



Universiteit  
Leiden  
The Netherlands

## **Horace Walpole and his correspondents : social network analysis in a historical context**

Henstra, F.H.

### **Citation**

Henstra, F. H. (2014, May 28). *Horace Walpole and his correspondents : social network analysis in a historical context*. LOT dissertation series. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/25845>

Version: Corrected Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/25845>

**Note:** To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/25845> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

**Author:** Henstra, F.H.

**Title:** Horace Walpole and his correspondents : social network analysis in a historical context

**Issue Date:** 2014-05-28

## Chapter 3. Strong verb forms in the language of Horace Walpole and Horace Mann<sup>1</sup>

### 3.1. Introduction

According to Cheshire (1994:115), even though “[p]resent-day standard English has relatively little inflectional morphology ... a small amount of variation still exists in one area of standard English verbal morphology: the preterite and past participle forms of certain irregular verbs”. Variety in irregular verb morphology is nowadays mostly found in non-standard English only, and Cheshire attributes this to the codification process the variety of the English language which developed into the standard underwent. As a result of this process, variability in the use of this particular linguistic feature “seems to have been brought to a stop ... between 1600 and 1800” (Cheshire 1994:116). In eighteenth-century English, variation in usage was still very common. Oldireva-Gustafsson carried out a case study of idiolects in private and public writing from the period, focusing on “variety in the otherwise well-known scenario of the rise of a standard” (1999: 266; see also Oldireva-Gustafsson 2002a, esp. 180–246, and 2002b).

Lass (1994) uses what he calls the clean-up of the strong verb in English as an example of the operation of the process of standardisation and codification or “regulation” taking place in the history of the English language. The process had a levelling and restructuring effect on the irregular verb paradigm, which consequently led to the parallel use of certain preterite (PRET) and past participle (PP) forms in verbs for which these two forms had remained distinct. Cheshire (1994) states that there is “general agreement that

---

<sup>1</sup> This chapter is based on my paper “WRITE, WROTE, WROTE. Preterite and past participle forms in the language of Horace Walpole and Horace Mann” presented at the 15th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics, in Munich, August 2008.

eighteenth-century prescriptive grammarians stood in the way of the ‘normal’ process of simplification that was taking place with the strong verbs” (Cheshire 1994: 125) – these grammarians are known to have prescribed retention of distinct PP forms while the PRET forms were being reanalysed as PP in actual usage. On the basis of her case study, Oldireva-Gustafsson discovered that what she calls “shifted forms of irregular pterite and past-participle”, such as the use of *wrote* rather than the present-day form *written* as a participle, were rare at the time. Moreover she notes that “variation in the use of these forms was never great” (1999:280–281). For all that, eighteenth-century grammars were very much preoccupied with proscribing the usage of irregular verb forms, and with prescribing a system that allowed for a distinction between past tense and past participle forms in the strong verb paradigm. Lowth does indeed comment on these types of construction in his grammar, and in no uncertain terms. He calls the use of PRET for PP a “very great Corruption”, and states: “This abuse has been long growing upon us” (1763: 64– 65).

In this chapter I will discuss variation in usage in the irregular verb paradigm as attested in Horace Walpole’s idiolect, and I will contrast it with the usage of one of his correspondents, Horace Mann (1706–1786), who, though somewhat older, was a close friend of his throughout much of his life. The private correspondence between these two men spans a period of almost fifty years, which makes it an excellent case study for studying variety in educated usage during both the rise and the peak of the codification process that affected the strong verb system. This chapter will show how the usage of members of the educated upper classes fits into the existing picture of variability, and also whether a “codification-effect” can be demonstrated from changes in their usage over time.

For the analysis, I will focus not so much on the development of the irregular verb paradigm itself as on the variety of usage in the two idiolects in question, and I will discuss how this variation relates to the precept of the prescriptive grammars produced in the period. I will compare data on variation in usage in the language of Walpole and Mann primarily with the aim of investigating whether their usage could possibly have served, either directly or indirectly, as a norm on which grammarians like Lowth based the prescriptions in their grammars (see for example Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2006). Firstly, I will provide a brief account of the relationship between Horace Walpole and Horace Mann (3.2), and describe the corpus I have compiled for the purpose of analysing their language (3.3.1). Next, I will analyse their usage in a context of earlier studies on the irregular verb in a sociohistorical linguistic context (3.3.2). In doing so, I will refer to any developments which the usage of these two men may have undergone in the course of time, and I will highlight particular problems that will arise as a result of doing this kind of corpus-based research in a historical sociolinguistic framework (3.3.3). Finally, I will discuss how the language of Walpole and Mann fits into the existing pattern of variability – that is, in as far as it has been described; I will discuss what my data contribute to a discussion of the degree of difference between precept and practice, a point raised by Cheshire (1994), Lass (1994) and Oldireva-Gustafsson (1999, 2002a and 2002b); and I will show how the usage of both men relates to the norm as codified in the grammars of the period (3.3.4 and 3.4).

### 3.2. The two Horaces

*Well, Sir Miny, you are a good creature, to send one such a long letter, such a large packet, & such a quantity of news. I wou'd be as good as you as you if I had as much time; but you see how many letters I have and they must be answer'd.*

*I have paid your little friend your debt of crowns; & have drawn for a hundred pound my in all, 194 crowns for you & the rest for*

*myself; as it is all put in one note, & consequently will make a jumble, we must settle our accounts when we meet.*

*The Princess arriv'd on Sunday; the Pr. & Princess of St Croce went to meet 'em, besides several English, & they came in at high corso time with eight coaches & six, coaches & pair, chaises &c. &c. I believe she put down the whole Corso to her own account; as a Mayor's Wife that happen'd to come into a country church as the Beleif was repeating; she thought they all bow'd & curtsied to her, & declar'd they were the best bred Parish she had ever set foot into. Madame de Craon in half an hour's time was up to the Ears in Roman Princesses and Dutchesses, & so for three nights [...]*

*[...] I may beg you will tell my Lady that I have been looking out for Pope's Testoons (or Testicles as Ld Mansel calls them) for her, but silver is so extremely scarce here, that I have not yet met with one with the head on it [...]*

*Good night, child, I am in a violent hurry. Oh - Porto Bello, the delightfull news! - Corradini is certainly to be pope & soon. Next post I shall probably be able to tell you he certainly is not.*

*Yrs ever,  
H.W.*

(Extracts from Walpole to Mann, 16 April 1740, HWC vol 17: 2-4)<sup>2</sup>

This is how we first meet Horace Walpole in his letters to Horace Mann. Walpole was on his Grand Tour of Europe which het ook as a Young man between 1739 and 1741. He wrote the letter to Horace Mann from Rome. Horace Mann, whose name already came up in section 1.3 as one of Walpole's correspondents, was more than ten years Walpole's senior, and lived and worked in Florence. The *ODNB* characterises him as a diplomat, though

---

<sup>2</sup> The text reproduced here was taken from HWC vol 17: 2-4, but edited by transcription of the manuscript source in order to reflect the spelling and punctuation of the manuscript original as found in the digital edition of HWC.

politically speaking he was not a very successful one. As Lewis puts it in the introduction to the correspondence between Walpole and Mann:

we see him quite clearly in his dispatches to London, a fussy minor diplomat whose main job was to watch the Pretender and his sons and who was treated as below the salt by the great secretaries of state. ... We laugh at him when he sends a courier dashing off to England with the false rumour of the Young Pretender's departure in 1741, or when his garden party becomes a scandal (HWC 17: xxiv)

Florence is also where the two men met, when Walpole visited this city on his Grand Tour of Europe in 1741. After they met, they took up a correspondence which lasted for more than forty years, but in the course of which they never met again. The letters are of very great interest to linguists and historians alike, as they may be considered a chronicle of the times: most of them deal with political and social affairs. In the transcript above we see Walpole communicating to Mann on exactly these types of subjects: taking care of a private financial matter for Mann, the visit of a prince and princess, some gossip about a common acquaintance, and the election of a new pope.

In their overview of the familiar letter in the eighteenth century, Anderson and Ehrenpreis (1966:277) refer to the letters between Mann and Walpole, calling them “an example of a correspondence in which a human relationship is formed almost entirely through the exchange of comments on social and political events ... [T]heir correspondence was nevertheless no exchange of news bulletins: each valued the other for the insights *and* the information he offered”. W.S. Lewis also praises the correspondence for its grand scope and longevity:

The correspondence with the elder Horace Mann extends from Walpole's twenty-third year to his sixty-ninth, from

1740 to 1786, from the Age of Pope to the appearance of the Kilmarnock Burns. For sweep and variety and the procession of great events it is unrivalled among Walpole's correspondences: the reader who goes through it from beginning to end will acquire, we suggest, a fuller picture of the period than he can get from any other writer in it. (HWC 17: xxiii)

Mann and Walpole were also distantly related; Mann's great-great-grandmother was the sister of Walpole's great-great-great-grandmother (see HWC 17: xxvi, xxix), but more importantly, Mann owed his appointment in Florence in part to Sir Robert Walpole, Horace's father, (see also: *ODNB* s.v. Mann, Horace). Lewis also notes Mann's dependence on Walpole as a reason for the fact that the strong relationship between the men survived their long separation:

In Mann's case the reason was obvious enough: Walpole was his life-line to London ... it meant everything to him to have a vigilant and powerful friend at home, who was dedicated to keeping him in his post ... regardless of who was in power (HWC 17: xxvi)

One might say this hints at a certain asymmetrical hierarchy in the relationship between the men; however, Walpole did not seem to see it this way. Instead, he focused in many letters on the shared enterprise of chronicling their age in their letters. He noted that "long absence makes one entirely out of all the little circumstances of each other's society .. which are the soul of all letters" (Walpole to Mann, 22 July 1744 OS, in HWC 18: 480) and therefore he felt that they were "forced to deal only in great events like historians; and instead of being Horace Mann and Horace Walpole, seem to correspond as Guicciardin and Clarendon would" (HWC 18: 480 as quoted by W.S. Lewis in HWC 17: xxvi). Walpole's view of himself as a historian appears over and over again



throughout the correspondence. Walpole refers to Francesco Guicciardini (1483–1540) and Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon (1609–74), historians of their respective nations whose works he owned. Note that the “long absence” had only been three years at this point, and that in the following 42 years the men somehow succeeded in retaining the spirit of their conversation through letters, as we can see from this extract from a letter written by Mann in 1780:

A pain, which many people would persuade me is the gout in my right hand, has made it extremely inconvenient to me to write for some time past ... but I cannot refrain from telling you a story which will make a noise in the World and make you laugh (Mann to Walpole, 12 December 1780, HWC 25: 100).

Mann continued to tell the story of the very public marital problems of the Countess of Albany and her husband in great detail in this letter. Besides chronicling (and gossiping about) the greater and lesser events of European history in their letters, the men also shared an interest in antiques. That is to say, Mann provided excellent access to some of the antiques Walpole wished to acquire from the continent. They both, moreover, suffered from health problems, as can also be seen from the fragment above, possibly consisting partly of hypochondriac inclinations: on his first trip to Italy Mann even brought a coffin on the boat with him in case he would not survive the journey (see HWC 17: xxx). Both men lived as bachelors and never had any children. For all that, and as will be illustrated furthermore for Walpole in chapter 5, they both took an active interest in the well-being in their younger relatives, and they generally enjoyed the life of high society. Lastly, their shared characteristics and the tone and subject matter of their correspondence have elicited rumours from biographers and contemporaries alike about both men’s effeminate characters and even supposed homosexuality (see for instance

Mowl (1996) on a queer reading of Walpole's correspondence). Hester Lynch Piozzi called Mann a "finger twirler":

Mrs Greatheed & I call those Fellows Finger-twirlers; – meaning a decent word for Sodomites: old Sir Horace Mann & Mr James the Painter had such an odd way of twirling their Fingers in Discourse; – & I see Suetonius tells the same thing of one of the Roman Emperors 'nec sine *molli quadam digitorum gesticulatione*.' Vid. C. Suet. Tranq: Tib: Nero Cæsar [Life of Tiberiuis, chap. 68] (Piozzi 1951: 874-5, vol. ii, entry for 29 March 1794).

Haggerty, however, takes position against the thorough "queering" efforts of Mowl (1996), as well as the "bachelor" view of earlier biographers:

If Mowl makes Walpole too outrageous a homosexual and if Lewis, Fothergill, and other biographers such as Robert Wyndham Ketton-Cremer all make him an asexual "bachelor" of some unimaginable kind, then all these outpourings of personality may help us to see a man who does not fit any of the identities his biographers would like to create for him (Haggerty 2006: 554).

### 3.3 Analysis

#### 3.3.1. *The letters analysed*

For the analysis presented in this chapter I have digitized the published personal correspondence between these two men from HWC, specifically volumes 17 to 25 (see Appendix B). The letters from the two men that have come down to us span a period of forty-five years: the first letter dates from 16 April 1740 and the last from 5 September 1786. The material consists of all letters between the two men that have come down to us, as many as 1713 altogether. The resulting corpus of letters between them makes up slightly over 1.4 million words, and amounts of text which are about equally divided between letters from Mann to Walpole and vice versa. The material collected

has been divided into nine periods, based on the respective volumes in which they were published as part of HWC; this has the practical advantage that even though the time-spans per individual period may be unequal, the sample of words is nearly the same for each sub-period. Table 3.1. provides an overview of all this.

The Walpole–Mann corpus which I have compiled is in no way representative of eighteenth-century usage as a whole, nor was it meant to be: my aim in compiling it was to analyse the language of two relatively contemporary authors who shared a close relationship. For the sake of comparison, it may be noted that the corpus used by Oldireva-Gustafsson (1999, 2002a and 2002b) for her analysis of irregular verb morphology consists of a broader spectrum of sources from the period 1680–1790, but comprises about 750,000 words only. As a consequence, and given the fact that the feature analysed in this chapter is a relatively high-frequency one, it is expected that the present corpus may provide satisfying results from the perspective of research on idiolectal usage as well as from a statistical approach; my results can then be compared to the more representative results from Oldireva-Gustafsson’s corpus of private and public writing that spans the century in which Walpole and Mann lived and wrote. Consequently, I will be able to put the two Horaces’ usage into the wider perspective of eighteenth-century usage.

As for the feature analysed in this chapter, I am drawing on the account of the history of the strong verb as provided by Oldireva-Gustafsson (1999, 2002a and 2002b), as indicated in section 3.1, above. In addition, I have drawn on Cheshire (1994) who describes variation in present-day English and who argues that the roots of this variation lie in the historical context of the rise of the standard. The wider context of the analysis presented here may be

summarised as follows: for the eighteenth century, the rise of the modern standard, as evident from the data for the irregular verbs analysed, is expected to be more progressed in the language of more educated users, such as Walpole and Mann. The grammar precepts, according to Lass (1994) and Oldireva-Gustafsson (1999: 267-68, 280-81), are expected to describe a wider variety than that found in usage corpora; an example of this can be seen in Table 3.2. below: a rather large proportion of the nonstandard verb forms is found in the precept, the forms which are proscribed or prescribed in the grammars, but not in actual usage in this part of CHWC.

<b>Letters from Walpole to Mann</b>				
<b>Period</b>	<b>First letter</b>	<b>Last Letter</b>	<b>Number of Letters</b>	<b>Number of Words</b>
1	16 April 1740 NS	21 July 1742 OS	56	49,270
2	29 July 1742 OS	14 January 1745 OS	73	56,868
3	1 February 1745 OS	18 September 1748 OS	74	54,384
4	2 December 1748 OS	29 August 1756	86	81,626
5	19 September 1756	4 January 1762	99	77,094
6	29 January 1762	8 March 1768	97	83,209
7	31 March 1768	1 May 1774	105	87,918
8	15 May 1774	20 December 1779	103	85,129
9	4 January 1780	22 June 1786	134	113,620
<i>Total</i>	<i>16 April 1740 NS</i>	<i>22 June 1786</i>	<i>827</i>	<i>689,118</i>

Letters from Mann to Walpole				
Period	First letter	Last Letter	Number of Letters	Number of Words
1	? April 1741 NS	29 July 1742 NS	66	86,971
2	5 August 1742 NS	12 January 1745 NS	93	97,612
3	26 January 1745 NS	24 October 1748 OS	91	83,743
4	15 November 1748 NS	18 September 1756	107	90,073
5	23 October 1756	9 January 1762	107	80,004
6	6 February 1762	23 February 1768	116	85,023
7	12 March 1768	23 April 1774	107	76,015
8	17 May 1774	13 March 1779	91	55,932
9	3 Jan 1780	5 September 1786	108	65,608
<i>Total</i>	<i>? April 1741 NS</i>	<i>5 September 1786</i>	<i>886</i>	<i>720,981</i>

Table 3.1. Overview of the corpus of correspondence between Walpole and Mann

### 3.3.2. *The verbs analysed*

For the analysis presented in this chapter, I have selected a number of verbs, based on the study by Oldireva-Gustafsson (1999: 271-73 and 2002a: 303-306). An overview of the verbs is presented in Table 3.2. below. The table includes both standard forms (in as far as they were considered as such at the time), which have been taken from the discussion in Lowth's grammar (1762: 78-95), and non-standard forms as listed by Oldireva-Gustafsson. The non-standard forms have, moreover, been cross-referenced with the discussion of these forms provided in Sundby *et al.* (1991). In most cases, the standard forms overlap with those that are in use in Standard English today. Forms printed in italics did not occur in the corpus.

Standard forms (preterite)	Nonstandard forms (preterite)
bade, broke, began, chose, caught, forgot, got, spoke, ran, wrote	bad, <i>bode</i> , <i>bided</i> , bid, <i>brake</i> , <i>breaked</i> , <i>begun</i> , <i>beginned</i> , <i>chosed</i> , <i>cotch</i> , <i>cothc't</i> , <i>cotched</i> , <i>cotch'd</i> , <i>catched</i> , <i>catcht</i> , <i>catchet</i> , <i>forgot</i> , <i>gat</i> , <i>spake</i> , <i>speaked</i> , run, <i>runned</i> , writ, <i>writt</i> , <i>wrot</i> , <i>writed</i>
Standard forms (participle)	Nonstandard forms (participle)
bidden, broken, begun, chosen, caught, forgotten, gotten, spoken, run, written	<i>bode</i> , <i>bade</i> , <i>bad</i> , <i>bided</i> , bid, broke, <i>brake</i> , <i>breaked</i> , began, <i>beginned</i> , chose, <i>chosed</i> , <i>cotch</i> , <i>cothc't</i> , <i>cotched</i> , <i>cotch'd</i> , <i>catched</i> , <i>catcht</i> , <i>catchet</i> , forgot, <i>forgot</i> , got, <i>gat</i> , spoke, <i>spake</i> , <i>speaked</i> , ran, <i>runned</i> , wrote, writ, <i>writ</i> , <i>wrot</i> , <i>writed</i>

Table 3.2. Overview of studied forms

One or two additional points should be made here. Contrary to Oldireva-Gustafsson's practice, I have not adopted the full list of forms listed in Sundby *et al.*, as some of the forms are considered standard in one grammar and non-standard in another; they would consequently have cancelled each other out in the above list. Oldireva-Gustafsson, moreover, notes that there is never a one-to-one correspondence between a single grammar's prescriptions and a single idiolect (1999: 270). Furthermore, it seems unlikely that either Walpole or Mann were influenced by or used Lowth's grammar. Sairio (2008) asked the same question with regard to Elizabeth Montagu (1718–1800), with respect to her usage of preposition stranding, another controversial feature at the time, but found no evidence that she was either:

Overall, it seems reasonable to assume that Bluestockings often referred in their letters to what they were reading. However, I have not found any mention of grammars ... It appears that the Bluestockings did not have an interest in grammars as such (Sairio 2008: 142-43, see also Sairio 2009b 198).

Mrs Montagu, Sairio argues, did not belong to Lowth's target audience, and the same could be said to apply to the two men under discussion here. It is, however, known that Walpole owned a copy of the second edition of Lowth's grammar (1763), and that he read and annotated it (see Hazen 1969). Such practice was in fact quite common at the time, as has been shown by Navest (2007), who argues convincingly that one of the annotated copies of Lowth's grammar in the possession of the Winchester College Library was that of William Warburton (1698—1779). In this respect, Walpole differs from Mrs Montagu, who does not appear to have possessed a copy of the grammar. But whether his language use was actually influenced by the rules in the grammar is hard to say, and may be impossible to determine. In Warburton's case, however, of whom we at least know that he read Lowth's grammar very thoroughly, no immediate influence seems to have occurred in relation to the use of singular *you was*, a feature that was condemned by Lowth in his grammar in no uncertain terms as a solecism (see Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2011: 111). I have nevertheless selected Lowth's grammar as a starting point here as well as in the context of the broader research of the present study (see chapters 5 and 6, below), because of the general question, posed in Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2006), (2010) and (2011), about the relationship between the norm he presented in his grammar and upper-class usage which may have served as a model to him in the grammar.<sup>3</sup> As explained above, my reason for focusing on the language of two educated members of the upper classes was to find further evidence for this.

Looking at the language of Walpole and Mann, we encounter examples of standard and non-standard preterite and past participle use, as in the following examples:

---

<sup>3</sup> According to Sairio (2009b: 295-319) this seems indeed to be very likely.

Walpole's use of a standard preterite form:

1. Murray **spoke** for the first time, with the greatest applause; Pitt answered him with all his force and art of language, but on an ill-founded argument (Walpole to Mann, 9 December 1742 OS, in HWC 19: 123).
2. They tell a melancholy story for the assassin; that having lost a commission, he gave a memorial to the King, who **bade** him give it to the secretary at war, which the poor creature did not think a likely method of redress (Walpole to Mann, 31 December 1769, in HWC 23: 166).

Walpole's use of a standard past participle form:

3. The Duke of Cumberland, who has entirely **broken** with Mr Fox, has had a conference' of four hours with Mr Pitt. Hitherto it has produced nothing. (Walpole to Mann, 30 November 1762, in HWC 22: 102).
4. I conclude there is nothing to know. The shooting season is **begun**, and we have our fashions too. I suppose of politics on ne parle plus (Walpole to Mann, 26 September 1765, in HWC 22: 342).

Walpole's use of a non-standard preterite form:

5. I did but cross Piccadilly at eight in my coach with a French Monsieur D'Angeul whom I was carrying to Lady Hertford's; they stopped us, and **bid** us huzza (Walpole to Mann, 31 March 1768, in HWC 23: 6).

Walpole's use of a non-standard past participle form:

6. All this while, nothing was certain: one day the coalition was settled; the next, the treaty **broke** off: I hated to write to you, what I might contradict next post (Walpole to Mann, 24 December 1744, in HWC 18: 549-50).
7. He talks of returning; and indeed I would advise it for his sake: he is quite spoiled for living in England, and had



entirely **forgot** what Visigoths his countrymen are (Walpole to Mann, 17 November 1749 OS, in HWC 20: 99).

In the case of Walpole's non-standard use of past participle forms, there is a clear example of PRET/PP-shift: Walpole uses the PRET forms in a PP context. The form *bid*, used as a preterite, is irregular in the sense that the prescribed form in the precept is *bade*. However, the form *bid* is considered a correct alternative to *bade* for the preterite in modern English (*OED s.v. bid v.*).

For Mann, examples of the following standard and non standard forms may be presented:

Mann's use of a standard preterite form:

8. I am now confined by a violent cold which I **caught** in making an attempt of that kind on horseback a few days ago (Mann to Walpole, 19 February 1757, in HWC 21: 58).

Mann's use of a standard past participle form:

9. They all strictly denied it, though Cardinal Albani's friends and the very few Catholics our friends **began** to doubt of it on his and Mr Chute's assertions, though till then not one soul in Rome had ever hinted such a thing (Mann to Walpole, 25 January 1746 NS, in HWC 19: 198).

Mann's use of a non-standard preterite form:

10. He conveyed away all his goods, borrowed above ten thousand crowns some days before, and **run** away to Rome (Mann to Walpole, 17 June 1741 NS, in HWC 17: 68).
11. I was pleased to see that Giuseppe **run** home to his wife the moment he had put me to bed (Mann to Walpole, 27 August 1741 NS, in HWC 17: 117).

Mann's use of a non-standard past participle:

12. Though part of his troops had actually **began** to march, orders were then given to make preparations on the road towards Perugia (Mann to Walpole, 16 February 1745 NS, in HWC 19: 7).
13. ...it does not appear that any of the Courts that have a right by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle<sup>10</sup> and an interest to oppose it, have **spoke** a single syllable against it (Mann to Walpole, 6 September 1768, in HWC 23: 54).

Mann's non-standard usage in these examples is a mix of PRET/PP-shift (using the preterite form *began* in the context for past participle *begun*, and *spoke* for *spoken*) and use of an otherwise non-standard form for the preterite (use of *run* for *ran*).

The number of non-standard and standard forms for the preterite and past participle forms of the verbs listed in Table 3.2. as found in the language of Mann and Walpole's letters can be seen in Table 3.3. below. The percentages indicate relative usage in relation to what was considered the standard verbal paradigm at the time (see also Table 3.2.).

From Mann to Walpole				
Grand Total	Number of standard forms used	Number of non-standard forms used	% of standard forms used	% of non-standard forms used
Preterite forms	572	53	91.52%	8.48%
Participle forms	158	600	20.84%	79.16%
From Walpole to Mann				
Grand Total	Number of standard forms used	Number of non-standard forms used	% of standard forms used	% of non-standard forms used
Preterite forms	620	14	97.79%	2.21%
Participle forms	521	349	59.89%	40.11%

Table 3.3. Overview of standard and non-standard usage of PRET and PP forms in the language of Walpole and Mann

To see whether we can detect any change in usage across time, I have presented the different figures for the two men for each of the nine subperiods set out in Table 3.1. in a graph (Figure 3.1).

The graph in Figure 3.1. shows a number of interesting things. To begin with, usage of the preterite forms, as represented by the two lines at the top of the graph, is more standard than usage for the past participle for both correspondents. The difference between the degree of standard usage in participle and preterite use is statistically significant. We may therefore conclude that usage of the preterite is already more standardised in the two men's language use than the use of the participle. The lines representing the figures for Mann, moreover, show that his usage remained fairly stable across time overall. For all that, the differences for his usage between the earliest and the last subperiods are still statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ).

Mann's usage for the preterite is, as said, more standard than for the participle. With an average of about 90 per cent standard forms used in the preterite as against only 20 per cent for the participle (see Table 3.3.), this difference is statistically significant as well ( $p < 0.05$ ). For Walpole we see that there is also a difference between the degree of usage of standard forms in the preterite and the past participle forms. The difference is also significant, although the average difference between standard and non-standard usage in both types of forms is much smaller in Walpole's case than in that of Mann: Walpole used nearly 98 per cent standard forms in the preterite, and about 60 per cent for the participle (see Table 3.3.). The difference in usage for the two men is statistically significant for both forms.

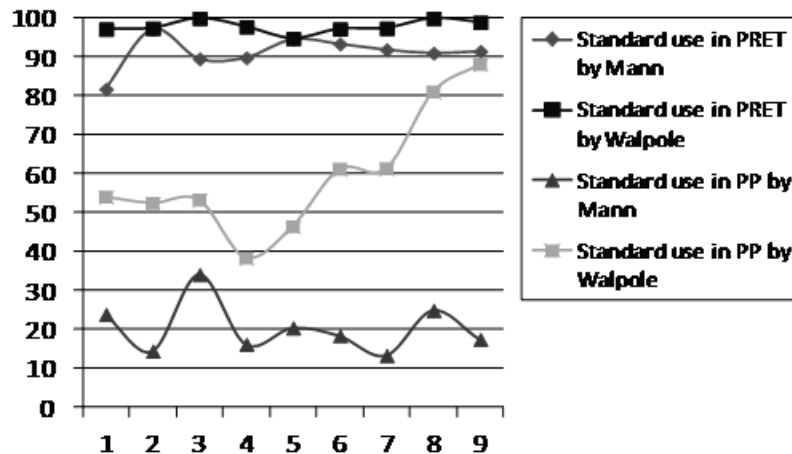


Figure 3.1. Overview of the percentage of standard and non-standard usage of PRET and PP forms in the language of Mann and Walpole over time<sup>4</sup>

The interesting thing about Walpole's usage, as Figure 3.1. indicates, is that his use of the standard form for the past participle increased over time while that for Mann remained relatively stable. The rise can be seen to start in period 4, which covers the years 1745–1748, following an earlier decrease, and is statistically significant (chi-square test,  $p < 0.05$ ). Walpole's change in usage across time is significant in the light of Sairio's remark that her data show that "[t]he Bluestockings were aware of the stigma of preposition stranding already in the late 1730s and early 1740s ... indeed well before the publication of Lowth's grammar in 1762" (Sairio 2008: 154). The data for Walpole's usage suggest that he was aware of this same linguistic climate, too. As discussed in

<sup>4</sup> Here, as well as in Figures 3.2. and 3.3. below, the numbers represent the following periods: period 1: 1740 – 1742; period 2: 1742 – 1745; period 3: 1745 – 1748; period 4: 1748 – 1756; period 5: 1756 – 1762; period 6: 1762 – 1768; period 7: 1768 – 1774; period 8: 1774 – 1779; period 9: 1780 – 1786.)

1.3, he shows in his letters that he was conscious of the existence of linguistic variation in usage: he joked about the dialect speakers he met in Norfolk, and commented on other people's clumsy or illiterate usage in letters addressed to various correspondents. Sairio also notes that her figures on preposition stranding "suggest that in the 1750s attitudes toward and the writers' awareness of correct usage may have changed" (2008: 151), which in turn "may reflect the increasing numbers of published grammars and discussion of correct language use during those years". Looking at my own data, it might be said that Walpole was evidently part of the linguistic climate which inspired the normative rules laid down in the grammars of the 1760s and beyond.

As can be seen in Table 3.3. above, the number of tokens found for each of the possible irregular verb forms is quite low, especially in the preterite. Only 14 irregular uses of the preterite are found for Walpole, in a corpus of 720,981 words, that is a 0.002% frequency; the rate is slightly better in Mann's language sample, with 53 tokens on a corpus of 689,118 words amounts to a 0.008% frequency of occurrence. It is not surprising that this type of research on a smaller language sample will often be frustratingly fruitless. I therefore believe that any data for irregular verb morphology retrieved from much smaller corpora would also be considerably more unreliable than those I obtained on the basis of the present corpus.

Oldireva-Gustafsson (1999: 280) remarks that "Walpole's grammar stands out in my sample as an example of the minimum variability associated today with a cultivated command of grammar". Indeed, we also see from the above results that Walpole's usage is more standard than that of Mann. However, variation found in my own much larger corpus is much greater than in the 20,000 word sample compiled by Oldireva-Gustafsson (1999), which showed a non-standard usage in Walpole's language of 0.7 per cent in the

preterite and 1 per cent in the past participle against 2.2 per cent in the preterite and as much as 40.1 per cent in the participle in my own corpus. Overall, the percentage of non-standard usage in my corpus is also much higher than the figures found by Oldireva-Gustafsson (1999: 281), on the basis of which she concludes that “variation was never great: for the period from 1760–1790, which was the apogee in the prescriptive suppression of variability”. In that study, Oldireva-Gustafsson found 1–5 per cent non-standard usage for preterite forms and 1–7 per cent past participle usage in her overall corpus (Oldireva-Gustafsson 1999: 281). Especially the figure for this last category is much higher in my larger corpus.

One explanation for this discrepancy might be that I have selected one form as the standard form, whereas the list in Sundby *et al.* (1991) which Oldireva-Gustafsson used as a basis for her own analysis often supplies several options for the standard; this might have “levelled” the results. For all that, it seems unlikely that the results would be affected so much by this that the 79 per cent non-standard usage of Mann for the participle on average would come anywhere near Oldireva-Gustafsson’s figure of 1–7 per cent. In chapter 5, below, I will analyse the language of the Walpole Family Network Cluster for the same feature and where possible draw a comparison to the results found for Walpole and Mann. As for the differences in usage between Walpole and Mann: they both belonged to the upper class, were both highly educated and would therefore be expected to have drawn upon a similar linguistic norm. However, we have seen a significant difference in usage, to which point I will return in 3.3.4.

### 3.3.3. *Quirks and blips in the data*

In order to get a better picture of the variation in usage by the two Horaces, I shall focus on a number of specific forms, and also try to account for the particular form the changes in usage take as seen in Figure 3.1. For convenience sake, I will here reproduce only the relevant part of that figure, i.e. that for the standard past participle forms in the letters of Mann and Walpole (Figure 3.2.). My reason for doing so is that there are a number of important points to be made about the results of the analysis presented above, and I will highlight a few quirks and blips in the data in order to illustrate my point.

I will first compare Figure 3.2. to Figure 3.3. below, which shows the degree of standard usage for the participle forms of the verb WRITE for both Walpole and Mann across time. How do the data for this verb fit in with the general picture of their usage as discussed in the previous section and as seen in Figure 3.2. Figure 3.3. shows that Mann's usage for the verb WRITE is considerably less standard – indeed strikingly so – than that of Walpole. This difference is statistically significant (chi-square test,  $p < 0.05$ ), and fits in with the general picture of Walpole's usage being more standard than that of Mann, particularly where it concerns past participle forms, and more so as time passes. However, Walpole's usage for WRITE does not follow the pattern of increasing standardness that his usage shows across the board in Figure 3.2.; there is a clear dip for his usage during periods 4, 5 and 6, the mid-eighteenth-century in other words, and there is no clear sign of the semi-linear increase towards standard usage that we see for his usage in general during this period (cf. Figure 3.2.). Walpole's use of *wrote* as a past participle does increase steadily over time; however, in the mid-eighteenth century, Walpole added

*writ* as a variant to his usage, possibly as a contraction of *written* (which is how it is described by Lowth (1762:74)) as can be seen from example 14:

14. If I had **writ** to you last week, I should have told you that the scene brightens up for the Court, that the petitions begin to grow ridiculous, and that the Opposition have succeeded lately in no one material point. (Walpole to Mann, 30 November 1769, in HWC 23: 155)

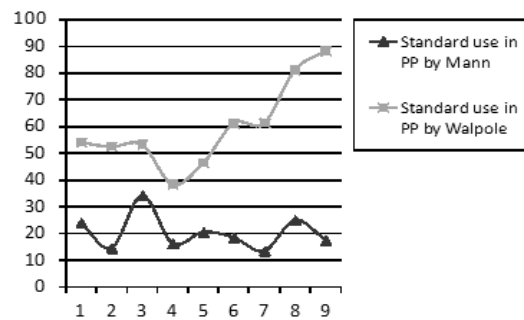


Figure 3.2. Overview of the percentage of standard and non-standard usage of PP forms in the language of Mann and Walpole across time

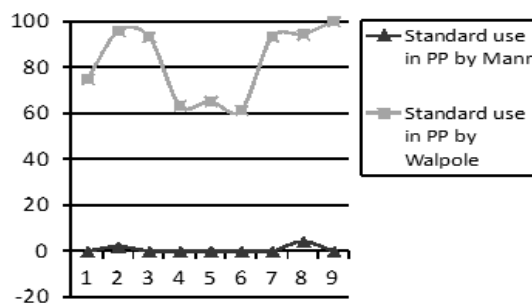


Figure 3.3. Overview of the percentage of standard usage of PP forms of the verb WRITE in the language of Walpole and Mann across time



Table 3.4.below presents all data on the use of WRITE in PRET and PP in the language use of Walpole and Mann, for a more detailed insight into the degree of standard and non-standard usage in the language of both men. There may be several explanations for the distribution of forms we find in this overview. Some of these explanations have a direct bearing on the fact that working with historical corpora is further complicated when one has to work with data wholly derived from published material. It is possible that Walpole simply started to use a new word, and that he was influenced in this by one of his other correspondents, or by an external influence. This possibility cannot be confirmed on the basis of the present corpus, as Mann did not use the form *writ*.

Period	1 (1740-1742)				2 (1742-1745)				3 (1745-1748)			
	HW		Mann		HW		Mann		HW		Mann	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Standard use in PRET	19	100	0	0	13	100	44	100	15	100	32	100
Non-standard use in PRET	0	0	4	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Standard use in PP	12	75	0	0	23	95.83	1	2.04	28	93.33	0	0
Non-standard use in PP	4	25	1	100	1	4.17	48	97.95	2	6.67	50	100
Period	4 (1748-1756)				5 (1756-1762)				6 (1762-1768)			
	HW		Mann		HW		Mann		HW		Mann	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Standard use in PRET	26	100	36	100	25	92.59	32	100	21	100	34	100
Non-standard use in PRET	0	0	0	0	2	7.41	0	0	0	0	0	0
Standard use in PP	21	63.64	0	0	17	65.38	0	0	16	61.54	0	0
Non-standard use in PP	12	36.36	33	100	9	34.61	31	100	10	38.46	39	100

Period	7 (1768-1774)				8 (1774-1779)				9 (1780-1786)			
	HW		Mann		HW		Mann		HW		Mann	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Standard use in PRET	20	100	26	100	17	100	27	100	30	100	34	100
Non-standard use in PRET	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Standard use in PP	28	93.33	0	0	17	94.44	1	4.35	40	100	0	0
Non-standard use in PP	2	6.67	32	100	1	5.56	22	95.65	0	0	23	100

Table 3.4. Overview of standard and non-standard usage of the verb WRITE in the language of Horace Walpole and Mann

Another viable option is that it was the influence of his secretaries who wrote and copied a number of letters for him. The high degree of standard usage in the early letters may in turn be influenced by the fact that many of the early letters in the Horace Walpole correspondence only exist in the form of later copies in Walpole's own hand, taken from letter books into which he copied his correspondence years after the letters were first sent, as Lewis explains:

The earliest letters after Walpole's landing in England were returned to him in 1749, nearly nine years after the correspondence began; the last were returned to him after Mann's death in 1786. Walpole seems to have begun his transcriptions of the letters in 1754. He **pruned the text** and wrote footnotes **to nearly all the early letters** and to many of the later ones (HWC 17: xli).

Moreover, “[w]hen he reached his letter to Mann of 22 April 1755 he resigned the labour of transcription to Kirgate, thereafter merely writing the headings of the letters and an occasional note” (HWC 17: xli). This coincides directly with the *blip* in use of the standard form for the Past Participle of WRITE (*written*), and also with the introduction of the form *writ* into Walpole's letters. It could

well be argued that this form may in fact have been introduced into the transcripts by Kirgate, Walpole's secretary. However, the later periods do not show this influence.

This effect is also not visible in the usage for the other irregular verbs (cf. Figure 3.1.), of which most non-standard forms do occur mostly in the earlier letters. As discussed above, Oldireva-Gustafsson (2002a:27) remarks that she eventually discarded Walpole's letters from her study because they were written in different hands, probably those of his secretaries, but it seems peculiar to say the least that Walpole would have corrected his own usage only for certain forms in the copying process. In such cases, usually only the spelling is affected, while grammatical features are as a rule left as in the original. For this reason it is generally considered safe to draw on even copied material for analysis, though in the case of grammatical studies only. Oldireva-Gustafsson also notes that she "could use the extracts from the Yale edition for a case study of variation in the use of the past participle variants for the verb *write*" (Oldireva-Gustafsson 2002a: 27). The introduction of the form *writ* for *written*, possibly by Kirgate, seems less striking in this light when we consider Lowth's classification of the form as a contraction, rather than a grammatical alternative (1762: 24).

Other small quirks may lead to similar questions: where do the two single occurrences of *catched* in Walpole's language come from, for example? They may be found in examples (15) and (16):

15. The Princess was at the feet of the bed; she **catched** up a candle and ran to him, but before she got to the head of the bed, he was dead (Walpole to Mann, 21 March 1751, in HWC 20: 232)
16. I **catched** at a little Lorrainer that sets out for Florence tomorrow, and made him promise to carry a letter for me (Walpole to Mann, 2 May 1740 NS, HWC 17: 18)

The form is not recorded in Lowth's grammar, which prescribed the regular form *caught* instead. Sundby *et al.* record *caught* as an irregular form that was criticised in grammars (1991: 304), however. Do these few instances reflect Walpole's own usage? If so, do they reflect evidence of his informal vernacular (cf. Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2005a: 118)? Influence of the secretary's usage on Walpole's language is less likely, since Kirgate copied mostly letters dated after April 1755, and I was in fact able to ascertain that both letters are in Walpole's own hand by consulting the digital images available in the digital edition of HWC. This point is of major concern in any study that will be dealing with data like the Horace Walpole correspondence, and the newly facilitated access to digital copies of manuscript letters greatly improves the possibilities of selecting data and interpreting 'stray' forms. Taking such drastic measures as in the case of Oldireva-Gustafsson (2002a) by excluding all letters of doubtful scribal provenance altogether would furthermore preclude the possibility of making use of otherwise valuable data for historical sociolinguistic research. I would argue that the data is still highly valuable, but that in interpreting any unusual deviations from an expected pattern the problem of the hand of the letters should be taken into account. The analysis presented here, despite the serious methodological problems I have pointed out when interpreting the data, nevertheless shows that Walpole's language is more standard than that of Mann, and that Mann's usage is more stable across time whereas Walpole's usage developed towards the norm of the standard of the time, foreshadowing usage as it is today.

#### 3.3.4. *The two Horaces' idiolects*

Another important finding on the basis of the data presented in this chapter is that both patterns of usage continue along lines that suggest that neither man

was directly influenced in their usage by the other. The question needs to be asked why Mann's usage, in contrast to Walpole's, did not change over time. Something to be considered here is the fact that Mann lived outside England during most of his life (see section 3.2): as an expatriate it is less likely that he would have been subject to ongoing changes in the English Language, even to the extent that his usage would not be influenced by that of his close friend Walpole, despite intensive and prolonged contact. Arnaud mentions a similar effect for Robert Browning:

We must remember that between the ages of 24 and 50 he lived in Italy (1836-1861), largely removed from the influence of his native community. This is not likely to have encouraged him to adopt a new development he already shunned. (Arnaud 1998: 133)

Het notes, however, that "this explanation is highly speculative" (Arnaud 1998: 134).

As for the idiolectal differences between the two correspondents, Table 3.5. provides a detailed overview of the nonstandard forms attested in their letters, both for the preterite and the past participle forms of strong verbs. In Table 3.5. below all non-standard forms indicated in the precept of grammars are italicised.

<b>Walpole: preterite forms</b>	<b>Walpole: past participles</b>
bade, <i>bad</i> , <i>bid</i> , broke, began, chose, caught, <i>catched</i> , forgot, got, spoke, <i>spake</i> , ran, wrote, <i>writ</i>	<i>bid</i> , bidden, broken, <i>broke</i> , begun, chosen, chose, caught, <i>catched</i> , forgotten, <i>forgot</i> , gotten, <i>got</i> , spoken, <i>spoke</i> , run, written <i>wrote</i> , <i>writ</i>
<b>Mann: preterite forms</b>	<b>Mann: past participles</b>
<i>bid</i> , broke, began, chose, caught, forgot, got, spoke, ran, <i>run</i> , wrote	<i>bid</i> , bidden, broken, <i>broke</i> , begun, <i>began</i> , chosen, chose, caught, forgotten, <i>forgot</i> , <i>got</i> , gotten, spoken, <i>spoke</i> , run, <i>wrote</i> , written

Table 3.5. Walpole and Mann's idiolects

Oldireva-Gustafsson (1999: 276) notes on the basis of her own study of the subject:

It seems that men of letters tend to employ a greater spectrum of variability than less educated writers. At the same time, the preference of the variant suffix *-en* [as in the forms *broken*, *bidden*, *written*, *chosen*, etc.], or at least its introduction into the set of possible paradigmatic variants appears to be a sign of a more advanced command of grammar.

This observation matches very well with the usage I have described for Walpole in the preceding section of this chapter: Walpole used slightly more variant participial forms (9 variant non-standard forms) than Mann (8 variant non-standard forms). He thus used *writ* and *wrote* alongside *written*, for example, but also *spake*, *bad* and even *catched* alongside *caught*. However, he also used more of the standard *-en* forms: I have attested *gotten* (proscribed by the grammarians of the period, but according to Oldireva-Gustafsson never used in her corpus, except by one writer; 2002a: 69) as well as *forgotten* in Walpole's usage, while he apparently preferred *broken* to *broke*. The number of variations in Walpole's language is greater than in that of Mann, though the degree of standard usage by Walpole is also greater: Walpole thus has a more variable idiolect, but he uses it in a more standard way.

### 3.4. Concluding remarks

Walpole and Mann both belong to the educated upper classes of the eighteenth century, and for this reason I expected to find similar usage in the language of their letters. The results, however, have proved to be very different. One explanation for this could be that Walpole, who was both linguistically interested as well as highly linguistically conscious as I have noted in the introduction to the current chapter as well as in chapter 1, was more

sensitive to language and the changing language than Mann. At the same time, and as already noted in section 3.3.4, Walpole was himself part of the linguistic climate in England, with its growing focus on language correctness. This was expressed both in the public press of the period, as Percy (2008) has shown, as well as in the increasing interest in normative grammars published at the time (Tieken-Boon van Ostade 2008b and 2008c). That Walpole was part of this climate, and presumably interested in what was going on, is evident from the fact that he acquired a copy of Lowth's grammar (see 3.3.2.). Whether he actually used it is a different question, and can in all likelihood probably never be proven. Sairio (2008:155), quoting Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2006), writes that "Lowth based his grammar not on his own language use, but on his perception of an upper-class norm, so the actual direction of the influence may have gone both ways". What Tieken-Boon van Ostade refers to here is the influence of actual usage, that of the aristocracy, on the norm presented by grammarians such as Lowth in his grammar, and, conversely, the shaping of usage by the normative grammars subsequently. This would also support the fact that Walpole's language use changed over time whereas Mann's remained stable: Mann was not part of the linguistic climate to the extent that Walpole was, a climate in which usage changed and was criticised in the public press, while rules based on that usage were laid down in grammars, further influencing usage as a result.

This chapter has illustrated and strengthened the idea that Walpole's usage reflects the linguistic climate or vogue of eighteenth-century England, in which the language was codified as part of the ongoing standardisation process of the language, which in turn significantly influenced that same linguistic climate, giving rise to an interest in prescriptivism among the general public. Mann's usage can be interpreted as providing an example of a kind of negative

evidence of what was going on at the time, in displaying usage that was more stable, and did not develop towards or in line with the changing norm. One might call this *expatriate lag* as a variation of the term *colonial lag*, used to describe the apparent retention of archaic features in the language varieties spoken in colonies. According to Bauer “this conservatism in colonial varieties is, rather unfortunately, termed ‘colonial lag’ – unfortunately because the term gives the impression that the colonial variety will (or should) one day catch up with the home variety, though this is unlikely to ever happen” (Bauer 2002: 5) Görlach (1987: 91), largely debunks the myth that is *colonial lag*, but Bauer notes that “this myth does, of course, have some foundation in fact ... [t]he relevant fact is that some regional dialects of English retain old forms which have disappeared from the standard form of the language” (Bauer 2002: 5). Mann’s usage is not *lagging* in a literal sense: it does not necessarily reflect an older norm, but his physical distance from the womb of the English language makes him less susceptible to the process of ongoing change. Walpole’s language seems to be ahead of the change: it was already approaching the norm before it was laid down in the grammars. Sairio (2008) showed a similar effect in the case of preposition stranding. The studies undertaken so far confirm the premise posed by Tieken-Boon van Ostade (2006) that the input for the norm as codified in grammars was influenced by the language of the upper classes and educated users.