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.

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Old French–English Dictionary

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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 inputting 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
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 locations 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 particularly complex 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: duece/douce, fet/fut, asses/aszæ, loin/luin etc. A word such as haiberc (‘coat of mail’), for instance, is variously found in texts as haibert, halbert, auberc, osbner, whilst a verb like faire might similarly be found as fere or feire; or oiel as oil, eil, oill, oel, huell, ueill, 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 enheldeur is not there, try under enheldeure; if raison cannot be found, try under raison, etc.

| ai- | see ei-, e- (empaindre/empenindre) |
| al- | see hau-/haiberc/hauberc |
| am-, an- | see emb-/ambre/embre |
| c- | see ch-, qu- (calendre/chalandre) |
| de- | see des-/deraisnier/dseraisnier |
| e- | see hai-/haitié/haitié |
| ei- | see hai-/haitié/haitié |
| el- | see eu- (enheldeure/enheldeure) |
| eur | see eor- (troveur/troveor) |
| g- | see j- (gehai/jehui) |
| h- | see u- (hui/uil) |
| if | see is- (craitif/craitis) |
| iie- | see ie- (saumier/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) |
| oi- | see ei-, i- (proisier/preisier/prisier) |
| ol- | see ou- (molt/mout) |
| ou- | see o- (bouton/boton) |
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

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

(a) Multi-volume dictionaries


(b) Single-volume dictionaries


(c) Old French grammar and syntax


(d) Histories of the French language


(e) Anthologies and Old French readers


(f) Other