Semantic Shifts in Selected (Late) Middle English 'Battle'-Nouns

Weronika Kaźmierczak

The University of Warsaw

Abstract

Language consists of single words carrying meanings. Stern (1931, 163) emphasizes that a word referent is subject to semantic shifts. A change of a referent is an optional factor required for a shift to operate, but the process may occur even if the referent remains unchanged. Words have changed their core meanings over time. An answer to the question in what way it is possible to trace such changes is provided in the study of military terms from a historical perspective. The analysis enables one to establish whether a meaning is still applied or obsolete. The present paper discusses the semantic fate of selected 'battle'-nouns in Late Middle English (1400–1500). Dictionary search has resulted in selecting terms such as *battle* and *conflict* as well as *acountering, balestour brush, chaple, hosting, militation, poynye, sembly*, *stour* and *strut*. The data collected from the *Innsbruck Corpus of Middle English Prose* (IC), *Middle English Dictionary* (MED), the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) and the *Historical Thesaurus of English online* (HTEO) are analysed with emphasis on the changes they underwent in time.

Keywords: historical semantics, semantic change, synonyms, battle

Abstrakt

Język jest tworem zróżnicowanym, zbudowanym z pojedynczych słów mających określone znaczenie. Wedle Gustafa Sterna (1931, 163) słowa muszą mieć swoje odnośniki, które mogą ulegać zmianom tak samo, jak znaczenia słów. W swoim podejściu Stern uwzględnia także czynnik ludzki jako element składowy, niezbędny, aby zmiana znaczeniowa mogła zajść. Celem artykułu jest omówienie zmian semantycznych obejmujących rzeczowniki będące synonimami terminu *battle* 'bitwa' w okresie późno-średnioangielskim. Dokonawszy selekcji rzeczowników będących synonimami słowa *battle,* terminy *acountering, bale-stour bargain, brush, conflict, chaple, hosting, militation, poynye, sembly* zostały poddane analizie semantycznej, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem zmian jakie odnotowane zostały w odniesieniu do nich w *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), *Middle English Dictionary* (MED) oraz *Historical Thesaurus of English online* (HTEO).

Słowa kluczowe: bitwa, semantyka historyczna, synonimy, zmiana semantyczna

1. Introduction

Changes in language always enforce shifts in meaning. Industrial, economic and sociocultural revolution requires permanent adjustments of language to the present-day reality. The phenomenon of meaning change has been talked over from various perspectives, but no approach has so far managed to cover its complexity. Stern (1931, 163) proposed a definition of semantic change that may successfully reflect its foundation and factors by which it may be conditioned.

Linguists have made attempts to categorise the types of meaning shift to provide a description of relations between a term and its denotation. The greatest contribution to the growth of lexical semantics has been made by Geeraerts who classified lexical-semantic changes of meaning into analogical and non-analogical. In his discussions on the nature of semantic change, Geeraerts has accounted for three pillars which helped semanticists to build a solid base for the growth of lexical semantics:

> Lexical semantics as an academic discipline in its own right originated in the early nineteenth century, but that does not mean that matters of word meaning had not been discussed earlier. Three traditions are relevant: the tradition of speculative etymology, the teaching of rhetoric and the compilation of dictionaries (Geeraerts 2009, 11).

In its complex and multi-staged history, English acquired a wide range of new terminology representing different lexical fields. As historical research proves, it was in Middle English (1100–1500) that the English language experienced a substantial influx of new words, in most cases of French origin. Undeniably, borrowing from French was a gradual process which left a lasting imprint on the language. Its consequences are seen chiefly in English spelling and pronunciation systems, which were both exposed to strong French influences.

> Although the influx of French words was brought about by the victory of the Conqueror and by the political and social consequences of that victory, it was neither sudden not immediately apparent. Rather it began slowly and continued with varying tempo for a long time. Indeed it can hardly be said to have ever stopped (Baugh and Cable 2002, 56).

2. The concept of "category member"

It is beyond any doubt that all items or phenomena one comes across in everyday life are subject to various classifications according to certain established criteria. Similar processes operate in semantics which divides terms with regard to their 'remoteness' from the main category member. The whole concept is grounded in the prototype theory launched by Eleanor Rosch. To realise what approach proposes, it is worth to delve into the notion of "prototypicality" as defined below.

The central insight of prototype theory is that word meanings, and the conceptual classes that the words name, are distinguished one from another not in terms of an explicit definition but in terms of similarity to a generic or best example. The concept red is the class of colors that are centered around a particular point on the spectrum that everyone tends to agree is the *prototype* red. (…) The category of red things is therefore the category of things whose color is sufficiently similar to a prototypical red (and dissimilar from other prototypes) (Hampton 2006, 1).

The prototypicality theory works not only in the assessment of *red* as the main category member but also defines semantic relations between the representatives of any other semantic field and their degree of remoteness from the core term. The concept holds good if one would like to examine the relatedness of 'battle'-synonyms to 'battle' itself.

2.1. Battle

The body of the Late Middle English terms for 'battle' embraces dialectal, metaphorical, and obsolete words. All the examined dictionaries vary depending on the number of items they hold, though the widest scope of terminology can be found in the *Historical Thesaurus of English* (HTNO) whereas *Middle English Dictionary* (MED) and the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) offer a wide range of spelling variants as well as semantic interpretations of each term, illustrated with citations gathered from documents of a different kind.

According to the OED, the investigated term *battle* "a hostile engagement between opposing forces on land or sea; a combat, a fight" (*OED* 2017) was first recorded in *The Chronicle of Robert of Gloucester*, dated to 1297. Additional data taken from the OED suggest that it may be interpreted as "a fight between two persons, a single combat, a duel" (*OED* 2017) or an "encounter between two animals, especially when set to fight to provide sport" (*OED* 2017). These three interpretations show the ways how a mutual enemy encounter can be understood.

Over the course of time, literature has enriched its lexis in a series of 'battle'-synonyms using the word *battle* as a building block. Some terms turned out to be so rare that it was hardly possible to find them in more than one source, while others were encountered in numerous texts. They assumed different grammatical forms, as did the terms *acountering* and *bargain,* derived from the verbs *acounter* and *bargain* respectively, which were used in English with a different degree of frequency.

Another essential criterion is the semantic scope of the discussed nouns. As may be concluded, items such as *battle* and *conflict* were frequent in the language but they also embrace a much wider range of associations than, for instance, *chaple* or *strut*. Having taken these aspects into consideration, the selection of the terms was made on the basis of the criterion of associations they create. In consequence, the present study examines the functioning of the term *battle* in longer expressions such as *to give the* battle or *to have the battle* and investigates possible directions of its change, as reflected in the examples below.

> (1) The wheche Cardynale was ordined and purpast for to haue gone in-to Prage, to haue destroyed and **gyf batayle** vn-to the fals berytykes and Lollordys.
>
> [1272 *The Brut or the Chronicles of England*]

(2) Whether is the better?... He that **has the bataile.**

[c1400 *Ywaine & Gaw.*]

Basing on what has been found in the *Innsbruck Corpus*, the phrase *to give the battle* (1), means "to engage in battle" (*IC* 2017 'battle'), while in the OED it stands for "to grant victory" (*OED* 2017) in contrast to the phrase *to have the battle* (2), employed in the sense of "being victorious" (*OED* 2017).

Texts contain the phrase *trial by battle* "the legal decision of a dispute by the issue of a single combat" (*OED* 2017). Indeed, such interpretation was proved to exist in one of the 17th century texts. The example (3) suggests that such expression was employed in the language of law.

(3) The House afterwards Ordered a Bill to be brought in to take away **Tryal by Battel**.

[1641 J. Rushworth *Hist. Coll.*]

It may be concluded that the ultimate meaning of 'battle' is always context-based and must be interpreted in a direct relation to the remaining items in a given expression.

2.2. Conflict

The term *conflict* "struggle, quarrel" (*OED* 2017) occurs in three principal senses. First, it pertains to "an encounter with arms; a fight, a battle, a prolonged struggle, fighting, contending with arms, martial strife" (*OED* 2017), second, if applied metaphorically, it reflects "a mental or spiritual struggle within a man" (*OED* 2017), and third, "the clashing or variance of opposed principles, statements, arguments" (*OED* 2017). In one of the 19th century texts *conflict* was believed to be "the opposition, in an individual, of incompatible wishes or needs of approximately equal strength; also, the distressing emotional state resulting from such opposition" (*OED* 2017). By contrast, in the phrase *conflict of interest*, first recognised in 1837, *conflict* presents the following aspects: "(a) an incompatibility between the concerns or aims of different parties; (b) a situation whereby two or more of the interests held by, or entrusted to, a single person or party are considered incompatible or break prescribed practice – a situation in which an individual may profit personally from decisions made in his or her official capacity" (*OED* 2017).

(4) **Conflycte** of werre, *conflictus*.

[c1440 *Promptorium parvulorum*]

(5) I shall treat first of the **conflict** of a voluntary stimulus with the spontaneous impulses considered as growing out of the purely physical conditions of the nervous and muscular systems.

[1859 A. Bain *Emotions & Will*]

The citations (4) and (5) exemplify different connotations of the term. The latter stresses the fact that the semantic field of 'conflict' embraces martial campaigns and figuratively, mental conflicts rooted in human psyche.

3. Other selected Late Middle English 'battle'-nouns

To provide an account how members of the family of 'battle' evolved in Late Middle English, dictionary sources were researched and a number of words were selected according to two criteria: the first group contains only derivatives such as *acountering* or *hosting* whereas the second one embraces *bale-stour, brush, chaple, militation, poynye, sembly, stour,* and *strut*. Technically, they are named hybrids and borrowings since their sources can be found in other languages. The list below outlines in what way the terms changed and what their relation to the explored semantic field of 'battle' was.

- *acountering* (AN *aconter / acountrer* "an armed encounter; an attack" (*OED* 2017);
- *bale-stour* (OE *balu / bealu* "evil; ill") "evil, especially considered in its active operation, as destroying, blasting, injuring, hurting, paining, tormenting; fatal, dire or malign quality or influence, woe, mischief, harm, injury; death, infliction of death" (*OED* 2017);
- *brush* (OF *brosser*) "a forcible rush, a hostile collision or encounter; in later use a short but smart encounter" (*OED* 2017);
- *chaple / chaplee* (OF *chaple* "carnage, massacre") "a clash of arms, a fierce battle" (*OED* 2017);
- *conflict* (Lat. *conflictus* "striking together, shock, fight, conflict") "fatal-struggle, death, throe or a conflict with the use of immaterial weapons" (*OED* 2017);
- *hosting / osting* (OF *host / oost* "army") "a fierce combat, encounter" (*OED* 2017);

- *militation* (Lat. *militatio* "perform military service") "fight, battle, skirmish" (*OED* 2017);
- *poynye* (AN *poigne* "fight, battle") "a fight, a skirmish" (*OED* 2017);
- *sembly* (OF *assemble* "put together, gather") "hostile meeting, conflict" (*OED* 2017);
- *stour* (OF *estour* / AN *estur* "tumult, uproar, commotion, fuss") "a conflict waged with immaterial weapons, a struggle with pain or adversity, act of strife, quarrel, dispute" (*OED* 2017);
- *strut* (OE *strut* "combat, strife") "a hostile meeting, onslaught, attack, conflict; the raising of troops, raid, an encampment, military expedition or incursion, warfare, raiding" (*OED* 2017).

The list above comprises derivatives, hybrids and loanwords. Each item bears a close resemblance to the core category member and sometimes makes reference to other aspects of military discourse, as in the case of the hybrid *bale-stour*.

3.1. Types of meaning shift

As has been claimed word meaning is not a stable feature, as words experience changes in time and adjust their meanings depending on the text in which they occur. Shifts affecting particular items are context-dependent, so word environment plays the most important role in the process of meaning-shaping. Changes in meaning not only embrace shifts between referents within a sentence but also between lexemes and morphemes, so that a shift may be observed at the syntactic and grammatical levels.

> Semantic change refers to the alternation of the relationship between a given word and the set of referents such a word may denote. Changes in the meaning conveyed by words can affect their lexemes and their morphemes, so we find semantic shifts in both lexical and grammatical notions. Conventionally, semantic change refers to the developments in the meaning conveyed by lexemes, while changes in the meaning of morphemes are the concern of historical morphology and morphosyntax (Moyano 2014, 1).

Linguists distinguish basic semantic processes such as amelioration, pejoration, broadening and narrowing which demonstrate how meaning may be changed. The processes mentioned above constitute only part of the phenomenon of semantic shift. What

lies at the basis is considered as the nature of semantic change expressed by metaphor (similarity of meanings) and metonymy (contiguity of meanings). The similarity of meaning is the process based on associating two referents one of which reflects the other. On the contrary, metonymy can be defined as the process of associating two referents in which one is closely related to the other.

3.2. *Acountering*

Acountering (gerund) is a form of the verb *acounter*, "to meet (a person or group) as an adversary" (*OED* 2017) or "to engage in combat with" (*OED* 2017). The gerund *acountering*, referred to the situation of "a hostile meeting or involvement in combat" (*OED* 2017).

> (7) **A countryng** þe heþene man Made encountre hard and strong, Þat manye a man was slayn among].
>
> **[**a1400 *Richard Coer de Lyon*]
>
> (8) Þe **acountre** of hem was so strong, Þat mani dyed þer-among.
>
> [c1330?(a1300) *Guy (2)*]

The example (7) shows that *a countryng* was interpreted as battle which made a mild encounter or meeting excessively bitter. Under (8), the meaning remains unchanged, but MED shows that the noun *acountering* existed in English as early as the first half of the 14th century.

Contrary to the OED, the HTEO states that it should be understood as "jousting" (*OED* 2017) or "tilting" (*OED* 2017). Although both have the sense of "struggle" (*OED* 2017), the Thesaurus suggests the meaning "a verbal attack, a sharp critic aimed at someone's views" *(OED* 2017) or "a combat or encounter (for exercise or sport) between two armed men on horseback with lances or similar weapons, the aim of which being to throw his opponent from the saddle" (*OED* 2017) and "the exercise or the like, at a mark, as the quintain" (*OED* 2017). Although explanations in both dictionaries reflect the military sense, both point to other contexts in which *acountering* appears.

3.3. *Bargain*

Even though *bargain* represents a "discussion between two parties of the terms on which one is to give or do something to or for the other; chaffering, bargaining" (*OED* 2017), it has also generated several interpretations, i.e. "business transactions or agreement, trading, buying and selling" (*MED* 2017). In one of the 15th century texts, it was found to mean "a state of affairs resulting from someone else's actions" (*MED* 2017). In Middle English it was typically associated with business matters, and in some sources it was translated as a systematic pursuit for mastery. In the second half of the 17th century, *bargain* gained the additional sense of "bout, struggle, stour" (*OED* 2017).

> (9) He helpit hym swa in that **bargane**, That thai thre tratouris [1489 *Adv.* tratowris] he has slane.
>
> [1487 (a1380) J. Barbour. *Bruce*]

The example (9) suggests that the Modern English form *bargain* differed from its variant in the 15th century. *Bargane* is a single example from a wide range of spellings found in literature. Over the course of time the term developed orthographic variants such as *bargens, bergane* and *bargaine*.

3.4. *Bale-stour vs stour*

The two other nouns to be discussed are *bale-stour*, a compound-form of the native term *bale* "evil" (*OED* 2017) or "fatal force causing destruction, death, evil-speaking, abuse" (*OED* 2017) and *stour* "an armed combat or conflict, a contest in battle; a fight" (*OED* 2017). The 15th century *bale-stour* created from two roots combined as one, meant a "fatal struggle" (*OED* 2017) or "death throe" (*OED* 2017). Lexically, it is created from two elements with different meanings, which poses questions of the extent to which each element contributed to the overall sense of *bale-stour*.

> (10) Bot werdes haht and hey tures Getes thir cite men fra **stures**.
>
> [c1325 *Metr. Hom.*]

> (11) Bed me bilyue my **bale stour**, & bryng me on ende.
>
> [c1400 (▸?c1380) *Patience*]

As said earlier, *bale-stour* is classified as a hybrid, comprising the native root *bale* (OE *bealu*) and *stour* (cf. OF *estour*). Two-element hybrids frequently occur in English, particularly those containing a native and French element.

3.5. *Brush*

Brush (15c) meant "charge, onslaught encounter" (*MED* 2017). OED defines the term as "a forcible rush, a hostile collision or encounter" (*OED* 2017), cf.

(12) With slik a brout & a **brusche** þe bataill a-sembild.

[*a*1400 *Alexander*]

Diachronically, *brush* underwent semantic widening so that it adopted new forms in which it reflected the idea of "charge, onslaught, encounter" (*MED* 2017). In fixed expressions such as *at a brush, after the first brush* (*OED* 2017) it refers to the moment of meeting or a situation shortly after that. In the expressions above, *brush* could be equated with the noun *encounter* without any meaning shift.

3.6. *Chaple*

The originally French term *chaple,* defined as "a fierce combat or encounter, clash of arms" (*MED* 2017), was registered only twice in historical texts. In Old French, *chaple* was supposed to mean "a violent stroke, shock of combat" (*OED* 2017), like the related verb *chapler* "to fight fiercely" (*OED* 2017).

(13) Ther be-gan the **chaplee** so mortall that neuer was sein more mortalite.

[a1500 (?1450) *Merlin*]

As (13) indicates, *chaplee* referred to a vehement confrontation between two opposite forces. In Modern English translation the sentence conveys the idea that no other battle had been more ferocious.

3.7. *Hosting*

The term *hosting* (15c) "the raising of a host or a military multitude; hostile encounter or array, raid, an encampment, a military expedition" (*OED* 2017), involves meanings related to the elements of military equipment or actions performed during military expeditions. This seems to be debatable as *hosting* lacks a firmly established origin. Still, attention must be drawn to the period it was last recognized in English. Dictionary sources provide solid information on how it developed in time, with some discrepancies in the data they provide. The last text in MED which contains the noun is *The Conquest of Ireland,* whereas the last citation in the OED comes from Pulling's *The Dictionary of English History* from 1884.

(14) This Erle a litill afore the forsayd **hostynge** rode Thomon xl. dayes, the wyche is the moste Inly Streynth of Iryssh of al the land.

[1422 *Secreta Secret., Priv. Priv.*]

Hosting was a gerund derived from the 14th century verb *host* "to gather into a host; to assemble into battle array, to encamp" (*OED* 2017). The noun was identified with its two spellings: *hosting* and *osting* (16c), though *hostynge* (14) was also one of the possible variants.

3.8. *Militation*

Militation, was a noun with an intricate history. It was first recorded in 1460 with the meaning "military service" (*OED* 2017), corresponding to the post-classical Lat. *militatio*. As the OED suggests, *militation* lacks a fixed origin. It could be either a Latin borrowing or a Latin-English hybrid. Texts, mostly from the 17th and 18th centuries, hold the sense "existential conflict, dissent or contrariety or the need of revenge taken from the perspective of an enemy action" (*OED* 2017).

(15) Mankyndys lyfe is **mylitatioun**.

[a 1460 *Knyghthode & Bataile* (Pembr. Cambr.)]

(16) Repentance doth not cut down sin at a blow; no, it is a constant **militation**, and course of mortification.

[Z. Crofton in *Morning Exercises* (1845)]

It may be concluded that *militation* has remarkably modified its meaning since it was first recorded in 1460. Unlike the Late Middle English instances, the present-day use does not retain the sense "military service" (*OED* 2017) but has narrowed it down to "a fighting, warfare, state of conflict" (*OED* 2017).

3.9. *Poynye*

The origin of *poynye* has not been fully established, but it might have been borrowed from Anglo-Norman *pogneiz* (< Classical Lat. *pugna*). Its meaning "fight, skirmish" (*OED* 2017) *was* the only context in which *poynye* was known, as is demonstrated in (17).

> (17) He broght with him to that **poyne** Off gode knyghtes thousandes thre.
> [*c*1425 (▸c1400) *Laud Troy-bk* 5565]

Basing on what has been found in the OED, *poynye* embraced 12 spelling variants, i.e. *poygne, ponꝫe, ponyhe, poyhne, pugny* or *pwnꝫhe*, which is many more than any other item examined so far.

3.10. *Sembly*

Unlike the remaining words, *sembly* functioned as a contraction of *assembly* "a gathering of people" (*OED* 2017), (14c). At later stages, *sembly* acquired new meanings, among which "a hostile meeting, conflict" (*OED* 2017) or "a hostile encounter, battle, quarrel" (*OED* 2017) appear between 1400 and 1450. Its last record in military language is dated to 1535–1540.

> (18) He yat departis fra the ost jn the tyme of **semble** yat is feid and wrytyn.
> [c1485 (1456) G. H Hay *Bk. Law of Armys*]

Even though in one of three contexts *sembly* was defined as a "hostile meeting, conflict" (*OED* 2017), the current form *assembly* has no such connotation. Characteristically, no other noun was characterised by such a large number of spellings, as *sembly* was (13 in the OED).

3.11. *Strut*

Like the remaining items, *strut* "strife, contention; a quarrel, wrangle, contest" (14c) demonstrates a similarity to what the family of 'battle' stands for. Characteristically, the term was linked to Middle High German masculine noun *strúȝ* "combat, strife" (*OED* 2017), though linguists relate it to the Germanic verb *strūto* "stand out, project, protrude" (*OED* 2017). Interestingly, the OED suggests its possible relation to German *strauss* (old-fashioned 'fight'). *Strut* was a metathetic form of the noun *sturt* "contention, violent quarrelling, contentious or violent behaviour" (*OED* 2017), used mostly in Scotland.

> (19) Þe chaunpiouns…maden mikel **strout** Abouten þe alþerbeste but.
>
> [(c1300) *Havelok*]

> (20) He sad til hire with **sturt** & schore: 'til ydolis þu mak sacryfice.'
>
> [c 1480 (a1400) *St. Cecilia* in W.M. Metcalfe *Legends Saints Sc. Dial.*]

The sentences (19) and (20) ascribe *strut* and *stour* a military sense, even though both underwent meaning extension. In the translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, *sturt* is interpreted as "disquiet of the mind, vexation of the spirit" and in that sense it survived into the 18th century. In comparison to *sturt*, *strut* was absent in English for centuries but it was in 1303 when it attached an additional meaning "display, flaunting in fine attire" (21) (*OED* 2017).

> (21) But wlde þey þenke þat make swyche **strut**, yn what robe, yn erþe, þey shul be put.
>
> [1303 R. Mannyng. *Handlyng Synne*]

3.12. Conclusions

All languages are constantly enriched and modified by new phenomena not only in the field of semantics but also in other areas. What must be remembered is that any language change has its reasons and consequences which help us understand how it functions.

Words linked together in sentences are exposed to semantic shifts, conditioned by internal and external, linguistic and non-linguistic factors. They are assigned new

meanings interpreted in accordance with the context they appear in. As a consequence, they can shape their meanings in different ways so as to embrace a larger number of concepts or phenomena and to more precisely mirror the surrounding reality.

Undeniably, the present-day meaning of words has not emerged out of nowhere.

It is commonly known that a single process is preceded by a long research geared to examine individual relations between words, sentences or texts, in this case chiefly, which may illustrate a single form along with an array of potential spellings and its contextual uses. Undoubtedly, it always takes decades to analyse centuries-old texts and establish the etymological and semantic background of words.

Language expands its lexical stock via past and present social-historical processes. As the terminology examined highlights, particular stages in the lexical evolution paved the way for new interpretational, context-dependent readings and directed attention towards the analysis of potential spelling variants identified in the texts under examination. It was frequently noted that the original sense was often subject to slight modifications and the newly developed meanings did not differ drastically from what the term had primarily stood for, as exemplified by *conflict*. Although this noun brings to mind the idea of disagreement, *conflict* can acquire the sense of either 'a hand-to-hand fight' or 'a verbal dispute'. One is each day exposed to many types of conflict situations, not solely ended with a hand-to-hand fight, but a wide range of examples from legal or psychological discourse, which demonstrate that *conflict* found its use at several levels of the linguistic debate. The varied degree of frequency in language is also the reason why certain items prove to be hardly encountered. Such was the case with the term *chaple* recorded solely in two fragments of the same text. Its short-lived existence in language could be triggered by a sporadic use in English.

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Appendix

A list of Late Middle English synonyms of *battle* and semantic differences between them as found in *Middle English Dictionary* and the *Oxford English Dictionary*

Term	Date	Meaning in the MED	Meaning in the OED
Acountering	(c1425)	-	'combat, battle'
Bale-stour	[c1400 (?c1380)]	**-**	'fatal struggle, death throe'
Bargain	[(c1540) / (c1390)]	'contention, wrangling'	'contention or contest for the mastery'
Brush	[(c1425) / (c1450)]	'charge, onslaught, encounter'	'a forcible rush, a hostile collision or encounter'; 'a short but smart collision'
Conflict	(c1450)	'an armed encounter, a battle'; 'a struggle, a quarrel'; 'an attack or assault as of temptation'	'an encounter with arms; a fight, a battle'
Chaple	a1500 (c1450)	'a clash of arms, a fierce battle'	'a fierce combat or encounter'
Hosting	(c1425)	'the waging of war; warfare; campaigning; raiding; a military expedition or incursion; a raid'	'the raising of a host or armed multitude; hostile encounter or array; raid; encampment; a military expedition'
Militation	(a1460)	'warfare, strife; military service'	'conflict'; 'military service'
Poynye	(c1425)	-	'a fight, a skirmish'
Sembly	(c 1485)	'a hostile encounter, battle, quarrel'	'a hostile meeting, a conflict'
Stour	(c1325)	'(of a battle); a fight; intensely violent, fierce, hard-fought' (of a blow); powerful, heavy'	'an armed combat or conflict, a combat in battle'
Strut	(a1300)	'strife, contention; a fight, dispute, debate'	(a) 'strife, contention; a quarrel, wrangle, contest'; (b) 'display, flaunting in fine attire';
Sturt	c1480 (a1400)	'quarrelling, contention'	(a) 'contention, violent, quarrelling' contentious, violent behaviour'; (b) 'disquiet of the mind, vexation of the spirit';