

Evidence from English lexicography for otherwise unrecorded Anglo-Norman words, forms, and meanings

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What this talk will cover

- A very brief summary account of some ‘big picture’ data on the nature and extent of lexical borrowing into Middle English from French (principally Anglo-Norman).
- In more detail, two test cases, which show English borrowing from Anglo-Norman in a slightly different light from that assumed by most classic textbook accounts.

1. My main sources of data: the major dictionaries of English and French

1.1 The *Oxford English Dictionary*

- First published 1884-1928; supplemented in 1933 and 1972-1986.
- To date approximately 33% of the new edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *OED3*, has been published (www.oed.com)
- All documentation has been reconsidered and reviewed, including all etymologies, which have been compiled by a single team working to shared guidelines over a relatively short period of time.
- This enables us to review traditional, *OED*-derived, estimates of the numbers of words borrowed from each donor language over time.

1.2 Major period dictionaries of English drawn upon for this talk

- The *Middle English Dictionary*, covering the period 1100-1500 (but excluding most early printed books)
- The *Scottish National Dictionary*, covering English as used in Scotland (i.e. Scots) from c1700 to the present. (The earlier period is covered by the *Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue*).

1.3 Dictionaries of French (in brief)

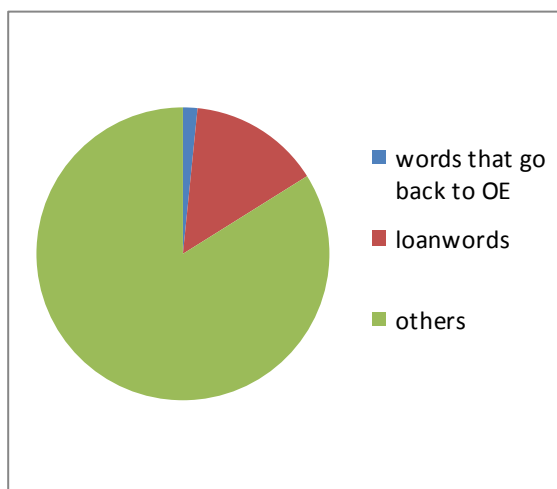
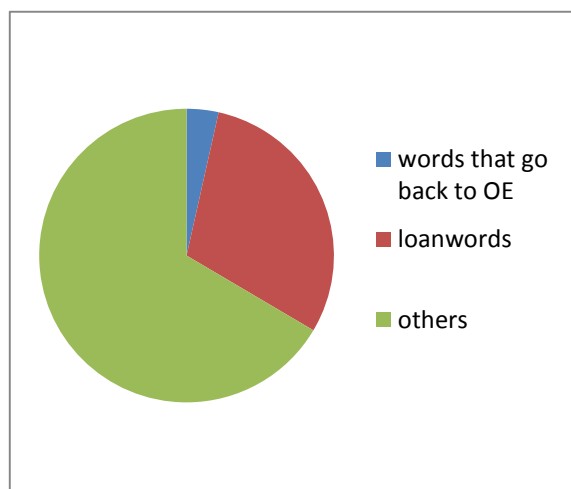
- The *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, 1977-1992; fully revised edition (*AND2*) 2003-
- *DEAF*, *FEW*, *DMF*, *AFW* (Tobler-Lommatzsch), *TLF* (and *TLFÉtym*)

2. The picture presented by the *OED*.

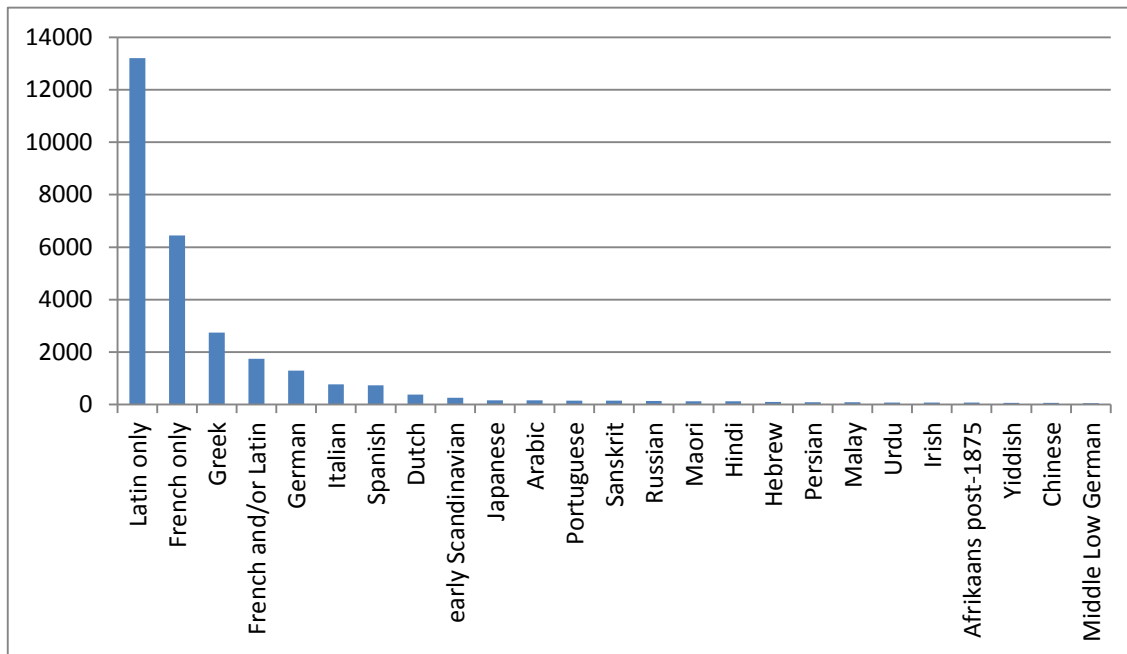
(For all data in this section see further Durkin 2014.)

2.1 (i) *OED* headword entries only.

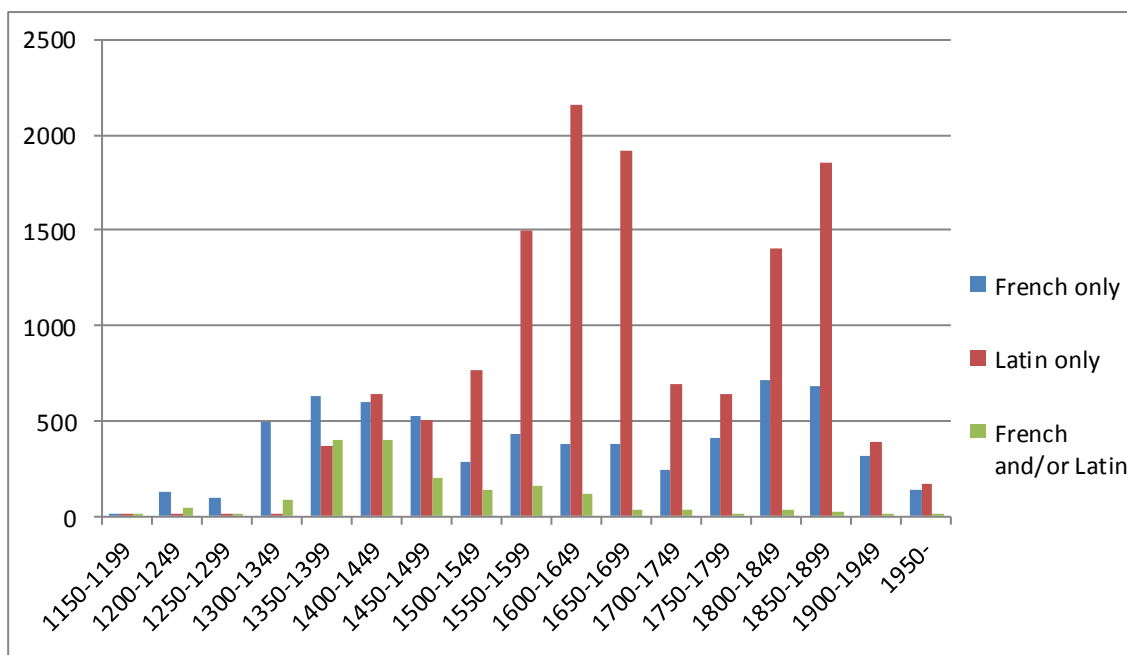
(ii) All lexical items in *OED*.



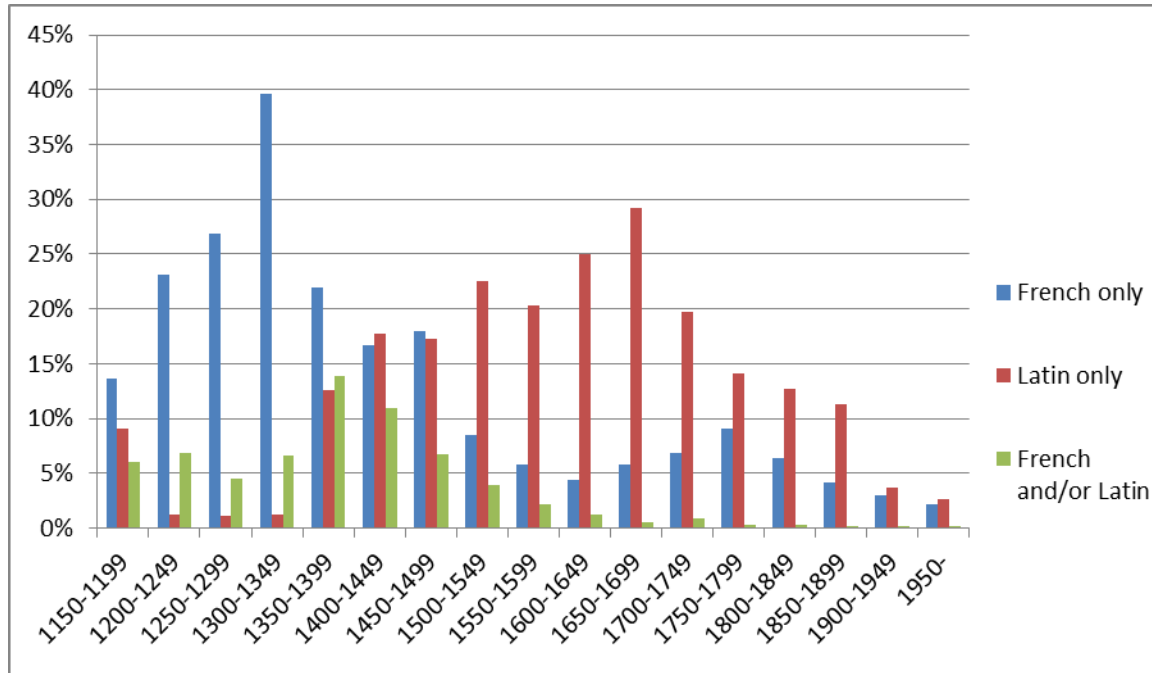
2.2 The most frequent donor languages (as reflected by parts of *OED3* so far published)



2.3 Loanwords from French, Latin, and French and/or Latin arranged chronologically



2.4 Borrowings from these sources as a proportion of all new words recorded in each period



3. Dual French and/or Latin borrowings in focus

- Dual ‘French and Latin’ etymologies have become much more frequent in English lexicography (compare Coleman 1995, Durkin 2002, 2014). They need to have a basis in linguistic data and in known contact situations: compare Schweickard (1986) on multiple etymologies in Romance lexicography.
- In English, high-volume borrowing from French in early Middle English established regular patterns for formal accommodation of both French and Latin words; Latin words may appear in French morphological ‘clothing’. Variation in the ending of a word seldom yields unequivocal evidence.
- Uncertainty largely centres on words which reflect the multiple layers of (learned) borrowing in French from Latin, e.g. Latin *pācificāre* > OFr *pacefier*, MFr *pacifier* (by contrast with e.g. Latin *pāc-*, *pāx* > (Anglo-)French *pes*, *pais* > ME *pees*, *pais*, modE *peace*, where phonological development of the stem vowel in French demonstrates that the English word is borrowed from French, not Latin)
- Thus, Latin verbs in *-ficāre* typically end in *-fy* in Middle English, because they had the form *-fier* in French. Early examples which established the pattern include *signify* (first attested in the thirteenth century), and *crucify*, *justify*, *specify* (all first attested in the fourteenth century). When *pacify* (in early use also *pacefy*) enters English in the late fifteenth century, formal criteria thus do not help us establish with confidence whether we have a borrowing from MFr *pacifier*, *pacefier*, or from Latin *pācificāre* (with remodelling of the ending on the predominant pattern).
- In such cases, *OED3* typically assumes input from both languages, especially where the range of meanings and uses shown by the English word points to the likelihood of multiple instances of borrowing in different areas of discourse over time.
- For instance, the range of meanings shown by English *person* (including specialist uses in religious discourse, in law, and in grammar), point to multiple converging influence from both French and Latin, within the multilingual contexts of later medieval England.

OED3 etymology for *person* n., extracts:

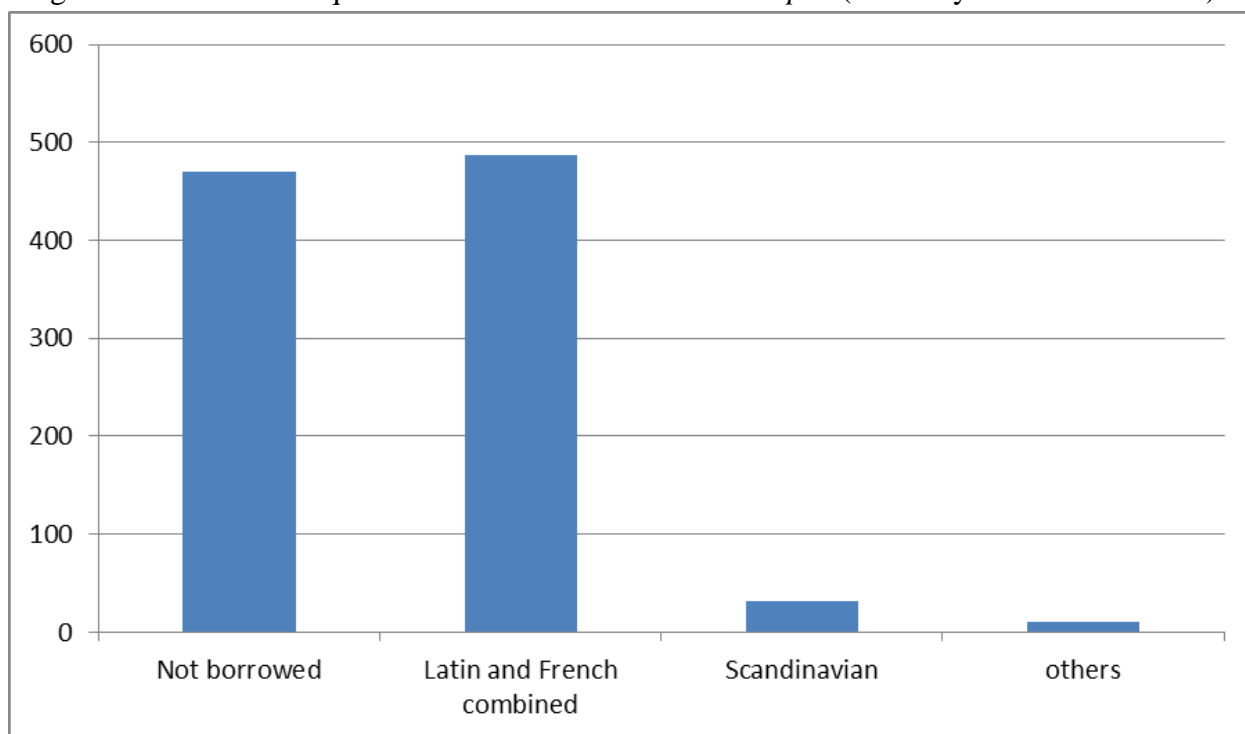
< Anglo-Norman *parsonne*, *parsoune*, *person*, *persoun*, Anglo-Norman and Old French, Middle French *personne*, *personne* (French *personne*) presence, appearance (c1135), important person (c1140 in Anglo-Norman), the body (c1170), individual human being (1174 in Anglo-Norman), person of the Trinity (1174 in Anglo-Norman), grammatical person (first half of the 14th cent. in Anglo-Norman), juridical person (1481 in Anglo-Norman),

and its etymon classical Latin *persōna* mask used by a player, character in a play, dramatic role, the part played by a person in life, character, role, position, individual personality, juridical person, important person, personage, human being in general, grammatical person, in post-classical Latin also person of the Trinity (early 3rd cent. in Tertullian), appearance, stature (9th cent.)...

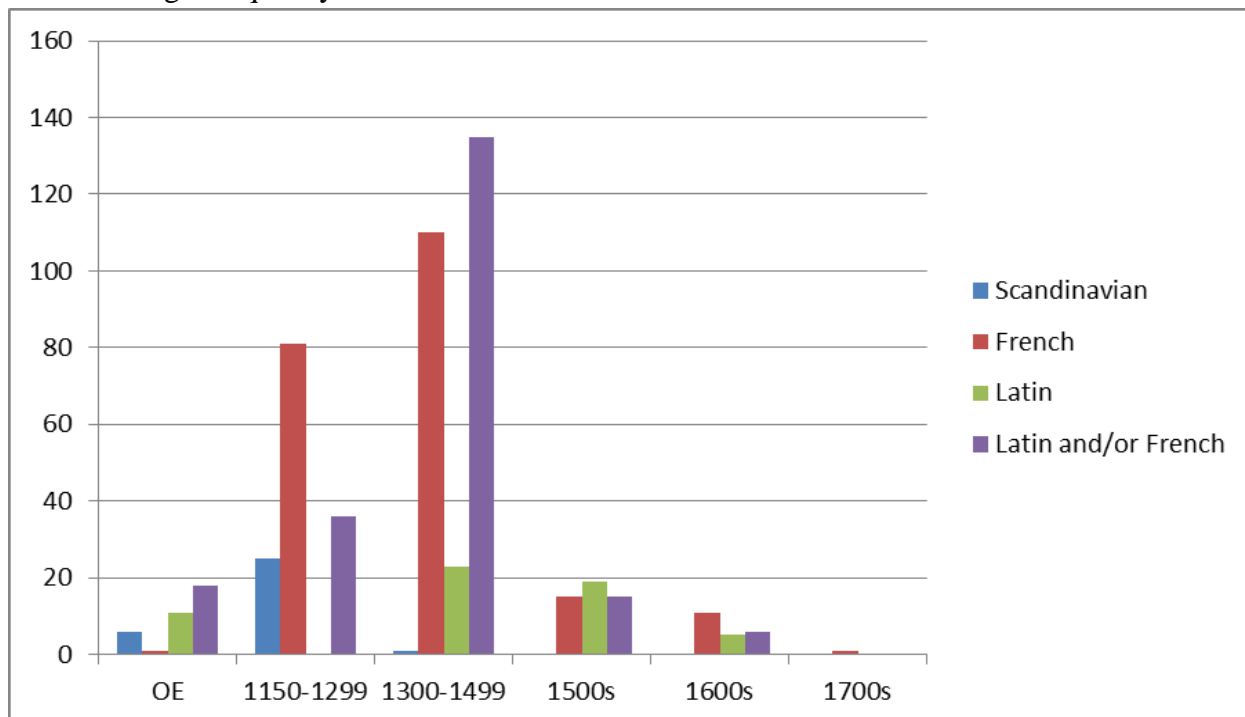
With *singular person* (see sense 7) compare Anglo-Norman *persone singular* (a1325 or earlier). With *in one's (own) person* (see Phrases 2) compare Anglo-Norman *en sa persone* (second half of the 12th cent. or earlier), classical Latin *in suā personā*. With *in (one's) proper person* (see Phrases 2) compare Anglo-Norman and Old French, Middle French *en (sa) propre persone* (c1250), post-classical Latin *in persona propria* (6th cent.), *in propria persona* (a1180, 1264 in British sources). With *in (the) person of* (see Phrases 3) compare Anglo-Norman *en la persone de* (second half of the 12th cent.). With *in person* (see Phrases 4) compare Middle French *en persone* (1464).

4. The impact of borrowing from French on the high-frequency vocabulary of English

Origins of 1000 most frequent words in *British National Corpus* (see analysis in Durkin 2014):



When the high-frequency loanwords were borrowed:



Words from French among the 1000 most frequent words in contemporary written English:

OE: *service* (earliest attested in an *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* entry for 1070), *war*

1150-1199: *court, large, standard,*

1200-1249: *air, authority, catch, change* (as noun and verb), *chapter, charge, city, degree, easy, fail, image, letter, matter* (noun), *measure* (noun), *oil, order* (hence *in order*), *park, pass* (verb), *pay* (verb), *piece, place* (noun, hence *place* (verb), *replace*), *point* (noun), *poor, price, prove, reason, rule* (noun), *save, simple* (hence *simply*), *story, term,*

1250-1299: *age, amount* (noun, < verb), *appeal, appear, arrive, available* (< *vail*, ultimately), *certain* (hence *certainly*), *chance, choice, claim* (verb), *clear* (hence *clearly*), *close* (verb), *company, contain, cost, country, couple, course, cover, defence, demand, despite* (preposition < noun), *discover, duty, enter, fine* (adjective), *force* (as noun and verb), *foreign, join, people, season, sir, size, sound, stage, suddenly* (< *sudden*), *treat* (hence *treatment*), *very* (earliest as adjective)

1300-1349: *account, achieve, allow, approach* (noun < verb), *argue, art, base* (hence *basic*), *carry, claim* (noun), *contract* (noun), *county, difference, disease, environment* (< *environ*), *face* (noun and verb), *feature, garden, hon* (= *honourable*), *increase* (verb), *issue, just* (adverb, < *just*, adjective), *language, level* (earliest as noun), *maintain, member, money, Mrs* (< *mistress*), *nice, number, office, paper, party, performance* (< *perform*), *power, proposal* (< *propose*), *purpose, push, quite, record* (noun), *return, river, round* (adverb and preposition, hence *around*, preposition and adverb), *science, space, suppose, sure, university, value,*

1350-1399: *able, affair, agree, apply, army, avoid, award* (noun), *benefit* (noun), *close* (adjective), *community, design* (verb), *determine, enjoy, ensure, especially* (< *especial*), *establish, express, financial* (< *finance*), *finish, increase* (noun), *million, movement, officer, please* (earliest as verb), *point* (verb), *policy, property, publish, range, receive, remain, remember, remove, sort, source, test* (noun), *total* (adjective), *village*

1400-1449: *obtain, report* (noun), *rest* (noun), *royal, security, set* (noun), *several, training* (< *train*), *view,*

1450-1499: *agreement, announce, bank, behaviour, committee, control* (verb), *department, effort, employment* (< *employ*), *encourage, government, page, police,*

1500-1549: *improve, mention, society,*

1550-1599: *control* (noun), *design* (noun), *develop, industrial, machine, model, national* (hence *international*), *procedure, research* (noun), *resource, responsibility* (< *responsible*)

1600-1649: *detail, identify, plan* (noun, hence also verb), *risk, role*

1650-1699: *attack* (noun), *attitude, group, hotel, list,*

1750-1799: *development*

Words from Latin and/or French (in some cases very tentative):

OE (showing later French input): *according to* (< *accord*), *April, cell, council, July, June, March, market, May, Mr* (< *master*), *note* (noun and verb), *October, oh, part, plant, table, title*

1150-1199: *serve,*

1200-1249: *case, cause* (hence *because*, also 'cos), *circumstance, figure, form* (noun), *general* (hence *generally*), *person, question, special, state* (noun; hence (via verb) *statement*), *suffer, use* (verb, hence also *used (to), user*), *use* (noun), *visit* (verb)

1250-1299: *capital* (noun), *colour, during* (< *dure*), *election, element, evidence, form* (verb), *intend, move, natural, nature, second, study, style, tax* (earliest as verb),

1300-1349: *bill, character, condition, continue, current, date, discussion, doctor* (also as *Dr*), *final* (hence *finally*), *hospital, labour* (noun), *minister, music, original, pattern, present* (verb and adjective), *profit, quality, region, require, response, single, subject, voice*

1350-1399: *accept, act* (noun), *action, actually* (< *actual*), *add, animal, application, argument, aspect, attention, car, centre, college, commission, common, consider, decide, difficulty* (hence *difficult*), *division, economic, effect, example* (hence *for example*), *experience, family, future, history, information, institution, involve, major, minute, moment, necessary, operation, opportunity, particular* (hence *particularly*), *patient, per, personal, position, possible, president, pressure, principle, probably* (< *probable*), *problem, process* (noun), *provision, public, real* (hence *really*), *refer, relation* (hence *relationship*), *represent, site, social, station, student, support* (verb and noun), *task, tend, usually* (< *usual*),

1400-1449: *activity, admit, affect, compare, customer, different, direction, economy, method, organisation, parent, period, practice* (< *practise*), *prepare, prime, rate, recent* (hence *recently*), *reduce, reflect, report* (verb), *sense, serious, structure,*

1450-1499: *concern* (noun, < verb; hence also *concerned*), *decision, director, factor, human, industry, interest* (noun), *legal, local, military, modern, production, relate, situation, type, union,*

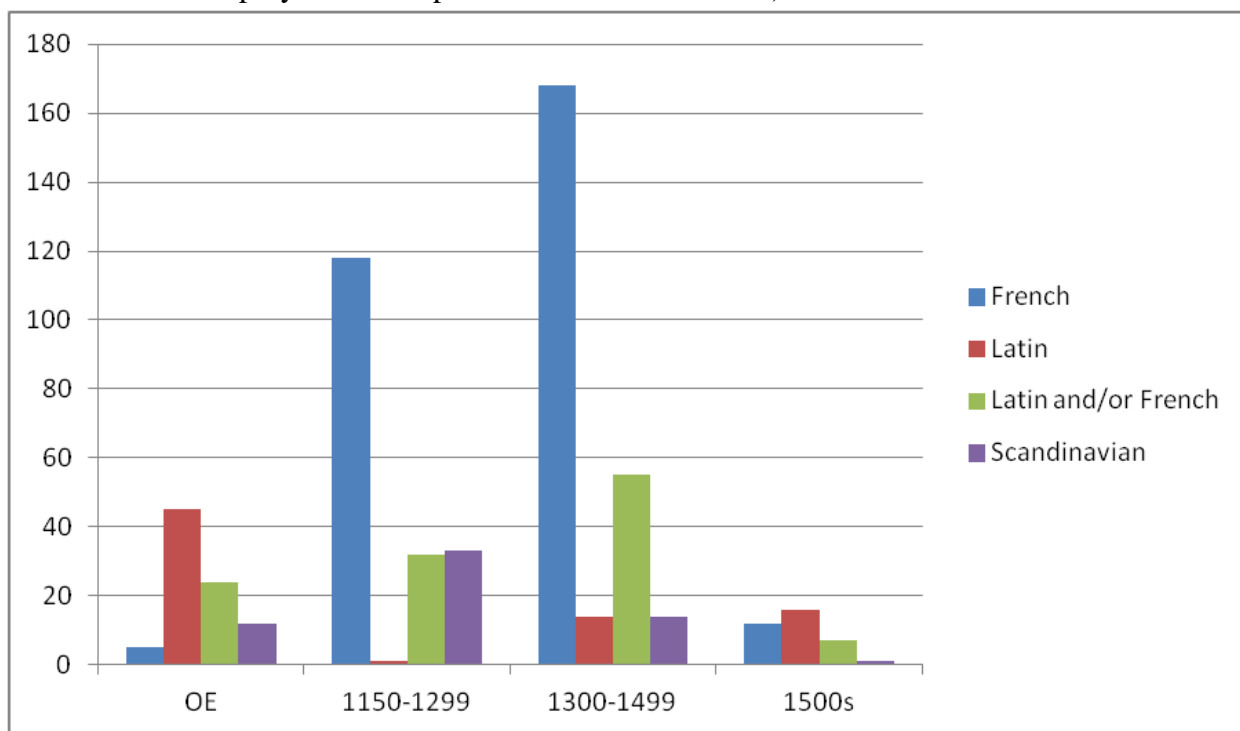
1500-1549: *association, attempt* (noun, < verb), *century, class, conference, education, explain, function,*

1550-1599: *computer* (< *compute*), *energy, event, expect, important, section, scheme, theory,*

1600-1649: *central, exist, programme, similar, specific, system*

5. The impact of borrowing from French on the ‘basic’ vocabulary of modern English

The main sources of loanwords in a very large basic meaning list (see Durkin 2014 41-45, 400-423, and for the framework employed see Haspelmath and Tadmor 2009)



Some examples: *to carry, soil, to cry* (although the meaning ‘weep’ is an innovation in English).

6. Can we pinpoint the transition from Anglo-French to continental French as the primary source of loanwords into English?

- Traditional philological methods, looking at doublets such as *cattle* or *catch* (reflecting phonological characteristics of Anglo-Norman) beside *chattel* or *chase* (reflecting ‘continental’ phonological characteristics) fail to take account of the dialectally mixed nature of Anglo-French. The evidence presented by the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* demonstrates amply the variety of formal types actually attested in Anglo-Norman.
- Looking at material in *OED3* edited with the benefit of *AND2* lets us at least see how often English has borrowed forms or meanings only recorded from insular sources, or forms and meanings only recorded in continental sources. (See detailed analysis in Durkin 2012, 2014.)
- The parts of *AND2* and *OED3* which can be compared directly are still very limited in extent, but preliminary analysis suggests:
 - There are very few English words attested earlier than 1380 for which an etymon is attested in continental French but not in Anglo-Norman. In the late 14th and 15th centuries, we begin to find more such cases.
 - This correlates closely with the period in which the range of functions of English in writing is expanding rapidly, and native-like command of Anglo-French is declining. Compare Ingham (2010a, 2011). Also period of shift in teaching of Latin, previously through medium of French, from 2nd half of 14th cent. through medium of English.
 - However, there are interesting counterexamples to this general picture, which perhaps act as useful reminders of the limitations of our surviving evidence. I will look at two examples here:
 - *hogmanay*, attested in a single source from Yorkshire in 1443, but perhaps reflecting much wider (and probably earlier) currency
 - kinship terms in *grand-*, which appear early in Middle English and in a wide range of text types, suggesting wide currency also in Anglo-Norman, even if evidence to support this is lacking.

7. Test case: *hogmanay*

- This term for New Year’s celebrations is emblematic of Scottish cultural distinctiveness within the British Isles.
- Although there is not an exact match in word forms, it is usually assumed that its etymon is a (northern) French word of highly variable form which probably shows as its ending *l’an neuf*.

- Range of historical spelling forms found in English (as recorded by *OED3*):

Forms: IME *hagnonayse* (*north.*), 18– *hogmanay*; *Eng. regional (north.)* 16– *hagmena*, 17–18 *hagman heigh*, 18 *hagnuna* (*Cumberland*), 18 *hogmena*, 18– *hagmana*, 19– *hagmanay*, 19– *hogamanay*; *Sc.* pre-17 *hagmane*, pre-17 *hagmonay*, pre-17 *hogmynae*, pre-17 *hoguemennay*, pre-17 17–18 *hogmanae*, pre-17 17– *hogmanay*, 17 *hagmenai*, 17 *hogmane*, 17 *hogmenae*, 17 *hogmenai*, 17–18 *hagmenay*, 18 *hanganay*, 18 *hoghmanay*, 18 *hogmana*, 18 *hogmanee*, 18 *hogminae*, 18 *hogminay*, 18 *hogmoney*, 18 *hugmenay*, 18 *huigmanay*, 18– *hangmanay*, 18– *hogmaney*, 18– *hogmenay*, 18– *hogmonay*, 19– *hanginay*.

- First part of etymology section in *OED3* entry:

Probably < Middle French *aguilanleu*, *haguirenleu* (14th cent.), *haguimenlo*, *aguilanleu*, *aguiloneu*, *aguillenueu*, etc. (15th cent.), Middle French, French *aguillanneuf* (15th cent.; now only in regional use) New Year's Day, New Year's celebration, New Year's gift, cry with which people (especially children) greet the New Year and demand a New Year's gift < a first element of unknown origin + (probably) *l'an neuf* the new year < *le* the + *an* year + *neuf* new. The Middle French and Older Scots words do not correspond exactly in form, although compare also modern French regional forms such as *oguinane*, *guignannée*, etc. (for further forms see *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* XXIII 160 at *étrennes*; for probable Middle French variants *hoguinenno*, *hoguilenno*, etc. see also *Dictionnaire étymologique de l'ancien français* at *hoguinenlo*).

- Its earliest attestation in a Scottish source is dated 1604.

- The *Scottish National Dictionary* comments explicitly: “In Scot. the word is prob. due to the French Alliance and had been borrowed a.1560.”
- In Scotland the “Old Alliance” with France (and against England) is charged with similar cultural significance to Hogmanay, and therefore it is worthy of note that a much earlier example has been uncovered from considerably south of the border in Yorkshire.
 - (The *Scotsman* newspaper reported *OED*’s revised entry in a two-page spread entitled “Whisper it, but Hogmanay was invented in Yorkshire” 31/12/2014.)
- A likely example of the word from Yorkshire in 1443 was reported in an article by R. E. Yarwood in the journal *Folklore* in 1984 (95/2 252-4). Yarwood gives its context as: “SHORTLY after Michaelmas 1444 Richard Whitwood, the collector of farms of Sir Robert Waterton in Methley, West Yorkshire, submitted his financial account for the preceding twelve months. Although his business was concerned principally with the collection of rents from demesne lands and with expenditure on maintenance and repairs within the manor and park, this account also contains a number of miscellaneous payments made by him at the lord's order. Their appearance here may be explained by the fact that Richard Whitwood also held the office of supervisor of the lord's household for the same year, for which office he submitted a separate account, now lost. Provided that all matters relating to the household were properly accounted for, it was perhaps of little consequence on which account many of them appeared.”
- The relevant entries are:

Et solutum xxxj die decembris magn. hagnonayse xijd. et parv. hagnonayse viijd. xxd. Et solutum primo die mensis Januarij Pasy munstrallo ex precepto domini xijd. Et solutum iiiij¹⁰ die mensis Januarij instrionibus Thome Haryngton ex precepto domini xxd.
- Rendered into modern English by Yarwood as:

[And paid on 31st December (for) large hagnonayse (12d.) and small hagnonayse (8d.), 20d. And paid on 1st January to Pasy, a minstrel, by the lord's command, 12d. And paid on 4th January to the players of Thomas Haryngton, by the lord's command 20d.]
- Like a good deal of evidence from post-Conquest medieval England, it is in fact unclear whether this document shows an instance of a Middle English word or of its (otherwise unrecorded) Anglo-Norman etymon. (For discussion of issues raised by this compare Trotter 2010, Schendl 2013, Schendl and Wright 2011.) However, here the final *-se* is most readily explained as a Middle English plural ending.
- Yarwood hypothesizes that the word may have come to Methley when Charles Duc d'Orléans was under the keeping of Sir Robert Waterton's grandfather, who was constable of Pontefract Castle – thus implying a direct borrowing from continental French. However, it seems to me more likely that it shows another instance of the influence of Anglo-Norman on many aspects of the language of manorial estates throughout later medieval England (compare e.g. Ingham 2009).

8. Test case: *grand-* in kinship terms

- Usually, the rich documentary evidence for Middle English, Anglo-Norman, and continental Old and Middle French, and the wonderful dictionaries supported by this evidence, enable English lexicologists to support the hypothesis that an English word is borrowed from French with evidence of attestation in French texts earlier than the first date of attestation found in English.
- Kinship terms with the prefix *grand-*, as in *grandmother*, *grandfather*, etc., provide an interesting counterexample, where close investigation of Middle English lexical data points to some interesting lacunae in the record for French.
- English *grand* ‘large, big’ (ME *graund*) < French *grand*
 - Contexts of use and phonological criteria suggest considerable input from Anglo-Norman.
 - It is recorded twice in the second half of the fourteenth century, and a few more times in the fifteenth century; it appears to have had only limited currency as a Middle English word.

- English *grand-* in kinship terms probably entered English separately from, and earlier than, the adjective *grand*.
 - It occurs in four words:
- Middle English *grandame* (later English *grandam*) ‘the mother of one’s father or mother, grandmother’
 - First recorded in English in a life of St. Margaret, preserved in a manuscript of *c*1225, and probably composed *c*1200.
 - This saint’s life belongs to a group of texts which often yield particularly early evidence for borrowings from French, at various different levels of register. (Compare Trotter 2003 on a related text.)
 - The next attestation is *a*1393 in the English poem *Confessio Amantis* by John Gower (who wrote major poems in Latin, Anglo-Norman, and Middle English), after which there are a number of examples from fifteenth-century sources.
 - The French word appears not to be attested before the end of the fourteenth century, and is not a lemma in the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*.
- ME *grandsire* ‘the father of one’s father or mother, grandfather’
 - First recorded *c*1300 in several texts from the *South English Legendary*, and is also attested in a number of other texts dating from the fourteenth century.
 - Old French *grantsire* is recorded from the twelfth century, but I am unaware of examples from Anglo-Norman sources.
- ME *grandfather* is probably modelled on Anglo-Norman **grant pere*.
 - First attested 1424 in the derivative formation *grauntfaderles* (hence showing that it has already become productive in combination with a suffix of native origin).
 - This first attestation is from a will, but by the middle of the fifteenth century there are also examples from religious texts (including a Bible translation), from a literary text, and from other types of legal records, and slightly later (*a*1466) there is also evidence from a personal letter.
 - Middle French *grant pere* is first attested *a*1389 in the sense ‘male ancestor’, but is apparently not attested securely before the mid fifteenth century in the sense ‘grandfather’. (*FEW* offers a dating of the twelfth century in its main text, but this appears to be hypothetical, as acknowledged in the etymological discussion of this word: *FEW grandis* 221/2, 223/2-224/1).
 - Anglo-Norman evidence again appears to be lacking.
- ME *grandmother* is probably modelled on Anglo-Norman **grant mere*.
 - First attested 1424 in the derivative formation *grauntmoderles*, in the same will in which *grandfather* first appears.
 - Within the next two decades there are further examples from other types of legal record, and one from a literary text.
 - Old French *grant mere* is attested as early as the thirteenth century.
 - Anglo-Norman evidence again appears to be lacking.
- Some conclusions: ME words in *grand-* indicate Anglo-Norman influence even on core kinship terminology (as do *uncle* and *aunt*, *nephew* and *niece*, *paternal*, *maternal*, *fraternal*, etc.)
- The earliness of the ME evidence, and the spread through different text types, point strongly to insular, Anglo-Norman borrowing.
- The existence of ample ME evidence when there is apparently none at all for Anglo-Norman indicates the value of detailed work on ME for telling us more about Anglo-Norman.

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