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## Reference Works in Progress

### Towards Completing the Second Edition of the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*



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#### ABSTRACT

This article gives an overview of some of the history of the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* and focuses on the possibilities created by its conversion to a digital-only resource in 2001–2006. It describes the central process of single-letter revision that forms the basis of the Second Edition, as well as several ancillary revision projects that have impacted upon the dictionary as a whole: the introduction of references to cognate dictionaries, of a semantic tag, of a chronology of dated citations, and (for the future) of a language tag. The digital format allows for a modular approach to revision that has already expanded a purely semantic dictionary to one with historical, etymological and onomasiological elements. A new grant now allows for the completion of the Second Edition, initiated in the 1990s. This article shows the significance of this achievement, while arguing that as an online resource the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* can continue to grow in several ways. In that sense, the editorial team is ready to admit that the project remains “incomplete.”

**Keywords:** Anglo-Norman, digital humanities, historical lexicography, semantics, etymology, onomasiology, medieval, multilingualism

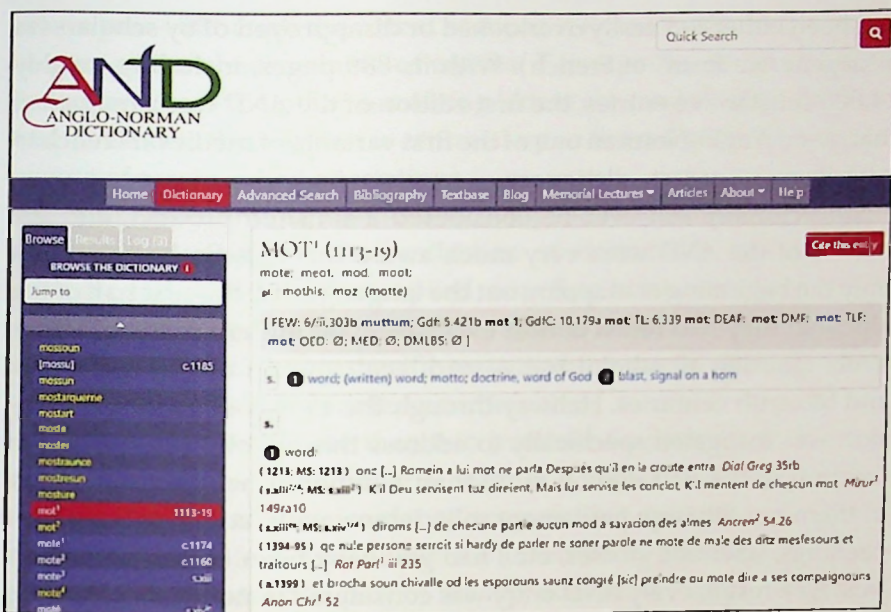
The *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (AND) project, based at Aberystwyth University, recently received a new grant from the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) to continue its ongoing revision of the dictionary. As this grant will cover work on the revision of T–Z for the next three and a half years, effectively bringing the Second Edition (AND2) to its completion, the time is perhaps right to look back on the project's history, highlight some of the more recent (and future) developments, and question the notion whether “complete” is ever the right word to apply to a dictionary. More than five decades of editorial work have gone into the creation of this resource, which became available as a free-access website on [www.anglo-norman.net](http://www.anglo-norman.net) in 2006. In the latter half of 2020, all of its data was migrated to a new platform, resulting in a completely redeveloped website that provides a more modern presentation of the dictionary and adds increased functionalities, as shown in Figure 1.<sup>1</sup>

*Anglo-Norman* is the term traditionally used for the variety of French that was current in medieval Britain from 1066 until the end of the fifteenth century.<sup>2</sup> In its origins it was the language of the Norman conqueror, imposed upon English society together with a Norman nobility. However, throughout the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, it grew into one of the three main languages of the British Isles—together with Latin and, at a later stage, English—prevalent in many levels of society, including administration, literature, religion, medicine, trade, husbandry, and so forth. Losing its association with Normandy and the Norman dialect at an early stage,<sup>3</sup> it developed its own linguistic characteristics (Short 2013), influenced not only by its interaction with different types of Continental French, but also by the emerging English vernacular (De Wilde 2022).

<sup>1</sup>The new site has been created by Brian Aitken, University of Glasgow.

<sup>2</sup>For further discussion on the definition of *Anglo-Norman* (including the problematic nature of the term), see Collette and Fenster 2017 and Trotter 2013.

<sup>3</sup>King John lost the Duchy of Normandy to King Philip II of France in 1204.



**FIGURE 1** Anglo-Norman Dictionary (AND2 Online Edition), s.v., *mot*<sup>1</sup>, accessed July 6, 2021

The lasting impact of Anglo-Norman on British culture is best demonstrated by its effect on the English language: it is a rough estimate that more than half of the lexis of Modern English derives from an Anglo-Norman/French origin, such as—to give but a random selection—the words *pork*, *attorney*, *text*, *space*, *excellent*, *silence*, *decoration*, and *brief*. For further examples and a discussion of the phenomenon, see Durkin 2014 and 2020.

Although acknowledged for many centuries, the true recognition of the role of Anglo-Norman as a crucial language in British history has been remarkably slow. The *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* has been one of the resources instrumental in providing access to and defining the language.

The First Edition of the *AND* (*AND1*) was published, in printed fascicles, between 1977 and 1992. It was the outcome of an undertaking started in the 1930–1940s, which also produced the *Anglo-Norman Text Society* (*ANTS*) series,<sup>4</sup> to draw attention to a historical language that

<sup>4</sup>Anglo-Norman Text Society, London and Oxford, 1939–, <http://www.anglo-norman-texts.net/>.



had been either too easily overlooked or disapproved of by scholars (as a “degenerate form” of French). With its 889 pages, including roughly 14,000 substantive entries, the first edition of the *AND* was a major feat that made Anglo-Norman one of the first variants of medieval French to have its own separate dictionary.

No dictionary can ever be considered a finished product, and the editors of the *AND* were very much aware that this first edition was only the beginning of mapping out the language. For the first half of the alphabet they had relied almost exclusively on literary material, effectively ignoring all administrative and legal sources of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Halfway through the 1990s, a program of revision was instigated specifically to address this imbalance: during the creation of the first edition more than a hundred new sources (most of them non-literary: parliament rolls, letters, wills, statutes, court proceedings, scientific glosses, etc.) had gradually been added to the corpus. As a result, every *AND* entry was considered in need of a complete overhaul and revision. And so, going through the alphabet once again, the Second Edition was begun.

In the early 2000s, the creation of a digital platform, together with the establishment of a new editorial team, allowed the *AND* to expand and evolve to an extent that was previously unimaginable. The first five letters of the Second Edition (A–E) were originally written towards a printed volume, but they were converted to a digital format and published online soon after their publication in book form in 2005. After that, and starting with the revision of F, the *AND* became a digital-only resource.<sup>5</sup>

This opened up completely new possibilities for creating and maintaining the dictionary and its data. Some of the editorial methodologies did not change over the years: the revision process still moves gradually through the alphabet, with the editorial team working on, roughly, one

<sup>5</sup>In order to provide a full dictionary from the start, the online *AND* reproduced the entirety of the printed first edition and gradually replaced sections with newly revised letters of the second edition. When the website was first opened to the public, the second edition consisted of the A–F section. At the time of writing, the second edition now covers A–R, U and W. The letter S will be published towards the end of 2021. For a more detailed overview of the publication progress, see <https://anglo-norman.net/history-of-the-online-and/>. The *AND* should always be consulted online, with the printed versions becoming increasingly out of date.

letter a year—although the recent sections P, R and S all took two years because of the sheer volume of entries. T is expected to be of a similar size, whereas the other remaining letters are considerably smaller.<sup>6</sup> And, as before, the revision is centered upon the compilation and processing of newly added attestations.

Several time-honored methods of compilation continue to be relied upon, including an in-house collection of around one million index cards of citations that were compiled more than half a century ago, folders with “gleanings” or notes made by editors or members of the public while reading through specific texts, and the careful analysis of the glossaries of editions or printed concordances.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to this, more than two hundred Anglo-Norman sources are now available to the editorial team in a digital .txt format, which can be subjected to a concordance program that automatically alphabetizes an entire text. This allows for a method of gathering and processing data of a specific part of the alphabet that is faster and much more detailed than before, and can be considered exhaustive. From around 2003 this methodology was incorporated in the *AND* editorial process, and a selection of these texts has been made available on the *AND* site (<https://anglo-norman.net/textbase/>). In addition, the quality of OCR-read PDF files and, more recently, Google text-recognition of image files has improved dramatically in recent years, allowing for a reliable conversion to concordance-ready .txt files of virtually any modern edition. Ideally, this would allow for the exhaustive gleaning of the entire extant Anglo-Norman corpus. However, there simply is not the time to achieve this—both as regards the conversion to .txt files and the processing of the material; the editorial team must select those sources they consider most relevant. This means that while the *AND* Bibliography (<https://anglo-norman.net/bibliography/>) aims to provide as complete as possible an overview of the entirety of Anglo-Norman primary

<sup>6</sup>Because of the nature of Anglo-Norman spelling variation, U was already given a preliminary revision together with O, Y with I, Z with S, and W with G. This will allow the editorial team to move considerably faster through these sections of the alphabet.

<sup>7</sup>Over the years, the *ANTS* has set the standard for glossaries of Anglo-Norman text editions, which provide data that can feed directly into the *AND* revision. Printed concordances exist for, for example, the works of John Gower (Yeager, West and Hinson 1997) and Wace (Keller 1953).



source materials, not all of it is being used for the compilation of the dictionary. It is a continuously growing proportion, but, in this respect, the dictionary must continue to be considered "incomplete."

A major shift in the set-up of the *AND* revision process has been that, with the finished product now being completely digital, the editors can, at any time, return to earlier parts of the alphabet and make changes, corrections, additions or even carry out extensive rewritings. This had been undreamed-of in a dictionary that was previously printed in fascicles, where earlier parts of the alphabet were "set in stone" and had to anticipate what later sections would or would not include. Now every online publication of a newly revised letter goes hand in hand with numerous small changes that impact on earlier sections of the dictionary—such as the addition of new cross-references to entries under the new letter, or the moving around of locutions/expressions or sometimes entire entries between the new letter and earlier parts of the alphabet.<sup>8</sup>

As a result, the *AND* has had to establish a robust document management system (DMS) that maximizes the ability to re-edit earlier entries and re-publish them online.<sup>9</sup> While an annotation at the bottom of every online entry indicates whether it is a reproduction of the first edition (roughly for S–Z) or belongs to the second edition (currently A–R), any further changes or substitutions are no longer specified. De facto, some entries may already be considered third, fourth or even fifth edition, without explicitly using that terminology. Earlier versions of entries are retained and changes can be retraced within the system, although they are not visible to the user: every online entry, while still subject to potential changes, must be considered the most up-to-date version. When referencing an entry, users are therefore advised to specify the date of access, in line with most styles of referencing online resources.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup>For example, the entry *cercher* 'to seek, look for' will be superseded by the new and expanded entry *sercher*<sup>1</sup> with the publication of S and will be replaced by a simple cross-reference.

<sup>9</sup>A new *AND* DMS System was put into place towards the end of 2020, which allows for editing and instant re-publication of individual entries. Until then, re-publication was only feasible in yearly batches.

<sup>10</sup>For example, a Chicago-style reference to the entry *entariement* would be: *Anglo-Norman Dictionary (AND2 Online Edition)*, s.v., "entariement," accessed June 8, 2021, <https://anglo-norman.net/entry/entariement>.

The *AND* is now moving towards dropping the “second edition” label altogether, and, probably after the completion of the second edition revision process, presenting itself simply as the (*Online*) *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*—a resource that, as long as the editorial team is active, will continue to evolve.

This option—the ability to easily rework earlier parts of the alphabet while moving forward with the overall alphabetical revision process—has already opened the door to additional dictionary-wide revision processes that can be carried out simultaneously with, but independent from, the main one-letter-by-year progress. Some of these have already been just as fundamental to the development of the *AND*, in that they provide additional content as well as introduce new options for using the dictionary.

Firstly, suggestions and/or corrections that are communicated by readers can now be realized and published immediately. For example, the printed version of the second edition of *AND2* (A–E) prompted a highly detailed review by Takeshi Matsumura and Giles Roques (Roques and Matsumura 2007), which suggested numerous corrections to specific *AND* entries. In the course of 2009–2010 these corrections were implemented online, affecting several hundreds of entries. Originally a note was added in every relevant entry to indicate this update,<sup>11</sup> but now, in the light of further changes and developments, these corrections and any others like them are tacitly included. Several text editors, lexicographers of other dictionary projects and researchers kindly provide their comments and findings to the project ([anglonormandictionary@gmail.com](mailto:anglonormandictionary@gmail.com)), which have been incorporated in the relevant entries under any section of the alphabet.

Secondly, whereas newly published editions were formerly included only from that section of the alphabet onwards when they became available,<sup>12</sup> it is now possible to go back and include all lexical material to earlier parts of the alphabet too. New Anglo-Norman texts and

<sup>11</sup>For example, the entry for *daierie* was tagged with “Incorporates corrections to the print version in the light of the review in *RLiR* 71 (2007), 278–323 [Matsumura].”

<sup>12</sup>For example, Tony Hunt’s edition of the Anglo-Norman paraphrase of the *Proverbs of Solomon* (Hunt 2012) is currently included in the *AND* from O onwards only. Another example is Angier’s translation of the *Dialogues of St. Gregory the Great*, which was used from a private manuscript transcription for A–O, but from edited text (Orengo 2013) from P onwards.



editions still come out at a regular pace, and are almost always a rich source of additional variant spellings, senses, locutions, and even new entries to earlier parts of the alphabet. Unfortunately, there is currently a backlog of text such as these that await retrograde inclusion. While editors gradually work their way through these, it remains another element of the “incomplete” nature of dictionaries.

This approach also allows editors to change their minds about whether a given text is Anglo-Norman or not. A minimal number of texts needed to be removed over the years,<sup>13</sup> whereas a significant proportion of “older” editions have been added—often as the result of a wider interpretation of what needs to be considered Anglo-Norman.<sup>14</sup>

Thirdly, and most conspicuously to users, over the last decade additional features and elements were added to the dictionary as a whole or to individual entries.

In 2012–2013, all second edition *AND* entries—adding up to over 20,000—were provided with a new section that references and, where possible, provides a direct link to the equivalent entries in cognate dictionaries, as shown in Figure 2.

## RENGE<sup>1</sup> (1120-40)

Cite this  
entry

ranc, rang, range, rangh, raunge, renc, reing, renge, renk, renke, renne, reynge,  
pt. rens

[ FEW: 16,240a **hring**; Gdf: Ø; GdfC: 10,539a **renc**; TL: 8,772 **renc**; DEAF: **renc**; DMF: **rang**; TLF: **rang**;  
OED: **range n.1** and **adv.** / **rank n.1** / **reng** **n.1**; MED: **rank n.1** / **raunge n.1** / **reng** **n.2**; DMLBS:  
2756b **renga 1** ]

**FIGURE 2** Cognate references feature in the gray area; *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (*AND2 Online Edition*), s.v., **reng**<sup>1</sup>, accessed July 6, 2021

<sup>13</sup>For example, the text *Rec méd*, which consisted of medical recipes in Madrid, Escorial I.III.7 (Wiese 1928), was used in the first edition, but appears to be a Continental Norman text. All of its citations and consequently related senses or entries need to be removed.

<sup>14</sup>This allowed, for example, for the inclusion of two important authors: late fourteenth-century John Gower (who wrote in a style that was at times deliberately imitative of Continental French) from G onwards, and twelfth-century Wace (who was a Norman author, born in Jersey but brought up on the Continent, writing about English history for an English audience and popular in England) from R onwards.

This new feature reflects a growing interest in the multilingual nature of medieval culture by situating all Anglo-Norman words within their wider linguistic context of French, English and medieval Latin. It allows users to have immediate access to the etymology and wider distribution of Anglo-Norman lexis through, for French, the *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (FEW), Godefroy's *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française*, Tobler and Lommatzsch's *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch*, the *Dictionnaire étymologique de l'ancien français* (DEAF), the *Dictionnaire du Moyen Français* (DMF) and the *Trésor de la langue française* (TLF); for English, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED online) and the *Middle English Dictionary* (MED); and, for medieval Latin, the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (DMLBS). This feature roughly maps out the position of Anglo-Norman within the etymological network of these languages, and the addition of these references has already prompted some of the above-named dictionaries to further develop their linking to *AND* entries. With every dictionary having its own "incomplete" nature, users will inevitably benefit from cross-checking between resources: for example, a particular sense of a given Anglo-Norman word may not as yet be included in the *AND*, but could be attested in the Latin equivalent. As such, this cognate reference section can help specialized lexicographers or etymologists as well as readers of a previously unpublished or unstudied Anglo-Norman text in finding the sense or translation they need. At the time of writing there is not yet a dedicated dictionary-wide search-option for this section, but this may be developed in the future.

Another new feature, implemented in the course of 2016–2017, was the overhaul of the additional bracketed information in *AND* definitions; for example, for **maxime** '(in philosophy) maxim, axiom' and for **desparagement** '(law) disparagement, misalliance'. This resulted in the creation of a searchable semantic tag (De Wilde 2012). Just over a hundred recurring semantic groups were identified, defined and standardized, including philosophy, law, music, medicine, zoology, occupation, and botany. These were added throughout the dictionary (A–Z this time) as distinct tags before the definitions, as shown in Figure 3.

One of the new Advanced Search options of the *AND* (<https://anglo-norman.net/search/>) is by these Semantic & Usage Labels. As shown in Figure 4, users can browse through an alphabetical list of all



labels, each of these provided with a precise definition and the number of entries they are used in.

## MUSIKE (s.xii<sup>3/4</sup>)

[Cite this entry](#)

musek, musik, musique, musyke

[ FEW: 6/iii,264b **musica**; Gdf: 5,457c **musique 2**; GdfC: 10,187b **musique**; TL: 6,461 **musique 2**; DEAF: **musique 2**; DMF: **musique 1**; TLF: **musique**; OED: **music n. and adj.**; MED: **musik(e n.)**; DMLBS: 1871c **musicus** ]

**1** **music** music (one of the seven liberal arts):

(s.xii<sup>3/4</sup>; MS: s.xiv<sup>2</sup>) Cum il deit [...] Chanter par musique a de toz mals garir *Rom Chev* ANTS 437

(s.xiii<sup>1/2</sup>; MS: s.xiv<sup>n</sup>) Maistre esteit de fisike, De astronomie e de musike *Brut Royal* 1196

(s.xiv<sup>1</sup>) E qe il i eit a les chaunçons juger eslu .ii. ou .iii. qì se conoissent en chaunt et en musike, pur les notes et les poinz del chaunt trier et examiner *Lib Cust* 225

(1423) .ij. scolemaisters, l'un pur enfourmer les ditz queresters en musyk et l'autre en gramer *Rot Parl*<sup>iv</sup> 249

♦ **personif.** **music** personification of music:

(1214-16; MS: s.xiv<sup>1/4</sup>) En soun palays fist peyndre [...] les sees arz. [...] Musyke i est peynthe ke enseyne a ben chaunter. Par ceste art feet l'em les beus servises en les eglises. Ceste art vint des aungeles Deux *Turpin* 1392

**2** **music** **occupation** musician:

(c.1270; MS: s.xiv<sup>2</sup>) [A] itel fruss cherra Babiloine le grant, E ja outre trovez ne serront Voiz de harpurs ne de musikes que chanterunt En tib[ile]s e busines desorenavant *Apoc Verse* ANTS 1071

(s.xiv; MS: s.xiv<sup>m</sup>) Jeo teise de gramariens, retorikes [...] musikis, astronomiens [...] *S Jer* 2r

**celestre musike**

**phil.** **music** **astron.** harmony of the spheres:

(c.1230; MS: 1275-85) Dunt sa (=mankind's) jointure est alsì riche Cum est la celeste musike *Pet Phil* 2002

[Top ^](#)  
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**FIGURE 3** New semantic tags are highlighted in dark gray; *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (AND2 Online Edition), **musike**, accessed July 6, 2021

By clicking on an individual label, the relevant *AND* entries can be accessed directly. The search can be refined further by specifying a time-period (e.g., law terms that have thirteenth-century attestations in the *AND*) or by combining two or more labels (e.g., a combination of “military” and “shipping” will retrieve words/senses related specifically to army vessels; “sound” and “orn.” will identify all words to describe birdsong, etc.). Although still a relatively basic system, this option allows the *AND* data to be accessed from an onomasiological angle—not by Anglo-Norman headword or variant spelling, but by



sense—whereby specific semantic groups (e.g., all agricultural terminology or words for footwear or trees) can now be traced at once.

SEMANTIC LABELS	
<b>acad.</b>	126
Senses related to institutional teaching and learning, including the customs, governance, practices, and organisational structures of such institutions.	
<b>agricultural</b>	590
Senses related to all forms of farming and crop-growing, as well as to estate management, forestry and aboriculture. Includes agricultural buildings and implements, and legal terms specifically relating to land under cultivation or active management. For senses related to the rearing or use of animals, see <b>livestock</b> .	
<b>alchem.</b>	46
Senses related to the materials and processes of alchemy and the study of the nature and transformation of physical substances.	
<b>amph.</b>	17
Senses related to animals classed as amphibia in modern zoological usage, i.e. cold-blooded vertebrates with an aquatic larval stage. This is distinct from the broader pre-modern sense of 'amphibious' creatures, so called because they are capable of living both on land and in water, and which the AND labels <b>reptiles</b> or <b>mammals</b> , as appropriate.	

**FIGURE 4** Selection from the Semantic Labels in the Advanced Search section of the AND

This, in combination with the ability to perform an Advanced Search by English definitions, lays the foundations for potentially a new project that subjects the AND data to a comprehensive onomasiological system, for example through *The Historical Thesaurus of English* project at the University of Glasgow (<https://ht.ac.uk/>), which would allow different-language dictionaries to inter-link through concepts and senses rather than through words.

A third dictionary-wide revision followed in 2020 (resulting from work carried out between 2016 and 2020) with the addition of historical information. Originally, the AND was a purely semantic dictionary,

that is, it documented senses and illustrated them with citations. However, by explicitly dating these citations, re-arranging them in chronological order, and, most importantly, identifying the earliest attestation, *AND* entries now provide users with important historical information about words and senses. Users can now see when a word first appeared in Anglo-Norman and whether or not it was used throughout the medieval period. For example, this information demonstrates how a word like *pecul* ('foot of a bed') only features in twelfth-century romances and literary texts, whereas *immediat* ('without intermediary, direct') first appears in fourteenth-century documents and legal texts. Since Anglo-Norman is part of a medieval language continuum, and, as mentioned before, plays an important role in the creation of Modern English, this information is essential for analyzing and defining its impact more precisely, particularly in the field of etymology or the study of the history and development of loanwords and borrowing.

In order to achieve this conversion to a historical dictionary, the editors first produced the best possible establishment of dates of all Anglo-Norman sources, both, where possible, of the composition of the text and, especially where there is a great chronological discrepancy, of the manuscript.<sup>15</sup> This information was added through a combination of automated as well as manual processes to every single citation in the *AND*. Next, a methodology was developed to automatically rearrange all *AND* citations in chronological order per sense or subsense, taking into consideration that these are a mixture of precise datings (e.g., 1354) and more general ones (e.g., s.xiii<sup>3/4</sup>, or the third quarter of the thirteenth century).<sup>16</sup> Finally, the earliest sources were re-gleaned in their entirety, so that several thousands of earliest attestations were identified and added to existing entries. Whereas more than 97% of the citations are now fully dated, the process of locating and adding earliest

<sup>15</sup>The outcome of this research forms part of the new *AND* Bibliography, published online in 2021: <https://anglo-norman.net/bibliography/>. This bibliography of primary sources is ongoing, and any corrections to dates here will feed into the citations used in the dictionary.

<sup>16</sup>This was accomplished by associating every non-specific date with an underlying specific date which remains invisible to users. These "pseudo-specific" dates take the middle year of a period. For example, s.xiii<sup>3/4</sup> covers 1250–1275, which, for the sake of chronological ordering, correlates with 1263. A similar system for creating an order of chronological labels of sources was used by the *DEAF*; see *Complément Bibliographique* 2007, pp. 780–87.



attestations is still ongoing, and will be for the foreseeable future. As is the case for most historical dictionaries, the earliest attestation of an *AND* entry (the date of which is now indicated conspicuously alongside all headwords, see, for example, Figure 3) only remains so until an earlier one is found.

This “modular” approach to dictionary revision will continue, and a fourth additional element will be developed over the course of the next three years as part of the new grant: the addition to entries of a searchable language tag. The existing tag (inherited from the first edition) will be re-worked and re-applied more systematically, concentrating on loanwords (and avoiding contamination of the data with etymology). A new dedicated search function will allow users to retrieve all entries that are loanwords from English, Latin, Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, Welsh, Dutch, German, Scandinavian or any other variant languages that will prove to be relevant. This will allow users to identify and quantify medieval language borrowing to and from Anglo-Norman. By adding this element the *AND* data will form a solid basis in the continuing study of medieval multilingualism.

So, while working towards the completion of the Second Edition in 2025, the *AND* undeniably remains an “incomplete” dictionary in the best sense of the word: as long as further research is carried out, this digital resource can continue to grow and add to our understanding of Anglo-Norman and its linguistic and socio-historical context.

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