) dates back to the seventeenth century (s.v. *algate*, -s). The title of the present paper includes “again”, to acknowledge the existence of Dekeyser’s (1998) work entitled “*Alway(s)* and *Algate(s)* in Middle and Early Modern English”. Whereas his work is semantic in nature, the interest of the present study is more formal. It approaches the issue within the variationist framework, dealing with the shift from *algate(s)* to *alway(s)* and the shift from *alway* to *always* (and from *algate* to *algates*) in the history of English. The following are illustrative examples of the forms (*algate*, *algates*, *alway*, and *always*) explored in the following discussion:

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² All orthographic variants of *alway(s)* and *algate(s)* are included under these forms. This practice is followed throughout the present paper.

- (1) And thus *algate* husbondis hadde sorow (Chaucer, 1477, *The Canterbury Tales*)³
- (2) and in the same place I toke a glasse or a mirroure & a combe whiche my wyf wold
algates haue (Caxton, 1481, *Reynard the Fox*)
- (3) And for he prophecied *alway* that they that went in to egypt at that tyme sholde be
destroyed (Trevisa, 1482, *Polychronicon*)
- (4) And *alwayes* sire Dynadan loked vp there as syre Launcelot was (Malory, 1485,
Morte Darthur)

Examples like the following, where space is available after *all*, are also considered in the present paper:⁴

- (5) and that blisfulnes cometh alweye to good folke / and infortune cometh *all weye* to
wicked folke. (Chaucer, 1478, *Boece*)

This is counted as an example of *alway*.

Both with *algate(s)* and *alway(s)*, the forms without *-s* are originally accusative,⁵ while the ones with *-s* are considered to be genitive (cf. Skeat 1892: § 258; den Breejen 1937; Brinton 2012: 153; *OED*, s.v. *always*).⁶ Despite this difference in the original roots,

³ Unless otherwise stated, all citations in the present paper are from *METiP (Selected Middle English Texts in Print)*, and hence ultimately from *Early English Books Online*. For further details of the texts explored in this study, see Section 2. The italics in the citations are mine.

⁴ Buchstaller & Traugott (2006: 356) discuss *algate(s)* and *alway(s)* under the category of univertated adverbs. However, the existence or absence of space cannot be relied upon in Middle English, where spacing did not necessarily coincide with word divisions.

⁵ The accusative ending is on occasion retained in early Middle English, as illustrated by the following example quoted from the *Helsinki Corpus*: “*atneway he ys bezide*” (*Helsinki Corpus*, ME2, CMAYENBI). For details of the *Helsinki Corpus*, see <<http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/CoRD/corpora/HelsinkiCorpus/>> (accessed 18 September 2015).

⁶ While the genitive origin of *algates* and *always* has been more or less established in previous research, it is not entirely free from dispute. Some earlier studies have attributed the ending *-s* to the plurality of *gate* and *way*. See Jespersen (1909-1949: VI, 305), who states: “The adverbial *-s* has in many cases come to be associated with the pl ending”.

however, the difference in meaning between the forms with or without -s has been obscure since earlier periods. The *OED* gives a single and common entry for the forms *algate* and *algates*, stating “[a]s no meaning difference appears between *algate* and *algates*, they are not here separated” (s.v. *algate*, -s). Although for the words *alway* and *always*, the *OED* gives two separate entries, the intersection of meanings between the two is quite obvious. The first meaning allocated to *alway*, i.e. ‘all along, through all time’ is found as the second meaning under the entry of *always*. Likewise, the first meaning allocated to *always*, i.e. ‘every time, at all times’ is encountered as the second meaning under *alway* (s.v. *alway* and *always*). There may have been a slight shade of difference in meaning between the two forms originally, but it was clearly minimal in the Middle English period, when examples are available for both meanings and for both forms.⁷ Hence, the forms *algate(s)* and *alway(s)* are treated together in the present study, so long as *gate* and *way* are used in the metaphorical sense, only excluding examples with the original spatial meaning. For the shift of meaning from *space* to *time*, see Dekeyser (1998).⁸

Apart from the discussion on the accusative and genitive origins as hitherto mentioned, no substantial research has been conducted into the historical development of *algate(s)* and/or *alway(s)*—to the best of my knowledge—except for Dekeyser (1998) and Iyeiri (2014). Dekeyser (1998) encompasses a fairly long span of time, discussing the historical development of the adverbs under consideration. His central interest is, however, directed to the semantic expansion of *algate(s)* and *alway(s)* from the spatial domain to the temporal one. In his work, therefore, the four relevant forms,

⁷ It is also relevant to note that Bridges & Weigle (1960: 17) refer to the obscurity of meaning difference between *alway* and *always*, although their analysis is concerned with a later period. Their study is based upon the Authorized Version of the English Bible (1611).

⁸ The *OED* gives the meaning ‘at any rate, by all means, nevertheless’ under the entry of *algate(s)* as well as the meaning ‘always’. The former meaning is, however, an extension of the latter. See Dekeyser (1998) on this matter. In any event, the inclusion of the relevant examples of *algate(s)* does not affect the discussion here, since the same meaning is observed with *alway(s)* as well (see *MED*, s.v. *alwei*). The conditions are the same between *algate(s)* and *alway(s)*.

i.e. *algate*, *algates*, *alway*, and *always* are treated together, whereas the distribution of these forms is the main focus of discussion in the present study. Furthermore, he relies upon the *OED* and *Middle English Dictionary* (hereafter *MED*) for factual details, his examples being essentially citations from them. Hence, research into the process by which *algate(s)* gradually came to be superseded by *alway(s)* is still called for. While Iyeiri (2014) demonstrates that the major shift from *alway* to *always* takes place in the course of the sixteenth century, the shift from *algate(s)* to *alway(s)* has not been explored in quantitative terms. It is, therefore, worthwhile to focus upon later Middle English, when *algate(s)* was still relatively common. The late Middle English period is also crucial in respect of the rise of *always* (form with *-s*), as its preparatory expansion is already visible around this time (see Iyeiri 2014).⁹

2. The Texts Investigated in this Study

For the purpose of elucidating the changeover from *algate(s)* to *alway(s)* and the addition of *-s*, the present research will investigate the following list of Middle English texts, all extracted from *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*. This collection is tentatively called *Selected Middle English Texts in Print (METiP)*:¹⁰

⁹ Iyeiri (2014) delves into the letters of the Paston family in the fifteenth century and shows that *always* comes to be attested to some noticeable extent only in their third generation. Overall, *always* (namely, with *-s*) seems to be fairly restricted in occurrence even in later Middle English.

¹⁰ This collection, which draws materials from *EEBO*, has been compiled for my research purposes. For *EEBO*, see: <<http://eebo.chadwyck.com/>> (accessed 9 October 2015). The choice of texts is, to some extent, dependent upon the structure of *EEBO*, which is essentially a database of Early Modern English and which therefore includes only a limited number of Middle English texts. Most major Middle English works have been selected from among them for the purpose of compiling the *METiP*. The advantage of using it for the present research is, as mentioned in the main body of discussion, that it allows the comparison between manuscripts and printed versions as done in the following sections.

Table 1. *Selected Middle English Texts in Print (METiP)*

	Dates	Texts	Approximate number of words
Geoffrey Chaucer	1477	<i>wHan that Apprill with his shouris sote ... [The Canterbury Tales]</i>	178,900
	1477	<i>The lyf so short the craft so lo[n]ge to lerne [The Parliament of Fowls]</i>	7,900
	1477	<i>Thou fiers god of armes, mars the rede [Anelida and Arcite]</i>	2,900
	1478	<i>Boecius de consolacione philosophie [Boece]</i>	52,200
	1483	<i>The book of fame made by Gefferey Chaucer</i>	11,900
	1483	<i>Troilus and Criseyde</i>	62,500
	1500	<i>The loue and complayntes bytwene Mars and Venus</i>	4,800
		(subtotal	321,100)
John Trevisa	1482	<i>Prolicionycion [sic]</i>	364,900
Thomas Malory	1485	<i>Le morte darthur</i>	350,100
William Caxton	1481	<i>This is the table of the historye of reynart the foxe</i>	49,400
	1484	<i>Here begynneth the book of the subtyl historyes and fables of Esope ...</i>	67,000
	1484	<i>Here begynneth the prologue or prohemye of the book callid Caton ...</i>	49,800
	1484	<i>Here begynneth the booke which the knyght of the toure made ...</i>	75,400
	1485	<i>This book was compyled [and] made atte requeste of kyng Phelyp of Fraunce ... whyche book is callyd in frensshe. le liure Royal ...</i>	111,500
		(subtotal	353,100)
Some religious texts	1494	Walter Hilton, <i>Scala perfecc[i]onis</i>	97,600
	1494	Nicholas Love, <i>Incipit Speculum vite Cristi</i>	101,100
	1495	Richard Fitzjames, <i>Sermo die lune in ebdomada Pasche</i>	19,900
	1499	<i>The meditat[i]ons of saint Bernard</i>	15,000
	1499	Simon Winter, <i>The fyrst chapitre is the lyf of saint ierom ...</i>	15,300
	1500	Raymond of Capua, <i>Here begynneth the lyf of saint katherin of senis the blessid virgin</i>	109,100
		(subtotal	358,000)
Total			1,747,200

As shown in this table, *METiP* is a collection of selected major Middle English works printed in the fifteenth century, the dates indicating their publication. With some of the texts, therefore, the gap between the original and publication dates needs to be considered in discussion, e.g. works written by Geoffrey Chaucer (1340?-1400) in the fourteenth century and published in the fifteenth century.

This is not necessarily disadvantageous, as it allows comparative analyses between

manuscripts and printed texts with some gap of dates. The following discussion will, therefore, make such comparative studies about Chaucer and Malory, using texts based upon manuscripts: Benson (1987) (for Chaucer) and Ker (1976) (for Malory). The obvious aim is to see how language allowed alterations in the process of textual transmission in the late Middle English period. Benson (1987) is an edited text but based upon earlier manuscripts, which are supposed to be closer, at least in dates, to the original than printed texts. Ker (1976) is a facsimile edition of the manuscript version of Malory's *Morte Darthur*.¹¹ In addition to these texts, the Middle English sections (ME1, ME2, ME3, and ME4) of the *Helsinki Corpus* will be explored in the following discussion. This is to contextualize the results of analysis within the framework of the Middle English period in general.

3. *Algate(s)* and *Alway(s)* in Middle English

3.1. *Overall Tendencies*

As clarified in the above accounts, there are two principal concerns in the present study: the decline of *algate(s)* followed by the expansion of *alway(s)*; and the addition of the suffix *-s*, as observed with the forms *algates* and *always*. The present section deals with the first. Since the presence or absence of *-s* is not the central issue in this section, *algate* and *algates* are treated together under the form *algate(s)* and likewise *alway* and *always* under *alway(s)*. The addition of *-s* will be scrutinized later.

Although not much research has been conducted into the relationship between *algate(s)* and *alway(s)*, except by Dekeyser (1998), who points to the similarity between them in their semantic expansion, the quotations in the *OED* present some idea as to the overall competition between *algate(s)* and *alway(s)* in the history of English. Despite the separation of the entries *alway* and *always*, the two forms, when combined, display a continuous history from Old English to the present day (s.v. *alway* and *always*).

¹¹ See Notes 15 and 20.

Alway(s) is a lexical item which has invariably existed in English. The existence of *algate(s)* is, by contrast, more ephemeral in chronology: it is a loan from Old Norse and its first citation in the *OED* dates back only to around 1200. While it may have been in common use during the Middle English period, it quickly declines thereafter. The *OED* demonstrates that it does not seem to last after the beginning of the seventeenth century. It is now marked as “obsolete or dialectal” in the *OED* (s.v. *algate*, -s).¹²

The Middle English period, with which the present research is mainly concerned, reveals a notable number of *algate(s)*, though this is certainly marginal when contrasted with *alway(s)*. The Middle English sections of the *Helsinki Corpus* provide 28 examples of *algate(s)*, mostly in ME3 (1350-1420), as opposed to 102 examples of *alway(s)*. See the table below, which elucidates the raw frequencies of *algate(s)* along with *alway(s)* in the four different periods of Middle English in the *Helsinki Corpus*:

Table 2. The raw frequencies of *algate(s)* and *alway(s)* in the *Helsinki Corpus* (Middle English only)

	<i>algate(s)</i>	<i>alway(s)</i>	Totals
ME1 (1150-1250)	2	2	4
ME2 (1250-1350)	1	6	7
ME3 (1350-1420)	24	38	62
ME4 (1420-1500)	1	56	57

The following are some illustrative examples:

(6) I dampned thee; thou most *algate* be deed (Helsinki Corpus, ME3, CMCTVERS)

(7) And whanne þei ben made prelatiſ by ſynful menus, as ofte falliþ, God schulde

¹² A quick survey of the *Early Modern English Prose Selections* (*EMEPS*, ver. 1) (selected texts from *EEBO* for the period 1500-1700, see Iyeiri 2011 for details) provides only five examples of *algate(s)*, whereas there are as many as 1,298 examples of *alway(s)* in the same collection. Four of the five examples of *algate(s)* are evidenced in the first half of the sixteenth century and the remaining example in the second half of the sixteenth century. Moreover, one of the examples is attested in verse, suggesting that the item was already reserved for special (and perhaps archaic) contexts. The texts in the *EMEPS* are essentially prose, but include a limited number of verse lines encompassed in prose lines.

algatis ziuen hem wit and confermen hem in grace

(*Helsinki Corpus*, ME3, CMWYCSE)

(8) For thou art *alway* adred, be it fals or trew. (*Helsinki Corpus*, ME4, CMTOWNEL)

(9) And sythyn, loke in what monyt it be, and in the space of that monyth goo *always*
vpward tyl þu come euene azen the noumyr of þe forseyd day.

(*Helsinki Corpus*, ME4, CMREYNES)

As the table shows, ME3 of the *Helsinki Corpus* indeed displays a notable number of *algate(s)*, but the same period also shows more frequent occurrences of *alway(s)*. It is feasible that *algate(s)* never established its dominance before it declined in the later period of Middle English. By the time of ME4, it ceased to be used, at least in the *Helsinki Corpus*, on the one hand, while on the other hand the use of *alway(s)* was firmly established.

To turn to *METiP*, whose texts were all published in the late fifteenth century though the original dates of some go back to much earlier periods, the preponderance of *alway(s)* as against *algate(s)* is even more transparent. Table 3 displays the raw frequencies of the two forms in the five subgroups in *METiP*:

Table 3. The raw frequencies of *algate(s)* and *alway(s)* in *METiP*¹³

	<i>algate(s)</i>	<i>alway(s)</i>	Totals
Geoffrey Chaucer	48 (19.4%)	200 (80.6%)	248
John Trevisa	1 (0.7%)	148 (99.3%)	149
Thomas Malory	0	93 (100%)	93
William Caxton	1 (0.5%)	184 (99.5%)	185
Religious texts	19 (17.4%)	90 (82.6%)	109

¹³ This table excludes one example of *algate(s)* in Chaucer (1483, *Troilus*) which is obscure as to whether it has the ending -s, due to physical corruption. The inclusion of the example would not affect the statistics of this section, as it is nonchalant about the presence or absence of -s, but it certainly would in later sections of this paper.

Table 3 demonstrates the overall tendency that *alway(s)* was already dominant in the period when the above texts were printed. Despite this general trend, however, it merits attention that different texts display slightly different situations. The predominant use of *alway(s)* is clear in Trevisa, Malory, and Caxton, while *algate(s)* is preserved to some notable extent in Chaucer and the set of religious texts.¹⁴ Furthermore, in Chaucer and the groups of religious texts, the division is quite explicit between the texts where *algate(s)* is relatively common and those in which *algate(s)* is virtually non-existent. Of the 48 examples of *algate(s)* in Chaucer, 23 are found in *The Canterbury Tales* (1477, *Whan that ...*) and 20 are observed in *Boece* (1478). The remaining texts by Chaucer yield only five examples of *algate(s)* in total. Similarly, the 19 examples of *algate(s)* in the religious texts include 14 examples in Nicholas Love (1494). All the remaining texts display extremely marginal attestations of *algate(s)*, while they quite commonly employ *alway(s)* instead. It is, therefore, likely that there were essentially two types of texts available by the time of later Middle English in terms of the use of *algate(s)* and *alway(s)*: those which still retained *algate(s)* (e.g. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, *Boece*, and Love), and those which are essentially devoid of *algate(s)*, showing the predominance of *alway(s)*. Most texts in the late Middle English period are likely to belong to the latter. Chaucer's use of the two forms needs further explication, which is given below.

3.2. *Algate(s)* and *Alway(s)* in Chaucer

As hitherto discussed, *algate(s)* is fairly numerous in Chaucer, especially in his *Canterbury Tales* and *Boece*, whilst this is not always the case with most other texts in late Middle English, including those listed under Caxton, who printed Chaucer's works. The abundance of relevant examples in Chaucer, which is to some extent ascribable to

¹⁴ Although Chaucer's texts include some notable number of verse lines, the metrical scheme should not necessarily dominate the choice between *algate(s)* and *alway(s)*, since *alway(s)* in Middle English was flexible enough to appear in various forms like *alway*, *always*, and *alwayses*, satisfying the need concerning the number of syllables.

the substantial nature of his work, allows further research into the relationship between *algate(s)* and *alway(s)* in his works. The following discussion compares the occurrences of *algate(s)* and *alway(s)* in *METiP* (printed texts) with those in the texts edited by Benson (1987) (based upon manuscript readings).¹⁵ The tables below give the frequencies of *algate(s)* and *alway(s)* in the two versions of *The Canterbury Tales* and *Boece*. For the sake of comparison, the tables also include *Troilus*, which presents only a limited number of *algate(s)*:

Table 4. The raw frequencies of *algate(s)* and *alway(s)* in Benson (1987)

	<i>algate(s)</i>	<i>alway(s)</i>	Totals
<i>The Canterbury Tales</i>	25 (22.5%)	86 (77.5%)	111
<i>Boece</i>	21 (33.9%)	41 (66.1%)	62
<i>Troilus</i>	2 (3.6%)	53 (96.4%)	55

Table 5. The raw frequencies of *algate(s)* and *alway(s)* in *METiP*

	<i>algate(s)</i>	<i>alway(s)</i>	Totals
<i>The Canterbury Tales</i>	23 (20.0%)	92 (80.0%)	115
<i>Boece</i>	20 (33.9%)	39 (66.1%)	59
<i>Troilus</i>	3 (5.9%)	48 (94.1%)	51

Examples in Benson (1987) include:

(10) If thou stryve with a fool, though the fool be wrooth or though he laughe, *algate* thou shalt have no reste. (Benson, *The Canterbury Tales*)

¹⁵ Since the purpose of this study is to see the overall tendencies related to the choice of *algate(s)* and *alway(s)* in Chaucer's texts and their printed versions, the analysis is based upon the edition by Benson (1987). It would require a book-length discussion to see the comprehensive textual issues related to Chaucerian manuscripts, which is beyond the purview of the present study. The present author has, however, gone through the section of textual notes of *The Canterbury Tales*, *Boece*, and *Troilus and Criseyde* to make sure that the choice of *algate(s)* and *alway(s)* is not editorial in Benson (1987). There are several cases where different manuscripts show different readings in respect of *algate(s)* and *alway(s)*, but in all cases Benson (1987) follows the reading of the base text. Hence, it is safe to conclude that it serves the purpose of the present study.

- (11) And thus *algates* housbondes han sorwe. (Benson, *The Canterbury Tales*)
- (12) For *alwey*, of alle thinges, the nature of hem ne may nat ben betere thanne hir begynnynge. (Benson, *Boece*)
- (13) His breed, his ale, was *alweys* after oon; / A bettre envyned man was nowher noon.
(Benson, *The Canterbury Tales*)

Tables 4 and 5 reveal that the general tendency of the use of the two forms did not change to any notable extent in the process of textual transmission. In other words, Caxton did not really renew the language, again to any noticeable extent, when he compiled Chaucer's works for printing. The totals of *algate(s)* and *alway(s)* differ to a minor degree between the two versions, but their proportions stay largely unaffected: in both versions, *The Canterbury Tales* and *Boece* show some notable occurrences of *algate(s)*, whereas the same form almost disappears in *Troilus*. Apparently, *algate(s)* was a free alternative to *alway(s)* for Caxton, who did not necessarily alter the former to the latter when exposed to the word, although he himself employed the latter form much more frequently in his own writings. It is possible to surmise that *algate(s)* was clearly receding in the late fifteenth century, but that it belonged to the passive vocabulary or "vocabulary of the passive repertoire" for those who were involved in creative activities like Caxton.¹⁶ It is probable that the variation was relatively stable and that the major increase of *alway(s)* at the expense of *algate(s)* had not begun. In other words, they are still illustrative of what linguists call "stable variation",¹⁷ at least in the fifteenth century, although it may be more or less ready to shift to "dynamic variation" in due course.

¹⁶ I borrow the term "passive repertoire" from Laing (1992: 577-578) and other works of her research group. The definition of variant forms in the "passive repertoire" in Laing runs as follows: "forms known to him [copyist] but which he would not normally use spontaneously".

¹⁷ For the concept of "stable variation", see Chambers (1995: 107) and Raumolin-Brunberg (2002) among others.

4. The Addition of -s

4.1. Overall Tendencies

Besides the relationship between *algate(s)* and *alway(s)* in later Middle English, which has already been treated, the addition of -s is a matter of significant interest with both items. The *OED* states: “The extended form *algates* began in the n.e. [North East] c1300; the -s was probably analogical, after *always*, etc. (originally genitive)” (s.v. *algate*, -s). The present section focuses upon the addition of the ending -s to *algate* and *alway*, which leads to the occurrence of *algates* and *always* in the history of English.

During the Middle English period in general, the addition of -s was not a common feature at all with *always*, although the late Middle English period, which is currently under consideration, observes forms with and without -s. *MED* (s.v. *al wei*) states that forms with -s are rare before 1400. Even in the fifteenth century, the addition of -s seems still marginal: ME4 (1420-1500) of the *Helsinki Corpus* provides 51 examples of *alway* as against only five examples of *always*. Likewise, the texts in the *METiP*, all from the fifteenth century, also reveal restricted use of *always*, although here the situation differs significantly depending upon the text. See the table below, which exhibits the raw frequencies of *alway* and *always* in *METiP*:

Table 6. The raw frequencies of *alway* and *always* in *METiP*

	<i>alway</i>	<i>always</i>	Totals
Geoffrey Chaucer	198 (99.0%)	2 (1.0%)	200
John Trevisa	148 (100%)	0	148
Thomas Malory	23 (24.7%)	70 (75.3%)	93
William Caxton	176 (95.7%)	8 (4.3%)	184
Religious texts	89 (98.9%)	1 (1.1%)	90

Overall, the table shows that the addition of -s was not yet a characteristic feature of English towards the end of the Middle English period. Except in Malory, the form *always* (as against *alway*) is attested at ratios smaller than five percent in *METiP*, and

in fact it is unavailable in Trevisa's *Polychronicon*. This analysis confirms that the notable development of the genitive form *always* takes place only during the course of the Early Modern English period. Malory aside, the late Middle English period is still premature in respect of the expansion of the *s*-forms.

The frequent occurrence of *always* (with *-s*) in Malory's English as represented in Caxton's version is remarkable for its date. The text yields as many as 70 examples of *always* while it gives only 23 examples of *alway*, the proportion of *always* being as large as 75.3%. Jespersen refers to the existence of *always* in Malory and says, "Malory has *alwey* as well as *alweyes*" (1909-1949: VI, 305). He does not necessarily mention how frequent the two forms are, but he may have been aware of the frequent use of *always* in Malory, as he makes this comment particularly on his English.

Kato (1993: 190-191) is another who pays attention to this under-researched phenomenon. She refers to the coexistence of *alway* and *always* in Malory, but her research focus is placed upon the relationship among different orthographic variants with the two scribes involved in the production of the Winchester manuscript of Malory's *Morte Darthur*. Accordingly, the shift from *alway* to *always*, i.e. the addition of *-s*, is not highlighted in her study. Hence the present study discusses the issue. It is quite clear that Malory's frequent use of *always* is rather exceptional in later Middle English. The *OED*'s first citation of *always* dates back to the early Middle English period, but as stated above, *always* is far from being widespread in the last century of the Middle English period.

Interestingly enough, the introduction of *-s* seems to be a little earlier with *algate(s)*. In the *Helsinki Corpus*, the occurrence of the relevant forms concentrates upon ME3 (1350-1420), which yields seven examples of *algate* as against 17 examples of *algates*, already showing the preponderance of the *s*-form. The remaining periods of the Middle English part of the same corpus provide only four examples in total, and are not suitable for meaningful statistical analysis. Still, the tendency in ME3 is transparent enough to indicate that the addition of *-s* is earlier with *algate* than with *alway* in the

history of English.

The same tendency is observed with *METiP*, although relevant examples are unavailable or extremely rare if any, in the texts by Trevisa, Malory, and Caxton. See the table below, which shows the relationship between *algate* and *algates* in the texts included in the corpus:

Table 7. The raw frequencies of *algate* and *algates* in *METiP*

	<i>algate</i>	<i>algates</i>	Totals
Geoffrey Chaucer	18 (37.5%)	30 (62.5%)	48
John Trevisa	1 (100%)	0	1
Thomas Malory	0	0	0
William Caxton	0	1 (100%)	1
Religious texts	14 (73.7%)	5 (26.3%)	19

It is only in Chaucer and the group of religious texts, which provide more than one example of *algate(s)*, that research into the relationship between *algate* and *algates* is relevant. Still, it is safe to conclude that the addition of *-s* seems to be more advanced with *algate(s)* than with *always(s)* (see also Table 6 for comparison), although the proportions of *algates* differ to a significant extent between the groups of texts by Chaucer and of religious texts. The remaining texts, owing to the scantiness of relevant examples, do not necessarily support this tendency, but they at least do not militate against the results presented by Chaucer and the religious texts. One might wonder, therefore, whether it is appropriate to state as in the *OED* (s.v. *algate*, *-s*) that “the *-s* was probably analogical, after *always*, etc. (originally genitive)” (see above). The addition of the *-s* ending to *algate* may have preceded the addition of the same ending to *always* in chronological terms.¹⁸

Simultaneously, however, it may not always be correct to stipulate that the engendering of *always* was instigated by the earlier occurrence of *algates*. In other

¹⁸ This does not altogether deny the possibility of the alleged influence, though, since infrequent forms can demarcate the pathway of historical development.

words, the influence is not necessarily observed the other way around, either, since the texts where *always* (with -s) abounds are not necessarily the ones where *algates* is also abundant. Malory's *Morte Darthur* is a typical case in point: it presents a strikingly large number of *always* (with -s) for its date on the one hand, while on the other hand it yields no examples of *algate(s)*. Likewise, Chaucer offers a fairly large number of *algates* as opposed to *algate*, whereas the occurrence of *always* (with the addition of -s) is very restricted in his works. On the whole, different texts are inclined to display different tendencies in terms of the choice of forms from among *algate*, *algates*, *alway*, and *always*. Here again, the concept "stable variation" is most appropriate (see above).¹⁹

4.2. *Alway and Always in Malory*

Since *always* (with the addition of -s) is exceptionally frequent in Malory's *Morte Darthur*, it is worthwhile to compare and contrast the phenomenon between the two extant versions of the same text. The present section intends to clarify whether the occurrences of *always* in Caxton's version in *METiP* represent any influence from, or correspondence to, the choice of forms in the Winchester Malory. Tables 8 and 9 display the results of the analysis which the present study performed by checking all Caxton's examples of *alway(s)* against relevant lines in the Winchester manuscript:²⁰

¹⁹ Different tendencies in different texts are observed in the contrast between *algate* and *algates per se* as well. Of the 48 examples of *algate(s)* in Chaucer, 23 are found in *The Canterbury Tales*, of which 15 are *algate* and eight examples illustrate *algates*. *Boece* is another text by Chaucer which provides a notable number of *algate(s)*, i.e. 20 examples, but it presents a slightly different tendency: all the relevant examples in this text illustrate *algates*, showing the absence of *algate*. Turning to the group of religious texts, most examples come from Love but none of them illustrates the addition of -s. It presents 14 relevant examples, all of which exemplify *algate*. The remaining texts provide only five examples in total, all of which illustrate *algates*. In other words, different forms are in a fairly stable co-existence.

²⁰ Unlike the case of Chaucer, Malory's *Morte Darthur* exists only in one manuscript. Thus, there is no reason for not using it, especially when it is available in facsimile, despite the excellence of Field's (2013) most up-to-date edition. Hence, the statistics in this section are based upon Ker's (1976) facsimile edition. Incidentally, the relationship between the Winchester manuscript and Caxton's Malory is well documented in previous studies. See, for example, Takamiya (1996: 63),

Table 8. *Alway* in Caxton's *Morte Darthur* (METiP)

<i>alway</i> in Winchester	<i>always</i> in Winchester	no corresponding examples	Total
15	3	5	23

Table 9. *Always* in Caxton's *Morte Darthur* (METiP)

<i>alway</i> in Winchester	<i>always</i> in Winchester	no corresponding examples	Total
7	54	9	70

Examples include:

- (14) a. for he was *alwey* ageynst hym (Malory, 1485)
 b. for *all wayes* he was a3enst hym (Winchester, 16r)
- (15) a. for *alweyes* she drad moche kynge Arthur (Malory, 1485)
 b. for *all wey* she drad muche kyng Arthure (Winchester, 58r)
- (16) a. but *alweyes* I suffre her knyghtes to fare soo with me (Malory, 1485)
 b. but *all wayes* I syffir her knyghtes to fare so with me (Winchester, 63v-64r)

Comparison of Tables 8 and 9 reveals that there is a fairly good correspondence between the two versions of Malory. Caxton's version includes 23 examples of *alway*, of which as many as 15 display the same form (i.e. the absence of *-s*) in MS Winchester. By contrast, those corresponding to *always* in Winchester count only three. Likewise, the 70 examples of *always* in Caxton's version include as many as 54 examples corresponding to *always* in Winchester. Those without *-s* in the Winchester manuscript amount to only seven. It is, therefore, most probable that Caxton's addition of *-s* reflects the addition of *-s* in the exemplar. This inference is consistent with the fact that Caxton

who states: "Despite Lotte Hellinga's remarkable discovery of smudges of printing ink and several letters of Caxton's type 2 and type 4 offset in mirrored type on some leaves of the Winchester MS, the lack of compositors' marks in it is another reason suggesting that it was not Caxton's setting-copy". Given the close relationship between the two—both were existent in Caxton's printing house at one time—, it is reasonable to perform a comparative analysis, though they may not be directly linked. See also Hellinga (1981).

himself rarely adds *-s* to *alway* in his own English (cf. Table 6 above).²¹ At the same time, however, it is also worth noticing that forms with and without *-s* are freely employed when there are no comparable lines or forms in the Winchester version, indicating that both are within the range of Caxton's vocabulary. It is, therefore, safe to conclude that the fifteenth century in general was a period when authors had relative freedom in the choice between *alway* and *always*, though in practice the choice of the latter form was not yet very common.²²

5. Conclusion

The hitherto discussion has dealt with *algate*, *algates*, *always*, and *alway(s)* in later Middle English, by delving into their occurrences in *METiP*, which includes some 1,750,000 words of printed texts of the fifteenth century. Additional corpus and texts have also been explored wherever relevant. In the period investigated in the present study, *algate(s)* is always less frequent than *alway(s)*. Although the predominance of the latter is attested only in the last period of the Middle English section of the *Helsinki Corpus*, *METiP*, which includes texts printed in the fifteenth century, displays a fairly clear trend in this respect, presenting *alway(s)* much more frequently than *algate(s)*.

The addition of *-s*, which is presumably genitive in origin, is another feature that merits attention in Middle English. A notable shift from *alway* to *always* is considered to have taken place in the Early Modern English period, and indeed *always* is not yet dominant in the fifteenth-century texts explored above. Malory's *Morte Darthur* is, however, exceptional in that *always* is much more frequently observed than *alway*.

²¹ Although compositors were certainly involved in the production of Caxton's Malory, the issue is beyond the purview of the present study. Hence, "Caxton's Malory" in this section simply implies the Malory text produced in Caxton's printing house.

²² The mystery remains as to why the manuscript version displays the exceptionally frequent use of *always* for its date. Some relevant examples are attested in line-final position, but no consistent tendencies are traceable. Hence, this does not seem to explain the choice of *always* in Malory.

By contrast, the addition of -s seems to be more prevalent with *algate(s)* during the Middle English period, although the situation differs significantly depending upon the text. Chaucer's English in print is intriguing in this respect: *The Canterbury Tales* displays a fair competition between *algate* and *algates*, whereas *Boece* employs *algates* (rather than *algate*) constantly. Love is another who provides a large number of relevant examples, all of which, however, display the form without -s. Hence, the choice between forms with and without -s appears to largely reflect individual tastes: some texts favour the form without and some texts the form with -s. They may purely and simply have been free variants during the late Middle English period, although they are to be superseded by *alway(s)* in due course.

Furthermore, the above discussion has made some comparative analyses using different versions of the same text. The investigation of Chaucer and Malory has shown that forms are likely to be retained in textual transmission. Despite the earlier dates of the manuscripts, a fairly consistent correspondence is visible between them and printed texts in later dates. Apparently, printers found no pressing needs to alter the text so long as the words at issue were within their vocabulary in a broad sense. It is feasible that all four forms in question were acceptable to most language users in the fifteenth century, although *algate(s)* was receding and the addition of -s to *alway* was just beginning to catch on. All in all, the relationship among the four forms is illustrative of what linguists call "stable variation", although it is a type of stable variation which leads to a dynamic one in due course. A reasonable assumption will be that it is only when the choice of forms obtains some sociolinguistic bearing that the stable variation changes into dynamic variation. Iyeiri (2014) shows that *alway* was increasingly replaced by *always* in the Early Modern English period, and by this time there was clearly a sociolinguistic meaning associated with the choice between the forms, in that the newer form *always* was more frequent in spoken genres than in written ones. Apparently, the Middle English texts explored in the present study have not reached this stage.

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