

SUGAR AND SPICE AND ALL THINGS NICE:
FROM ORIENTAL BAZAR TO ENGLISH CLOISTER IN
ANGLO-FRENCH

In May of 1436 the *George* of Seaton came into the port of Southampton: its entry was logged in French. In the same month a boat came in from Portugal: it too was logged in French.¹ These were just two out of many vessels, some from British ports, others from all over continental Europe, whose comings and goings were all recorded in French. Naturally, the year 1436 was not an exception to the rule: from the time of the *Oak Book* in about 1300² French was the working language of the port. At around this same period, the early decades of the fifteenth century, the Grocers' Company, the Merchant Taylors, the Goldsmiths, the Mercers, and other mercantile corporations based in London were also using French, mixed with English, to preserve a record of their business activities.³ In Southampton the regulations governing the administration of the medieval city were also in French, as were those for Leicester⁴ and York,⁵ where French appears alongside Latin and, increasingly, English. In the ecclesiastical field a similar situation obtained. At Durham, the extensive accounts of the abbey from the early fourteenth century to the sixteenth contain not only the expected Latin and, increasingly with the passage of time, English, but also an unexpected amount of French.⁶ In the same city a separate set of documents relating to the activities of the Bishop in the early part of the fourteenth century as both a temporal and a spiritual leader also contains a sizable percentage of Anglo-French.⁷ In the higher reaches of government and the law French continued to be widely used well into the fifteenth century, despite the statute of 1362 banning it from precisely these areas.

This kind of first-hand evidence must call into question yet again the traditional wisdom from second-hand sources still being peddled even today regarding the nature and scope of later Anglo-French. In an article published in 1996, D. A. Kibbee writes approvingly of 'the study of later Anglo-French for many purposes,

¹ *The Local Port Book of Southampton for 1435-6*, ed. by Brian Foster (Southampton: Southampton University Press, 1963), p. 46.

² *The Oak Book of Southampton*, ed. by P. Studer, Publications of the Southampton Record Society, 10 (Southampton: Cox & Shorland, 1910-11). See also *The Port Books of Southampton*, ed. by P. Studer, Publications of the Southampton Record Society, 15 (Southampton: Cox & Shorland), 1913.

³ See my article, 'The French Vocabulary in the Archives of the London Grocers' Company', *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur*, 102 (1992), 23-41; Lisa Jefferson and W. Rothwell, 'Society and Lexis: A Study of the Anglo-French Vocabulary in the Fifteenth-Century Accounts of the Merchant Taylors' Company', *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur*, 107 (1997), 273-301; Lisa Jefferson, 'The Anglo-French Vocabulary of the Medieval Records of the Goldsmiths' Company Archives', *Multilingualism in Later Medieval Britain: Proceedings of the 1997 Aberystwyth Colloquium*, ed. by D. A. Trotter (Cambridge: Brewer), Jefferson is continuing to work on similar records left by other livery companies.

⁴ *Records of the Borough of Leicester*, ed. by Mary Bateson, 2 vols (London: Clay, 1899; 1901).

⁵ *York Memorandum Book*, ed. by Maud Sellers, Surtees Society, 120, 125 (Durham: Andrews, 1911; 1914).

⁶ *Extracts from the Account Rolls of the Abbey of Durham*, ed. by Canon Fowler, Surtees Society, 99, 100, 103 (Durham: Andrews, 1898; 1898); 1901.

⁷ *Registrum Palatinum Dunelmense, The Register of Richard de Kellawe* [...], 4 vols, ed. by Thomas Duffy Hardy, Rolls Series (London: Longman, 1873-78).

which must include the fact that it was degenerating into a risible jargon'.⁸ That the leading port on the south coast of England, and, as will be seen later, the Port of London, along with a number of highly successful business groups with international as well as national connections, also administrators and lawyers dealing with affairs at both local and national level should all choose to preserve a substantial part of their important records in 'a risible jargon' defies common sense, so it may be appropriate to look at some of the available documents to see just what role was played by French at this late period.

Until recently, such limited interest as late Anglo-French was able to arouse amongst scholars specializing in medieval French has been confined, with only a very few exceptions, to the efforts made in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries to teach what was by now a language unknown to most of the inhabitants of a country moving inexorably towards the unchallenged dominance of English as the national language. Attention has been focused in the main on the various textbooks of French produced in England from the second half of the thirteenth century onwards, particularly the later *Manières de Langage*,⁹ composed to help the anglophone traveller in France. These manuals provide him with the French vocabulary associated with the necessities and luxuries of life on his journeys: obtaining food, drink, and shelter, preferably with female company, furnishing a house, knowing the French for the parts of the body, counting, along with the names and values of French coins, asking the way to a distant town, conversing with or abusing, as the case may be, different classes of French people, and so on. Alongside these practical manuals may be set a number of grammatical works composed around the same time, which have most recently been studied in some depth by Brian Merrilees.¹⁰ These are either straightforward elementary grammars, giving verb-forms, numbers, adverbs, and so on, or accompany their grammatical information by dialogues in the form of the *Manières* referred to above.

Whilst the few surviving examples of this type of document have been researched over many decades, other teaching manuals of roughly similar date have received less attention. Around the time that the needs of the English traveller in France were being catered for by instruction in oral exchanges and the theoretical structure of the language was being set out in the grammars, a very different practical register of French was being taught at Oxford by the *dictatores* Thomas Sampson and William Kingsmill. I. D. O. Arnold and Dominica Legge made introductory studies of the

⁸ 'Emigrant Languages and Acculturation: The Case of Anglo-French', in *The Origins and Development of Emigrant Languages: Proceedings from the Second Rasmus Rask Colloquium*, ed. by Hans F. Nielsen and Lena Schøsler (Odense: Odense University Press, 1996), pp. 1–20 (p. 16). The coinage 'acculturation' itself would qualify for inclusion in a 'risible jargon' better than later Anglo-French. Although Kibbee also claims at the same point that 'no one would claim now that French was cut off from its continental supply in 1204' (p. 13), this is precisely what Juliette Dor does claim in her article 'Langues française et anglaise, et multilinguisme à l'époque d'Henri II Plantagenêt', in the highly authoritative *Cahiers de Civilisation médiévale*, 37 (1994), 61–72: 'coupé de ses racines métropolitaines' (p. 65). Referring to the linguistic state of the English people in Henry's reign she writes: 'Ils étaient dans la situation type de pidginisation et de créolisation' (p. 68).

⁹ *Walter de Bibbesworth: Le Tretiz*, ed. by W. Rothwell, ANTS Plain Texts Series, 6 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1990); Andres M. Kristol, *Manières de Langage*, ANTS, 53 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1995).

¹⁰ See B. Merrilees, 'Donatus and the Teaching of French in Medieval England', in *Anglo-Norman Anniversary Essays*, ed. by Ian Short, ANTS Occasional Publications, 2 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1993), pp. 273–91, which gives all the necessary references to previous scholarship on this subject.

works of these teachers long ago¹¹ but only the historian H. G. Richardson has published an appreciable amount of Sampson's actual teaching material, showing how students were taught to compose various kinds of letter in French, which must surely indicate preparation for future careers in administration and commerce.¹² Other known manuscripts of Sampson's work still await publication. That the *Manieres*, grammars, and exercises in letter-writing all form part of the same picture is shown by a passing reference in Merrilees's and Sitarz-Fitzpatrick's edition of the *Liber Donati* from MS CUL Dd.12.23,¹³ which belongs to the first half of the fifteenth century: 'The other principal items contained in the manuscript are two legal treatises in French, the *Tenures* and the *Curia Baronis*, extracts in French from a London Guildhall Customs Book' (*Liber Donati*, p. 1). These extracts in French from the Customs records of the Port of London match the contemporary evidence from the Southampton port records given above, whilst the legal treatises in French found in the same manuscript as a copy of the *Liber Donati* prove the survival of legal instruction in French long after it was expressly (albeit theoretically) banned from the law by statute in 1362. MS Oxford, All Souls 182, of roughly the same date as the *Liber Donati*, contains hundreds of letters in good French on all manner of high-level diplomatic and administrative matters,¹⁴ as well as a late copy of Bibbesworth's thirteenth-century teaching manual on French. In an appendix to his article 'Donatus and the Teaching of French in Medieval England',¹⁵ Merrilees prints *Le donait* ('Donatus') *soloum douce franceis de Paris* composed early in the fifteenth century by Richard Dove, a monk of Buckfast Abbey. This abbey is mentioned again in Richardson's article quoted above: 'Ego frater N., electus scholaris huius monasterii beate Marie de Buckfaste' (p. 301). The use of French in English religious houses in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries has recently been further illustrated by Tony Hunt's publication of three separate treatises on the vocation of the nun and the rules governing the religious life emanating from different areas.¹⁶ So Durham Abbey was not the only English religious house using French in the later medieval period. Nor was the incumbent of the see of Durham the only prelate to use Anglo-French for a proportion of his administrative records: similar evidence from Exeter has been studied by D. A. Trotter, who writes that 'amongst the registers of the bishops of Exeter, from Walter Bronescombe (1257–80) to Edmund Stafford (1395–1419), there are some 80 to 90 documents in Anglo-French' (*French Studies Bulletin*, 49 (1993), 1–4 (p. 1)). All these different converging strands indicate a perceived need for at least a section of the literate few in England engaged in the professions or commerce to be able to use spoken and written French in the

¹¹ 'Thomas Sampson and the Orthographica Gallica', *Medium Aevum*, 6 (1937), 193–209; 'William of Kingsmill — A Fifteenth-Century Teacher of French in Oxford', in *Studies in French Language and Mediaeval Literature Presented to Professor Mildred K. Pope* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1939), pp. 241–46.

¹² 'Letters of the Oxford Dictatores', *Oxford Historical Society*, New Series, 5 (1942), 360–416.

¹³ *Liber Donati*, ed. by Brian Merrilees and Beata Sitarz-Fitzpatrick, ANTS Plain Texts (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1993).

¹⁴ *Anglo-Norman Letters and Petitions*, ed. by Mary Dominica Legge, ANTS, 3 (Oxford: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1941).

¹⁵ *Anglo-Norman Anniversary Essays*, ANTS Occasional Publications, 2 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1993), pp. 273–91.

¹⁶ 'An Anglo-Norman Treatise on the Religious Life', in *Medieval Codicology, Iconography, Literature and Translation* [...], ed. by P. R. Monks and D. D. R. Owen (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 267–75; 'An Anglo-Norman Treatise on Female Religious', *Medium Aevum*, 64 (1995), 205–31; 'Anglo-Norman Rules for the Priors of St Mary de Pré and Sopwell', in *De Mot en Mot: Aspects of Medieval Linguistics*, ed. by Stewart Gregory and D. A. Trotter (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), pp. 93–104.

fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, not as a social grace or literary ornament but as a mundane tool in the world of work.

Being primarily interested in verse texts that provide rhymes useful in phonological work, philologists have traditionally paid only scant attention to a wide range of prose texts in medieval French from the spheres of commerce, the law, and administration, which would call for the type of training considered above. It is historians of different specialities who must be credited with editing the major constitutional works such as *Magna Carta*, the *Rotuli Parliamentorum*, the *Statutes of the Realm*, *Parliamentary Writs*, and so on, and also the many disparate historical and legal documents, containing at least a proportion of Anglo-French, to be found in the long series of the Camden, Selden, and Surtees Societies. Setting aside a few notable editions such as the *Oak Book*, *Port Books*, and *Local Port Book* of Southampton (see note 1), together with Dominica Legge's *Anglo-Norman Letters and Petitions* (see note 14), following on Tanqueray's pioneering *Recueil de Lettres Anglo-Françaises* (Paris: Champion, 1916) the non-literary French of later medieval England has been regarded as the preserve of historians rather than linguists.¹⁷ In the present decade, however, the balance has started to be redressed by lexical studies of the records of the important livery companies mentioned earlier, covering the period from about 1370 to 1450. When this evidence is added to that from the *Durham Account Rolls*, the port records from Southampton, the treatises from the religious houses and the voluminous correspondence in French referred to above, the rationale behind the teaching of written French at Oxford in the later fourteenth century becomes more understandable.¹⁸

With this background situation in mind, it is now appropriate to take a closer look at the records of the port of Southampton up to the early decades of the fifteenth century currently available in print.¹⁹ The rules governing the shipping using the port and the Customs charges for a wide range of merchandise entering it around the beginning of the fourteenth century are set out in the second volume of the *Oak Book* (the first being given over to the regulations for governing the town itself). Not only the identity of ships entering and leaving the port but also details of their masters, any merchants on board, and the goods they carry are listed in the *Port Books of Southampton* and the *Local Port Book*. The time-scale involved in these publications runs from the beginning of the fourteenth century to 1436. Virtually all the actual records are set down in French, with only a brief summary of the accounts being in Latin: the port functions in French, even into the second quarter of the fifteenth century.²⁰

As well as details of the vessels themselves, the goods carried in them are set down in a French form, regardless of their point of origin. 'Walnuts' are recorded as *noiz ffranceys* in the list of Customs charges from c. 1300 (*Oak Book*, II, 14), whatever their source, and the spices and dye-stuffs are also listed in French, although originating

¹⁷ To these must now be added the voluminous pioneering output of Tony Hunt in the areas of multilingual glossing, botany, and medicine, much of which is not germane to the present study.

¹⁸ It is important to note that the editions of both the *Durham Account Rolls* and the *Oak Book* are incomplete, the former very much so, with whole sections being omitted.

¹⁹ Knowledge of the shipping records for English ports in the medieval period is as yet far from complete.

²⁰ Comparisons with records from French Mediterranean ports would be particularly instructive in this regard. For instance, in his book *Building in England down to 1540* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), L. F. Salzman quotes, but only in passing, a Customs entry '*ynde baudas*' ('indigo of Bagdad') at Marseille in 1228 (p. 169). This might be taken as hinting at the use of French, rather than Provençal, for these records.

far from France: ‘*De la bale de peyvere, gyngyvere, sedewale, canel, galyngale, maces, quibusks* (= ‘cubeb’), *clowes* (= ‘cloves’), *safroun, greynz* (= ‘kermes’, ‘scarlet grain’), *brasyll* (= ‘red-dye wood’), *almandes, comyn, rys, lycoryz* (II, 8). Many of these exotic products came from the East and arrived in Southampton from foreign ports covering a wide area.²¹ Leaving out of account the considerable local traffic from English ports all along the Channel coast and up into East Anglia, all of which were logged in French, the records show a brisk trade with the French ports along the Channel and Atlantic coasts, as is to be expected, but also a regular movement of ships not only from Holland, Denmark, and Germany but from a number of Mediterranean ports. Vessels from Genoa and nearby Savona, from Venice and Ancona, from Catalonia, Portugal, and Famagusta²² all came into Southampton, some of them frequently. These Italian vessels must have gone to the East to load the sugar and spices that would end up in England, some of them on the tables of the religious at Durham Abbey. In the case of sugar, it might be thought that since there were refineries at Venice and Genoa at this time (*Local Port Book* p. 107, the names of the different varieties would be in Italian. Yet all are treated as French: *suchre candy* in a Venetian galley; elsewhere *poudre de suchre, suchrepot, de sugre in pane, sugre de pot, sugre roset, peins de sucre, suchre cassen*.²³ The types of ginger (*gyngibre mekyn* and *gyngibre belendyn*) referred to on pages 45 and 50 of the *Port Books* originate in Mecca and India²⁴ and were brought in from Genoa, yet they too are treated as French. In 1429 a certain André Spinol landed two barrels of *gynbre [sic] verd* from a carrak, again from Genoa (*Port Books*, II, 106, 107). In January 1430 the same André Spinol brought in another two barrels of ginger, along with a whole range of other spices (p. 110). He is next recorded as the importer of two *sport* (‘baskets’) *de resins de Malik* (p. 111).²⁵ Together with one Gregore Catan he then imports more ginger and bales of *graine de Paradys* (p. 112), a product of West Africa. As is only to be expected, the vessels entering Southampton carried many products other than spices. References are frequently found to goods from the East: Turkish cotton, Syrian cotton, silk from Calabria, a type of expensive striped silk from Alexandria called *bord d’Alexandre* (*Local Port Book*, p. 86), which turns up again 300 miles from Southampton in a will from York in the form *bordalisander*,²⁶ metal rods from Italy,²⁷ to mention only a few.²⁸ Whatever the native language of the masters of the vessels and the merchants who were selling these spices, fabrics, and other goods, not only are the records of the ships’ arrival, departure, and cargo all couched in French but when goods are transferred at

²¹ Fine fabrics from the East are mentioned in Anglo-Norman literature as early as c. 1170: ‘Corinan, Riche ille de mer u maignent marinan, Si.n soelent aporter pailles e bukeran’ (*The Romance of Horn*, ed. by M. K. Pope and T. B. W. Reid, ANTS, 9–10, 12–13 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955; 1964), ll. 3328–30).

²² For example, Genoa pp. 44, 46, 47, 50, 51; Savona pp. 77, 107; Venice pp. 44, 82, 106; Ancona p. 109; Lisbon p. 103; Bilbao p. 102. Many similar entries are found in the *Local Port Book*.

²³ *Local Port Book*, pp. 84, 92, 98; *Oak Book*, II, 24; *Port Books*, pp. 48, 53, 53, 110.

²⁴ A. S. C. Ross, *Ginger: A Loan-Word Study* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1952). I am indebted to Lisa Jefferson for this information.

²⁵ *Malik* is probably Malaga, its old name being ‘Malaca’. A Venetian carrak brings in a consignment of figs ‘de Malith’ (p. 98). The word is found in the accounts at Durham as ‘Mallek’ in 1310–11 (p. 510), alongside ‘Sybyll’ (‘Seville’).

²⁶ *Testamenta Eboraciensa*, ed. by L. Baker, 2 vols, Surtees Society, 4 (London: Nichols, 1836), I, 251.

²⁷ ‘ij barel esten en verg’ (*Local Port Book*, p. 116).

²⁸ A mysterious bale of *dent d’olifant* (*Local Port Book*, p. 94) is thought by the editor to indicate ‘some sort of herb’ on the analogy of *dent de lion* ‘dandelion’, but at £7.6s.8d it must have been a very expensive herb, to be found only in England. If read as ‘elephant tusks’ the price would be more appropriate and would further demonstrate the range of merchant shipping at this time.

Southampton into smaller vessels for distribution in England or elsewhere,²⁹ they are again ‘in French’; they then pass through the hands of wholesalers who must likewise have retained their ‘Frenchness’, so that even when they arrive in far-away centres like Durham and York they are still ‘French’.

Indirect confirmation of the association between French and international trade in the later Middle Ages has recently been provided by Michael Freeman’s wide-ranging article on the origin of the wine term ‘osey’.³⁰ The numerous French forms recorded for this wine in many different texts throughout the medieval period have created such a strong perception of its French origin that modern scholars have repeatedly sought to identify ‘Osey’ as a place-name somewhere in France, an error only now corrected by the detailed evidence in Freeman’s article.

French is the connection between Italian ships in Southampton and English monks in Durham. In most cases, once goods left the port they were lost from sight, but at Durham all the supplies that came into the abbey were recorded. Even the excerpts from the abbey accounts available in print are extensive, running from the early fourteenth century into the sixteenth in a mixture of Latin, Anglo-French, and English, the distribution of languages in that mixture varying over time.³¹ Published at the turn of the century, they have been studied by historians and figure in the *OED*, *MED*, and *DMLBS*,³² but have remained outside the purview of Anglo-Norman scholarship for a hundred years. Being unvarnished business documents, they make no pretensions to literary style; indeed, they are often not even made up into properly constructed sentences, their contents consisting of nothing more than lists of purchases and payments. Consequently, their French element offers nothing of value to Anglo-Norman specialists as far as phonology, morphology, or syntax are concerned, thereby precluding their traditional linguistic exercises concentrated on identifying a writer’s possible date and place of origin by the analysis of particularities in these areas of his language: any linguistic interest these rolls might have can only be purely lexical. Additionally, as was explained earlier, by the time the *Durham Rolls* were set down, the French of England was supposed to be in a state of terminal decline, little more than a barbarous, corrupt jargon, practised by such a tiny minority of the population as to be of negligible importance. I have questioned this claim elsewhere,³³ with arguments that need not be rehearsed here, but it may be pertinent to ask yet again how it could be that some two hundred years after beginning its alleged downward slide into near incomprehensibility from the first half of the thirteenth century, Anglo-French was none the less still used coherently in documents such as these Durham records and those referred to earlier.

²⁹ ‘Gregore Catan charge de la carrak susdite [from Venice] en dyverses vessel pour Londres: lix bouts [i.e. ‘butts’] de vin, [. . .] xvij barels de vin’ (*Port Books*, p. 107); ‘Et en la garde de Andre Spinol sunt xxx casses [of sugar] qui sunt encore a vendre. Et il dit que il les fera passer en Flandres’ (*Local Port Book*, p. 102).

³⁰ ‘“Pots of Osey”: Portuguese Wine in Late Medieval England and its Place of Origin’, in *De Mot en Mot*, pp. 17–36.

³¹ The present partial edition runs to over 1000 pages in total.

³² The dictionaries referred to in this article, together with their abbreviations, are as follows: F. Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l’ancienne Langue française* (Paris, 1880–1902) (*G*); A. Tobler and E. Lommatzsch, *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch* (Berlin, 1925–) (*T-L*); W. von Wartburg, *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bonn, 1928–) (*FEW*); *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, ed. by Louise Stone and others (London: MHRA, 1977–1992) (*AND*); *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, ed. by R. E. Latham and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975–) (*DMLBS*); *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List*, ed. by R. E. Latham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965) (*RMLW*).

³³ See, for example, my article, ‘The Trilingual England of Geoffrey Chaucer’, *Studies in the Age of Chaucer*, 16 (1994), 45–67, with further bibliographical information.

Broadly speaking, the Durham accounts are all set on a Latin base, as convention required, with many items in French and English being inserted at every point. At first sight the distribution of the languages may seem completely random, but there is a discernible if not absolutely regular pattern behind the choice of language used. Like all lists of accounts, the documents are highly repetitive, with many items recurring from year to year. Generations of scribes set down details of repairs to the fabric of the abbey, to the buildings on the estate, and to farm implements, the acquisition or repair of vestments, the purchase of candles, altar-cloths, and similar objects for use in the church, of food and drink: in short, the accounts detail the day-to-day running of an important religious house right through the fourteenth century and well beyond. The form of language used to record these repetitive activities from one year to the next is understandably formulaic, countless entries beginning 'In . . .' or 'Pro . . .'. After these conventional openings, the substance of the item may contain other Latin elements, but only if the matter in hand falls within the narrow confines of the scribe's Latin vocabulary or is itself an oft-repeated formula. Otherwise, either French or English, often dressed up as Latin, will have to be brought in to convey the sense required. For example, 'In repar. unius selle del Baghorse, 8d' (1312-13, p. 10), 'pro feltacione botarum' ('lining boots with felt') (1324-25, p. 166), or 'in tribus garniamentis pro forestario, carpentario et bateman' ('boatman'; 1416, p. 286); 'In clausura hayarum' ('of the hedges'; 1339, p. 310; 'hayorum', p. 319); 'mulieribus siccantibus et tassantibus fenum' (payment is made 'for women drying and stacking hay'; 1319, p. 310); 'in cariacione meremii et inquisicione de palice' ('for carriage of wood and obtaining fencing'; 1374-75, p. 180); 'pro sarracione bordarum pro le bay in stabulo' ('for sawing boards for the bay in the stable'; 1438-39, p. 73); or 'pro araiacione et le scourynge diversorum armorum' ('for the preparing and scouring of various arms'; 1452-53, p. 147). The hundreds of similar phrases to be found all through the accounts show that successive generations of scribes are incapable of using Latin as an independent and comprehensive means of communication, even when dealing with Church matters: Latin must always be supplemented by French and, increasingly as time goes on, English. On occasion a scribe will explain a Latin term he has used by adding an Anglo-French one: 'in quadam parcella more de Q. jacente sive abuttante versus orientem' ('in a certain section of Q. moor lying or "abutting" towards the east'; 1443-44, p. 144). Phrases such as the following sum up the scribes' command of Latin: 'In paknedel et paktrede emp. pro lana pakkanda' (1342, p. 542), 'unum gun cum pulvere pro guerra' (1401, p. 395). Regrettably, although there are many references in the accounts to payments made to students at Oxford,³⁴ nothing is known for certain about the academic instruction given to the religious at Durham Abbey itself. In 1415-16 payment is made to 'D'no W. Kibblesworth pro erudicione juvenum monachorum' (p. 139), and about 1430 there is a reference to payment made to a 'Joh'i Garner Magistro scolarum grammaticalium' (p. 234), but without any details of the teaching being given. Evidence for the teaching of Latin in monasteries and at Oxford in the later fourteenth century is given by Richardson in his 'Cistercian Formularies', and, like the teaching of French, is associated with the

³⁴ For example, pp. 138, 176, 181, 182, 183, 184. There is even mention of 'd'no Ric. Barton tunc gardiano colegii nostri in Oxon' (1431-32, p. 231).

name of Sampson, but it all remains very much on the plane of generalities.³⁵ For instance, the concept of a ‘muck-fork’ or an ‘oven-fork’³⁶ had to be arrived at either by a phrase in Latin or recourse to the vernaculars, French or English. I have discussed this whole phenomenon in greater depth elsewhere³⁷ and it is mentioned here simply as proof that the Latin element in this kind of document at Durham is purely an artificial construct that need not divert attention from the living Anglo-French and Middle English components of the rolls. That a few eminent scholars could use Latin fluently at this time is not in dispute, but there is no evidence that such competence extended to those who set down the accounts of Durham Abbey.

I turn, then, to the use of French and English in the *Durham Account Rolls*: the broad distinction made by the scribes is that English is usually found in lists of farm or household implements, the parts of a cart, building materials, local fish, and the like: in sum, anything produced in the locality or in neighbouring areas.³⁸ French, on the other hand, is the language chosen as a rule for lists of imported products: fabrics, tableware, furnishings, furniture, a wide range of fruits and spices, and for what might be termed architectural features of important buildings,³⁹ as distinct from humbler constructions such as cowsheds. This distinction, however, is not absolute. The apparently English ‘gathes’ and their artificial Latin equivalents ‘gatis’⁴⁰ are in reality the French ‘gat(t)e/jatte’, ‘bowls’ (G.10.40b, **jatte**; *AND*, **gate**); the ‘myour’ on p. 16 (1326–27) is French for the humble ‘grater’ (G.5.327c **miour**; *AND* **miur**); the strange form ‘gemoose’,⁴¹ hiding amongst a crowd of English terms for parts of a fulling-mill, is the Anglo-French ‘gemel’, ‘hinge’ (*AND*, **gemel**; *DMLBS*, **gemellus**). As this last example shows, such French terms are often given an anglicized spelling to help them on their way to integration into the lexis of English, for it must be remembered that Anglo-French did not die, but was absorbed into English. It is, however, the sugar and spices bought for Durham Abbey that will provide the main thrust of the argument in the present paper and will be set over against the evidence of the records of shipping entering and leaving Southampton during the later Middle Ages.

The purchase of sugar is mentioned from the very start of the Account Rolls and it is a constantly recurring item of consumption. The Cellarers sometimes just record a purchase of ‘zucer’, as in 1390 (p. 49), but often they give its place of origin. The earliest of such references is to ‘zucker marrokes’ (1299; p. 495), found again on several other occasions.⁴² Then comes ‘zucker de Cipre’, which appears in the Rolls

³⁵ *Formularies Which Bear on the History of Oxford c. 1204–1420*, ed. by H. E. Salter and others, *Oxford Historical Society*, New Series, 5 (1942), 281–327.

³⁶ ‘5 furce pro fimo’ (1338, p. 200); ‘1 grape’ (1404, p. 397), ‘1 muk fork, 2 grapys’ (1404–05, p. 399). For ‘grape’, see G.4.336c. ‘furgoun ferr’ pro coquina’ (1329–30, p. 16); frogonys’ (‘furguns’ 1404–5, p. 398). See *OED* under **furgon**.

³⁷ See my paper, ‘Aspects of Lexical and Morphosyntactical Mixing in the Languages of Later Medieval England’, in *Multilingualism in Later Medieval Britain*.

³⁸ For example: ‘In 3 schaffes aceris’ (‘sheaves of steel’) (1309–10, p. 7); ‘dogdrave’ (‘cod’) (1311–12, p. 9); ‘stokfysse’ (1316–18, p. 11); ‘drawghrape’, ‘smalrape’ (1447–48, p. 87); ‘sowdyngyrns’, ‘grosers’ (‘grozing irons’) (1404, p. 397); ‘burdclath’, ‘rostyngyrn’, ‘hamerys’, ‘barowes’ (1404–45, p. 398); ‘lyn pynnys’, ‘axilnayl’, ‘muk fork’ (1404–05, p. 399) (pp. 398 and 399 are full of such terms).

³⁹ See my article, ‘Glanures lexicologiques dans des documents des 14^e et 15^e siècles, forthcoming in *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* (2000).

⁴⁰ 1316, p. 11; 1329–30, p. 17.

⁴¹ ‘1 pare de lez gemoose’ (1447–48, p. 237).

⁴² ‘zucker marok’ (1302–03, p. 503); ‘çouker de Marrok’ (c. 1310, p. 510); ‘succe marokes’ (1311–12, p. 8); ‘sucore de Roche et Marrok’ (1311–12, p. 9).

as 'zucar de Cypr.' (1316–18, p. 11), occurring again in about 1330 (p. 518), being recorded again in 1360 as 'zukur de Cypre' (p. 563) and 'sucr. de Sivr.' in 1363–64 (p. 566). From further afield in Iran or Egypt comes 'zukur Babilon' (c. 1330, p. 518),⁴³ whilst the less obvious 'zukur. de Skaffatyne' (c. 1348, p. 547), 'sucr. de Caffatyn' (1349–50, p. 551) or 'zucere caffatyne' (1360, p. 563) was most probably shipped from Caffa or Kaffa, a Black Sea port renowned for its trade in medieval times and held by the Genoese from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century. It is not mere chance that the Genoese galleys were the most numerous Italian vessels in the port of Southampton in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. The rolls also mention different types of sugar: 'zukur' alb'. (c. 1350, p. 44) and 'suger blanch' (1408–09; p. 608) are our 'white sugar'; 'sugreroset' (1363–64, p. 566) is a confection made of sugar and roses; 'zukur in plate' is, according to the editor of the rolls, sugar melted over a fire and poured out on a marble stone dusted with rice flour; 'çouker de Roche' (c. 1310, p. 510), 'suker del Roch' (1323–24, p. 13) and, semi-Latinized, 'çouker de Rupe' (c. 1310, p. 510) could be either the 'hard confection of candied sugar' mentioned in the *OED*, or, in view of the definite article and the link with Morocco (see note 42), perhaps 'sugar from Gibraltar'. The Middle English 'sugyrlaffe' (1422, p. 59), costing 8s.4d., and even its half-size version, 'di. sugerlafe' (1430, p. 61), must have been large blocks of sugar. In three instances in 1340 the Durham Rolls state where the monks purchased their sugar: 20 lbs of white sugar was bought from 'Radulfo de Qwytevell' (Whitwell?, near Northallerton), 12 lbs of Moroccan sugar from 'R. de Pontefracto' and 20 lbs of sugar from Cyprus came from 'Adam de Boulton' (possibly Castle Bolton on the Ure). Incidentally, the white sugar cost almost twice as much as that from Cyprus, an indication, perhaps, of the cost of refining it. The whole journey of the sugar from ship to abbey kitchen via the port officials at Southampton and the wholesalers who supplied the religious in Durham must have been made 'in French'.

Sugar was only one of the products from the East to end up on the tables of Benedictine monks in Durham. The trade in sugar and spices goes back at least to the early thirteenth century, long before the extant *Durham Rolls*, with the names of all the products showing unmistakably their French form. The wide currency of these luxuries from the Mediterranean lands and the Near East in the first part of thirteenth century may be judged from the multilingual glosses drawn up in England. 'Sugar' is attested in John of Garland's *Dictionarius*, dating from about 1220, its Latin form 'zucaram' later being glossed into Anglo-French by three different scribes as 'soucre', 'zucere', and 'sucere'.⁴⁴ The *Douce Glossary* of the mid-thirteenth century lists over seventy herbs and spices (*Teaching and Learning*, I, 420–32), whilst glosses on the *Dictionarius* from the later years of the century also provide two paragraphs of similar content (II, 133). 'Sucre de alisandre' (from Alexandria) and 'sucre bogie' (from Bougie) are found as early as 1240–50 in an insular version of the *Lettre d'Hippocrate*.⁴⁵ At roughly the same time Bibbesworth's *Tretiz* on the French language ends with the menu for a feast in which figure a

⁴³ The medieval Babylon has been attributed to both an area south of Bagdad and also south of the modern Cairo. For present purposes this is irrelevant.

⁴⁴ Tony Hunt, *Teaching and Learning Latin in Thirteenth-Century England*, 3 vols (Cambridge: Brewer, 1991), II, 133.

⁴⁵ Tony Hunt, *Popular Medicine in Thirteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Brewer, 1991), p. 107. The former occurs again on page 34 in a different manuscript.

number of spices: 'maces, quibibes' ('cubeb's') and 'clous gilofrez' ('cloves'), as well as 'zugre' and 'zucro roset'.⁴⁶ At the beginning of the fourteenth century 'sucro roset' is found again as one of the ingredients in a medical receipt from Stowe (*Popular Medicine*, p. 71).

This spice trade formed part of a thriving business in a wide range of exotic products imported into England from at least the twelfth century, as may be confirmed by a glance at the lexis of early romances. The *Romance of Horn* from c. 1170 contains references to 'paile alexandrin' and 'paile escarimant' (a costly silken stuff from Alexandria and Persia respectively),⁴⁷ whilst the expensive 'samit' and 'ciclatun' fabrics are mentioned in both *Horn* and the similarly dated *Roman de toute Chevalerie*.⁴⁸ Later, a fine fabric from the East, 'camaca',⁴⁹ is brought into Durham. Numerous references made in the Durham accounts to foreign places reveal the import of other commodities: 'i pynte de Crete' (i.e. 'Cretan wine') (1360, p. 563); 'In j pipa vini de Rina' (1340, p. 538), referred to as 'Ryniswyne' and 'Rinischewyn' (1375, p. 582); 'in sale de Bayon' ('salt from Bayonne') (1373–74, p. 579, also pp. 581, 589); 'j quart. sal. gross. de Paytouse' ('Poitiers', 1439–40, p. 78), called 'salis de Pattow' in 1363–64 (p. 566), 'salis de Patters' in 1375–76 (p. 583) and 'Pattowsalt' in 1377–78 (p. 586); 'In quatuor quart. salis del Bay' ('Bay of Biscay', 1368–69, p. 575); 'In una furura de Calabere' (Calabria', 1373, p. 578); 'In 2 couplis de ficul. de Mallek et figul. de Sybyll' ('figs from Malaga and Seville', 1310–11, p. 510); 'pro panno de Reynes' ('cloth from Rennes') (1381–82, p. 592).

These products have been mentioned only incidentally, in order to show the extent of overseas trade in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries revealed in just one set of documents. To return, however, to the spice trade: it started in French and remained so, despite the well-documented presence of Italian merchants in England from the reign of Edward I and their ownership of land in London.⁵⁰ The Italians dominated Mediterranean sea traffic from the thirteenth century to the sixteenth, with the French often chartering Italian ships, placing orders for vessels to be built in Italy and even engaging Italians to construct French vessels on the coast of Normandy.⁵¹ Yet the international language of trade in the Mediterranean was French for centuries.⁵² For example, the existence of trade between Morocco and England from the end of the thirteenth century is clear from the use of Moroccan sugar at Durham. However, in an article in the *Times* of London for 8 November 1997, dealing with the discovery of Moroccan coins in a seventeenth-century wreck off the Dorset coast, an official of the British Museum claimed that the trade between the two countries was inaugurated by Elizabeth I, some three

⁴⁶ *Walter de Bibbesworth: Le Tretiz*, ll. 1122, 1132.

⁴⁷ *The Romance of Horn*, ed. by M. K. Pope and T. B. W. Reid, 2 vols, ANTS, 9–10, 12–13 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1955; 1964).

⁴⁸ *The Anglo-Norman Alexander (Le Roman de Toute Chevalerie)* by Thomas of Kent, ed. by B. Foster, 2 vols, ANTS, 29–31, 32–33 (London: Anglo-Norman Text Society, 1976–77), ll. 1403, 2517.

⁴⁹ 'j pannus novus de serico viridis coloris de kameca' (1338, p. 375; 'i pannus de camaka' (1344–45, p. 379).

⁵⁰ C. G. Young, 'Extracts Relative to Loans Supplied by Italian Merchants to the Kings of England in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', *Archaeologia*, 28 (1840), 207–326. The register of the Bishop of Durham for 1316 contains the following recommendation from the King: 'Nous envoioms a vous nostre chier marchant Antony Pessaig (Vol. iv, p. 494).

⁵¹ See B. E. Vidos, *Storia delle Parole marinavesche italiane passate in francese* (Florence: Olschki, 1938).

⁵² The massacre of the French occupiers of Sicily in the Sicilian Vespers in 1282 is a reminder of the presence of France and French in the Eastern Mediterranean in the thirteenth century.

centuries later than the Durham entry. No mention of a French connection was made in the article.

In fact, Morocco, French, and trade come together much nearer to the beginning of the thirteenth century. In a Middle High German verse romance from about 1220 a wealthy German merchant from Cologne is shipwrecked on the coast of Morocco, having already visited Damascus and Niniveh on business, as well as more northern places. Whilst making his way to the nearest town he meets a nobleman who addresses him in 'heidensch', which he does not understand. The nobleman then asks him whether he understands French, to which he replies affirmatively, saying that he knows both French and France:⁵³ a clear testimony to the international character of medieval French in the world of trade. Later in the same work, the merchant is told that the future bride of the English king, a Norwegian princess, has been brought up to speak French, so he is able to hold a long conversation with her in what must be assumed to be the international language of the noble classes. Equally germane to my present concerns is a third linguistic exchange. The Cologne merchant is allowed to talk to twenty-four English knights, prisoners of the Moroccan ruler, who are awaiting ransom and held in chains, expressed as 'boyen', the medieval French 'boies', 'buies'. The presence of captured English noblemen in this tale may be not unconnected with the Crusades. However that may be, the merchant greets them in French, the international language, but, although not totally ignorant of French, they cannot handle it with ease, so the merchant emphasizes his superiority by switching to English, the third string to his bow. This is in about 1220 and may well contain more than a grain of truth: not long after this time Walter of Bibbesworth would deem it necessary to compose his *Tretiz* to help young anglophone English nobles to learn French (see above, note 9).

This final detail from the Middle High German romance brings me back to the question of the diffusion of French in later medieval England, where its continuing use in commerce and records would suggest that the classes responsible for its survival were principally the merchants and the scribes. The merchants had to be conversant with French in order to do business outside England;⁵⁴ the class of scribes likewise had to know French in order to set down the various kinds of correspondence and records originating with their masters, whether these were nobles, merchants, or civic dignitaries. In practice, the nobility at this period, usually thought to be the main protagonists of French, could escape with little expertise in any language other than English. The time was long past when many of them were completely or even partially of French extraction and communicated with the English work-force on their lands through French-speaking stewards.⁵⁵

⁵³ 'Das Problem der sprachlichen Verständigung bei Auslandsreisen in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters', in *Reisen und Welterfahrung in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters*, ed. by Dietrich Huschenbett and John Margetts. Würzburger Beiträge zur deutschen Philologie, 7 (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1991), 24–34, (p. 24). I am indebted to D. A. Trotter for drawing my attention to this important article.

⁵⁴ 'The one traveller amongst those looked at here who did seem pretty competent in foreign languages was Marco Polo the merchant, who thus stands out from Rubruck and Odoric, missionary friars' (D. A. Trotter, 'Westerners on the Silk Route: The Language Problem', a paper read at Tashkent in September, 1997).

⁵⁵ J. H. Fisher's claim that 'from the Norman Conquest until after 1400, French was the official language of England [. . .] because it was the native language of all those who held office' flies in the face of the evidence ('A Language Policy for Lancastrian England', *PMLA*, 107 (1992), 1168–79 (p. 1168)).

Civic dignitaries, however, often tended to be prominent members of the merchant class.

The reality of this link between the English merchant class and French is confirmed in the tale of *Fouke le Fitz Warin*.⁵⁶ As part of a plan to exact revenge on King John, Fouke gets his henchman to dress up as a foreign merchant anxious to bring his vessel up to London and trade his rich cargo. He takes lodging with the Mayor, telling him that he is Greek and has been in 'Babiloyne, Alixandre e Ynde le Majour' (p. 56.21–22). The Mayor entertains him lavishly and presents him to the King. With the Mayor he speaks only 'latyn corrupt, mes le meir le entendy bien' (p. 56.17). On meeting the King, 'ly salua en son langage. Le roi l'entendi bien' (p. 56.19–20). Although the four learned editors of the text pass over this interesting passage in silence, the fake merchant's bogus activities tally with the genuine evidence of traders and trading found in the records of the port of Southampton and supported by the Middle High German romance referred to above. Without stretching unduly such imprecise evidence, it would appear that with the Mayor, who would probably have been a prominent member of the commercial class, the merchant communicated in the *lingua franca* of medieval business and record, the mixed language studied by Laura Wright,⁵⁷ whilst with the King he spoke French,⁵⁸ the international language of the noble classes. This would mean that a literary text could be reflecting the linguistic situation found in the trilingual Durham accounts on the one hand and the good French of the official correspondence as seen in the collections published by Tanqueray and Legge on the other hand.

The balance of languages in medieval England in the areas described above appears to have changed markedly at the end of the fourth decade of the fifteenth century. In the introduction to his edition of *The Local Port Book of Southampton for 1439–40*, H. S. Cobb writes that they 'contain a number of Norman French words', but that 'after 1440 the Norman French words practically disappear'.⁵⁹ This shift is found also in the *Durham Account Rolls* at about the same time and is all the more significant because a number of different officials such as the Bursar, the Hostillar, and the Cellerer all begin to use far less French in their separate records. Further confirmation comes from the registers of the Bishops of Exeter referred to above, in which a similar move from French to English takes place at around this time.⁶⁰ Finally, in Freeman's article referred to earlier, he quotes an Anglo-French text of 1415 in which 'osey' is one of the wines said to be available in a hostelry near Carfax (p. 33, note 4), and an English text from the middle of the fifteenth century in which, although the language has changed, much of the vocabulary is still very obviously French. As Laura Wright correctly points out, the increase in the English

⁵⁶ Ed. by E. J. Hathaway and others, ANTS, 26–28 (Oxford: Blackwell, 1975). The published fourteenth-century prose version is based on a lost thirteenth-century verse text.

⁵⁷ See Laura Wright, 'The Records of the Hanseatic Merchants: Ignorant, Sleepy, or Degenerate?', *Multilingua*, 16 (1997), 335–50, containing a list of earlier work on this subject by herself and others. Also, Laura Wright, 'Bills, Accounts, Inventories: Everyday Trilingual Activities in the Business World of Later Medieval England', a paper read at the Conference on Multilingualism in Later Medieval Britain, Aberystwyth, September 1997.

⁵⁸ This interpretation is based on 'son' meaning the King's language. It is unlikely that the Greek merchant would use his own language to an English king and be understood. When the original tale was set down in the thirteenth century there would be no doubt as to the King's language.

⁵⁹ Southampton: Southampton University Press, 1961, quoted in Wright, p. 340.

⁶⁰ This information comes from D. A. Trotter.

content of this kind of material 'is the result of the encompassing of so many Anglo-Norman words by the English language, so that as time went on, they ceased to seem French. [...] A word or phrase that appeared to be Anglo-Norman to one generation may have seemed English to the next' (p. 349). In the *Durham Account Rolls* it is virtually impossible to state categorically in many cases whether a word is intended to be French or English.

This is the key to an understanding of the role of French in medieval England and, concomitantly, of the development of Middle English in the fifteenth century. The publication of more non-literary documents from this period, especially from the areas of business and trade in the widest sense, followed by a close examination of their linguistic structure is a prime necessity. Such first-hand sources will provide further confirmation of the present findings and ought to put paid at last to the simplistic idea that later Anglo-French was all of a piece whatever the context, nothing more than an unintelligent jargon that just died out, to be replaced by a brand-new English language.

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