Summary / Zusammenfassung
This research project traces politeness in the history of the English language. It argues that in Anglo-Saxon England politeness took forms that are very different from Present-day English politeness. Anglo-Saxon society was a society that was based on obligation and kin-loyalty with the added Christian values of "caritas" and "humilitas". Middle English – under French influence – adopted the concept of "curteisie" 'courteous behaviour' as a form of discernment politeness (as evidenced for instance in the use of the plural pronoun "ye" to address single addressees. Early Modern English is already characterized by a politeness system based on face work with a predominance of positive politeness. Present-day English is characterized by negative politeness, such as conventional indirectness ("Could you, please, ...?").

Publications / Publikationen

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