LEXICAL BORROWING IN A MEDIEVAL CONTEXT

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In a recent article in Modern Language Review, 'Anglo-French Lexical Contacts, Old and New,' I set out to show that the borrowing of items of vocabulary from one language to another is not a simple process whose working can be encompassed in one all-embracing formula, as scholars have attempted to do in the past, but that a number of different factors have to be taken into consideration in order to arrive at a satisfactory explanation of why a borrowing occurs at a particular moment and in a particular place. In that article my concern was solely with French and English, partly during the medieval period, but also in our own times. The purpose of the present study is quite different: in the first place attention will be concentrated on the borrowing process in the Middle Ages only; secondly, the area of investigation will not be confined to northern French and English, but will include Latin and Provençal. In comparison with the previous article, therefore, the present paper is at once more restricted in time but broader in geographical and linguistic scope.

Past generations of scholars faced with the problem of lexical borrowing have tended to view it as a straightforward filling of gaps in the overall vocabulary of a particular language or else as the mark of a desire for prestige. Both these views contain a measure of truth and are not to be rejected out of hand. For instance, in support of the idea of lexical borrowing being occasioned by the necessity to fill gaps in the existing vocabulary of a language one might cite the introduction into French of philosophical and scientific terms taken from Latin in the thirteenth century, terms such as *cavillacion*, *convertibilité*, *integument*, *sillogisme*, *triangle*, etc. This kind of borrowing appears

1 A lecture delivered in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester on Wednesday, the 12th of March 1980.
2 lxiv. 287–96.
LEXICAL BORROWING

when French began to be written systematically for purposes other than entertainment or edification. Similarly, in the important fields of medical and botanical knowledge, where again the thirteenth century saw the emergence of the vernacular as a disseminating force bringing new knowledge to a broader spectrum of the population, lexical borrowing from Latin in order to fill gaps was widespread over the whole area from England to Provence. The element of prestige involved in certain borrowings is a more recent phenomenon and might be illustrated by the adoption into French at the time of the Renaissance of many Italian terms relating to the arts. Clearly, here too it is often a question of filling gaps in the existing lexis. It would be wrong, therefore, to dismiss these explanations of lexical borrowing as being completely without foundation, but they certainly cannot be accepted as providing the whole answer to the problem. In the past few years a number of scholars have begun to stress the importance of a range of social and cultural factors in this question, but so far without producing any close demonstration of the operation of such factors in the medieval period.

Yet it is precisely this medieval period that offers the greatest challenge in respect of lexical borrowing, firstly because the linguistic conditions obtaining in the medieval world have long since disappeared and are often only imperfectly understood by our present age, and, secondly, because the considerable deficiencies that still exist in our published source material make lexicological work in the medieval field so much more difficult than in the modern period. The difficulties presented by the linguistic complexities of the Middle Ages will be dealt with more fully a little later in this paper. As far as the gaps in published source material are concerned, it often comes as a surprise even

1See Gisela Hilder, Der scholastische Wortschatz bei Jean de Meun, Tübingen, 1972.
to medievalists to learn that there are still large untapped reservoirs of medieval documents in Latin, French and Provençal, whose publication could hardly fail to increase very considerably our knowledge of the lexes of these languages. As long ago as 1916, in the Introduction to his Recueil de lettres anglo-françaises, Tanquerey wrote that just one section of the Public Record Office contained enough unpublished French material to fill twenty volumes as large as his own (p. iv); another single section of the same Public Record Office furnished Salzman with a mass of evidence in Latin, French and English for his Documentary History of Building in England down to 1540, although, regrettably, the documents themselves remain in large measure unpublished. All over the Languedoc area there are deposits of manuscripts whose existence is often revealed only by articles—usually of a historical rather than a philological nature—printed in reviews such as the Annales du Midi. These important primary sources, so essential for a true understanding of the development of the lexis of northern and southern French, remain hidden away in archive deposits because they have so far failed to attract much attention from the majority of the scholars who specialize in medieval vernacular language and literature. The reason for this is that these manuscripts seldom deal with the products of the imagination—heroic or courtly tales, saints’ lives and so on—but are for the most part administrative documents in the widest sense—accounts, inventories, business letters, petitions, contracts, reports and the like. Yet as such they contain a register of medieval vocabulary that is only poorly represented in the conventional literary works so frequently edited and re-edited. This means, in turn, that the non-literary register of medieval French and Provençal is inadequately represented in the standard dictionaries, since the bulk of quotations in Godefroy and the vast majority of those in Tobler-Lommatzsch are taken from literary sources. The narrowness of approach that characterizes the Tobler-Lommatzsch is a matter of deep disappointment from the lexicological point of view, since this new dictionary—still not completed—was intended to mark a big advance on the nineteenth-century Godefroy. In many respects, however, it has

turned out to be less rich than its predecessor. As far as the
dictionaries of Old Provençal are concerned, a fresh start needs
to be made using a far wider range of source material.¹

Lest it might be thought that this unpublished administrative
material is of only minimal importance historically and culturally,
however valuable it might be to the lexicologist and lexicographer,
it may not be out of place to draw attention, if only in passing, to
the recent statement by the distinguished medieval historian
Régine Pernoud to the effect that only a hundredth part of the
writings of a figure as important as Stephen Langton has so far
been published and that, for want of the publication of the
original sources, our knowledge of even Saint Louis is second-
hand.²

To return, however, to the central issue of the borrowing of
items of vocabulary from one language to another. Perhaps the
best-known aspect of lexical borrowing concerns the introduc-
tion of learned vocabulary of the kind mentioned at the beginning
of this paper. Whilst much of the basic, everyday vocabulary of
French may be traced back to Latin in accordance with patterns
of sound-change elaborated long ago by the Neo-Grammarians,
there is found from medieval times forward another layer of
terms whose form differs only minimally from that of its Latin
original and which has clearly not been subjected to the phonetic
wear and tear that has gradually made the ‘popular’ or ‘etymolo-
gical’ stratum of vocabulary so different in appearance from the
Latin out of which it has developed. The clearest and simplest
illustration of this may be found in the numerous pairs of doublets
—words derived from the same Latin original but taken into
French by different routes, the one popular, the other learned.
For instance, in the case of the pairs frêle/fragile (< fragilis),
meuble/mobile (< mobilis), sevrer/séparer (< separare), the first

¹See ‘The Need for a New Dictionary of Old Provençal’, Proceedings of the
First Conference on Medieval Occitan Language and Literature (Birmingham,
1979), pp. 8, 1–11.

²Pour en finir avec le Moyen Age (Paris, 1977). ‘Il est extraordinaire de penser
que le catalogue complet des actes de Saint Louis n’a pas encore été dressé . . .’
(p. 130); ‘nous n’avons de son règne qu’une connaissance de seconde main’
(ibid.); ‘de l’oeuvre d’Etienne Langton, un centième seulement à être publié’
(p. 131).
element is of popular origin, the second a later learned borrowing from Latin. For generations now scholars have been able to draw up long lists of words whose latinate form points to their having been introduced into French in a different way from the basic etymological or popular vocabulary. All this is so well documented as to require no further elaboration, and it is usually assumed that the extensive body of learned borrowings now present in French was brought in by generations of bilingual clercs in need of new terms to express in the vernacular concepts of an intellectual kind hitherto handled only in Latin.

Whilst not wishing to call into question the main argument behind this explanation of the large-scale adoption of learned vocabulary into French, attention must be drawn to certain difficulties it often fails to resolve. To take just one simple example—baptiser. The modern French baptiser is accepted as a learned borrowing, ultimately derived from Greek and appearing in its modern form as early as the eleventh century. This is usually the sum total of information given about it, but it is only an abridged version of the real development of the Latin baptisare in French. For centuries after the appearance of this modern learned form baptiser Old French used a whole series of more etymological forms without ‘p’—bateier, batoier, batier, bautoier—and semi-learned forms with a ‘p’—baptaier, bapteier, baptyer, baptoier. The noun baptême tells the same story, appearing early in its latinate form, but alongside popular and semi-learned forms such as baptisement, baptisment, baptizement, baptezerie, baptoïement, baptisage, baptire, baptisement, baptisaison, baptiseure, baptisterie, all with the same meaning. Up to the end of the Middle Ages, then, there were many forms indicating ‘baptism’ and ‘to baptise’, and this is typical of the lexis of medieval French as a whole, although this fact is seldom stressed in the manuals. It is tempting to explain the appearance and eventual triumph of baptême and baptiser by simply saying that it was natural that a clerical ceremony should call for a latinate name, hence the introduction and adoption of the learned forms. This, however, is to discount the fact that all the writers who used the popular and semi-learned forms must, by definition, have been clercs brought up on Latin. Moreover, at the other end of the human life-span, the modern
French ensevelir is a popular, not a learned form, the latinate borrowing sepelir and other similar variants having been lost from the language before the end of the Middle Ages, whilst the synonymous enterrer is a purely French coinage with no Latin antecedent. It must be admitted that burial is no less clerical a ceremony than baptism, so there must be some explanation other than the superficial one to account for the different linguistic outcome in these two cases. This explanation is to be sought not in the earlier period of medieval French and in the filling of a supposed gap by a learned borrowing, but rather in the later Middle Ages and especially the sixteenth century and in the desire of that age to make French as latinate as possible.

This brings us to the question of the difficulty of understanding the linguistic situation in the Middle Ages that was mentioned earlier. The problem in this case, as so often, is that our modern desire to see everything fit neatly into one or other of a number of set categories does not correspond to the reality of the linguistic situation in medieval France. The idea of having one form to represent one concept and of keeping one meaning for each form has no place in medieval French, where very often a number of forms cannot be validly separated as to meaning and where a single form can have a very wide range of senses. It is not an accident that France produced neither a grammar nor a dictionary of French during the Middle Ages. (Even in modern French this confused state is largely perpetuated, despite the efforts of many generations of grammarians, lexicographers and lexicologists from Malherbe onwards.) Then again, our cultural perspective encourages us to view the development of French vocabulary in relation to its state in the last quarter of the twentieth century, looking back on its development by using the presentday language as a yardstick. Yet to understand fully the medieval situation we must try to see the lexis of medieval French in its own context, taking account of the evolving cultural situation of the period.

One of the essential factors of this cultural situation that is often not given due consideration is the massive and enduring presence of medieval Latin as a major force in both literary and also linguistic terms. Although E. R. Curtius transformed attitudes
towards medieval Latin literature by his pioneering studies over thirty years ago, it is only in the last few years that scholars have come to recognize the true importance of medieval Latin in the domain of lexical development in the Romance languages. In fact, not until 1975, with a forceful article by Kurt Baldinger in the ZRP, was attention focused squarely on the contribution made to French vocabulary specifically by medieval, as distinct from classical Latin. Pointing out that the monumental FEW only rarely refers to texts in medieval Latin when dealing with the sources of French words, Baldinger states quite bluntly that failure to devote adequate attention to the task of publishing scientific material written in the Latin of the Middle Ages has distorted our view of the development of the vernacular lexis, and he goes on to insist on the closely intertwined relationship between the specialized Latin of scientific works and charters on the one hand and medieval French on the other.\(^1\) Baldinger's argument is just as valid for the domain of medical and botanical terminology, where modern editions of all the relevant texts—both Latin and vernacular—are a necessity if we are to understand fully the development of the French lexis in these areas. As with the vernaculars of the medieval period, Latin written at that time has all too often been edited and studied by scholars only if it had literary/historical or philosophical/theological interest. The absence of an up-to-date comprehensive dictionary of medieval Latin on the scale of Lewis and Short has meant that it has always been difficult to track down many terms occurring in medieval Latin texts but not used in Classical Latin at all or used there in senses different from those obtaining in medieval Latin;\(^2\)

\(^1\) Zum Übergang von der lateinischen zur französischen Fachterminologie im 14. Jahrhundert' (pp. 485–90). 'In Wirklichkeit erfolgte die Entlehnung sehr oft aus dem Latein des späten Mittelalters, besonders wenn es sich um wissenschaftliche Fachtexte handelt' (p. 485); 'Nur selten wird im FEW auf die lat. Texte des Mittelalters hingewiesen' (p. 487); 'Dass man bisher die lat. Fachtexte des Mittelalters nicht in stärkerem Masse berücksichtigt hat, liegt sicher daran, dass sie noch schlecht erforscht sind' (p. 485); 'die französische Lexicologie hat dann keine Entschuldigung mehr, diese genetisch wichtige Fachliteratur in straflich leichtsinniger Weise zu übersehen' (p. 490).

\(^2\) E.g. stillicidium: 'rain-water' in Classical Latin, 'gutter' in medieval Latin; venabulum: 'hunting-spear' in Classical Latin, 'buckstall, trap' in medieval Latin; lumarium: 'smoke-chamber for ripening wine' in Classical Latin, 'smoke-
in addition, it has meant that the sources from which such a
dictionary of medieval Latin would have to draw its material
have not all been thoroughly examined. It is only when dictionary
material needs to be gathered from a wide variety of sources that
all kinds of obscure and neglected texts are combed and are
often found to reveal insights going far beyond the utilitarian
purpose that originally led to their study. There is little doubt
that the complete publication of the several large-scale diction-
aries of medieval Latin now being actively prepared and edited
both in England and on the continent will contribute enormously
not only to our knowledge of the language itself, but also to our
understanding of the culture for which it was a most important
vehicle.

In the case of medieval England the problem is aggravated,
since here we have not two, but three languages in use during
the whole period in a complicated and constantly changing way.
In a recent book of fundamental importance to all who deal with
Post-Conquest England, M. T. Clanchy has set out in detail the
way in which English, French and Latin could all be used in the
transmission of a royal order or in the same court case. ‘A royal
message to a sheriff in the thirteenth century might have been
spoken by the king in French, written out in Latin, and then read
to the recipient in English’ (p. 160). This, however, is simplicity itself
in comparison with the linguistic situation in the courts. ‘First of
all, the jurors were presented with the justices’ questions . . . in
writing in either Latin or French. They replied orally, probably in
English, although their answers were written down as veredicta
by an enrolling clerk in Latin. When the justices arrived in court,
the chief clerk read out the enrolled presentments or veredicta
in French, mentally translating them from Latin as he went along.
On behalf of the jurors, their foreman or spokesman then
presented the same answers at the bar in English. Once the
presentments, in both their French and English oral versions,
were accepted by the court, they were recorded in the justices' plea rolls in Latin' (p. 161). It is clear, then, that Latin, French and English must have been in daily contact in a number of spheres—administration (royal and ecclesiastical), the law, education—and that, given such a degree of close contact, a good deal of borrowing from one language to another must inevitably have taken place.

At this point, however, it is important to recognize that, as Clanchy's example makes very clear, although all three languages were used together in certain contexts, they were never simply interchangeable. English, the mother tongue of the whole population apart from a limited and dwindling number of Frenchmen around the person of the king, was always the only language of the three that could hope to cover the complete range of the spoken lexis, whilst French and Latin were—in Clanchy's terms—the languages of record, the languages in which, from the late twelfth century onwards, laws, royal decrees, petitions, business transactions, historical events of all kinds were increasingly recorded for posterity. And even here an important distinction needs to be made: French, whilst less and less a true vernacular in England after the twelfth century, in the sense that it was the native language of only a small group largely made up of nobles, was nevertheless a living language, the vernacular of a large and powerful kingdom just across the Channel, with whom close ties of blood and culture still existed long after the loss of Normandy in 1204. It was also the language in which a very considerable body of literature of all kinds was written in England for widespread entertainment, edification and instruction.\(^1\) In sharp contrast, Latin had ceased to be a vernacular centuries ago: long before this time and long afterwards, it was to a very great extent a language of record and advanced instruction only, a learned language known only to the few and so quite unable to renew its lexical resources in any natural, spontaneous way. These distinctions between the languages used in England during the medieval period are not without bearing on the nature of the lexical borrowing that took place here.

Whilst the importance of borrowings made by the vernaculars from medieval Latin is now beginning to be recognized and will probably become a major area of research in the next generation if Baldinger's sharp admonitions are heeded, we cannot ignore the traffic in words moving in the opposite direction—from the vernaculars into medieval Latin. This area of enquiry has not been given very much attention up to the present, yet it is certainly worthy of study for the light it sheds on whole groups of vernacular terms that are not always recorded very early in the vernaculars themselves and also for the overall view it gives of the role of medieval Latin in relation to the vernaculars. In a paper given in Naples in 1974\(^1\) Frankwalt Möhren was able to show that a number of agricultural terms recorded for continental French only at a late date in the etymological dictionaries are to be found much earlier in Anglo-Norman and earlier still in Anglo-Latin documents, thinly disguised as Latin words but clearly French in origin. This means that they must have been in current vernacular use, probably on both sides of the Channel, long before the time suggested by the etymological dictionaries. As with all dictionaries, etymological dictionaries are only as good as their source material allows them to be. Any restriction in that source material will inevitably be reflected in the dictionary itself. It is not an accident that Möhren's terms belong to a non-literary register of language, one that has received much less attention from scholars than the standard literary register represented by the mass of published texts. Another similar case is provided by documents on architecture. These seem to have been given no attention at all, although they exist in number and are potentially full of lexicological information. For the purposes of the present paper it will suffice to confine examples to a small selection of those given in Salzman's *Documentary History of Building in England down to 1540*\(^2\) and Mortet's *Recueil de Textes relatifs à l'Histoire de l'Architecture*.\(^3\) These examples, however, must be understood as amounting to no more than a glimpse of the

\(^{1}\) 'La Terminologie anglo-normande de l'Agriculture', in *XIV Congresso internazionale de Linguistica e Filologia romanza, Atti IV*, pp. 143–57.


\(^{3}\) Paris, 1929.
lexicological material that a thorough research study would undoubtedly reveal.

It is well known that later medieval Latin deteriorated badly and the ludicrous bastard Latin full of borrowed vernacular terms that is to be found in documents towards the end of the medieval period is nothing new. For example, in Salzman’s documents for 1491 there is an account pro sawying unius walnotre et hewyng (p. 252). Such cases abound at that period and need no further illustration. What may, however, be less well known is the early date at which this process occurs. Evidence from continental France suggests that this decking out of vernacular terms with a semblance of Latin was common practice at least as early as the twelfth century, if not before. In Normandy for 1198 records provide the following illustrations of how very much scribes needed to have recourse to their vernacular in order to fill out their defective Latin:

In operatione barbekenne de Danvill
Pro i mille leri emptis ad faciendum picoisos
operatione domororum et heriçonorum et fossatorum
boskeronis; hotariis
Flecharis qui faciebant flechas ad engueinnas

Barbekenne is clearly nothing more than the Old French barbacan, and picoisos simply the Old French picois, a sort of javelin; heriçon, a wooden obstacle bristling with long spikes; the boskeronii and hotarii, respectively, are forest workers and building workers who carry hods, whilst in the last example payment is being made to fletchers (arrow-makers) for their arrows used in the engueinnas, an adaptation of the Old French engaigne, a throwing weapon.¹ Even earlier than this, in 1190, a document from Autun deals with the rebuilding of the antiquum municipium, cum fossatis et clausuris ligneis et chaufaludis et bre[les]chis,² which are platforms and brattices—Old French eschaufaut and bretesche. In a slightly later document of 1234 a Latin form eschaufaudis occurs, which is even nearer to the Old French.³ Still in the realm of military terminology, Mortet’s docu-

ments give us *krenellare* at the beginning of the thirteenth century and *trebuchetum* for 1245, representing Old French *creneler* and *trebuchet*, a stone-throwing machine.

Exactly the same phenomenon is recorded about the same time in England. No later than 1212 Salzman's documents mention *torchiatores*, plasterers who put up the walls of wattle and daub. The form of this word shows that it is no more than a thinly disguised *torcheurs* and not a genuine Latin word at all. The dictionaries of medieval French, however, do not attest *torcheur* before 1308, although Mortet gives an example of it in a document of 1287 (p. 307). Its borrowing into Anglo-Latin in 1212, then, shows that it must have been in current vernacular use in England—and, therefore, in France from where it came—nearly a century before its first recorded attestation. Another case in point is that of *chuchatores* (p. 69) who are found in 1237. Context shows clearly that these are workers who helped the masons, and they would appear to be related to the *cucherius*, 'stone-layer', given in the *MLWL* for 1238. So far, though, a vernacular form of *chuchator* has not been found, so the word is not recorded in the dictionaries of medieval French, in spite of its double *ch* which points unerringly towards its being French rather than genuine Latin. For 1247 Salzman's documents attest the form *pilera buterica* for 'buttresses' and for 1251 the ablative plural *columnpis botericis*, forms that are supported by *butteracia* given in the *MLWL* for 1249. Yet an Anglo-Norman form *arche boteraz* has not been found in documents before 1315, whilst Godefroy's first example of *arc boutant* goes no further back than 1387. The form of the words *buterica*, *botericis* and *butteracia* suggests strongly that all are derived from a French original based on the verb *bouter*, 'to thrust', so that it looks as though we have here borrowings into medieval Latin from a French original that was not recorded until much later.

This is not just an unsuppressed assumption on my part, because on occasion it can be shown without any doubt that

1Ibid. p. 273.

2Godefroy, VII, 749c; Tobler-Lommatzsch simply refers to Godefroy without bothering to give any quotation. Being essentially a literary dictionary, Tobler-Lommatzsch does not pick up the Mortet attestation.
medieval Latin forms are indeed borrowed from French architectural terms. For instance, the MLWL has a form lambruzcari ‘to panel’ for 1228; the word turns up in Salzman’s documents as lambruscare in 1245 (p. 258) and as a past participle in camera reginae lambruisata in Soissons in 1248.¹ A century before this, however, the Anglo-Norman historian Gaimar was using the French root form lambre ‘panelling’ in his Estoire des Engleis, written before 1140, and derivative forms lambrins and lambresche are found in the Anglo-Norman Roman d’Alexandre about 1165.² Confirmation of the French origin of this group of terms for ‘panelling’ is provided by an interesting quotation given by Salzman for 1240, when building was being undertaken at the Tower of London. In connection with the construction work reference is made to a parietem in modo lambruschure (p. 382), showing that the scribe was obliged to use the French form lambruschure because he had no genuine Latin term at his disposal. Oddly enough, however, lambruschure has simply not been picked up by the two standard dictionaries of medieval French, so that we have the curious situation in which a French word is recorded solely in a Latin document written in England. Such cases lend point to the need for the publication of all available source material, both here and in France.

The state of our present knowledge of the lexical resources of the languages used in medieval England is so incomplete that any attempt to draw detailed conclusions about borrowings could be dangerous. This may be illustrated by looking at the development of just two terms—‘falcon’ and ‘frame’. As early as 1257 a Winchester document quoted by Salzman refers to a carpenter making faucon’ (p. 324). Although Salzman does not specify the language in which the document is couched, simply giving the one word faucon’ in the original, we must assume that it is Latin, or, more probably, French. Elsewhere in his book he quotes accounts from Vale Royal for 1278 containing the derivative form faukonarii, which he explains thus: ‘A “falcon” appears to have been a kind of crane or windlass; these were, no doubt, the men who worked it’ (p. 70). The MLWL, however, knows

nothing about this derivative at all and lists the simple *falco* ‘the horizontal axle of windlass’ only from 1317, seventy years after Salzman’s first attestation. The *u* of both ‘faucon’ and *faukonarii* in place of the Latin *l* (which would have given *falconarii*) points yet again in the direction of a borrowing from French, but the FEW (III, 381) has no mention of *falco/faucon* as a crane, the only technical sense given being that of a small cannon no earlier than the sixteenth century. The recent publication of the Anglo-Norman *Roman d’Alexandre*, however, shows *faucon* as some kind of siege weapon by c.1165,¹ over a full century earlier than Salzman’s quotation and no less than four centuries before the FEW’s cannon. It is evident that only the serious deficiency in our published source material prevents us from being able to recognize and follow through a number of technical senses that must have attached to the *falc* root from the middle of the twelfth century (or perhaps even earlier) up into the sixteenth. In this connection it must not be forgotten that the *Roman d’Alexandre* just happened to be published in 1978 as a normal addition to a series of literary texts aimed very largely at entertainment. No thought of any contribution to technical vocabulary was ever in the editor’s mind, yet but for this chance publication we would not be in a position to account at least in part for the development of *falco*.

Whilst *faucon* most probably started its medieval career as a technical term in French, *frame*, on the other hand, would appear to be of English origin and can be shown to have been borrowed into both Anglo-French and Anglo-Latin during the medieval period. The new dictionary of medieval Latin now being prepared in this country will show *frama* in a Pipe Roll of Henry II in 1159 and *framatura* in a similar document of 1181, both terms referring to the framework of a building.² Until recently, then, it looked as though an English word was simply being latinized for the purposes of record, since no trace of any similar French word had been found. Once again, however, it is the chance publication of the

¹*Un chastel i ferme, les murs en fist forz,*
*E porte ses faucons pur ruer as porz.* (vv. 7229–30)

²I am grateful to Dr D. Howlett, who is in charge of work on the dictionary, for permission to mention these forms.
Roman d'Alexandre that has thrown a new light on the development of the word and, in so doing, enables us to correct an error that occurs in both standard dictionaries of Old French, Godefroy and Tobler-Lommatzsch. In a passage describing a splendid eastern palace the writer tells how Alexander looked up from the marble floor, his gaze travelling up the golden pillars to the ceiling where there was a marvellous vine whose stock was of silver, with grapes of crystal on a trellis-work of emeralds. The emperor's gaze is said to go up to the *framente*, and the leaves of the vine are described as being painted on the *enframeure*.¹ The only satisfactory interpretation of *framente* and *enframeure* in this context would be 'framework of the ceiling'. This means, in effect, that the English 'frame' must have been borrowed into French at least as early as into Latin and possibly earlier, since by c.1165 it had acquired in French both a prefix *en-* and a suffix -*eure* to give *enframeure*. These morphological procedures are indicative of the genuine absorption of a term into the borrowing language and normally do not take place overnight.²

Neither Godefroy nor Tobler-Lommatzsch lists *framente* or *enframeure*, for obvious reasons, but both have a term *framure* which they place under *fermeure*,³ with a quotation from the Anglo-Norman *Li Quatre Livre des Reis*. Tobler-Lommatzsch have clearly borrowed uncritically from Godefroy here, since they not only use the same quotation but take it from the same ancient Leroux de Lincy edition when they might have been expected to use the much more recent Curtius one. Their interpretation too is borrowed from Godefroy, who regards *framure* as a form of *fermure* with metathesis. For Godefroy, the root meaning is 'closing' and he glosses the form *framure* as 'place fortifiée, forteresse, fortification': Tobler-Lommatzsch follow suit, glossing it as 'Verschluss'. Curtius too, in his 1911 edition of the text, adopts

¹ *Esgarde les columnes, l'overe e la coverture.*
*Entre la framente garde par aventure*
*Une vigne . . . .*
*De vertes emeraudes fu la treillure,*
*La loille vouseseise, painte desuz l'enframeure.* (vv. 4289–96)
² See 'Anglo-French Contacts, . . . ' referred to above.
³ Godefroy, III, 763a; T–L, III, 1751–2.
Godefroy's interpretation, giving in his glossary 'framure = fermeüre befestigter Platz, Befestigung'. All these eminent authorities, however, are wide of the mark, simply because none of their proposed renderings will fit the context. *Li Quatre Livre des Reis* is an early translation into Anglo-Norman of the Old Testament *Books of Kings*, and at the point from which the quotation containing *framure* is taken the text is dealing with the building of the Temple of Solomon. The writer describes how Solomon built the walls, floors and roof, but nowhere is there any reference whatever to fortification or locking things up. The context states clearly that a floor is laid down on an upper storey as a *framure* and goes on to say that this *framure* on the third storey was *plate*.¹ It is quite impossible to reconcile these facts with any idea of fortifications which would have had to be the opposite of flat. The term *framure* found in the *Quatre Livre des Reis* is connected, in fact, with the *framente* and *enframeure* we have seen in the *Roman d'Alexandre* and means 'framework of the ceiling'. Indeed, the Paris manuscript of the *Alexandre* reads *frameure* for *framente*. When it is remembered that these texts are roughly contemporaneous, it will be seen that together they provide conclusive evidence for the borrowing into Anglo-French of the English 'frame' at least as early as into Anglo-Latin.

In the cases of *faucon* and *framure* it has been possible to show incontrovertibly how the authoritative works of reference are defective or in error, but such clear-cut conclusions are not always attainable in the present state of our knowledge. According to the *Middle English Dictionary*² and the *Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*,³ the verb 'to hobble' is borrowed into English from Holland in the fourteenth century. Yet the Anglo-Norman *Ipomedon*,⁴ written about 1180, twice uses a present participle *hobelant* in the sense of 'ambling, moving slowly up and down'. The verb *hobeler* is also well attested for continental

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¹ *E sur ces trois fud fait uns planchiers de cedre en lieu de framure, e lud plate la framure ki esteit sur le tierz estage* (p. 124 of Curtius edition).
  *Par la plaine vait hobelant, Vers la cite e puis arere* (vv. 9322–3).
  *Par le pais vait hobelant Ensement cum ço tut fust son* (vv. 9368–9).
French long before the fourteenth century, but in the sense of 'to skirmish' rather than 'to move up and down'.¹ This means that if the verb really is of Dutch origin it must have been borrowed into French no later than the twelfth century, brought across to England and here given a sense somewhat different from the one prevalent on the continent. Until such time as new evidence is forthcoming, it is difficult to determine whether the French verb simply died out in England and was then replaced by a new borrowing direct from Holland, or whether the twelfth-century *hobeler* continued to exist in England, being taken into spoken English and surfacing in writing much later as 'to hobble' in the fourteenth century.

Similarly, we need more documentary evidence for the origin of the noun 'fence'. Again, the *ODEE* and the *MED* seem to need correction when they state that 'fence' is not found in the meaning 'enclosing hedge, wall' until the sixteenth century. The first volume of the *Rotuli Parliamentorum*² uses fence with precisely this sense nearly two centuries earlier (1325): *xxiiij acres de more od le fence* (p. 437). If 'fence' does indeed come from an Anglo-Norman *fens*, an aphemic form of *delens* 'prohibition', as the *ODEE* claims, it is odd that what appears to be the first attestation of it should have both the modern form and the modern meaning of 'fence', 'enclosing hedge or wall'. The more we learn about the vocabulary of Anglo-Norman the better we shall understand the growth of our own English vocabulary.

The evidence examined so far with respect to lexical borrowing in medieval England would point towards a state of affairs in which the developing civilization of a mixed community was reflected first in the living languages of that community—English and French—with virtually any form made up from the vernaculars being passed off as Latin. It has been shown that from the twelfth century onwards medieval Latin was dependent on the vernaculars for its technical vocabulary and at least a passing reference must now be made to the dialectal nature of some of the borrowings made. On occasion the Latin resulting from this type of development borders on the laughable. For example, a ram for battering walls or gates was *aries* in Latin for John of Garland, who

wrote his trilingual glosses in the first half of the thirteenth century. As French equivalents of *aries* he gives *mutun* and *manguel*. At roughly the same time, however, the French *moutun* in the sense of 'battering-ram' was unnecessarily latinized as *mundo*, -onis, which is found in the *MLWL* for 1244 and also in Salzman's documents for 1289. A little later the English 'ram' occurs in a strange mixture of Latin, French and English concocted in an account for building work carried out at the Tower of London—*pro iij bideux pro le ram*. In the fourteenth century at York the local dialect name for the ram—'tup'—gives a most un-Ciceronian dative or ablative plural *tuppis* 'for, with the battering-rams'; but this Yorkshire Latin goes even further, making a verb *tupare* 'to ram (earth)'. It must be recognized that this Latin—if indeed it is worthy of that title—amounts to nothing more than dialectal English with Latin endings tagged on.

The dialectal nature of some of this technical Latin used in medieval England may be further illustrated by reference to the various terms for 'kiln', an essential feature of the building trade. At Winchester in 1222 a kiln was *rogum*, the Classical Latin term for 'funeral pile'; at Harrow in 1242 *thorale*, a form unknown to Lewis and Short, but listed in the *MLWL* as 'lime-kiln', 'tile-kiln' and linked with the medieval French *toraille* (Godefroy VII, 747c); in 1275 a plural form *rees calcis* is found; in 1278 another plural form recorded is *chauffornia*, a term closely connected to the *chauforneor*—a worker in the lime-kilns—quoted by Godefroy from an undated manuscript (Il, 97b); the fourteenth century yields *clibanus*, the Classical Latin for 'oven, furnace'. When quoting these forms in his book Salzman adds significantly: 'many others were in use' (p. 150). In other words, there simply was no firm medieval Latin term or terms for 'kiln' that commanded even a modicum of acceptance. The local or dialectal flavour of this kind of technical Latin is a subject calling for detailed study based on a far more extensive documentation than is at present available in published form, but it is clear from even these few
incomplete examples that, certainly by the early thirteenth century, if not sooner, Latin was providing for technical and industrial documents only a framework of morphology and syntax with a basic non-technical vocabulary that was supplemented as required by any calque that would be locally intelligible through French or English.

Yet there are occasions when the borrowing process could be more complicated than this. When faced with the mounting list of terms for 'louver' yielded by his documents in the Public Record Office, Salzman wrote as follows: 'The Latinization of "louver" gave the medieval accountants a good deal of trouble, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that it gave them opportunities for extemporizing. The correct form was *lodium*, and this was occasionally used. . . . More often the word used is intended for a derivative of *fumus*—"smoke" (p. 221). He goes on to list a number of such terms—*fumatorium* (1250), *fumerium* (1251), *fumerillum* (1252), *fumerarium* (1292), *femorale* (1339), *femural* (1365), *femerallorum* (1397) and *femerelle* (1470). The MLWL, incidentally, gives no less than fifteen words for 'louver', all connected with the root *fumus*. The louver was an essential means of getting rid of smoke from the medieval dwelling and so it is not surprising, after the variety of terms we have seen used for 'louver', that medieval scribes should 'extemporize', as Salzman calls it.

Some idea of the uncertainty that often surrounds lexical borrowing in the medieval period may be gathered from a closer inspection of the terms for 'louver' given in two thirteenth-century Latin-French glossaries produced in England. The Glasgow Glossary has an entry *hoc fumarium*: *fumere*, which is quoted by both Godefroy and Tobler-Lommatzsch, although they differ as to its interpretation. For Godefroy (IV, 181c), *fumere* is a 'chambre enfumée où l'on dépose le vin pour le rendre doux', whilst Tobler-Lommatzsch regard it as a form of *fumee* and gloss it as 'Rauch, Dampf' (III, 2353). Godefroy's translation shows that he is transferring to the medieval *fumere* the sense of *fumarium* current in ancient Rome, but he provides no evidence to show that smoke-filled rooms were specially set aside in northern medieval Europe for the purpose of mellowing wine. The frequent references found in medieval texts to devices aimed at getting
rid of smoke would tend to indicate that in the Middle Ages
smoke-filled rooms were one of the curses of life rather than a
desirable feature of domestic architecture. In fact, there is another
example of fumere not quoted by the dictionaries which shows
very clearly that it does indeed mean ‘louver’ and not ‘smoke-
filled room’. This is found in one of Salzman’s building contracts
for 1384,¹ where it is stipulated that the kitchen of Bamborough
Castle shall be fitted with four windows and a fumere in the middle
going up as high as the bedrooms. Yet Godefroy in the nine-
teenth century did at least recognize that he was dealing with an
architectural feature of the building: the translations ‘smoke’
and ‘steam’ offered by Tobler-Lommatzsch in the second half of
the twentieth century do not even have this merit, and their
failure to recognize the true meaning of the word is all the more
remarkable since on the very next line of their entry they quote
an example of the plural fumaria being glossed by chimenee.

Yet it is not only modern lexicographers who have experienced
difficulty with medieval terms for ‘louver’. The medieval scribes
themselves committed strange errors over these words when
compiling their Latin-French glossaries. The Glasgow Glossary
puts hoc fumarium: fumere between hoc epicautorium² chimenee
and hoc lenestra: lenestre, a placing which points towards fumere
being connected with chimneys and windows; but then the text
goes on to give hoc imbrex, hoc lodium: lover. The juxtaposition
of imbrex ‘gutter’ and lodium ‘louver’ with the same meaning is
clearly wrong, and imbrex should be moved to refer to gutere
given just above. This is not difficult, but we are still left with both
fumere and lover meaning ‘louver’, and both on the same page,
only a few entries apart. Interestingly enough, the Douce glossary
in Bodley goes astray at exactly the same point, although the
terms it uses are not quite the same as those in the Glasgow
Glossary:

hic caminus: astre vel chimenee  hoc lenestra: lenestre
hoc epicautorium: chimenee  hoc inpluvium vel stillicidium: gotere
hoc fumarium: fumerel  hoc imbrex: lover³

²Paul Meyer reads epicantorium, but this should clearly be epicautorium.
³MS Douce 88, f. 148”b.
Just as in the Glasgow Glossary, we have here two words for ‘louver’—fumerel and lover and also the incorrect imbrex given once again as ‘louver’. By simply exchanging inpluvium for imbrex good sense is restored:

hoc imbrex vel stillicidium: gotere
hoc inpluvium: lover

Yet this does not explain why the compiler, like the man who wrote the Glasgow Glossary, should include two words for ‘louver’. Again, was the Latin of both scribes at fault, or was it a failure to understand the French that produced these errors in both glossaries? The incorrect linking of imbrex and lodium in the one case and of inpluvium and stillicidium in the other would indicate that the scribes’ Latin was the weak point in both cases, so that it appears reasonable to infer that there really were two terms in Anglo-Norman for ‘louver’—fumerel/loverel and lover/luver.

The confusion presented by the terms for ‘louver’ in Latin and thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman leads us, however, to yet another difficulty. Some time in the second half of this same thirteenth century Walter of Bibbesworth wrote a classified vocabulary of French, with the difficult words glossed into Middle English, to help his patroness acquire a good command of French as a second language. In this Tretiz\(^1\) as he calls it, he twice uses ‘lover’, but as a Middle English gloss, not as part of the French vocabulary to be learnt. In the first of these instances lover is set in the manuscript above the medieval French aumeire:

\textit{Li aumeire (M.E. lover) e la fenestre (v. 976)}

but the second case is even clearer:

\textit{Car en fraunceis est aumere nomé Ki ci est lover appeler (vv. 979–80)}.

It must be inferred from this that by the thirteenth century the French lover had been assimilated into Middle English and must have been regarded, at least by some Englishmen, as a genuine English word. This example strengthens the view I have expressed

\(^{1}\)Ed. Annie Owen (Paris, 1929).
on more than one occasion in the past, namely that by the thirteenth century the fusion of English and Norman civilizations was very far advanced, a fusion characterized by the thorough linguistic blending of English and Anglo-Norman. This view has lately received powerful support from the close study of a number of bilingual and trilingual glosses carried out by Dr Tony Hunt. In a recent article he deals with cases where scribes wrongly attribute words to French or English, putting gallice or romanice for anglice, and vice versa. To use Dr Hunt’s own words: ‘Even a cursory glance . . . at glossed grammatical texts of 13c. England reveals a constant confusion in the application of these terms and a constant mingling of French and English forms.’

When dealing with the confusion over the Latin terms for ‘louver’ evident in the minds of the scribes who wrote the Glasgow and Douce glossaries, I suggested that their Latin was, perhaps, somewhat inadequate in this area of vocabulary. The same kind of doubt must now be expressed with regard to Walter of Bibbesworth’s French in this same area. On four occasions he used aumelire to mean ‘louver’, but this word has so far been found nowhere else with this meaning, except in a fourteenth-century Nominale sive Verbale and in Femia, both of which are simply later re-workings of Walter’s own text with full, instead of partial, glosses. Whilst it is, of course, very difficult to be absolutely certain that one has tracked down the source of an error made over seven hundred years ago, it is nonetheless tempting to reflect that the change of no more than one single letter—reading initial a as f, would transform the unknown aumere into the well-attested fumere. It is all too easy to forget that the writers who provide our linguistic evidence for the medieval period must have varied widely in their command of languages and that their testimony ought not to be accepted uncritically at its face value.


2ZFS, lxxxix (1979), 132; see also RLIR, xliii (1979), 162–78 and 235–62.

3Ed. Skeat in Transactions of the Philological Society, (1903–6), pp. 1*–50*.

Up to this point attention has been concentrated on medieval England and it has been shown that whilst the two living languages—French and English—must have developed their technical vocabulary without difficulty as the decades went by, medieval Latin was able to deal adequately from its own resources only with those aspects of everyday medieval life that had not changed since Roman times and with the generally abstract ideas pertaining to the study of the liberal arts. In practical terms, medieval Latin could express perfectly well the unchanging world of nature, Grosseteste's scientific work on optics or his religious concepts, but not medieval building techniques or Grosseteste's ideas on the efficient day-to-day management of a large estate in thirteenth-century England. The existing vocabulary of Latin could be given new semantic values to bridge the gap between the cult of the Roman gods and that of the Christian God; it could convey quite adequately the ideas of Aristotle; on the other hand, not having been the vernacular of craftsmen or farmers for centuries, it could not bridge the gap between the practical techniques of the Roman Empire and those of medieval England or France. Hence the kind of borrowing we have seen earlier.

If we now move for a moment from northern to southern French—Old Provençal—we shall find confirmatory evidence in abundance to support these assertions, even though the lexis of Provençal is far less well researched than that of Old French or Anglo-Norman. Without extending the area of enquiry beyond the limited number of texts provided by Mortet and the pages of the *Annales du Midi*, it will be seen that there is no lack of cases where a Provençal term shows very clearly through a thin disguise of Latin. As was the case in England and northern France, this happens whenever a technical term is needed for an activity or an object unfamiliar to the Roman world. For instance, before the middle of the twelfth century a document from Romans reads:

*portales muratos cum arcubus et chaialcos desuper* (1138)

The chaalicos here are platforms used as fortifications. In 1243 at Avignon an ablative plural form abatitoriis is used for 'abattoirs' and a little later, at Toulouse, we find reference made to:

\[
\text{cato\text{\textit{os versatiles \ldots toraces et bombacinia}} (1245)^1}
\]

All these are medieval engines of war and their Latin form is much nearer to Provençal than to anything in Classical Latin. Just before the end of the thirteenth century an inventory was made of the military resources of Carcassonne. From the point of view of the lexicologist or lexicographer this is a most revealing document, containing items such as the following:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{decem polleyas de cupro} & \quad \text{('ten copper pulleys')} \\
\text{sex boitas ferri in quibus polleyas vertuntur} & \quad \text{('six iron boxes in which the pulleys run')} \\
\text{vii paria soffletis} & \quad \text{('seven pairs of bellows')} \\
\text{j enclutge ferri} & \quad \text{('one iron anvil')} \\
\text{iv golftones duplices} & \quad \text{('four double hinges')} \\
\text{lustam de duabus springaliis} & \quad \text{('the arm of two stone-throwing machines')} \\
\text{bolones de ferro} & \quad \text{('iron bolts')}
\end{align*}
\]

These terms are no more than a representative selection made for the purposes of the present paper: this one document could easily be made to yield many more of the same kind. On similar lines is a list of material found on a galley wrecked off Nice in 1441 and containing numerous items such as these:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{unarn parvarn bombardellam} & \quad \text{('a little cannon')} \\
\text{tres bassinetos et tres celatas} & \quad \text{('these are different kinds of medieval helmet')^2}
\end{align*}
\]

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Marseilles was the centre of the Mediterranean coral trade, whose specialized nature makes it certain that the compiler of the documents recording its activities had to think all the time in his native Provençal, although ostensibly writing in Latin. Terms such as prouier, pouvier, megier, trelhier, coral de tor de talhar, etc. are unmistakably Provençal.\(^3\) So are the galucherius ('clog-maker'), the penche telerii ('weaver's comb'), the navetam ('shuttle'), and

\footnotesize
1 All these examples are taken from Mortet, Recueil de Textes . . . , pp. 50, 267, 273.
3 Annales du Midi, lxiv (1952), 199 ff.
so on found in a court register of the fourteenth century. Indeed, on occasion only a knowledge of the vernacular Provençal form makes it possible to interpret the sense of the artificial Latin. In the register just referred to there occurs an ablative plural form balqueriiis. This is found in no Latin dictionary so far published, but makes sense in its context if given the meaning of 'grass-covered area' in line with the Provençal bauquiero quoted in Mistral's Tresor. The same page of the register gives a strange busculhas ulmi which clearly means 'elm branches', even though the form busculha is not known to the dictionaries of Latin. Here again, Mistral has a form bouscalha meaning 'branch', thus proving that the Latin term is no more than a straight borrowing from Provençal.

It would not be a difficult undertaking to gather together a far richer body of material from southern France than has been dealt with in the present paper, but the essential point is clear: Latin, as the principal language of record in the Languedoc area during the medieval period, was used in many spheres for which it was simply not equipped lexically, and so found itself obliged to borrow wholesale from the available lexis of Provençal. It follows from this fact that any future work on Old Provençal of a lexicological or lexicographical nature will be grossly defective unless it takes full account of all forms of extant documents in both Old Provençal and medieval Latin. In fact, even this will not be completely satisfactory, since the introduction of northern French into the Languedoc in the later medieval period created a trilingual, rather than a bilingual, situation, thus providing a parallel with medieval England. The importance of this third language was recently brought sharply to the fore by the publication of La Stolonomie by Jan Fennis. This treatise on the fitting-out and maintenance of a fleet of galleys exists now only in a northern French version of the sixteenth century, but Fennis has shown quite incontrovertibly that many of the specialist terms it uses are of Provençal, not northern French, origin, and go back to the language spoken in medieval Marseilles, having been borrowed into French because the objects and techniques they represented did not exist in French.

1 Annales du Midi, liii (1941), 78 ff.  
2 Amsterdam, 1978.
LEXICAL BORROWING

In the past it has been customary for languages to be considered as separate entities and for lexical borrowing from one to another to be regarded as a largely external or even peripheral phenomenon. This view, however, has its roots in the modern equation of language with nationality: once we go back to the medieval period, this equation has nothing like the same force as in the post-medieval world, and the whole question of lexical borrowing in the Middle Ages must be tackled in a multilingual context. In the present state of our knowledge this is a very difficult undertaking and will become a practical possibility only on the publication of large-scale comprehensive dictionaries of the vernaculars concerned and of Medieval Latin. These dictionaries in turn are dependent for their completeness upon a detailed scrutiny of countless documents that have hitherto received scant attention from those interested in medieval languages and literature. Only when all this unglamorous spadework has been carried out shall we be in possession of the necessary factual information on which to base definitive research into lexical borrowing during the medieval period, research that will have to cover the development of the hermetic language of the law in England, in northern and southern France as well as the growth of the technical and administrative registers of the languages concerned. It is hoped that the present paper may help to stimulate interest in this area of enquiry.¹

¹I am indebted to Professor T. B. W. Reid, whose incisive criticism of draft letters of the AND has stimulated thought on a number of points discussed in this paper.