Introduction to Historical Linguistics (LING 611)

Homework #1

Do both parts (A and B). This is due in class, WEDNESDAY JANUARY 5.

A. Consider the following sentences from three periods in the history of English:

   ‘Now we should praise the guardian of the kingdom of heaven’

b. Whan that Aprille with its shoures soote (Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales*, c.1400)
   ‘When April with its sweet showers ...

b. Tush, never tell me! I take it much unkindly that thou, Iago,
   who hast had my purse as if the strings were thine, shouldst know of this.
   ‘Bah, never tell me! I take it much unkindly that you, Iago, who has had my purse
   as if the strings were yours, should know of this’
   (Shakespeare, *Othello* (1604))

Compare each example with its Modern English equivalent (some glosses are given, as needed; the translations are not literal but should give you an indication of what is going on in each example. Give a brief (NB: conciseness is highly valued here) listing of the elements that have changed and determine which level of linguistic structure is involved (phonology, morphology, syntax, etc.).

B. Keeping in mind that diachronic stability can be as interesting as diachronic change, and that there is no necessity a priori that language should change, brainstorm a bit and try to come up with ONE aspect of the human experience (involving life, institutions (etc.)) that has NOT changed over an extended period of time. Again, brevity is highly valued here.