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The Influence of French on the Middle English Lexicon after the Norman Conquest

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Abstract

As a consequence of the Norman Conquest in 1066, the French language influenced to a high extent the Middle English lexicon, since English borrowed a high number of words. Literature on the topic has widely explored domains such as law, religion or administration. Nonetheless, the domain of Agriculture and Horticulture has not received much attention. Given the importance that agriculture had in England's society at that time, whose economy was based on a feudal system, a research using the *Oxford English Dictionary* was conducted to explore some of the most important borrowings from that domain. Moreover, in a selection of those words, which originally had the same meaning both in French and English, semantic changes were analysed to account for their current meanings in Present Day English and Present Day French. The results show that words which are widely used in PDE and whose current meanings are not always connected to the semantic field of agriculture and horticulture were used with meanings related to agriculture in the 14th century. Furthermore, both PDE and PDF show similar meanings for those words, having followed similar patterns of semantic change.

Keywords: Norman Conquest, Middle English lexicon, French borrowings, Agriculture and Horticulture.

Resumen

Como consecuencia de la Conquista Normanda en 1066, el francés influenció en gran medida el vocabulario del inglés medio, que tomó prestadas una gran cantidad de palabras. La literatura sobre el tema ha explorado extensivamente áreas como la ley, la religión o la administración. Sin embargo, el área de Agricultura y Horticultura no ha recibido demasiada atención. Dada la importancia que la agricultura tenía en Inglaterra para la sociedad de aquella época, ya que su economía se basaba en un sistema feudal, se ha llevado a cabo un estudio utilizando el *Oxford English Dictionary* con el fin de explorar los préstamos más importantes de dicha área. Además, en una selección de estos préstamos, los cuales originalmente tenían el mismo significado en francés y en inglés, también se han analizado los cambios semánticos que explican su significado en ambas lenguas en la actualidad. Los resultados muestran que palabras que hoy en día son de uso muy corriente en la lengua inglesa y cuyos significados no siempre están relacionados con la agricultura y la horticultura, en el siglo XIV se utilizaban con significados relacionados con dicho campo. Además, ambas lenguas comparten significados similares para estas palabras en la actualidad, habiendo seguido caminos similares en cuanto a cambios semánticos.

Palabras clave: Conquista Normanda, vocabulario del inglés medio, préstamos de origen francés, Agricultura y Horticultura.

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1. INTRODUCTION

One of the most important ways in which languages can evolve is through contact with other languages. Nowadays, language contact has become something much more common, and, as a result, languages influence each other easily. Nonetheless, at the time when globalisation was far from existing and the separation among languages was a fact, the two major reasons for language contact were migrations and conquests. It should be taken into account that, although language contact did take place, under some circumstances it was a short process that quickly led to "language loss and assimilation", and under some other circumstances, the result has been "long-term stability and acceptance by the bi- or multilingual population" (Sakoff, 2001, p. 3-4). The later was the case of French in England in the Middle Ages, the concrete period in which the paper will be based on.

The Norman Conquest in 1066 is one of the events that has influenced the most the development of the English language. It should be taken into account that English has always been receptive to changes, as shown by the influence Scandinavian had had on it after the Viking invasions or the large number of words that English borrowed from Latin during the period following the Christianisation of the Anglo-Saxons. The influence of French as a consequence of the Conquest was felt on different areas of the English language. The Conquest brought with it changes that affected both English grammar and phonology. For instance, the analytic dative and genitive constructions that English adopted in this period were reinforced by the French indirect object construction with *à* 'to' and the French genitive construction with *de* 'of', respectively. In terms of phonology, just to mention some examples, two new diphthongs of French origin were introduced, /ɔɪ/ and /ʊɪ/. Nonetheless, the greatest impact was observed on the lexicon. Borrowings have been proved to be a valuable source of linguistic influence, and in this case, English borrowed a great number of words both from Norman French (later Anglo-Norman) and Central French. These borrowings came from different domains, which reflected the natural process that follows a conquest. In the beginning, the separation between both languages was more acute, since the status of both languages was different and so the areas from which borrowings came at that time reflect that difference in terms of status. Nonetheless, over time, and mostly due to intermarriage, the population began to become bilingual. Thus, the areas from which borrowings were taken were more varied and the English lexicon incorporated a high amount of French-origin words, many of which are part of the Present Day English lexicon, in which more than 10.000 words have a French origin.

The paper will begin by providing an overview of the historical context in which the Norman Conquest took place and a review of the literature that covers the influence of French on the English vocabulary during the Middle English period. Then, I will contribute to the literature by exploring the domain of *Agriculture and Horticulture* using the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*). The reason behind this choice is that England's economy during the Middle Ages, and concretely at the time when the Norman Conquest took place, was one based on a feudal system and therefore agriculture played an important role. Even though after time other sectors began to acquire more importance, agriculture continued to be the means of sustenance for the majority of England's population (Thomas, 2008, p. 68). Since lords were in most cases of Norman origin, their tenants (regardless of whether they were of English or Norman origin) would be compelled to use some agriculture terminology of French origin. I will analyse the related meaning of a set of words belonging to the aforementioned domain, and then analyse the semantic change in some of these words by comparing the evolution in both Present Day English and Present Day French.

2. STATE OF THE ART

The central issue around which the paper is focused on is the influence that French had on the Middle English lexicon after the Norman Conquest. The borrowing of French words was at the core of this linguistic influence, but the process by which these words entered the English language needed to be further explored. Many scholars have already investigated this area of study, since the influence that French had on the English language is one that can be accounted for still nowadays, with the great number of words of French origin that the Present Day English lexicon has. Most studies have focused on the same areas of vocabulary: law, religion, government, administration and art, to name a few.

Scholars, when approaching the process of borrowings from French into the Middle English lexicon, start by pointing out at the difference in terms of status that was found at the beginning, after the conquest took place. Their point is to show how the type and number of borrowings that took place at the beginning of the period reflect that difference. One of the most well-known examples that is recurrent in all studies on the topic is that of animals being designated with their English name when they were alive, but on the contrary, referred to using the French term when they had been cooked to be eaten. This example is used to reflect the difference in terms of status of those who spoke English and those who spoke French, mostly at the beginning.

Gerry Knowles in his book *A Cultural History of the English Language* points out at the areas from which these words were borrowed at the beginning, which were war, law and religion, mainly. He also points at the difference in terms of the origin of those borrowings, since at the beginning they came from Norman French, the dialect spoken by those who conquered England. Nonetheless, those borrowings started to come from Central French, the dialect spoken in Paris and that would become the prestigious one as a consequence of the loss of Normandy on the part of King John.

In those same lines, Charles Barber in the book *The English Language: A Historical Introduction* introduces the comparison between the way in which the words were borrowed in the case of Scandinavian with that of French to illustrate that same point: that of the difference in terms of status of the two languages at the beginning of the ME period. In the case of Scandinavian, the words that were borrowed belonged to more domestic areas, as opposed to in the case of French. The reason given is that the Norman Conquest implied the complete replacement of the native aristocracy, and so again the focus is on the borrowings that reflect that difference in terms of status between French and English. Barber gives examples of borrowings that belong to the domains of titles of rank, ecclesiastical life, administration, law, military techniques and art, among others. He also explores the issue of Central French or Norman French as being the source of those borrowings. He explains that at the beginning, borrowings only came from Norman French and that it was during the 13th and 14th centuries that borrowings were taken from Central French. The Norman French ones, nonetheless, were much more integrated within the English language and include more familiar words than the ones coming from Central French. Also, the case of "doublets" is explained. Words that were borrowed first from Norman French, and then again from Central French, in each case with a different meaning.

Finally, Laurel J. Brinton and Leslie Arnovick in their book *The English Language: A Linguistic History* point at the period in Middle English in which the highest number of borrowings took place, which was from the second half of the 13th century until the end of the 14th century. The study carried out by the grammarian Otto Jespersen is used to illustrate this point since out of the 1,000 French borrowings he analysed, more than 40% of them entered the English language during that period. The reason given is that this was the period in which there was more bilingualism among the population. In the book, they also mention how

borrowings started to enter the English language also from other domains: architecture, literature, medicine, furnishings and social life, to name a few.

3. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF ENGLAND PRIOR AND AFTER THE NORMAN CONQUEST

One may consider the Norman Conquest as the historical event that has influenced the most the development of English. The Norman Conquest had a profound effect on England's society at that time, which would alter its course both socially and politically. It should be borne in mind that England's connections with France existed long before the conquest took place. Edward the Confessor, King of England from 1042 to 1066, was half Norman and, therefore, nobility in England already had strong connections with France. Nonetheless, it was not until the Norman conquerors landed on England that the course of the English language was altered. To begin with, a portrait of the Normans should be presented. Normandy's rulers were originally Scandinavian Vikings who had conquered especially the North of France in the 9th and 10th centuries, and who were finally accepted by the King of France. In fact, the word Norman is a compound that originally derives from 'north' and 'man'. Hrólfr Ganger, better known as Rollo, was their leader, and he was declared the first Duke of Normandy in 912. The King of France became his overlord. Over the years, the Normans progressively integrated within the native population to the extent that they were no longer foreign neither in speech nor in culture (Barber, 2007).

It should be borne in mind that connections between England and Gaul[1] already existed before the Norman Conquest took place. Concretely, Normandy and England had already been close since the marriage of King Ethelred[2] to Emma of Normandy (King Richard II's sister) in 1002 and the coronation of their son, Edward the Confessor, –who was himself half-Norman and who had been educated in France – as King of England in 1042 (Davies, 2003). Nonetheless, there would be another pretender to the English throne in Normandy: William "the Conqueror", previously known as "the Bastard". To give a bit of context as to who William was, it is important to keep in mind that he had been the Duke of Normandy since he was six years old, when he had succeeded his father after he died. However, he was a bastard, since his

[1] Name given by the Romans to the territories where the Celtic Gauls lived, including present France, Belgium, Luxemburg and parts of the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany on the west bank of the Rhine, and the Po Valley, in present Italy.

[2] King Ethelred II "the Unready".

mother was the daughter of a tanner. At the same time, his second cousin was King Edward, who in his visits to England had led him to believe that he would succeed him in the English throne. It is believed that Harold Godwinson, the other pretender to the English throne and who was captured in Normandy in 1064, may have promised William not to oppose to his ascension to the throne. Despite that, Harold, Edward the confessor's bother-in-law and advisor, was named king of England on the 6th January 1066. William decided to conquer England, and so he arrived in England with a large army on the 28th September 1066, concretely in Pevensey, which was near Hastings. Harold, who was in the north of England had to descend and the two clashed in the battle of Hastings on the 14th October 1066. After important losses on Harold's side, he himself was finally killed in battle, supposedly by an arrow in his eye. His army had been defeated, and William was crowned as the King of England in Westminster Abbey on the 25th December 1066 (Brinton & Arnovick, 2011). Immediately after the conquest, William confronted the opposition of the country he had conquered, to which he responded by burning down their lands and placing the army in non-urban areas. Besides, he sentenced those members of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy accused of treason to death and distributed his followers (whether they were Norman or not) with the newly acquired properties from the English high society. The way life changed for much of the English population is illustrated in these words:

> The entire governing class of Anglo-Saxon England, some 4000 or 5000 thegns, had been made to vanish and authority, wealth, men and beasts had been given to foreigners. You could survive and still be English. You could even speak the language. But politically, you were now a member of the underclass, the inferior race ... you lived in England, but it was no longer your country (Schama, 2000, p. 67-8) (Singh, 2005, p. 106).

Their arrival in England has often been misinterpreted as if they had brought a civilisation in a way superior to the one that already existed there. Historians agree on the fact that this was not the case, but rather, that the Normans demonstrated a superiority mostly in terms of military techniques and castle construction (Barber, 2007). As regards social organisation, there has been a misconception in the sense that it was generally accepted that the Normans introduced a political system based on feudalism. The truth is that before 1066, the system on which England's political society was based was a "feudal system", in which a lord had a number of tenants that rendered their services in exchange for land. The difference between the French

lords and the previous ones (English and Anglo-Scandinavian) was that the former seemed to hold more power over their tenants (whether English or French). The explanation to that is not found in claiming that they introduced new practices with regards to feudalism. Instead, it was a matter of the opportunity created by the Conquest of substituting the entire social class that owned the lands, which resulted in closer connections between lords. In that same way, the fact that there was an introduction of lexicon related to lordship did not imply that there was an introduction of a new social system, but rather a vocabulary change (Davies, 2003).

One of the main consequences that the Conquest had on England was the destruction and subsequent replacement of the native aristocracy. Besides, lands were expropriated and distributed among the new conquerors, while the church and education were also under their rule, and so French became the language of those at the top of the hierarchy. The substitution of the English aristocracy and religious positions continued even during the reigns of King William's descendants. Just to mention an example, in 1072 there was only one earldom in England whose earl was of English ascendancy, and indeed he was executed in 1076 (Baugh & Cable, 2002, p. 112). All that had an enormous impact not only on the social and political future of England but also on the development of the English language, since that situation extended for more than two hundred years (Barber, 2007). The consequences of the Norman Conquest were overwhelming but at the same time rapidly accepted by the native population. Indeed, both people became mingled quite rapidly, as the large number of intermarriages between Norman men and English women proves. Another example that illustrates that fusion was that the Norman nobility began to found monasteries on their lands and chose to be buried in their newly acquired lands, instead of in Normandy. Apparently, this was particularly frequent under the kingdom of Henry I, as stated by an English jurist at the end of the 12th Century: "Now that the English and Normans have been dwelling together, marrying and giving in marriage, the two nations have become so mixed that it is scarcely possible today, speaking of free men, to tell who is English, who of Norman race" (Baugh & Cable, 2013).

In the beginning, although the new conquerors did not outnumber the native population, they continued to communicate in own their language, only using some English words sparingly. For 200 years French was the language of the upper classes. Their power did not come from outnumbering the English population, but solely from the position they occupied as the new governors (Singh, 2005). In the beginning, only those of Norman descent spoke French. Nonetheless, as intermarriage and social interaction between both communities

became more frequent, the need to learn the new language arose on the part of the native population. Regardless of that, English continued to be the language of the majority of the population and so finally the ruling class had no other option than to learn the native language (Baugh & Cable, 2013). It is worth mentioning that, although French became the language of those who belonged to the upper-class, the majority of the population continued to speak English. Since there was not a standard variety of English recognised as the norm, each region used its own dialect. As a consequence, the texts written in English during the Middle English period consist of a mixture of dialects (Barber, 2007).

Nonetheless, although it is generally accepted that French was the language spoken by the upper-classes and English the one spoken by the majority of the population, this division cannot be entirely clear-cut. It is presumed that the upper-classes started to become familiar with English as time passed and that French was not only spoken by the French aristocracy. When addressing the use of French on the part of those who belonged to the upper-class, it should be taken into account that it was not reduced to those who were of Norman origin, but instead, it encompassed all of the aristocracy and their connections regardless of their origin. Hence, it is not surprising that French was seen as a mark of higher social status. In those same lines, since English was the language spoken by the majority of the population, many of those who belonged to the aristocracy also had to become familiar with it to a certain extent. Although it was not the norm, many bishops (including those of Norman origin) were fluent in three languages: English, French and Latin. The presence of English in religious settings was further reinforced by the fact that the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle was continued to be written until 1154 in Peterborough. Therefore, it can be claimed that by the end of the 12th century, those who were educated or were in contact with both the aristocracy and the lower classes, were most probably in command of both English and French (Baugh & Cable, 2013).

In those same lines, by the time the 12th century was coming to its end, French was not completely unknown to those who belonged to social classes other than the aristocracy. Thus, for instance, there is evidence that knights were in command of French regardless of which was their mother tongue. Moreover, some of those who lived in towns also had some knowledge of French, so as to be able to communicate with the merchants, who were mostly of Norman origin. Nonetheless, it should be borne in mind that their knowledge of French was not widespread, as a writer pointed out by the end of the 13th century: “Common men know no French / Among a hundred scarcely one” (Baugh & Cable, 2013, p. 120). Hence, before the

loss of Normandy took place in 1204, it could be claimed that there was a small percentage of the population who only spoke French and a large majority who only spoke English, leaving aside a part of the population who were bilingual (Baugh & Cable, 2013).

There was an event, however, that would completely change the status of the French language in England: the loss of Normandy by King John in 1204. It caused a fracture in the connections between England and the continent. John married Isabel de Angoulême, who was indeed already engaged to Hugh of Lusignan, a powerful noble. As a consequence, King John, who was also the duke of Normandy, was asked to respond in front of the French court at Paris. Since he refused to do so, Philip, the king of France, declared that he would no longer have possession in Normandy and invaded it. That marriage and his refusal to respond in front of the court at Paris made him start to lose followers and the ultimate event that led to his unpopularity was the death of Prince Arthur (who was married to King Philip's daughter and who at the same time was King John's nephew and captive), who was believed to have been assassinated. Rouen succumbed in 1204 and so Normandy was no longer part of the crown of England (Baugh & Cable, 2013). As a consequence of the newly acquired control of King Philip over Normandy, *francien* became the standard variety of French (Central French) and the one with prestige, making Norman French (the one that was spoken in England at that time) lose its status. What is more, Central French began to be taught in England as a foreign language (Knowles, 1997).

In the 13th century, French was still the language spoken at the court and the language in which literature was written; nonetheless, it was in this century that the change towards a higher use of the English language began (Barber, 2007). As it was mentioned above, it was in the 13th century, when the loss of Normandy took place nourishing hostility between England and France England, that all the population of England was finally united (Baugh & Cable, 2013). The main consequence of this loss was that the aristocracy in England at that time had to decide whether to lend their support to Normandy or England and so the connection between both was debilitated. Furthermore, at the time when Henry III was king (1216-72), many French aristocrats moved to the English court, bringing Central French with them. The use of this variety of French, which was very prestigious across Europe, was encouraged and there were "warnings against speaking improper French." On the contrary, negative attitudes against English had started to decrease, since it had become the habitual language to use, and eventually, would be re-established as the national language of England. French, with its high

social status, began to be seen as “a matter of culture and fashion rather than ethnicity. As such, it evoked resentment among an increasingly nationalistic populace and began to diminish in use” (Brinton & Arnovick, 2011, p. 246).

Nonetheless, there were two major events that also contributed to the aforementioned restoration of English. First, the Hundred Years War between England and France, in which the English achieved decisive victories, adding to the construction of an English nationalism. Secondly, the Black Death plague, which also had a decisive role. More than 40 per cent of the population died as a consequence of the plague, and of those the majority belonged to the working classes. Since they were reduced in number, their demand was higher (from 1337 to 1453), and so it granted them with the opportunity of demanding a raise in their salary and to have better labour conditions. Moreover, the population who lived in urban areas began to grow, and so did the middle classes. “As the political power and social status of English speakers increased, so did the status of their language. English became, then, both the prestige language and a sign of in-group solidarity, factors that are very important in the adoption of linguistic forms” (Brinton & Arnovick, 2011, p. 246). Progressively, English began to be the language that was used in formal contexts, to the extent that schools adopted it as the language of instruction, and so did judicial hearings (except for the royal court). During the 14th century, the number of literary texts written in English also increased. All this led to the eventual restoration of English, and most academics agree that it was accomplished by the time Henry V was the sovereign (1413-22) (Brinton & Arnovick, 2011).

To conclude, had it not been for the Norman Conquest in 1066 one can only speculate on the kind of language English would have developed into. Most probably English would have followed the same path as the other Germanic languages, which relied more on word inflection and were much more closed to incorporating borrowings into their word-stock. Although French influenced to a certain extent English’s grammar and phonology, without the Norman Conquest, one of the most important effects we would have nowadays on the English language would be the lack of the great number of words that were borrowed from French (Baugh & Cable, 2013). It should always be borne in mind that more than 10.000 words of French origin are part of the English lexicon. After having considered all the other effects that the conquest had (politically and socially), as regards its linguistic effects, it is important to take into account the fact that English had always been a language open to the influence of other languages. This feature, which is not found in some other languages, made it possible for French to have the

impact that it had on the English language at that time and for English to be the language that it is nowadays.

4. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

When analysing the economic and political effects that the Norman Conquest had on the English society in the Middle English period, one inevitably has to focus on its effects on language as well. The influence of both Norman and Central French can be noted on almost all areas of Middle English. Nonetheless, its influence on the English vocabulary is particularly remarkable as evidenced by the large number of French-origin words (more than 10.000) that have survived into Modern English. Although there is a great number of resources (both online and physical) that address the topic of the Norman Conquest and its influence on the English language, the extent to which the amount of French-origin words introduced during the Middle English period has been thoroughly analysed could be debated. Hence, the aim of this study is to provide an in-depth literature review on the influence of French on the English vocabulary during the Middle English period.

Most scholars agree that it was during the Late Middle English period that the greatest number of French borrowings occurred. Nonetheless, before diving into any analysis, it should be taken into consideration the fact that the number of texts dated back to the Late Middle English period is much larger than during the Early Middle English period. Due to that reason, it may be misleading to believe that all French borrowings entered the English language by the end of the period. It might have been in use earlier, but there are no written records to prove it. It is indeed a fact though, that there was a higher amount of borrowings during the Late Middle English period. This was due to the natural process that follows a conquest since at the beginning both languages were more strictly separated due to the separation between the conquerors and the conquered. It is agreed though, that French was not superior to English in any sense, but simply the language of the conquerors who took the lands and became the new aristocracy, forcing those who spoke English to learn French at some point.

Since at the beginning the new rulers did not learn the native language (that is, English), the separation between both was much more strict. It is important to highlight, as it was mentioned earlier, that English continued to be spoken by the vast majority of the population, and so many scholars agree on the claim that most borrowings during the Early Middle English period had to do with areas that show the power of the conquerors, both culturally and

politically. The literature on the topic is flooded with examples that have to do with war, law or ecclesiastical matters, to name but a few. Scholars agree that this was true especially at the beginning, and so one can find the words *chancellor, prison* and *justice* in The Peterborough entry for 1137 (Knowles, 1997). Many scholars often make reference to the Scandinavian borrowings that English had taken earlier, in order to illustrate that point. They claim that as opposed to the Vikings, who integrated within the native population much more equally, the Normans maintained a much more strict separation at the beginning, and so the French words that were borrowed were much less "homely" that the Scandinavian ones. The Norman Conquest brought about the almost total replacement of the English aristocracy with a Norman one. Thus, it is not surprising that among the words borrowed from French during the Middle English period we find those related to titles of rank, *baron, count, duke*. Changes of personnel among the upper clergy and administrative officers were also very significant, this would explain the large number of words related to ecclesiastical life that were borrowed, *abbey, religion, saint, sermon* or *virgin*, and related to administration, such as *council, crown, government, people,* and *nation*. Changes in the legal system also brought about a large amount of borrowings in that domain, such as *accuse, court, crime, justice, prison.* It is not surprising as well that there were many borrowings related to military terms since the new conquerors brought with them a number of new military techniques as well as the construction of castles; words such as *armour, battle, castle, tower or war*. Other domains where there was an influx of borrowings include fashion (the word itself being a borrowing) with words such as *costume* or *dress*; art, where we find words such as *beauty, colour, music, paint, poem, romance* and *sculpture*); but also words used to describe mental and moral qualities were borrowed from French, such as *courtesy, cruelty, mercy*, and *obedience* (Barber 2007). Thus, studies have proven and there is a consensus as regards the fact that objects that belonged to the upper-class were referred to using the French term, whereas those that had to do with "ordinary people" maintained the English name. For instance, English *home* and *house* but French *manor* and *palace*; English *child, daughter,* and *son*, but French *heir* and *nurse*; English *maid, man,* and *woman,* but French *butler* and *servant*. Many scholars also offer the example of borrowings that had to do with prepared meat in order to illustrate the point that borrowings clearly show the power of the conquerors. Animals were referred to using the English name; for instance, *veal, ox, pig, deer* and *sheep*. Nonetheless, they were referred to using its French counterpart when they were already prepared to be eaten, as with *calf, beef, pork, venison* and *mutton*; this

distinction was already remarked by John Wallis in 1653 (Barber, 2007; Knowles, 1997; Brinton & Arnovick, 2011).

As it was explained above, from the 11th to the 12th century French remained the language of the upper class, and so not that many words were borrowed. As the population became bilingual in both languages, mostly due to intermarriage, during the 13th and 14th centuries words started to be borrowed from French into English, most usually when speakers addressed topics that had to do with government or literature since French was the language that had been used for those purposes until then (Barber, 2007). Concretely, there has been a period identified as that in which the majority of borrowings took place: between 1250 and 1400, 1380 being its highest peak. According to the grammarian Otto Jespersen, who carried out a study in which he analysed 1,000 French borrowings, more than 40% of the words borrowed from French entered into English between 1250 and 1400. This period is assumed to be the one that witnessed more bilingualism. As it was mentioned earlier, the population had already begun to become bilingual (mostly due to intermarriage), and there was a need to resort to some French terms when speaking in English. It must be taken into account that

> When a common second language is learned and used by a group of people [...] they often find themselves introducing second-language lexical items into conversation with fellow bilinguals in their original first language. Such items, referred to by Weinreich as nonce borrowings (Weinreich and Herzog, 1968, p. 47) seem to constitute the thin end of the wedge in various types of subsequent linguistic change. [...] nonce borrowings are clearly the route for the later adoption or integration of these lexical items as loan-words [...] (Sakoff, 2001, p. 5).

It is important to remark that although borrowings came from the semantic domains of government or literature, they also started to come from a wider range of semantic fields: economic organization (*tar, revenue, estate*), architecture (*cathedral, vault, porch*), music (*melody, dance, music*), literature (*volume, prose, poet*), medicine (*surgeon, ointment, physician*), learning (*grammar, rhyme, logic*), food (*biscuit, bacon, dinner, fruit*), furnishings (*lamp, blanket, couch*), social life (*conversation, recreation, tavern*), non-nuclear family (*niece, nephew, uncle, aunt*), trade (*grocer, tailor, mason*) (Brinton & Arnovick, 2011).

Another issue frequently addressed in the literature has to do with whether the origin of those borrowing can be found in Norman French or Central French. Those who invaded England in 1066 spoke a variety of French that was called “Norman French”, and when in

contact with the English people this dialect became another variant known as "Anglo-Norman". However, from the 13th century and onwards, Central French, the dialect spoken in Paris became the most popular and prestigious, influencing the rest of France. The fact of Central French becoming the prestigious dialect also reached England, where Anglo-Norman began to lose prestige and was replaced by Central French at the court. As regards the linguistic situation in France, at that time the two main languages spoken where *langue d'oil* (the language spoken in the north) and *langue d'oc* (the language spoken in the south). The king in Paris was the sovereign of *Île de France*, but also of other duchies such as Normandy, Burgundy and Brittany. In each of these duchies, the variety of French that was spoken was different, hence the French brought by the Normans to England was considerably different from *francien*, the French spoken in *Île de France*. After the conquest, since over time the Normans mixed and mingled with the English population, the differences between them both became barely distinguishable. The issue from that moment onwards was the growing hostility between them and the Normans in France. This situation was exacerbated King John lost Normandy in 1204 and the King of France claimed Normandy under his control. This newly acquired control also had consequences on the French language, since *francien* became the standard variety of French (Central French) and the most prestigious, making Norman French (the one that Normans had brought with them into England) lose its status. What is more, Central French began to be taught in England as a foreign language (Knowles, 1997). Thus, scholars claim that at the beginning borrowings were only taken from Norman French. Later, during the 13th and 14th centuries, they came mainly from Central French. Nonetheless, those that came from Norman are "very thoroughly assimilated into English, and include more ordinary everyday words than the later borrowings from Central French, presumably because in many cases they were introduced by the Norman rank and file who came over at the Conquest" (Barber, 2007, p. 148), with examples such as *garden, hour, market, people*, and *wage* among those borrowings. Doublets are also widely discussed in the literature, in this case of we refer to the process of borrowing the same word first from Norman and then from Central French, and then finding both forms in Modern English but with different meanings such as in *catch/chase, cattle/chattel, wurden/guardian, wage/gage 'pledge', cant/chant, warranty/guarantee*, and *reward/regard* (Barber, 2007; Brinton & Arnovick, 2011). Despite the fact that French borrowings come from two different varieties, there exist phonetics differences that allow us to distinguish them and determine whether they can be considered early or late borrowings. Thus, for instance, Latin [k] before *a* in Norman French remains as [k], while in Central French

it develops as [č], which explains *carry* vs. *charity*. Also, the loss of [s] before (t) in central French results in the early borrowing *hostel* and the late borrowing *hotel*.

The review of the literature I carried out proved to be a valuable source of information, providing me first of all, with a broad knowledge of the historical context of England before and after the Norman Conquest, and then in terms of the linguistic consequences that the conquest had. In my review of the literature, I have mentioned which ones were the areas that had been thoroughly explored before: law, ecclesiastical titles, art, government, administration, nobility titles, and medicine, among others. Therefore, as I already mentioned, I decided to explore a semantic field that had not received much research attention before: that of *Agriculture and Horticulture.*

5. METHODOLOGY

This paper provides an exploratory analysis of the ME French borrowings related to the domain of *Agriculture and Horticulture*. The linguistic data have been extracted from the *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)* (https://www.oed.com./).

The study focuses on the 14th century because it was the period of Middle English that saw the highest influx of French origin borrowings, and so as to have more options in terms of input. In order to identify the target words, first, words filtered on the basis of their origin (in this case French, without making a distinction between Norman and Central French), and then in terms of the date in which they were first recorded in the English language.

Finally, semantic changes were analysed in some of the words previously explored. To identify potential semantic changes in English I also employed the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*). In the case of French, in order to account for semantic changes, I used a combination of the *Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé* (*TLFi*) and the *Larousse Dictionnaire*.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After exploring the lexicon found in the *Agriculture and Horticulture* section in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), I selected 15 words. I will present these words chronologically based on the time of first attestation in English with a meaning (or meanings) related to the aforementioned domain. To begin with, I state the date in which the word in question enters the English language, and then the date in which it appears with a meaning that is related to *Agriculture and Horticulture*. It is important to note that the date in which the word appears

being used with a particular meaning does not imply that the word had not already been used with that meaning. In most cases, this is due to that there is no documentary evidence. Then, I provide some of the forms that the word originally had in ME and mention the origin of the word, since sometimes it is specified whether it came from Norman or Central French, or whether it was partly a borrowing from Latin as well. Finally, I state the meaning or meanings related to *Agriculture* and/or *Horticulture* that the word had in the 14th century[3] and provide an example of usage of the word for each meaning.

6.1. The domain of Agriculture and Horticulture in the 14th century

First I will start by introducing the noun *gardener,* which appears in the English language circa 1300. Some of the forms it adopted in the ME period were *gardenere, gardiner or gardeiner*. As regards its origin, there are two different possibilities. It was either formed in Middle English by adding the suffix -er to the noun *garden* (modelled on a French lexical item *jardin* + -ier suffix), or it was borrowed from Anglo-Norman in the late 12th century or earlier, where the forms *gardiner*, *gardener* had developed as a variant of the Anglo-Norman word *jardiner,* from Norman French *gardinier.* The meaning of the word was "a person employed to tend, cultivate, or lay out a garden", as in (1)

1. He clepid his *gardener* þo And asked whi þe olde tre verd so (*c*1330[4] in *Seven Sages* (Auch.) (1933) l. 478 (*MED*)).

It was also used to refer to "a person who is skilled or knowledgeable in gardening, or who cultivates a garden as a pastime," as in (2)

2. Þe greate gardyner, þet is, god þe uader, huanne he nhesseþ þe herte and makeþ zuete and tretable..ase land guod and agrayþed (1340 in *Ayenbite* (1866) 94 (*MED*)).

In this case, the word has not undergone any semantic changes, the same meanings are preserved in Present Day English.

[3] Some examples may have two dates: the first one, the date of documentary evidence, and the second one (*), the date of composition of the text.

[4] *c*: circa

The noun *grange* also appears in the English language circa 1300. The form it adopted in Anglo-Norman was *graunge.* It came from the Middle French word *grange.* Originally, the meaning of this word was "an establishment where farming is carried on," as in (3)

3. The Samaritan..ladde hym so forth on lyard to *lex-christi*, a *graunge* (1377 in W. Langland *Piers Plowman* B. xvii. 71).

Moreover, it was used to refer to "a group of such places, a village" (although this meaning is now obsolete). Nowadays *grange* is used to refer to "a country house with farm buildings attached, usually the residence of a gentleman-farmer."

It also designed "a repository for grain; a granary, barn" (4). This meaning is now archaic.

4. And eke of loves mo eschaunges Than ever cornes were in *graunges* (*c*1384 in G. Chaucer *Hous of Fame* ii. 190).

The noun *manor* appeared in the English language before the 14th century, circa 1290. In Middle English texts, it is found spelled in a variety of forms including *manar, mannour* and *manore.* In Anglo-Norman the word was found as *maner, manor, manoir, manoyre,* and in Old French as *manoir* and *maneir*. It is circa 1300 that it appears with a meaning related to agriculture. It was used to refer to "a mansion or country residence; the principal house of an estate, spec. (in Law) that occupied by the owner of the estate" (5). This meaning is related to the system of *manorialism* in England, in which there was a lord who owned the land that the farmers worked. The meaning of *manor* to refer to a "mansion or country residence" is still found in PDE.

5. Þe bissop of eli & þe king sone wende To a *maner* þer biside (*c*1325 ((*) *c*1300) in *Chron. Robert of Gloucester* (Calig.) 10231 (*MED*)).

The word had another meaning related to feudal law, "a unit of English territorial organization, consisting of the lands belonging to or under the jurisdiction of a feudal lord", as in (6)

6. And that all the Patentes..of thes Names, Castels, *Maners,* Lordesships..be ȝolden uppe into the Chauncellerie (1399 in *Rolls of Parl.* III. 452/1).

The noun *pasture* enters the English language before 1300. As it was the case with the majority of words in the Middle English lexicon, the word adopted different forms depending on the region. Some examples are *pasturre* and *pastour*. The word was a borrowing partly from

Latin *pastura* and French *pasture*. At the beginning, it designated "a piece of grassy land used for or suitable for the grazing of animals, esp. cattle or sheep; pastureland," (7)

7. Synay is an hiȝe mount and noble and worthi to *pasture* and bereth beste herbes and gras ((*) *a*1398 in J. Trevisa tr. Bartholomaeus Anglicus *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (BL Add.) f. 168).

The word was also used to refer to "the action of feeding (on the part of an animal); *spec.* the action of grazing," although this usage of the word is now obsolete, as in (8)

8. Leue I this Chauntecleer in his *pasture* (*c*1390 in G. Chaucer *Nun's Priest's Tale* 4375).

Pasture also referred to "the feeding or tending of animals; *spec.* the practice of putting livestock out into the field," as in (9)

9. In hillis is plente of herbes, gras, and lese; þay ben acordynge to *pasture* of shepe and of oþer bestes ((*) *a*1398 in J. Trevisa tr. Bartholomaeus Anglicus *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (BL Add.) f. 164).

The verb *to nourish* entered the English language circa 1300. The word adopted different forms depending on the area of England in which it was found. Its origin is in the French word *noris-*, *norrir*. It was used to express a variety of senses, nonetheless, the ones related to the domain that is being explored were "to bring up or rear (an animal)" (10), and to tend, cultivate, or promote the growth of (a plant, crop, etc.)" (11), both of them obsolete nowadays

10. An Oxeherde..feedeþ and *norissheþ* oxen (*a*1398[5] in J. Trevisa tr. Bartholomaeus Anglicus *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (BL Add.) f. 273v).

11. Fro þat time Crist suffret payn..Iewes haden neuer myȝt ne mayn to *norisch* corn in no cuntre (*a*1500 ((*) ?*a*1400) in *Stanzaic Life of Christ* (Harl. 3909) (1926) 1052 (*MED*)).

Lastly, it was also used to mean "to supply (a plant, inanimate object, etc.) with whatever is necessary to promote growth or formation, or to maintain a healthy condition". This meaning is still in use nowadays as in (12)

[5] *a*: ante (before)

12. A drope..fediþ and *norissheþ* rotes and seedes ((*) *a*1398 in J. Trevisa tr. Bartholomaeus Anglicus *De Proprietatibus Rerum* (BL Add.) f. 158v).

The noun *butcher* entered the English language before 1325. In Anglo-Norman, it had been found as *bucher, bowcher, bocher, bochier,* from the French *bouchier* or *boucher*. In Middle English the word had numerous forms, from *bocheor* to *bochier*, finally being consolidated as *butcher*. The original meaning, which is still preserved nowadays, was "a person whose trade is the preparation and selling of meat. Also, esp. in early use, a person who deals with both the slaughter of livestock and the preparation of animal flesh for food" (13). The word would later acquire other meanings, such as "a shop where meat is sold" (a meaning which is still in use nowadays), "a person who slaughters people indiscriminately or brutally", "an executioner; a person who inflicts capital punishment or torture", and "something that inflicts torture or punishment; a scourge" (the two last ones have become obsolete).

13. A woman þat was quene of Fraunce by eritage wedded a *bocher* for his fairenesse (*a*1387 in J. Trevisa tr. R. Higden *Polychron.* (St. John's Cambr.) (1865) I. 285).

The noun *park* entered the English language much earlier, recorded for the first time in 1222. Nonetheless, the first time it appeared in an English text with a meaning related to agriculture and horticulture was circa 1325. It adopted a variety of forms, some of them were *paark, perk, perke*. It was a borrowing from the Old French word *parc*. The word was used to refer to "any large enclosed piece of ground, usually comprising woodland and pasture, attached to or surrounding a manor, castle, country house, etc., and used for recreation, and often for keeping deer, cattle, or sheep"(14)

14. Forth sche wente prively Unto the *Park* was faste by, Al softe walkende on the gras ((*) *a*1393 in J. Gower *Confessio Amantis* (Fairf.) iv. 1288 (*MED*).

It also meant "an enclosed piece of ground for pasture or cultivation; a field, a paddock", as in (15). This meaning is nowadays regional. It is mainly found in Scottish.

15. I axe nouther *Park* ne Plowh; If I hire hadde, it were ynowh ((*) *a*1393 in J. Gower *Confessio Amantis* (Fairf.) v. 2849 (*MED*)).

The adjective *gentle* had already been borrowed into the English language before 1200. It comes from the Old French word *gentil/jentil* and it could be found in many different forms,

among them *gentil*, *gentill* and *gentyl*. Originally, the word's meaning was not related to agriculture; nonetheless, in the 14th century it acquired a sense that was related to this domain. The adjective *gentle* was used to refer to "an animal of excellent breed or spirit," as in (16). This meaning has fallen into disuse nowadays.

16. This *gentil* Cok hadde in his gouernaunce Seuene hennes (*c*1386 in Chaucer *Nun's Priest's Tale* 45).

The noun *forest* already appears in the English language in the 13th century, in 1297, with a form that was quite regular, except that sometimes it could be found as *foreste* or *foreist/foreyst.* It finally adopted the exact same form as in the Old French *forest*. It appears before 1375 with a meaning that was related to agriculture, since the word started to be used to designate "an extensive tract of land covered with trees and undergrowth, sometimes intermingled with pasture. Also, the trees collectively of a 'forest' (17)

17. In þat *forest*..þer woned a wel old cherl (*a*1375 ((*) *c*1350) in *William of Palerne* (1867) l. 3.

The noun *paradise* had also entered the English language much earlier, during the Old English period with a religion-related meaning ("the abode of Adam and Eve before the Fall in the biblical account of the Creation; the Garden of Eden"). Nonetheless, the word is found in 1374-5 with a meaning that is related to horticulture. It adopted a variety of forms, but it was commonly found as *paradise* or *paradis/paradys*. It was partly a borrowing from the Latin word *paradisus* and the Old French word *paradis*. In horticulture, the word was used to refer to "a garden, *esp.* an enclosed one; an orchard; an enclosed area or court in front of a building, esp. a church", as in (18)

18. Þyn owt sendingis *paradis* of powmgarnetis with þe frutes of appelis ((*) *a*1382 in *Bible (*Wycliffite, E.V.*)* (Bodl. 959) Song of Sol. iv. 13.

The noun *place* also appears in the English language much earlier, during the Old English period, but it is before 1387 that it appears with a meaning related to agriculture. It had many different forms depending on the dialect, thus, for example, *plaace* was used in Surrey and *pleeace* in Yorkshire. The word was partly borrowed from the Latin word *platea*, but it was later reinforced by the Anglo-Norman term *plas*, Old French *place* and Middle French *plasse*. As regards its meaning, it was used to refer to "a dwelling, a house; a person's home; (formerly)

spec. a mansion, a country house with its surroundings, the principal residence on an estate. Also: a farm or farmstead" (19).

19. With grene trees shadwed was his *place* ((*) *c*1387–95 in G. Chaucer *Canterbury Tales Prol.* 607).

The noun *labour* also entered the English language much earlier, circa 1300, with another meaning that was not related to agriculture. This noun in particular, adopted a variety of forms that were very different to each other, such as *labowr, lawboure* and *lobour*. It was partly a borrowing from the Latin word *labor* and from the French term *labour/labeur* (in Anglo-Norman it could be found as *labure, labur, labor* or *labour*). Within the domain at hand, the word could be used to refer to "agricultural work, *esp.* tillage," as in (20)

20. Þe freke þat fedeth hym-self with his feythful *laboure,* He is blessed by þe boke (*c*1400 ((*) *c*1378) in W. Langland *Piers Plowman* (Laud 581) (1869) B. vi. l. 253 (*MED*)).

The noun *season* appears before 1300 with a meaning that is related to agriculture. It was usually found with the form *seson,* although it could appear in a variety of forms. As regards its origin, it comes from the Old French word *seson, seison*. The word was used to refer to "the time of year when a plant flourishes, when it blooms or bears fruit, etc.", as in (21)

21. lkin frut in his *sesun* (*a*1300 in *Cursor Mundi* 22881 I).

Within the domain of agriculture we also find another meaning, that of "the time of year assigned to some particular operation of agriculture," as in (22)

22. In *cesoun* of heruest-tyme (1393 in W. Langland *Piers Plowman* C. vii. 112 (MS. F.)).

The noun *beast* had already entered the English language much earlier, at the beginning of the 13th century. In Middle English, the noun could be found with the forms *best* and *beste,* among others. It was a borrowing from the Old French word *beste,* which in turn came from the Latin word *bestia*. In the 14th century, the word started to be used with a sense related to agriculture. It was used to designate "a domesticated animal owned and used as part of farm 'stock' or cattle; at first including sheep, goats, etc., but gradually more or less restricted to the bovine kind," as in (23). Another meaning, more specific than the former one was "an animal

used in riding, driving, etc., as the horse and ass; a 'beast of burden,' a 'yoke beast,' a draught animal," as in (24)

23. Ta your *beistes* wit yow bun (*a*1400 ((*) *a*1325) in *Cursor Mundi* (Vesp.) l. 6137).

24. And leid hym on his *beest* [1382 hors], and ledde in to an ostrie (*a*1425 ((*) *c*1395) in *Bible (*Wycliffite, L.V.*)* (Royal) (1850) Luke x. 34).

The noun *cattle* had already been borrowed much earlier as well, although with a different meaning. In particular, this noun came from the Norman French word *catel* and it would later be borrowed again from the Central French word *chatel*. Nonetheless, it is not until before 1400 that the word is found being used with a meaning related to agriculture. In the beginning, the word would be found with the original form *catel*, but it could also be found as *catelle* or *catayl*, finally adopting the form *cattle*. The noun was used as "a collective term for live animals held as property, or reared to serve as food, or for the sake of their milk, skin, wool, etc.," as in (25)

25. Hors, asse, mule, ox, camell, Dun þan deid all þair *catell* (*a*1400 ((*) *a*1325) in *Cursor Mundi* (Vesp.) l. 6002).

6.2. Semantic changes in Present Day English and Present Day French

Having traced the origin and meaning of some of the most important French borrowings related to the semantic field of agriculture and horticulture, the next section deals with the analysis of semantic changes that some of these words have undergone over time. When words are borrowed from one language into another (in this case from French, and introduced into the English language), they are expected to retain the same original meaning. Nonetheless, as languages follow their own paths and evolve differently, the meanings of those words can change. Thus, I made a choice of 4 words (in this case, all of them are nouns) to analyse and determine whether this was the case and whether each language developed its own meaning (or meanings) for these words, or, on the contrary, they have the same meaning nowadays in both languages (whether it is the original one or a new one).

6.2.1. PDE Cattle (n.) / PDF Cheptel (n.)

The word came from the Late Latin term *captāle* and, as it was mentioned above, in French, it had two different forms, one for Norman French, *catel*, and another one for Central French, *chatel*. Present Day English *cattle* comes from the Norman French word *catel*. In the beginning,

the original meaning of the word was related to the notion of property. In English, circa 1275, it was used to designate a "property, substance; strictly personal property or estate, wealth and goods". Circa 1330, it adopted the meaning "money; *esp.* capital, as distinct from interest". These meanings, nonetheless, soon became obsolete. The word then acquired a new meaning that is not unrelated to the previous ones. The word, as it was already mentioned, started to be used to refer to the concept "livestock". Later its use was restricted and began to be used to designate only "bovine animals". This is the meaning that has survived until nowadays. Other possible uses of the word were: (a) from the 17th century onwards, "in the language of the stable, applied to horses"; (b) in the 19th century, it was "applied by slaveholders to their slaves". In all these cases the meaning has narrowed, it has become more specialized; by adding more semantic features, the meaning has become narrower. Nonetheless, the word still retains the core meaning that it had in the Middle English period: that of what is being designated as "cattle" being property.

Present Day French *cheptel* comes from the Central French word *chatel*, and it has undergone a similar semantic change. According to the *Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé*, *cheptel* was used to refer to a rural right, "Bail à cheptel ou cheptel. « Contrat par lequel l'une des parties donne à l'autre un fonds de bétail pour le garder, le nourrir et le soigner, sous les conditions convenues entre elles » (Code civil, 1804, page 326)", that is, a contract in which one of the parties gives the other one a fund of livestock so that he keeps, feeds and takes care of them, on mutually agreed terms. As a result of metonymy, the word started to be used with the following meaning: "ensemble du bétail constituant le fonds du cheptel" (all livestock constituting the fund of the "cheptel"). According to *Larousse Dictionnaire*, the meaning nowadays is "ensemble du bétail d'un pays, d'une exploitation agricole" (all livestock of a country, of a farm). Nonetheless, in French, it can also be used in a metaphorical way when talking about "cheptel humain". In this case its meaning is "les hommes considérés comme une main-d'œuvre servile" (men considered as a servile labour force). The word, as in English, has lost the original meaning that referred to property in the strictest sense, in which it was used to refer to wealth and goods, especially money. Nonetheless, the core meaning of the word, as in the case of English, is retained in the meanings used nowadays. In both languages, the meaning has undergone narrowing.

6.2.2. PDE Beast (n.) / PDF Bête (n.)

According to the *OED,* the Old French word *beste,* from Latin *bestia,* was originally used to translate the Latin word *animal,* which replaced the Old English word *déor.* It appears in the English language circa 1220 with the meaning "a living being, an animal". This meaning is now mostly restricted to literary use. Nonetheless, it could also be used to refer to humans as well, as in (26). This meaning became obsolete.

> 26. Axest not me quod I. whеþir þat [man] be a resonable *best* mortel (*c*1374 in G. Chaucer tr. Boethius *De Consol. Philos.* i. vi. 27).

The meaning of the word underwent narrowing, and *beast* could be used with another sense (found circa 1225), which was "a quadruped (or animal popularly regarded as such), as distinguished from birds, reptiles, fishes, insects, etc., as well as from humans", which is now the ordinary literary use. Then, as it was mentioned above, the word was used to designate "a domesticated animal owned and used as part of farm 'stock' or cattle", this use of the word is now mostly restricted to the bovine kind. As regards its figurative meanings, circa 1400, the word would have a meaning transferred from the original one: *beast* began to be used to refer to "a human being under the sway of animal propensities". Nonetheless, as early as circa 1210 the word appears being used to mean "a brutal, savage man; a man acting in any manner unworthy of a reasonable creature". In earlier usage, often connoting stupidity or folly (cf. French *bête*). In modern phraseology it is opprobriously employed to express disgust or merely aversion". Finally, this word had another figurative meaning, which is not obsolete. This meaning was "the antichrist, or the Antichristian power. (From the Apocalypse of St. John.)," as in the phrase 'the mark of the beast'.

In French, according to the *Trésor de la Langue Française informatisé,* the word appears circa 1100 to refer to animals other than humans, and it was in 1160-70 when it appears with a figurative sense, "referring to a man, being stupid or silly". Contrary to Present Day English, Present Day French has retained this sense, and when accompanied by an adjective, *bête* can be used to mean that a person has no malice or is foolish. As in English, the word was also used with a sense related to religion/mythology ("the antichrist"). Likewise, as in English, according to *Larousse,* the word can also be used in a figurative way to refer to "a person under the sway of animal propensities". In colloquial language, the word can also be used to refer to insects, but it is commonly used to refer to the livestock in a farm (*le bétail*).

6.2.3. PDE Butcher (n.) / PDF Boucher (n.)

According to the *OED,* in English, as it was already mentioned, the word started being used before 1325 to refer to "a person whose trade is the preparation and selling of meat. Also, esp. in early use: a person who deals with both the slaughter of livestock and the preparation of animal flesh for food." The word then, due to metonymy, started to be used (mainly in the genitive) to refer to "a shop where meat is sold", appearing for the first time in 1695 in an English text and being still used with this sense nowadays. Nonetheless, by pejoration, the meaning of "slaughtering" was transferred to refer to "a person who slaughters people indiscriminately or brutally" as well. The first instance of documentary evidence for this meaning is circa 1450. In those same lines, there were two other meanings that have become obsolete nowadays. That is the case of "an executioner; a person who inflicts capital punishment or torture", and "something that inflicts torture or punishment; a scourge". Nowadays we can find a metaphorical meaning for the word when used in slang, which is that of "a doctor or surgeon, *esp.* one who is incompetent or too readily inclined to operate on patients." Finally, the noun *butcher* also acquired a new meaning by metonymy, in which the word started to be used to designate "a dark blue colour resembling that of a butcher's apron" This meaning is rare nowadays, though.

In French, according to the *TLFi,* the word was already used between 1180 and 1190 with the same original meaning that the word would later have when borrowed into English (that of "a person whose trade is the preparation and selling of meat"). As well as in English, the word acquired a pejorative use, and was used to designate "a man with sanguinary instincts." This use was common when referring to a head of state. Again, as it was the case in English, *boucher* began to be used to refer to "an incompetent doctor or surgeon". These meanings have become rather obsolete in Present Day French. Nowadays, as in the case of English, the most common use for the word is that of "a person who sells meat in a shop."

6.2.4. PDE Labour (n.) / PDF Labeur (n.)

As it was already mentioned, the word was a borrowing partly from French and from Latin. The original meaning when the word was borrowed was that of "an instance of physical or mental exertion; a piece of work that has been or is to be performed; a task," a meaning that is still found in Present Day English. Then, before 1382 we find instances of the word being used to refer to "bodily or mental exertion particularly when difficult, painful, or compulsory; (hard) work; toil; *esp.* physical toil," a meaning that is still used nowadays as well. During the 14th

century, the meaning of the word could be narrowed to refer only to "agricultural work, *esp.* tillage," as it was already mentioned. This usage of the word, however, is not found in PDE. Other meanings that are nowadays obsolete are "physical exercise", and "hardship, suffering (esp. physical); pain; distress." In the 14th century, the word is also used to refer to "an outcome, product, or result of work," but this meaning is nowadays rare. The word was used with other senses from the 15th century onwards, these meanings are also obsolete nowadays: (a) "effort made or trouble taken in accomplishing or attempting to accomplish a task; endeavour; an instance of this" (as in the phrase *to do one's labour*: to do one's outmost); (b) "effort made to further a matter, obtain a favour, etc., esp. on behalf of another; intervention; the exertion of influence" (as in the phrase *to make labour*: to exert influence); and (c) "a labourer, an unskilled worker." The word then started to be used with a sense that is still preserved nowadays in PDE, the original meaning of "an instance of physical or mental exertion" was narrowed to refer to "the process of childbirth from the onset of uterine contractions to delivery of the fetus and placenta." A different sense of the word *labour,* which nowadays is reduced to a poetic use, is that of "an eclipse of the moon." Finally, the more specific meanings for which the word is mostly used nowadays in PDE are those of (a) "work (esp. physical work) considered as a resource or commodity, typically when necessary to supply the needs of the community or for the execution of a particular task; (b) the contribution of the worker to production", as a consequence of metonymy "workers (esp. manual workers) considered collectively, esp. as a social group or political force", and (c) when written with capital initial, to refer to 'the Labour Party'.

In French, according to the *TLFi,* during the first half of the 12th century, the original meaning of the word was *peine, affliction, malheur,* and in 1155 it was found referring to "hard work". As opposed to English, in PDF this meaning is nowadays literary and it is only used in a formal style and when the work it designates has a moral value. In a figurative sense, it started to be used as well to designate "a continuous and progressive process of maturation and transformation". Finally, the word can be used with another meaning that is not found in English, since, from the 18th century onwards, the meaning was narrowed and *labeur* started to be used to designate "the work made in the printing industry".

7. CONCLUSIONS

The exploring of the Middle English lexicon borrowed from French at that time and belonging to the domain of Agriculture and Horticulture was only possible through the use of

the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*). The literature on the topic has not paid too much attention to it, however, it may be surprising to find how words that are nowadays widely used in Present Day English, in the 14th century started being used with meanings that were related to Agriculture and Horticulture. Many of those meanings are obsolete or historical nowadays, but some of them have remained, although they are not frequently used. It should also be noted that in the case of words that had a single meaning, when the referent they designated started to lose importance, the word became obsolete altogether. This was the case of many of the words analysed in this section. Some words that were not included in this section are *afaite* (v.), *falsart* (n.), *flote* (n.), *frank* (n.), *gainage* (n.), *governail* (n.), *praiere* (n.), *refet* (n.), *sarpe* (n.), *solsecle* (n.), *sum* (n.), *trail* (v.), *vachery* (n.), *vendage* (n.), *vendonging* (n.), *verger* (n.), *viner* (n.).

Nonetheless, it is not as surprising when taking into account that language is a reflection of the culture of a particular society at a particular time and that as society and the way of living change and evolve, so does the language in question. As it was already mentioned, England's economy during the Middle Ages was still based on agriculture, and it continued to be so for a long period of time. The feudal system implied that lords had a number of lands under their control, which were worked by their tenants. Since those who were at power were of Norman origin and had French as their mother tongue, the terminology used to refer to occupations or works related to the land would end up being in French as well. As regards the semantic changes illustrated by the selected words, the results show that both languages followed a similar path in adding or removing meanings to those words. In both languages, it was found that the meaning of those words underwent widening, narrowing and metonymy, among other semantic changes.

It is important to note as well, that, although it was expected that words related to the domain being explored here entered the English language during the 14th century, the period that saw the highest influx of borrowings, results show that many of those words had already entered the English language much earlier. The results suggest that the key issue behind borrowings is not only the date of entrance and the original meaning that they had but that new meanings can be added to the word, depending on the needs and circumstances at a particular time.

It is also interesting to point out that the origin of many borrowings was partly Latin and partly French. This is not surprising if it is taken into account that many of those French words

had a Latin origin. In some cases, it cannot be assured whether the word entered the English language directly from Latin or from French, which shows the importance that Latin still had for the society at that time and the influence that it still had on the English language.

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