

Cambridge University Press  
0521345642 - Old French-English Dictionary  
Alan Hindley, Frederick W. Langley and Brian J. Levy  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

This is the first Old French–English dictionary of its kind to provide a comprehensive reference tool for a broad range of English-speaking users. In the form of a compendious but manageable single volume, it is designed for both the general and specialist reader of Old French texts including students, scholars, philologists and historians. The dictionary is based on a large and varied number of texts up to ca. 1350, starting from the ‘classics’ of medieval French literature and extending through all the genres: epic, romance, religious, moral, didactic and allegorical texts, lyric poetry, drama, humour and satire, as well as non-literary historical, political and legal documents. The aim has been to include a wide range of variant spellings as well as the main dialectal forms to help the anglophone user in particular. Detailed definitions and grammatical functions are provided, together with common phrases with their translations.

ALAN HINDLEY is Senior Lecturer in French at the University of Hull. He is editor of *Drama and Community: People and Plays in Medieval Europe* (1999) and author, with Brian J. Levy, of both *The Old French Epic: An Introduction* (1983) and the computer-based program *MedFrench: An Old French Course* (1991).

FREDERICK W. LANGLEY is Lecturer in French at the University of Hull. He is the co-editor, with Alan Hindley, Brian Levy and Cedric Pickford, of Jehan Renart’s *Lay de l’ombre* (1977) and has contributed to journals including *Medium Aevum*, *French Studies* and *Literary and Linguistic Computing*.

BRIAN J. LEVY is Reader in French at the University of Hull. He is author of *The Comic Text: Patterns and Images in the Old French Fabliaux* (2000) and, with D. L. Jeffrey, *The Anglo-Norman Lyric* (1990).

Cambridge University Press  
0521345642 - Old French-English Dictionary  
Alan Hindley, Frederick W. Langley and Brian J. Levy  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

# Old French– English Dictionary

---

ALAN HINDLEY  
FREDERICK W. LANGLEY  
BRIAN J. LEVY



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
 0521345642 - Old French-English Dictionary  
 Alan Hindley, Frederick W. Langley and Brian J. Levy  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9780521345644](http://www.cambridge.org/9780521345644)

© Cambridge University Press 2000

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
 and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
 no reproduction of any part may take place without  
 the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2000

Reprinted 2004

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Hindley, A.

Old French–English dictionary / Alan Hindley, Frederick W. Langley, Brian J. Levy.

p. cm.

ISBN 0 521 34564 2 (hardback)

1. French language – To 1500 – Dictionaries – English. I. Langley, Frederick William,  
 1938– II. Levy, B. J. (Brian Joseph) III. Title.

PC2891.H56 2000

477'.01'03–dc21

99–056328

ISBN-13 978-0-521-34564-4 hardback

ISBN-10 0-521-34564-2 hardback

Transferred to digital printing 2005

Cambridge University Press  
0521345642 - Old French-English Dictionary  
Alan Hindley, Frederick W. Langley and Brian J. Levy  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

Contents

Acknowledgements   vii

Introduction   ix

    I   From database to dictionary   ix

    II   The dictionary entries   ix

    III   How to use the dictionary   x

    IV   Conclusion   xi

List of abbreviations   xii

Select bibliography   xiv

The dictionary   1

Cambridge University Press  
0521345642 - Old French-English Dictionary  
Alan Hindley, Frederick W. Langley and Brian J. Levy  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## Acknowledgements

Throughout the long period during which this dictionary has taken shape, we have received encouragement and help from many people. We should like to acknowledge our indebtedness to the British Academy for their award of research grants enabling us to appoint a Clerical Assistant in the early stages of our work, and subsequently a Research Assistant; and to Ms Janet Beesley and Ms Deborah Pearson, who respectively filled these positions, we here record our sincere thanks for their invaluable work in putting large amounts of data. We are also indebted to the University of Hull for the 'seed-corn' funding that made it possible to get the project under way initially, and are particularly grateful to Dr Alan Best, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, for his help at crucial stages. The patient assistance of Kate Brett, of the Cambridge University Press, has also been invaluable, not least in the preparation of the electronic manuscript. We should like to record a special debt of gratitude to the late Professor T. E. Hope of the University of Leeds, who first encouraged us to undertake the dictionary and who provided support and encouragement in its early stages.

## Introduction

### I From database to dictionary

This dictionary began life as an electronic database that came to be known as COFREL: 'Computerized Old French–English Lexicon'. In 1985 the University of Hull had set up the Computer Assisted Linguistic and Text Analysis (CALATA) project, intended to encourage the use of computers in teaching in modern language departments, and it was from this initiative that COFREL first began. The initial 'cofrel' was a simple BBC B+ Computer with a database to match, though subsequently we moved up to a faster IBM clone via more versatile PC-File, dBaseIV, Paradox, and Access databases. The present dictionary has been produced from this COFREL database. The compilers had long felt that there was a need for such a dictionary, since the glossaries provided in Old French texts set for study in university courses are often inadequate for undergraduates, who are not always aided significantly by the one-volume works available: K. Urwin's *Short Old French Dictionary for Students* (Oxford, 1949) is limited in its scope, while the Greimas *Dictionnaire de l'ancien français* (itself replacing the older work by Grandsaignes d'Hauterive) is intended for French speakers, and its grouping of words under a single 'family' entry (usually based on the verb or the adjective) presents major difficulties for the anglophone reader of Old French. It is our hope, too, that medievalists who are not primarily linguists might find a use for such a tool, intended as a reasonably compendious and comprehensive working dictionary drawing on representative texts – both literary and non-literary – up to approximately 1350, and designed for a broad range of English-speaking readers: students of French, philologists, historians, and indeed scholars working in disciplines other than French literature. Though a definitive dictionary could clearly not have been envisaged in the space of a portable single volume, we have nevertheless attempted to draw upon a wide cultural range: epic and romance, religious,

moral, didactic and allegorical texts, lyric poetry, drama, humorous and satirical texts, as well as legal, administrative, historical, and political documents. These areas thus form the basis of the dictionary. Although there is an amount of technical vocabulary, the dictionary is intended to blend with the general cultural context rather than to be exhaustive in specific technical areas. We have also included, again in a selective but representative manner, many dialectal forms and variants. We started off by entering into our database words from the glossaries of the most recent editions of the standard texts most frequently studied in university courses on Old French language and literature. These were then supplemented from a far broader range of medieval texts and, inevitably, from the existing multi-volume dictionaries listed in the bibliography section (a), in particular the Godefroy, Tobler–Lommatzsch (T–L) and the Anglo-Norman Dictionary (AND), as well as from student 'readers' such as those found in the bibliography section (e).

The larger COFREL database from which the dictionary has been compiled consists of eight fields: the head-word itself (*WORD*), the text in which the word appears (*TEXTCODE*), its location in the text (*LINE*), the type of text in which it occurs (*GENRE*), its grammatical function (*FUNCTION*), its geographical provenance (*DIALECT*), the date of the text and manuscript in which it is found (*DATE*), and its meaning in context (*DEFINE*). Readers wishing to find out more about this aspect of the dictionary's compilation are referred to the studies by F. W. Langley in the bibliography.

### II The dictionary entries

The dictionary contains some 60,000 entries, with information drawn from three of the COFREL database fields: the *word* itself, its *grammatical function*, and *definitions*. The headword is generally given in the oblique case, except for certain imparisyllabics of the type *gloz/gloton*, where both subject and object

Introduction

forms are included, with a cross-reference. In the interests of coherence, we have normally followed the regularised graphies adopted by T-L. In order to give as wide a range of entries as possible in a single volume – an important feature of the dictionary – and also to enable variants and main dialectal forms with a clear system of cross-references to be included, we have not provided information from the other COFREL database fields, nor have we provided etymons or context quotations. However, we have felt it important to include common locutions with translations. We have not always included words whose form and meaning are the same in Modern French, but cases where some of the meanings are different in Old French, as well as obvious *faux amis* such as *joli* (‘jolly’), *raison* (‘speech’) etc., have been provided. We have not normally included irregular verb-forms; nor have we provided elaborate grammatical explanations, since this is a dictionary of words and is not intended as a primary source of information on Old French morphology, grammar or syntax. Users requiring further guidance on such matters will find useful titles listed in section (b) of the bibliography.

From the outset, we aimed to provide as wide a range of definitions as reasonably practical, covering the different contexts in which the particular word is found. Specific shifts in meaning of a given word are usually separated by a semicolon, although where meanings are significantly different we have provided a separate entry for clarity of reference. Similarly with verbs: in a number of cases transitive, intransitive and reflexive meanings are given under a single entry, but more often, again in the interest of ease-of-reference, we have used separate entries, since the definitions tend to change according to the function of the verb. Homonyms with identical grammatical functions have superscript numbering in accordance with the usual practice. In a number of particularly complex cases a word will be numbered through all its grammatical functions. Rather than adopt the Greimas approach of ‘family’ groupings, we have effectively given each word its own entry, with extensive cross-referencing. This was felt to be the most helpful way to deal with words drawn from texts from a wide chronological period, from an amalgam of a number of Northern French dialects, and with no established orthographic traditions, a combination which presents particular problems for both compilers and users of a

dictionary of Old French. This is why we have chosen for the headword the ‘standard’ forms of the Francien dialect, largely as they appear in T-L.

III How to use the dictionary

When we read a text in Old French, we have to bear in mind that the written form represented something heard rather than strictly read, and that the medieval scribe did not abide by any set spelling rules when copying in and from the vernacular. This explains why two or more concurrent forms of the same word may well be found in the same text, or indeed on the same manuscript folio: *duce/douce, fet/fait, asses/asez, loin/luin* etc. A word such as *hauberc* (‘coat of mail’), for instance, is variously found in texts as *haubert, halbert, auberc, osberc*, whilst a verb like *faire* might similarly be found as *fere* or *feire*; or *oiel* as *oil, eil, oill, oel, oeul, hueil. ueil*, etc. The fact that the surviving text of a work was not always the original one also creates problems, especially where that text has been modified by a later copyist or by a scribe from a different dialectal area. We have sought, as a matter of policy, to cross-index a wide range of variant forms referring back to the single headword entry.

The more common spelling variants listed below should help the user to find an expression which at first sight may not appear in the dictionary; for instance, if *enheldeure* is not there, try under *enheudeure*; if *reison* cannot be found, try under *raison*, etc.

- ai- see ei-, e- (*empaindre/empeindre*)
- al- see hau- (*halberc/hauberc*)
- am-, an- see emb- (*ambleor/embleor*)
- c- see ch-, qu- (*calendre/chalandre*)
- de- see des- (*deraisnier/desraisnier*)
- e- see hai- (*hetié/haitié*)
- ei- see hai- (*hetié/haitié*)
- el- see eu- (*enheldeure/enheudeure*)
- eur see eor- (*troveur/troveor*)
- g- see j- (*gehui/jehui*)
- h- see u- (*hui/ui*)
- if see is- (*craintif/craintis*)
- iie- see ie- (*saumiier/saumier*)
- k- see c-, ch-, qu- (*kalendre/calendre*)
- n variants include combinations of n, g, i (e.g. *ngn, ign, in, ni* or even *g*)
- o see ou-, u- (*doter/douter/duter*)
- oi- see ei-, i- (*proisier/preisier/prisier*);
- ol- see ou- (*molt/moult*)
- ou- see o- (*bouton/boton*)

Cambridge University Press  
0521345642 - Old French-English Dictionary  
Alan Hindley, Frederick W. Langley and Brian J. Levy  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

Introduction

- qu- see c-
- rr- see r- (*arramie/aramie*)
- ui- see o-, oi- (*buisine/boisine*)
- w- see gu-, v-, vu- (*waucrer/vaucrer*)
- x see -us (*fox = fous* etc.)
- y- see i- (*yver/iver*)

One should not forget that a number of common words exist in two forms, depending on the nominative or oblique functions, e.g. *ber; baron; lere(s), larron; sire, seignor* etc. For other such spelling-variants, see E. Einhorn, *Old French: A Concise Handbook* (Cambridge University Press, 1974), p. 13 and pp. 135–41, which list some common dialectal traits.

IV Conclusion

No dictionary, in whatever language, can be compiled without a heavy reliance on those that have preceded it. The present volume is certainly no exception, and we are pleased to

record here our profound debt to all those lexicographers cited in our bibliography, especially Frédéric Godefroy, Adolf Tobler, and Erhard Lommatzsch. It is also true, as A. J. Greimas has pointed out (*Dictionnaire*, p. x), that the ideal dictionary would be compiled only following lengthy collaboration with its likely users. Though that is clearly impossible, we nevertheless feel that our collective experience of over a hundred years in the teaching of Old French to students will have helped us to produce a dictionary that anglophone readers of the Old French language will find useful, and we should be grateful to have appropriate feedback from its users. Finally, to many generations of our students enlightened enough to have chosen medieval options at Hull, go our especial gratitude and thanks for showing us the need for the dictionary, and what form it should take. It goes without saying that any shortcomings it may contain are entirely our own responsibility.



## Abbreviations

<i>a</i>	adjective	<i>inf</i>	infinitive
<i>abs</i>	absolute	<i>interj</i>	interjection
<i>acc</i>	accusative	<i>interr</i>	interrogative
<i>adv</i>	adverb	<i>inv.</i>	invariable
<i>anat.</i>	anatomical	<i>lapid.</i>	lapidary
<i>arch.</i>	archaic	<i>legal</i>	term in law
<i>archit.</i>	architectural	<i>lit.</i>	literally
<i>astron.</i>	astronomical	<i>liturg.</i>	liturgical
<i>aux</i>	auxiliary	<i>loc.</i>	locution
<i>bibl.</i>	biblical	<i>m</i>	masculine
<i>bot.</i>	botanical	<i>med.</i>	medical
<i>cf.</i>	compare	<i>MFr</i>	Modern French
<i>coll.</i>	collective	<i>mil.</i>	military
<i>comm.</i>	commercial	<i>ms.</i>	manuscript
<i>comp</i>	comparative	<i>mus.</i>	music(al)
<i>cond</i>	conditional	<i>myth.</i>	mythology
<i>conj</i>	conjunction(al)	<i>naut.</i>	nautical
<i>cul.</i>	culinary	<i>neg</i>	negative
<i>cyn.</i>	hunting	<i>neut.</i>	neuter
<i>dat</i>	dative	<i>nom</i>	nominative
<i>def</i>	definite	<i>num</i>	numeral
<i>dem</i>	demonstrative	<i>obl.</i>	oblique
<i>dimin.</i>	diminutive	<i>onom.</i>	onomatopoeic
<i>eccl.</i>	ecclesiastical	<i>orig.</i>	originally
<i>ed.</i>	edition, editor	<i>orn.</i>	ornithological
<i>e.g.</i>	for example	<i>o.s.</i>	oneself
<i>Engl.</i>	English	<i>part.</i>	particle
<i>entom.</i>	entomological	<i>partic.</i>	particularly
<i>etc.</i>	et cetera	<i>pej.</i>	pejorative
<i>erot.</i>	erotic	<i>pers.</i>	personal
<i>euph.</i>	euphemism	<i>pharm.</i>	pharmaceutical
<i>f</i>	feminine	<i>phil.</i>	philosophy
<i>fig.</i>	figurative(ly)	<i>pl</i>	plural
<i>fut</i>	future	<i>poss</i>	possessive
<i>gen</i>	genitive	<i>pp</i>	past participle
<i>ger</i>	gerund	<i>pr</i>	present
<i>gram.</i>	grammatical	<i>prep</i>	preposition
<i>her.</i>	heraldic	<i>pret</i>	preterite
<i>hort.</i>	horticultural	<i>pron</i>	pronoun
<i>hypoth.</i>	hypothetical	<i>prov</i>	proverb(ial)
<i>i.e.</i>	that is	<i>prp</i>	present participle
<i>ichth.</i>	ichthyological	<i>q.v.</i>	( <i>quod vide</i> ) which see
<i>imp</i>	imperfect	<i>refl</i>	reflexive
<i>imper</i>	imperative	<i>rel</i>	relative
<i>impers.</i>	impersonal	<i>relig.</i>	religious
<i>ind</i>	indicative	<i>s</i>	substantive
<i>indef</i>	indefinite	<i>sf</i>	substantive feminine
<i>indir obj</i>	indirect object	<i>sg</i>	singular

Cambridge University Press  
0521345642 - Old French-English Dictionary  
Alan Hindley, Frederick W. Langley and Brian J. Levy  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

List of abbreviations

<i>sm</i>	substantive masculine	<i>v</i>	verb
s.o.	someone	var.	variant
sth	something	vet.	vetinerary
str.	strong	<i>v impers</i>	impersonal verb
<i>subj</i>	subject, subjunctive	<i>vi</i>	intransitive (neuter) verb
<i>subord</i>	subordinate	<i>vr</i>	reflexive (pronominal) verb
<i>subst</i>	substantial	<i>vt</i>	transitive (active) verb
<i>superl</i>	superlative	vulg.	vulgar
theol.	theological	wk.	weak
usu.	usually	zool.	zoological

## Select bibliography

### (a) Multi-volume dictionaries

- K. Baldinger, J-D. Gendron and G. Straka, *Dictionnaire étymologique de l'ancien français* (Heidelberg–Québec, 1972. In progress).
- F. Godefroy, *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française et de tous ses dialectes du IXe au XVe siècle*. 10 vols. (Paris: F. Viewig, 1880–1902; rpt Paris: Librairie des Sciences et des Arts, 1937–8).
- A. Tobler and K. Lommatzsch, *Altfranzösisches Wörterbuch* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung; Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1925–). Continued by Hans Helmut Christmann. Currently through the letter V.
- W. von Wartburg, *Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bonn: Fritz Klopp; Basel: Helbing Lichtenhahn; Leipzig: B.G.Teubner; Basel: Zbinden, 1928–).
- O. Bloch and W. von Wartburg, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue française* (Paris: PUF, 1950).
- W. Rothwell, Louise W. Stone, T. B. W. Reid, Dafydd Evans, Stewart Gregory, D. A. Trotter, Paul Staniforth, *Anglo-Norman Dictionary* (London: MHRA, 1977–92).

### (b) Single-volume dictionaries

- H. van Daele, *Petit dictionnaire de l'ancien français* (Paris: Garnier, 1939).
- F. Godefroy, *Lexique de l'ancien français*, publié par les soins de MM. J. Bonnard [et] A. Salmon, (Paris: Champion, 1964). (Abbreviated version now difficult to find, except in large libraries.)
- R. Grandsaignes d'Hauterive, *Dictionnaire d'ancien français* (Paris: Larousse, 1947).
- A. J. Greimas, *Dictionnaire de l'ancien français jusqu'au milieu du XIVe siècle* (1969; 2nd edn, Paris: Larousse, 1976; Larousse-Bordas, 1997).
- M. Rouquier, *Vocabulaire d'ancien français* (Paris: Editions Nathan, 1992).
- K. Urwin, *A Short Old French Dictionary for Students* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1946).

### (c) Old French grammar and syntax

- J. Anglade, *Grammaire élémentaire de l'ancien français* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1965).
- H. Bonnard and Claude Régner, *Petite grammaire de l'ancien français* (Paris: Magnard, 1991).
- E. Einhorn, *Old French: A Concise Handbook* (Cambridge University Press, 1974).
- E. Faral, *Petite grammaire de l'ancien français: XII–XIIIe siècles* (Paris: Hachette, 1941 and subsequent).
- L. Foulet, *Petite syntaxe de l'ancien français*. Classiques Français du Moyen Age (2nd ser., 3rd edn, Paris: Champion, 1928 and subsequent).
- Ch.-Th. Gossen, *Grammaire de l'ancien picard* (2nd edn, Paris: Klincksieck, 1970). Bibliothèque Française et Romane, ser. A, no.19.
- P. Guiraud, *L'Ancien français* (Paris: PUF, 1963).
- W. W. Kibler, *An Introduction to Old French* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1984).
- Ph. Ménard, *Manuel d'ancien français: t. III Syntaxe* (Paris: Bière, 1988).
- G. Moignet, *Grammaire de l'ancien français: morphologie, syntaxe* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1973).
- D. Paton, *Manuel d'ancien français (début du XIIe siècle)* (London: Nelson, 1933).
- G. Raynaud de Lage, *Introduction à l'ancien français* (9th edn, Paris: SEDES, 1975).
- G. Raynaud de Lage, *Manuel pratique d'ancien français* (Paris: Picard, 1964).
- E. Schwan and D. Behrens, *Grammaire de l'ancien français*. Translated by O. Bloch. (Bruxelles: Ed. Libro-Sciences, SPRL, 1970.)

### (d) Histories of the French language

- F. Brunot and C. Bruneau, *Précis de grammaire historique de la langue française* (Paris: Masson et Cie., 3rd edn, 1949).
- A. Ewert, *The French Language* (London: Faber & Faber, 1943; reprinted with corrections, 1969).

Cambridge University Press  
 0521345642 - Old French-English Dictionary  
 Alan Hindley, Frederick W. Langley and Brian J. Levy  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

### Select bibliography

J. Fox and R. Wood, *A Concise History of the French Language* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1968).  
 M. K. Pope, *From Latin to Modern French* (Manchester University Press, 1934, rpt 1952).  
 G. Price, *The French Language, Present and Past* (London: Arnold, 1971).  
 G. Rohlfs, *From Vulgar Latin to Old French: An Introduction to the Study of the Old French Language*. Translated from the German by V. Almazan and Lillian McCarthy. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1970.)  
 W. von Wartburg, *Évolution et structure de la langue française* (Berne: Francke, 1946; 7th edn 1965).

#### (e) Anthologies and Old French readers

C. W. Aspland, *A Medieval French Reader* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).  
 J. Batany, *Français médiéval: textes choisis, commentaires linguistiques, commentaires littéraires, commentaires phonétiques* (Paris: Bordas, 1972).  
 M. Galliot, *Études d'ancien français: moyen âge et XVIe siècle* (Brussels: Didier, 1967).  
 P. Groult, V. Emond, and G. Muraille, *Anthologie de la littérature française du moyen âge des origines à la fin du XIIIe siècle*, 2 vols. (Gembloux: Duculot, 1964–7).

A. Henry, *Chrestomathie de la littérature en ancien français* (Berne: Francke, 1953; 5th edn 1970).  
 J. A. Noonan and R. C. Johnston, *Passages for Translation from Old French* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1950).  
 P. Studer and E. G. R. Waters, *A Historical French Reader: Medieval Period* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924).  
 R-L. Wagner, *Textes d'étude (ancien et moyen français)*. Ed. renouvelée par O. Collet. (Genève: Droz, 1995).

#### (f) Other

Tony Hunt, *Plant Names of Medieval England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1989).  
 Tony Hunt, *Popular Medicine in Thirteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 1990).  
 F. W. Langley, 'Compiling an Old French-English Dictionary', *University Computing*, 12.2 (1990), 61–4.  
 F. W. Langley, 'The COFREL Project: Compiling an Old French-English Dictionary', *Literary and Linguistic Computing*, 10.1 (1995), 45–9.  
 A. Hindley, F. W. Langley, B. J. Levy, 'A Computer-Assisted Old French-English Dictionary', *Humanities Communication Newsletter*, No. 6 (1986), p. 25.