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LANGUAGE DISSERTATIONS

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LINGUISTIC SOCIETY OF AMERICA

EDITED BY

GEORGE MELVILLE BOLLING
Ohio State University

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NUMBER XIX JUNE, 1935

OLD HIGH GERMAN *BITEILEN* AND *BISKERIEN*

BY

LUISE HAESSLER
Professor of German, Brooklyn College

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO DISSERTATION

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UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA, PHILADELPHIA

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To
FRANCIS ASBURY WOOD

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PREFACE

This is the first instalment of a study begun nearly thirty years ago, the subject of which, Prefix *Be-* Privative in Germanic, was offered to me by my revered teacher, Professor Emeritus Francis Asbury Wood of The University of Chicago, to whom this thesis is dedicated. For those who had the privilege of attending Professor Wood's classes, the depth and breadth of his knowledge, his kindliness and his modesty were a constant source of amazement and admiration, and remained an ideal to strive for, for all time.

The occasion of the suggestion of the subject was the occurrence, in our Old Saxon course, of OS *bidelian*, defined as 'entziehen' in the glossary of F. Holthausen's Altsächsisches Elementarbuch. Prefix *Be-* Privative in Germanic was suggested at first as a subject for a master's thesis; later, when the idea of getting a master's degree was abandoned, it remained a subject for a doctor's dissertation. It proved too large a subject even for that. For years, material was collected from all the Germanic dialects, from the beginning to the present. The purpose of the study was to discover the origin and development of the privative meaning of the prefix *be-*, a meaning rather limited in extent. The study was begun on the basis of development of meaning, but this approach proved futile. It had seemed, during the gathering of material, that the pessimistic meaning prevailed in words with prefix *be-*, but a study and classification of all the words with prefix *be-* listed in the New English Dictionary showed that the proportion of pessimistic to optimistic meaning was as fifty to fifty. At last, a study based on chronology and syntax led to fruitful results.

In spite of the vast mass of material collected from the other Germanic dialects, it seemed advisable to begin with Old English, because of its wealth of early syntactic material. All the Old English material has been studied. It appeared, however, that unless the corresponding material in the other dialects were studied and made use of, the conclusions drawn from the Old English material alone would be liable to attack. In the present study, the Old High German material not only corroborated the conclusions drawn from the Old English material, but furnished so many new problems that it has received first place.

When, in the near future, the stress of teaching and administrative

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activity will have ceased, work on the general subject of Prefix *Be-* Privative in Germanic will be resumed, and it is hoped that the entire study will be completed within a few years.

To Columbia University Library I owe a debt of gratitude for the courtesy and generosity of its staff, who for years made books in large numbers readily accessible, and provided quarters that made work easy and enjoyable.

The professors of The University of Chicago to whom I owe my training and inspiration have nearly all retired from teaching: Professor Francis Asbury Wood, Professor Starr Willard Cutting, Professor Camillo von Klenze, Professor Martin Schütze, Professor Carl Darling Buck. The new generation that now forms the professorial staff of the Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures of The University of Chicago I want to thank for its patience and courtesy: Professor Archer Taylor for his kindness and hospitality to a stranger; Professor Chester Nathan Gould, once a classmate, for introducing me to the life and spirit of modern Iceland; and Professor Leonard Bloomfield, also a former classmate, for the great care with which he read this dissertation and for his valuable suggestions in regard to its introduction and arrangement.

Professor Franz Boas of Columbia University, with whom I studied half a dozen mutually unrelated American Indian languages, gave me a new perspective for my own Indo-European field.

Most of all, I want to thank one who died shortly after the work on my dissertation was begun, but whose example and teaching were worth more than four years of college, one who has been the inspiration of my life—my music teacher, Julius Klauser of Milwaukee. If my work as a teacher and as a student has been fruitful, it is in the largest measure due to him.

I want to thank the Linguistic Society of America for accepting my dissertation for publication, and to express my deep appreciation of the painstaking care with which Professor Roland G. Kent, Secretary of the Linguistic Society of America, and Professor George Melville Bolling, Editor of its Publications, read my manuscript and saw it through the press.

Lastly, a word of thanks is due to Miss Gertrude E. Mallette for the intelligence and conscientiousness with which she typed the dissertation, checked the sources, and helped read the proof.

LUISE HAESSLER

Brooklyn College
December 8, 1934

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