

# The multilingual lexis of the medieval English manor

A trilingual thesaurus

Gloria Mambelli

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## World Histories of Lexicography and Lexicology

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# Abbreviations

AF	Anglo-French
AL	Anglo-Latin
AND	Anglo-Norman Dictionary
BT	Bosworth Toller's Anglo-Saxon Dictionary
BTh	Bilingual Thesaurus of Everyday Life in Medieval England
CF	Continental French
DMLBS	Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources
E	English
EDD	English Dialect Dictionary
F	French
F/L	French and/or Latin
F+/L	French, Latin, French and/or Latin
HTE	Historical Thesaurus of English
ME	Middle English
MED	Middle English Dictionary
L	Latin
ML	Medieval Latin
OE	Old English
OF	Old French
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
ON	Old Norse
PDE	Present-Day English



# 1 Introduction

The period in which Middle English emerged, conventionally acknowledged as spanning from c.1100 to c.1500, was a period of multilingualism marked by the co-existence of Latin, Anglo-French, and English. The phenomenon of extensive lexical borrowing that the English language underwent at the time is well known, and its relationship with the situation of language contact in post-Conquest England has attracted increasing attention in English historical linguistic studies.

Recent scholarship (Jefferson & Putter 2013, Trotter 2000b, Wright 2020d) has highlighted the interplay between the three major languages of post-Conquest England, shedding light on language-mixing practices (Schendl & Wright 2011, Wright 2000, 2013a) and rejecting the traditional monolingual approach to Middle English in view of the claim that the three medieval languages “were in continuous, concurrent use throughout the Middle Ages and in constant contact” (Hunt 2011: 68), and thus “cannot be studied in isolation” (Schendl 2015b: 15).

From a lexicographic perspective, these studies investigating the multilingual situation of post-Conquest England contribute to stressing the importance of treating the Middle English (ME) lexicon alongside that of Anglo-French (AF) and medieval Latin (ML) since, as argued by Trotter (2000a: 4), “monolingual lexicography in a multilingual environment does not work”. Nevertheless, even though it is now clear that “a perspective drawn from one language alone [...] is manifestly inadequate” when it comes to investigating the ME period (Trotter 1996: 31), the multilingual lexis attested in England in the centuries following the Norman Conquest is still scattered in distinct historical dictionaries (the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* [AND], the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* [DMLBS], and the *Middle English Dictionary* [MED]), each focussing on one of the three languages of literacy. The work of historical linguists relies heavily on these resources, given the impossibility of interviewing actual speakers of the languages in question. However, the consultation of one of these dictionaries alone is unlikely to reveal the complex multilingual situation of the time and provide insights into medieval perceptions of language boundaries.

In a note to an essay discussing the problems that language contact in medieval Britain poses to the lexicographer, Trotter (1996: 35) observes that “[t]here is a strong case for an onomasiological treatment of later medieval England, which

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would alone be able really to show how the three languages (Anglo-French, Middle English and Latin) functioned". This remark implies the idea that an onomasiological approach to the three medieval languages, i.e. a lexicographic approach in which referents rather than forms represent the starting point of the investigation, might be able to effectively shift the focus away from the modern "separateness of languages" (Trotter 2009: 155), a concept which cannot easily be applied to the post-Conquest sociolinguistic context. By adopting a multilingual, onomasiological approach, it would be possible to "provide an adequate account of the reality of language use in medieval Britain" (Trotter 1996: 31) while attempting to reproduce the medieval cognitive experience through an appropriate classification.

As far as English is concerned, the onomasiological dictionary par excellence is the *Historical Thesaurus of English* (HTE). However, since the HTE treats the development of the English lexis from a monolingual perspective, its users should consult it alongside the aforementioned historical dictionaries in order to catch a glimpse of the linguistic situation of post-Conquest England.

An onomasiological resource assembling the ME and AF lexis relating to specific lexical domains has been recently made available: the *Bilingual Thesaurus of Everyday Life in Medieval England* (BTh) represents one of the first attempts "to capture the characteristics of two different languages in overlapping use during the same period" (Sylvester et al. 2017: 318). Besides the BTh, however, no other lexicographic project aiming at an onomasiological reconstruction of the post-Conquest multilingual lexis is available at present. In particular, still to this day, historical linguistics cannot benefit from a resource assembling the lexis of the three medieval languages, including Latin, which would reflect the onomasiological treatment of medieval multilingualism advocated by Trotter.

In addition to pointing to the issues posed by traditional monolingual lexicography, recent scholarship has challenged the orthodox view concerning borrowing in ME. The massive influx of French-origin lexical items in the language, resulting from language contact occurring during the post-Conquest period, has been traditionally treated as a matter of prestige borrowing, i.e. as a phenomenon mainly affecting high-status domains such as that of law, fashion, and cookery (cf. Barber et al. 2009 and Baugh & Cable 2002). However, the studies recently carried out on the lexical material collected for the BTh (Ingham et al. 2019, Sylvester & Marcus 2017, Sylvester et al. 2020) show a different picture, offering "a perspective in which the use of French is seen as going well beyond aristocratic pursuits" (Sylvester & Marcus 2017: 218). Evidence from the vocabulary of occupational domains shows that "in the contexts in which medieval people lived and worked, French-origin lexis played a very substantial role which should not be

accounted for as a matter of elite culture” (Ingham et al. 2019: 475). Moreover, the bilingual competence of individuals working in professional spaces such as estate management identified in recent studies (Ingham 2009, Ingham & Marcus 2016) suggests that a certain degree of language contact occurred in rural areas as well. Nevertheless, the fact that the majority of the population living in the countryside “remained anglophone and was illiterate throughout the medieval period” (Rothwell 2009: 384), alongside “the relative paucity of rural vocabulary of French origin that found its way into standard English in the later medieval period” (Rothwell 2009: 399), still makes language contact in medieval rural England an underexplored domain.

In view of the scarcity of studies investigating the effects of language contact on the vocabulary of the medieval countryside due to its association with a predominantly anglophone environment, this book investigates the lexis used in post-Conquest England to denote concepts and referents associated with the medieval manor. Specifically, it brings together the vocabulary recorded in three distinct dictionaries and subsequently focuses on the Middle English terms to explore the impact of contact with Anglo-French and Latin on this lexical domain and shed light on the sociolinguistic context.

The trilingual thesaurus compiled for this study attempts to fill the gap in historical lexicography pointed out by Trotter (2000a, 1996, 2009) by providing an onomasiological treatment of the three languages of post-Conquest England, albeit with a focus on a specific domain.

The lexis connected to the sociolinguistic context revolving around the medieval manor was chosen as the focus of this work on the basis of its historical significance (1), multilingual context (2), and lexicographic implications (3).

1. The manor was one of the key institutions of medieval England since it was “central to the organisation of agrarian life in the Middle Ages and beyond” (Bailey 2002: 2).
2. Notwithstanding the predominance of anglophone labourers, it is important to consider that manorial estates were owned and managed by bi-/multilingual individuals. In particular, the multilingual competence of manorial officers suggests that a certain degree of language contact must have occurred on countryside estates.
3. The lexis relating to manorial contexts constitutes a domain requiring an onomasiological reconstruction, in view of the impossibility of mapping it onto a modern concept. Lexicographic evidence shows that meanings, and

## 1 Introduction

thus onomasiological categories, change through time, “reflecting changes in the societies which produce them” (Kay & Wotherspoon 2002: 52). Therefore, medieval concepts that no longer exist or were conceived of differently from how they are understood in modern times cannot be investigated by referring to modern classifications. Although the HTE undoubtedly stands as an invaluable resource for diachronic studies of the English lexicon, it is not especially suitable for the linguistic investigation of medieval concepts such as the manorial context since it tends to “impose a modern day world view onto the medieval data” (Sylvester et al. 2017: 310).

On the basis of the recent approaches to multilingualism in post-Conquest England, this work provides an onomasiological resource that, for the first time, takes the multilingual environment of the time fully into account. In addition, it attempts to reconstruct the medieval cognitive experience through the designing of an appropriate onomasiological classification. By taking advantage of the framework of cognitive semantics and the “possibility of retrieving specialized thesauri” from the HTE suggested by Kay (1984: 90), this resource assembles and classifies the lexis associated with the medieval manor, extracted from the three dictionaries of the medieval languages (AND, DMLBS, MED).

The collected lexical material was examined in order to assess the effects of language contact on the domain under investigation. While the primary aim of the thesaurus was to provide the long-needed lexicographic treatment of the post-Conquest linguistic context, the subsequent analyses focus predominantly on the ME lexis, as Middle English constitutes the recipient language under investigation.

The structure of this book is organised into three parts: Part I (Chapter 2, Chapter 3, Chapter 4) illustrates the research background and the methodology used for the compilation of the thesaurus; Part II (Chapter 5, Chapter 6, Chapter 7) offers detailed analyses of the lexical material assembled in the thesaurus, with a particular focus on ME; Part III presents the thesaurus itself.

Chapter 2 presents the sociolinguistic context by addressing multilingualism in post-Conquest England and the effects of language contact on Middle English, with a focus on borrowing in non-elite contexts and a concluding section on rural contexts. Chapter 3 illustrates the sociohistorical context by outlining the main features of manors and manorial society in medieval England. The methodological aspects concerning the compilation of the trilingual thesaurus are illustrated in Chapter 4, which presents the theoretical framework, the design of the conceptual classification, and the methodology adopted in the data collection process. The analyses carried out on the thesaurus are presented in Part II, which consists

of Chapter 5, Chapter 6, and Chapter 7. Chapter 5 begins by examining the distribution of lexical items extracted from the three dictionaries and subsequently focuses on the ME lexis to assess the impact of contact with French and Latin from both a synchronic and diachronic perspective. Chapter 6 presents a series of case studies focusing on the ME lexical material from selected thesaurus categories, both to further validate the findings presented in the previous chapter and to closely examine the ways in which synonyms have survived in the domain up to PDE. Concluding remarks are presented in Chapter 7, while the thesaurus is available in full in Part III.



## **Part I**

# **Mapping the multilingual lexis of the medieval English manor**



## 2 Multilingualism in post-Conquest England

### 2.1 Multilingualism and language mixing

Historical evidence shows that “the English language has been contact-derived from its very beginning” (Schreier & Hundt 2013: 1), i.e. since the time of the Germanic invasions famously reported in Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* and later in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as occurring in 449 CE. Contrary to what is conventionally repeated in textbooks, the settling of the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes was, in fact, a long and complex migration process (cf. Howe 1989). Although much speculation remains concerning dialect differentiations in the early Old English period, scholars have traditionally agreed that English emerged from the fusion of the dialects spoken in the kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon England (Sweet 1885), developing into what Siegel (1985) describes as a koiné (Schreier & Hundt 2013: 3). Additionally, at the time of the Germanic invasions, Britain was inhabited by Celtic populations and had been under Roman governance until not long before (around 410 CE). Considering that Latin had also been a source of influence before the Germanic tribes left the continent, Celtic and Latin can be confidently referred to as the “earliest external influences” on the English language (Filppula 2010: 432). The effects of contact with the Celtic languages are generally acknowledged to be limited to a restricted number of toponymic borrowings, although Celtic influence in other areas of the language, such as phonology and verbal structures, has been suggested (Filppula 2010, Filppula et al. 2002, Hickey 1995, Vennemann 2001).

Language contact did not cease after the Germanic tribes settled on the island: in his account of the history of the English people, Bede reported the existence of five languages in Britain in the eighth century, namely English, British, Irish, Pictish, and Latin (Townend 2006: 62).

The Scandinavian invasions starting in the 780s and the subsequent settlement in the north-eastern part of England (later referred to as the Danelaw) brought about contact with Old Norse (ON), resulting in lexical loans related to everyday life, such as *get*, *give*, *knife*, *sky*, *take*. The pronouns *they*, *them*, *their* have also

## *2 Multilingualism in post-Conquest England*

been commonly held to derive from ON, although recent research suggests a native origin (cf. Cole 2018). The influence of ON is particularly evident in Middle English texts (Dance 2003, Skaffari 2009), although Old English texts also preserve evidence of borrowings reflecting the Norse rule and legal system (Dance 2017: 2011–2013; Lutz 2013: 566–567). Finally, the Norman Conquest, set off by the Battle of Hastings, brought about contact with the variety of French spoken by the new ruling class, contributing to the adoption of a significant amount of loans.

Of course, language contact did not cease after these crucial sociohistorical events. As argued by Townend (2006: 61),

for much of its history the English language in England has been in a state of co-existence, or competition, or even conflict with one or more other languages, and it is these tensions and connections which have shaped the language quite as much as any factors internal to English itself.

Nevertheless, the impact that the Norman Conquest and consequent contact with French had on the English lexicon is unprecedented. Considering that no other events in English history had such a substantial effect on the language, it undoubtedly represents a turning point in the history of the English lexis. Had William, Duke of Normandy, not succeeded in claiming the English throne in 1066, English would have probably evolved in the same way as the other Germanic languages have, lacking its evident Romance element.

The massive impact that language contact brought about by the Norman Conquest had on the English language is still observable in the large proportion of words of Romance origin making up the English lexicon. An analysis of high-frequency words in a corpus of contemporary English is likely to yield a significant number of loanwords: according to Durkin (2014: 223–224), “if we look at the composition of the vocabulary of modern English, Latin and French are by far the most prolific contributors of loanwords, [...] the overwhelming majority [of which] were first borrowed in the Middle English period”. The latter corresponds to the period between the twelfth and the fifteenth centuries, when, in addition to transitioning from being a predominantly synthetic language to a predominantly analytic one, the English language underwent unprecedented lexical expansion due to contact with French. Of all the stages in the history of English, “borrowing in the Middle English period has made by far the largest contribution to the high-frequency vocabulary of modern English” (Durkin 2014: 40). The significant number of words that entered the language during the post-Conquest period came to exist side by side with native words, expanding the lexicon and,

in some cases, leading the native equivalents to fall into disuse or undergo semantic shift. These changes permanently affected the English lexicon, “making it an etymological hybrid” (Stockwell & Minkova 2001: 38).

The impact of French can also be seen in the post-Conquest literary production, which includes a considerable number of works written in the insular variety of French: even the earliest surviving manuscript of the Song of Roland, one of the major landmarks of French literature, was produced in England in the twelfth century (cf. Short 1991).

The variety of French in use in Britain between 1066 and the early fifteenth century is conventionally referred to by scholars as “Anglo-Norman” or “Anglo-French”. However,

many scholars today prefer the term ‘Anglo-French’, because there was considerable input from varieties of French other than the Norman one even in William the Conqueror’s invading army and there was substantial contact with and input from different continental varieties over the subsequent centuries (Durkin 2014: 230).

As illustrated by Rothwell (2006) in the preface to the second edition of the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, even though the dictionary has retained the term ‘Anglo-Norman’ in its title for reasons of continuity, the more generic term ‘Anglo-French’ better reflects the linguistic reality of the time. This new language was brought to England by a heterogeneous army including men from different regions of France; moreover, it was used in the following centuries by people from different ethnic backgrounds with different levels of linguistic competence. For these reasons, I will henceforth refer to this variety as Anglo-French.

Although studies of AF have often “to contend with a widespread perception that it was not really genuine French” (Ingham 2010a: 8) due to nineteenth-century claims referring to it as a broken, debased version of French (“une manière imparfaite de parler français” (Bos & Paris 1881: xxxv), it is important to point out that the insular variety of French was “a principal language of record – alongside British Latin” (Rothwell 1991: 174) and “is now widely recognised as a vigorous and productive contact variety in its own right” (Schendl 2015b: 16). Not only was it used “as a vehicle for the teaching of Latin” (Ingham 2009: 80) and “spoken on a daily basis by large numbers of English citizens carrying out their professional duties, but, more importantly, it was written in great quantity to keep the records needed by any advanced society” (Rothwell 1993: 21–22). After the initial post-Conquest period, the number of monolingual French speakers belonging to the elite strata of society gradually decreased, up to a point when AF

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became an instructed second language: thirteenth-century educational treatises reveal that “not only was French having to be learned by the aristocracy, it was also coming to be learned by members of the middle classes”, resulting in the fact that “the language began to be used in increasingly varied contexts” (Townend 2006: 67). Evidence from business documents shows that AF “maintained an important place as a language of administration and culture even when it was no longer a naturally acquired first language” (Schendl 2015a: 234). Contrary to the traditional view of the decline and decay of AF after the early thirteenth century, propounded by Pope (1952) in particular, “insular French went on being used well into the first decades of the fifteenth century” thanks to the professionals working in the contexts of estate management, trade, medicine, and architecture (Ingham & Marcus 2016: 146).

The etymology of French loanwords in ME is usually referred to by distinguishing between borrowings from AF and those from what is called continental (or central) French (CF). Even though literate people living in England during the post-Conquest period were “bilingual in English and Anglo-French, not continental French” (Durkin 2014: 233), etymological evidence shows that “by the Early Modern period the vast majority of loanwords are from continental French” (Durkin 2014: 269). Nevertheless, it is often difficult to establish with confidence whether a word entered English specifically from one of the two aforementioned varieties of French and discern when the shift to borrowing from CF occurred.

A division into two periods characterised by the two different types of French loan influence is usually referred to in textbooks since it is commonly acknowledged that, whilst AF was the language brought by the new rulers with the Conquest, CF became a source of new loanwords in the thirteenth century, when “greater intellectual, social, and commercial contact with France” occurred (Lerer 2007: 69). The loss of Normandy, which was conquered by King Philip of France in 1204, is generally regarded as the main reason for a shift of military and cultural interests to central France, as a result of which “the French spoken in and around Paris became the source of new loans in English”, especially in the “legal, military, administrative, political, religious, and cultural spheres” (Stockwell & Minkova 2001: 38). According to Rothwell (1998), however, the recurrent assumption that new vocabulary was brought from France in the later thirteenth century represents the failure of scholars to take the role of AF adequately into consideration.

The etymological information provided by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), the *Middle English Dictionary* (MED), and the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (AND) has shed new light on borrowing in the history of English. Whilst morphology cannot tell us much concerning the distinction between AF and CF as source

## 2.1 Multilingualism and language mixing

languages, investigation of the semantic history of ME words shows that loanwords entering English via AF developed “senses unknown to the parent language – Continental French”, thus revealing the independent evolution of AF on English soil (Rothwell 1998: 157). When the semantics of AF is taken into account, it becomes clear that later French-origin influence was not “so much a matter of borrowing words from continental French speakers, but of adopting lexis in productive use in England” (Ingham et al. 2019: 462). AF continued to be influenced by CF dialects, and vice versa: Trotter (2003a,b) argues against the supposed isolation of AF, demonstrating how “[s]cribes and administrators accustomed to generating diplomatic, legal and commercial documentation in insular French would have found themselves constantly exposed to the continental variety” (Trotter 2003b: 429).

Despite the tendency of traditional English lexicography to refer to Germanic languages and rarely consider “the next-door neighbour, Anglo-Norman, either as an immediate source of English terminology, or as a conduit through which other Romance (Mediterranean) terms were transmitted” (Trotter 2006: 76), Rothwell’s studies on AF undoubtedly laid the foundations for more accurate investigations of the etymological origin of the ME lexis. Increasing awareness of the key role of AF in the evolution of the English language has brought about revised editions of the OED, MED, AND, and dictionaries of medieval French (*Dictionnaire Étymologique De L’ancien Français*, *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français*, *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch*, *Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*), as well as new empirical investigations. On the basis of his analysis of dictionary data, Durkin (2014: 280) found that, even though “[t]he proportion of French loanwords [in the English lexicon] that can be identified as specifically Anglo-French is small, [...] Middle English borrowing was largely from Anglo-French rather than continental French up until about 1375”. These findings confirm that a shift from AF to central French occurred; however, they refute the hypothesis that it started with the loss of Normandy and pinpoint the pivotal role of AF in post-Conquest borrowing.

As far as the maintenance of AF is concerned, the year 1362 is often cited as the beginning of the gradual expansion of the use of English and the consequent decay of French. However, AF did not cease to be used after that date. According to Rothwell (2001), this misconception probably originated from a misinterpretation of the Statute of Pleading, contained in the *Rotuli Parliamentorum*: the statute stipulated that, in order not to prevent English speakers lacking competence in French from understanding ongoing cases, the language of oral pleading at court should thereafter be English, rather than AF. Even though alternating with English and Latin, AF continued to be used in the *Rotuli* up to the fifteenth

## 2 *Multilingualism in post-Conquest England*

century, and “law reporting continued in French until the seventeenth century” (Baker 1990: 2). Moreover, vocabulary deriving from AF still survives in legal discourse. The Statute, therefore, had little impact on the written medium, although it could have represented a starting point for the legitimization of the English language.

In the light of these premises, the status and function of Anglo-Norman are necessarily related to the multilingual situation in which it developed, and “it is impossible to study Anglo-Norman independently of the other two languages of medieval England, English (Middle English and Old English) and Latin.” (Hunt 2011: 60).

During the centuries following the Norman Conquest, “English showed a complex interaction with both Latin and Anglo-French in ways that changed considerably over time” (Durkin 2014: 229). Recent scholarship has drawn attention to the complex linguistic situation characterising the ME period (Ingham 2010b, Jefferson & Putter 2013, Trotter 2000b, Wogan-Browne et al. 2013, Wright 2020d), often referring to “the trilingual civilization of medieval England” (Rothwell 1998: 164) when addressing this new environment in which AF, ME, and Latin co-existed. These were not the only languages in use at the time: Celtic languages survived in peripheral areas (Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, etc.), and “Norse continued to be spoken [...] quite possibly into the twelfth [century] in some places” (Townend 2006: 66). Nevertheless, I will focus on the three aforementioned languages in view of their pivotal role in late medieval society. Written evidence suggests that

for almost all of the Middle English period it would have been more or less impossible to pursue any mode of life that involved literacy without having considerable, probably native-like, competence in Anglo-French and Latin, as well as in English (Durkin 2014: 229).

Although “the degree of multilingual competence must have widely differed between individuals and social groups” (Schendl 2015b: 15), “bilingualism – or even trilingualism – seems to have been no unusual phenomenon in both oral and written communication” (Schendl 2000: 77).

Latin became the main language of record in 1070, when the royal chancery “stopped using English as a language of record and communication and switched into Latin” (Timofeeva 2022: 37). The latter “served traditionally as the common medium of literacy in a multilingual and predominantly oral society”: oral statements made in English or AF would have been recorded in Latin and, conversely,

messages and documents drawn up in Latin would have been read out in English or AF (Clanchy 1993: 206).

According to Kristol (2000: 39), the co-existence of the three languages of literacy was further complicated by the co-existence of several orthographic traditions: in addition to the English, AF, and Latin ones, scribal evidence shows the influence of traditions of continental origin, namely from Picardy, Paris, and Orléans, especially in texts drawn up in AF.

Although it is usually reported in textbooks that French was the language used by the elite classes in the spheres of culture and administration and that Latin and English were the language of the Church and of the people respectively, “these three languages were not as clearly stratified as we might think” (Lerer 2007: 55).

Firstly, it is important to bear in mind that the myth of the ‘Norman yoke’ and the consequent traditional view of AF as the language of the invaders and English as the language of the oppressed no longer stand. In fact, “it is becoming clear that the relationship between French and English in the later medieval period was more a matter of complementarity” rather than conflict (Ingham 2009: 80). Multilingualism in post-Conquest England is often referred to in scholarship in terms of “a kind of diglossic or even multiglossic situation” (Schendl 2000: 78) in view of the different functions that the three languages had depending on social situations and the fact that they were predominantly used in different domains and text types. However, the relationship between these languages appears to have been much more complex. Hunt (2011: 60) illustrates this interaction in terms of “continuity, contiguity, and conflation”, by arguing that the three languages “were in continuous, concurrent use throughout the Middle Ages and in constant contact” (Hunt 2011: 68). In other words, AF, Latin, and ME “existed in harmony, not just side by side, but in symbiotic relationship” (Turville-Petre 1996: 181) up until the mid-fifteenth century. Although “we lack any real information about contemporary perceptions, and about metalinguistic conceptions of what was meant [...] by the separatedness of languages” (Trotter 2009: 155), scholars such as Trotter observe that the modern conception of language boundaries cannot be applied to the linguistic situation of post-Conquest England, which was characterised by mutual borrowing and shared lexis. On the basis of this approach, according to which “a cut-and-dried divide between languages did not exist” at the time (Rothwell 2001: 545), the three medieval languages “should be understood within a continuum” (Roig-Marín 2019: 242). This perspective primarily stems from the issues posed by mixed-language, non-literary documents.

As argued by Trotter, unlike most literary texts, “much, perhaps most, of the vast amount of largely unexplored non-literary material dealing (broadly speaking) with everyday life [...] is not even notionally monolingual, but multilingual”

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(Trotter 2006: 73). Contrary to what is conventionally thought about the Norman sociocultural dominance, administrative documents reveal that, as early as 1066, “multilingual clerks and administrators, rather than francophone scribes, were mixing their first, second and third languages” (Timofeeva 2022: 34). Business documents such as accounts and inventories, which were aimed at efficiency rather than dissemination, constitute examples of “a text type where a mixing of two or more languages is the norm” (Wright 2000: 149). What makes these documents particularly interesting from a linguistic point of view is the presence of instances of intrasentential code-switching, albeit not in significant amounts (cf. Ingham 2018, Keller 2020), and a peculiar use of the abbreviation and suspension system which goes beyond practical reasons connected to saving parchment space and ink.

Intrasentential code-switching is a phenomenon occurring in bilingual spoken communication, hence mainly discussed in synchronic studies. It involves what is referred to as a *base* or *matrix* language, i.e. the language which dictates the grammatical structure, and an *embedded* language, which provides material occurring within the matrix-language sentential context (Myers-Scotton 1997). Medieval business documents were generally drawn up in Latin or AF and characterised by the presence of vernacular lexis (i.e. AF or English) embedded in the matrix language.

Latin manorial accounts dating from the fourteenth century contain English content words preceded by AF grammatical function words, which, according to Ingham, reflect the type of code-switched spoken communication occurring among the professionals who administered manorial estates (Ingham 2009, 2018).

In addition, medieval accounts combine code-switching and the abbreviation and suspension system to offer the reader some “linguistic and interpretative advantages” (Wright 2000: 150). For instance, late medieval accounts concerning the maintenance of London Bridge were drawn up in Latin or AF and contain a number of English nouns, adjectives, and adverbial nouns. Investigation of the original manuscripts reveals how “the abbreviation and suspension system served to background the Romance morphology and foreground the English, and Latin/English, stems”, in order to allow the reader to comprehend the document regardless of his competence in Latin (Wright 2000: 150). In other words, word-final morphology was obscured so that readers could interpret content words as Latin, Anglo-Norman, or English according to their linguistic competence (e.g. *candela* with an appropriate symbol in final position could be interpreted as both English *candle* or Latin *candelarum*).

Even though the study of code-switching relies on the separation of codes, the overlapping use of the three languages in mixed-language documents shows a

complex picture in which one language “is in a sense a continuation [...] of the other” (Trotter 2009: 155). In addition to reflecting “the – often very high – multilingual competence of [...] authors and scribes” (Schendl & Wright 2011: 20), mixed-language practices suggest that medieval speakers might not have been aware of language boundaries and thus urge us not to “assume [...] that what is perceived as separate now (after centuries of standardization and monolingualism) was regarded as separate or indeed separable in the Middle Ages” (Trotter 2011: 157). According to Hunt (2011: 64), “from a lexical point of view attempts at a clear distinction of language identity is futile, for such distinctions were certainly blurred in medieval England”.

The existence of mixed-language business writing indicates that, rather than monolingual Latin, the main language of record was a mixture of Latin and the spoken vernaculars, and that “it was not until the last quarter of the fifteenth century that any kind of consistent monolingualism emerged” (Wright 2017: 349). As a result, when it comes to investigating the languages of medieval England, which were connected to “a society where multilingualism was endemic and where, for the educated at least, monolingualism was the exception and not the norm” (Trotter 2000a: 3), “a perspective drawn from one language alone [...] is manifestly inadequate” (Trotter 1996: 31).

An important aspect to take into account is the fact that “[t]he status and distribution of these languages [...] changed over time” (Schendl 2015a: 234). Even though the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries are usually referred to as the period of the emergence of English, which had previously been the “Low variety” in the medieval diglossic situation (cf. Schendl 2015a), surviving evidence shows that the shift to English was not a straightforward takeover and did not mark the demise of Latin and AF. As observed by Wright (2020b: 5),

most of the writing extant in archives around the British Isles dating from the late fourteenth and fifteenth century was not written in monolingual English but in varying proportions of Medieval Latin, Anglo-Norman and Middle English.

By redirecting our focus from monolingual literary texts to mixed-language documents, which continued to be produced for a range of business purposes until the late fifteenth century, it is possible to observe shifting ratios of Latin, Anglo-Norman, and Middle English over time. Whilst AF “became increasingly restricted to law and administration” (Schendl 2015a: 234), Latin continued to be used as a matrix language until the early fifteenth century. However, a lower ratio of code-switching from Latin to AF can be identified in texts dating from

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that period: “the Anglo-Norman component dropped out of use in the first half of the fifteenth century [...] and English took its place” (Wright 2020c: 528). It is important to point out that, rather than operating a gradual shift to English, “fourteenth and fifteenth century scribes switched back and forth between languages” (Wright 2020a: 29), until, eventually, a switch of grammatical matrix took place. When English began to be increasingly used in professional contexts, “becoming the default choice as language of writing in various official functions” (Durkin 2014: 231), AF did not entirely disappear from written records: rather, it was absorbed into the English matrix.

As a result, rather than simply referring to the emergence of English, it is more appropriate to refer to a shift in matrix language from Latin to English, preceded by shifts of ratios of Latin, Anglo-Norman, and English.

The complex relationship between these three languages during the period discussed above had a considerable impact on each of them. The “enormous effect of the Norman Conquest on the vocabulary of English” (Stockwell & Minkova 2001: 35) is well known. However, it is important to point out that transfers did also occur “in the opposite direction, i.e. from English into the other languages of medieval Britain” (Ashdowne 2020: 411). A look at the AND and DMLBS is likely to reveal a considerable number of headwords of English origin, often antedating the attestations of usage recorded in the MED and OED (cf. Wright 2013b), resulting from the language-mixing practices previously discussed. In particular, documents belonging to the administrative domain dating from as early as the initial post-1066 period show that “Anglo-Latin and [...] English were flooded with Norman and, more generally, Gallic terminology [...]”, and “insular Latin and [...] Norman were at least equally affected by the influx of English lexis” (Timofeeva 2022: 55).

## **2.2 French and Latin influence in Middle English**

The Norman Conquest is generally seen as a turning point in the history of English due to the unprecedented influx of French-origin lexis in the language, a considerable proportion of which is still in use at present. Lexicographic data show that, “in the Middle English period, loanwords from French make up a huge proportion of all new words recorded in English, falling away rather sharply after 1500” (Durkin 2014: 32). Nevertheless, French was not the sole source of expansion of the English lexicon in the post-Conquest period. Whilst the earliest studies tended to focus on words coming directly from French (Jespersen 1926), renewed interest in the complexities and implications of language contact has shed light on the significant role of both French and Latin borrowing in ME

## 2.2 French and Latin influence in Middle English

(Coleman 1995). Thanks to recent, better-informed lexicographic work, historical dictionaries now provide much more detailed information concerning the etymological history of English words, and, in particular, the transmission of Latin borrowings via French. However, although some words can be confidently shown to come directly from either French or Latin based on such etymological information, it is not always easy to determine the origins of loanwords. As observed by Durkin (2014: 236–237),

[i]n very many cases, we cannot say with complete confidence that a word is from French rather than Latin, or vice versa, and in most of these cases composite origin from both languages seems the likeliest scenario.

Durkin's study of borrowings in the history of English (Durkin 2014) illustrates how, considering loanwords deriving from French, Latin, and French/or Latin, the Latin and French element in the lexicon outnumbers all the other sources, leaving a relatively low proportion of native vocabulary inherited from Old English (OE). Specifically, he found that loanwords from French, Latin, or both make up 44% of the headword entries in the third edition of the OED, if solely words first recorded in ME are taken into account (Durkin 2014: 257). The same investigation carried out on the headwords of the MED yielded a higher percentage, i.e. 48%, showing how borrowings from French and Latin make up nearly half of the ME lexicon (Durkin 2014: 256). When looking at loanwords from a diachronic perspective, he found a considerable increase in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Durkin 2014: 33), confirming previous findings by Dekeyser (1986), Mossé (1943), and Jespersen (1926) among others. In addition, his study illustrates the considerable contribution of French to ME through the identification of a dramatic peak of borrowing solely from French in the first half of the fourteenth century, unparalleled in the history of English (Durkin 2014: 35). By contrast, loanwords deriving solely from Latin show later peaks, in Early and Late Modern English (Durkin 2014: 32, Durkin 2014: 345).

Textbook accounts have traditionally pinpointed the role of prestige in borrowing from French by referring to the high-status domains “reflecting the leading position of the new aristocracy” (Stockwell & Minkova 2001: 38) in which French loan influence is preponderantly found. Lists of French-origin words adopted in ME are often reported with the aim of illustrating how the upper classes transferred into English

much of their governmental and administrative vocabulary, their ecclesiastical, legal, and military terms, their familiar words of fashion, food, and social life, the vocabulary of art, learning, and medicine. (Baugh & Cable 2002: 156)

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Literary works of the period, especially Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, are generally referred to in order to point out the "large number of French loanwords" found in ME, such as those relating to "moral qualities [...] discussed in courtly circles" (Barber et al. 2009: 179).

Although the French origin of the lexis relating to institutions and denotata imported with the Conquest and, more generally, of the "terms of high culture or social status" (Lerer 2007: 68) connected to the elevated milieu is indisputable, recent studies investigating the lexis connected to the activities and interests of the non-elite strata of society have reassessed the traditional view of the impact of French on ME, paving the way for further inquiry on the overlapping use of French and English in everyday life contexts.

Written evidence from professional contexts shows that the use of French was not a prerogative of the ruling classes: in fact, people working in a variety of professional spaces such as estate management were competent bilingual speakers rather than monolingual speakers of English (Ingham 2009, Ingham & Marcus 2016). The bilingual (or multilingual, if we consider Latin as well) competence of these professionals inevitably had effects on both languages, resulting in contact-induced change in the lexis connected to these professional activities. The systematic investigations carried out by Sylvester & Marcus (2017), Ingham et al. (2019), and Sylvester et al. (2020) on the ME vocabulary of occupational domains, intended as domains containing words "denoting processes, agents and objects connected to everyday occupations" (Sylvester et al. 2017: 313) in urban and rural contexts, yielded results which challenge the traditional view of high-status prestige borrowing. By examining the lexis connected to the domains of building, farming, food preparation, manufacture, trade, and travel by water, Ingham et al. (2019) found an average of 26% of words deriving from French and both French and Latin across these six occupational domains. The influence of French appears to be significantly greater in the domains of food preparation and trade, where French loanwords account for 43% and 35% of the domain respectively (Ingham et al. 2019: 467). Interestingly, Durkin (2014: 255) found that, of all headwords entries in the MED, including the English words already attested in OE, 16% derive solely from French and 11% from both French and Latin (hence a total of 27%): the figure found by Ingham et al. (2019) thus mirrors the average figure referring to Romance-origin borrowing (i.e. from French and both French and Latin)<sup>1</sup> in the entire ME lexicon.

The findings emerging from the investigation of the lexis associated with occupational domains clearly indicate that "in the contexts in which medieval people lived and worked, French-origin lexis played a very substantial role which

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<sup>1</sup>Words deriving solely from Latin are excluded in this count.

should not be accounted for as a matter of elite culture” (Ingham et al. 2019: 475). If we consider the language of everyday life rather than focussing on literary works, we find that French influence did not solely affect the elevated milieu but it “penetrated much further, into ordinary occupations” (Timofeeva & Ingham 2018: 201).

Of the domains considered in the aforementioned studies, farming shows the lowest proportion of French loan influence, with only 18.7% of French-origin lexical items. The reasons behind the relatively low impact of French on this domain possibly lie in external factors such as the lack of contact with the outside world (as opposed to domains such as trade and travel by water) and a low proportion of French speakers in non-urban environments (Ingham et al. 2019: 472–473).

Furthermore, the domain of farming was found to contain a relatively high proportion of technical vocabulary (Sylvester et al. 2020). Considering that a higher impact of French was identified by Sylvester (2018) and Sylvester et al. (2020) at the hypernymic levels of meaning, i.e. in the areas of vocabulary with most general rather than most technical senses, the low proportion of French-origin loanwords in the domain of farming may possibly be linked to the high proportion of lexis at the hyponymic levels. Sylvester (2018: 262) observes that the preference for native terminology for the most technical lexis may suggest “a resistance to the imported French vocabulary [...] by the class of skilled workers”, as in the case of farmers.

## 2.3 Language contact in the medieval countryside

Although bi- and multilingualism was widespread in the upper echelons of later medieval society and represented “the key to social and economic success” (Short 1980: 479) to the low-born professionals who were granted access to literacy, it is important to remember that, unsurprisingly, “the lower classes, the great majority of the people, spoke English and English alone” (Wilson 1968: 11).

In his study of the depositions recorded in the context of the 1307 inquiry concerning the process of canonisation of Thomas Cantilupe, Short (2009) sheds light on the different proportions of speakers in the urban and rural areas of late medieval England, pointing at the significantly higher proportion of English monolingual speakers belonging to the rural population as opposed to French-English bilingual speakers inhabiting urban environments.

As observed by Rothwell (2009: 384), “the surviving written evidence in Middle English and Anglo-French cannot be taken as reflecting accurately the true balance of the two languages”. In fact, whilst the presence of francophone and

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anglophone speakers was much more balanced in cities and towns, resulting in a higher degree of linguistic contact and the production of a greater amount of written documents, the situation was quite different in the countryside.

From a sociolinguistic perspective, rural areas were distinguished by a predominantly anglophone population. The typically extensive manorial estates owned by medieval landlords required the labour of a large workforce, as well as appointed officials responsible for administration. On the one hand, landlords were francophone during the early post-Conquest period and bilingual speakers of English and French from the late twelfth century onwards (cf. Ingham 2018, Short 1980), and higher-ranking officers were expected to be proficient in the languages of literacy. On the other hand, labourers were predominantly anglophone, mostly illiterate, and bound to the piece of land where they lived and worked. Agricultural work was often carried out far from the manor house, allowing little or no direct contact with the landowners and leaving English as the main means of communication. Consequently, the sociolinguistic landscape of the countryside was characterised by two distinct linguistic groups, a bilingual and a monolingual one, differing both in number and social role.

Combined with the

numerical imbalance between speakers of the two languages on country estates, the separation created by the legal relationship [...] between the lord, his officials [...], and finally the uneducated workers themselves must have accentuated the social gulf between the two linguistic groups and so inevitably affected the overall linguistic situation obtaining on the estates. (Rothwell 2009: 384)

Nevertheless, contact between the two groups was possible thanks to those officials who, besides managing and supervising the estate, acted as linguistic mediators between the two by passing orders down to the anglophone labourers. In addition, manorial courts played a pivotal role in the linguistic context of manors by providing essential, recurring opportunities for interaction between the two linguistic groups.

Although it has been acknowledged that peasants remained mostly anglophone throughout the late medieval period, it is only by considering the “non-literary material dealing [...] with everyday life” referred to by Trotter (2006: 73) that we can understand how language contact operated at the time and reassess the traditional view of a clear-cut separation between French and English, where the former is perceived as the language of the new rulers and the latter as the language of the oppressed classes.

### 2.3 *Language contact in the medieval countryside*

For rural areas, manorial documents serve as the prime source for investigating the linguistic nature of manorial environments. Ingham's study of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Latin manorial accounts highlights the presence of French grammatical words introducing English content words in a Latin matrix (Ingham 2009). As argued by the author, the use of intrasentential code-switching is possibly an indicator of bilingual French-English discourse among the professionals administering manorial estates. Investigation of the English lexical items found in manorial documents reveals a tendency to use English for words "denoting items in semantic fields such as places, artefacts, types of land, rural customs, and customary feudal payments", pointing at the hypothesis that estate professionals communicated in French and switched to English when referring to familiar concepts, items, and places on manorial estates (Ingham 2009: 83). This observation mirrors Hulbert's claim, based on a survey of English etymons in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century manorial documents, that "the English words in the manorial documents are of a homely character" (Hulbert 1936: 38).

The hypothesis concerning bilingual discourse among estate professionals implies that competence in French and Latin was not confined to the aristocratic classes: Ingham & Marcus (2016) pinpointed the maintenance of French in several professional contexts including architecture, trade, and medicine, as well as manorial estate management. As previously illustrated, the complementary nature of the languages of medieval England is observable in the written material connected to everyday-life contexts and activities rather than in literary works bound to courtly circles.

Even though the multilingual competence of estate professionals was demonstrated by the aforementioned studies, suggesting a certain degree of language contact in rural contexts of post-Conquest England, the effects of language contact on ME domains connected to such environments have been underexplored from a contact-linguistic perspective.

Areas of the language such as the literary, administrative, and legal domains have been widely discussed in scholarly investigations, especially in view of the fact that the majority of French-origin borrowings surviving in PDE come from the upper registers of the language. However, since knowledge of French was certainly required to work with or for members of the elite classes, the influence of French must have reached the domains relating to the professional contexts discussed above. As previously illustrated, recent studies have demonstrated that areas of the lexicon related to ordinary activities carried out by members of sub-aristocratic communities were not immune to the influence of French. Nevertheless, the relatively lower proportions of loanwords found in the domain of

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farming seem to suggest that the presence of bilingual speakers on manorial estates had little impact in terms of linguistic borrowing within an environment characterised by a predominance of English monolingual speakers.

One of the few studies focussing on the effects of language contact in the lexis connected to rural contexts of medieval England was carried out by Rothwell: by examining a set of lexicographic entries in historical dictionaries as well as ME glosses in AF treatises on agricultural and estate management, he determined the “relative paucity of rural vocabulary of French origin that found its way into standard English in the later medieval period” (Rothwell 2009: 399). His study emphasises the ways in which the uneven distribution of the francophone and anglophone groups had an impact on the linguistic environment of the countryside, suggesting that the greater proportion of English speakers was responsible for preventing the language of the landowners from affecting and eventually replacing their own language. As noted by Ingham (2009), even when discourse was conducted in French, code-switching into English was adopted to refer to local denotata, especially when addressing English labourers.

The fact that “remarkably few French terms for agricultural items and activities, not to mention rural landscape terms, have passed into English” (Ingham 2013: 106) is possibly the reason why lexical domains connected to the medieval countryside have not attracted considerable attention in scholarship. However, as previously mentioned, Ingham et al. (2019) demonstrated that, although limited, the influence of French was not insignificant in the domain of farming, paving the way for further inquiry into other areas of the lexis associated with rural contexts of post-Conquest England.

# 3 The medieval English manor

## 3.1 Introduction

The fact that “[m]ost medieval people made their living from agriculture” (Dyer 2002: 13) is well acknowledged. However, it is necessary to bear in mind that the “overwhelming importance of agriculture at this time” (Ingham & Marcus 2016: 152) contributed not only to the subsistence of the population but also to the formation of social structures related to manorialism, a political, socio-economic system that “touched and influenced the lives of common people in the Middle Ages” (Bailey 2002: 1). The characteristics of the medieval manor discussed in this chapter reveal how agricultural practices extended beyond the mere reliance on the advantages of a favourable natural environment and innovative agricultural techniques.

The topography of medieval England was marked by a predominantly rural landscape interspersed with hamlets and villages generally located within landholdings controlled by noble lords and bishops, who depended on the local peasantry for the supplies of produce and revenue derived from the payment of rent. While the majority of the population lived in small-sized, scattered settlements up to the tenth century, the period spanning the eleventh to twelfth centuries witnessed a rapid process of village formation, possibly stemming from either an increased density of farms and hamlets or the strategic planning of landlords, and the consequent birth of the manor (Dyer 2002: 13–42). The new settlements were notably larger, consisting of clusters of dwellings where peasant households lived and cultivated the adjoining land. A distinguishing feature of these emerging peasant communities was the fact that the agricultural practices were subject to common rules: the new field systems that developed alongside the medieval village formation proved advantageous for the entire community and represented one of the main technological changes defining the Middle Ages.

Changes concerned estates as well, which underwent fragmentation in the period after 850 CE. Previously, landlords owned multiple extensive estates, necessitating regular travel between them and subsequent stays of limited duration during which they required provisions. Conversely, the lords of the new, smaller estates were often local residents, and thus increasingly relied on the work of the

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local peasantry to fulfil their daily needs. In order to respond to these evolving circumstances and ensure the systematic exploitation of the land, the implementation of an appropriate system of organisation was necessary. Although such an organisation already existed before the Norman Conquest, it was not until the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries that it evolved into a fully-fledged institution, overseen by a hierarchy of officials responsible for its management. This marked the birth of the medieval manor, whose role was “central to the organisation of agrarian life in the Middle Ages and beyond” (Bailey 2002: 2).

Although the term *manor* originally denoted the lord’s aristocratic residence, “the medieval manor was more than just a seigneurial dwelling” (Bailey 2002: 3): by extension, the word came to refer to the whole administrative unit responsible for the management of land tenures and the exploitation of agricultural resources. A medieval manor consisted of “tenant land, on which peasants were settled on condition that they paid rents and worked for the lord, linked to the demesne on which the labour services could be used” (Dyer 2002: 34). The latter was the area of land designated for the lord’s exclusive use, which allowed him to effectively gain income thanks to the work of both serfs (the *villani*) and hired labourers from the local village, which might be subdivided among more than one manor. Although the components and characteristics of medieval manors varied across different estates, the following section provides a general overview of the typical composition of these territorial units.

### 3.2 **Composition of the medieval English manor**

The seigneurial residential complex, alongside its gardens and the various agricultural outbuildings necessary for running the demesne, was situated within the capital messuage of the estate, usually consisting of a few acres. Besides serving as the primary residence of the lord, it represented the centre of management of the whole organisation.

The patterns of land allocation in medieval agricultural landscapes were diverse: demesne and tenant lands varied in size and were scattered in small parcels over common fields. Cultivation relied on the open-field system: the fields of arable land were unenclosed and typically subdivided into long, narrow strips of land, each usually divided from the other by raised ridges of unploughed land, although evidence from surveys reveals the “difficulty which men found in knowing exactly where their own strip ended and that of a neighbour began” (Bennett 1938: 47). Individual tenants or households were allocated non-adjoining strips scattered across the common fields, which they cultivated according to common

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regulations. Many of them possessed additional plots of ground, typically a small enclosure near their dwelling and other parcels of land usually located on the outskirts of the manor.

In addition to arable land, the primary holdings of a manor included pasture and meadow. The former was used for the grazing of cattle or sheep, while the latter provided hay for livestock, and they both proved equally vital for the manor's sustenance. Like the common fields of arable land, they were held in common: each portion, which was fenced or marked by ditches, was allocated to an individual tenant or household. Beyond these fields stretched woods and *wastes*.

The rough, uncultivated land lying on the outskirts of a manor, constituted of both woodland and open spaces potentially suitable for grazing and agriculture, was generally termed *waste*. Such areas of land were sometimes limited, hence reserved for the members of a specific manor, but frequently extremely vast, lying between one manor and another and lacking clear delimitation of ownership. In both cases, however, they proved essential for the daily life of the community since they provided wood, which was used as fuel and for building agricultural and household tools, and wild fruits and berries, as well as turf, clay, sand, and gravel, all used for building purposes. Pieces of these expanses of lands could be enclosed for the individual use of tenants, who were allowed to cultivate them by paying a relatively small yearly rent. A piece of waste land converted to arable use by means of a clearing process was termed *assart*.

It is worth pointing out that the medieval manor involved both economic and legal dimensions. Certain components making up the layout of a medieval manor extended beyond mere agricultural resources, encompassing jurisdictional aspects: the term *warren*, for instance, not only denotes a place designated for the profitable breeding of rabbits but also refers to a legal right granted by the Crown by means of which individuals were allowed to kill game within a specific area. All legal matters and disputes, including violations of manorial regulations, were addressed in the manorial court, a local institution presided over by manorial officers that enabled landlords to exercise jurisdiction over their tenants.

In addition to the expanses of land, manors comprised a diverse array of facilities. Among these, the (water- or wind-powered) mill represented a source of valuable revenue since, besides increasing the overall productivity of the manor, it constituted a direct source of income for the lord, who charged tenants a fee or percentage of their grain for milling services. Other facilities included fishponds, a forge, and a dovecote.

The church stands as another noteworthy element within the composition of the medieval manor. As estates underwent fragmentation, an increasing number of landlords ordered churches to be founded on their manor. Initially conceived

### 3 *The medieval English manor*

as private places of worship for local lords and their households, churches subsequently evolved into centres of congregation for the rural communities, becoming the parish churches still surviving at present.

Manors varied extensively, exhibiting unique characteristics that distinguished them from one another. For example, in 1279, the layout of the manor possessed by the abbot of Bury St Edmunds at Coney Weston (Suffolk) comprised a capital messuage, a large demesne composed of arable, pasture, meadow, woodland, and marsh (for which rights to cut peat were granted), and a windmill, as well as areas of arable land, heath, and marsh held by its peasants. Conversely, manors such as that of Hillhall in Holkham (Norfolk), possessed a limited expanse of demesne arable and featured distinctive components tied to jurisdictional rights, such as a market and a fair (Bailey 2002: 6).

### 3.3 Manorial society

The manor, with its economic, social, and administrative functions, played a crucial role in the lives of numerous individuals during the Middle Ages. Manors were held by lay lords or ecclesiastical institutions, who controlled varying numbers of tenants from whom they demanded rents and services. However, collecting rents and managing the rendering of services necessitated a degree of organisation, and lords frequently held more than one manor. Furthermore, they were at times occupied with duties such as serving the king. As a result, “a widespread system sprung up, whereby manors were controlled by paid agents of the lords, and a whole hierarchy of officials and minor servants was created” (Bennett 1938: 153). Manorial officials played a pivotal role within the manorial system, as they were responsible to the landowner for overseeing both the administrative management of the manor and the agricultural operations.

Detailed insights into the specific responsibilities and duties of manorial officers are offered by surviving didactic treatises on estate management and farming. The most renowned among these are Grosseteste’s *Rules*, the anonymous *Seneschaucy*, Walter of Henley’s *Husbandry*, the anonymous *Husbandry*, and Walter of Bibbesworth’s *Tretiz*. All these texts were drawn up in AF during the thirteenth century, a period which saw the rise of a new, legal profession demanding competence in both AF and Latin from its practitioners, hence referred to as the heyday of “literate administration” (Oschinsky 1971: 3).

The earliest of the aforementioned treatises was the set of rules for the management of a seigneurial household and estate written by Robert Grosseteste, bishop of Lincoln, for the use of Countess Margaret of Lincoln, who was left

with manors to manage after the death of her husband. Both the *Seneschaucy* and Walter of Henley's *Husbandry* deal with the management of large estates, the latter drawing on the information found in the former, which illustrates the responsibilities of the various ranks of manorial officers typically employed on an estate. However, while the *Seneschaucy* describes the duties of individual officers in several chapters, the *Husbandry* is written "in the form of a sermon, the advice of a father to his son" (Oschinsky 1971: 7). The anonymous *Husbandry*, on the other hand, was written for the use of the accountants responsible for the financial management of an estate: it offers instructions specific to accounting, by describing the form of the account, the compilation procedure, the audit, etc. Finally, Walter of Bibbesworth's *Tretiz* is "a lengthy and detailed exposition in French of the vocabulary of the countryside" (Rothwell 2010: 48), written in the form of a poem intended to help the author's patroness (Dionisie de Munchensi) to teach her children French and, in particular, to teach them how to administer their estates in French. Bibbesworth's work differs from the other treatises in that it was not intended for a specialised readership whose first language was French, but, rather, it was aimed at providing "a new generation growing up in an increasingly anglophone environment with the more general French terminology of the countryside" (Rothwell 2009: 396). Although all the aforementioned texts were composed during a period when the upper echelons of society still spoke AF, the language of the first few generations of post-Conquest aristocracy was in the process of becoming a second language to be learned at school by native speakers of English. Contrary to the conventional perspective according to which the use of AF declined soon after the twelfth century (see Chapter 2), it has been demonstrated that "the use of French was widespread amongst the administrative profession" well into the fifteenth century (Ingham & Marcus 2016: 151). In manorial environments, the higher ranks of officials were required to be competent bilingual speakers "capable of interpreting the instructions of their French masters and passing the requisite orders down to the English work force in their charge" (Rothwell 2009: 384).

As well as providing detailed information regarding agricultural and financial practices relating to estate management, medieval didactic treatises "set out different aspects of the working relationships, duties and responsibilities of the officials and estate employees" (Rothwell 2010: 46), shedding light on their linguistic competence and showing how the development and prosperity of the medieval English manor heavily relied on underlying social structures.

Although the organisation of individual manors varied considerably, the following overview of the hierarchy of officials typically hired on a medieval manor

### 3 *The medieval English manor*

from the thirteenth century onwards attempts to illustrate the social structure on which estate management relied.

Stewards, also referred to as *seneschals*, were the higher ranks of estate administrators, “employed to have oversight of all the manors possessed by the landholder” (Ingham & Marcus 2016: 152), which they had to visit regularly “to inquire into rights, rents, services, and husbandry” (Oschinsky 1971: 93). Acting as “the voice and executive of the lord” (Bennett 1938: 158), stewards played a pivotal role in estate management in view of their authority. As far as their linguistic competence is concerned, they were possibly of well-born origin, i.e. they “belonged to the literate class amongst whom knowledge of French remained viable” (Ingham 2009: 85).

Collaborating closely with the steward and working under his guidance was the bailiff (or *sergeant*), a free man appointed by the lord and entrusted with “[l]ocal management of each manor, including hiring of workers and assignment of tasks to be performed” (Ingham & Marcus 2016: 152). He was assisted by the reeve, a villein appointed by the village community to represent the interests of manorial tenants. In view of their non-elevated social origins, reeves “might well have been anglophone only”, unless they received an education (Ingham 2009: 85). Both bailiff and reeve were responsible for the oversight of agricultural activities, ensuring adherence to the instructions given, and the preparation of a draft annual account (called *comptus*) for scrutiny by auditors working on behalf of the lord. However, “sometimes the bailiff [was] in charge of several manors and [had] to move about frequently to supervise their effective working” (Bennett 1938: 162), hence reeves were often entrusted with the collection and keeping of notes “until the clerks who wrote the accounts in final form came to the manors” (Hulbert 1936: 39) and the auditors conducted “a searching inquiry into the details of the account” (Bennett 1938: 189).

As far as the office of auditor is concerned, considering the essentially itinerant nature of this profession and the fact that “no manorial officer [...] was allowed to serve as auditor” (Oschinsky 1971: 97), this category of officials will not be treated here as part of the hierarchy manorial officers.

Lesser offices, which could be filled by peasants, were that of hayward, beadle, and woodward. The hayward was responsible to the reeve for “the summoning of customary labour and the supervision in the fields” (Oschinsky 1971: 96): specifically, he had to watch over crops, enclosures, pastures, and meadows in order to apprehend those who violated customary laws. The beadle (or constable), although “almost always ignored in [medieval] treatises” (Bennett 1938: 179), played a key role as a *de facto* law enforcement officer. His responsibilities included collecting fines, summoning tenants to the manorial court, and executing

eviction orders issued by the court. Since the duties of haywards and bealdes were often exercised by the same person, it is not always possible to refer to a clear-cut distinction between these two offices. The office of woodward, on the other hand, can be more easily separated from the aforementioned ones, since a woodward was specifically “appointed to safeguard the lord’s woods and plantations” (Bennett 1938: 182), ensuring the integrity of these resources often located at the outer boundaries of the estate.

As previously mentioned, although medieval treatises illustrate the exact duties of each officer in detail, “evidence from existing estate records show[s] that status and duties varied on different estates” (Oschinsky 1971: 65). If we examine the actual organisation of medieval manors, we find that not all the officers were active on every manor and the duties theoretically associated with distinct offices were often exercised by one single person. Contrary to the statements recorded in treatises, “the accounts and the Court Rolls could not differentiate clearly between the various manorial officers” (Bennett 1938: 156). For instance, the medieval lawsuits described by Sabapathy (2014: 25–37) highlight the ambiguities associated with the office of bailiff. The first case concerns Robert of Chilton, who was entrusted with the manor of Wye in the early twelfth century and was consequently referred to by means of the term *prepositus* in a surviving document; however, the same document also refers to him as a servant of the landholder, although not necessarily implying a servile status. Surviving evidence shows that, when he was sued for failing to tend to the manor, Robert “refused to be treated like a manorial officer” (Sabapathy 2014: 25). The second case, on the other hand, concerns John de Valle, who was formerly a bailiff in Ireland and later imprisoned in London for arrears in the account due to the lady of the manor. Interestingly, records of the lawsuit show that “John de Valle’s responsibilities look more like a steward’s, yet he was held to account legally as a bailiff” (Sabapathy 2014: 25).

In view of the inconsistency and variability in the responsibilities assigned to manorial officials in practical scenarios, distinctions between the different offices are sometimes avoided in historical texts: for instance, rather than distinguishing between the duties of bailiffs and reeves, Dyer (2002: 122) simply reports that “each manor was put under a local official, a reeve, sergeant or bailiff”. As observed by Bennett (1938: 178), “we must beware of making things too clear and of insisting on classifications which the medieval mind did not make”. In order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the subject, treatises and administrative documents should be treated as complementary evidence.

While the number of officials overseeing manorial estates was limited, tenants represented the majority of the people living and working on manorial estates.

### 3 *The medieval English manor*

The classification of tenants within the social hierarchy connected to the manorial environment is typically based on “the most basic distinction [...] between free and unfree (also known as villein, customary and servile) tenure” (Bailey 2002: 26). In other words, medieval tenants were primarily subdivided into free and unfree depending on the type of land tenure that they were entitled to. While free land could be either purchased, granted, or inherited, unfree land was subject to the authority of the lord and held according to the custom of the manor. A third category for land tenure was leasehold, wherein the lessee acquired either a free or unfree interest in the land for a limited period of time.

Rather than absolute freedom, the medieval concept of “free” tenure implies freedom from certain obligations, considering that both free and villein tenants owed duties to their lord. The privileged tenure granted to free tenants, who often held land in return for obligations such as military service rather than labour, allowed them to enjoy relatively great freedom from seigneurial control and protection by common law against their own lords. Nevertheless, pinpointing the specific attributes of free tenantry can be challenging, as the various types of holdings tend to shade off into one another. For instance, the terms *liberi tenentes* (or *libere tenentes*) used in the 1279-80 survey known as the *Hundred Rolls* refer to “a group of persons of varying social grades, ranging from the military tenant of some importance to the humble peasant” (Dodwell 1944: 164). An interesting example can be found in the case of those tenants of ancient demesne, i.e. residing on manors held directly by the crown and thus protected by the latter’s interests, termed *sokemen* (or *sochmanni*) because they held their land in socage, i.e. by a fixed agricultural service or by payment of money rent, without any military obligations. These tenants were particularly common in eastern counties such as Essex. Despite holding land in exchange for a certain agricultural service or money rent, the fact that “they were accorded rights of access to common law” granted them significant advantages over other villeins, placing them in an intermediate position between free and unfree tenants (Schofield 2003: 16).

The unfree peasantry, on the other hand, was subject to a wider range of obligations to the lord of the manor, who had considerable control over it. Unfree tenure assumed a number of forms, which explains the “bewildering variety of categories of ‘unfree’ landholders” typifying manorial society (Bailey 2002: 26). When it comes to discussing these categories, it is important to point out the originally existing distinction between unfree tenure and serfdom. The terminology employed in the *Domesday Book*, the survey of holdings in England conducted at the behest of King William I and completed in 1086, reveals that late eleventh-century peasantry was subdivided into categories of peasant tenantry on the one hand and slaves on the other. Although both owed obligations to the lord, the

former may have become unfree by acquisition of unfree land (thus referred to as serfs by tenure), whilst the latter were born unfree (hence serfs by blood) and had extremely limited rights. Serfs “had no land of their own—or at the most a few acres, and [...] were primarily on the manor to cultivate [the lord’s] lands, and to tend to his flocks and herds” (Bennett 1938: 183). Moreover, unlike tenants, they were not allowed to leave the lord’s demesne at will.

The differentiation between unfree tenants and serfs, which implies a distinction between unfree tenure and personal unfreedom, became blurred in the record by the thirteenth century, and “servile tenures based upon birth [were] extinguished by the early fifteenth century” (Schofield 2003: 13). As a result, unfree tenants are often referred to as servile tenants, although the vast terminology for the categories of unfree tenants who held their land from the lord “in villeinage” or “in bondage” according to the custom of the manor includes terms such as *customary tenants*, *villeins*, *bondmen*, and *cottars* (found as *custumarii*, *villani*, *bondi*, and *cotarii* in Latin records).

By 1300, “the overwhelming majority of customary land was held in villein tenure, whose rent package comprised a mixture of cash, payments in kind, servile incidents and labour services” (Bailey 2002: 212). Customary land was held “at the will of the lord” and the title to it was hereditary. However, the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries saw the emergence of copyholds and leaseholds, which came to replace the aforementioned type of villein tenure. Copyholders enjoyed legal protection under the common law: they acquired land through choice rather than inheritance and held it by copy of the court roll (hence the term *copyhold*), in some cases for a limited period of time. Lessees, on the other hand, held land from a lord for a set period and a fixed money rent. Other types of tenants who enjoyed relatively greater freedom than villeins included, for instance, bordar tenants (*bordarii*), who held a cottage and a small parcel of land under less servile conditions, and tenants in gavelkind, the latter being a type of land tenure found chiefly in Kent that allowed an intestate’s estate to be divided equally among the heirs.

As a result of the changes which the class of customary tenants underwent throughout the medieval period and the increasingly wider range of forms of land tenure underlying the manorial system, in addition to the scarcity of details provided by some court rolls, the terms for tenures “could be vague [...] or fluid” (Bailey 2002: 211). Therefore, given the “bewildering variety of forms and inconsistency of nomenclatures” (Harvey 1991: 670), “historians tend to adopt a shorthand of ‘unfree’ in referring to that group who held from and were *de iure* property of their manorial lord” (Schofield 2003: 13).

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The demographic upheaval caused by the Black Death in the latter half of the fourteenth century, alongside economic changes brought about by inflations in previous centuries and the rise of a market economy, further contributed to the transformation of manorial society. The drastic population decline resulted in a severe scarcity of labour, compelling lords to increasingly abrogate many aspects of villein status and paving the way for effective ownership and a free labour market. Tenants gained increased freedom, with many becoming leaseholders, and labour services were gradually replaced by money rent payments. By the end of the fifteenth century, “the manorial system w[as] in an advanced state of decay” (Douglass & Thomas 1971: 780), its economy greatly destabilised by the emergence of a workforce free to seek the best employment opportunities.

Having addressed the role of officials and tenants within the manorial system, it is important to address a significant aspect of manorial life: the manorial court. This tribunal served as the centre where legislative, administrative, and judicial functions were executed. Among its roles were the administration of justice according to customary law, facilitation of land transfers, resolution of disputes, and regulation of conduct. The authority of the court, which represented the power of the lord, was enforced by his officials. Trials were generally presided over by the steward or, in his absence, the bailiff, and both free and unfree tenants were required to attend. The “high level of community participation characterising manorial courts” (Mulholland 2018: 93) suggests that these institutions not only served as centres for administrative and legal proceedings but also represented the foci of language contact in rural contexts. Court rolls and other manorial documents originating within these courts offer valuable insight into the nature of medieval society. Besides providing a vivid picture of manorial legal rituals and the overall administration of manors (cf. Razi & Smith 1996), they have recently proven to be rich sources for the investigation of the linguistic complexities of these multilingual social environments. As illustrated in Chapter 2, the code-switching practices identified in manorial documents (cf. Ingham 2009, 2018, Ingham & Marcus 2016) call for further investigation of the outcomes of language contact on manorial estates.

# 4 Compiling the trilingual thesaurus of manorial lexis

## 4.1 An onomasiological approach

At present, scholars interested in the three languages of post-Conquest England necessarily rely on three distinct historical dictionaries: the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (AND), the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (DMLBS), and the *Middle English Dictionary* (MED). However, in order to obtain an overview, or rather, a glimpse, of the linguistic environment typifying post-Conquest England, it is necessary to consult them concurrently. Even so, this approach is hindered by the overlapping use of the medieval languages, which results in shared lexis and lexicographic inconsistencies (cf. Wright 2013a,b). These issues stem from the fact that, as Wright argues, “[t]he mixed-language text-type is difficult for monolingual dictionaries to handle” (Wright 2013a: 131). Considering the complex linguistic situation of the time, characterised by language-mixing practices, it becomes evident that “monolingual lexicography in a multilingual environment does not work” (Trotter 2000a: 4).

This issue raises the need to identify a methodological approach capable of addressing it effectively. In a note to an essay discussing the lexicographic problems arising from the lack of clear boundaries between languages in medieval Britain, Trotter (1996: 35) claimed that

[t]here is a strong case for an onomasiological treatment of later medieval England, which would alone be able really to show how the three languages (Anglo-French, Middle English and Latin) functioned, but this lies a long way in the future.

Before defining the concept of onomasiology, it is important to note that none of the dictionaries previously mentioned adopts this perspective, resulting in a significant gap in the current lexicographic treatment of medieval multilingualism.

The present study seeks to address Trotter’s suggestion by compiling a lexicographical resource that offers, for the first time, an “onomasiological treatment”

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of all three post-Conquest languages. For practical reasons, and within the scope of this work, this resource focuses exclusively on the lexis associated with the medieval manor, with the aim of shedding light on the linguistic contact situation of rural England in the later Middle Ages. Specifically, it assembles vocabulary relating to manorial places and society, two interconnected domains that are representative of a sociolinguistic context insufficiently taken into account in language contact investigation.

The primary aspect to be addressed when designing a lexical database is the lexicographic approach to be adopted, i.e. the organisational principle underpinning the lexical and semantic information collected by the lexicographer.

Whilst present-day dictionary users may be used to the alphabetical arrangement of lexical units due to “the dictionary system’s ubiquity in recent years” (Kay & Alexander 2016: 367), the latter is not the only way of presenting lexicographic information. As we know, “[l]exicography is concerned with compiling inventories of the words of a language and accounting for their conventional meaning and use” (Hanks 2012: 416). Given that words are correlated with semantic content, lexicography is thus concerned with naming and meaning, the two opposite and fundamental aspects of semantics and starting points of lexicographic investigation. As observed by Glynn (2015: 48), “one can begin with a meaning and seek to understand how a language (or speakers) expresses that meaning or one may begin with a linguistic form and ask what a language (or speakers) means with that form”. The two different approaches account for the distinction between semasiology and onomasiology, two concepts extensively discussed by Geeraerts (1988, 1997, 2010), the first linguist to foreground their pivotal role in the paradigm of cognitive linguistics. The difference between semasiology and onomasiology lies in the starting point for investigation:

[w]hereas a semasiological perspective investigates which concepts are associated with a given word, onomasiological research takes its starting-point in a concept, and investigates which words may be associated with that concept (Geeraerts 2003: 84).

In other words, a semasiological approach starts from the formal aspect to identify the meanings expressed by a specific lexical item; conversely, an onomasiological approach starts from the content, that is, from a particular concept, and aims to identify the lexical items used to express it.

Originally, these notions were not defined in these terms. For instance, one may consider the definitions provided in the OED across its editions. In a note to his 1996 proposal concerning an onomasiological version of the OED, Hüllen

(1996: 15–16) reported the outdated entry for “onomasiology” found in the supplement of the OED edition available at the time, i.e. “[t]he study of the principles of nomenclature, esp. with regard to regional, social, or occupational variation”. After expressing his disagreement, he suggested the following one: “[t]he study of language in which preconceived meanings are expressed by words. The reverse of semasiology or semantics [...]” (Hüllen 1996: 16), which appears to be more in line with the concept defined by Geeraerts. In addition, Hüllen discussed the limitation of an alphabetical arrangement by pointing out the different needs of OED users, who, besides looking up words that they already know, might want to find words that best express a semantic idea that they have in mind. Luckily, the *Historical Thesaurus of English* (HTE) project was already under way thanks to Michael Samuel’s proposal for the compilation of a conceptual thesaurus based on the OED.

Alongside synonym dictionaries, thesauri are examples of onomasiologically-structured lexicographical resources which “arrange the vocabulary according to concepts or in conceptual fields” (Sylvester 1994: 21), hence allowing users to investigate all the forms through which a specific concept is expressed. In other words, a thesaurus is “a work of lexicographical reference which presents lexical facts with semantic domains as its core organizational principle, rather than in alphabetical arrangement” (Kay & Alexander 2016: 367). It differs from a semasiological dictionary in that it is characterised by a thematic macro-structure underpinned by a classification system. The onomasiological approach adopted in the compilation of a thesaurus, however, does not exclude a semasiological one; on the contrary, the two approaches can be said to be complementary. In order to assign a lexeme to a specific category, we need to distinguish and classify its senses, taking into account the pervasive nature of polysemy.

The classification of lexical items according to the concept they express implies a classification of the senses of each word. Since the boundaries of categories are rarely clear-cut and referents may change through time, problems of classification arise (see Section 4.2.1), resulting in the semasiological aspect having an impact on the onomasiological one. Given the complementary nature of onomasiology and semasiology, a semasiological investigation of a set of lexical items selected from the thesaurus is presented in Chapter 6, where the individual history of selected pairs of synonyms of different etymological origin (native and borrowed) is tackled. Nevertheless, a purely semasiological investigation is not enough to understand the interaction of native and borrowed vocabulary, therefore this study was specifically designed to illustrate the advantages of the “onomasiological treatment of later medieval England” advocated by Trotter (1996: 35).

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Underlying the onomasiological process is categorisation, a cognitive ability of paramount importance from a cognitive perspective in view of the fact that “[o]ne of the ways in which we make sense of the world is by sorting things into categories” (Kay & Allan 2015: 25). Evidence from the field of psychology shows that, in view of the enormous diversity of objects and properties constituting the surrounding world, people tend to mentally group objects into categories rather than treat them as unique items (Markman 1981). Given this natural urge to systematically categorise the human experience, the concept of categorisation is particularly important in cognitive semantics, the branch of cognitive linguistics which “takes a usage-based rather than a system-based approach to the description of meaning” by investigating “the variable, contextualized use of language as it is embedded in human experience and interaction” (Geeraerts 2016: 433). An onomasiological treatment of the lexis of a language entails the design of a structure that is the result of an attempt to systematically categorise the world and is therefore heavily dependent on cognitive experience. Consequently, this study takes advantage of the framework of cognitive semantics in that it is underpinned by a conceptual classification of the lexical material under investigation.

The following sections describe the methodology employed in the compilation of the thesaurus, which is available in full in Part III and is analysed in the following chapters.

### 4.2 The conceptual classification

In addressing the lexicographic treatment of polysemy, Geeraerts (2006: 340) claims that “[t]he primary step to be taken by the lexicographer will obviously be the imposition of a *hierarchical structure* on the semantic material”. Thesaurus-making is informed by semantic field theory, which

describes fields as closely-knit sections of the vocabulary in which a particular conceptual area is divided up, classified, and organized so that each of its elements helps to delineate and limit its neighbours, and is delineated and limited by them (Sylvester 1994: 21).

Whilst resources such as WordNet<sup>1</sup> (an electronic lexical database combining both semasiological and onomasiological information) do not provide a structure for the lexicon, semantic field theory is clearly relevant to projects such as the

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<sup>1</sup><https://wordnet.princeton.edu/>

*Historical Thesaurus of English* (HTE), whose construction is based on a taxonomy designed to allow its users to investigate lexical change. The crucial aspect of semantic field theory to be taken into account in thesaurus-making is that “[i]n each field experience is categorized in a particular way, which may differ from both language to language and through history” (Sylvester 1994: 21).

The initial phase of the lexicographic process described in this chapter involved the creation of a conceptual classification, that is the designing of semantic domains to which the collected lexical material could be assigned and their arrangement into a semantic hierarchy.

When it comes to concepts and referents that are peculiar to the medieval world, it is important to bear in mind that our cognitive experience is not the same as that of the people living in the past. As observed by Kay & Wotherspoon (2002: 52), “[c]ategories change over the years, reflecting changes in the societies which produce them”. As a result, domains that are specifically related to life in the Middle Ages require an onomasiological reconstruction. Even though the HTE provides a diachronic resource of inestimable value for research in English historical linguistics and semantics, studies of semantic domains connected to the past cannot entirely rely on its classification, considering that some concepts and referents were conceived of differently and some of them no longer exist. Making use of the HTE categories for semantic and lexicological investigations of medieval concepts would impose “a modern day world view onto the medieval data” (Sylvester et al. 2017: 310). For instance, the compilers of the *Bilingual Thesaurus of Everyday Life in Medieval England* (BTh), which is derived from the HTE in terms of taxonomic categories, had to extend the domain relating to farming to include terms that are found elsewhere in the HTE, such as those used to refer to plants and animals, in order to “capture the habitus of those involved in medieval farming” (Ingham et al. 2019: 466).

Since the manorial system no longer exists, the lexis associated with the medieval manor represents one of the domains requiring an onomasiological reconstruction, as it cannot be mapped onto any modern concept. The concept of manor is found in the HTE macro-categories “The World” and “The Mind”, specifically in the categories “Farming” (The world > Food and drink > Farming > Farm > manor) and “Possessions” (The mind > Possession > Possessions > real/immovable property > land > manor) respectively. However, the HTE taxonomy, which was devised from a modern perspective, does not allow us to connect these concepts to the types of land and society which typified a manor during the Middle Ages. For instance, in order to find the terms that were used to refer to the main areas of demesne land under the jurisdiction of a medieval manor (i.e. arable, meadow, and pasture), we need to explore the category “Farmland”,

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below “Farming” (The world > Food and drink > Farming > Farm > Farmland). The words for the uncultivated waste are found elsewhere in the classification, specifically in the category “Wild/uncultivated land”, a few levels below “Land” (The world > The earth > Land > Landscape > Wild/uncultivated land), as are those referring to the messuage, i.e. where the manor house was located (The mind > Possession > Possessions > real/immovable property > land > a piece of land > messuage). The different types of officials entrusted with estate management, on the other hand, need to be searched in the macro-category “Society”, a number of levels below “Authority” (e.g. Society > Authority > Exercise of authority > One having delegated/derived authority > steward/bailiff in charge of another’s property).

The conceptual classification adopted in this lexicographic project takes the composition of the medieval manor and manorial society into account, reflecting an attempt to offer a cognitive perspective as close as possible to the medieval one. The historical concepts and referents pertaining to the domain under investigation were onomasiologically reconstructed through the compilation of a thesaurus assembling all the terms that were available during the ME period to express them. The overall aim is to present this lexical domain in an onomasiological structure that takes both the cognitive experience and the multilingual environment of the time into account.

The conceptual classification underpinning the thesaurus is modelled on the hierarchical structure of the HTE and the BTh, in which lexical items are categorised according to the semantic relations of hyponymy ( $x$  is a type of  $y$ ) and meronymy ( $x$  is a part of  $y$ ), which represent “key relationships in the structure of thesauruses” (Kay & Allan 2015: 32).

The HTE is an onomasiological work initiated by M. L. Samuels in 1965, when he announced that “the English Language Department at the University of Glasgow would undertake the task of turning the headwords in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) into a conceptual thesaurus” (Kay 2012: 41). Its aim is to categorise the entire English lexis, including obsolete words and senses, in order to provide a research tool for the study of the development of semantic categories over time. As claimed by the editors, it represents “the first historical thesaurus ever produced for any language”<sup>2</sup> and it is currently available in two online versions, the HTE and the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* (HTOED), which differ in that only the former includes OE words and senses which became obsolete before 1150.

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<sup>2</sup><https://ht.ac.uk/about/>

The HTE classification was envisaged “as a modified folk taxonomy, and is based on the assumption that we begin by classifying the immediately observable phenomena in our environment” (Kay 1984: 89). Consequently, it arranges concepts from the most general to the most specific ones by grouping words according to concepts within a semantic hierarchy. Each category is defined by a heading and consists of synonyms or co-hyponyms presented in chronological order. However, considering that “[l]anguage possesses no *pure* synonyms” (Samuels 1975: 65), it is important to note that

[w]ithin each heading in HTOED, meanings are grouped according to a loose principle of synonymy. There is no claim that these words are exactly synonymous, i.e. could replace one another in all contexts (if such a condition exists), but rather that they share enough of their meaning to be classified together (Kay et al. 2009: xix).

When Christian Kay presented the HTE at the *International Conference on Lexicography* in 1983, she suggested “the possibility of retrieving specialized thesauri” from it (Kay 1984: 90). An example is the *Bilingual Thesaurus of Everyday Life in Medieval England* (BTh), whose macro-structure is modelled on the taxonomic categories of the HTE. The lexicographic project described here stems from Kay’s suggestion and is modelled on the modified taxonomy of both the HTE and BTh.

The BTh is the result of a project initiated by Richard Ingham and Louise Sylvester, designed with the aim of assessing the effects of language contact on the technical lexis of contexts of late medieval England having “received little research attention from a contact linguistics perspective” (Ingham et al. 2019: 459). In other words, this project, which is now available online, focuses on the lexis associated with activities carried out by the non-elite strata of medieval society. Specifically, it assembles ME and AF vocabulary “denoting processes, agents and objects connected to everyday occupations” (Sylvester et al. 2017: 313) in use in England between 1150 and 1450, covering the following seven domains: “building”, “domestic activities”, “farming”, “food preparation”, “manufacture”, “trade”, “travel by water”.

As already mentioned, its taxonomy is based on that of the HTE; however, its categories were occasionally modified since, unlike the HTE, the BTh’s structure is based on associative fields, rather than semantic ones, and its lexis is categorised according to semantic roles (Sylvester et al. 2017: 310). The central concept underlying the BTh is the idea of a “process” and its connection to agents, specialised locations, and objects. As a result, the groupings in each domain are

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presented below headings such as “agents”, “instruments”, “processes”, “product/s”, “specialised locations”. In addition, unlike the HTE, terms are arranged alphabetically rather than chronologically in each sub-domain, with a separation between AF (referred to as Anglo-Norman) and ME lexical items.

As far as methodology is concerned, the BTh data were extracted from the MED and AND. The authors used the HTE headings, as well as synonyms of the latter, as keywords to perform searches in these two historical dictionaries in order to find all the terms used at the time in the sense in question (Sylvester et al. 2017: 311).

In view of the effectiveness of this lexicographical resource as a tool for investigating the role of French in the English lexis connected to the medieval non-elevated milieu, as confirmed by the studies based on its data (Ingham et al. 2019, Sylvester 2018, 2020, Sylvester & Marcus 2017, Sylvester & Tiddeman 2023, Sylvester et al. 2020, 2022a,b, 2023), the BTh was used as a model for the present work. Specifically, the commonalities between the BTh and the thesaurus compiled for this research are the classification based on associative fields and semantic roles and the data collection method. On the other hand, the microstructure devised for this project differs from that of the BTh in that the medieval languages are not displayed in separate sections. Instead, the multilingual (i.e. AF, ME, and ML) lexis assigned to each conceptual grouping is presented in chronological order, as illustrated in Section 4.3.1. This approach aims to shift the focus away from modern-day perspectives of language boundaries by centring the investigation around concepts and avoiding clear-cut separations between languages.

The project presented here aims to assemble and classify the multilingual lexis related to the medieval English manor that is scattered in distinct semasiological dictionaries by organising it into a structure that attempts to reflect the medieval cognitive experience. The output is a domain-specific historical thesaurus that provides a multilingual perspective on the lexis in use in post-Conquest England, on which research on the effects of language contact can be conducted.

The lexical material gathered for the project was arranged in hierarchically structured groupings: like the BTh compilers, I opted for assembling associative rather than semantic fields and categorising them according to semantic roles.

The conceptual classification is based on two of the semantic roles covered by the BTh, namely specialised locations and agents. Although this project has the potential to be expanded in the future through the incorporation of vocabulary denoting processes (activities) and objects and/or instruments, the lexical domains pertaining to farming practices and tools were intentionally excluded

in view of their comprehensive coverage in the BTh and the extensive studies conducted on the latter.

The macro-structure features two major divisions, found under the headings “Manorial locations” and “Manorial society” respectively. These two macro-categories collect the terms in use during the ME period to refer to the locations that were most commonly under the jurisdiction of a manor and the people representing the stratification of manorial society, i.e. those who possessed manorial estates, those who administered them, and the free and unfree people holding tenancies. As far as the hierarchical structure is concerned, the two macro-categories differ in that whereas the lexical material found below “Manorial locations” is arranged according to relationships of both hyponymy and meronymy, that found below “Manorial society” is classified based on hyponymy only.

The conceptual classification, modelled on that of the HTE and BTh, aims to reflect the composition of the medieval manor and the structure of manorial society. In fact, it is based on a generalisation of an institution that appeared to be much more complex, in view of the considerable variety in the composition and size of manors and in the ranks and number of people involved in their administration (see Chapter 3). Nevertheless, the macro-category “Manorial locations” was designed to classify the main, largest areas typically constituting a manorial estate (thus excluding small locations such as agricultural outbuildings), i.e. the messuage, where the manor house was located, and the areas of land under the jurisdiction of a manor intended for farming and agriculture. The subdivisions found at the superordinate level of this macro-category are mainly based on the topographical subdivision illustrated by Bailey (2002: 3) within a diagram schematically showing the “economic and legal components of the manor between c. 1200 and 1500”. The macro-category “Manorial society”, on the other hand, is structured into three subdivisions reflecting the main social categories of the context under investigation, namely landlords, officers, and tenants. The conceptual classification underpinning the category devised to assemble the terms for manorial officers is based on Bennett (1938: 151–192) and Sabapathy (2014), whereas the classification of the lexis denoting manorial tenants is based on Dyer (2002) and Schofield (2003).

The classification initially devised had to be continuously updated during the lexicographic process. The designing of the thesaurus structure was carried out alongside the collection of data, resulting in each of the two processes influencing the other. As observed by Kay (1984: 89), “one problem of compiling a thesaurus, as opposed to an alphabetical dictionary, is that one is constantly having to revise one’s ideas in the light of data from other sections, so that the structure cannot be regarded as complete until the work is finished”. Although enough

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data were collected for the purpose of this research project, this work cannot be considered final since a thesaurus is never complete “until every available meaning is slotted into place” (Kay 2012: 52). As previously suggested, the two macro-categories designed for the project may be further expanded in the future to include additional sub-categories in both macro-categories. Specifically, “Manorial locations” may be expanded by adding sub-categories assembling the lexis denoting “the various agricultural outbuildings necessary to run the demesne as a working farm” (Bailey 2002: 3), including barns, granaries, stables, etc., and buildings such as churches and mills, “which generated valuable revenue for the manor” (Dyer 2002: 41). “Manorial society”, on the other hand, may be expanded through the addition of sub-categories assembling terms for specialised workers such as peasants, carpenters, smiths, and all those villagers who “did not [...] live on the yield of the land” (Bennett 1938: 67).

The semantic hierarchy was constructed using *Fieldworks Language Explorer* (FLE<sub>x</sub>), a free software tool designed for the creation of lexical databases, including both semasiological and onomasiological dictionaries. This structure was progressively refined based on incoming data. Superordinate categories were established in the early stages of the process, while hyponymic categories were subsequently added to include more specific vocabulary. At present, the thesaurus has 72 sub-categories in total (“Manorial land” and “Types of manorial land”, representing level markers and hence devoid of lexical material, are excluded), 26 of which are found below “Manorial Location” and 45 below “Manorial society”. The classification structure of the two macro-categories is illustrated in Table 4.1, Table 4.2, and Table 4.3. All domains are hierarchically numbered (1.1, 1.1.1, 1.1.1.1, 1.1.1.2, etc.) and the sub-categories of the same category (e.g. “Assart”, “Fallow”, and “Other types of arable land” below “Arable land”) arranged alphabetically. The divisions in the organisational system are termed “hierarchical levels” (HLs): moving from HL0 downward “involves increased specificity of reference” (Sylvester et al. 2020: 4).

Table 4.1 shows the structure of the macro-category “Manorial locations”. Hierarchical levels range from HL0, corresponding to the macro-category heading (no items are found at this level), to HL5, where the most specific vocabulary is found. The domain “Manorial estate” constitutes the superordinate category, located at the top of the hierarchy (HL1), which contains the superordinate terms denoting the medieval institution as a whole. At the hierarchical level below (HL2), we find “Manorial land” and “Types of manorial estates”: whilst the latter is connected to the upper level by means of a hyponymic relation, as it assembles the words denoting specific types of manors, the former is devoid of lexical

Table 4.1: Classification structure of the macro-category “Manorial locations”

Category	Hierarchical level
1. Manorial locations [EMPTY]	HL0
1.1 Manorial estate	HL1
1.1.1 Manorial land [EMPTY]	HL2
1.1.1.1 Arable land	HL3
1.1.1.1.1 Assart	HL4
1.1.1.1.1.1 Types of assart	HL5
1.1.1.1.2 Fallow	HL4
1.1.1.1.3 Other types of arable land	HL4
1.1.1.2 Meadowland	HL3
1.1.1.2.1 Types of meadowland	HL4
1.1.1.3 Messuage	HL3
1.1.1.3.1 Manor house	HL4
1.1.1.4 Pastureland	HL3
1.1.1.4.1 Cattle pasture	HL4
1.1.1.4.2 Other types of pastureland	HL4
1.1.1.4.3 Rabbit pasture	HL4
1.1.1.5 Types of manorial land [EMPTY]	HL3
1.1.1.5.1 Common land	HL4
1.1.1.5.2 Demesne land	HL4
1.1.1.5.3 Enclosed land	HL4
1.1.1.5.4 Measures of land	HL4
1.1.1.5.5 Other types of land	HL4
1.1.1.5.6 Tenant land	HL4
1.1.1.5.6.1 Types of tenant land	HL5
1.1.1.6 Wasteland	HL3
1.1.1.6.1 Types of wasteland	HL4
1.1.1.6.2 Wood(s)	HL4
1.1.1.6.2.1 Types of wood(s)	HL5
1.1.2 Types of manorial estate	HL2

material and its function is to group the domains that stand in a meronymic relation with “Manorial estate”. These are “Arable land”, “Meadowland”, “Messuage”, “Pastureland”, and “Wasteland”, found one level below (HL3): they all contain

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the lexis used to refer to the areas of land under the jurisdiction of a manor. Another domain, “Types of manorial land”, is found alongside the aforementioned ones at HL3: it is another empty category devised to group the hyponymic sub-categories containing lexis denoting specific kinds of land from the point of view of land ownership, found at HL4 (“Common land”, “Demesne land”, “Enclosed land”, “Measures of land”, “Other types of land”, “Tenant land”). These include “Measures of land”, a unique category which contains technical lexis unrelated to that found in the adjacent domains. Taking the BTh as a model, I decided to locate it here since the same domain is found below “Kinds of land” in the BTh.

Another sub-category which can be arbitrarily assigned to different domains in the hierarchical system is “Assart”: since an assart was a ‘piece of forest or waste land converted to arable use’ (OED), this domain may be located either below “Arable” or “Wasteland”. I decided to treat it as a sub-category of “Arable” in view of the fact that, after the process of assarting had taken place, an assart was no longer part of the uncultivated waste.

Domains at HLs 3 and 4 are mainly connected through relations of hyponymy (e.g. “Meadow” and its hyponymic sub-category “Types of meadow”): only “Manor house” is a meronymic sub-category of “Messuage”. In addition, the lexical items contained in “Wood(s)” (HL4) may be considered both hyponyms and meronyms of those contained in “Waste”, since manorial wastes included woodland as well as open spaces.

Only three domains are found at HL5, the lowest level of the hierarchy, namely “Types of assart”, “Types of tenant land”, and “Types of wood(s)”. Whilst the majority of categories contain near-synonyms, the domains found below the headings “Types of...” or “Other types of...”, as well as “Enclosed land” and “Measures of land”, were devised to gather non-synonymous co-hyponyms.

The macro-structure of the second macro-category (“Manorial society”) is presented in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3.

In comparison to the previous macro-category, “Manorial society” presents a different arrangement, resulting from the different nature of the lexis to be classified. However, as in “Manorial locations”, hierarchical levels range from 0 to 5, with only two sub-categories at the most specific level (HL5), namely “Female cottar” and “Tenant by copyhold”. This does not mean that the lexis gathered in this macro-category is less specific than that found in “Manorial locations”, since “HLs are not a consistent or quantitative indicator of technicality in individual cases and at any specific level” (Sylvester et al. 2020: 4), not even within the same macro-category.

For instance, as opposed to the macro-category discussed above, all sub-categories of “Manorial society” are populated by lexical material. Moreover, meronymic

Table 4.2: Classification structure of the macro-category “Manorial society” (Part 1)

Category	Hierarchical level
2. Manorial society [EMPTY]	HL0
2.1 Landlord	HL1
2.1.1 Female landlord	HL2
2.1.2 Other types of landlord	HL2
2.1.3 Position of landlord	HL2
2.2 Officer	HL1
2.2.1 Administrator/Steward/Bailiff	HL2
2.2.1.1 Deputy administrator/steward/bailiff	HL3
2.2.1.1.1 Office of deputy administrator/...	HL4
2.2.1.2 Female administrator/steward/bailiff	HL3
2.2.1.3 Office of administrator/steward/bailiff	HL3
2.2.2 Beadle	HL2
2.2.2.1 Office of beadle	HL3
2.2.3 Hayward	HL2
2.2.3.1 Office of hayward	HL3
2.2.4 Office	HL2
2.2.5 Other types of officer	HL2
2.2.6 Reeve	HL2
2.2.6.1 Office of reeve	HL3
2.2.6.2 Types of reeve	HL3
2.2.7 Woodward	HL2
2.2.7.1 Deputy woodward	HL3
2.2.7.2 Office of woodward	HL3

relations are not involved since the macro-category primarily assembles terms denoting people, which were grouped according to hypernymic and hyponymic relations. The sub-categories found below the headings “Group of...”, “Office of...”, and “Position of...” constitute exceptions: even though they do not share a hyponymic relation with those found at the upper level, they were added on the model of the HTE, where the same headings are found, in order to provide a more comprehensive overview of the lexis relating to manorial society.

At the superordinate level (HL1) we find the three domains “Landlord”, “Official”, and “Tenant”, which refer to the three main subdivisions typifying the stratification of manorial society.

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Table 4.3: Classification structure of the macro-category “Manorial society” (Part 2)

Category	Hierarchical level
2.3 Tenant	HL1
2.3.1 Group of tenants	HL2
2.3.2 Other types of tenants	HL2
2.3.2.1 Female tenant	HL3
2.3.3 Position of tenant	HL2
2.3.4 Tenant by freehold	HL2
2.3.4.1 Joint tenant by freehold	HL3
2.3.4.2 Other types of tenant by freehold	HL3
2.3.5 Tenant by joint tenure	HL2
2.3.5.1 Female tenant by joint tenure	HL3
2.3.6 Tenant by service/allegiance	HL2
2.3.6.1 Female tenant by allegiance	HL3
2.3.6.2 Tenant in socage	HL2
2.3.6.3 Unfree tenant	HL3
2.3.6.3.1 Cottar	HL3
2.3.6.3.1.1 Female cottar	HL4
2.3.6.3.2 Female unfree tenant	HL5
2.3.6.3.3 Other types of unfree tenant	HL4
2.3.6.3.3.1 Tenant by copyhold	HL4
2.3.6.3.4 Position of unfree tenant	HL5
2.3.7 Tenant by subtenure	HL4
2.3.8 Tenant in bordage	HL4
2.3.8.1 Female tenant in bordage	HL5
2.3.9 Tenant in gavelkind	HL4

The categories found at HL2 gather hyponyms used to refer to the different types of landlords, officials, and tenants, and several differences can be observed in their arrangement. While the sub-categories of “Landlord” are limited to “Female landlord”, “Other types of landlord”, and “Position of landlord”, occupying HL2 as the most specific level, a more complex hierarchy, in addition to a higher number of sub-categories, is found below “Official” and “Tenant”. Even when the latter are compared, substantial differences can be observed: the terms for the different types of officials are all found at HL2, with their hyponyms found

one level below, whereas the hierarchical arrangement of the lexis denoting the different types of tenants is more complex.

The more articulated category below “Official” is the one found under the comprehensive heading “Administrator/steward/bailiff”, devised for solving the problems posed by the overlapping definitions offered by the historical dictionaries from which the terms were extracted (this issue is further illustrated in Section 4.2.1). A similar decision was made by the HTE editors, who opted for “Steward/bailiff in charge of another’s property”. The lexis denoting specific types of officials (mainly deputy officials) and their office is found at HL3.

When we look at the macro-structure of the category “Tenant”, we can observe that there are six categories related to the main types of land holding at HL2, alongside the supplementary domains “Group of tenants”, “Other types of tenants”, and “Position of tenants”. More specific categories are found the further down the hierarchy we progress; most of these are below “Tenant by service/alliance”, where all the terms for tenants required to render services to the lord are gathered. One level below (HL3), we find the sub-category “Unfree tenant”: considering that customary tenants are generally referred to by scholars simply as “unfree” due to the changes which the class underwent throughout the medieval period (see Chapter 3), all the terms for “villein or servile tenants of a manorial lord according to the custom of the manor” (Schofield 2003: 11) are gathered in this comprehensive sub-category.

Considering the complexities related to the stratification and development of manorial society, classification of the numerous terms for the different types of officials and tenants required a considerably higher degree of decision-making compared to that of the vocabulary for manorial locations, as shown by the arrangement of the 17 sub-categories of “Official” and the 23 sub-categories of “Tenant”.

### 4.2.1 Classification issues

The main issue concerning onomasiological classifications is the fact that the structure into which the lexical material is arranged is inevitably the result of idiosyncratic decisions made by lexicographers. Kay & Alexander (2016: 369) argue that the attempt “to impose a degree of structure on the apparent disorder of our world” requires decision making, hence a thesaurus macro-structure is “necessarily arbitrary, although ideally logical”. Arbitrariness is a key defining feature of schemata of classification, which “have no inherent truth, but represent the best attempts of the compilers to present their materials within a coherent and illuminating framework” (Roberts & Kay 2000: xxxv–xxxvi). As a result,

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the conceptual classification proposed in this study is not to be considered the only possible one, although it represents my “best attempt” to reconstruct the medieval cognitive experience. After all, “there is no perfect or inevitable way of classifying the world or the lexis which refers to it” (Kay 2004: 67).

In the compilation of this thesaurus, the main issues arose in relation to the classification of the terms used to refer to the higher ranks of manorial officers. As already mentioned, the comprehensive domain “Administrator/steward/bailiff” was devised in place of distinct domains for solving the problem of senses with blurred boundaries. Fuzziness is a central issue in the cognitive semantic conception of categories and must be come to terms with. The prototype theory first developed by Rosch (1973, 1975, 1978) through her studies of the internal structure of categories and later applied to linguistics (cf. Taylor 1995) involves the following aspects, frequently mentioned in the literature, outlined by Geeraerts (1997: 11):

1. Prototypical categories exhibit degrees of typicality; not every member is equally representative for a category.
2. Prototypical categories exhibit a family resemblance structure, or more generally, their semantic structure takes the form of a radial set of clustered and overlapping readings.
3. Prototypical categories are blurred at the edges.
4. Prototypical categories cannot be defined by means of a single set of criterial (necessary and sufficient) attributes.

Although prototype theory is mainly applied to semasiological structures, it accounts for the issues faced in onomasiological categorisations of the lexicon. Whilst prototypical concepts are likely to be easier to classify and represent the best fit for category headings, the peripheral, less prototypical ones pose challenges for the lexicographer. Since “the nature of meaning [...] renders a degree of fuzziness inevitable” (Roberts & Kay 2000: xxxv), “most, if not all, categories do not have clear-cut boundaries” (Rosch 1978: 35). The fact that categories have blurred boundaries means that certain terms appear in more than one place in the semantic hierarchy. Although this represents a necessary solution and a feature typical of thesauri, special attention had to be reserved to the terms for the officers in charge of estate management in order to avoid an excessive number of doubled items which might lead to skewed results in the quantitative analyses to be carried out on the collected data.

Even though the information concerning the duties of manorial officers provided by treatises such as in Walter of Henley's *Husbandry* and the anonymous *Seneschaucy* appears quite clear (cf. Oschinsky 1971), it is necessary to be cautious when attempting a categorisation of the hierarchy of individuals in charge of estate management. In fact, not all types of officials were active on every manor, and the duties ascribed to different roles were sometimes exercised by the same person. As a result, "the accounts and the Court Rolls could not differentiate clearly between the various manorial officers" (Bennett 1938: 156), whose names were used interchangeably. For instance, in describing a medieval lawsuit, Sabapathy (2014: 25) reports that the responsibilities of the person involved "look[ed] more like a steward's, yet he was held to account legally as a 'bailiff'". In order to avoid terminological issues, scholars tend to simply report that "each manor was put under a local official, a reeve, sergeant or bailiff" (Dyer 2002: 122). Bennett (1938), however, provides a rather comprehensive overview of the duties of each manorial official, on which the proposed onomasiological classification is based. Nevertheless, the fuzziness observed in surviving documents is reflected in dictionary definitions, which often contain references to different types of officials. An example is offered by the PDE lexemes *steward* and *bailiff*, which recur together in the following definitions consulted for the compilation of the thesaurus:

- (1) bailiff: 'bailiff, official in country, town or franchise etc. with executive and judicial functions; bailiff, steward' (AND)
- (2) fermer: 'bailiff, steward' (AND)
- (3) fermour: 'a collector of rents or taxes, a bailiff or steward in charge of a town or manor, a collector of church revenues' (MED)
- (4) hordarius: 'a steward, bailiff' (DMLBS)
- (5) maerarius: 'bailiff, steward' (DMLBS)
- (6) reve: 'the manorial officer responsible for managing the lord's demesne farm, accounting for the yearly income and expenditure of the manor and representing the interests of the serfs; also, a steward, bailiff, an overseer' (MED)

In some cases, also the PDE term *reeve* occurs alongside the aforementioned ones within the same definition:

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- (7) provost: ‘reeve, steward’ (AND)
- (8) tungrevius: ‘reeve, steward, bailiff’ (DMLBS)
- (9) vilicus: ‘(farm) superintendent, steward, manager, reeve, bailiff’ (DMLBS)

Furthermore, the recurrence of the superordinate term administrator and its synonyms (e.g. *manager, superintendent, overseer*) alongside more specific terms (*steward, bailiff, reeve*) in definitions made it difficult to draw a distinction between a possible superordinate category under the heading “Administrator” and hyponymic categories such as “Steward” and “Bailiff”:

- (10) administratour: ‘manager, steward’ (MED)
- (11) dightnere: ‘steward, manager’ (MED)
- (12) hous-bond(e): ‘a man in charge of something, keeper, overseer, household manager, steward’ (MED)
- (13) gardein: ‘steward, administrator over a territorial unit (with extensive powers of jurisdiction)’ (AND)
- (14) governour: ‘an administrative director of a guild, a household, etc.; steward, manager, master’ (MED)
- (15) oeconomus: ‘manager of household or estates, housekeeper, steward’ (DMLBS)
- (16) ordenour: ‘steward, manager’ (AND)
- (17) praefectus: ‘estate manager, bailiff’ (DMLBS)
- (18) praepositus: ‘one appointed to position as superintendent, governor or administrator, reeve, provost, mayor’ (DMLBS)
- (19) procuratour: ‘the steward or manager of a household’ (MED)
- (20) procutour: ‘a steward in a household, a manager’ (MED)
- (21) provisor: ‘one who is in charge (of), ruler, administrator, manager, steward’ (DMLBS)
- (22) provost: ‘the manager of a household, a steward’ (MED)

Another example worth mentioning is the Medieval Latin term *baillivus*, for which the DMLBS provides a series of related senses. By looking at this entry, we find that the word was used both as a superordinate term to refer to an official in general ('bailiff [in general sense], agent or official') and as a more specific one ('bailiff, official subordinate to sheriff'). For these reasons, this lexeme is found twice in the thesaurus, both as a hypernym (in the domain "Official") and a hyponym (in "Administrator/steward/bailiff").

The examples illustrated above show that, although medieval treatises report that stewards, bailiffs, and reeves had distinct roles (see Chapter 3), senses sometimes overlap and no sharp distinctions can be made. As a result, the same lemma is found in more than one domain in the thesaurus. However, the numerous instances in which *administrator*, *steward*, and *bailiff* occur together in dictionary definitions and the fact that these officials are not clearly distinguished in written records required the implementation of a different, more appropriate solution. As observed by Kay & Alexander (2016: 369), "decisions must be made, often on [...] pragmatic grounds, about how to represent the large, abstract notions under which everyday life can be subsumed".

In the introduction to the second impression of the *Thesaurus of Old English*, Roberts & Kay (2000: xxxv) state that

problems arise if there is a single definition of wide extension or if the boundaries of the senses are not clear cut. One solution is to use a comprehensive defining heading.

Following this suggestion, I opted for designing the comprehensive category "Administrator/steward/bailiff", which is modelled on the HTE category "Steward/Bailiff in charge of another's property". Unlike other domains making up the thesaurus, this category contains both hypernyms conveying the sense 'administrator' and hyponyms such as *seneschal*, a French-origin term often used as a synonym of steward to refer to the chief of the lord's officials in charge of estate management.

### 4.3 Data collection

Since the aim of this work is to assemble and classify lexical material scattered in existing historical dictionaries, the data were drawn from the available dictionaries of the three languages of post-Conquest England, i.e. the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (AND), the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (DMLBS), and the *Middle English Dictionary* (MED).

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The selection of the lexical material to be included in the thesaurus was carried out according to the following criteria:

1. All the items must be nouns in view of their “high borrowability” from a statistical perspective (Matras 2009: 167), considering the fact that “the lexicon is the language layer most responsive to socio-political and cultural changes in the history of a nation” (Stockwell & Minkova 2001: 34);
2. All the items must be attested in the relevant senses between 1100 and 1500 (i.e. the conventional boundaries of the ME period).

Each lexical item was transcribed into FLE<sub>x</sub>. Due to the heterogeneity of the lexicographical resources consulted, I performed manual searches in the aforementioned dictionaries in order to find the data to be recorded in the software. According to Kay & Wotherspoon (2002: 112), even though information can nowadays be easily collected and stored in computer databases without effort, “the initial stage of data collection is best done manually”. Meaning is the primary object of investigation of every lexicographic project; therefore, all the senses and sub-senses of a polysemous word listed in a semasiological dictionary need to be examined before assigning the word to one or more semantic domains. For instance, when assembling the category “Pasture”, I selected the forms denoting an area of land and discarded those denoting pasturage intended as the action of grazing or the grass on which livestock feed.

The data collection procedure involved the use of keywords to perform manual searches in the online versions of the dictionaries. Kay & Wotherspoon (2002: 127) observe that

there are two possibilities for bringing together words with similar senses or which are in the same semantic domain. One is to use the subject labels of the OED, such as Mus(ic) or Zoo(logy). However, these are only applied to specialized areas of knowledge, and even then only sporadically, so would leave the majority of lexis unaccounted for. The other method is to search the definition field of the OED [...] for either key-words or superordinate terms. [...] Searching on superordinate terms can be reasonably productive in areas denoting concrete objects.

The latter is the method adopted by the compilers of the BTh, who used category headings from the HTE as keywords for searches in the AND and MED (Sylvester et al. 2017: 311), and it served as a model for collecting the lexical data to

be recorded in the thesaurus. The headings of the categories constituting the hierarchy previously designed were used alongside their synonyms as keywords to perform manual searches in the online versions of the dictionaries. Specifically, I performed reverse look-up searches by typing the PDE keywords in the appropriate section of each dictionary, namely “Definition and notes” in the MED, “English translations” in the AND, and “Full text” in the DMLBS, in order to search definitions rather than headwords. Additional keywords found in dictionary definitions were also adopted: for instance, in order to populate the category found under the heading “Landlord”, I used the look-up terms ‘landlord’, ‘lord’, and ‘feudal lord’. The category “Pasture” was assembled by using the keywords ‘pasture’, ‘pasture land’, ‘grazing land’, ‘pasture land’, and the category “Waste” by means of ‘waste’, ‘wasteland’, ‘wilderness’. This method proved to be time-consuming but effective in the detection of the relevant senses.

Data collection concerned both “approximately synonymous words” (Kay 2012: 43) and non-synonymous co-hyponyms. Not all sub-categories are constituted by the former: those found under the headings “types of...” and “other types of...” (e.g. “Types of meadow”, “Other types of official”) include terms that share a relationship of hyponymy with the ones gathered at the superordinate level but not one of synonymy with those occupying the same space. These are generally items that do not have synonyms which justify the creation of an additional sub-category. For instance, instead of creating a considerable number of sub-categories containing a single lexical item denoting a specific type of tenant, the following terms were assigned to the category “Other types of tenant”, found one level below “Tenant”:

- (23) demivirgarius: ‘tenant of half virgate’ (DMLBS)
- (24) exsartarius: ‘tenant of assart’ (DMLBS)
- (25) hidarius: ‘tenant of hide-land, prob. owing service’ (DMLBS)
- (26) tenaunt bi devis: ‘a tenant by inheritance’ (MED)
- (27) termor: ‘termor (person who has tenant’s rights over land for a fixed period, but cannot dispose of it heritably)’ (AND)
- (28) virgarius: ‘tenant of a yardland, virgater’ (DMLBS)

The same goes for terms denoting tenants whose meaning is uncertain, such as *bacaver* (‘some kind of tenant’, MED) and *gras man* (‘some kind of tenant of

#### 4 Compiling the trilingual thesaurus of manorial lexis

a manor' MED), as well as terms such as *foresposmannus*, *par*, and *ruricola*, for which the DMLBS offers the unspecific definition 'class of tenant'.

Each lexical item extracted from the aforementioned dictionaries was assigned to one or more sub-categories in the thesaurus according to its sense(s). For instance, the word *lordship(e)* is found in the sub-categories "Manorial estate", "Demesne land", and "Position of landlord" because the word *lordship(e)* refers to more than one concept, as illustrated in the following MED and OED definitions:

- (29) "A feudal estate or an aggregate of such estates; manor; demesne land" (MED); "the land belonging to a lord; the territory under a lord's jurisdiction; an estate, a domain" (OED)
- (30) "Rule of a country, land, or people; government; dominion" (MED); "The dignity, functions, or position of a lord" (OED).

As a result of the data collection, the thesaurus contains a total of 1,011 senses (including tokens found in multiple categories due to polysemy), 212 of which were extracted from the AND, 335 from the MED, and 464 from the DMLBS.

Each item is labelled according to the dictionary from which the term was extracted (AND, DMLBS, MED). Since ME and AF spelling was not standardised, the forms recorded in the thesaurus are the variants found as headwords in the dictionaries consulted.

It is important to note that the challenges posed by language mixing in lexicography, particularly the difficulty of distinguishing between established loans and instances of code-switching, complicate the task of confidently assigning lexical items attested in documents produced in England in the period under investigation exclusively to one of the three post-Conquest languages. As observed by Wright (2000: 155), "it is very difficult to assess the degree of assimilation of a borrowed word to a given language at a given point in time", a task rendered even more complex in a context of multilingualism and language mixing practices. In addition, dictionary policies generally adhere to the principle of including a word if it appears in documents drawn up in the relevant language, regardless of whether the word is an instance of intrasentential code-switching or a fully lexicalised borrowing. For example, the AND includes nouns of non-French etymology if they occur in an AF matrix and are preceded by a French determiner such as *le* or *la* (Wright 2013b). Furthermore, dictionaries tend to ignore, by expanding or omitting, the abbreviations and suspension symbols which were meant to obscure word-final morphology in mixed-language texts (see Chapter 2). Consequently, these editorial practices introduce limitations that necessitate recourse to the original manuscripts.

In light of these issues, it was deemed inappropriate to label the lexical items according to the language. This decision takes into account the shared lexis across the three dictionaries, resulting from the inclusion of mixed-language attestations. For instance, the English word *hayward*, denoting the manorial officer in charge of safeguarding pastures, is found as *hei-ward* in the MED, *hayward* in the AND, and *haiwardus* in the DMLBS. Similarly, the term *steward*, denoting the administrator of a lord's manor(s), is found as *steuard* in the MED and as *estiward* in the AND, where it is recorded due to its occurrence in a single attestation with an AF matrix. Considering the difficulties in establishing language boundaries in a context in which, "from a lexical point of view, attempts at a clear distinction of language identity is futile" (Hunt 2011: 64), all forms recorded in more than one dictionary were included in the thesaurus, without any attempt to attribute shared lexis exclusively to a single language.

#### 4.3.1 Attestation dates

After examining dictionary definitions, I selected the terms in use (in the three medieval languages) in the sense in question during the period under investigation and assigned them to the appropriate category in FLEx. Each lexical item was recorded alongside the attestation range of the relevant sense. Subsequently, rather than grouping the terms in the three languages into three distinct sections, the multilingual lexical material was arranged in chronological order within each category.

The MED was used as reference for first attestation dates, while the OED was consulted to look up post-1500 attestations of the ME words extracted from the MED. The HTE was not used in the procedure of selection of attestation ranges due to problems of postdatings (e.g. the term *assart* is attested since 1450 in the sense 'piece of waste land converted to arable use' in both the MED and OED, but the attestation range provided in the HTE for the same term below "Cleared land" is 1628–1766).

After selecting the relevant attestations from the MED, these were collated with those provided by the OED in order to determine the final time range of attestation to be indicated next to each lexical item recorded in the thesaurus. For instance, the term *wodewardship* is accompanied by 3 quotations in the MED, dating from 1418, 1435, and 1467–8 respectively. The same term is recorded, with PDE spelling, in the OED below the entry for *woodwardship*, where the following attestations are provided: 1418 (the same quotation provided by the MED), 1485, 1586–7, and 1640. As a result, the time range 1418–1640 was recorded in the thesaurus.

#### 4 Compiling the trilingual thesaurus of manorial lexis

Only continuous attestations were taken into account. In other words, attestations occurring after a gap of at least two centuries were not included in the attestation range provided next to each term in the thesaurus. For instance, if a sense in the OED has continuous citations up to the sixteenth century and then one citation in the nineteenth century, only the former were considered and recorded in the thesaurus. An example is the term *smal man* ('a minor manorial tenant holding land by copyhold'), for which the OED provides four quotations, dating from 1367, 1417, 1895, and 1962 respectively: since a considerable gap (between 1417 and 1895) is involved and the two most recent attestations refer to the medieval sense, 1417 was selected as the date of latest attestation. In the case of *smal man*, the time range 1130–1417 refers to the earliest MED attestation and the latest OED one, excluding the post-gap quotations.

Dates of composition were preferred as the earlier evidence of use of a specific lexical item in place of dates of documentary evidence, considering that the attested terms were possibly already in use before the production of the surviving manuscript in which they are recorded. The DMLBS provides solely dates of documentary evidence, hence selection of composition dates is not possible, but the MED, OED, and AND generally make a distinction between date of composition and date of production of the manuscript. However, the date of documentary evidence was selected in those cases in which the date of composition is not known.

Thorough examination of the list of quotations provided by the dictionaries allowed me to take into account solely the attestations of the form and sense under investigation, and thus to identify also those compounds and phrases that are not found as headwords in entries and sub-entries. For instance, the ME expression *oxe leswe* (PDE 'cattle pasture') is found in the MED entry for *oxe*, specifically in the section in which compounds and combinations including the word *oxe* are listed. *Oxe leswe* is recorded below sense 3.(b) alongside *oxe bos*, *oxe(n) hous*, *oxe shipene*, *oxe lond*, and only by thoroughly examining the list of citations provided can it be possible to find that the lexical item is attested only once, in a citation from the 1382 Wycliffite Bible. The same goes for *tilling(e) lond*, found in the MED entry for the gerund form *tilling*, under sense 1.(a), alongside the other combinations *tilling(e) craft*, *erthe tilling(e)*, *lond tilling(e)*. It is necessary to read through all the quotations in order to select the attestations of the relevant form (dating from 1387, 1410, 1440, and 1488) and consequently collate them with those provided by the OED for the compound *tilling land* (1387 and 1488), recorded in the entry for the noun *tilling*. Other examples are the phrases *tenaunt in vileinage* (ME) and *seneschal de la forest* (AF). The former is recorded in the entry for *tenaunt* in the MED, specifically in a single attestation dating from 1475, listed among the attestations of *tenaunt bi (de) devis*, *tenaunt bi the courtesie*,

*tenaunt thurgh laue of engelond, and fre tenaunt. Seneschal de la forest* (meaning ‘steward of the forest’) is recorded in the AND with a single attestation dating from 1293: the phrase is found at the bottom of the list of phrases and compounds provided separately from the senses of the headword *seneschal*.

The collected data include word forms and senses first attested during the OE period that were still in use during the ME period: in these cases, rather than indicating the exact date of first attestation, the label “OE” was used to mark earliest usage. For example, the range of attestation of the ML word *pascuarium* (in the sense of ‘pasture’) is OE–1208. Conversely, post-1500 dates of last attestation are clearly indicated, unless they have survived up to PDE (where an em dash is provided), as illustrated by the following examples:

OE– reve (MED)  
 OE–1210 grafio (DMLBS)  
 1150–1338 provost (AND)

The year 1800 was chosen as a watershed to mark the beginning of PDE since, in the case of words that are currently in use, OED entries which have not been updated yet (and therefore provided with more recent attestations) include citations up to the nineteenth century only. This criterion is based on the following definition proposed by Sylvester et al. (2022a: 245): “a word is defined as occurring in PDE if it is attested in the nineteenth century or later, unless an OED entry with a final citation in the 1800s states that a word is obsolete”. For reasons of consistency, and in order to avoid the problem of future OED updates which would require updating this work, all terms which have post-1800 citations in the sense under investigation in the OED are not provided with a date of latest attestation (e.g. “1300–” means that the term is attested from 1300 up to PDE). In some cases, the OED states that the sense in question is obsolete or now limited to specific geographical areas or contexts (law, history, poetry, etc.); therefore, the following labels (drawn from the information found in OED entries) are provided:

- Arch. (archaic)
- Dial. (dialect)
- Hist. (historical)
- Loc. (local)
- Obs. (obsolete)

#### 4 Compiling the trilingual thesaurus of manorial lexis

- Poet. (poetical)
- Reg. (regional)
- Rare
- Scot. (Scottish)

The following examples show ME terms taken from the sub-category “Meadowland” in use in the sense in question until at least the eighteenth century, provided with information about current usage within brackets:

OE— *medwe*  
OE— (poet. reg.) *mede*  
OE— (poet.) *lei(e)*  
1300— (arch. rare) *plain(e)*  
1317— (loc.) *eng*

While we can confidently say that the term *medwe* (PDE ‘meadow’) has been retained in PDE in the sense ‘meadow, meadowland’, the other terms have undergone restriction of usage in this sense. According to the OED, *mede* (PDE ‘mead’) is “now chiefly poetic and regional”, *plain(e)* (PDE ‘plain’) is “now archaic and rare”, and *eng* (PDE ‘ing’) is labelled as “local”. With respect to *lei(e)* (PDE ‘lea’), the OED editors report that the word is now “chiefly found [...] in poetical or rhetorical use, ordinarily applied to grass land”, therefore it was provided with the label “poet.”.

#### 4.3.2 Source languages

The MED terms are followed by labels indicating their source language(s), derived from the etymological information provided by the MED and cross-checked with that provided by the OED. As far as French-origin loanwords are concerned, the MED distinguishes between Old French (OF), i.e. the language spoken in France until the fourteenth century, and the insular and continental varieties spoken during the ME period, that is AF and CF respectively. With regards to terms deriving from what is generally referred to as “Latin”, it distinguishes between Latin (L), i.e. Classical Latin, and the pre- and post-Conquest insular varieties, i.e. Anglo-Latin (AL) and Medieval Latin (ML) respectively. Examples taken from the category “Messuage” are presented below to show the source language labels indicating the different French and Latin varieties:

1225— (obs.) court (MED) OF  
 1300— maner (MED) AF, CF  
 1375— mansioun (MED) L, OF  
 1387— place (MED) OF, ML  
 1390— mesuage (MED) AF, AL

A source language label is also provided next to AF and ML terms deriving from the other languages treated in the thesaurus, as in the following ML examples from the category “Assart”, deriving from OF, ME, and OE respectively:

OE—1539 essartum (DMLBS) OF  
 11..—1250 riddinga (DMLBS) ME  
 1135—1300 brecha (DMLBS) OE

In certain cases, however, careful consideration was required to determine the appropriate source language label, drawing on the etymological information provided by both the MED and OED. For instance, in the case of the compound *soke-man*, both dictionaries record the AF form *sokeman* and the Latin form *socamannus* (also attested in variant spelling forms such as *sokemannus*) as etymons. However, a closer examination of the etymological explanation found in the OED reveals that the ultimate origin of the word lies in an OE compound combining the words *socn* and *man*. Although the first element appears as *soca* in Latin documents, consideration of the word’s ultimate origin led to the decision to select Old English as the source language for both elements. The same approach was applied to the other compounds including the element *soke*, as shown in the following examples:

OE— (hist.) soke-man (MED) OE + OE  
 1321 soke-lond (MED) OE + OE  
 1307 soke reve (MED) OE + OE

Moreover, it is important to note that the MED and OED include mixed-language attestations, which are sometimes reported in square brackets. The terms embedded in a different matrix language are notoriously difficult to assign to a specific language from a lexicographic point of view (cf. Wright 2013b), therefore a specific criterion had to be devised in order to address those terms first appearing in mixed-language documents. In the case of English native terms first recorded in a Latin or AF matrix in the sense in question, such attestation was taken into account as the earliest attestation. An example is *selfode*, a term coined within English through derivation and used to refer to a specific kind of land holding and the class of tenants occupying it, for which the OED first provides two

#### 4 Compiling the trilingual thesaurus of manorial lexis

Latin attestations. The first of these, dating from 1271, was used as the starting point for the attestation range. Conversely, the earliest attestations of ME words of French or Latin origin appearing in AF or Latin quotations were not considered since they do not represent instances of borrowing in ME. For instance, the OED provides two early mixed-language attestations in square brackets for the word *demeine* (PDE 'demesne') below the sense 'an estate held in demesne: land possessed or occupied by the owner himself, and not held of him by any subordinate tenant'. These are citations with a Latin- and AF-matrix respectively, not relevant for investigating the adoption of the word in ME.

In order to show the microstructure of the thesaurus, a section of the hierarchy, namely the superordinate level of the semantic domain "Arable land", is presented below:

##### 1.1.1.1 ARABLE LAND

- OE— (arch.) aker (MED) OE
- OE—1187/1215 ager (DMLBS)
- OE—1200 seges (DMLBS)
- OE—1300 planus (DMLBS)
- OE—14.. campus (DMLBS)
- OE—1500 lond (MED) OE
- OE—1583 terra (DMLBS)
- OE—1587 terra arabilis (DMLBS)
- OE—1728 falwe (MED) OE
- 1148/1202 sationalis (DMLBS)
- 1154—1367 cultura (DMLBS)
- 1160 gain (AND)
- 1160—1216 agricultura (DMLBS)
- 1160—1500 erthe (MED) OE
- 1175 erth(e) land (MED) OE + OE
- 1175—1500 mold(e) (MED) OE
- 1250—1394 terre arable (AND)
- 1260—1330/31 terre (AND)
- 1269 arabilis (DMLBS)
- 1292—1329/30 culture (AND)
- 1300 pais de champaigne (AND)
- 1316— (dial. hist. poet.) tilth (MED) OE
- 1330—1735 forwe (MED) OE
- 1333 eringe land (MED) OE + OE
- 1346—1347 terre hide et gain (AND)

- 1382–1500 *erthe tilling(e)* (MED) OE + OE  
 1387–1488 *tilling(e) lond* (MED) OE + OE  
 1393–1400 *plough* (MED) OE, ON  
 1398 *tilling(e) craft* (MED) OE + OE  
 1400– *arable lond* (MED) OF, L + OE  
 1400 *ardawe* (MED) ON  
 1410– (rare) *erable lond* (MED) OE + OE  
 1440– *arable* (MED) OF, L

As can be observed, the terms are arranged chronologically according to the date of first attestation of the sense and are labelled according to the dictionary from which they were extracted. MED terms are followed by labels indicating their source language(s), which, in this domain, are Old English (OE), Old Norse (ON), Old French (OF), and Latin (L). In the case of compounds such as *erthe tilling(e)* and *arable lond*, the source language of each element is indicated. It is also possible for a term to have more than one source language, as in the case of *arable*, which derives partly from OF *arable* and partly from Latin *arābilis* and represents one of the items of composite origin from both French and Latin discussed by Durkin (2014: 236–237).



## **Part II**

# **Tracing the multilingual lexis of the medieval English manor**



# 5 Effects of language contact on the lexis of the medieval English manor

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates how the trilingual thesaurus presented in Part I of this book was used to analyse the effects of language contact on the Middle English lexis of the medieval English manor. For the purpose of this study, which adopts the perspective of Middle English as the recipient language, particular attention is given henceforth to the lexical data collected from the MED, while the data from the AND and DMLBS are reserved for future research.

The analysis begins with an overview of the distribution of terms extracted from the three dictionaries (AND, MED, DMLBS), before turning to a detailed examination of the MED lexis in terms of source languages. The approach adopted is both synchronic (i.e. focusing on the language at a specific point in time) and diachronic (i.e. examining changes over time), which has proven useful for tracing the impact of borrowing on the lexicon (cf. Durkin 2014, 2020).

The investigations presented here are first conducted on the lexical material within the thesaurus as a whole and subsequently across the two major subdivisions underpinning the conceptual classification, namely the macro-categories “Manorial locations” and “Manorial society”. This approach aims to determine whether differences exist across the two domains that may be attributable to sociolinguistic factors.

The chapter is structured into two major sections. The first provides a synchronic overview of the distribution of the data on the basis of their lexicographic source (i.e. the dictionary from which they were extracted), while the second focuses on the MED lexis. This latter section first examines the MED lexis in terms of source languages and subsequently adopts a diachronic perspective in its two subsections, aiming to assess trends in borrowing in the ME period and drop-out rates up to PDE.

Considering the dictionary-based nature of this study (see Chapter 4), it is important to acknowledge that, while historical data provide valuable insights, they present limitations that must be taken into account. First of all, it is not possible

to aim at representativeness when it comes to working with historical data, due to the restricted availability of written evidence resulting from the passing of time and the limited access to literacy characterising the period under investigation. Studies of the medieval languages are necessarily based on the assumption that “sources survive by chance and may be unrepresentative” (Coleman 1995: 101). As observed by Kay & Wotherspoon (2002: 119), “no dataset, and especially not one for a historical period, is ever going to be comprehensive” in view of the challenges of survival and the limited nature of written evidence, which is restricted to only a few text types.

Scholars investigating administrative documents produced in the Middle Ages, such as manorial records, are likely to find words that are not recorded in dictionaries since “many of them would never be used in the kinds of literature that we have from medieval times” (Hulbert 1936: 38). It has been acknowledged that historical dictionaries tend to favour the recording of citations found in literary documents, particularly those authored by highly regarded individuals such as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton; hence, any dictionary-based study is inevitably skewed towards literary attestations (cf. Schäfer 1980). For instance, words denoting places on the manor such as *dustlond* and *hogfeld*, found by Hulbert (1936: 41) in manorial documents, are not included in the dataset employed for this study since they are not recorded in dictionaries. Moreover, the lexical material on which the analysis is based is envisaged as a potentially expandable sample of data connected to a conceptual domain whose structure and composition is “necessarily arbitrary” (Kay & Alexander 2016: 369), thus implying some limitations. The result of these factors is a scarcity of data exemplified by the relatively low number of lexical items on which the analysis is carried out, especially when considering the MED subset.

Another pivotal aspect to be taken into account is the linguistic context of post-Conquest England (see Chapter 2). Considering the overlapping use of the three languages at the time, a certain proportion of shared lexis across dictionaries is to be expected. As illustrated in Chapter 4, the lexical material included in the thesaurus was extracted from the MED, AND, and DMLBS, and labelled accordingly. Hence, we find several items of non-Latin etymology among the DMLBS material, such as the English-origin terms *acremannus*, *brecha*, *rengator*, *riddinga*, and the French-origin words *manerium*, *maneries*, *warecta*, as well as a few lexical items from other sources (*bondus*, from ON, and *ringildia*, from Welsh). All these are recorded in the DMLBS because they are attested in Latin-matrix attestations. Similarly, the AND material contains a number of words of English etymology (*frith*, *louerd*, *parroc*, *sokeman* etc.) and a single term of Welsh origin (*ringild*), all found in AF-matrix documents. In these cases, it is difficult to confidently say if

## *5.2 Distribution of lexical material by lexicographic source*

we are in the presence of loanwords or instances of code-switching in view of the language mixing practices of the time and the consequent fuzziness of language boundaries. As a result, I opted to systematically categorise all the terms according to the dictionary from which they were extracted and to analyse the distribution of material from the three dictionaries across the thesaurus, rather than attempting to analyse the distribution of the three languages.

Finally, I acknowledge the fact that a higher number of attestations available in later periods due to a proliferation of sources may possibly skew the results of the diachronic analysis of the influx of borrowing in the domain, leading to the identification of an increased frequency of a particular trait associated with the greater amount of extant data. For all the reasons listed above, the quantitative analyses presented in this chapter do not aim at calculating statistical significance but rather at finding possible patterns in the synchronic and diachronic distribution of the data. The observations derived from an empirical analysis of the lexis gathered in the thesaurus compiled for this study may prove beneficial in shedding light on the effects of language contact in this underinvestigated domain.

## **5.2 Distribution of lexical material by lexicographic source**

The synchronic analysis is articulated in the following stages. As previously anticipated, I begin by investigating the distribution of lexical material by lexicographic source (AND, DMLBS, MED). Firstly, the analysis is carried out on the thesaurus overall; subsequently, the same material is analysed by breaking it down into the two macro-categories which represent the two major divisions underpinning the thesaurus macro-structure, i.e. “Manorial locations” and “Manorial society”. After this initial phase, I focus on the MED lexis and examine the distribution of native and borrowed material both in the whole thesaurus and in the two macro-categories, in order to assess the impact of contact with French and Latin on the ME lexis of this domain.

In light of the challenges posed by shared lexis across dictionaries, and the resulting difficulty in confidently assigning lexical items to one of the three languages (cf. Wright 2013b), I opted to examine the distribution of lexical material on the basis of the language label assigned to each lexical item, which indicates the dictionary in which the item is recorded (i.e. the AND, MED, and DMLBS), rather than attempt to determine the extent to which each of the three medieval languages is represented in the thesaurus. As a result, words recorded in more

## 5 Effects of language contact on the lexis of the medieval English manor

than one dictionary are counted more than once for the purpose of the present study. For instance, the terms *steuard* (MED), *estiward* (AND), and *steuardus* (DMLBS) are treated as three distinct items. Table 5.1 shows the figures for the lexical material extracted from the three dictionaries. The thesaurus contains a total of 1,011 terms, of which 335 are from the MED, 212 from the AND, and 464 from the DMLBS. Each dictionary represents 33.20%, 20.95%, and 45.85% of the total respectively. The same data are represented in the clustered column chart in Figure 5.1.

Table 5.1: Distribution of lexical material by lexicographic source in the thesaurus

Dictionary	N. of items	%
MED	335	33.14
AND	212	20.97
DMLBS	464	45.90
Total	1,011	100.00

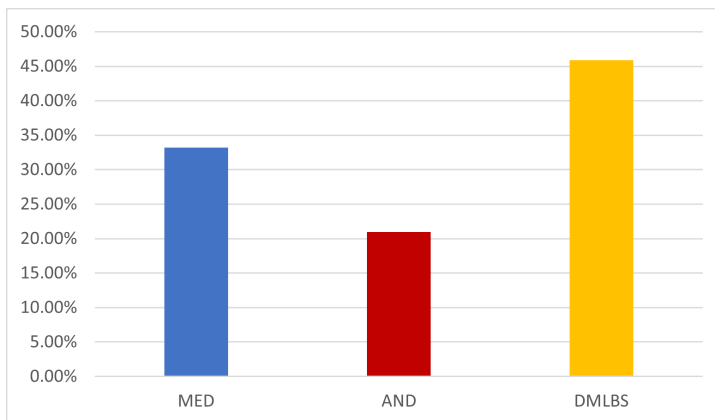


Figure 5.1: Distribution of lexical material by lexicographic source in the thesaurus

As can be observed, the lexis extracted from the DMLBS accounts for the highest proportion in the thesaurus. This predominance can be attributed to the triglossic relationship among the three medieval languages, whereby Latin maintained unparalleled prestige throughout the ME period and beyond. Latin served

## 5.2 Distribution of lexical material by lexicographic source

as the primary language of record in Britain for most of the medieval era and retained its authoritative status even when, from the late fourteenth century onwards, the use of English increased in a rising number of domains. Consequently, a greater number of Latin documents have survived.

Given the importance of the two macro-categories in the macro-structure of the thesaurus, the analysis carried out on the thesaurus overall was subsequently carried out on each macro-category to see if any variation in the distribution could be found. Table 5.2 reports the percentages calculated from the total of each macro-category and provides a comparison of the two.

The macro-category “Manorial locations” contains 455 lexical items, 37.14% of which are from the MED, 21.76% from the AND, and 41.10% from the DMLBS. In “Manorial society”, containing a total of 556 items, MED material accounts for 29.86% of the macro-category, AND material for 20.32%, and DMLBS material for 49.82%. If we compare the proportions found in the two macro-categories by looking at Figure 5.2, we can observe that DMLBS material accounts for the highest proportion in both domains and is followed by a relatively lower proportion of MED and AND material, the latter representing the lowest proportion in both domains. However, some differences in the distribution of lexicographic sources can be observed: there is a relatively higher proportion of DMLBS material in “Manorial society” compared to “Manorial locations”, where the proportions of DMLBS and MED material do not differ as considerably as they do in the other macro-category.

Table 5.2: Distribution of lexical material by lexicographic source in the two macro-categories (percentages calculated from the total of each macro-category)

Macro-cat.	MED	%	AND	%	DMLBS	%	Total	%
M. locations	169	37.14	99	21.76	187	41.10	455	100.00
M. society	166	29.86	113	20.32	277	49.82	556	100.00

It is interesting to note that, even though the number of MED lexical items contained in the two macro-categories does not vary markedly (169 in “Manorial locations” and 166 in “Manorial society”), the proportion of MED material is relatively higher in “Manorial locations”, where it accounts for 37.14% of the macro-category, whilst it accounts for 29.86% in “Manorial society”. In particular, the latter stands out for the contrast in proportions between the MED and DMLBS items, which represent 29.86% and 49.82% of the category respectively.

## 5 Effects of language contact on the lexis of the medieval English manor

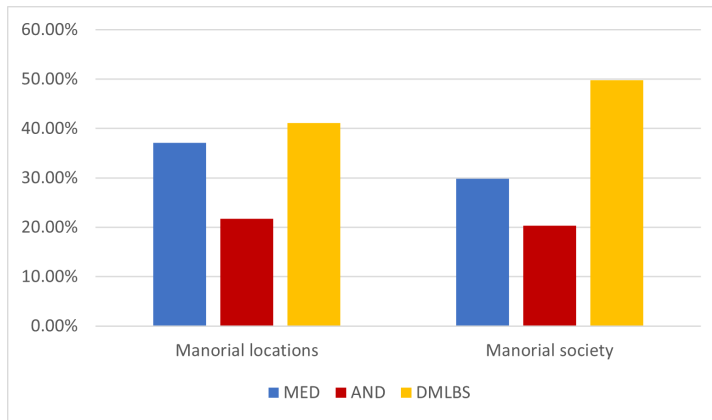


Figure 5.2: Distribution of lexical material by lexicographic source in the two macro-categories (percentages calculated from the total of each macro-category)

This variation is equally evident if we calculate the percentages from the total of the thesaurus overall, as illustrated in Table 5.3 and Figure 5.3. The proportion of DMLBS material in “Manorial society” (27.40%) remains higher than the one in “Manorial locations” (18.50%). Considering that the MED represents approximately 16% of both macro-categories, the disparity in proportions between DMLBS and MED is wider in “Manorial society”.

Table 5.3: Distribution of lexical material by lexicographic source in the two macro-categories (percentages calculated from the total of the thesaurus)

Macro-cat.	MED	%	AND	%	DMLBS	%	Total	%
M. locations	169	16.72	99	9.79	187	18.50	455	45.00
M. society	166	16.42	113	11.18	277	27.40	556	55.00
Total							1,011	100.00

If the distribution of lexical material by lexicographic source is understood to reflect the status of the three languages in manorial contexts, the dissimilarities observed between the two macro-categories may be attributable to sociolinguistic factors. As we know, even though Latin was the language of record and those responsible for drawing up accounts and inventories were generally educated individuals, i.e. competent in the three languages of medieval England, the labourers who worked on manorial estates were monolingual speakers of

## 5.2 Distribution of lexical material by lexicographic source

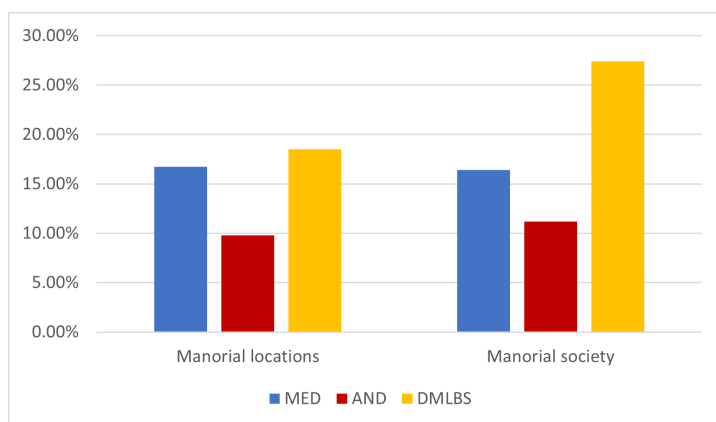


Figure 5.3: Distribution of lexical material by lexicographic source in the two macro-categories (percentages calculated from the total of the thesaurus)

English. Hence, discourse between them and higher officers such as bailiffs and stewards “must surely have been conducted in English, and the practice of doing so may well have favoured the use of English items, such as *familiar places*, activities, and artefacts” (Ingham 2009: 85, italics mine). These vernacular terms would be subsequently incorporated in the Latin accounts in the form of intrasentential code-switching. According to Ingham (2018: 325), “[i]n the context of a manorial estate, English was routinely used to designate familiar landmarks and buildings by estate managers when conversing in French with those drawing up accounts”. The tendency to use English to refer to places on the manor identified by Ingham might explain the smaller difference between MED and DMLBS lexical items in the macro-category “Manorial locations” when compared to “Manorial society”, where the proportion of DMLBS material considerably exceeds that of MED material.

It is necessary to point out that this finding was obtained by surveying dictionary citations that encompass a wide variety of text-types rather than focussing on the type of manorial records investigated by Ingham. For instance, the ME word *pastur(e)*, in the sense of ‘pastureland’, is found in literary works such as *Cursor Mundi*, Mannyng’s *Chronicle and Patience*, as well as in administrative documents such as the *Rotuli Parliamentorum*. The ME word *wast(e)*, in the sense of ‘uncultivated land’, is found in works such as Mandeville’s *Travels*, the *Catholicon Anglicum*, and the Paston Letters. As a result, in addition to showing a relatively higher tendency to use Latin to refer to the people who held and/or administered manorial land, the information depicted in Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3 reveals that

Ingham's findings concerning a preference for English to refer to places within a manorial estate are mirrored across a broader spectrum of text-types.

### 5.3 Distribution of source languages in the Middle English lexis

Having presented the distribution of lexis across the three lexicographic sources, I will now narrow my focus to the vocabulary extracted from the MED in order to examine the impact of Latin and French on the ME lexis within the lexical domain under investigation. In order to do so, I will track the distribution of source languages within the MED lexical material, hereafter referred to as ME lexis.

This study is modelled on the analyses carried out on the ME lexis collected in the *Bilingual Thesaurus of Everyday Life in Medieval England* (BTh) (Ingham et al. 2019, Sylvester & Marcus 2017, among others), which represent the first attempts at a systematic investigation of the lexis relating to manual occupations, designed "to assess the degree of penetration of French-origin lexis into ME" (Sylvester & Marcus 2017: 217). Compared to other occupational domains, a relatively low proportion of Romance-origin material (18.7%) was found in the domain "Farming" by Ingham et al. (2019: 467). This work intends to verify if different results emerge when the lexis associated with the countryside is explored from a perspective that places the manorial system at its core. As remarked in Chapter 4, the lexicographic project compiled for the purpose of this study does not focus on the lexis related to animal husbandry and cultivation, which can be possibly linked to a broader conception of rural contexts and has been extensively investigated in the aforementioned studies based on the BTh. As exemplified by the two macro-categories making up the thesaurus macro-structure, this study focuses on the locations and social structures specifically connected to the medieval English manor.

The language of origin of each lexical item recorded in the thesaurus was determined on the basis of the etymological information provided by the MED, which was cross-referenced with the OED (see Chapter 4). However, a classification of source languages inevitably raises some issues, considering that words may present uncertain or complex etymologies, or may derive from more than one language. For example, the term *bidel* (PDE 'beadle'), which derives from OE *bydel*, has a complex etymological history, complicated by the fact that the originally OE form was gradually replaced by the French form *bedel* during the

### 5.3 Distribution of source languages in the Middle English lexis

ME period, while also appearing as *bidellus* or *bedellus* in Latin documents. Moreover, the thesaurus includes several compounds whose elements come from different source languages, such as *oxpasture* (OE + OF, L), *baillif-wik* (OF + OE), *copie-holder* (OF, ML + OE), found below “Cattle pasture”, “Office of administrator/steward/bailiff”, and “Other types of unfree tenant” respectively.

In addition to the complexities arising from multiple origins, it is important to note that, as observed by Durkin (2014: 236–237), it is often difficult to confidently assess if a word derives solely from French or Latin, and, in many cases, it is possible that it derives from both languages. For example, words such as *pastur(e)* and *administratour* are partly borrowed from French and partly from Latin, and thus have two etymons. Words such as *mesuage* and *tenement*, on the other hand, likely derive from Latin through AF: the MED lists both source languages, whilst the OED first provides the French etymon and subsequently traces the etymological development from Latin to AF.

In order to address the issues mentioned above, specific categories suitable for classifying the different types of etymological origin, including those cases presenting a mixed origin, were designed.

For the purposes of the present analysis, items were classified according to the following etymological categories:

- English (E)
- French (F)
- Latin (L)
- French and/or Latin (F/L)
- Mixed
- Old Norse (ON)
- Uncertain

As shown above, source languages were grouped into seven categories, with the first designed to include all the native English material (E). Three categories (i.e. “F”, “L”, “F/L”) were created to classify the Romance-origin material. “French” and “Latin” were envisaged as broad categories encompassing their respective varieties, namely, Old French (OF), Anglo-French (AF), and Continental French (CF) for French; and Latin (L), Anglo-Latin (AL), and Medieval Latin (ML) for

## 5 Effects of language contact on the lexis of the medieval English manor

Latin. The category “French and/or Latin” was specifically added to include all those terms whose source language cannot confidently be classified as deriving solely from French or Latin.

Besides loanwords of Romance origin, the dataset includes terms from Old Norse (ON), such as *greive* (below “Administrator/Steward/Bailiff”) and *hag* (below “Types of wood(s)”). All the terms of mixed origin were assigned to the category “Mixed”. The latter includes all compounds and phrases whose elements derive from different source languages, such as *lege lord* (AF, CF + OE) and *partener(e) felawe* (OF + ON), as well as a few terms of multiple origin, such as *bidel* (previously discussed) and *ringildie* (deriving from Latin and Welsh).

Conversely, items formed by derivation were classified according to the source language of the stem. For example, *baillifship* (OF + E) and *raunger* (OF + E), both of which have a French-origin stem, were classified as French notwithstanding the English suffix.

There are also a few words of uncertain etymology in the dataset, namely *plough* (which appears three times in the thesaurus, including the compound *plough-lond*, once below “Arable” and twice below “Measures of land”), *yeman* (found below “Other types of tenant by freehold”), and *self-ode*, (below “Other types of tenant”). Although the MED refers to OE and ON in the etymology section of the entry for *plough*, the OED lists its origin as uncertain; therefore, the term was classified accordingly. *Yeman* (PDE ‘yeoman’) denotes ‘a man holding a small landed estate’ and is probably a variant of *yong man* (‘young man’) according to the MED and OED. However, its etymological origin remains obscure, although numerous attempts have been made to resolve this enigmatic puzzle. Only Liberman (2024: 262–265) seems to have made significant progress by pointing to the prefix *yeo-*, meaning ‘additional’, in the word *yeomath* (meaning ‘aftermath’, i.e. an additional crop or growth of grass in the same area). *Self-ode*, on the other hand, is a geographically restricted term (c.f. MED, OED) referring to a class of tenant, specifically those “who possessed nothing except their own labour” (Bennett 2015: 311). This compound combines the native element *self* with one “of uncertain and disputed origin”, probably from ON, although ME *hold* has also been suggested (OED). Notwithstanding the scholarly speculation surrounding these terms, they were classified as “uncertain” in the analysis.

The distribution of source languages across the ME subset is illustrated in Table 5.4 and its corresponding graph (Figure 5.4).

As previously illustrated, the source languages are categorised into 7 groups. English native items (151) make up 45.07% of the total, representing the highest percentage in the domain. Surprisingly, there is a small percentage of lexis deriving solely from Latin, namely 3.58% (12 items), notwithstanding the preponder-

### 5.3 Distribution of source languages in the Middle English lexis

Table 5.4: Distribution of source languages in the ME lexis

Source language	N. of items	%
E	151	45.07
F	80	23.88
L	12	3.58
F/L	46	13.73
Mixed	26	7.76
ON	15	4.48
Uncertain	5	1.49
<b>Total</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>100.00</b>

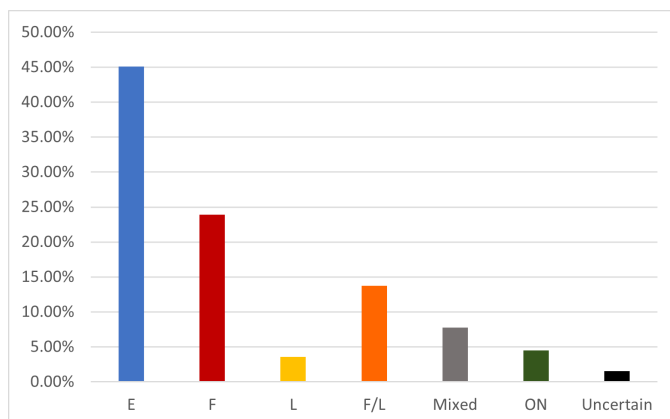


Figure 5.4: Distribution of source languages in the ME lexis

ance of Latin lexis across the whole thesaurus. Even though contact with Latin remained constant throughout the ME period, this result confirms the observation that the main language of record-keeping practices had little impact on the English lexis before the Early Modern period (cf. Durkin 2014).

The 80 items deriving solely from French account for 23.88% and are followed by those deriving from French and/or Latin (46), the latter representing 13.73% of the dataset. Lexis of mixed and ON origin are found in relatively low percentages (7.76% and 4.48% respectively). Finally, the five terms of uncertain origin previously mentioned account for only 1.49% of the domain.

After being analysed separately, the categories “F”, “L”, and “F/L” were combined into a single, comprehensive category, “F+/L” (where “F+” stands for both

## 5 *Effects of language contact on the lexis of the medieval English manor*

F and F/L), to distinguish between native items and Romance loanwords. This resulted in the following classification:

- English (E)
- French, Latin, or both (F+/L)
- Mixed
- Old Norse (ON)
- Uncertain

Table 5.5 shows that the total of French and Latin loanwords found in this domain, including those possibly deriving from both languages (i.e. F, L, F/L), accounts for 41.19%, a figure not too far from that found by Durkin (2014: 256–257) in his analysis of headwords in the MED, where 48% of words first recorded in ME are from French or Latin, or both. Figure 5.5 shows that the proportion of Romance-origin lexis does not differ considerably from that of English lexis (45.07%), whilst it considerably exceeds the proportions of mixed-, ON-, and uncertain-origin lexis. In addition, it is worth noting that the percentage of Romance loans found in this study considerably exceeds that found by Ingham et al. (2019: 467) when investigating the vocabulary for locations, agents, and objects connected to farming (i.e. 18.7%)<sup>1</sup>. This shows how a higher impact of language contact can be identified in rural contexts when the focus shifts from the lexis of animal husbandry and cultivation to that of manorial locations and social structures.

Contrary to our expectations based on the traditional accounts suggesting a relatively scarce occurrence of language contact in rural areas of medieval England, Romance-origin lexis occupies considerable space in the domain. These findings suggest that the influence of French (to a greater extent) and Latin (to a lesser extent) in shaping this domain was far greater than what could be inferred from our assumptions based on the proportions of monolingual and bilingual speakers in the countryside.

Given the substantial presence of French and Latin lexis in the domain, the analysis was narrowed down exclusively to the lexical items that entered the domain during the ME period. This narrowing aimed to determine whether, through

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<sup>1</sup>Ingham et al. (2019) considered only words from French only and from French and/or Latin, excluding words deriving solely from Latin. However, even when the small percentage of Latin-only lexis found in this study is excluded, the combined proportion of F and F/L loans remains considerably higher (37.61%).

### 5.3 Distribution of source languages in the Middle English lexis

Table 5.5: Distribution of source languages in the ME lexis (F, L, F/L merged)

Source language	N. of items	%
E	151	45.07
F+/L	138	41.19
Mixed	26	7.76
ON	15	4.48
Uncertain	5	1.49
<b>Total</b>	<b>335</b>	<b>100.00</b>

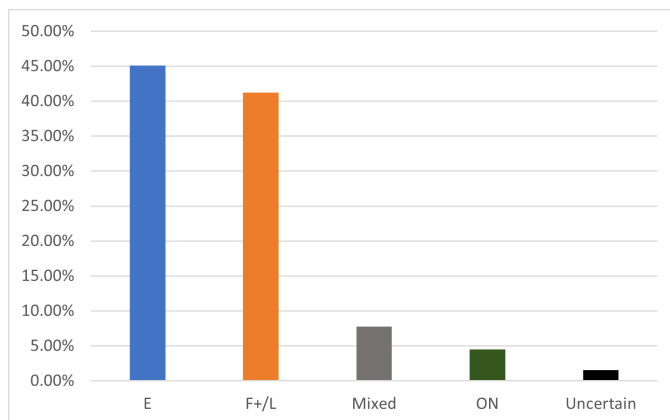


Figure 5.5: Distribution of source languages in the ME lexis (F, L, F/L merged)

the exclusion of older material, the proportion of Romance-origin lexis aligns more closely with or deviates further from the figure found by Durkin (2014).

If we exclude the terms already attested in OE (i.e. before 1100) in the relevant sense, we obtain a different picture. Table 5.6 compares the distribution of source languages in the overall ME dataset with their distribution in the subset of lexis first attested in ME (i.e. 1100–1500) in the relevant sense.

Unsurprisingly, when restricting the analysis to those terms first attested in ME in the relevant sense, the number of English items decreases, specifically from 151 to 99. On the other hand, the number of items of French and Latin origin items does not change markedly, as nearly all of them, except for *clerk* (already attested in OE), entered the domain during the ME period. However, the decrease in native

## 5 Effects of language contact on the lexis of the medieval English manor

Table 5.6: Distribution of source languages in the overall dataset compared to the post-1100 subset

Source language	Overall	Post-1100
E	45.07%	35.48%
F+/L	41.19%	49.10%
Mixed	7.76%	8.96%
ON	4.48%	5.02%
Uncertain	1.49%	1.43%
Total	100.00%	100.00%

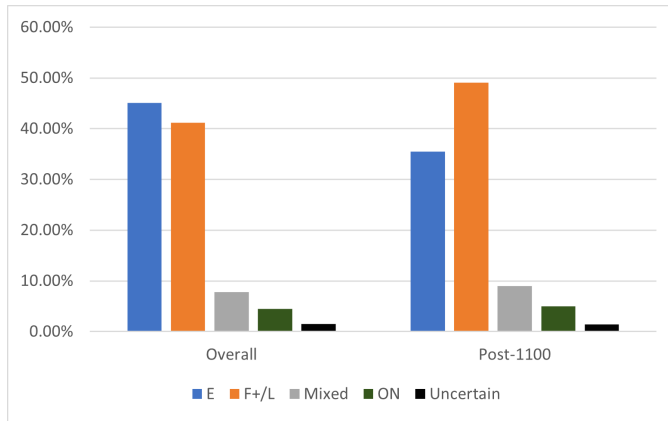


Figure 5.6: Distribution of source languages in the dataset overall compared to the post-1100 subset (F, L, F/L merged)

items leads to an increase in the percentage of Romance-origin material, resulting in a higher proportion of French and Latin vocabulary (49.10%) compared to the native one (35.48%). The evident disparity in proportions observed between the two datasets (the overall one and the post-1100 subset) is visualised in Figure 5.6.

Interestingly, the figure for the Romance material entering the domain during the ME period slightly exceeds the one identified by Durkin in his investigation of the ME lexis overall (i.e. 48%), further highlighting the considerable impact of contact with French and Latin on a domain associated with a predominantly anglophone environment.

### 5.3 Distribution of source languages in the Middle English lexis

Table 5.7: Distribution of source languages in the ME lexis per macro-category (percentages calculated from the total of each macro-category)

Macro-cat.	E	F	L	F/L	Mixed	ON	Unc.	Total
M. locations	60.36%	11.24%	4.14%	11.83%	4.14%	6.51%	1.78%	100%
M. society	29.52%	36.75%	3.01%	15.66%	11.45%	2.41%	1.20%	100%

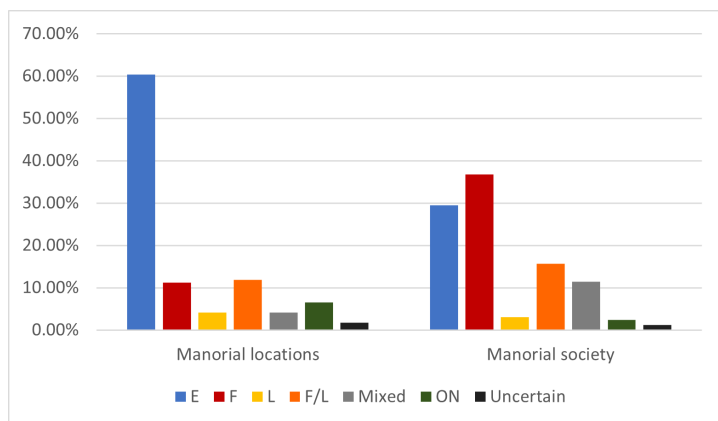


Figure 5.7: Distribution of source languages in the ME lexis per macro-category (percentages calculated from the total of each macro-category)

The distribution of source languages was examined across the two macro-categories to ascertain whether one of the two contributes disproportionately to the considerable influence of French and Latin identified in the domain overall.

Table 5.7 and Figure 5.7 illustrate the percentages calculated from the total of each macro-category.

When comparing the two macro-categories, what immediately stands out is the disparity in proportions of native and French-origin material between the two semantic spaces. Among the 169 lexical items in “Manorial locations”, 102 (60.36%) are of English origin, whilst only 19 (11.24%) derive solely from French. Conversely, the native and French-origin material in “Manorial society” show similar proportions: the 49 native items account for 29.52% of the total (166 items), and the French-origin ones (61) for 36.75%. The proportions of items deriving solely from Latin remain low in both macro-categories (4.14% in “Manorial locations” and 3.01% in “Manorial society”), while the proportion of material from

## 5 Effects of language contact on the lexis of the medieval English manor

Table 5.8: Distribution of source languages in the ME lexis per macro-category (F, L, F/L merged; percentages calculated from the total of each macro-category)

Macro-cat.	E	F+/L	Mixed	ON	Unc.	Total
M. locations	60.36%	27.22%	4.14%	6.51%	1.78%	100%
M. society	29.52%	55.42%	11.45%	2.41%	1.20%	100%

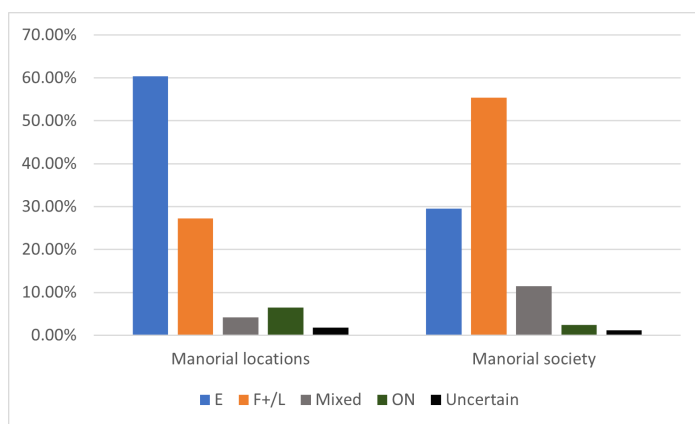


Figure 5.8: Distribution of source languages in the ME lexis per macro-category (F, L, F/L merged; percentages calculated from the total of each macro-category)

French and/or Latin is slightly higher in “Manorial society” (15.66%, compared to 11.83% in “Manorial locations”).

The remaining source languages do not show marked variation across the two macro-categories, except for the higher proportion of mixed-origin material in “Manorial society” and ON origin in “Manorial locations”.

In order to assess the overall impact of both French and Latin on the two macro-categories, we can observe the proportions of Romance-origin material shown in Table 5.8 and Figure 5.8.

When the proportions of lexis from French, Latin, and French and/or Latin are merged, the disparity between native and Romance material across the two macro-categories becomes even more evident, displaying two distinct trends. “Manorial locations” evidently exhibits a prevalence of native lexis (60.36%) and a considerably lower proportion of words from French and Latin (27.22%), whereas “Manorial society” is primarily characterized by the dominance of Romance-origin material (55.42%) and a lower proportion of English vocabulary (29.52%).

### 5.3 Distribution of source languages in the Middle English lexis

Table 5.9: Distribution of source languages in “Manorial society” per social category (percentages calculated from the total of the macro-category)

Category	E	F	L	F/L	Mixed	ON	Unc.	Total
Landlord	3.01%	2.41%	0.00%	0.60%	1.20%	0.00%	0.00%	7.23%
Officer	13.86%	21.69%	1.20%	10.84%	5.42%	1.20%	0.00%	54.22%
Tenant	12.65%	12.65%	1.81%	4.22%	4.82%	1.20%	1.20%	38.55%
Total								100.00%

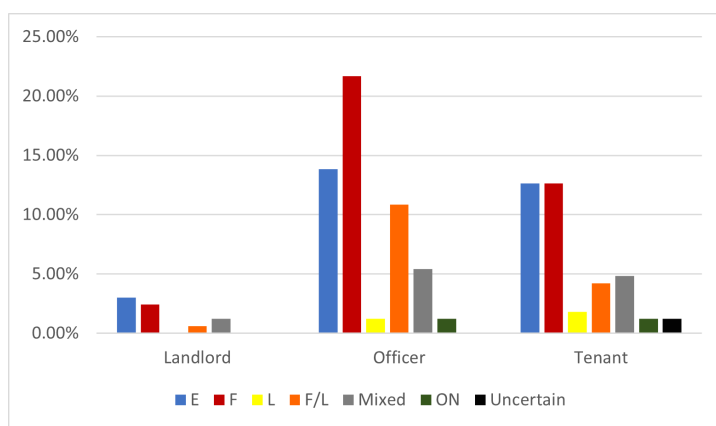


Figure 5.9: Distribution of source languages in “Manorial society” per social category (percentages calculated from the total of the macro-category)

These results strongly suggest a certain degree of resistance to borrowing in the domain containing the terms for the major locations related to the medieval manor and, on the other hand, a substantial role of French and Latin in shaping the domain containing the terms used to refer to the principal agents in manorial society (landlords, officers, and tenants).

Having identified how French and Latin influence the two macro-categories differently, I was interested in investigating whether one of the three main subdivisions within the macro-category “Manorial society”, namely “Landlord”, “Officer”, and “Tenant”, accounts for the substantial proportion of Romance lexis.

Table 5.9 shows the distribution of source languages in the ME lexis of the three social categories contained in “Manorial society”. As illustrated in Figure 5.9, the category “Officer” stands out for the higher percentage of French-origin lexis (21.69%): it is the only category in which the proportion of material borrowed

## 5 Effects of language contact on the lexis of the medieval English manor

Table 5.10: Distribution of source languages in “Manorial society” per social category (F, L, F/L merged; percentages calculated from the total of the macro-category)

Category	E	F+/L	Mixed	ON	Unc.	Total
Landlord	3.01%	3.01%	1.20%	0.00%	0.00%	7.23%
Officer	13.86%	33.73%	5.42%	1.20%	0.00%	54.22%
Tenant	12.65%	18.67%	4.82%	1.20%	1.20%	38.55%
<b>Total</b>						<b>100.00%</b>

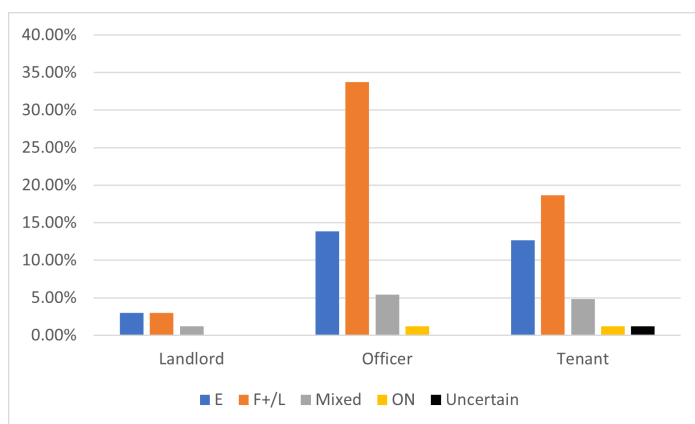


Figure 5.10: Distribution of source languages in “Manorial society” per social category (F, L, F/L merged; percentages calculated from the total of the macro-category)

from French exceeds the native one, which accounts for 13.86%. In addition, it is the category showing the higher proportion of items from French and/or Latin (10.84%).

Interestingly, “Tenant” contains the same number of English and French-only lexical items (21), which account for 12.65% of the macro-category.

The proportion of Romance-origin material combined in each category can be observed in Table 5.10 and Figure 5.10.

When the French, Latin, and French and/or Latin material is considered as a whole, a preponderance of Romance-origin lexis can be observed in the categories “Officer” and “Tenant”, while “Landlord” is too small to support meaningful conclusions. In particular, Romance loans considerably exceed native items in “Officer”, where they account for 33.76% of the whole macro-category. Consid-

### 5.3 Distribution of source languages in the Middle English lexis

ering that none of the social categories in “Manorial society” is marked by a preponderance of native lexis, we can confidently say that the proportions identified in the three main subdivisions of “Manorial society” mirror the findings relating to the macro-category overall, which, as opposed to “Manorial locations”, stands out for its relatively high proportion of lexical material derived from French and Latin.

As illustrated earlier, the high proportion of native English terms found in the ME lexis of the macro-category “Manorial locations” possibly reflects the preference for native terms to refer to “familiar landmarks on the estate” identified by Ingham (2009: 88) in mixed-language manorial accounts, as well as the “homely character” of the English words identified by Hulbert (1936: 38) in Latin manorial documents.

Conversely, the macro-category “Manorial society” displays a higher proportion of borrowing of Romance origin, especially resulting from the considerable French influence found in the category “Officer” contained therein. The reason for this disparity in proportions can be possibly traced back to sociolinguistic factors.

A primary factor contributing to the high proportion of French loanwords among officer designations may be the impact of the Norman Conquest, which prompted changes in manorial organisation and contributed to the proliferation of French-origin terms in this sub-domain. At the same time, it is important to remember that the profession of manorial official required competence in the three languages of literacy of post-Conquest England, especially with reference to those officers at the highest level of the hierarchy, such as the *stewards* (or *seneschals*) appointed by the lord to express his authority on his behalf (Ingham 2009, Ingham & Marcus 2016, Rothwell 2009). The results of the analyses presented above seem to suggest that the multilingual competence of manorial officers affected their lexical choices when referring to the main ranks of people involved in the functioning of manors. The idea of prestige attached to AF and Latin possibly played a role in the preference for Romance-origin words denoting members of manorial society detected in this study, especially with regard to the terminology relating to the hierarchy of officers entrusted with estate management of which these multilingual individuals were part. Manorial courts, whose authority was enforced by these officials and applicable to the tenants within the jurisdiction of the manor (see Chapter 3), likely served as the primary sites for the making and recording of lexical choices concerning the social roles involved, in addition to representing the ideal foci of language contact between the two linguistic groups making up the manorial population.

## *5 Effects of language contact on the lexis of the medieval English manor*

In sum, the class of manorial officers in charge of preparing and drawing up accounts and inventories seems to have been responsible for the introduction of borrowed terms in the lexis relating to the medieval manor, especially with regard to the terms denoting the various members of manorial society.

Notwithstanding the low proportion of bilingual speakers compared to the majority of English monolingual speakers inhabiting the medieval countryside (Short 2009), the social power of manorial officers, who acted as mediators between the lords and the population, allowed them to play a significant role in the dissemination of vocabulary of French and Latin origin in the lexical domains related to rural contexts. As observed by Rothwell (2009: 384), social relationships heightened the divide between the group of bilingual officials and the numerous monolingual labourers. In such a sociolinguistic context, only social power can overcome the separation between linguistic groups and favour language contact. As observed by Matras (2009: 165),

[i]n cases where part of the speech community is monolingual, the chances of successful borrowing will depend on the social position of the bilingual innovators acting as the principal agents of potential language change.

Bilingual speakers have been found accountable for the introduction of “French terms for techniques and artefacts in the workplace in [...] medieval occupations” connected to the non-elite strata of later medieval society (Ingham et al. 2019: 474). In the same way, the bilingual individuals involved in estate management, responsible for keeping records and passing orders to the English work force, must have been accountable for the introduction of French and/or Latin terms in the lexical domain connected to the medieval manor. In other words, the results of this study point to manorial officers as the major agents of loan diffusion in rural sociolinguistic contexts of post-Conquest England.

However, while the preponderance of Romance-origin material denoting members of manorial society can be explained by considering the power relationship between the bilingual innovators and the recipient speech community, it is more difficult to explain why the bilingual innovators tended to use English native terms for referring to manorial locations. A possible, commonsense explanation would be that officials aimed to achieve effective communication when giving instructions to the anglophone labourers, by using words that were familiar to them. As argued by Ingham (2009: 85), while estate managers employed AF among themselves, discourse between them and the anglophone workers was conducted in English, possibly resulting in the use of English terms for familiar places in the AF discourse as well. In addition, lower-ranked officers such

### 5.3 *Distribution of source languages in the Middle English lexis*

as reeves, who were responsible for preparing draft accounts notwithstanding their non-elevated origins (Ingham 2009: 85), might have been responsible for the recording of vernacular words in Latin manorial records. Nevertheless, this is not always the case. For example, in an analysis of the 1349 Exe Bridge Wardens' account, Trotter (2010: 53) observes that "ignorance of Anglo-French lexis on the part of the scribe, or presumed ignorance of the workmen" are unlikely as the basis of the presence of English words in the AF matrix, and suggests that "such words are part of the pool of lexemes available, their exact provenance being of less importance than their usefulness".

When it comes to the ME lexical material considered in this investigation, it is necessary to point out that the terms are all attested in at least one document with a ME matrix (recorded in the MED). Therefore, besides considering scholarly discussions of mixed-language accounts, it might be useful to consider frequent linguistic patterns in order to explain the opposite trends identified in the two macro-categories. The resistance to borrowing shown by the lexical domain relating to manorial places seems to simply confirm "the greater stability of concepts pertaining to the immediate surroundings" (Matras 2009: 169), a frequent pattern which explains why native terms for locations tended to remain in use notwithstanding the significant role of the bilingual innovators working on manorial estates. Conversely, the higher proportion of loanwords denoting the various members of manorial society confirms the fact that "[c]oncepts that involve negotiation of activity with others are, by contrast, more prone to borrowing" (Matras 2009: 169). The difference in French and Latin influence characterising the two macro-categories is thus explained by common patterns concerning borrowing in different semantic fields as well as by power relationships, the latter revealing how social roles influence language change, favouring or resisting processes of borrowing. In the case of manorial lexis, the social role of multilingual officers on the one hand and of monolingual labourers on the other contributed to the variation across the two domains identified in the present study.

The relatively low impact of borrowing on the domain relating to manorial locations confirms previous findings by Rothwell (2009) and Ingham (2009) concerning the scarcity of loanwords from French in the lexis denoting countryside landscapes. However, the considerable impact of French and/or Latin on the domain containing the terms denoting the members of manorial society sheds new light on the effects of language contact in the medieval countryside and urges us to revise the traditional claims concerning the minimal impact of borrowing on rural vocabulary. It is true that, when focussing on the terms for locations, the lexis of the medieval countryside shows relatively low influence from French and Latin if compared to other domains. Nevertheless, the findings relating to

the lexis denoting the most prominent members of manorial society show a different picture, suggesting that, notwithstanding the majority of monolingual English speakers, the impact of language contact in rural contexts was greater than expected.

The analyses previously presented have shown firstly the synchronic distribution of languages in the thesaurus overall and, secondly, the distribution of native terms and loanwords in the subset of ME lexis. I turn next to the diachronic analysis of the ME material, aimed at tracking the influx of French- and Latin-origin lexical items in the domain over the centuries. In order to do so, I adopted the method employed and advocated by Durkin (2020: 345) to investigate borrowing in English from a diachronic perspective, i.e. “by correlating dictionary data on language of origin with the date of first attestation of each lexical item”. Durkin’s study of borrowing in the history of English (Durkin 2014) reveals an unprecedented amount of borrowing from French in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, with a dramatic peak in the first half of the fourteenth century, confirming previous findings by Mossé (1943) and Dekeyser (1986), among others.

In order to verify if the domain under investigation yields similar or different results, the source languages of each lexical item gathered in the thesaurus were correlated with the earliest recorded attestation of the sense in question during the ME period. In addition, the same procedure was carried out to assess the proportions of native terms and loanwords falling out of the domain over time, by correlating source languages with the latest or more recent attestation date, from the ME period up to PDE. In doing so, it was possible to obtain a chronological overview of the proportions of words entering the semantic space under investigation and, subsequently, of those being dropped and becoming obsolete.

Before presenting the following analyses, a caveat is in order. As observed at the beginning of the chapter, it is necessary to bear in mind that the data under investigation were extracted from existing historical dictionaries, which rely heavily on published records and are therefore unable to include all existing evidence and to accurately represent the linguistic situation of the time. For instance, not all the extant attestations of the ME language are recorded in the MED, considering the proportion of unpublished documents (including manorial records preserved in archives) which may show earlier attestations. In addition, the number of attestations increases in later periods. Moreover, there is the problem of attestations found in mixed-language contexts, which are difficult for lexicographers to handle and result in different dictionaries presenting different dates of first attestation for the same sense (cf. Wright 2013a,b). The analyses illustrated in the following sections, which focus on the ME terms attested in the domain during the ME period, are entirely based on the attestations recorded in the MED

and the OED. Where the two dictionaries offer different dates of first attestation for the same sense, I selected the earliest one. In particular, the first attestation of terms already in use during the OE period was extracted from the OED since the MED only includes ME attestations. Dates of latest attestation, on the other hand, were all extracted from the OED, except for those cases in which a word is only attested in the MED.

#### 5.3.1 Distribution of source languages based on first attestation dates

In order to investigate the distribution of source languages in relation to the date of first attestation of each lexical item (in the sense in question), first attestation dates have been grouped into five periods: <1100, 1100–1199, 1200–1299, 1300–1399, and 1400–1500. The first one was devised in order to collect all those items which were already in use in the sense under investigation before 1100, whilst the others correspond to the four centuries making up the ME period. For the purpose of this analysis, the five terms of uncertain origin (*plough* [in “Arable”], *plough* [in “Measures of land”], *plough-lond*, *self-ode*, *yeman*) were discarded, resulting in a total of 330 ME lexical items under investigation.

As illustrated in Table 5.11 and Figure 5.11, a considerable proportion of the dataset (15.76%) is constituted by native items which were already attested in the domain before the ME period conventionally began (in 1100), namely 52 items including terms such as *aker* (PDE ‘acre’), *lese* (PDE ‘lease’), *lond-lord* (PDE ‘land-lord’), *medwe* (PDE ‘meadow’), *reve* (PDE ‘reeve’), *toun* (PDE ‘town’), *wode* (PDE ‘wood’).

The majority of loanwords did not appear in the domain until the thirteenth century. Only *clerk* (OF, L), *bidel* (OE, OF, ML), *dreng* (ON) were already attested in English before 1100 in the sense in question.

The highest rate of new words entering the domain can be observed in the fourteenth century, when 33.33% of the dataset, including both native terms and borrowings, was first attested. The second highest rate (26.97%) is recorded in the following century.

If we focus on the material deriving solely from French, we can observe that the highest peak of borrowing from French is in the fourteenth century, when 41 terms entered the domain. Among these are, for instance, *forest* (1300), *maner* (1300), *vilein* (1325), *baillif* (1350), *officer* (1375), *dispensour* (1380), *lege* (1380), *seneschal* (1387).

No other source language shows such a high peak in any of the periods under investigation. Whilst the rates of native material entering the domain tend to remain stable across the ME period (oscillating between 6.06% and 9.39% of

## 5 Effects of language contact on the lexis of the medieval English manor

Table 5.11: Diachronic distribution of source languages during the ME period based on first attestation dates

Period	E	F	L	F/L	Mixed	ON	Total
<1100	15.76%	0.00%	0.00%	0.30%	0.30%	0.30%	16.67%
1100–1199	6.06%	0.91%	0.00%	0.61%	0.30%	0.91%	8.79%
1200–1299	7.27%	2.42%	0.30%	1.52%	1.82%	0.91%	14.24%
1300–1399	9.39%	12.42%	0.91%	6.67%	2.42%	1.52%	33.33%
1400–1500	7.27%	8.48%	2.42%	4.85%	3.03%	0.91%	26.97%
Total	45.76%	24.24%	3.64%	13.94%	7.88%	4.55%	100.00%

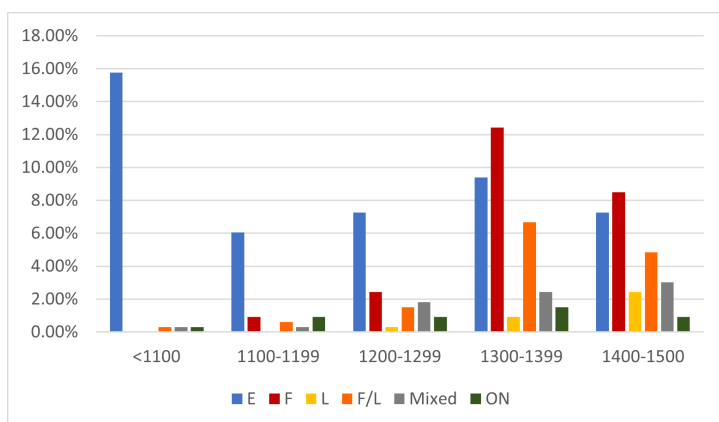


Figure 5.11: Diachronic distribution of source languages during the ME period based on first attestation dates

the dataset), although showing a peak in the same century (9.39% in the period 1300–1399), the rate of incoming French loanwords changes considerably from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century, i.e. from 2.42% (8 terms) to 12.42% (41 terms) of the dataset. Similarly, the material from French and/or Latin increases from 1.52% (5 terms) in the thirteenth century to 6.67% (22 terms) in the following century, when words such as *tenaunt* (1325), *seignour* (1363), *prefect* (1382), *procutour* (1382), *mesuage* (1390), *pasturing(e)* (1390) enter the domain. Even though the number of new borrowings from French and French and/or Latin decreases in the fifteenth century, their proportions remain relatively high (8.48% and 4.85% respectively), more than doubling the figures from the thirteenth century (2.42% and 1.52% respectively).

### 5.3 Distribution of source languages in the Middle English lexis

Table 5.12: Diachronic distribution of source languages during the ME period based on first attestation dates (F, L, F/L merged)

Period	E	F+/L	Mixed	ON	Total
<1100	15.76%	0.30%	0.30%	0.30%	16.67%
1100–1199	6.06%	1.52%	0.30%	0.91%	8.79%
1200–1299	7.27%	4.24%	1.82%	0.91%	14.24%
1300–1399	9.39%	20.00%	2.42%	1.52%	33.33%
1400–1500	7.27%	15.76%	3.03%	0.91%	26.97%
<b>Total</b>	<b>45.76%</b>	<b>41.82%</b>	<b>7.88%</b>	<b>4.55%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

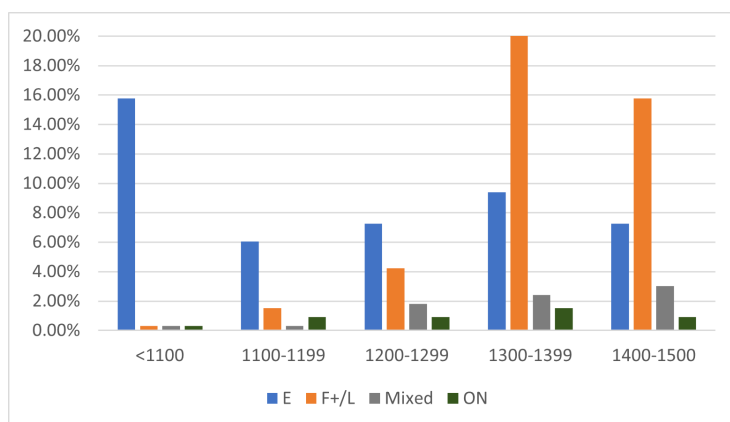


Figure 5.12: Diachronic distribution of source languages during the ME period based on first attestation dates (F, L, F/L merged)

The high percentage of Romance loanwords first attested in the domain in the fourteenth century is more evident if the proportions of words of French, Latin, and French and/or Latin origin are merged, as illustrated in Table 5.12 and Figure 5.12. The data show that the highest peaks of new words (regardless of the source language) observed in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries are predominantly due to the considerable percentage of Romance-origin items entering the domain during these periods. In the period 1300–1399, when the domain expanded through the adoption of 66 Romance-origin words (20.00% of the total), only 31 native items (9.39%) entered it, alongside a few mixed- and ON-origin words. A similar pattern can be observed in the following century, when 52 Romance loanwords (15.76%) and only 24 native items (7.27%) entered the domain.

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Table 5.13: Diachronic distribution of source languages during the late ME period based on first attestation dates (percentages calculated from the total of all the new words per half-century)

Period	E	F	L	F/L	Mixed	ON	Total
1300–1349	26.42%	43.40%	0.00%	15.09%	7.55%	7.55%	100%
1350–1399	29.82%	31.58%	5.26%	24.56%	7.02%	1.75%	100%
1400–1449	27.27%	30.91%	5.45%	21.82%	10.91%	3.64%	100%
1450–1500	26.47%	32.35%	14.71%	11.76%	11.76%	2.94%	100%

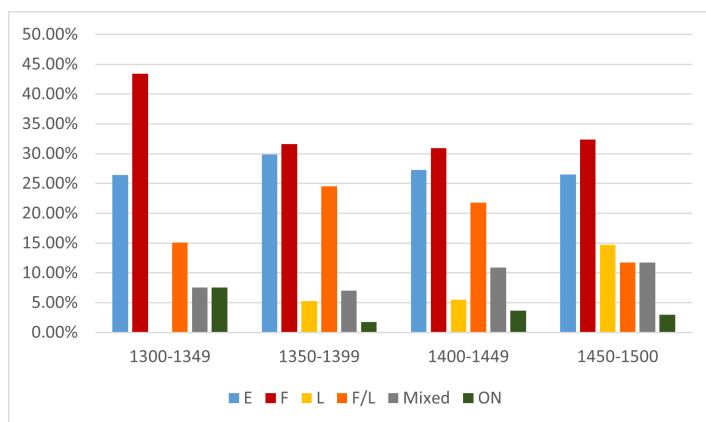


Figure 5.13: Diachronic distribution of source languages during the late ME period based on first attestation dates (percentages calculated from the total of all the new words per half-century)

The analyses presented above clearly show two peaks of borrowing of Romance origin in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, mirroring Durkin's findings concerning the unprecedented amount of borrowing from French and Latin observed in the later medieval period when correlating source languages and first attestation dates (Durkin 2014: 33). However, unlike Durkin's study, this investigation considers the first attestations of senses (e.g. the first attestation of the term *toun* in the sense referring to a medieval manor) rather than the first attestations of word-forms regardless of senses, since it aims to track the influx of loanwords in the domain under investigation.

As already stated at the beginning of this chapter, it is necessary to point out that a higher number of attestations from later periods is recorded in the MED, possibly due to a greater number of surviving texts available. Therefore, the in-

### 5.3 Distribution of source languages in the Middle English lexis

creased frequency of borrowing in the later ME period is possibly associated with the fact that first attestations are more likely to appear in later periods.

Following the identification of the peaks of Romance borrowing in the late ME period (1300–1500), the last two centuries were split into fifty-year periods and percentages were calculated from the total of new words entering the domain in each half century. Using this method, Durkin found a dramatic peak of borrowing solely from French (slightly less than 40%) in the first half of the fourteenth century (Durkin 2014: 35, 261) and, when combining the totals of French, Latin, and French and/or Latin, he found that Romance-origin loanwords make up 47%-48% of all new words in the fourteenth century (Durkin 2014: 260–261).

The data shown in Table 5.13 and Figure 5.13 reveal a peak of borrowing solely from French in the period 1300–1349, which mirrors the peak found by Durkin in his study of the whole English lexicon. The percentage representing this peak (43.40%) slightly exceeds the figure identified by Durkin (39%) in the same period (Durkin 2014: 261).

When we look at the Romance material combined, an interesting picture emerges. As illustrated in Figure 5.14, the proportions of loanwords from French and Latin remain stable throughout the periods under investigation. Once again, this result mirrors Durkin's findings, which show "a much less dramatic picture" when the percentages of borrowings from French and Latin are combined (Durkin 2014: 260).

The similarities emerging when these results are compared to those obtained by Durkin show that the domain under investigation, associated with a soci-

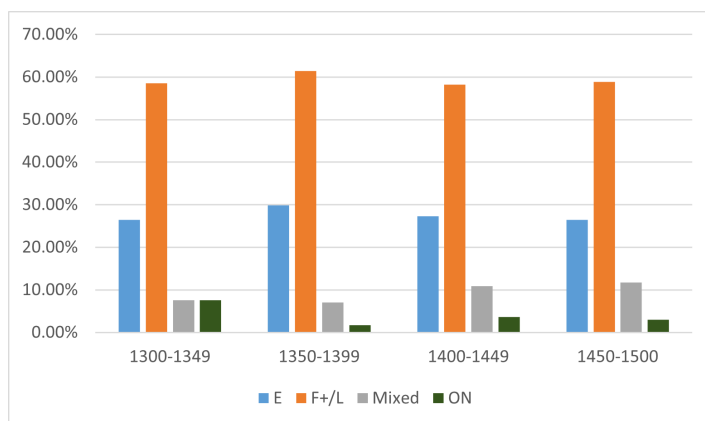


Figure 5.14: Diachronic distribution of source languages during the late ME period based on first attestation dates (F, L, F/L merged; percentages calculated from the total of all the new words per half-century)

olinguistic context dominated by monolingual English speakers, shares similar trends with the English lexicon overall, on which borrowing of Romance origin was significantly impactful. Once again, the data collected in this study suggest that we should revise the claim concerning the minor impact of French on the lexis connected to the medieval countryside.

### 5.3.2 Distribution of source languages based on latest attestation dates

Having analysed the proportions of new words entering the domain during the ME period, I turn now to the examination of the drop-out rates of senses over time. This analysis, based on the correlation of source languages and latest attestation dates, was devised as a complement to the previous one and provides a picture of the proportion of items falling out of the domain during the ME period and beyond. The objective is to determine whether the items surviving in the domain for a longer period of time are more likely to be native or borrowed.

Table 5.14 and Figure 5.15 show that 35.15% of the lexical material in the domain became obsolescent in the sense in question by 1500, whilst a considerably higher percentage, i.e. 64.85%, survived after the ME period and either was dropped later or survived up to PDE. If we look at source languages, we can observe how a considerably higher number of Romance-origin loanwords display a post-1500 latest attestation date: only 21 items deriving solely from French (6.36% of the whole dataset) were dropped before 1500 as opposed to 59 (17.88%) surviving after that date, and only four items from French and/or Latin (1.21%) became obsolescent as opposed to 42 (12.73%) surviving after 1500.

The totals of Romance-origin material combined are illustrated in Figure 5.16. The proportion surviving after 1500 (32.73% of the domain) is considerably higher than that being dropped by the end of the ME period (9.09%), suggesting a higher survival rate in loanwords from French and Latin if compared to native items.

Table 5.14: Diachronic distribution of source languages in the ME period and beyond based on latest attestation dates (percentages calculated from the total of the ME material)

Period	E	F	L	F/L	Mixed	ON	Total
1100–1500	18.79%	6.36%	1.52%	1.21%	4.55%	2.73%	35.15%
1501–	26.97%	17.88%	2.12%	12.73%	3.33%	1.82%	64.85%

### 5.3 Distribution of source languages in the Middle English lexis

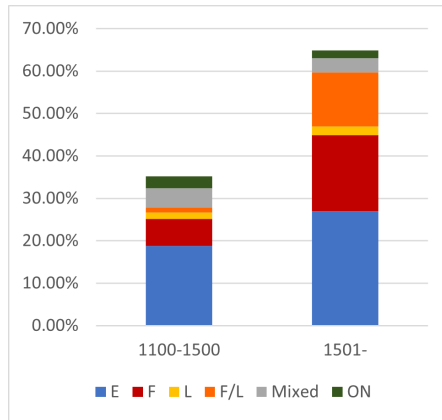


Figure 5.15: Diachronic distribution of source languages in the ME period and beyond based on latest attestation dates (percentages calculated from the total of the ME material)

After examining the ME period as a whole, a chronological subdivision ranging from 1100 up to PDE was devised to track the distribution of lexical material throughout the centuries on the basis of the latest attestation date of each ME lexeme in the thesaurus. As previously outlined, the aim of this section of the study is to assess the proportions of lexical material falling out of the semantic space in each century, as well as the proportion surviving into PDE, in relation to the source languages involved. Latest attestation dates (derived from the

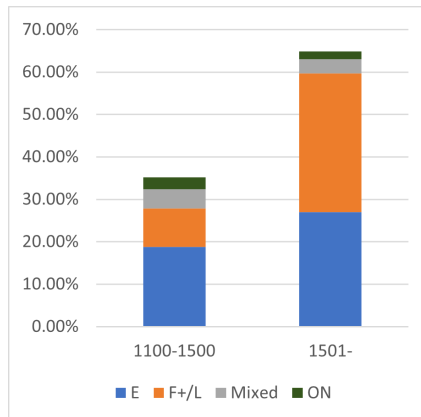


Figure 5.16: Diachronic distribution of source languages in the ME period and beyond based on latest attestation dates (F, L, F/L merged; percentages calculated from the total of the ME material)

MED and OED) were grouped into eight periods: 1100–1199, 1200–1299, 1300–1399, 1400–1500, 1501–1599, 1600–1699, 1700–1799, and 1800–.<sup>2</sup> The latter was chosen to represent PDE as well, in view of the fact that not all OED entries have been updated and some of them still represent nineteenth-century scholarship: as proposed by Sylvester et al. (2022a: 245), “[a] word is defined as occurring in PDE if it is attested in the nineteenth century or later, unless an OED entry with a final citation in the 1800s states that a word is obsolete”. Nevertheless, no attempt is made here to differentiate between words that are still in use and those that became obsolete after 1800. The lexical material grouped in the period “1800–” in the following tables and graphs should be understood as having a post-1800 latest attestation date in the OED. A closer look at a selection of terms surviving after 1800 is presented in Chapter 6, where the outcomes of lexical retention in PDE are investigated in detail.

Table 5.15 and Figure 5.17 show the proportions of items falling out of the domain across the centuries based on latest attestation dates. As far as the ME period is concerned, the highest drop-out rate regardless of the source language is recorded in the period 1400–1500, when 24.85% of all items fell out of use. The majority of these are native (12.42% of the total), compared to the low proportions of borrowed material becoming obsolescent in the same period (5.15% French, 1.52% Latin, 1.21% French and/or Latin). However, if we take the whole period from 1100 to PDE into account, we find that a considerably higher percentage of lexical material survived after 1800, namely 47.58%.

A similar pattern is observable in the native and French-origin lexis, which both show a peak of obsolescence in the fifteenth century and a higher survival rate in PDE. Native words such as *fre-holding* (‘freeholder’), *hom* (‘manorial estate’), *wold* (‘woodland’), and French loanwords such as *bail(le)* (‘stewardship’), *procurour* (‘administrator’), *wasten(e)* (‘wasteland’) are last attested in the period 1400–1500. Conversely, native words such as *falwe* (‘fallow’), *medwe* (‘meadowland’), *reve* (‘reeve’), and French loanwords such as *baillif* (‘bailiff’), *maner* (‘manor’), *vilein* (‘tenant in villeinage’) survived into PDE. However, not all the surviving items are in current use in the sense in question. Some survive only as rare, archaic, or historical terms, as in the case of *seignour* (‘seignior’), labelled as “rare” in the OED, *aker* (‘acre’), now archaic in the sense ‘a piece of tilled or arable land’ and found only in proper names (OED), and *steuard* (‘steward’), denoting the steward of the medieval manor solely in historical contexts. On the

<sup>2</sup>The inconsistency in the time divisions is due to the time period 1400–1500 being selected instead of 1400–1499 in order to align with the conventional boundaries of the Middle English period and maintain consistency with the previous analysis.

### 5.3 Distribution of source languages in the Middle English lexis

Table 5.15: Diachronic distribution of source languages based on latest attestation dates

Period	E	F	L	F/L	Mixed	ON	Total
1100–1199	1.52%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.52%
1200–1299	1.82%	0.30%	0.00%	0.00%	0.61%	0.00%	2.73%
1300–1399	3.03%	0.91%	0.00%	0.00%	1.21%	0.91%	6.06%
1400–1500	12.42%	5.15%	1.52%	1.21%	2.73%	1.82%	24.85%
1501–1599	1.82%	0.30%	0.61%	2.12%	0.61%	0.00%	5.45%
1600–1699	1.82%	2.42%	0.30%	1.21%	0.61%	0.00%	6.36%
1700–1799	2.12%	2.12%	0.00%	0.61%	0.30%	0.30%	5.45%
1800–	21.21%	13.03%	1.21%	8.79%	1.82%	1.52%	47.58%
<b>Total</b>	<b>45.76%</b>	<b>24.24%</b>	<b>3.64%</b>	<b>13.94%</b>	<b>7.88%</b>	<b>4.55%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

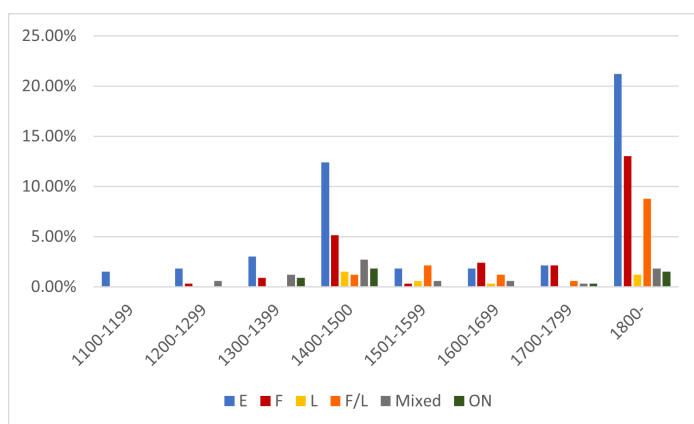


Figure 5.17: Diachronic distribution of source languages based on latest attestation dates

other hand, some survive only in dialectal or regional use, as in the case of *lese* ('lease') and *feding* ('feeding'), now dialectal terms for 'pastureland', or contexts, as in the case of *mede* ('mead') and *lei(e)* ('lea'), both denoting a meadow solely in poetical usage (see Chapter 6 for a detailed analysis of outcomes in PDE).

A better overview of the rates of obsolescence of the Romance-origin lexis can be obtained by merging the French, Latin, and French and/or Latin data.

As illustrated in Table 5.16 and Figure 5.18, both native and Romance elements exhibit parallel patterns. Specifically, they both record a peak of obsolescence

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Table 5.16: Diachronic distribution of source languages based on latest attestation dates (F, L, F/L merged)

Period	E	F+/L	Mixed	ON	Total
1100–1199	1.52%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	1.52%
1200–1299	1.82%	0.30%	0.61%	0.00%	2.73%
1300–1399	3.03%	0.91%	1.21%	0.91%	6.06%
1400–1500	12.42%	7.88%	2.73%	1.82%	24.85%
1501–1599	1.82%	3.03%	0.61%	0.00%	5.45%
1600–1699	1.82%	3.94%	0.61%	0.00%	6.36%
1700–1799	2.12%	2.73%	0.30%	0.30%	5.45%
1800–	21.21%	23.03%	1.82%	1.52%	47.58%
Total	45.76%	41.82%	7.88%	4.55%	100.00%

in the period 1400–1500, when 41 (12.42%) native items and 26 (7.88%) Romance loanwords fell out of use, and a considerably higher proportion of material surviving after 1800, namely 70 (21.21%) native items and 76 (23.03%) Romance loanwords. These shared trends contribute to the overall evolution of the domain, characterised by two dramatic peaks: one in the fifteenth century and one in PDE. Interestingly, when the Romance material is combined, it becomes evident that native and Romance lexis exhibit strikingly similar survival rates after 1800 (21.21% and 23.03% respectively). This observation also applies to the mixed and ON-origin materials: despite the limited number of lexical items, these categories exhibit a survival rate of 1.82% and 1.52% in PDE respectively.

The parallel trends observed in the native and Romance-origin materials show that both groups exhibited analogous behaviours and equally contributed to the linguistic ecology of ME. The higher proportion of lexical material retained in the semantic space up to PDE, regardless of the language of origin, suggests that loanwords did not necessarily push native words towards semantic shift or obsolescence, as often suggested by studies making use of the conventional metaphor of competition (cf. Käsmann 1961, Mevis 2021, Rynell 1948, Timofeeva 2018). Sylvester & Tiddeman (2023) and Sylvester et al. (2022a, 2023) found that, rather than competing, native terms and loanwords tended to co-exist in the same semantic space during the ME period. This observation applies specifically to (near) synonyms, hence it is important to note that not all thesaurus categories contain synonyms, as some were specifically designed to contain non-synonymous co-hyponyms. Nevertheless, the MED terms found in such categories (i.e. “Mea-

### 5.3 Distribution of source languages in the Middle English lexis

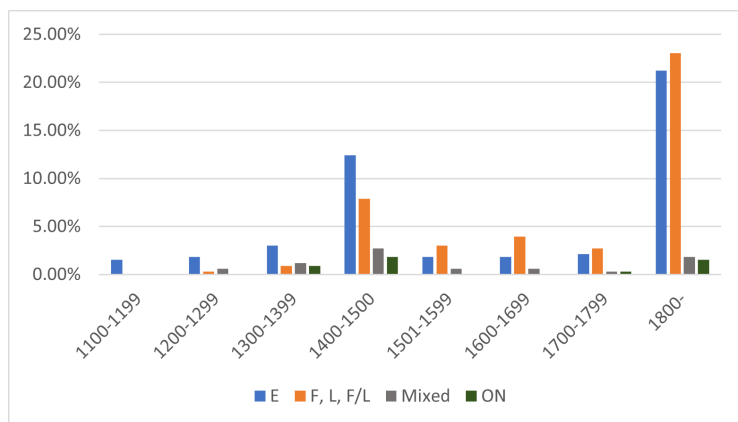


Figure 5.18: Diachronic distribution of source languages based on latest attestation dates (F, L, F/L merged)

asures of land”, “Administrator/Steward/Bailiff” and its subcategories, as well as those found under the headings “Types of...” and “Other types of...”) account for only 36% of the entire MED lexical material, indicating a predominance of (near) synonyms within the dataset. A more detailed examination of a selection of categories containing synonyms is provided in Chapter 6.

Furthermore, a caveat is needed when making reference to synonyms. According to Samuels’s functionalist theory, the systemic regulation of language prevents pure synonyms from co-existing:

If, for extralinguistic reasons such as cultural borrowing or foreign conquest, two exact synonyms exist for a time in the spoken chain, either one of them will become less and less selected and eventually discarded, or a difference of meaning, connotation, nuance or register will arise to distinguish them (Samuels 1975: 65).

On the basis of this assumption, it should be noted that the categories constituting the thesaurus are intended as prototypical categories with blurred boundaries in which some elements are more salient than others (see Geeraerts 1989, 1997, 2006 and Chapter 4), hence connotation and register were not considered in the evaluation of category discreteness.

In light of these considerations, the results presented above do not seem to fully support the traditional scholarly discussion on lexical replacement occurring in ME as a result of extensive borrowing from French. Although a peak of native material becoming obsolescent can be observed in the fifteenth century,

the percentage appears to be relatively low (only 12.42% of the whole dataset), hence hindering a potential identification of significant lexical replacement resulting from the influx of loanwords in the domain.

The analysis of latest attestation dates suggests a higher tendency of native and borrowed items occupying the same semantic space to co-exist throughout the ME period and beyond. Both the peak of obsolescence identified in the fifteenth century and the higher proportion of material surviving into PDE seem to confirm the findings by Sylvester et al. (2022a, 2023) and Sylvester & Tidde-man (2023). In examining the semantic outcomes of samples of (near) synonyms in ME, they observed that “the highest drop-out rate for both native and non-native existing terms is found during the period 1400–99” and that “the rate of lexical replacement was relatively low” during the ME period (Sylvester et al. 2023: 182,187), providing the basis for the claim that lexical replacement “is rarer than expected, and wholesale relexification did not happen during the later medieval period” (Sylvester & Tidde-man 2023: 182).

The fact that loanwords did not extensively oust native terms but co-existed alongside them in a relationship of synonymy for longer than expected does not mean that changes did not occur. In fact, many of the items identified in the analysis as surviving in PDE are still in use in the sense in question solely in specific contexts or dialects (see Chapter 6. As claimed by Sylvester et al. 2023: 185, “many native terms have remained in use but as contributors to sets of near synonyms differentiated by register”. Extensive borrowing from French (and Latin to a lesser extent) led to an expansion of the English lexicon during the ME period, as a result of which a considerable number of lexical variants came to co-exist in the language. Later, these started to be differentiated by register or function. According to Sylvester (2020: 366), the condition of multilingualism typifying the post-Conquest period “is the key to the notion of standardisation of the lexicon”. Whilst the standardisation of phonology or spelling involves the achievement of “minimal variation in form” (Haugen 1966: 931), the higher tendency of ME synonyms of native and Romance origin to survive suggests that the standardisation of the lexicon is not achieved through the elimination of variants but is the result of the co-existence and subsequent differentiation of synonyms in the language.

This study has shown how the lexical expansion induced by contact with French and Latin during the centuries following the Norman Conquest is not limited to domains connected to the life and activities of the post-Conquest ruling elite but can be identified in the lexis associated with rural contexts as well. Although a relatively lesser impact of language contact is observable in the vocabulary for countryside locations, an examination of the lexis connected to the medieval English manor in its various dimensions (its composition and social

### *5.3 Distribution of source languages in the Middle English lexis*

structure) reveals how the influence of French (and Latin to a lesser extent) also reached domains that have been underexplored from a contact linguistic perspective in view of their supposed resistance to borrowing. The analyses presented in this chapter revealed a considerable proportion of loanwords of Romance origin in the lexis related to the medieval manor and to manorial society in particular, the majority of which were retained alongside the native lexis throughout the later Middle Ages up to the nineteenth century and beyond. These findings show how the development of this domain, connected to a sociolinguistic environment characterised by a predominance of English monolingual speakers and thus supposedly less exposed to contact with French and Latin, mirrors the evolution of the English lexicon overall.



# 6 Lexical variation and change: case studies

## 6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores lexical variation and change in ME manorial lexis through the analysis of selected categories from the two macro-categories of the thesaurus, i.e. “Manorial locations” and “Manorial society”. These case studies complement the analyses presented in the previous chapter by closely examining the ways in which the lexical material extracted from the MED and included in these onomasiological categories evolved over time, from ME up to PDE.

The chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section is further articulated in eight sub-sections, each focussing on one of the selected categories. The MED (hereafter ME) lexical material included in each category is examined with reference to the diachronic development of the category, concluding with a focussed analysis of the semantic development of a pair of ME terms that have survived into PDE in the relevant sense. The second, concluding section brings together the lexical material previously examined to track the effects of lexical borrowing by assessing survival rates and outcomes of lexical retention in PDE across the sample.

The aim of the case studies presented in this chapter is twofold. First, they seek to determine whether the patterns identified in the overall dataset from the previous chapter are also reflected at the level of individual categories containing (near) synonyms. Secondly, they aim to illustrate the evolution of each semantic space in terms of lexical retention and obsolescence to assess the ways in which words that were synonymous in ME have survived into PDE.

Durkin (2020) advocates for further research on the outcomes of language contact by suggesting the adoption of both an onomasiological and semasiological approach as a way to shed light on the role of borrowings from French and Latin in the development of the English language. Specifically, he claims that this objective can be achieved “by tracking the trajectories shown by specific words over time [...], and examining the changing shape of particular word fields in time” (Durkin 2020: 357).

As illustrated in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5, an onomasiological perspective allows us to investigate the lexicon by taking into account the socio-cognitive dimensions of language and gain both a synchronic and diachronic overview of the distribution of native lexis and loanwords according to the concepts they express. By offering a close examination of a sample of thesaurus categories, focussing on the ME lexis contained within them, this chapter aims to illustrate how onomasiological categories rearrange through time, particularly in relation to the interaction between native and borrowed terms. Moreover, it seeks to add a semasiological dimension to the analysis by shifting the focus from the onomasiological structure of the domain under investigation towards the semantic development of ME synonyms within it. Specifically, in line with previous studies examining the interaction between native lexical items and incoming loanwords (cf. Kornexl & Lenker 2011, Sylvester et al. 2022a, Timofeeva 2018), pairs of co-existing synonyms, each consisting of a native and a French-origin term, were selected to trace their semantic development. The overall aim of this chapter is to determine what a closer examination of the lexical material can reveal about the ways in which the native and borrowed words occupy the semantic spaces considered in this research.

## 6.2 Category selection

The selection of the sample of categories to be considered for the present analysis is based on the fact that, generally, (near) synonyms are mostly found at the higher, superordinate levels of the hierarchy, where the lexical items contained in each category are most numerous. The lexis found at the lowest levels, on the other hand, is the most specific, and therefore the most technical: as a result, the further down the hierarchy we progress, the more we are likely to find non-synonymous co-hyponyms and less populated categories. For instance, whilst the hypernymic category “Pastureland” contains 8 ME lexical items, the hyponymic categories found one level below, that is, “Cattle pasture”, “Rabbit pasture”, and “Other types of pastureland”, contain 5, 1, and 4 ME items respectively. Moreover, Sylvester (2018) and Sylvester et al. (2020) found that French-origin loanwords tend to cluster at the most general levels of the lexicon and to consistently decrease further down; therefore, the higher the hierarchical level taken into consideration for the analysis, the higher the chance to find borrowed items in the categories under investigation.

Ideally, all the material to be examined in this chapter would be drawn from HL1, where superordinate senses are found. However, due to the different struc-

ture of the two macro-categories, it is not possible to carry out a consistent selection procedure: only one category is found at HL1 in the macro-category “Manorial locations”, whilst “Manorial society” contains 3 categories at the same hierarchical level. This is due to the different classification systems devised for the two macro-categories: the highest levels of the hierarchy (HL1, HL2) are linked by both hyponymic and meronymic relations in “Manorial locations” and solely by hyponymic relations in “Manorial society” (see Chapter 4). The arbitrariness of classification systems discussed in Chapter 4 accounts for the presence of lexical items with the same level of specificity at different HLs. According to Sylvester et al. (2020: 4), “HLs are not a consistent or quantitative indicator of technicality in individual cases and at any specific level”, hence it was not possible to carry out a balanced selection of categories from the two macro-categories by taking into account a single HL. The categories selected from “Manorial locations” are those found at HL3 (i.e. “Arable land”, “Meadowland”, “Pastureland”, “Wasteland”), while those selected from “Manorial society” are the superordinate categories “Landlord” and “Tenant”, found at HL1. The categories found under the headings “Types of...”, i.e. “Types of land” and “Types of manorial estates” were discarded in view of the presence of non-synonymous co-hyponyms, as well as those that do not include at least one pair of synonyms surviving in PDE, one of which is native and the other a Romance-origin loanword. Consequently, the categories “Message”, where only a single term (*mesuage*) is still in use, and “Official”, where no native terms have survived into PDE, were not considered in the analysis.

The list of all the categories constituting the sample investigated in this chapter is presented below:

- Manorial locations:
  - 1.1.1.1 Arable land (HL3)
  - 1.1.1.2 Meadowland (HL3)
  - 1.1.1.4 Pastureland (HL3)
  - 1.1.1.6 Wasteland (HL3)
- Manorial society:
  - 2.1 Landlord (HL1)
  - 2.3 Tenant (HL1)

The selection of the pair of synonymous terms to be analysed from a semasiological perspective is based on the following criteria:

## 6 Lexical variation and change: case studies

1. the pair consists of a term inherited from OE and a French-origin loanword (i.e. from French only or from both French and Latin) first attested during the ME period;
2. both terms have been retained after 1800 (i.e. post-1800 attestations are present in the OED).

As illustrated in the previous chapter, the year 1800 was chosen as marking the beginning of PDE on the basis of Sylvester et al.'s definition of terms surviving in PDE (Sylvester et al. 2022a: 245). In the thesaurus, terms surviving after 1800 are marked with the date of their first attestation only (e.g. "1300– maner"), in some cases followed by further specification of the present status of the word (e.g. when a term is now obsolete or found solely in specific contexts). Processes of semantic change were not taken into account in the previous chapter, where all terms surviving until at least 1800 were classified as surviving in PDE. This chapter, however, presents a closer examination of the semantic development and current usage of individual lexical items.

The pairs of terms selected from the aforementioned categories are listed below:

- Arable land: *tilth* (1316–), *arable* (1440–)
- Meadowland: *medwe* (OE–), *plain(e)* (1300–)
- Pastureland: *lese* (OE–), *pastur(e)* (1297–)
- Wasteland: *wildernes(se)* (1200–), *wast(e)* (1200–)
- Landlord: *lond-lord* (OE–), *seignour* (1363–)
- Tenant: *man* (OE–), *tenaunt* (1325–)

Four out of the six terms selected as native terms were already attested in the sense under investigation before the ME period, whilst *tilth* and *wilderness(se)* acquired the meaning examined here during the ME period.

Each of the following sections is dedicated to one of the selected categories and is structured as follows. First, I examine the category from an onomasiological perspective. After providing an overview of its composition, I illustrate the distribution of the lexical material according to the language (ME, AF, ML) and the etymological relationships between the lexical items in the three languages.

Subsequently, I focus on the ME lexical material contained in the category and illustrate its diachronic development. Finally, I trace the semantic development of a pair of terms that are still in use in PDE in the relevant sense, providing a semasiological perspective that complements the onomasiological analysis previously presented.

### 6.2.1 Arable land

The terms that were used as synonyms to refer to the areas of land where crops were grown are found in the thesaurus under the heading “Arable land”. The category is found one level below “Manorial estate”, with which it shares a relation of meronymy since arable land constituted part of the landed property of a manor. “Meadowland”, “Messuage”, “Pastureland”, and “Wasteland” are found at the same level, alongside “Types of land”, where terms for other types of land are grouped, and “Types of manorial estate”, which contains the hyponyms of *manorial estate*.

The hyponyms of *arable* are found one level below: the terms for plots of arable land obtained by clearing a tract of waste land are grouped in “Assart”, those for arable land left uncultivated in order to restore its fertility in “Fallow”, and other hyponyms in “Other types of arable land”.

The category is constituted by a total of 17 terms drawn from the MED, which are listed below alongside information concerning the donor language(s):

- OE— (arch.) aker (OE)
- OE-1500 lond (OE)
- OE-1728 falwe (OE)
- 1160-1500 erthe (OE)
- 1175 erth(e) land (OE + OE)
- 1175-1500 mold(e) (OE)
- 1316— (dial. hist. poet.) tilth (OE)
- 1330-1735 forwe (OE)
- 1333 eringe land (OE)
- 1382-1500 erthe tilling(e) (OE + OE)
- 1387-1488 tilling(e) lond (OE + OE)
- 1393-1440 plough (?OE, ?ON)
- 1398 tilling(e) craft (OE + OE)
- 1400— arable lond (OF, L + OE)
- 1400 ardawe (ON)
- 1410— (rare) erable lond (OE + OE)
- 1440— arable (OF, L)

Table 6.1: Distribution of source languages in the ME lexis of “Arable land”

Source language	N. of items	%
E	13	76.47%
F+/L	1	5.88%
Mixed	1	5.88%
ON	1	5.88%
Uncertain	1	5.88%
Total	17	100.00%

Table 6.1 shows that, of the 17 ME terms, 13 are native words or phrases deriving from OE forms. The only non-native terms in the category are *ardawe*, a word of probable ON origin for which only three attestations of this sense dating from 1400 are provided by the MED, *arable*, a borrowing of both French and Latin origin also found in the mixed-origin phrase *arable land*, and *plough*, a word of uncertain origin.

The high proportion of native terms stands out: they account for 76.47% of the category, reflecting the data recorded in the whole macro-category “Manorial locations”, which, in contrast to the macro-category “Manorial society”, shows a preponderance of native-origin lexis (see Chapter 5).

An overview of the category from a diachronic perspective is illustrated in Figure 6.1<sup>1</sup>, which shows that a considerable proportion of terms fell out of use in this sense by the end of the ME period, as 10 items (*lond*, *erthe*, *erth(e) land*, *mold(e)*, *eringe land*, *erthe tilling(e)*, *tilling(e) lond*, *plough*, *tilling(e) craft*, *ardawe*) are attested before or until 1500. The term *lond* (PDE ‘land’) seems to have lost the specific sense ‘arable land, productive land’ after the ME period, since this sense is recorded in the MED but not in the OED.

Only two items (*falwe*, *forwe*) survived until the second quarter of the eighteenth century. *Forwe* (PDE ‘furrow’), in the sense of ‘arable/ploughed land’, is labelled as poetic in the OED, where few citations, including Shakespeare’s *Tempest* and Milton’s *Comus*, are provided. The terms that survived after 1800 are *aker* (PDE ‘acre’), *tilth*, *arable lond* and *erale lond* (PDE ‘arable land’), *arable*.

Some of the surviving terms have undergone semantic shift. Of the two main senses of *aker* (PDE ‘acre’) recorded in the MED, only one has survived, suggesting that a narrowing of the sense took place after the ME period. The term

<sup>1</sup>Bar colours correspond to those used for source languages in Chapter 5

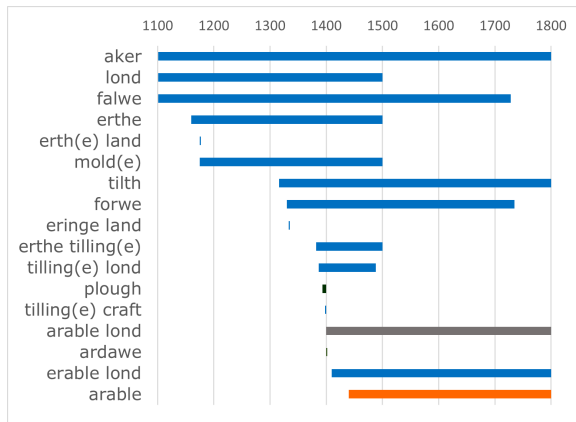


Figure 6.1: Diachronic overview of the ME lexis in “Arable land”

originally denoted both a ‘piece of arable land’ and a specific ‘land measure of 160 rods square’, that is the area of land that could be ploughed by a yoke of oxen in one day. However, the OED editors note that the more general sense is now archaic and found especially in proper names, whereas the more specialised sense still survives, as the term is still in use as a measurement of land. The term is also recorded as a borrowing of Anglo-Saxon origin in the DMLBS, s.v. *acra*, *acrus*, *acrum*, in view of its appearance in Latin attestations from 1086 (*Domesday Book*) to 1586. However, the Latin form does not appear at the superordinate level alongside the other terms in the category “Arable land”: in fact, it was placed at a lower level in the hierarchy, in the sub-category “Other types of arable land”, since the DMLBS definition taken into account is “strip of ploughland”. This sense was considered more specific and, as a result, Latin *acra* appears in the thesaurus as a hyponym of ME *aker*.

The adjective included in the term *erable lond* is a rare variant of *arable*, as suggested by the low frequency of occurrence recorded by the OED. According to the MED, *erable* comes from OE *eren*, ‘to plough’, and was formed on the model of *arable*. The most common form in PDE is *arable*, but both are derived from terms meaning ‘to plough’ (OE *eren* and Lat. *arare*) and both are first attested during the late ME period.

The semantic development of the native term *tilth* and the borrowed term *arable* is explored through individual discussions in the following section.

6.2.1.1 *Tilth and arable*

*Tilth* (1316–)

Source language(s): OE

OE forms: *tilð*, *tylð*, *tilðe*

Other ME forms: *tilthe*, *tilde*, *telth(e)*, *tulthe*, *tilz-* & *tilæhðe*, *tilehþe*.

PDE: *tilth*

Derived from the strong and weak feminine OE nouns *tilþ* and *tilþe*, which in turn come from the OE verb *tilian*, this term was mainly used to refer to objects or concepts connected with cultivation during the ME period. Its earliest senses during the OE period were ‘labour’ and ‘produce of labour’, the latter also used with reference to agricultural produce. Whilst the earliest ME attestations provided by the MED and OED refer to the senses ‘agricultural work’ and ‘crop’, the word is not attested in the sense of ‘tilled or arable land’ until the fourteenth century. The earliest attestation with this sense recorded by the MED probably dates from around 1316, a time when manorial estates were widespread, and includes reference to *wode* and *wildernesse*, terms which are present in the thesaurus in the categories devised for gathering vocabulary for wild, uncultivated areas of land:

- (1) *In thilke time..al wes wode ant wildernesse, Nes ther no tilthe.* (Short Metrical Chronicle of England)

The OED offers three fifteenth-century attestations under this sense, and it indirectly refers to the composition of the medieval manor by providing the following definition: ‘Land under cultivation, as distinguished from pasture, forest, or waste land’. This indicates that the term was used to refer to a specific manorial location, that is the area of land on which crops were harvested. The land under the jurisdiction of a manor usually consisted of arable land, meadows, pasture, waste and woodland: the same subdivision is found in the thesaurus in the form of onomasiological categories gathered below “Demesne land”. The post-ME quotations offered by the OED date to 1577, 1616, 1807, and 1881. Although frequency in current use is not high, the word appears to be still in use in this sense alongside the following ones: ‘labour or work in the cultivation of the soil’, ‘act of tilling’, ‘condition of being under cultivation’, ‘prepared surface soil’, and a figurative one referring to the cultivation of knowledge, morality, etc. Only the early general sense ‘labour’ and the one referring to the produce of cultivation are labelled as obsolete; the former having been discarded after the OE period and

the latter at the end of the eighteenth century. However, a closer examination of the nineteenth-century quotations under the sense ‘land under cultivation’ reveals that one is from Wordsworth’s *Prelude* (a1807), thus implying a poetic use of the language, and the latest one (1881) describes a “summer tilth” (i.e. a field left uncultivated for a season) as an agricultural practice of the past by comparing it to a more recent trend, thus offering a historical reference. Consultation of the HTE shows the label “dial.” next to the latest attestation date, suggesting that its use became restricted to local dialects by the nineteenth century. This observation is confirmed by the *English Dialect Dictionary* (EDD), where *tilth* is a headword. Among its listed senses is “Cultivated land or soil”, with quotations ranging from 1893 to 1901.

### **Arable** (1440–)

Source language(s): F, L

French forms: AF, MF arable, arrable

Other ME forms: arrable, er(r)able

PDE: arable

The loanword *arable*, both an adjective and noun, derives from the AF and Middle French adjective *ar(r)able* and classical Latin *arābilis*, the latter found in British sources also as a noun denoting arable land. The OED editors point out the fact that “the use as noun is apparently not paralleled in French”: evidence of this is found in both the AND and DMF, where the headword *arable* is found as an adjective in all the attestations provided and the sense ‘arable land’ only appears as the meaning of the phrase *terre arable* in the same entry. As far as Latin is concerned, the DMLBS offers only one attestation from 1269 (*Great Charter of Glastonbury*) containing *arabilis* as a noun, in contrast to the numerous attestations for the adjective. Interestingly enough, *arable* is found only as an adjective in the MED, which offers the definition ‘fit for tillage’ and the subentry *arable lond*, ‘arable land, land under cultivation’. Moreover, it presents *Master of Game*, dating to 1410, as the earliest attestation, whereas the OED provides an earlier attestation from *Femina*, dating to circa 1400, for the same sense (‘capable of being ploughed, suitable or used for growing crops’). Finally, the MED provides the labels OF and L in the etymology section, omitting any reference to AF and MF, which are mentioned in the OED entry.

Only the editors of the OED included English attestations in which the word appears as a noun, below the sense ‘arable land’. The earliest one (*Distichs of Cato*) was composed around 1440, thus post-dating the earliest attestation in which the word is used as an adjective:

- (2) *Iff thou list, my child..to knowe the tilthe and the cultur..summe is **arable** [v.r. erable] and summe is pasture.*

As in the example above, the term is often found alongside words referring to other manorial locations such as pasture, meadow, and woodland, suggesting a specialised usage in manorial contexts. In particular, a 1728 attestation from the newspaper *Stamford Mercury* mentions a manor:

- (3) *To be Sold..The Manour of Oxen..with a Freehold Estate of 44l 4s per Annum, consisting of **Arable**, Meadow and Pasture, in Anderby.*

Even the latest attestation, an advertisement from the magazine *Field* dating to 2004, includes both the words *arable* and *woodland*:

- (4) *Off-lying isolation yard. **Arable** and woodland. Potential for a shoot.*

Frequency in current use is higher than that of the native term *tilth*, although the frequency band to which the word is assigned suggests that it might be associated with educated discourse.

### 6.2.2 Meadowland

Synonyms denoting the areas covered in grass devoted to the production of hay, as distinguished from pastureland, are found under the heading “Meadowland”, which includes only one sub-category, “Types of meadowland”, containing its hyponyms. The category contains the following 14 terms drawn from the MED:

- OE— medwe (OE)
- OE— (poet. loc.) mede (OE)
- OE— (poet.) lei(e) (OE)
- OE—1528 wong (OE)
- 1200–1471 wold (OE)
- 1260–1400 praiere (OF)
- 1300— (arch. rare) plain(e) (OF)
- 1317— (loc.) eng (ON)
- 1390–1460 flat (ON)
- 1398–1400 flor (OE)
- 1400–1475 chaump(e) (OF)
- 1453–1614 meade ground (OE + OE)
- 1460 lede (OE)
- 1475–1577/87 lond mede (OE + OE)

Table 6.2: Distribution of source languages in the ME lexis of “Mead-owland”

Source language	N. of items	%
E	9	64.29
F+/L	3	21.43
Mixed	0	0.00
ON	2	14.29
Uncertain	0	0.00
Total	14	100.00

Once again, native words account for the highest proportion, reflecting the overall trend observed in the whole macro-category “Manorial locations”. As shown in Table 6.2, only five of the 14 lexical items are of non-native origin: of these, three derive solely from French (*praiere*, *plaine*, *chaumpe*) and two from ON (*flat*, *eng*).

As shown in Figure 6.2, only five terms have survived into PDE, but some of these are now mainly found in poetic usage and some have lost their specific meaning referring to an area of land covered in grass. As indicated in the OED, *mede* (PDE ‘mead’) and *lei(e)* (PDE ‘lea’) are now chiefly poetic forms, whilst plain is considered archaic and rare. *Wold* originally referred to wooded high land in OE, but in the ME period it came to denote also an area of open land covered in grass. This sense is recorded in the MED but not in the OED, which provides the more general sense “a piece of open country, a plain” and reports that in later use it mainly denotes an elevated tract of open land or, more specifically, moorland. The meaning of *eng*, now chiefly in use in Northern England, has narrowed to refer to a specific type of marshy meadow found by a river.

ME *lede*, possibly a blend of *mede* and *leie*, is found in a single attestation dating from 1460, and *flor* (PDE ‘floor’) is only attested in this sense in documents possibly composed between 1398 and 1400. The remaining words became obsolete (either as forms or in this sense) during the ME period (*praiere*, *flat*, *chaump*) or the Early Modern one (*wong*, *meade ground*, *lond mede*).

## 6 Lexical variation and change: case studies

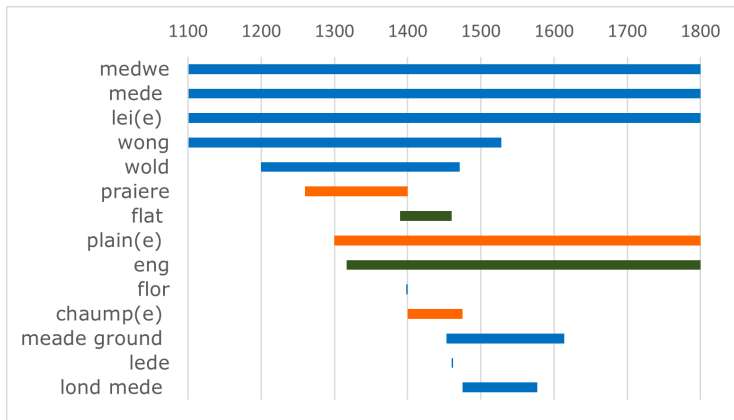


Figure 6.2: Diachronic overview of the ME lexis in “Meadowland”

### 6.2.2.1 *Medwe* and *plain(e)*

#### *Medwe* (OE—)

Source language(s): OE

OE forms: *mæd*, *mædwe*

Other ME forms: *mēdwe*, *medeu(e)*, *medou(e)*, *medo*, *medu(e)*, *maideue*, etc.

PDE: meadow

Partly derived directly from OE *mæd* (PDE ‘mead’) and partly from its oblique forms, the term is still widely attested in PDE and could be considered prototypical in this category. *Medwe* and its etymon, *mede*, occupy the same semantic space and survived as synonyms after the ME period.

The word has two main related meanings, listed separately in both the MED and OED: ‘a piece of grassland used for hay; a grassy field’ and ‘meadowland’. The latter appears to reflect more accurately the concept investigated here since it refers to an area of land as distinguished from other types of land. However, in manorial terms, meadowland was distinct from pasture in that it was used for producing hay, hence it is hard to separate the two senses. Association with manorial land is suggested by a 1400 citation from Robert Mannyng’s *Chronicle of England* (probably composed around 1338), found in both the MED and OED below the sense ‘land used as a meadow or meadows’, in which waste, pasture, and meadow are mentioned together:

- (5) *Alle mad he wasteyn, pastur, medow, & korn.*

This seems to be the first attestation in the sense referring to meadowland, which started to co-exist alongside the one referring to a specific piece of land covered in grass, widely attested in well-known medieval works such as Lazonby's *Brut*, Chaucer's *Legend of Good Women*, Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, among others.

The term is recorded in the EDD (s.v. *meadow*) with the sense "A field set apart for hay in contradistinction to pasture land" (among others), with citations dating from 1788 to 1789. This suggests that this sense survived in dialectal usage at least until the late eighteenth century.

If we look at the most recent attestations provided by the OED below the sense 'land used as a meadow or meadows', we notice that they all refer to historical contexts, as the following 1910 citation from the *Encyclopædia Britannica*:

- (6) *The territory of the 'township' [in England before the year 1800] consisted of arable land, meadow, pasture and waste.*

The more general sense, on the other hand, appears to be more widely used in PDE, especially in fictional writing, as suggested by the most recent citations provided by the OED, among which we find twentieth-century novels such as *Last Puritan* by G. Santayana and *Stalin's Shoe* by Z. Tomin. According to the frequency in current use recorded by the OED, however, the term seems more likely to be used in educated discourse.

### **Plain(e)** (1300–)

Source language(s): OF

French forms: OF, MF *plain*; AF *pleine*; OF, MF, AF *plaine*

Other ME forms: *plein(e)*

PDE: *plain*

*Plain(e)* is a French-origin borrowing ultimately deriving from Latin *plānum*, meaning a flat area of land. According to the OED, the word comes from OF and MF *plain*, meaning flat ground, and partly from AF and OF *pleine*, which, alongside the AF form *pleine*, is a feminine noun denoting a wide tract of land. Below the headword *plain*, the DMF offers the definition 'plaine, place ouverte', mirrored in the DMF definitions relating to an 'étendue de terre', namely 'étendue plate, plaine' and 'terrain plat, souvent déboisé, clairière'. The AND offers the sense 'plain, flat tract of land, level ground' below *plaine*.

As well as a broad, level tract of flat land, the term came to denote a 'meadow, field, clearing in a forest' in English, as recorded in the MED and OED. Both senses are first recorded in English at the beginning of the fourteenth century,

specifically in the verse romance *Arthur and Merlin* (composed around 1300) contained in the 1330 Auchinleck Manuscript, as shown in the following MED citations:

- (7) ‘An expanse of generally level ground, a plain; a broad open space; also, a plateau’:

*He wil zou teche swiþe wel What destourbes zouz castel, Þat it may stond on þe pleyn.*

- (8) ‘A meadow, field, clearing in a forest; an open space outside a town; also, an untilled field or tract of land’:

*King Ban hadde to his demeyne... cites and borwes, castels and pleyns.*

Another early attestation of the sense ‘a broad tract of land which is comparatively flat’ (OED) is Robert of Gloucester’s *Chronicle*, composed in 1300:

- (9) *Vpe þe plein of salesbury þat oper wonder is, Þat ston heng is icluped.*

Leaving out figurative senses such as ‘plainness, openness, clarity’ (MED), all the meanings of the word are related in that they refer to a flat area, including the obsolete ones denoting a flat surface, now expressed by means of the form *plane*.

As far as the more specific sense ‘meadow’ is concerned, the MED provides the following extended definition: ‘a meadow, field, clearing in a forest; an open space outside a town; also, an untilled field or tract of land’. Other subsenses are more specific: one is mainly found in legal documents to refer to a tract of meadowland and one refers to a battlefield or any kind of field used for exercise of arms. The former seems to best reflect the meaning investigated here, since the term often appears in citations alongside other types of estate land such as pastureland and woods, as in the following 1475 attestation from the *English Register of Godstow Nunnery*:

- (10) *The forsaid yerd lond..shold abide for euer holy and fully to the said mynchons of Godestow.in pease frely..in wode, in pleyne, in weyes and pathes and in pasturis and in all placis.*

Unfortunately, the OED does not include this specific subsense below the one referring to a meadow or clearing in a forest, and it does not provide citations in which the term is associated with other types of land that are specific to medieval estates.

The term mainly survives in PDE in its prototypical sense referring to a flat tract of land. The sense ‘meadow’ is still found in recent works such as T. E.

Lawrence's translation of Homer's *Odyssey*, first published in 1932, but is labelled as archaic and rare by the OED. In addition, a regional use is recorded by the latter, which provides citations ranging from 1720 to 1996, chiefly from the area of East Anglia, where the term appears in place names. However, this sense is not recorded in the EDD, which only provides the more general meaning 'A level piece of ground' and the more specific 'A level place surrounded by houses in a town'.

### 6.2.3 Pastureland

Pasture, or pastureland, was the type of 'grassy land used for or suitable for the grazing of animals, esp. cattle or sheep' (OED), and distinguished from meadowland. The terms used to refer to it are found in the category "Pastureland". Hyponyms denoting types of pastureland intended for specific animal species are found one level below, gathered in the categories "Cattle pasture", "Other types of pastureland", and "Rabbit pasture".

The eight ME lexical items belonging to this category are listed below.

- OE– (dial.) lese (OE)
- OE– (dial.) leswe (OE)
- 1200–1471 wold (OE)
- 1263 bou erthe (ON + OE)
- 1297– pastur(e) (OF, L)
- 1300– medwe (OE)
- 1390– pasturing(e) (OF, L)
- 1430– (obs. dial.) feding (OE)

Table 6.3 shows that, as in the categories "Arable land" and "Meadowland", as well as in the whole macro-category "Manorial locations" (see Chapter 5), native items are preponderant, accounting for 62.50% of the dataset. The compound *bou erthe* is constituted by an ON element (*bou*) and a native one (*erthe*), while *pasture* and *pasturinge* are loanwords deriving from both French and Latin.

Although both *pasture* and *pasturinge* have survived into PDE (Figure 6.3), only *pasture* is still frequently used in this sense, while *pasturing* seems to be more frequently attested in the sense relating to 'the action of pasture' and is not common in general text types, as shown by the frequency band to which the headword is assigned in the OED.

Except for *bou erthe*, of which only one attestation is recorded in the MED, and *wold*, which later came to denote 'an elevated tract of open country or moorland' (OED), the majority of the lexical items in the category are still in use in PDE. Nevertheless, only *pasture* appears to be frequent in current use, although the

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Table 6.3: Distribution of source languages in the ME lexis of “Pastureland”

Source language	N. of items	%
E	5	62.50%
F+/L	2	25.00%
Mixed	1	11.11%
ON	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

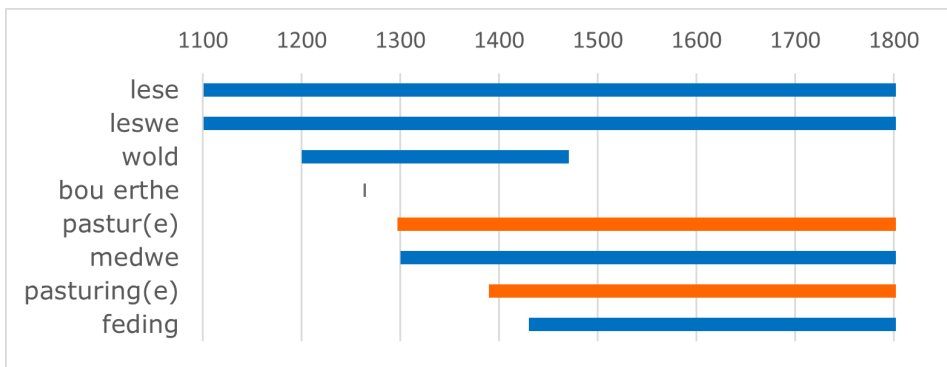


Figure 6.3: Diachronic overview of the ME lexis in “Pastureland”

OED frequency band signals its occurrence mainly in educated discourse. The terms *lese*, *leswe*, *feding* only occur in restricted usage with this meaning and are labelled by the OED editors as dialectal forms.

### 6.2.3.1 *Lese* and *pasture*

#### *Lese* (OE–)

Source language(s): OE

OE forms: *læs*

Other ME forms: *leise*, *leies*, *les-*, (?) *lē̄s*; pl. *leses* & *lesen*.

PDE: *lease*, *leaze*

The term was already in use during the OE period and is recorded in *Bosworth Toller’s Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (BT), which offers a single sense defined by the

PDE words *pasture* and *leasow*, both found in the thesaurus category under investigation. Subsequently, during the ME period, its meaning underwent semantic shift and broadened to denote the ‘grass and herbage used for food by grazing livestock’ (MED) as well. Whilst the sense referring to pastureland was first attested in OE documents, the new one referring to pasturage is first attested in the following quotations:

- (11) *An ylle fair ynou3, Grene & wiþ wel fair lese.* (South English Legendary, 1290)
- (12) *Lese* [*v.r. leseo*] *last þer alle winter.* (Robert of Gloucester’s Chronicle, 1297)

Moreover, the following quotation from Robert of Gloucester’s Chronicle includes reference to another kind of land found in areas of manorial waste (the “forest”):

- (13) *He..binom hor lond..& made it al forest & lese, þe bestes uor to dede.*

In addition to providing the two prototypical senses, the MED reports that the term is found in surnames and toponyms and includes the combined expression *lese pans*, used to refer to ‘a customary payment for pasturage of livestock’, among the sub-entries. When consulting the OED, however, we only find a single sense, in which the following sub-senses are gathered: ‘pasture; pasturage; meadow-land; common’. Since the last two are not recorded in the MED, I decided not to include the term in the thesaurus sub-categories “Meadow” and “Common land” (found below “Types of land”).

According to the OED, the word is still in use, although only as a dialectal form. The label “now dialect” included in the section providing all the forms of the word, from OE to PDE, is best illustrated by the 1887 quotation from William Douglas Parish and William Francis Shaw’s *Dictionary of the Kentish dialect and provincialisms in use in the county of Kent*:

- (14) *Lees, a common, or open space of pasture ground. The Leas is the name given at Folkestone to the fine open space of common at the top of the cliffs.*

The dialectal usage is confirmed by the EDD, which provides citations dating up to 1885 for the term in the sense of ‘pasture’. Unfortunately, the OED quotation section has not been updated yet, and Thomas Hardy’s *Wessex Poems* (first published in 1898) represent the most recent attestation provided. The latter may possibly suggest a further usage in poetic discourse.

**Pastur(e)** (1297–)

Source language(s): OF, L

French forms: AF and MF pasture

Other ME forms: pastoure, pastor

PDE: pasture

The first sense of *pasture* listed in the OED entry is ‘a piece of grassy land used for or suitable for the grazing of animals’, accompanied by figurative sub-senses referring to heaven (now obsolete) and a (new) field of activity (the latter generally alluding to Milton’s 1638 quotation “to morrow to fresh woods and pastures new”). Other primary senses include the action of ‘putting livestock out into the field’ and the grass on which livestock feed. Obsolete senses refer to food as sustenance and spiritual nourishment and to the action of grazing.

As reported in the OED etymology section, the term was borrowed from both French and Latin, namely from the French form *pasture*, attested in AF and MF, and its etymon, post-classical Latin *pastura*. The latter is attested in the sense referring to an area of land used for the grazing of animals since the fourth or fifth century. This meaning soon broadened to include the sense ‘action of feeding animals’ and a more general one denoting food, and later, in the eighth century, the right of pasturage as well. Formed through derivation, this Latin word was the result of the combination of classical Latin *past-*, the past participial stem of *pascere*, meaning ‘to feed, graze’, with the suffix *-ura*, the latter denoting an action or its result.

According to the *Dictionnaire Étymologique de l’Ancien Français*, the OF word derived from the aforementioned Latin form referred to the “lieu où l’on fait brouter le bétail, action de pâture les animaux, aussi ce que mange le bétail en pâturant, pâturage” (i.e. the area of land, the feeding of animals, and the pasturage on which animals feed). The *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* records senses referring to “nourriture des animaux” and “nourriture humaine” (‘animal and human sustenance’), including figurative ones, and to the “lieu où l’on fait paître le bétail” (‘the land where animals graze’). The AND provides two main senses, one referring to the land, including the sub-sense referring to the right of pasturage, and the other to produce, especially cereals, including the more general sub-sense ‘sustenance’, the latter with a single attestation (Robert of Gretham’s *Miroir*). Hence, the senses referring to the land and herbage as food are recorded in all the languages but the one referring to the action of feeding livestock by putting them in the field is not attested in MF and AF.

According to the OED, the word was first attested in English in the compound *oxpasture*, recorded in 1300 and found in Albert Hugh Smith’s *Place-names of the East Riding of Yorkshire & York* (1937).

The MED provides two earlier Latin attestations below the primary sense referring to pastureland, reported in square brackets as complementary evidence, followed by an English-matrix quotation from *Handling Sin*, possibly composed in 1303:

(15) *She dyde to goo swych a melk slop..To sugke here keyn yn here pasture.*

The term is used with this meaning in well-known ME texts such as *Cursor Mundi*, Mannyng's *Chronicle* and the *Rotuli Parliamentorum*.

The second sense recorded in the MED is the one referring to pasture as food for animals: within the definition, the editors report that sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between this and the one referring to the land. The third sense concerns pasture as an action, both in the sense of 'putting animals to pasture' and of grazing. There are also figurative senses connected to the religious domain that are attested in ME but not in AF, namely 'a place of spiritual nurture or comfort' and 'spiritual nourishment'. These did not survive beyond the ME period, alongside the sense referring to the action of grazing, attested in Chaucer and few other texts. However, this sense has survived in the expression "at pasture". Another obsolete sense is the one referring to food or sustenance in general: it is labelled as such in the OED, where one of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Vailima letters* dating from 1887 is provided as the latest attestation of this sense.

The OED frequency band indicates that the word-form belongs to "literate vocabulary associated with educated discourse" and the most recent attestation of the primary sense discussed here, i.e. pastureland, is a 2000 quotation from the Travel section of *The Guardian*.

#### 6.2.4 Wasteland

The term *waste* was frequently used to refer to the uncultivated land lying on the outskirts of a manor (see Chapter 3). This and its (near) synonyms are found in the category "Wasteland". Since woodland was part of the waste, the sub-category "Wood(s)" is found one level below "Wasteland", alongside "Types of wasteland". The category contains the following 28 ME lexical items:

- OE— heth OE
- OE— mor OE
- OE—1350 west(e) lond OE + OE
- OE—1450 westerne OE
- 1175–1200 weste OE
- 1175–1400 wasten(e) OF, AF

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- 1200— wildernes(se) OE
- 1200— (dial. rare) wast(e) AF
- 1200— (obs.) desert ML, OF
- 1200–1475 wilderne OE
- 1300–1659 forest OF
- 1374— (obs.) wildnes(se) OE
- 1380–1400 wasterinne OE

Table 6.4 shows a predominance of native terms, once again confirming the results concerning the whole macro-category “Manorial locations”. Out of 13 words, nine (69.23%) are inherited from OE. Only the terms *wasten(e)*, *wast(e)*, *desert*, and *forest* are French-origin loanwords.

As illustrated in Figure 6.4, *heth*, *mor*, *wildernes(se)*, *wast(e)*, *desert*, and *wildness(se)* have survived into PDE, although not all of them are in current use. *Desert* and *wildness* are now obsolete in this sense, whilst *heath* and *moor* have undergone narrowing of meaning and now mainly denote a tract of land covered in heather. Besides *forest*, last attested in 1659 in the sense of ‘wild uncultivated waste, a wilderness’ (OED), the other terms found in the category (*weste lond*, *westerne*, *weste*, *wastene*, *wilderne*, *wasterinne*) did not survive beyond the ME period.

In addition to the forms deriving from OF *gast* (*waste*, *wastene*) and those possibly from OE *weste*, *westen* (*weste*, *weste lond*, *westerne*, *wasterinne*), the category includes other related words. As reported by the MED, both *wildernesse* and *wilderne* probably derive from OE *wild-deor*, whilst *wildness(se)* is a ME formation first attested in Chaucer’s *The Former Age* (circa 1374), now obsolete in the sense of ‘a wild place, a wilderness’ (OED).

Table 6.4: Distribution of source languages in the ME lexis of “Waste-land”

Source language	N. of items	%
E	9	69.23%
F+/L	4	30.77%
Mixed	0	0.00%
ON	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%
Total	13	100.00%

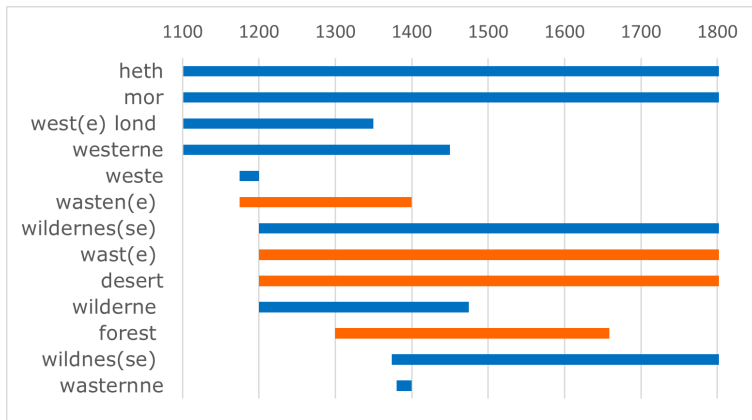


Figure 6.4: Diachronic overview of the ME lexis in “Wasteland”

#### 6.2.4.1 *Wildernes(se)* and *wast(e)*

##### *Wildernes(se)* (1200–)

Source language(s): OE

OE forms: \*wild(d)eornes (wilddeoren + ness)

Other ME forms: wildernes(e), wildernise, wildernosse, wildirnes(se), etc.

PDE: wilderness

Cognate with Dutch and German *wildernis*, *wildernes(se)* is a term of native origin, formed through derivation possibly during the early ME period. According to the OED, it derives from the unattested OE form \**wild(d)éornes*, derived from *wilder*, *wil(d)deor*, or, more probably, from *wilddeoren*, to which the suffix *-ness* was added. \**Wild(d)éornes* is not present in BT and is first attested in the *Trinity Cambridge Homilies* (circa 1200) alongside the term *waste*, discussed in the following section, and in the monastic manual *Ancrene Riwe* (composed circa 1200).

The prototypical sense of the term refers to an uninhabited, uncultivated tract of land. The OED makes the following distinction, absent in the MED: without the article, the word refers to ‘wild or uncultivated land’ in general; when preceded by an article or any other defining word, it refers to ‘a wild or uncultivated region or tract of land, uninhabited, or inhabited only by wild animals’. The OED editors specify that the former definition refers to a meaning that is distinguished from the one of *desert*, in that tracts of wilderness imply the presence of vegetation, while desert regions do not.

Other senses attested in ME include ‘a devastated or depopulated place, a ruined city’, ‘a state of ruin or desolation’, and human experience in a figurative sense (MED).

The term occurs alongside *waste* in the following ME attestations:

- (16) *Weste is cleped þat londe, þat is longe tilðe atleien, and wilderness.* (Old English Homilies, Trinity Cambridge Manuscript, c1200)
- (17) *A grete party of þis cuntree es waste and wilderness and noȝt inhabitid.* (Mandeville’s Travels, c1400)
- (18) *þat lond nis god...Ac wilderness hit is & weste.* (The Owl and the Nightingale, c1250)

The frequent co-occurrence of these two terms in dictionary citations suggests their potential classification as a binomial, a linguistic phenomenon defined by Malkiel (1959: 113) as “the sequence of two words pertaining to the same form-class, placed on an identical level of syntactic hierarchy, and ordinarily connected by some kind of lexical link”. However, determining the function of this pair is challenging without access to a larger corpus.

On the one hand, the presence of both terms may be explained in terms of stylistic variation as a rhetorical device. On the other hand, it possibly implies a different nuance of meaning difficult to discern from dictionary definitions since both the MED and OED define both types of land by means of the adjectives “uncultivated”, “uninhabited”, “wild”. Nevertheless, *wilderness* lacks the specialised sense restricted to legal contexts that *waste* has (see below) and thus appears to be a more general term denoting any tract of wild land.

Originally, the term also denoted a condition of wildness and desolation, a sense that is last attested in Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (1667). In addition, the term has transferred and figurative meanings: the oldest one refers to the secular world and life in a religious sense, first attested in *Ancrene Riwe* (c1200) and often found in compounds such as *wilderness-sins* (1679) and *wilderness-world* (1719), but other transferred senses, such as one referring to ‘a mingled, confused, or vast assemblage or collection of persons or things’ (OED), developed after the ME period.

### **Wast(e)** (1200–)

Source language(s): AF

AF forms: gast(e), gaast; chast; gaist(e); gaust; guast(e), vast; wast(e), waust

Other ME forms: waist, waest, vaste & (errors) waf, wafte.

PDE: waste

This loanword was possibly adopted in early ME from AF *wast*, also found in Old Northern French, and *vast*, both dialect variants of OF *gast*. In turn, the latter partly comes from the Latin neuter form (*vastum*) of *vastus* (in the sense of ‘waste, desert’ rather than ‘void, immense’) and partly a verbal noun from the AF and OF verb *waster*, dialect variant of OF *guaster*, meaning ‘to ravage, plunder’. The AF noun had 4 main senses, all found in ME as well: ‘damage, impairment of property’, ‘waste (land), wilderness’, ‘the king’s right to enjoy the profits etc. of a felon’s estate’, ‘extravagance, wastefulness’ (AND).

The term is first attested in the Trinity College Manuscript, dating from 1200, alongside the previously discussed term *wilderness*. According to the OED editors, it soon replaced the cognate native term *weste*, attested between 1175 and 1200 in this sense, and survived in place names until the end of the fourteenth century (the latest attestation provided by the MED dates from 1389).

In addition to the sense referring to an uninhabited, uncultivated region, the OED records a specialised meaning denoting ‘a piece of land not cultivated or used for any purpose, and producing little or no herbage or wood’, first attested in *Piers Plowman* (1377). This sense seems to become even more specific in legal use, where the word denotes ‘a piece of such land not in any man’s occupation, but lying common’. Indeed, in manorial terms, the waste often included the so-called “commons”, and where one merged into the other “would be difficult to say” (Bennett 1938: 58). Considering this specialised sense, the term seems to be more technical if compared to the previously discussed native synonym *wilderness*, with which it occurs in the aforementioned quotations. In particular, *waste* appears to be more closely related to the medieval manor, as exemplified by the following 1662 quotation recorded by the OED:

- (19) *Times for the putting the tenants cattle into the common pastures, wastes, and commons of the manor.* (in T. W. Horsfield, *The History and Antiquities of Lewes and Its Vicinity*, 1824)

According to the OED editors, the term, when used with this meaning, is now “in some dialects the ordinary word; otherwise rare in colloquial use”. The dialectal usage is confirmed by the EDD, which records the sense ‘a piece of uncultivated land; a common’.

The more general meaning ‘uninhabited (or sparsely inhabited) and uncultivated country’ is labelled as “somewhat *rhetorical*” by the OED, while the sense referring to ‘useless expenditure or consumption, squandering’ is attested since the end of the thirteenth century and appears to be the most common one in PDE.

The term occurs with the meaning referring to uncultivated land in the compound *wasteland* as well, a nineteenth-century formation first attested in William Morris's translation of the *Odyssey* and now often used in a figurative sense with an allusion to T. S. Eliot's 1922 poem *The Waste Land*.

### 6.2.5 Landlord

This is the first category encountered when browsing the macro-category "Manorial Society," which contains the lexis related to the individuals who lived and worked on a medieval manor. The superordinate category "Landlord" contains all the terms that were used to refer to the lord of a manorial estate. The terms denoting a female landholder are found one level below, in the hyponymic sub-category "Female landlord", alongside "Other types of landlord" and "Position of landlord".

The eight ME terms included in the category are listed below:

- OE— lond-lord (OE + OE)
- OE— lord (OE)
- OE-1513 herre (OE)
- 1297— lege lord (AF, CF + OE)
- 1363— (rare) seignour (OF, AF, L)
- 1380— (hist.) lege (AF, CF)
- 1384— lessour (AF)
- 1500 tenement man (OF, ML, AL + OE)

Table 6.5 shows that, among the eight lexical items, three (*land-lord*, *lord*, *herre*) are of native origin. Of the remaining terms, three derive from French (*lege*, *lessour*, *seignour*), while the compounds *lege lord* and *tenement man* are formed through the combination of a native and a romance element. Due to the limited number of lexical items in this subset, it is difficult to draw significant comparisons with the whole macro-category "Manorial Society", which exhibits a predominance of Romance-origin lexis (see Chapter 5). In contrast, the present category shows a more balanced distribution between native terms and loanwords.

The diachronic development of the ME lexis found in the category is illustrated in Figure 6.5, which highlights a high tendency for lexical survival. Out of eight terms, six have survived into PDE.

#### 6.2.5.1 *Lond-lord* and *seignour*

The semasiological analysis of the pair *londlord-seignour* is presented below. The former was already in use with the meaning under investigation in the OE period, whilst the latter is first attested in the fourteenth century.

Table 6.5: Distribution of source languages in the ME lexis of “Landlord”

Source language	N. of items	%
E	3	37.50%
F+/L	3	37.50%
Mixed	2	25.00%
ON	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

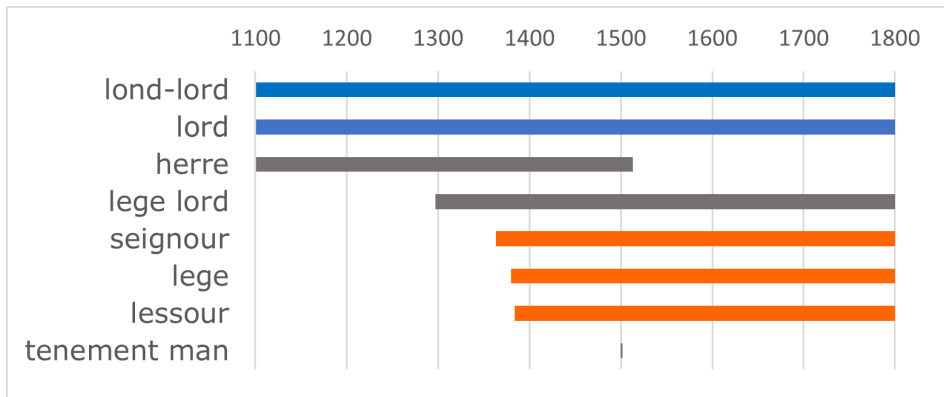


Figure 6.5: Diachronic overview of the ME lexis in “Landlord”

***Lond-lord*** (OE-)

Source language(s): OE

OE forms: landhlaforð

Other ME forms: landlord

PDE: landlord

The PDE term *landlord* is a compound combining the native nouns *land* and *lord*. The OED editors report that, even though the term *landhláforð* already existed in OE, “the modern word is a new formation”. However, since the earliest attestations provided in the OED entry date from before the year 1000, the word is considered to have been attested since the OE period in this study (likewise, all terms which are first attested before 1100, the year conventionally marking the beginning of the ME period, are considered as being in use since the OE period).

The word originally denoted a person ‘who rents land or property to a tenant’ (MED), and is still used as the correlative term to *tenant* in PDE, even though it has undergone semantic change (discussed below). The earliest attestations recorded in the OED are OE citations including the word *landhlaford*, followed by the following 1419 AF citation from the *Liber Albus*, also found as the earliest attestation in the MED:

(20) *Le lessour, appelle ‘landlorde’.*

The first citation with a ME matrix provided by the MED is from the 1443 *Proceedings in Chancery*:

(21) *He had hyryd a place for many yeeris and grete cooste dyd theruppon, and than the lanlord deyed sodehynly.*

The OED, on the other hand, provides a later attestation, from William Gregory’s *Chronicle of London* (1455–6):

(22) *The Lombardys..toke grete old mancyons in Wynchester..and causyd the londe lordys to do grete coste in reparacyons.*

However, the term is attested earlier as a surname, namely in two citations from 1275 and 1332 respectively, provided by the MED under sense 1(b).

The original meaning referred to in this study has broadened to include any ‘person of whom another person holds any tenement, whether a piece of land, a building or part of a building’ (OED).

Other related meanings emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: a figurative one referring to God (attested in only two seventeenth-century citations) and extended senses referring to a host (as the correlative to *guest*) or an innkeeper.

**Seignour** (1363–)

Source language(s): OF, AF, L

French and Latin forms: OF seignor, -(e)ur, segnour, etc., AF seinur, L senior

Other ME forms: seignoure, -iour, seinour, seinzoure, seingur, seingnour, etc.

This French-origin loanword was borrowed from AF and OF and ultimately from *seniōrem*, the Latin accusative form of *senior*. It is recorded under the headword *seignur* in the AND, where 6 attestations ranging from the early twelfth century to the fifteenth century are found under the sense ‘feudal lord, nobleman’. As far as English is concerned, the word is first attested in the twelfth

century as a surname or title, as recorded by the MED, and it was used as ‘a respectful term of address for a person of high rank, authority, or dignity’ (MED) since 1330 (*Arthour and Merlin*, Auchinleck Manuscript). According to the OED, its first use in the sense of ‘a person high in rank or authority, a ruler, a feudal superior; the lord of a manor’ is found in Langland’s *Piers Plowman* (1393):

- (23) *Now beþ þese seintes, as men seyen, and souereynes [v.r. **seynours**] in heuene.*

However, the MED provides an earlier attestation in this sense, from the *Cartulary of Cockersand Abbey* (1363):

- (24) *By ye Gyft..of sir Williamz of loncastr, hole lord of Wyresdale, & of other dyuersez **senyours**.*

The word is labelled “rare” in the OED definition provided for this sense, where it is stated that the term is now mainly used to replace the form *seigneur* ‘in speaking of a French feudal noble’. The two most recent attestations recorded in the OED, namely two historical texts dating from the nineteenth century (Kenelm Henry Digby’s *Mores catholici; or, Ages of faith* and George Bancroft’s *History of the United States of America*), confirm its use as a historical term to refer to a concept relating to the past.

### 6.2.6 Tenant

Synonyms used to refer to ‘one who holds or possesses lands or tenements’ from a lord (OED) are grouped in the superordinate category “Tenant”, found at HL1 in “Manorial society”. Its hyponymic sub-categories, which contain more specific terms denoting different types of tenants, are found at the levels below. The following 10 ME terms are contained in the category:

OE— (hist.) aker-man (ME) OE

OE— (hist.) man (OE)

1325— tenaunt (OF, AF, ML)

1333— subget (L, OF, AF)

1350— holder(e) (OE)

1387— (obs.) feodarie (ML)

1405 sitter(e) (OE)

1414— lond holder (OE)

1436 keper(e) (OE)

1439— terre-tenaunt (AF)

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Table 6.6: Distribution of source languages in the ME lexis of “Tenant”

Source language	N. of items	%
E	6	60.00%
F+/L	4	40.00%
Mixed	0	0.00%
ON	0	0.00%
Uncertain	0	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

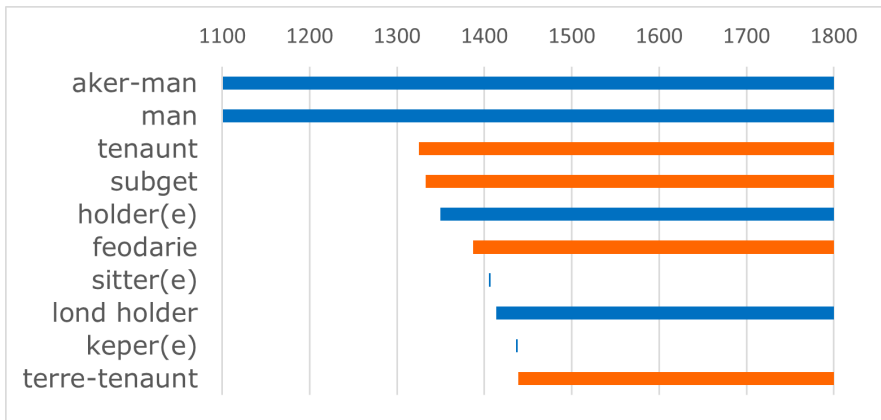


Figure 6.6: Diachronic overview of the ME lexis in “Tenant”

Table 6.6 shows a predominance of native terms, an opposite trend to the one identified in the whole macro-category “Manorial society” (see Chapter 5). However, the difference is not substantial: of the 10 lexical items, six (60%) are English and four (40%) are of Romance etymology. Specifically, *tenaunt* and *subget* are of both French and Latin origin, *feodarie* comes from ML *feodarius*, and *terre-tenaunt* from AF *terretenant*.

Figure 6.6 shows how the majority of terms (8 out of 10) have survived until at least the nineteenth century. Only *sitter(e)* and *keper(e)* are recorded in this sense in a single attestation (dating from 1405 and 1436 respectively). If these are excluded, the distribution of native and Romance-origin terms is evenly balanced.

6.2.6.1 *Man* and *tenaunt**Man* (OE—)

Source language(s): OE

OE forms: *man*

Other ME forms: *mane*, *manne*, *mon(e)*, *monne*, *ma*, etc.

PDE: *man*

The semantic development of *man*, from its early use as a designation mainly applied to any human being regardless of sex to its modern prototypical use as the correlative to *woman*, is well known. BT offers the definition ‘one, anyone, they, people’ and the earliest attestations of the word in the OED are listed below several sub-senses, most of which refer to a human being, an adult male person, or mankind in general, all recorded in the MED as well.

Even though it is not recorded in BT, the more specific sense referring to a feudal tenant appears to have emerged in OE or late OE: the OED offers two OE citations, one of which is from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicles* (Peterborough Manuscript), as the earliest attestations of the term in this sense. These are followed by a ME citation from *Havelok the Dane* (c1300):

(25) *O knes ful fayre he him sette...And bi-cam is **man** Rith þare.*

Whilst the OED provides numerous ME citations, only 3 attestations are recorded in the MED for the sense ‘a feudal tenant’:

(26) *Sacke ys pleys and amendys of mysdoynge of your **men** in your courte.*  
(The English Register of Oseney Abbey, c1460)

(27) *By your **man** and feithfull servant, John Rysyng.* (Paston Letters, 1465)

(28) *Henri fitz Iohn of Tubnei grauntid & confirmid to Gefrei fitz durande..þo iij yerdes of lond..for j halfe marke of siluer yerli..& Gefrei bi-come his **man** þerebi.* (English Register of Godstow Nunnery, a1475)

Even though the attestations provided by the OED range from OE to the end of the nineteenth century, the label “now historical” included in the definition ‘a vassal, a liegeman; a feudal tenant’ clearly marks the restricted usage of this sense in PDE. This can be confirmed by looking at the three most recent attestations, all drawn from historical works: Edward Augustus Freeman’s *The History of the Norman Conquest* (1871), L. J. Downer’s *Leges Henrici Primi* (1972), and Noel Malcolm’s *Kosovo: A Short History* (1998).

**Tenaunt** (1325–)

Source language(s): OF, AF, ML

French and Latin forms: OF *tenant*, AF *tenaunt*, *tene(a)nt*, ML *tenens*, *-entis*

Other ME forms: *tenaunte*, *tenant(e)*, *tenand(e)*, *teneande*, *tenent*, *tenaun*, etc.

PDE: *tenant*

According to the MED, the etymological origins of *tenaunt* can be found in OF, AF, and ML. The AND offers four attestations below *tenant* in the sense of ‘tenant, holder of lands (from a feudal superior)’, ranging from the twelfth to the early fifteenth century. Even the OED records a 1292 AF citation as the first attestation, notwithstanding the AF matrix of the text.

The term *tenens* is attested in ML between 1214 and 1520, as shown by the DMLBS citations recorded in the entry for the verb *tenere*, specifically below the sense ‘one who holds real property from another by feudal obligation or payment of rent, tenant’.

If we look at the citations provided by the MED and OED, we find that the term first appeared in English in the fourteenth century. The earliest MED attestations are drawn from the *Statutes of the Realm in English* (1325):

(29) *Pe tenaunt his redi to don to þe chef louerd þe seruices ant te costumes.*

(30) *Pat is i-seid for women holdinde in dowere ant tenauns þoru lawe of yngelonde.*

The latter is recorded in both the MED and OED in the sub-entry where phrases specifying the type of tenure are listed (sense 1(b) in the MED, 1b in the OED).

According to the OED, the term is used in the legal domain to refer to ‘one who holds or possesses lands or tenements by any kind of title’ and implies ‘a lord, of whom the tenant holds’, and this technical sense is the one taken into account for the present study. Shakespeare’s *Richard III* appears among the sixteenth-century attestations, followed by John Cowell’s *The Interpreter* (1607), William Blackstone’s *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1766) and two nineteenth-century citations, the latest of which is from the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana, or, Universal Dictionary of Knowledge* (1832).

The definition ‘one who holds a piece of land, a house, etc., by lease for a term of years or a set time’ is offered by the OED as a separate, non-technical sense, even though it is difficult not to associate the word with a legal context, and it is interesting to note that this, and not the legal one, is the one defined by the editors as “the ordinary current sense”. However, the absence of labels of usage indicating obsolescence suggests that the word is still in current use in both senses.

### 6.3 Survival in Present-Day English

The close examination of a sample of thesaurus categories presented in the previous sections was intended to further elaborate on the analyses presented in Chapter 5. In other words, it was devised with the aim of verifying if the findings drawn from the analysis of the thesaurus data overall can be confirmed by looking at a range of subsets.

The survival of the ME terms included in each of the selected categories was examined from both an onomasiological and semasiological perspective to provide an overview of the development of the category from two complementary perspectives. In particular, the semantic development of a pair of surviving terms, a native one and one of French origin, was tracked until PDE as an example of semasiological analysis that integrates the onomasiological examinations previously presented.

In this final section, the ME lexical material analysed separately in the previous sections is considered as a whole in order to show the overall picture that emerges from these case studies. Specifically, the survival of these terms throughout the ME period up until PDE is the focus of the analysis presented below, whose aim is to verify the outcomes of synonymy produced by the co-existence of native and borrowed terms in the language since the ME period. Firstly, the rates of lexical retention in ME and PDE are assessed; secondly, the outcomes of lexical retention in PDE in terms of changes in meaning and usage are compared across the sample.

Table 6.7 presents survival rates in ME (i.e. up to 1500) and PDE (i.e. after 1800) for the ME lexical items analysed in the previous sections, with the aim of identifying potential trends in the survival of synonyms within each category.

Table 6.7: Rates of lexical retention in the analysed sample

Macro-category	Category	Total	Retained until 1500	Retained in PDE
M. locations	Arable land	17 (100.00%)	11 (67.71%)	5 (29.41%)
	Meadowland	14 (100.00%)	8 (57.14%)	5 (35.71%)
	Pastureland	8 (100.00%)	6 (75.00%)	6 (75.00%)
	Wasteland	13 (100.00%)	7 (53.85%)	6 (46.15%)
M. society	Landlord	8 (100.00%)	7 (87.50%)	6 (75.00%)
	Tenant	10 (100.00%)	8 (80.00%)	8 (80.00%)

Results show that more than half of the lexical items which are attested as synonyms at some point between 1100 and 1500 tend to survive as such at least until 1500 in the categories under examination, as survival rates range from 53.85% to 87.50%.

It is interesting to note that a higher proportion of the material contained in the two categories belonging to the macro-category “Manorial society” (80–88%) survived at least until 1500, compared to the categories in “Manorial locations” (54%–75%). However, the disparity in the number of categories selected from each macro-category prevents balanced comparison between the two.

Overall, the tendency of the ME lexis (regardless of the language of origin) to be retained at least until 1500 observed in the analysed categories once again confirms the findings by Sylvester et al. (2022a, 2023) and Sylvester & Tiddeman (2023: 182), which, by showing that “loanwords did not generally oust native terms”, challenge the traditional scholarly discussions concerning the supposed widespread relexification happening during the late Middle Ages as a result of the massive influx of loanwords. As discussed in Chapter 5, a relatively low percentage (35%) of all the ME lexical material included in the thesaurus fell out of use by 1500, and the rates of lexical retention observed in the sample of categories presented in Table 6.7 confirm these findings, providing further evidence to support Sylvester’s claims concerning the role of multilingualism in the standardisation of the lexicon (Sylvester 2020, see Chapter 5).

If we compare the proportions of terms retained until 1500 to those retained until at least the nineteenth century, we find that, in the majority of cases, they do not differ very much. Only two categories, namely “Arable land” and “Meadowland”, show relatively low survival rates in PDE (29.41% and 35.71% respectively). These results seem to suggest that, once a lexical item survived throughout the ME period in the sense in question, it tended to be retained until at least the nineteenth century, albeit undergoing some kinds of change which will be discussed below.

After examining the rates of lexical retention in PDE, the surviving terms were analysed from a semasiological perspective in order to verify their outcome in PDE by considering semantic, diatopic or diaphasic changes.

As shown in the analysis of the pairs presented in the previous sections, not all the terms that have survived in PDE have been retained in the sense in question without any changes occurring. In some cases, semantic change and/or restriction of usage has occurred after the end of the ME period. Specifically, some lexical items have undergone narrowing of meaning and/or have retained such meaning either in specific contexts or geographic areas.

In order to assess the ways in which terms have survived in the senses under investigation, the labels and definitions provided by the OED were consulted. The classification of outcomes devised for the present study takes two aspects into consideration, namely semantic change and current usage. First, if the meaning under investigation has undergone a change in the history of the term in question, the latter is classified according to the type of semantic change. Secondly, if the usage of a word is now confined to specific areas of Britain and/or specific contexts such as law or history, the outcome is classified according to the information provided by the OED. Restriction of usage is indicated in the OED definitions by means of expressions such as “now dialect”, “regional”, or “rare”, whilst words that are no longer in use in the sense in question are provided with the following labels: “obsolete”, “archaic”, “historical”. According to the OED policies, obsolete terms are those last attested before or in 1929, archaic terms are now perceived as dated, and historical terms denote concepts and objects that no longer exist.<sup>2</sup> In a few cases, where a label is not provided by the OED, information concerning current usage was inferred from definitions and/or from the most recent quotations. For instance, wherever the adjective *feudal* is found in an OED definition, the term was classified as “historical”. In the case of *tilth*, for which the OED does not provide a label below the sense ‘arable land’, the classification is based on the label provided by the HTE (“dialectal”) and its most recent attestations (associated with poetic and historical contexts). The gerund form *pasturing* in the sense of ‘pastureland’ was classified as “rare” even though the label is not present in the OED definition provided, but the definition includes the additional information “also: pasturage, pastureland”.

The lexical items in the sample might have undergone both semantic change and restriction of usage, or either of them. It is important to note that the types of semantic change identified in this analysis only involve the sense relevant for this study and not all the senses that the term in question had in ME.

The typology of outcomes devised for the present analysis involves the following possible outcomes:

1. Retention: a term has survived in PDE with the same meaning without any changes occurring.
2. Obsolescence: the term survived into the nineteenth century but is now obsolete in the sense in question according to the OED.

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<sup>2</sup>See the OED blog post “Guidance on labels and date ranges: how the OED labels (really, really, really) old words”. <https://public.oed.com/blog/guidance-on-labels-and-date-ranges/#>.

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3. Semantic change: the meaning under investigation has undergone either narrowing (i.e. it has become less general), broadening (i.e. it has become more general) or shift (i.e. the term has acquired a different meaning).
4. Restriction of usage: the usage of the term in the sense in question is now confined to specific areas of Britain or specific contexts.
5. Semantic change + restriction of usage: both outcomes are observed.

The following tables (Table 6.8 Table 6.9 Table 6.10 Table 6.11 Table 6.12 Table 6.13) list all the surviving terms contained in each of the analysed categories and illustrates the outcome of the semantic evolution of each term (in the sense considered in the thesaurus). All terms, native (N) and non-native (NN), are presented in their PDE form.

After categorising the ways in which the terms in the sample have survived in PDE, outcomes were compared across the dataset in order to assess their distribution in relation to the native or non-native origin of the lexical items. The

Table 6.8: Semantic outcomes of the terms retained in PDE in the category "Arable land"

PDE word	Native / Non-native	Outcome
Acre	N	Semantic change (narrowing)
Arable	NN	Retention
Arable land	NN+N	Retention
Erable land	N+N	Restriction of usage (rare, archaic, reg.)
Tilth	N	Restriction of usage (dial., hist., poet.)

Table 6.9: Semantic outcomes of the terms retained in PDE in the category "Meadowland"

PDE word	Native / Non-native	Outcome
Ing	NN	Restriction of usage (local)
Lea	N	Restriction of usage (poet.)
Mead	N	Restriction of usage (poet., reg.)
Meadow	N	Retention
Plain	NN	Restriction of usage (archaic, rare)

sample consists of 20 native items and 16 loanwords, the majority of which are of Romance origin (only *ing* derives from ON). For the purpose of this analysis, the terms *arable land* and *liege lord*, composed of two elements of different origin, i.e. a non-native and a native one (NN + N), were considered borrowings (NN) in view of the presence of a romance-origin element in the compound, notwithstanding the fact that the head of the compound is of native origin.

The distribution of outcomes is presented in Table 6.14.

Observation of the distribution of outcomes revealed that the most common outcome in the dataset is restriction of usage for both native terms and loanwords, followed by the retention of non-native items in particular. As shown in Table 6.14, 17 items out of 36 (47.22%), 9 of which are native (25.00%) and 8 borrowed (22.22%), are still used with the meaning in question solely as diatopic or diaphasic (i.e. according to register) variants. The second most common outcome is retention (27.78%). Of the 10 terms that have been retained unchanged in PDE, 4 (11.11%) are native and 6 (16.67%) are borrowed. The slightly higher proportion

Table 6.10: Semantic outcomes of the terms retained in PDE in the category "Pastureland"

PDE word	Native / Non-native	Outcome
Feeding	N	Obsolescence
Lease	N	Restriction of usage (dial.)
Leasow	N	Restriction of usage (dial.)
Meadow	N	Retention
Pasture	NN	Retention
Pasturing	NN	Restriction of usage (rare)

Table 6.11: Semantic outcomes of the terms retained in PDE in the category "Wasteland"

PDE word	Native / Non-native	Outcome
Desert	NN	Semantic change (narrowing)
Heath	N	Semantic change (narrowing)
Moor	N	Semantic change (narrowing)
Waste	NN	Restriction of usage (rare)
Wilderness	N	Retention
Wildness	N	Obsolescence

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Table 6.12: Semantic outcomes of the terms retained in PDE in the category "Landlord"

PDE word	Native / Non-native	Outcome
Landlord	N+N	Semantic change (broadening)
Lessor	NN	Retention
Liege	NN	Restriction of usage (hist.)
Liege lord	NN+N	Restriction of usage (figurative)
Lord	N	Restriction of usage (archaic, hist.)
Seignior	NN	Restriction of usage (rare, hist.)

Table 6.13: Semantic outcomes of the terms retained in PDE in the category "Tenant"

PDE word	Native / Non-native	Outcome
Acreman	N+N	Restriction of usage (hist.)
Feudary	NN	Obsolescence
Holder	N	Semantic change (broadening)
Land holder	N+N	Retention
Man	N	Restriction of usage (hist.)
Subject	NN	Restriction of usage (hist.)
Tenant	NN	Retention
Terre-tenant	NN+NN	Retention

Table 6.14: Distribution of outcomes

Outcome	Total	N	NN
Retention	10 (27.78%)	4 (11.11%)	6 (16.67%)
Obsolescence	3 (8.33%)	2 (5.56%)	1 (2.78%)
Semantic change	6 (16.67%)	5 (13.89%)	1 (2.78%)
Restriction of usage	17 (47.22%)	9 (25.00%)	8 (22.22%)
Total	36 (100.00%)	20 (55.56%)	16 (44.44%)

of foreign-origin items may suggest that non-native terms are more likely to be retained in the language without undergoing any change; however, the sample size is too limited to support any reliable conclusions. Semantic change was observed in six cases, five involving native words and only one involving a term of foreign origin. This may suggest that native terms are more likely to undergo semantic change after the ME period as opposed to borrowed terms. The types of semantic change observed are narrowing, which is the most frequent (4 instances), and broadening (observed in two cases).

Only three terms in the dataset, namely *feeding* (N), *wildness* (N), and *feudary* (NN), are now obsolete. The low number of obsolete terms observed in the sample suggests that terms retained at least until 1800 tend to remain in the language, albeit with changes in meaning or usage.

Although “semantic development is never straightforward or predictable” (Sylvester et al. 2022b: 444), the findings of this study suggest that certain patterns may nonetheless emerge through systematic analysis. In particular, the examination of the semantic development of individual lexical items has revealed that restriction of usage, followed by retention, is the most common outcome within the dataset. In conclusion, the integration of both onomasiological and semasiological perspectives has proven valuable for identifying observable trends that shed light on lexical variation and change within the domain explored in this book.



## 7 Implications for historical linguistics and lexicography

It has been previously stated in the literature that the impact of French on the Middle English lexis related to the medieval countryside was minimal. This claim is substantiated by Rothwell (2009: 399) in particular, who pointed out the “relative paucity of rural vocabulary of French origin that found its way into standard English in the later medieval period”.

This work has challenged this claim through the examination of the lexis associated with medieval English manors. Specifically, terms denoting manorial locations and members of manorial society were collected and subsequently analysed with the aim of assessing the outcomes of language contact on a lexical domain associated with a rural context representing one of the key institutions of medieval England.

A domain-specific trilingual thesaurus was compiled and systematically investigated. Besides pursuing the primary aim of this work, i.e. the assessment of the outcomes of language contact on the domain under investigation, this onomasiological resource was devised with the aim of addressing the “onomasiological treatment of later medieval England” advocated by Trotter (1996: 35) and consequently filling a long-standing gap in historical lexicography. The compilation procedure has been discussed in Chapter 4 and the resource is available in Part III.

The results discussed in Chapter 5 have shown that the effects of language contact on ME lexis in rural environments were much greater than previously claimed in the literature and could be inferred from assumptions based on the large proportions of English monolingual speakers in the medieval countryside. On the one hand, the relatively higher proportion of English lexis denoting manorial locations identified in the dataset confirms the preference for English to refer to familiar locations identified by Ingham (2009, 2018) in Latin-matrix manorial accounts. On the other hand, in contrast to Rothwell’s claim, the results of the study have shown that Romance-origin lexis occupies considerable space in the domain under investigation, revealing how the influence of French and Latin was substantial in its shaping. When only the lexical items first entering the domain during the Middle English period are considered, the proportion of

Romance-origin items accounts for approximately half of the domain, exceeding the native material. The percentage identified in this study slightly exceeds that identified by Durkin (2014: 256) in his investigation of the Middle English lexicon overall: this finding shows how the significant role of French and Latin in the overall development of the Middle English lexis is mirrored in this domain, notwithstanding the predominantly anglophone environment to which it is associated.

Using the findings by Ingham et al. (2019) concerning the relatively low influence of French and Latin on the domain of farming as a starting point, this study has shown that the impact of borrowing is higher when the focus shifts from the vocabulary relating to animal husbandry and cultivation to referents specifically connected to the organisation of the manorial system.

It was illustrated how the macro-category “Manorial Society” is accountable for the high proportion of Romance lexis in the domain. When only the lexis denoting members of manorial society is considered, the predominance of French- and Latin-origin loanwords stands out, as opposed to the macro-category “Manorial locations”, where native items are predominant. The discussion in Chapter 5 emphasised the role of power relationships to explain the high impact of borrowing in the macro-category “Manorial society”: the results of the investigation suggest that the social power of manorial officers, appointed by the francophone lord to manage his estate and act as mediators between him and the anglophone workforce, possibly made them major agents of loan diffusion in rural contexts of post-Conquest England. Their multilingual competence, evidenced by the language mixing practices reflected in manorial records, may have played a crucial role in influencing their lexical choices when interacting in their native language (English), particularly when referring to themselves and other members of manorial society. The vocabulary for locations, on the other hand, displays a certain degree of resistance to borrowing, mirroring a recurrent pattern observed in words denoting the speaker’s surrounding environment.

The diachronic analyses presented in Chapter 5 have shown that the influx of loanwords in the domain started largely in the late Middle English period, once again mirroring the findings by Durkin (2014) and confirming how the influence of French and Latin on the lexicon overall was paralleled in this domain.

The majority of the Romance loanwords identified in this domain survived in the language after the Middle English period and beyond. The high proportion of borrowed words surviving alongside native items into PDE identified in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 confirms the long-lasting impact of language contact on the domain. At the same time, the relatively low proportion of native material becoming obsolescent during the Middle English period challenges the traditional claim concerning a widespread relexification of the language resulting from the

influx of loanwords, confirming the findings by Sylvester et al. (2022a, 2023) and Sylvester & Tiddeman (2023). Moreover, through the analysis of a sample of categories (Chapter 6), it was possible to further confirm these results and identify restriction of usage to a specialised domain (e.g. history) or diatopic variety as the most common outcome in PDE.

In sum, this study has shown how the impact of French and Latin on the lexis of the countryside is more substantial than previously asserted in the literature. Although the terminology for manorial locations shows a certain degree of resistance to borrowing if compared to other, more prestigious domains, the considerable proportion of Romance-origin loanwords found in the lexis denoting the various members of manorial society suggests that the claim concerning the scarcity of borrowings from French and Latin in the rural vocabulary of late medieval England should be revised in light of the findings presented in this work.

The findings from this study provide a deeper understanding of the sociolinguistic dynamics underpinning language contact and borrowing in rural medieval England, calling for further awareness of the sociolinguistic environments typifying medieval rural England in the field of contact linguistic studies. When it comes to assessing the penetration of loanwords in what is generally referred to as ‘rural vocabulary’, more attention should be paid to the various aspects of rural life through the construction of appropriate onomasiological categories. However, the implications of this work extend beyond the specific domain of manorial lexis. The approach adopted in this study can be applied to other sociolinguistic contexts and lexical domains to highlight the limitations of relying on broad generalisations in the field of historical linguistics.

As far as lexicography is concerned, the trilingual thesaurus compiled in this study offers a model for the compilation of multilingual lexical resources that address specific conceptual domains, attempting to bridge the gap between existing historical dictionaries and showing how an onomasiological approach not only facilitates cross-linguistic comparison but also sheds light on the diachronic development of lexical domains. In addition, it has proven valuable in offering insights into the social dynamics that shaped this evolution, emphasising the interconnectedness of language and society.

It is hoped that the present work will contribute to arousing interest in sociolinguistic contexts that are still underinvestigated from a contact linguistic perspective, opening paths for further investigations that may be able to challenge long-established narratives. Furthermore, it is hoped that the thesaurus compiled and presented in this work will contribute to increasing awareness of the long-term need for a lexicographical resource that treats the medieval languages from a multilingual perspective.



## **Part III**

# **The trilingual thesaurus of manorial lexis**



# 8 The trilingual thesaurus of manorial lexis

## 1 MANORIAL LOCATIONS

### 1.1 MANORIAL ESTATE

OE– (Scot.) toun (MED) OE + OE  
OE–1187/1215 vicus (DMLBS)  
OE–1210 cors (DMLBS)  
OE–1285 mansa (DMLBS)  
OE–1348 mansiuncula (DMLBS)  
OE–1405 hom (MED) OE  
OE–1467 locus (DMLBS)  
OE–1490 mansio (DMLBS)  
OE–1491 manerium (DMLBS) AF  
OE–1545 villa (DMLBS)  
1140/60–1418 maner (AND)  
1150–1225/50 vile (AND)  
1174–1250 herité (AND)  
1210–1625 maneries (DMLBS) AF  
1290 manerie (AND)  
1299/1300 alué (AND)  
1300– (hist.) maner (MED) AF, CF  
1300–1456 lith (MED) ON  
1310–1399 place (AND)  
1350– (hist.) lordship(e) (MED) OE  
1400 onstede (MED) OE  
1483 mansorium (DMLBS)

### 1.1.1 MANORIAL LAND

#### 1.1.1.1 ARABLE LAND

OE– (arch.) aker (MED) OE

OE-1187/1215 ager (DMLBS)  
OE-1200 seges (DMLBS)  
OE-1300 planus (DMLBS)  
OE-14.. campus (DMLBS)  
OE-1500 lond (MED) OE  
OE-1583 terra (DMLBS)  
OE-1587 terra arabilis (DMLBS)  
OE-1728 falwe (MED) OE  
1148/1202 sationalis (DMLBS)  
1154-1367 cultura (DMLBS)  
1160 gain (AND)  
1160-1216 agricultura (DMLBS)  
1160-1500 erthe (MED) OE  
1175 erth(e) land (MED) OE + OE  
1175-1500 mold(e) (MED) OE  
1250-1394 terre arable (AND)  
1260-1330/31 terre (AND)  
1269 arabilis (DMLBS)  
1292-1329/30 culture (AND)  
1300 pais de champaigne (AND)  
1316- (dial. hist. poet.) tilth (MED) OE  
1330-1735 forwe (MED) OE  
1333 eringe land (MED) OE + OE  
1346-1347 terre hide et gain (AND)  
1382-1500 erthe tilling(e) (MED) OE + OE  
1387-1488 tilling(e) lond (MED) OE + OE  
1393-1400 plough (MED) ?OE, ?ON  
1398 tilling(e) craft (MED) OE + OE  
1400- arable lond (MED) OF, L + OE  
1400 ardawe (MED) ON  
1410- (rare) erable lond (MED) OE + OE  
1440- arable (MED) OF, L

#### 1.1.1.1.1 ASSART

OE- (reg. hist.) ridding(e) (MED) OE  
OE-1224 exsartum (DMLBS)  
OE-1539 essartum (DMLBS) OF  
11..-1250 riddinga (DMLBS) ME

1135–1300 brecha (DMLBS) OE  
1143 ruptura (DMLBS)  
1178 occatio (DMLBS)  
1182 insartum (DMLBS)  
1288–1291 artiga (DMLBS)  
1290–1518 sart (MED) OF, ML  
1314–1330 essart (AND)  
1450– (hist.) assart (MED) OF, CF, ML

#### 1.1.1.1.1 TYPES OF ASSART

1226 essartulum (DMLBS)

#### 1.1.1.1.2 FALLOW

OE–1200 novalis (DMLBS)  
11./12.–13.. buce (AND)  
1125/50–12../13.. waret (AND)  
1160–1306 warecta (DMLBS) AF, OF  
1173–1381 friscus (DMLBS)  
1174/75 chaumel (AND)  
12.–12../13.. fresche (AND)  
1251–1444 leine (MED) OE  
1260 franc (AND)  
1290/1300–1338 gast (AND)  
1300– falwe (MED) OE  
1357– lei(e) (MED) OE  
1374 novatio (DMLBS)  
1388– (reg.) somer–lond (MED) OE + OE  
1398–1720 standing(e)–place (MED) OE + OF, ML  
1440 restif lond (MED) OF + OE  
1440 somer leie lond (MED) OE + OE + OE  
1460 warecte (MED) AL  
1467 wast(e) (MED) AF

#### 1.1.1.1.3 OTHER TYPES OF ARABLE LAND

1150 novelté (AND)  
1152–1338 saiso (DMLBS) AF  
1285–1290/1300 rebin (AND)

1.1.1.2 MEADOWLAND

OE— medwe (MED) OE  
OE— (poet. reg.) mede (MED) OE  
OE— (poet.) lei(e) (MED) OE  
OE—1350 pratum (DMLBS)  
OE—1446 campus (DMLBS)  
OE—1528 wong (MED) OE  
1121/25 rivere (AND)  
1121/25–1230 herbai (AND)  
1121/25–1273/82 praerie (AND)  
1121/25–1409 pré (AND)  
1157 medua (DMLBS) ME  
1180–1306 praeria (DMLBS) AF, ME  
1187–1240 pratarius (DMLBS)  
1200–1471 wold (MED) OE  
1222–1388 falcabilis (DMLBS)  
1260–1400 praiere (MED) OF  
1300— (arch. rare) plain(e) (MED) OF  
1317— (loc.) eng (MED) ON  
1390–1460 flat (MED) ON  
1398–1400 flor (MED) OE  
1400–1475 chaump(e) (MED) OF  
1453–1614 meade ground (MED) OE + OE  
1460 lede (MED) OE  
1475–1577/87 lond mede (MED) OE + OE

1.1.1.2.1 TYPES OF MEADOWLAND

1135–1260 pratellum (DMLBS)  
1150–1250 praticulum (DMLBS)  
1182 pratunculum (DMLBS)  
1185 pratulum (DMLBS)  
1185–1360/79 prael (AND)  
1200 cultura (DMLBS)  
1200— holm(e) (MED) OE  
1200–1284 capitium (DMLBS)  
1260–1314 pré fauchable (AND)  
1286 praella (DMLBS) OF  
1307/27 havoterie (AND)

1440 praiel (MED) OF

### 1.1.1.3 MESSUAGE

OE-1276 maisura (DMLBS) OF  
1114-1221 capitalis (DMLBS)  
1154-1573 masagium (DMLBS) OF, AF  
1170-1420/32 messuage (AND)  
1185-1230 mansuagium (DMLBS)  
1200/10-1311 mees (AND)  
1292-1327 chef mees (AND)  
1390- mesuage (MED) AF, AL  
1402-1729 mes (MED) OF, AF  
1440-1672 mes place (MED) OF + OF, ML

### 1.1.1.3.1 MANOR HOUSE

OE- hom (MED) OE  
OE-1186 halla (DMLBS) OE  
OE-1276 maisura (DMLBS) OF  
OE-1463 aula (DMLBS)  
OE-1490 mansio (DMLBS)  
1150-1656 burgh (MED) OE  
1154-1573 masagium (DMLBS) OF, AF  
1185-1230 mansuagium (DMLBS)  
1225- (obs.) court (MED) OF  
1250-1432 maner (AND)  
1277-1523 manerium (DMLBS) AF  
1290-1369 mansiun (AND)  
1300- maner (MED) AF, CF  
1300-1336 cort (AND)  
1314/50 domus (DMLBS)  
1375- mansioun (MED) L, OF  
1376-1403 tenelle (AND)  
1384-1394 tenella (DMLBS) AF  
1387- place (MED) OF, ML  
1390- mesuage (MED) AF, AL  
1399-1390/1412 place (AND)  
1432 maner (AND)  
1457 praetorium (DMLBS)

1.1.1.4 PASTURELAND

OE— (dial. poet.) lese (MED) OE  
OE— (dial.) leswe (MED) OE  
OE–1208 pascuarium (DMLBS)  
OE–1222 pascuus (DMLBS)  
OE–1343 pastura (DMLBS)  
OE–1470 arvum (DMLBS)  
1100/50 pastil (AND)  
1100/50–1394 pasture (AND)  
1113/19–1165 pastiz (AND)  
1135–1360/79 pasturage (AND)  
1140–1198 pasticium (DMLBS)  
1200 pasturel (AND)  
1200–1471 wold (MED) OE  
1222 pastoragium (DMLBS) OF  
1263 bou erthe (MED) ON + OE  
1297— pastur(e) (MED) OF, L  
1300— medwe (MED) OE  
1306–1374 herbage (AND)  
1321/22 past (AND)  
1328–1418 land (AND)  
1353/80–1587 terra (DMLBS)  
1390— pasturing(e) (MED) OF, L  
1430— (obs. dial.) feding (MED) OE

1.1.1.4.1 CATTLE PASTURE

1130–1160 vaccaria (DMLBS)  
1300— oxpasture (MED) OE + OF, L  
1308 boiria (DMLBS)  
1325–1650 vacheri(e) (MED) OF, AF  
1381 bucetum (DMLBS)  
1382 oxe leswe (MED) OE+OE  
1471— (hist.) vaccarie (MED) ML  
1483 bovaria (DMLBS)  
1483–1526 fugation (MED) ML

1.1.1.4.2 OTHER TYPES OF PASTURELAND

OE– (hist.) gras (MED) OE  
1296–1372 wartha (DMLBS)  
1300– fel (MED) ON  
1300– (hist.) droveden (MED) OE + OE  
1334 calfpasture (MED) OE + OF, L  
1390/99 frith (AND) ME  
1390–1443 frithum (DMLBS)

#### 1.1.1.4.3 RABBIT PASTURE

1205 leporium (DMLBS)  
1252 cuniculicuria (DMLBS)  
1260–1431 cunicularium (DMLBS)  
1270–1332 coninger (AND)  
1410– wareine (MED) AF, OF, ML

#### 1.1.1.5 TYPES OF MANORIAL LAND

##### 1.1.1.5.1 COMMON LAND

1166 menessa (DMLBS) OE  
1199–1533 communa (DMLBS)  
1228–1567 communis (DMLBS)  
1292–1308/09 commune (AND)  
1391 communitas (DMLBS)  
1466 menes (MED) OE

##### 1.1.1.5.2 DEMESNE LAND

OE–1130 aula (DMLBS)  
OE–1200 dominatio (DMLBS)  
OE–1200 dominicatus (DMLBS)  
OE–1220 halla (DMLBS)  
OE–1313 inlanda (DMLBS) OE  
OE–1328 dominium (DMLBS)  
OE–1475 inlond (MED) OE  
1115–1444 dominicus (DMLBS)  
1173 meneus (DMLBS)  
1174 demaineté (AND)  
1190/1200–1346 demeine (AND)

1350— (hist.) lordship(e) (MED) OE  
1398— demeine (MED) OF

#### 1.1.1.5.3 ENCLOSED LAND

OE— ham(me) (MED) OE  
OE— (reg.) par(r)ok (MED) OE  
OE—1422 wareнна (DMLBS)  
OE—1504 parcus (DMLBS)  
1114/18–1612 parroculus (DMLBS) ME  
1165–1393/94 park (AND)  
1207–1549 hamma (DMLBS) ME  
1230— intak (MED) ON  
1234 approvement (AND)  
1251–1300 ave-names (MED) ON  
1270–1421 garenne (AND)  
1275–1373 parroculus (AND) ME  
1286–1459/60 clos (AND)  
1290/1300 inhame (AND)  
1290/1300–1338 inhock (AND)  
1300— park (MED) OF  
1309–1363 claustrum (DMLBS)  
1310 infraclausus (DMLBS)  
1377— (hist.) wareine (MED) AF, OF, ML  
1399 inclusio (DMLBS)  
1406— (loc.) clos (MED) OF, ML  
1473 improuement (MED) AF  
1475 firth-feld (MED) OE + OE  
1483 excipium (DMLBS)

#### 1.1.1.5.4 MEASURES OF LAND

OE— aker (MED) OE  
OE— rigge (MED) OE  
OE— (hist.) hide (MED) OE  
OE— (hist.) ox-gang(e) (MED) OE + OE  
OE— (hist.) plough (MED) ?OE, ?ON  
OE—1106 mansiuncula (DMLBS)  
OE—1112 ager (DMLBS)  
OE—1200 perca (DMLBS)

OE-1235 ferthingus (DMLBS) ME  
 OE-1264 hida (DMLBS) OE  
 OE-1283 jugum (DMLBS)  
 OE-1294 mansura (DMLBS)  
 OE-1336 mansa (DMLBS)  
 OE-1377 carrucata (DMLBS)  
 OE-1430 cultura (DMLBS)  
 OE-1454 ferlingus (DMLBS) ME  
 OE-1535 bovata (DMLBS)  
 OE-1570 jugerum (DMLBS)  
 OE-1586 acra (DMLBS) OE  
 1115-1546 wista (DMLBS) OE  
 1126 bovaria (DMLBS) OF  
 1128-1468 roda (DMLBS) OE  
 1130/40-1290 acre (AND)  
 1145 quadragenarius (DMLBS)  
 1150 ploxlana (DMLBS)  
 1150-14.. selio (DMLBS)  
 1155 rasta (DMLBS)  
 1160 quadragena (DMLBS)  
 1189-1328 percata (DMLBS)  
 1189-1695 ferling (MED) OE  
 1190 ligua (DMLBS)  
 1190-1501 swatha (DMLBS) ME  
 1199-1611 ferlingata (DMLBS) ME  
 1200 erthendalis (DMLBS)  
 1200-1364 stanga (DMLBS)  
 1200-1427 staf (MED) OE  
 1204-1432 daiwerca (DMLBS) ME  
 1210-1532 diaeta (DMLBS)  
 1213 quarter (AND)  
 1229-1493 halva (DMLBS) ME  
 1230 percha (DMLBS)  
 1235- (hist.) fal (MED) OE  
 1235/52- (hist. loc.) selion (MED) ML, OF  
 1235/52-1706 ferdel (MED) OE  
 1240-1299 ferdella (DMLBS) ME  
 1241- (loc.) swath(e) (MED) OE

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- 1245 ferlinglanda (DMLBS) ME  
1245 ferthinglanda (DMLBS) ME  
1250–1382 selion (AND)  
1252–1475 partike (MED) L  
1260–13.. daina (DMLBS) ME?  
1260–1400 rodefalla (DMLBS) ME  
1260–1458 sulcus (DMLBS)  
1270 casus (DMLBS)  
1270–1412 daiwercata (DMLBS) ME  
1278–1425 charué (AND)  
1279–1468 quartero (DMLBS)  
1283–1283 wendus (DMLBS) ME  
1283–1457 virgata (DMLBS)  
1285 cultivure (AND)  
1285 culture (AND)  
1290 vele (AND)  
1291/92–1314 virgate (AND)  
1298 rodalis (DMLBS)  
1300– lond (MED) OE  
1300 perchata (DMLBS) AF  
1300– (hist.) plough–lond (MED) ?OE, ?ON + OE  
1300/50 manant (AND)  
1300–1350/75 perchee (AND)  
1300–1487 pedata (DMLBS)  
1302 diurnus (DMLBS)  
1305 ferthing (AND) ME  
1314–1460 virga (DMLBS)  
1315 ferthingata (DMLBS) ME  
1316–1469 rode (AND) ME  
1319–1341 bové (AND)  
1341 perche (AND)  
1387– (hist.) tem(e) lond (MED) OE + OE  
1388 carucate (AND)  
1389 mera (DMLBS)  
1393 quarter(e) lond (MED) OF, ML + OE  
1398–1580 erth(e) (MED) OE  
1400–1640 ferthing (MED) OE  
1410– (hist.) rod(de) (MED) OE

1410— (hist.) rode (MED) OE  
1425— (hist.) carucate (MED) ML  
1442— (obs.) pek(ke) (MED) ML  
1447 cart whele (MED) OE, ON + OE  
1469–1588 polus (DMLBS)  
1476 largus (DMLBS)  
1477 rigga (DMLBS) ME

#### 1.1.1.5.5 OTHER TYPES OF LAND

1130–1409 lap(pe) (MED) OE  
1157–1553 ofnama (DMLBS) ON  
1160–1349 ofnam (MED) ON  
1189–1363/74 cot–setle (MED) OE + OE  
1200–1420 for(e)–land (MED) OE + OE  
1320–1323 rodefalla (DMLBS) ME  
1327/8— (hist. reg.) overlond (MED) OE  
1425–1500 forwe (MED) OE

#### 1.1.1.5.6 TENANT LAND

1101–1537 tenura (DMLBS) AF, ME  
1157–1511 tenementum (DMLBS)  
1160–1724 rent(e) (MED) OF, ML  
1280–1471/81 tenance (AND)  
1291/92–1298/99 tenement (AND)  
1315–1510 tenendria (DMLBS) ME  
1325— tenement (MED) OF, ML  
1385–1597 tenauntri(e) (MED) OF, AF, ML  
1423–1670 tenaunci (MED) AF, ML

#### 1.1.1.5.6.1 TYPES OF TENANT LAND

1199–1438 gavelikinde lond (MED) OE + OE  
1200–1229 gavelikinda (DMLBS) ME  
1292–1312 sokemanerie (AND) ME  
1300–1400 acremanne land (MED) OE + OE  
1321 soke–lond (MED) OE + OE

#### 1.1.1.6 WASTELAND

OE– heth (MED) OE  
OE– mor (MED) OE  
OE–1170 tesquum (DMLBS)  
OE–1350 west(e) lond (MED) OE + OE  
OE–1450 westerne (MED) OE  
OE–1483 eremus (DMLBS)  
1100–1150 desveiemēt (AND)  
1129–1342 vastus (DMLBS)  
1150/75–1334 gast (AND)  
1150/75–1360/79 salvagine (AND)  
1160 desertine (AND)  
1160–1274 vastina (DMLBS)  
1165 vastitudo (DMLBS)  
1175–1200 weste (MED) OE  
1175–1400 wasten(e) (MED) OF, AF  
1200– wildernes(se) (MED) OE  
1200– (dial. rare) wast(e) (MED) AF  
1200– (obs) desert (MED) ML, OF  
1200/10–1340 gastine (AND)  
1200–1475 wilderne (MED) OE  
1266/1300 sart (AND)  
1282 runcaria (DMLBS)  
1290/1300–1350/1400 desert (AND)  
1300 vastura (DMLBS)  
1300–1659 forest (MED) OF  
1319 wasture (AND)  
1374– (obs.) wildnes(se) (MED) OE  
1380–1400 wasterne (MED) OE

#### 1.1.1.6.1 TYPES OF WASTELAND

OE– (rare) mor–lond (MED) OE + OE  
1196–1460 bernet (MED) OE  
12..–13.. binghaia (DMLBS) ME  
1290–1794 warlott (MED) OE  
1300– fel (MED) ON

#### 1.1.1.6.2 WOOD(S)

OE– frith (MED) OE

OE– hirst(e) (MED) OE  
 OE– wode (MED) OE  
 OE– wode-londe (MED) OE  
 OE– (arch. dial.) shau(e) (MED) OE  
 OE– (poet. dial.) holt (MED) OE  
 OE–1162/1178 lucus (DMLBS)  
 OE–1381 saltus (DMLBS)  
 OE–14.. nemus (DMLBS)  
 OE–14.. silva (DMLBS)  
 OE–1440 berwe (MED) OE  
 OE–1450 wold (DMLBS) OE  
 OE–1539 boscus (DMLBS) OF  
 OE–1609 greve (MED) OE  
 1100/30–1394 bois (AND)  
 1100/50–1290/1300 selve (AND)  
 1121– (poet.) wilde wode (MED) OE  
 1121/25–1214/16 land (AND)  
 1121/35–1200/50 gaut (AND)  
 1121/35–1354 forest (AND)  
 1121–1500 tres (MED) OE  
 1127–1573 grava (DMLBS) OE  
 1150/75–1230 gaudine (AND)  
 1150/75–1290/1300 boscage (AND)  
 1159 silvestria (DMLBS)  
 1160–1421 boscagium (DMLBS) OF  
 1165–14.. foresta (DMLBS)  
 1167–1535 walda (DMLBS) OE  
 1187–1202 nemorosa (DMLBS)  
 1192–1329/30 arbrei (AND)  
 1200–1513 wode–shaue (MED) OE  
 1250–1475 bush (MED) OE  
 1280/1307 boscaille (AND)  
 1285–1335 frithum (DMLBS) ME  
 1300– forest (MED) OF  
 1300–1450 lind(e) (MED) OE  
 1310 shawa (DMLBS) ME  
 1330 bois (MED) OF  
 1350– boskage (MED) OF

1371–1373 frith (AND) ME  
1373–1380 forbois (AND)  
1398–1425 salt (MED) L  
1400 shot (MED) OE  
1400–1475 scough (MED) ON  
1440–1450 bushaille (MED) OF, ML  
1440–1500 indago (DMLBS)

1.1.1.6.2.1 TYPES OF WOOD(S)

OE— grove (MED) OE  
OE–1154 nemusculum (DMLBS)  
OE–1210 silvula (DMLBS)  
1143–1400 bosculus (DMLBS)  
1160–1310 boscellus (DMLBS) OF  
1175/89— (reg.) hag (MED) ON  
1185–1225/1250 boschel (AND)  
1187–1366 hesa (DMLBS) OF  
12..–1421 grove (AND) OE  
1226 maeremium (DMLBS)  
1280 bosciculus (DMLBS)  
1297— (hist.) outwod(e) (MED) OE  
1372 haughyngrove (AND) ME  
1396 bochete (AND)

1.1.2 TYPES OF MANORIAL ESTATE

OE–1201 maneriolum (DMLBS)  
1263–1296 manerettum (DMLBS)  
1343 manerium (DMLBS) AF

2 MANORIAL SOCIETY

2.1 LANDLORD

OE— lond-lord (MED) OE + OE  
OE— lord (MED) OE  
OE–1235 terrarius (DMLBS)  
OE–1252 dominator (DMLBS)  
OE–1513 herre (MED) OE

OE-1559 dominus (DMLBS)  
1113/19-1419 seignur (AND)  
1114 landesricus (DMLBS)  
1136/37-1305 here (AND)  
1150-1324/25 seignurage (AND)  
1150-1352 sire (AND)  
1178-1200 dominus ligius (DMLBS) OF  
1200/10-1381 avoué (AND)  
1200/25-1351/52 demeine (AND)  
1216-1315 dominus fundi (DMLBS)  
1292/93 louerd (AND) ME  
1297- lege lord (MED) AF, CF + OE  
1297-1390 seignurie (AND)  
1363- (rare) seignour (MED) OF, AF, L  
1371 mestre (AND)  
1380- (hist.) lege (MED) AF, CF  
1384- lessour (MED) AF  
1500 tenement man (MED) OF, ML, AL + OE

#### 2.1.1 FEMALE LANDLORD

OE- ladi(e) (MED) OE  
OE-1362 domina (DMLBS)  
1143-14.. era (DMLBS)  
1290/1300-1405 mestresse (AND)  
1328-1469 seignouresse (AND)  
1335/61- maistres(se) (MED) OF

#### 2.1.2 OTHER TYPES OF LANDLORD

1190-1448 capitalis dominus (DMLBS)  
1271/72-1327 mene (AND)  
1314-1354 seignur paramont (AND)  
1315 seignur paraval (AND)

#### 2.1.3 POSITION OF LANDLORD

OE- lordship(e) (MED) OE  
OE-13.. dominatus (DMLBS)  
OE-1381 dicio (DMLBS)

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OE-1488 *dominatio* (DMLBS)  
11.-1368 *seignurie* (AND)  
1178-1377 *dominium* (DMLBS)  
1300- (obs.) *seignorie* (MED) OF, AF  
1388 *sieurie* (AND)

2.2 OFFICER

OE-1114/18 *minister* (DMLBS)  
1114/18 *ministrator* (DMLBS)  
1121 *wik(e)* (MED) OE  
1143-14.. *officialis* (DMLBS)  
1157-1327 *baillivus* (DMLBS) OF  
12..-14.. *sergant* (AND)  
1200/10-1406 *ministrour* (AND)  
1200-1463 *ministrat* (AND)  
1202-1287 *ministralis* (DMLBS)  
1212-1257 *ministerialis* (DMLBS)  
1227 *ministrallus* (DMLBS)  
1250- *maister* (MED) OF, L  
1270-1334 *official* (AND)  
1285-1392/93 *ministre* (AND)  
1295/98-1399 *mestre* (AND)  
1300-1750 *ministre* (MED) OF, L  
1314-1482 *officiarius* (DMLBS)  
1323-1390 *officer* (AND)  
1330-1680 *sergeaunt* (MED) OF  
1339 *officiener* (AND)  
1380- *officer* (MED) OF  
1382- *prefect* (MED) OF, L  
1402- *conservatour* (MED) OF, L  
1443 *officium* (DMLBS)  
1467 *praepositor* (DMLBS)

2.2.1 ADMINISTRATOR/STEWARD/BAILIFF

OE- *reve* (MED) OE  
OE-1279 *oeconomicus* (DMLBS)  
OE-1310 *commentariensis* (DMLBS)  
OE-1370 *dispensator* (DMLBS)

OE-1435 provisor (DMLBS)  
 OE-1440 oeconomus (DMLBS)  
 OE-1440 praepositus (DMLBS)  
 OE-1483 saccellarius (DMLBS)  
 OE-1521 senescalcus (DMLBS)  
 OE-1549 procurator (DMLBS)  
 OE-1567 praefectus (DMLBS)  
 OE-1570 vilicus (DMLBS)  
 1113/19-1452 seneschal (AND)  
 1114 tungrevius (DMLBS) OE  
 1114-1414 cachepollus (DMLBS)  
 1114-1510 hordarius (DMLBS)  
 1130- (hist.) hous-bond(e) (MED) OE + ON  
 1130/35-1710 greive (MED) ON  
 1130-1214 husbondus (DMLBS)  
 1143-1203 gravarengus (DMLBS)  
 1150/75-1350 despenser (AND)  
 1150/75-1390/1412 chamberlein (AND)  
 1150-1319 bailiff (AND)  
 1150-1338 provost (AND)  
 1155-1224 baillius (DMLBS)  
 1157-1327 baillivus (DMLBS) OF  
 1163-1440 aedituus (DMLBS)  
 1166 gravennarius (DMLBS)  
 1167-1343 serviens (DMLBS)  
 1225 dightnere (MED) OE  
 1258/59-1376 gardein (AND)  
 1261-1535 administrator (DMLBS)  
 1262-1505 ringildus (DMLBS) Welsh  
 1270-1432 approvour (AND)  
 1271/72 executur (AND)  
 1290 administrour (AND)  
 1290-1314 approuator (DMLBS)  
 1300-1687 procuratour (MED) L, OF  
 1303- (hist.) steuard (MED) OE  
 1305-1373 ordenour (AND)  
 1321/22-1381/83 cleric (AND)  
 1323/25-1406 officer (AND)

1323–1423 *fermer* (AND)  
1326/39–1550 *praepositarius* (DMLBS)  
1339–1356 *ministre* (AND)  
1340— *servaunt* (MED) OF, CF, AF  
1340— (hist.) *provost* (MED) L, OF  
1340–1611 *dispendour* (MED) OF  
1350— (hist.) *baillif* (MED) OF  
1372 *maerarius* (DMLBS)  
1380 *estiward* (AND)  
1380— *officer* (MED) OF  
1380— (arch.) *dispensour* (MED) OF  
1382–1565/78 *procutour* (MED) OF, L  
1382–1698 *dispensatour* (MED) L  
1384— (obs.) *fermour* (MED) OF  
1386–1758 *approuer* (MED) AF  
1387— *countrollour* (MED) AF, CF  
1387— *seneshal* (MED) OF  
1388–1423 *ministrour* (AND)  
1390— *governour* (MED) L, OF  
1402— *conservatour* (MED) OF, L  
1405–1546 *ministre* (MED) L, OF  
1437 *steuardus* (DMLBS) ME  
1440— *administratour* (MED) L, OF  
1440 *angarius* (DMLBS)  
1440 *archidapifer* (DMLBS)  
1450— (rare) *ministratour* (MED) L, OF  
1470–1489 *procurour* (MED) OF  
1500 *husbond-man* (MED) OE + ON + OE

#### 2.2.1.1 DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR/STEWARD/BAILIFF

OE–1289 *subpraepositus* (DMLBS)  
1283–1564 *subsenescalcus* (DMLBS)  
1294–1477/78 *suzseneschal* (AND)  
1350 *soubaillif* (MED) OF, AF  
1436— (hist.) *subbaillif* (MED) AF  
1450–1475 *underbaili* (MED) OF  
1450–1708 *understeward* (MED) OE

#### 2.2.1.1.1 OFFICE OF DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR/STEWARD/BAILIFF

1242/1307–1375 subsenescalcia (DMLBS)  
1472/3 understewardship (MED) OE

#### 2.2.1.2 FEMALE ADMINISTRATOR/STEWARD/BAILIFF

1143–1166 procuratrix (DMLBS)  
1273/82 seneschale (AND)  
1287 bailliva (DMLBS)  
1302 administrere (AND)  
1465/6– (rare) administratrice (MED) OF  
1475 procuresse (MED) L, OF

#### 2.2.1.3 OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATOR/STEWARD/BAILIFF

OE–1279 baillia (DMLBS)  
OE–1430 vilicatio (DMLBS)  
OE–1570 vilicatus (DMLBS)  
1125/42–1318 procuratio (DMLBS)  
1160 horder(e) wike (MED) OE + OE  
1165–1332 provosté (AND)  
1180–1471 bailliva (DMLBS)  
1185–1243 dispensaria (DMLBS)  
1191–1327 senescallia (DMLBS)  
1191–1509 senescalcia (DMLBS)  
1197–1555 quaestura (DMLBS)  
1200–1360/79 seneschalcie (AND)  
1279–1388 senescallaria (DMLBS)  
1282–1365 procuration (AND)  
1300–1738 bailli(e) (MED) OF  
1305–1337 baillie (AND)  
1311–1505 ringildia (DMLBS) Welsh  
1338–1450 bail(le) (MED) OF  
1347–1482 ringildie (MED) AL, Welsh  
1360–1393 seneschalrie (AND)  
1366 senescaria (DMLBS)  
1366–1449 senescallatus (DMLBS)  
1378–1487 bailliagium (DMLBS)  
1380– (hist.) provostrie (MED) OE, OF

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1420— bailliage (MED) OF  
1420 seneshalcie (MED) OF  
1420–1579 baillivata (DMLBS)  
1425–1463 baillifship (MED) OF + E  
1425–1754 bail(l)ieri (MED) OF  
1438–1467/8 ringildship (MED) AL, Welsh + E  
1460 greiveshipe (MED) ON  
1464–1570 baillif-wik (MED) OF+OE  
1465— steuardship (MED) OE

2.2.2 BEADLE

OE–1535 bedellus (DMLBS)  
OE–1628 bidel (MED) OE, OF, ML  
11.–1321 bedel (AND)  
1270–1483 praeco (DMLBS)  
13.–1402 bedelur (AND)  
1379/80— (Scot.) macere (MED) OF  
1400/1–1475 boder(e) (MED) OE  
1425 for(e)-crier (MED) OE + OF

2.2.2.1 OFFICE OF BEADLE

1212–1588 bedellaria (DMLBS)  
1332–1419 bedelrie (AND)  
1358 bedel-wike (MED) OE, OF, ML + OE

2.2.3 HAYWARD

1154 mestivarius (DMLBS)  
1160–1187 pratarius (DMLBS)  
1166— hei-ward (MED) OE  
1209–1410 haiwardus (DMLBS) ME  
1217–1230 messator (DMLBS)  
1233–1402 messor (DMLBS)  
1270–1310 hayward (AND) ME  
1375 haiator (DMLBS)  
1388 saeparius (DMLBS)  
1397–1519 agellarius (DMLBS)  
1440–1483 metellus (DMLBS)

### 2.2.3.1 OFFICE OF HAYWARD

1227–1351 haiwarderia (DMLBS) ME  
1306 messarius (DMLBS)

### 2.2.4 OFFICE

OE– (obs.) worship(e) (MED) OE  
OE–1279 baillia (DMLBS)  
OE–1482 wik(e) (MED) OE  
1175 wiken (MED) OE  
1180–1471 bailliva (DMLBS)  
1197–1515 administratio (DMLBS)  
1200–1475 mister (MED) OF  
1240–1330 baillie (AND)  
1275–1399 governaille (AND)  
1278–1420 office (AND)  
1290–1402 digneté (AND)  
1297–1378 place (AND)  
1300– chaier(e) (MED) OF  
1300– office (MED) OF, L  
1354–1400 charge (AND)  
1371–1404 governance (AND)  
1387– occupacioun (MED) OF  
1390–1533 misteri(e) (MED) OF, ML  
1447 officiatu (DMLBS)  
1450–1522 officialatus (DMLBS)  
1485–1743 room (MED) OE

### 2.2.5 OTHER TYPES OF OFFICER

OE–1555 clerk (MED) OF, L  
1189–1334 receptor (DMLBS)  
1190/1200–14.. receivur (AND)  
1200– rekenere (MED) OE  
1209–1277 ber(e)-bret (MED) OE + OE  
1211–1452 bertonarius (DMLBS)  
1217 gastaldius (DMLBS)  
1250–1425 messer (AND)  
1256–1294 ridemannus (DMLBS) ME

1270 acuntur (AND)  
1272/3— (hist.) repe reve (MED) OE + OE  
1277–1356 computator (DMLBS)  
1277–1485 auditor (DMLBS)  
1281–1422 coauditor (DMLBS)  
1284/1343–1389 ringild (AND) Welsh  
1290 computarius (DMLBS)  
1300–1770 countour (MED) AF, CF  
1310–1329 vadlet (AND)  
1314/15–1321/22 bachelor (AND)  
1314/16–1401 surveour (AND)  
1322/23–1384 parker (AND)  
1327 fen-greive (MED) OE + ON  
1330–1680 sergeaunt (MED) OF  
1333–1533 auditour (MED) AF, ML  
1362 ripereve (AND) ME  
1380— (hist.) receivour (MED) AF  
1389 fenreve (MED) OE + OE  
1409 computator (DMLBS)  
1432–1782 surveiour (MED) AF, OF

#### 2.2.6 REEVE

OE— reve (MED) OE  
OE–1159 praeses (DMLBS)  
OE–1170 gastaldius (DMLBS)  
OE–1202 propositus (DMLBS)  
OE–1210 grafio (DMLBS)  
OE–1248 exactor (DMLBS)  
OE–1300 praetor (DMLBS)  
OE–1440 praepositus (DMLBS)  
OE–1567 praefectus (DMLBS)  
OE–1570 vilicus (DMLBS)  
1114 tungrevius (DMLBS) OE  
1150–1338 provost (AND)  
1326/39–1550 praepositarius (DMLBS)  
1372 reve (AND)  
1485–1489 rivus (DMLBS)  
1500 propositor (DMLBS)

#### 2.2.6.1 OFFICE OF REEVE

OE-1174 praefectura (DMLBS)  
OE-1548 praepositura (DMLBS)  
1212-1588 provostria (DMLBS)  
1283-1346 praepositatus (DMLBS)

#### 2.2.6.2 TYPES OF REEVE

1150 gardireve (AND)  
1244 socarius (DMLBS)  
1307 soke reve (MED) OE + OE  
1313 sokeman (AND) ME

#### 2.2.7 WOODWARD

OE- (hist.) wode-ward (MED) OE + OE  
OE-1306 forestarius (DMLBS)  
1136/37-1409/10 forester (AND)  
1153-1595 saltuarius (DMLBS)  
1187-1500 viridiarius (DMLBS)  
1212 nemoralis (DMLBS)  
1224-1545 wodewardus (DMLBS) ME  
1250-1283/85 verder (AND)  
1256 senescalcus foreste (DMLBS)  
1293 seneschal de la forest (AND)  
1297- forster (MED) OF  
1300-1587 lucarius (DMLBS)  
1319 rengiarius (DMLBS) ME  
1319-1606 rengator (DMLBS) ME  
1327- raunger (MED) OF + E  
1334 coidarius (DMLBS)  
1346 wodeward (AND) ME  
1387-1607 foster (MED) OF  
1425-1503 viridarie (MED) ML  
1440 indagator (DMLBS)  
1460-1718 verder (MED) AF  
1483 salator (DMLBS)

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### 2.2.7.1 DEPUTY WOODWARD

1334–1369 *suzforester* (AND)

### 2.2.7.2 OFFICE OF WOODWARD

1172–14.. *forestaria* (DMLBS)  
1253–1330 *senescalcia foreste* (DMLBS)  
1302–1455 *wodewardia* (DMLBS) ME  
1305–1330 *seneschalcie de la forest* (AND)  
1305–1374 *foresterie* (AND)  
1334 *coidaria* (DMLBS)  
1390 *wodewardwyke* (MED) OE + OE + OE  
1418–1640 *wodewardship* (MED) OE + OE  
1452 *senescallia foreste* (DMLBS)  
1464– *raungership* (MED) OF + E  
1475 *verder* (MED) AF

### 2.3 TENANT

OE– (hist.) *man* (MED) OE  
OE– (hist.) *aker-man* (MED) OE  
OE–1235 *terrarius* (DMLBS)  
OE–1250 *inquilinus* (DMLBS)  
OE–1363 *homo* (DMLBS)  
OE–1430 *serviens* (DMLBS)  
1088 *casatus* (DMLBS)  
11.–1452 *terretenant* (AND)  
1130/40–1299 *home* (AND)  
1181–1286 *mansionarius* (DMLBS)  
1214–1520 *tenens* (DMLBS)  
1220–1365 *medius* (DMLBS)  
1220–1572 *feodatus* (DMLBS)  
1225/1300–1400/09 *tenant* (AND)  
1236–1521 *redditarius* (DMLBS)  
1254–1433 *tenentiarius* (DMLBS)  
1260–1390/1412 *fermer* (AND)  
1277–1492 *feodarius* (DMLBS)  
1291/92–1314 *burgeis* (AND)  
1325– *tenaunt* (MED) OF, AF, ML

1333— subget (MED) L, OF, AF  
1334 priodarius (DMLBS)  
1350— holder(e) (MED) OE  
1387— (obs.) feodarie (MED) ML  
1396–1514 homagiarius (DMLBS)  
1405 sitter(e) (MED) OE  
1414— lond holder (MED) OE + OE  
1429–1515 tentor (DMLBS)  
1436 keper(e) (MED) OE  
1439— terre-tenaunt (MED) AF

### 2.3.1 GROUP OF TENANTS

1309–1380 gentz (AND)  
1423–1447/8 tenauntri(e) (MED) OF, AF, ML

### 2.3.2 OTHER TYPES OF TENANT

OE–1139 radchenister (DMLBS) OE  
OE–1337 censarius (DMLBS)  
1114/18–1587 firmarius (DMLBS)  
1125/8 plenarius (DMLBS)  
1149–1283/1312 par (DMLBS)  
1153— (hist. Scot.) gras man (MED) OE  
1166 montator (DMLBS)  
1168 exsartarius (DMLBS)  
1175 hundredanus (DMLBS)  
1180 ruricola (DMLBS)  
1182–1275 avermannus (DMLBS)  
1189 ferling sete (MED) OE + OE  
1189 ferlingsetus (DMLBS)  
1189–1485 ferdellarius (DMLBS)  
1190 averagius (DMLBS)  
1190–1234 wicarius (DMLBS)  
1200–1285 emphyteuticarius (DMLBS)  
1209–1378 selfodis (DMLBS) ME  
1218–1366 advocarius (DMLBS)  
1221–1277 hundredarius (DMLBS)  
1222–1283 hidarius (DMLBS)  
1222–1381 acremannus (DMLBS) OE

- 1230–1307 wicmannus (DMLBS) OE  
1234–1449 virgarius (DMLBS)  
1235/61–1330 ferdellus (DMLBS)  
1238–1279 croftmannus (DMLBS)  
1250–1279 croftarius (DMLBS)  
1255–1282 montarius (DMLBS)  
1270 prier (AND)  
1270 priere (AND)  
1271– (hist.) self-ode (MED) OE + ?ON/?ME  
1272 foresposmannus (DMLBS)  
1272 smal molman (MED) OE + ON + OE  
1272–1483 husbondus (DMLBS) OE  
1275–1280 gersumarius (DMLBS)  
1277–1438/9 molman (MED) ON + OE  
1277–1533 emphyteuta (DMLBS)  
1278–1309 bacaver (MED) OE  
1279 toftarius (DMLBS)  
1280 yerdling (MED) OE  
1283–1393 virgarius (DMLBS)  
1285 bermannus (DMLBS)  
1289 accasatus (DMLBS)  
1290 sulungarius (DMLBS)  
1291 gratianus (DMLBS)  
1292 seutor (DMLBS)  
1292 termer (AND)  
1297–1535 conventionarius (DMLBS)  
1299 essartarius (DMLBS)  
1299 goselandus (DMLBS)  
1299 morestarius (DMLBS)  
1299–1326 ferthendellarius (DMLBS)  
1300–1390 ferlingatarius (DMLBS)  
1304–1336 foremanna (DMLBS)  
1305–1316 monedailondus (DMLBS) OE  
1308–1521 arrentator (DMLBS)  
1309–1342 capitagiarius (DMLBS)  
1315 ferthingatarius (DMLBS)  
1316 hamstallarius (DMLBS)  
1316 hillelondus (DMLBS)

1317–1394 *communarius* (DMLBS)  
1319 *lesee* (AND)  
1330–1485 *triferdellarius* (DMLBS)  
1338 *rentarius* (DMLBS)  
1339–1350 *chevagiarius* (DMLBS)  
1349 *quartronarius* (DMLBS)  
1351–1381 *hidemannus* (DMLBS)  
1362 *pontagiarius* (DMLBS)  
1381 *demivirgatarius* (DMLBS)  
1400— *sutour* (MED) AF  
1436 *tenaunt bi devis* (MED) OF, AF, ML + OF  
1470 *seutator* (DMLBS)  
1479–1518 *arrentatarius* (DMLBS)  
1485 *semiferdellarius* (DMLBS)  
1495— *lessee* (MED) AF

#### 2.3.2.1 FEMALE TENANT

1447 *firmarissa* (DMLBS)

#### 2.3.3 POSITION OF TENANT

1311–1376 *tenance* (AND)  
1391— *tenauntri(e)* (MED) OF, AF, ML  
1448 *tenendria* (DMLBS)

#### 2.3.4 TENANT BY FREEHOLD

1165 *dominicus* (DMLBS)  
1180–1231 *frank-tenant* (MED) AF  
1225–1368 *liber* (DMLBS)  
1285–1419 *feffe* (AND)  
1289–1433 *affeuatus* (DMLBS)  
1290–1321/22 *feffer* (AND)  
1300–1475 *fre-holding* (MED) OE + OE  
1355–1391 *proprietaryus* (DMLBS)  
1369 *libertenens* (DMLBS)  
1375— *fre-holder* (MED) OE + OE  
1379–1418 *enfeoffe* (AND)  
1404–1438 *enfeffe* (MED) OF, AF

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1411— feffe (MED) AF  
1413/19–1475 fre-tenaunt (MED) OE + AF  
1422–1603 feffour (MED) AF

### 2.3.4.1 JOINT TENANT BY FREEHOLD

1394— cofeffe (MED) AF  
1436–1437 cofeffé (AND)  
1470/1 cofeffour (MED) AF

### 2.3.4.2 OTHER TYPES OF TENANT BY FREEHOLD

OE–1271 drengus (DMLBS)  
OE–1325 dreng (MED) ON  
1297— (hist.) frank(e)lein (MED) AF  
1387— yeman (MED) ?OE  
1488 franktenementare (MED) AF

### 2.3.5 TENANT BY JOINT TENURE

1180–1293 partiarius (DMLBS)  
1199–1317 parcenarius (DMLBS)  
1200–1304 partionarius (DMLBS)  
1279 contenens (DMLBS)  
1279–1320 convillanus (DMLBS)  
1292–1343 jointenant (AND)  
1302–1375/1419 parcener (AND)  
1313/14 comunitenant (AND)  
1321 portionarius (DMLBS)  
1443 partener(e) felawe (MED) OF + ON

#### 2.3.5.1 FEMALE TENANT BY JOINT TENURE

1286–1349 parcenaria (DMLBS)

### 2.3.6 TENANT BY SERVICE/ALLEGIANCE

OE–1565 baro (DMLBS)  
1130/5–1270 virro (DMLBS)  
1200— (hist.) baroun (MED) OF  
1400— (hist.) homager (MED) OF  
1400— (hist.) vassal (MED) OF

### 2.3.6.1 FEMALE TENANT BY ALLEGIANCE

1258–1496 baronissa (DMLBS)

### 2.3.6.2 TENANT IN SOCAGE

OE– (hist.) soke-man (MED) OE + OE  
OE–1321 socamannus (DMLBS) ME, AF  
1150–1315 sokeman (AND) ME  
1300 socagius (DMLBS)  
1300–1315 sok (AND)

### 2.3.6.3 UNFREE TENANT

OE–1500 toun-man (MED) OE  
OE–1583 villanus (DMLBS)  
1100–1382 hospes (DMLBS)  
1107–1664 landsettus (DMLBS) OE  
1158–1375 operarius (DMLBS)  
1189–1400 net (MED) OE  
1190–1348 netus (DMLBS)  
1195–1294 consuetudinarius (DMLBS)  
1196 villanagiarius (DMLBS)  
1200–1425 bond(e) (MED) OE, ON  
1200–1482 nativus (DMLBS)  
1210–1230 operator (DMLBS)  
1230–1270 custumer (AND)  
1230–1544 costumarius (DMLBS)  
1236–1324 bondemannus (DMLBS) ME  
1239 landsettagius (DMLBS)  
1243–1290 rusticus (DMLBS)  
1245–1386 bondus (DMLBS) ON  
1250–1403/04 naif (AND)  
1250–1503/04 bond(e)-man (MED) ON + OE  
1270 custume (AND)  
1270–1392/93 vilein (AND)  
1275– (obs.) hous-bond(e) (MED) OE + ON  
1279 bondagius (DMLBS)  
1291–1294 werk-man (MED) OE + OE  
1292–1290 astrer (AND)

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1300 operariator (DMLBS)  
1300 ruralis (DMLBS)  
1319–1466 tenant a volenté (AND)  
1325– (hist.) vilein (MED) OF, AF  
1334–1390/1412 naif tenant (AND)  
1338–1579/80 (obs.) servaunt (MED) OF, CF, AF  
1373 servitor (DMLBS)  
1375–1611 bond(e)-holdere (MED) ON + OE  
1440 custumer (MED) OF  
1460 costumarie (MED) AL  
1475–1612 tenaunt in vileinage (MED) OF, AF, ML + OF, AF, ML

2.3.6.3.1 COTTAR

OE– (hist.) cot–set(e) (MED) OE  
OE–1128 cotsetus (DMLBS) OE  
OE–1511 cotarius (DMLBS)  
OE–1537 cotmannus (DMLBS) ME  
OE–1542 coterellus (DMLBS)  
OE–1584 cot-man (MED) OE + OE  
1086–1460 cotarie (MED) ML  
1125–1649 coter (MED) OF  
1130– (hist.) coterel (MED) ML  
1252 cotlandarius (DMLBS)  
1260–1349/50 cotere (AND)  
1323 cotsetlemannus (DMLBS) OE

2.3.6.3.1.1 FEMALE COTTAR

1440 coterella (DMLBS)

2.3.6.3.2 FEMALE UNFREE TENANT

1234 operaria (DMLBS)  
1260–1302 vileine (AND)

2.3.6.3.3 OTHER TYPES OF UNFREE TENANT

1125/8 semivillanus (DMLBS)  
1130–1392 smalmannus (DMLBS)  
1182 lunaris (DMLBS)

1183–1402 malamannus (DMLBS)  
1272 smalmalamannus (DMLBS)  
1284–1306 lundinarius (DMLBS)  
1308 fordlotus (DMLBS) ME

#### 2.3.6.3.3.1 TENANT BY COPYHOLD

1130–1417 smal man (MED) OE + OE  
1461– copie-holder (MED) OF, ML + OE

#### 2.3.6.3.4 POSITION OF UNFREE TENANT

1290–1393/94 vileinage (AND)  
13..–1465 bondagium (DMLBS)  
1300–1651 bondage (MED) AF

#### 2.3.7 TENANT BY SUBTENURE

OE–1234 undersetla (DMLBS) OE  
OE–1344 vavassor (DMLBS)  
1230–1566 subtenens (DMLBS)  
1235/52–1781 undersetle (MED) OE  
1289 subaccasatus (DMLBS)  
1296 subvavassor (DMLBS)  
1300– (hist.) vavasour (MED) OF, AF  
1309–1331 subbordarius (DMLBS)  
1469 tenant paraval (AND)

#### 2.3.8 TENANT IN BORDAGE

OE–1234 bordarius (DMLBS)  
OE–1286 bordmannus (DMLBS)  
1150–1271 bordier (AND)  
1201– (hist.) border(e) (MED) OF

#### 2.3.8.1 FEMALE TENANT IN BORDAGE

1120 bordaria (DMLBS)

2.3.9 TENANT IN GAVELKIND

OE-1300 gabulator (DMLBS)

1206/7-1283 gavelman (MED) OE + OE

1224-1397 gavelmannus (DMLBS) ME

1232-1348 gavelikindus (DMLBS)

1275-1313/14 gavelkindeis (AND)

1313/14 gaveltenant (AND)

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# The multilingual lexis of the medieval English manor

Despite decades of scholarship on lexical borrowing in post-Conquest England, the vocabulary of the medieval countryside has remained largely outside the lens of contact linguistics — an oversight shaped by the long-standing assumption that French influence was confined to elite domains. At the same time, the multilingual reality of medieval England has made monolingual lexicography an increasingly inadequate tool: the Anglo-French, Medieval Latin, and Middle English lexicons of the period cannot be studied in isolation, yet no single trilingual resource has existed to study them together.

This book provides that resource. Drawing on the historical dictionaries of all three languages and grounded in cognitive semantics, it constructs an onomasiological thesaurus of the vocabulary associated with the medieval English manor — concepts and referents attested from 1100 to 1500, arranged in conceptual groupings modelled on the structure of the *Historical Thesaurus of English* and the *Bilingual Thesaurus of Everyday Life in Medieval England*.

The findings reframe received assumptions. Language contact shaped the rural lexicon far more deeply than the literature has claimed: French- and Latin-origin vocabulary dominates the terminology of manorial society, while native English holds its ground in the vocabulary of familiar locations. The asymmetry illuminates the social mechanics of borrowing in non-elite environments and carries implications for the history of English into the present day.

This book will be essential reading for specialists in the history of the English language, the history of linguistics, historical lexicology and lexicography, and medieval studies, as well as for historical linguists and advanced students of language contact and multilingualism.

About the author: Gloria Mambelli received her PhD at the University of Verona. She has since worked as a postdoctoral researcher and adjunct professor. Her research interests include English historical linguistics, historical lexicography and lexicology, corpus linguistics, and translation.