

ANGLICA

An International Journal of English Studies

SPECIAL ISSUE

Multilingualism in Medieval Britain: Beyond English, Latin and French

32/4 2023

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Anglica An International Journal of English Studies

ISSN 0860-5734

www.anglica-journal.com

DOI: 10.7311/Anglica/32.4

Publisher:

Institute of English Studies University of Warsaw

ul. Dobra 55

00-312 Warszawa

Nakład: 30 egz.

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Typesetting:

Tomasz Gut

Cover design:

Tomasz Gut

Printing and binding:

Sowa – Druk na życzenie

www.sowadruk.pl

+48 22 431 81 40

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Ulrich Busse

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2650-8905>

Martin-Luther-University at Halle-Wittenberg, Germany

German Loans in Early English

Abstract: The paper outlines the contribution of German to the word stock of English in the three periods of Old English, Middle English, and Early Modern English, or, in other words, from the early Middle Ages up to 1700, and relates these words to major cultural events, such as the Christianisation of England, the Norman Invasion, the Reformation and to the beginnings of science and technology during the Renaissance. Methodologically, the term *German* will be used in the sense of High German and its antecedents rather than Low German or Low Dutch. As a consequence of this approach, the impact of German on the English language during these periods is rather small in terms of numbers, but interesting and varied as far as domains of borrowing, transmission routes of words, linguistic strategies (i.e. importation v. substitution), and mode of transmission (i.e. written v. spoken) are concerned.

Keywords: Anglo-German language contact, Early English, lexical borrowing, Christianisation, Reformation, botany, mineralogy, mining

1. Introduction

First of all, a definition of what is to be understood by the term *German* might not be amiss. In the following it will be used in the sense of High German and its older stages. The crucial point for this paper is to distinguish between the impact of High German on the one hand, and that of Low German / Dutch on the other. Different studies have used different cover terms for the neighbouring continental low varieties. For instance, Mary S. Serjeantson uses *Low German* to encompass Dutch or Low Franconian, Flemish, and continental Saxon.

Under the term Low German we include the dialects of Dutch (sometimes called Low Franconian), Flemish, and continental Saxon. The last-named includes the local dialects of North Germany, and the term Low German (or *Plattdeutsch*) is sometimes

applied specifically to these. The Low German dialects are in many respects nearer in form to English than to High German [...]. (Serjeantson 1935, 170)

More recently, Jennifer Hendriks (1661) uses Low Dutch with reference to Johan F. Bense (1925, 33; 1939, xv) “to refer collectively to Flemish, Dutch, Frisian, and Low German”. In historical texts the term *Dutch* (Middle English *duchysse*, *duyssh*, Middle English – 1600s *duch(e)*, 1500s *dou(t)che*, *dowche*, *duitch*, *dutche*) is ambiguous, so that it can also refer to German, as in the OED online (sense B. 1) below:

- B.1. The German language, in any of its forms.
- 2. a. The language of Holland or the Netherlands.
(OED online; s.v. *Dutch*)

This sense is obsolete, excepting *Pennsylvania Dutch*, “a degraded form of High German (originally from the Rhine Palatinate and Switzerland) spoken by the descendants of the original German settlers in Pennsylvania” (OED online).

Many studies from Charles T. Carr (1934) to the present treat the impact of Low German and Dutch during the Middle Ages together and separate it from that of High German. “In the first place the Low German element, which is often indistinguishable from Dutch, is more appropriately treated together with the Dutch borrowings” (Carr 1934, 36). Serjeantson (1935, 170–179) follows along these lines in that the subchapter entitled “Low German” contains Low German and Dutch words, followed by a shorter subchapter on “High German” (179–182). Anthony W. Stanforth (1996, 41–42) in his in-depth study also restricts his detailed analysis of German borrowings in English to High German for methodological reasons, because the written form of a borrowing from “German” before the 16th century makes it difficult to ascertain its High German provenance. At the same time, he emphasises that we must not forget that during the Middle Ages the vast majority of “German” borrowings came from Dutch and Low German.

More recent studies dealing with Middle and Early Modern language contacts such as Herbert Schendl (2012), Jennifer Hendriks (2012), and Laura Wright (2012) adopt a similar approach. Thus, Schendl (2012, 506) reports that during the ME period apart from the obvious contacts with French and Latin, “[a]dditionally there was trade-related contact with Low German and Low Dutch”.

Among the medieval trade relationships across the North Sea the Hanseatic League comes to mind. However, this relationship is usually described in the context of Low German and Dutch: “A survey of Anglo-Dutch contact as presented in the linguistic histories of English shows that it tends to be associated with the presence of Hanseatic merchants in England (mainly London) for the medieval period and with the dominance of Dutch merchants and shippers for the early modern period” (Hendriks 2012, 1664).

The present study follows this tradition in that it limits its scope to the influence of High German (and its older stages) on the English language. While the linguistic and cultural relations with the low varieties across the North Sea may be described as lively, and yielding quite a few borrowings during the Middle Ages (see Bense 1925; 1939; Llewellyn 1936; den Otter 1990; and Hendriks 2012), many studies unanimously confirm that the 16th century marks the starting point for the lexical influence of High German on English (see Serjeantson 1935, 179; Viereck 1993, 70; Stanforth 1996, 42; Nielsen 2005, 182; Hendriks 2012; 1667). Does that imply that there is nothing worth reporting for the earlier periods? Quite the contrary.

However, if the contribution of German to the word stock of early English is narrowed down to High German and its older stages then its impact is indeed rather marginal in terms of numbers, but interesting and varied as far as areas of borrowing, transmission routes of words (i.e. ultimate v. immediate source), linguistic strategies (i.e. importation v. substitution), and mode of transmission (i.e. written v. spoken) are concerned.

Stanforth begins his chronologically ordered outline by saying that the vast majority of borrowings from German came into the English language as a result of clearly identifiable cultural events (1996, 37). This approach fits in with the objective of the present special issue to contextualise the individual papers within a broader historical and sociolinguistic context.

Therefore, the present study outlines the contribution of German to the word stock of English in the three periods of Old, Middle, and Early Modern English and relates them to major cultural events, such as the Christianisation of England, the Norman Invasion, the Reformation, and to the beginnings of science and technology during the Renaissance.

In the Old English period the Anglo-Irish mission introduced English loanwords into German (see Stanforth 1968). It has been assumed that, as a reaction to this, a few words also went the other way from Old High German into Old English, mostly in the shape of calques on a Latin basis.

In Middle English, German can be regarded as the ultimate source for quite a few loanwords that were introduced into English after the Norman Conquest, and which the Gauls had previously borrowed from German. In the 16th century, the Reformation – despite its high cultural impact on England – resulted in the importation of only a few loanwords from High German.

In the Renaissance, early scholarly contacts lead to translations of German botanists and metallurgists by English authors. Up to this point in time, all the borrowings can be considered as indirect borrowings as a result of cultural contact. From the 16th century onwards, a new layer of technical words related to mining and mineralogy is introduced into English directly and orally through the presence of miners from Germany.

2. German loans in Old English

Anglo-German linguistic and cultural relations have a long history. The beginning of English lexical influence on German is marked by the Anglo-Saxon mission in Germany during the 7th and 8th centuries. It has been maintained that this influence was not a one-way street from Britain to the continent but that a few words also went in the other direction.

Werner Betz (1949, 99; 209) assumes that a small number of Old English [OE] religious terms may have been borrowed from their Old High German [OHG] cognates. Their borrowing may have been triggered by the Benedictine Reforms of Dunstan and Aethelwold in the 10th century. As a possible intermediary, the monastery of Fleury in France may have played a role in their transmission. Still others may already have been borrowed during the reign of King Alfred (871–899).

2.1 Latin and Greek religious terms transmitted via German

Based on Betz (1949, 99; 209), Stanforth (1996, 38) offers the following list of thirteen terms, including their assumed OHG immediate sources and their ultimate Latin source words. All of these words have in common that they translate or render the contents of their Latin sources more or less freely into OHG, and OE.

Table 1. OHG borrowings in OE and their Latin source words

(Table mine, based on Stanforth (1996, 38), OE meanings according to Toller, Shean and Tichy)

	OE	OHG	LATIN
1.	<i>cugele</i> ‘cowl, monk’s hood’	<i>cuculla</i> ‘Mönchskappe’	<i>cuculla</i>
2.	<i>aeweward</i> ‘priesthood’	<i>ewart(tuam)</i> ‘Priestertum’	<i>sacerdotium</i>
3.	<i>amansumian</i> ‘to excommunicate’	<i>arめinsamon</i> ‘exkommunizieren’	<i>excommunicare</i>
4.	<i>camphad</i> ‘warfare’	<i>champfheit</i> ‘der Kriegsdienst Gottes’	<i>militia</i>
5.	<i>dryhtenic</i> ‘belonging to the Lord, Lordly’	<i>truhtinlîh</i> ‘des Herrn’	<i>dominicus</i>
6.	<i>forbyrd</i> ‘a forebearing, an abstaining from’	<i>furiburt</i> ‘Enthaltsamkeit’	<i>abstinentia</i>
7.	<i>fullness</i> ‘complin(e)’	<i>folnissi</i> ‘die Komplet’	<i>completorium</i>
8.	<i>gehaben</i> ‘to abstain’	<i>gihaben</i> ‘sich enthalten’	<i>abstinere</i>
9.	<i>gemaensumnes</i> ‘holy communion’	<i>gimeinsami</i> ‘Abendmahl’	<i>communio</i>
10.	<i>niwcumen</i> ‘novice’	<i>niuwiquemo</i> ‘Novize’	<i>novitius</i>
11.	<i>timbran</i> ‘to instruct, edify’	<i>zimbron</i> ‘moralisch erbauen’	<i>aedificare</i>
12.	<i>hwilcness</i> ‘quality’	<i>wealhniissi</i> ‘Beschaffenheit’	<i>qualitas</i>
13.	<i>lytelmód</i> ‘of little courage, faint-hearted, pusillanimous’	<i>lucilmuati</i> ‘kleinmütig’	<i>pusillanimus</i>

In Betz's terminology of borrowings, they fall into the categories of loanword (1), loan-shifts (2–11), and loan formations (12–13). Excepting (12–13), all the others belong semantically in the technical register of the church and its administration.

Helmut Gneuss (1955, 93, 103 and 129) has cast doubts on this list. For *drychtenlic*, fullness, *getimbran* and *lytelmód*, he denies OHG origin; for the others he assumes independent coinage in OE. In a more recent survey article (Gneuss 1993), which can be regarded as a *tour d'horizon* of Anglo-Saxon language contact and its academic study from the earliest beginnings to the present, he sums up the many problems and findings that have been put forward regarding this matter as follows.

It has to be acknowledged that “the rendering of foreign terms and concepts on the basis of the native, receiving language, either by giving a native word a new meaning, additional meaning, or by forming new words from native elements” (Gneuss 1993, 142) plays an important part in lexical borrowing in general, and particularly in OE and OHG. Gneuss credits Betz for having laid the methodological foundations for such studies.

Another important result from cross-linguistic comparisons between OE and OHG is that the survival rate of lexical loans of all types and their proportion to the total number of recorded words is, unsurprisingly, much higher in German than in English.

Gneuss then points out two *caveats*:

- 1) to look carefully at what types of texts these translations occur in, and
- 2) to consider whether the interlinear glosses are rather mechanical word-for-word-translations or whether the “glossators were [...] knowledgeable and skilled”. (1993, 146).

In other words, did these translations really form part of the OE vocabulary or did they merely function as teaching aids in the instruction of novices?

2.2 Disputed and doubtful cases

Apart from these loan-shifts (*Lehnprägungen*), a small group of OE loanwords, namely *deofol* ‘devil’, *engel* ‘angel’, *cirice* ‘church’, *preost* ‘priest’, “and the loan-formations signifying ‘to baptize’, ‘to pity’, ‘to fast’ and ‘the heathen’” (see Gneuss 1993, 120) feature prominently in the literature. They all belong to the religious sphere. Ultimately, all of them, excepting *cirice*, go back to Latin. Some scholars have attributed their transmission to the influence of OHG. But, in general, their way of transmission into OE is uncertain or disputed.

Gneuss (1993, 120–123) discusses these words and their transmission routes in detail. Beginning with Friedrich Kluge it has been suggested that these words, present in a number of West Germanic languages “should be considered as Gothic borrowings from Greek which had been introduced into Southern German by Gothic missionaries travelling upstream along the river Danube. From Southern

Germany this Christian vocabulary would then have travelled further north until it had finally reached the Anglo-Saxons.” (1993, 120) This view, still maintained by Barbara M.H. Strang (1970, 374), lacks historical evidence and “as far as OE *engel*, *bisceop* and *deofol* are concerned, and likewise their West Germanic cognates, there do not seem to be any phonological problems in deriving them from a form of Latin spoken in Gaul [...]” (Gneuss 1993, 121).

For the OE word *cirice* ‘the house of God’, Gneuss favours the explanation that the Greek term “*kyrikón* was in use in Southern Gaul, in the area around Lyon, from where it may have reached Trier by the fourth century, afterwards spreading from there as a loanword.” (Gneuss 1993, 121; see also Wieland 2012, 370)

OE *haeden*, most likely a loan-meaning of Lat *paganus*, and the OE words for *baptizare* (*fulwian*, *depan*, *dyppan*), *misereri* and *misericors* (almost always *miltisian* and *mildheort*) represent an independent choice of translation words, as opposed to Gothic *arman*, *armahairts*, and OHG *irbarmen*, *armherz*. (Gneuss 1993, 122) Apart from the etymological mismatch, these words cannot be linked to Gothic antecedents because of “lexicographical evidence and the manuscript tradition” (Gneuss 1993, 122).

Consulting the OED online is instructive and disappointing at the same time. The etymologies of these words are described in detail and also their putative transmission routes. But often a number of open questions about whether these words were borrowed or independent parallel developments still remain.

These difficulties and uncertainties set aside, the loan-shifts and the loanwords bear testimony to the huge influence of Latin, and, to a lesser extent Greek, within the Christianisation of Europe. The loan-shifts as documented in Table 1, no matter whether they were borrowed or created independently, illustrate the linguistic strategy of the Anglo-Saxons to rely on their own linguistic resources to express the concepts of Latin words by creating calques, rather than borrowing the foreign word (form)s and their concepts wholesale.

From a diachronic perspective, it is noteworthy that none of the OE translations or renderings given in Table 1 survived into Modern English.

As far as the transmission routes of individual words are concerned, the closing remarks of this section intend to draw attention to Gneuss’ methodological suggestions for further research in this area:

we need to consider the progress made in recent years in scholarly disciplines that are directly relevant to our subject: historical linguistics, manuscript studies, history and archaeology. [...] Any study of a particular word must be based on the full textual evidence for this [...]. (Gneuss 1993, 111)

3. German loans in Middle English

Manfred Scheler (1977, 57) and Anthony W. Stanforth (1996, 40-41) mention that quite a few French borrowings in ME ultimately go back to German. This may seem quite implausible at first sight. In order to explain this, we need to go back to the very beginnings of the French state and its language in the early Middle Ages.

Walter von Wartburg explains on the basis of historical, linguistic and onomastic evidence that in present-day northern France between the fifth and the ninth centuries, Gauls and Franks were living side by side. This close and extended contact yielded Franconian loanwords in Old French in many walks of life.

Die Menge der fränkischen Elemente im französischen Wortschatz läßt keine andere Möglichkeit zu, als daß die beiden Sprachen längere Zeit nebeneinander gesprochen wurden. Nordgallien war einige Jahrhunderte zweisprachig. (von Wartburg 1950, 9)
 ‘The number of Franconian elements in the word stock of French does not allow any other possibility than that the two languages were spoken in northern Gaul for an extended period of time. Northern Gaul was for some centuries bilingual.’ [trans. U.B.]

3.1 French words originating in German

After the Norman Conquest, a number of these “German” words, now in French apparel, were borrowed into ME. Albert Eichler (1908) mentions that after the Norman Conquest words originating in German were not borrowed haphazardly into ME but that they can be found in specific domains of the vocabulary, in particular in law, warfare, and, to a lesser extent, in hunting and heraldry.

Scheler (1977, 57) outlines the way stages during the transmission of these words as follows: [West] Germanic/Old High German > [rom.] > Old French/Anglo-Norman > Middle English > Modern English.

Among others, he exemplifies the borrowing route of ModE *fresh*. OHG *frisk* (< West Germanic **friskaz*) via Old French *freis* (masculine) / *fresche* (feminine) ME *fresh*. The OE word *fersc* had the meaning ‘unsalted’ and can, therefore, not be regarded as the ancestor of Modern English *fresh*.

The OED online confirms this in principle, but also shows how complicated it is to verify the foreign influences on the various senses of the word: “Of multiple origins. Partly a word inherited from Germanic. Partly a borrowing from French.”

Some of these “French”-German words superseded their OE cognates and have stayed in the language.

- ModE *blue* < OHG *blao* superseded OE *blaw*
- ModE *quiver* < Old French *cuivre* < OHG *kohhar* superseded OE *cocur*
- ModE *robe* ‘garment’ via OFr < OHG *roup* superseded OE *reaf*
 Originally, the OHG word *roup* had the sense of Lat *spolia*, ‘captured armour

of a slain enemy' extending its meaning to 'garment'. The meaning 'capture' is carried on by *to rob* and *robber*.

In OE *reaf* was part of a productive word family with the members *reafian*, *reafere*, *reafol*, *reafung*, *reaflic*. The only present-day survivor being *to bereave*, literally 'to rob by death' (Eichler 1908, 239).

Another interesting example is the case of OE *feoh* 'cattle, property', which shifted its meaning under the influence of OHG *fehu*, *fihu* to reflect the new social order of feudalism, as in *to enfeoff*, *feud*, *fee*, *fief*, and *feudal* (Eichler 1908, 241).

These examples, among others, illustrate that in OE similar or related words already existed, and that the borrowing of foreign words is not necessarily a consequence of lexical gaps and/or cultural inferiority. This point is emphasised by Barbara Strang. She does, however, not refer specifically to the German examples above, but to the impact of Anglo-Norman and Central French in their entirety. She concludes:

Important as all this is, there is probably nothing so widely misunderstood in the history of English as the true meaning of the influx of French words. It is often, quite wrongly, supposed that English borrowed items it lacked, and that inferiority, in vocabulary and culture, can be detected where borrowing occurs. In fact, hordes of the French words which swept into the language in period IV [1170–1370] were synonymous with perfectly good words already long established in English [...]. (Strang 1970, 251)

4. German loans in Early Modern English

Direct borrowings that can be identified as German with a high degree of certainty hardly show up before the 16th century (see Stanforth 1996, 42). "There was less direct influence of High German on English in the earlier stages of the language than we have found in the case of French, Dutch, or Scandinavian." (Serjeantson 1935, 179) In many cases the causing factor or even the creator; i.e. the translator, is known. Nonetheless, it cannot be ruled out that in some cases Dutch mediation took place.

4.1 German loans related to the Reformation

Carr (1934, 39) states that "direct contact between English and High German begins with the Reformation. This was apparently the first event in German history which left its impression on the English vocabulary." In William Tyndale's translation of the New Testament a few words can be attributed with certainty to Luther's influence (see Carr 1934, 40; 1940, 71).

– *Mercy seat*, rendering Luther's *Gnadenstuhl*

1530 *Bible* (Tyndale) Exod. xxv. f. xlii And thou shalt make a mercyseate of pure golde... And make .ij. cherubyns off thicke golde on the .ij. endes of the mercyseate. (OED online)

- *Showbread*, rendering Luther's *Schaubrot*
1530 *Bible* (Tyndale) Exod. xxv. f. xlii^v Thou shalt sett upon the table, shewbred before me allwaye. (OED online)
- *Silverling*, a shekel; from *Silberling*
1526 *Bible* (Tyndale) Acts xix. 19 They counted the price of them and founde it fifty thousande silverlynges. (OED online)
- *Weakling*, rendering Luther's *Weichling*
1526 *Bible* (Tyndale) 1 Cor. vi. 9 Nether fornicators, ... nether whor~mongers, nether weaklings [Gk. *μαλακοί*; Luther, *weichlinge*]. (OED online)

Apart from the few immediate linguistic influences, the translation as such has connections to Germany and the continent. The background information provided on the website of the British Library tells us about its dramatic publication history.

In England it was forbidden to translate the Bible into a vernacular language. Tyndale had to take his English translation of the New Testament to Cologne to have it printed, but his endeavour was uncovered and he was forced to halt the printing and flee. After his arrival in Worms, he had a new edition printed in 1526, in around 3,000 copies. Some copies were smuggled into England and sold there, but owning a copy of Tyndale's New Testament still attracted the death penalty. Most copies were therefore destroyed by the authorities, who regarded the distribution of the New Testament in English as a danger to the established Church. Today, only three copies of this 1526 edition of Tyndale's New Testament are known to survive. (British Library, n.d.; <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/william-tyndales-new-testament>)

William Tyndale went into hiding, but he was arrested in Antwerp in 1535 and was convicted as a heretic and strangled and burned at the stake a year later.

The first complete English translation of the Bible by Miles Coverdale (1535) has a joint German-Dutch history. The full title of the translation is: *Biblia. The Bible, tha[t] is, the holy Scripture of t[he] Olde and New Testament, faithfully and truly translated out of Douche and Latyn in to Englishe.*

Due to the ambiguity of the word 'Douche' (see Llewellyn 1936, 6; Luu 2005, 263), we cannot be sure whether Coverdale used a German or a Dutch version of the Bible for his translation. Carr believes that Coverdale "certainly made use of Luther's translation." (1934, 40). The British Library provides the following background information.

As Tyndale was arrested and awaiting execution, translating the Bible into English had become less dangerous, but the first edition of Coverdale's Bible was nevertheless still published abroad. After the Bible had been printed in Antwerp (where Coverdale

lived) in 1535, two editions, one folio and one quarto, were published in London in 1537. It was the first time that a complete Bible in English was openly printed in England and was dedicated to the King himself. (British Library, n.d. <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/coverdale-bible>)

Carr (1934, 40) lists the following three Germanisms related to Coverdale's translation.

- *Firstling* (1535), a first-born; possibly from G.[erman] *Erstling* or Du.[tch] *eerstelinck*.
- *Romanist* (1523), coined by Luther 1520.
- *Sinflood* (1550), the great Flood, translating G. *Sündflut*.

Since these items were based on the first edition of the OED (1884–1928) and its one-volume supplement (1933), they were checked against the entries of the modern online-edition of the OED.

For *firstling* the updated OED online gives an earlier citation (1530, Bible Tyndale), but does not confirm the etymology: “formed within English, by derivation”. By contrast OED-2 says “In its earliest recorded use, perhaps after German *erstling*.” For *Romanist* in the sense of ‘A member or adherent of the Roman Church; a Roman Catholic’ OED online confirms Luther but gives a later first citation. There are no alterations, ante- or postdatings for *sinflood*.

In addition, many of the compounds with *wine-* as its first component are modelled on similar compounds used by Luther (see Carr 1934, 40). This information is confirmed by the not yet fully updated entry in the OED online.

Compounds [...] (*b*) in reproduction of German compounds, in Coverdale's version of the Bible, rendering Luther's language, as *wine-garden*, *wine-gardener*, *wine gathering*, *wine harvest*, *wine kernel*, *wine stock*, after German *weingarten*, *-gärtner*, *-ernte*, *-kern*, *-stock*; [...]. (OED online)

Finally, Carr (1934, 40) lists the three words *Anabaptist* (1526), *papist* (1521) and *Protestant* (1539), concluding that “[d]espite the importance of the Reformation, the number of words borrowed from German referring to it is not large.” Stanforth (1996, 42–44) also finds it surprising that compared to the huge cultural influence the Reformation exerted on England, its lexical impact in terms of direct borrowings from German is only marginal.

4.2 Early scholarly contacts: botanical terms

In comparison to the few German words that came into the English language as results of Bible translations, two sixteenth-century naturalists, namely William Turner (1509/10–1568) and Henry Lyte (1529?–1607), introduced quite a few botanical terms from German into English.

Turner wrote two books, *Names of Herbes* (1548) and *A New Herball* (in three volumes 1551, 1562, 1568). Carr (1934, 40-41) mentions that Turner travelled extensively in both Holland and Germany, and that it is sometimes difficult to decide whether the terms are borrowed from Dutch or German. Etymological evidence from the OED online gives German as the source language for the following items.

Boor's mustard (from early modern German *baurensenfe*, literally 'peasant's mustard'), *Cornel-tree* (translating German *cornell-baum*, which is also the source for the corresponding words in Danish and Swedish), *spindle-tree* (after German *spindelbaum* (Old High German *spindel-*, *spinelpaum*, *spinnilapoum*), = Middle Dutch *spindelboom*), *swallow-wort* (rendering early modern German *schwalbenwurtz* (compare obsolete Dutch *swaelemwortel*)).

Larch from German *Lärche*, *thoroughwax* from German *Durchwassz* [sic.], and *digitalis*, coined by the German botanist Fuchs (1542) as a latinization of German *Fingerhut* 'thimble', are definitely related to High German.

– *Neese-wort* is a case with an uncertain etymology:

[P]robably after a form in a continental Germanic language; compare early modern Dutch *nieswortel*, Old Saxon *hnioswurt* (Middle Low German *nesewort*), Old High German *hniesuurtz* (Middle High German *niesewurz*, *nieswurz*, German *Nieswurz*). (OED online)

The sources of the second example, Henry Lyte's *Niewe Herball* (1578), also make language attributions to individual items somewhat difficult. The full title of the book (see below) reveals that Lyte used the French translation by Charles de L'Ecluse, published in 1557, of the *Cruydeboek*, written by the Flemish physician and botanist Rembert Dodoens in 1554.

A new herball, or, Historie of plants: wherein is contained the whole discourse and perfect description of all sorts of herbes and plants : their diuers and sundrie kindes : their names, natures, operations, & vertues : and that not onely of those which are heere growing in this our countrie of England, but of all others also of forraine realms commonly used in physicke, First set foorth in the Douch or Almaigne toong / by that learned D. Rembert Dodoens ... and now first translated out of French into English, by Henrie Lyte, Esquier. (Dodoens)

Carr (1934, 41) lists the following eight words: *amelcorn*, *devil's milk*, †*hask-wort*, *hasel-wort*, *hirse*, *hole-wort*, †*pestilence-wort* and *rose-wort*. All of them, excepting *hole-wort* and *hirse* have Low German or Dutch correspondences.

The following three citations for *amelcorn*, *devil's milk*, and *hole-wort* from the OED online may serve as representatives for the etymological attributions:

– *amelcorn*

1578 H. Lyte tr. R. Dodoens *Niewe Herball* 456 This corne is called in high Douch *Ammelkorne*... in base Almaigne, *Amelcorne*, and in Latin *Amyleum frumentum*... it may be englished *Amelcorne*, or bearded wheate.

- *devil's milk*
1578 H. Lyte tr. R. Dodoens *Niewe Herball* iii. xxxii. 363 We may cal it after the Greke Pepsos, or following the Douche, Dyuels milke.
- *hole-wort*
1578 H. Lyte tr. R. Dodoens *Niewe Herball* iii. ii. 316 The roote whiche is holowe within is called in Germanie Holwurtz, that is to say in English Holowe roote, or Holewurt.

Most of these terms are outdated in present-day English, or were replaced, as e.g. *hirse* by *millet*.

4.3 Industry and trade: mining and mineralogy

Carr (1934, 44) states that the seventeenth century marks the beginning of “High German mining and mineral terms on English”. Earlier on, a number of Low German terms had been borrowed. The High German word *Glanz*, “which first appears in the compound *glance-ore* (1458),” was borrowed via Dutch *glans* in the fifteenth century (Carr 1934, 39).

Based on William Cunningham (1969, 116; 212), Carr provides a historical outline of the presence of German miners in England from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century.

The Germans played an important part in the mining operations in England from the earliest times. Even in the thirteenth century Richard of Cornwall brought German miners to work the tin mines in Cornwall. In the sixteenth century Henry VIII obtained services of Germans to develop the mineral resources of England; and in 1563 a German mining company was floated at Keswick and about 300–400 workmen brought over. [...] Later, in the seventeenth century, James I empowered Gerard Malynes to bring over German workmen to work the led mines in Yorkshire and the silver mines in Durham; whilst Prince Rupert brought German miners to Ecton in Staffordshire to teach the use of gunpowder in mining operations (Carr 1934, 44-45).

Carr (1934, 45-46) lists a total of fourteen technical terms relating to mining and minerals in the seventeenth century. On the evidence of the new edition of the OED online they are attested from 1650 to the end of the century. In contrast to the herbal terms, their etymologies are indeed all German. In principle, they fall into two parts: obsolete technical terms and words for minerals, which are still in technical or more general use.

The first group includes *bargh*, a dialectal word for *mine* (and compounds such as *barmaster*, from German *Bergmeister* and *barmote*), *dowsing-rod*, a water divining rod, *shiffer* ‘slate’, from older German *schiffer*, now *Schiefer*, and *spalt*, a scaly mineral, from German *spalten* ‘to split’.

Cobalt and *zinc* belong to the second group. They have remained in the language and are well known, and less technical than *blende* (from German *blende*, < *blenden* ‘to deceive’: so called ‘because while often resembling *galena*, it yielded no lead’), *glimmer* ‘mica’, and *bismuth*.

As far as the transmission of these words is concerned, Carr assumes “that many of them were used in the spoken language earlier than they appeared in print, so that it is impossible to determine when the actual borrowing took place.” (1934, 44) The fact that German miners were employed at different locations leads Carr to the conclusion that the German loanwords appeared first in local dialects and that written evidence follows in the 17th century. This view is confirmed by Martyn F. Wakelin. He states that “[t]here has been contact with Germany since the Middle Ages, but from the dialectal point of view it is not until the seventeenth century that there is much to note.” (Wakelin 1977, 23)

Regarding transmission routes, some tentative conclusions can be drawn from the etymologies and the citations given in the OED online. The obsolete *wismuth* and its later English form *bismuth* are related to the German scientist Agricola and his work *De re metallica*: “German *bismuth*; the present German form is *wismuth* or *wismut*, a reversion to *wissmuth*, the form in which the word first occurs in G. Agricola (1629), though he latinized it as *bisemūtum*.” (OED online)

The first part of Sir John Pettus’ work *Fleta Minor* (1683) is a translation of Lazarus Ercker’s *Proberbuch* (1574).

In this respect, *glimmer* is an instructive example.

1683 J. Pettus tr. L. Ercker i. 7 in *Fleta Minor* i Silver Oars..free from Flint..Mispickle, Glimmer, Wolferan [etc.]. (OED online)

“Pettus’s interest in metallurgy and mining led to him becoming a member of the Society of Mines Royal and Battery Works in 1651 and he acted as deputy governor of the royal mines from then until his death, apart from one brief interval.” (Porter 2008, para. 5)

Apart from translations, travel accounts are another written source for technical mining terminology. *Slich* ‘pounded ore’ is first attested in the OED in a travel account by the English physician and fellow of the Royal Society Edward Browne entitled *An Account of Several Travels Through a great Part of Germany, In four Journeys* (1677).

Here at *Freiberg* they have many ways to open the *Ore* whereby it may be melted; as by *Lead* and a sort of *Silver Ore* which holds *Lead* in it. They have also *Sulphur Ore* found here, which after it is burned, doth help much towards the fusion of *Metals*: And besides these, *Slich*, or pounded and washed *Ore*; [...]. (Browne 135)

Its anglicisation to *slick* is documented in Pettus’ *Fleta Minor* (1683).

1683 J. Pettus tr. L. Ercker ii. iii. 113 in *Fleta Minor* i Of Gold Slicks. Further, know also that when the Gold Oars and Gold Slicks are cleansed for to quicken [etc.]. (OED online)

By contrast, the etymology provided for *cobalt* favours oral transmission by German miners from the Harz or Erzgebirge rather than written transmission and diffusion by the work of Paracelsus:

Etymology: < German *kobalt*, [...] apparently the same word as *kobold*, etc., goblin or demon of the mines; the ore of cobalt having been so called by the miners on account of the trouble which it gave them, not only from its worthlessness (as then supposed), but from its mischievous effects upon their own health and upon silver ores in which it occurred, effects due mainly to the arsenic and sulphur with which it was combined. From the miners of the Harz or Erzgebirge the name became common German, and thence passed into all the European languages, French *cobalt*, Italian *cobalto*, Spanish *cobalto*, Portuguese *cobalto*, Dutch, Danish, Russian, Polish, Bohemian, etc., *kobalt*, Swedish *kobolt*. See Hildebrand in Grimm s.v., who shows also that the metal was known to Paracelsus (Wks. 1589 VIII. 350), though its discovery is usually credited to Brandt in 1733. (OED online)

The spelling variants given for *keeble*, *kibble* for German *Kübel*, ‘tub’, with the unrounding and shortening of the vowel would probably indicate oral transmission and assimilation.

1671 *Philos. Trans.* (Royal Soc.) 6 2104 A Winder with two Keebles (great buckets made like a barrel with iron hoops..) which as one comes up, the other goes down. (OED online)

1693 *Philos. Trans.* (Royal Soc.) 17 744 The Rate..for getting of Copper-Ore was.. from 8s. a Kibble to 2s. 6d., every Kibble being near a Horse-Load in weight. (OED online)

In the diachronic perspective, “the influence of the German nomenclature of mineralogy and geology is the oldest, and has remained the most constant.” (Carr 1934, 89). Serjeantson (1935, 180) also regards the borrowings in the domain of mineralogy as “[t]he most distinctive contribution of German to English”. A knowledge of German was indispensable to English mineralogists until the middle of the 20th century. Stanforth (1996, 48) maintains that up to the 1960s in several English universities students of these subjects needed to have knowledge of German in examinations.

Due to the presence of German miners in different parts of England, it is interesting to have a look at the socio-cultural background of this languages-in-contact situation.

During the reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603) and under the direction of Lord Cecil, the industrial development of England was mainly achieved by issuing patents. According to Lien Bich Luu “the government began to rely on patents and monopolies to encourage aliens and native English entrepreneurs to take the initiatives and shoulder the main responsibilities and risks involved.” (2005, 64) Excerpt (1) below tells us about the granting of royal mining patents to Thomas Thurland and Daniel Houghsetter by Queen Elizabeth.

(1) The Mines Royal, 1564

ELIZABETH by the Grace of God, etc. To all unto whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

WHERE We by our Letters Patents bearing date at Westminster the tenth day of October in the sixth year of our reign have, for the considerations therein mentioned, given and granted full power licence and authority to THOMAS THURLAND, Clerk, one of our Chaplains and Master of our Hospital of the Savoy, and to DANIEL HOUGHSETTER, a German born, their heirs and assigns and every of them forever, by themselves their servants labourers and workmen or any of them to search dig open roast melt stamp wash drain or convey waters or otherwise work for all manner of mines or ores of gold, silver, copper and quicksilver within our counties of York, Lancaster, Cumberland, Westmorland, Cornwall, Devon, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire and within our Principality of Wales or in any of them, [...]. (Tawney and Power 1924, 250)

Luu (2005, 68–70) reports in detail about the various problems that occurred in the mines at Keswick. In the 1560s, about four hundred to five hundred German miners were working there. As the German workers were used to drinking wine at mealtimes, this had to be brought from London. Their wish to have a preacher in their own language was denied by Lord Cecil, “presumably to discourage them from keeping to themselves and to encourage them to assimilate into the local community.” (Luu 2005, 70) Open hostility, resulting in a murder case was also reported. (See excerpt 2 below)

(2) Letter from the Queen to Lord Scrope and the Justices of Cumberland and Westmorland, ordering them to protect the German miners, 1566

Wheras certayn Almeynes privyleged by our lettres patents under our great seal of england with ther great travaill, skyl and expenses of monyes, have of layte to there great commendacon recouered out of the montaynes and Rocks within our Countyes of Westmorland and Comberland great quantite of myneralls, with ther full intencon to have furder proceded abowt the sayme, have of layte bene as we are credibly informed ympetched and assalted, Ryotously and contrarye to our peace and lawes, by a great number of disordered people of our said counties, whereupon manslaughter and murder of one of the said Almaynes hath ensuyd, to the lyklye discouragement of all ther sayd companye. [...]. (Tawney and Power 1924, 249-250)

These examples show that culturally, spiritually and linguistically the integration of the foreigners “in a remote and isolated area with no tradition of foreign immigration, was bound to provoke native attention and jealousy.” (Luu 2005, 70)

Apart from the vocabulary of mining and mineral terminology, Carr (1934, 46–49) briefly mentions further domains that yielded some German loanwords in the seventeenth century: religious words, words borrowed in connection with the Thirty Years’ War, and a couple of words not related to a particular sphere or domain.

From the point of view of contact linguistics, the importation of “Latin” terms in science is worth mentioning. The Swiss scientist Paracelsus coined a number of terms in his Latin works, out of which *laudanum* (1602), *salamander*, *sylph*, and *undine* (all 1657) are still known, as are Kepler’s *dioptrical* (1612), *dioptrics* (1644), *focus* (1656), *inertia* (1687), and *satellite* (1665). These neo-classical terms were coined by German scientists writing in Latin. Despite the scholarly works in the vernaculars (of English and German) giving rise to translations, the above-mentioned terms still testify to the importance of Latin as a language of scholarship.

5. Summary and conclusion

Carr begins his collection of Germanisms by saying that such a study is not only of etymological interest, but that “it also provides an instructive commentary on the cultural relations of one nation with another, and on the movement of ideas” (1934, 35) While the preceding sections definitely testify to this, the linguistic output does not.

In terms of numbers, the influence of German on the English language from the early Middle Ages up to the seventeenth century is small, and partly short-lived. As far as Old English and the introduction of Christianity are concerned, many of the putative borrowings from German have to be regarded in the broader scope of Latin as a donor language, since both vernaculars resorted to indirect borrowing for promoting and promulgating the new concepts of faith by coining new words on Latin patterns, especially by calquing. However, these loan renditions and creations did not survive the Old English period.

The German words that were transmitted into Middle English through Old French can only be ascertained by etymological research. Their German origin is not apparent to ordinary speakers of English or German; therefore Carr (1934, 38) excluded them from his study. However, these indirect borrowings have remained productive in the English vocabulary, partly in addition to existing words, and also replacing them.

The history of mining has shown that larger communities of German miners were living in different parts of the country, so that German was actively used and that some technical terms were transmitted into English dialects.

Despite the fact that the Reformation originated in Germany, its linguistic

impact on the English language was small. However, what the Reformation, and the beginnings of science, as illustrated by botany and metallurgy, have in common is a lively cultural exchange between European countries, resulting in the mobility of people and in the diffusion of ideas by travel accounts and translations of important works. In some cases, multiple sources and transitional stages in the transmission of individual words from *do(u)ch* cannot be ruled out, despite the objective to limit the scope of the paper to High German.

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