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Royal chancery after 1066: Lexical choice, change and negotiation

OLGA TIMOFEEVA

Abstract This paper explores linguistic and sociolinguistic mechanisms that facilitated collaboration between English and Norman administrators in the decades following the Norman Conquest. First, a community of royal and episcopal chancellors and scribes is reconstructed from historical and documentary sources and their ties and networks are described. In the second step, two subcorpora are used to illustrate the processes of lexical selection and focusing in their common professional language, Latin: royal writs of William I and circuit returns of the Domesday inquest for the South-West. Both parts of the study demonstrate high involvement of Norman actors in the leading bureaucratic positions but, at the same time, point to their wide collaboration with the local administrative and scribal personnel. As a result, the two vernaculars are mutually enriched with new professional vocabulary, while in the written Latin standard, common to both, compromise lexical features emerge.

Keywords royal chancery, social networks, loanwords, Old English, Anglo-Latin, (Anglo-)Norman

1 Introduction[1]

Traditionally, we look at the Norman Conquest and its aftermath in such terms as 'influence' and 'borrowing' and tend to see those as unidirectional – spreading from Normandy, or France more generally, to England and the English language. These terms describe both the sociopolitical change of 1066 and the sociocultural dominance of the new elite. In language, this turning point is regarded as most devastating at the level of lexis and orthography, with the Normans forcing the English to *castelweorces* (so the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*) and animal husbandry and introducing them to digraphs and new scripts (so the text-book accounts Baugh & Cable 2013: 172, 180, 207, 237; Hock 1991: 4, 385). The extent and dimensions of these influences have been re-

examined on many occasions, using both orthographic (Benskin 1982; Clark 1992; Laing 1999) and lexical data (Kornexl & Lenker 2011; Lenker 2014; etc.), and illuminated by palaeographic and corpus-linguistic approaches. Today it has become evident that collaborating in various linguistic practices was far more common than previously thought (Baxter 2011; Crick 2011) and that multilingual clerks and administrators, rather than francophone scribes, were mixing their first, second and third languages and spelling conventions in many diverse ways. Later, their practices would lay foundations for supralocal written Englishes and, ultimately, for standard written English (Stenroos & Thengs eds. 2020; Wright ed. 2020 and earlier publications).

One domain where the influences appear to have spread also in the opposite direction is that of royal bureaucracy, with the Normans adopting the concept of a centralised writing office from the English and applying it on both sides of the Channel (Bates 1998; Sharpe 2003; Hagger 2009). The exact linguistic and sociolinguistic mechanisms that facilitated collaboration between Anglo-Saxon and Norman officials have been largely unexplored, and the present paper aims to address this lacuna. It investigates linguistic practices associated with the administrative domain, the sustainability of pre-Conquest bureaucratic conventions and Norman-driven innovation after the Conquest and focuses on Norman loanwords in Anglo-Latin (and, by extension, Early Middle English) and Old English loanwords in Anglo-Latin (and, by extension, Anglo-Norman). Although the data point toward high involvement of Norman scribes in English administration from the very start, they also demonstrate that professional terminology used in the royal chancery was informed by the knowledge of both Norman and English lexical conventions. These findings are illuminated by a close analysis of the office of chancellor and its incumbents and of social networks in which the chancellors and scribes participated in the final decades of the eleventh century.

The data for the study come from Latin and Old English administrative documents produced between 1066 and 1087. They derive from two sub-corpora. The first one is based on David Bates's 1998 edition of *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum: The acta of William I, 1066–1087*. This part of the corpus represents documents that can broadly be defined as 'centrally-produced' (see below). These were searched for relevant data manually with the help of Bates's *Index verborum* (1009–41). The second part is based on the data-

base of the *Exon Domesday* project, the survey of the South-West England, including "an edition, translation, facsimile, description and resource for the study of Exeter Cathedral Library MS 3500, the earliest extant manuscript of the Conqueror's survey" (https://www.exondomesday.ac.uk/). This subcorpus is a collection of Domesday records compiled locally but coordinated both centrally and from Salisbury, the seat of the bishop overseeing the inquest into the South-West. The corpus design, thus, aims at tracing the emergence of new lexical practices in the royal chancery and their subsequent diffusion to local writing offices via administrative channels. The reconstruction of the royal chancery as a community is based on work by historians (Loyn 1963; 1988; 2000; Keynes 1988; Bates 1998; Sharpe 2003; 2017) and enlightened by social-network and community-of-practice approaches (Milroy 1987; Milroy & Milroy 1992; Milroy & Llamas 2013; Fitzmaurice 2000; 2010; Wenger 1998; Meyerhoff 2002).[2] This reconstruction is offered in section 2, and the case studies are presented in section 3, followed by discussion and conclusions.

2 The sociology of Norman administrators

2.1 The royal chancery in the reign of William I

It is important to emphasise from the start that the chancery of 1066 is quite different from the institution we know later in the medieval period. In fact, it is not an institution or even an office yet. Rather, it is a body of a few scribes, supervised by the chancellor and attached more or less permanently to the king, wherever he might be at any particular time – Winchester, London, Rouen, travelling by ship or on horseback.[3] The chancellor, too, has other functions at the court: he can be the king's chaplain and/or keeper of the seal, and he can perform and coordinate administrative and diplomatic tasks (Bates 1998: 96–102). High birth and good education, in other words, family connections and peer-group ties, typically contracted during school years at

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2   For earlier applications of social networks to the Anglo-Saxon period, see Lenker (2000), Conde-Silvestre & Pérez-Raja (2011) and Timofeeva (2018).

3   For detailed studies on the evolution of the royal writing office in the Anglo-Saxon period, see Keynes (1980) and Snook (2015).

a monastery, are the prerequisites for the job. The chancery is responsible for the production of royal diplomas and writs as well as the authentication of those written locally, i.e. for generating documents that record land transactions and privileges or communicate royal decisions to the public. This is achieved by carrying a charter to a local court in a city, shire or hundred (a unit of the shire) and announcing it to the representatives of the community.

One of the functional types of charters, a go-between for the king and local administrators, is called a *writ*. From the time of Edward the Confessor, if not much earlier, writs follow a protocol that makes them distinct from other kinds of administrative documents. They open with the name of the king and the verb *gretan* 'to greet' in the third person singular that salutes the addressees of the writ. The salutation concludes with the adverb *freondlice* 'in a friendly manner' and is immediately followed by a notification clause in the first person singular *ic cyðe eow þæt* 'I inform you that'. Next, the will of the king, or the main announcement, is presented in a slightly less formulaic manner. The writ can close with a prohibition clause, e.g. *ic nelle geþolian þæt* 'I will not suffer that' and a valediction *God eow gehealde* 'God keep you' (Harmer 1952; Timofeeva 2018; 2019; 2022). All of these formulas are illustrated in example (1), an original writ of William I, issued soon after his coronation on Christmas 1066 and confirming the privileges of the city of London.

1. **Will(el)m kyng gret** Will(el)m bisceop & Gosfregð portirefan & ealle þa burhwaru binnan Londone frencisce & englisce **freondlice**. **& ic kyðe eow þæt** ic wylle þæt get beon eallra þæra laga weorðe þe gyt wæran **on Eadwerdes dæge kynges**. & ic wylle þæt ælc cyld beo his fæder yrfnume æfter his fæder dæge. & **ic nelle geþolian þæt** ænig man eow ænig wrang beode. **God eow gehealde**. (Bates 180[4]; London, 1066)
   'King William greets bishop William [of London] and port-reeve Geoffrey and all the citizens within London, both French and English, in a friendly manner. And I inform you that I grant you all the laws of which you were worthy in King Edward's day. And I grant

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[4]   These abbreviated references are to the number of a charter as it appears in Bates's edition.

that every child shall be his father's heir after his father's day; and I will not suffer any person to do you wrong. God keep you.'[5]

In form, script, vocabulary and formulas, this writ is recognisably the work of an Anglo-Saxon scribe,[6] upon which the legitimacy of William in those early days of his kingship also depended, as he had to communicate with Londoners in a language that they associated with royal announcements. For several years after the Conquest, royal writs continued to be written in Old English, but, once the Norman rule had consolidated enough, sweeping changes were to take place.

In 1070, archbishop Stigand of Canterbury was deposed (d. 1072), along with several other English bishops, and Lanfranc of Pavia consecrated as his successor (c. 1010–1089). New replacements followed throughout the 1070s, and, by the end of William's reign in 1087, the overwhelming majority of England's bishops and abbots were foreigners. 1070 was a turning point also for the royal chancery: from around May that year, it stopped using English as a language of record and communication and switched into Latin, which could hardly have been a coincidence (Bates 1998; Sharpe 2003; 2017). According to Bates, both developments must have been coordinated and based on 'a decision reached at the centre' (Bates 1998: 107). The switch to Latin was accompanied by several changes in the diplomatic of writs. For instance, imperative verbs started to be used more widely, especially *mando* and *praecipio* 'I command' (Sharpe 2003: 250, 275–80) as opposed to *ic wylle þæt* in example (1). At the same time, the other template parts of Old English writs were translated into Latin and preserved in their conventional slots.

2. **Willelmus rex** Anglorum Heremanno episcopo et Hugoni filio Grip omnibusque baronibus meis de Dorseta **salutem. Sciatis me** concessisse abbatie de Abbottesburie terram suam, tam liberam et quietam quam fuerat **tempore Edwardi regis** consanguinei mei, cum saca et socna, et thol et theam, et infangethef, et omnia per mare appulsa litori pertinentia ad ipsam abbatiam, et hoc pro Dei

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5   Unless indicated otherwise, translations are by the author.
6   See *Early English Laws* at https://earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/laws/texts/wl-lond/.

amore et anima Edwardi regis consanguinei mei. Et **nolo ut** predicta abbatia aliquid perdat iniuste, set ut honorifice tractetur. **Valete**. (Bates 2; Abbotsbury, 1066x1078)

'William, King of the English, greets bishop Herman [of Sherborne] and Hugh fitz Grip and all my barons in Dorset. Be informed that I have granted the abbey of Abbotsbury its land as freely and peacefully as it was in the time of King Edward, my kinsman, with sake and soke, and toll and team, and infangenetheof, and whatever is cast up by the sea to the shore of the said abbey, for the love of God and the soul of King Edward, my kinsman. And I will not suffer this abbey to lose anything wrongly but be treated honourably. Farewell.'

The writ in example (2) opens in the king's name (*Willelmus rex*) and places the salutation and notification in the immediate proximity (*salutem. Sciatis*). Together with the prohibition clause *nolo ut* and valediction *Valete*, these Latin formulas follow the established Anglo-Saxon protocol very closely but not at the expense of idiomaticity. For instance, there is no attempt to translate the adverb *freondlice* or to render the legitimising phrase *on Eadwerdes dæge kynges* (*tempore Edwardi regis*) verbatim. What is also conspicuous, this writ mixes continental and insular terminology. Contrary to the Anglo-Latin and English tradition before the Conquest, the nobility of Dorset is addressed with a continental title *baronibus*; the franchises, on the other hand, i.e. jurisdictions over courts (*saca et socna; theam*) and captured thieves (*infangenthef*) and the right to collect tolls (*thol),* are enumerated in English. Overall then, the linguistic practices of the chancery after 1070 display a peculiar combination of conservatism and innovation. The next section provides further insights to the emergence of such practices.

2.2 The chancellors and bishops in the reign of William I

Since the time of King Alfred (if not before), clerks and chaplains became established among Anglo-Saxon royal officials. Their position relative to other members of the elite rose above ordinary priests but below bishops, or, in secular terms, above ordinary thegns but below ealdormen (Gautier 2017: 279). Royal chaplains were customarily promoted to bishoprics and

archbishoprics, and, as such, were the posts to aspire to and seek. These general characteristics did not change after 1066, although the takeover within the royal household and chancery was as comprehensive as elsewhere. In fact, in the king's entourage, promoting clerical personnel of continental origin, including the episcopate, had become notorious already in the reign of Edward the Confessor (Loyn 2000: 69). From among these clerks, the first Norman chancellors were recruited or, more likely, re-affirmed in their positions.

We are remarkably well informed about the composition of the royal household thanks to the witness lists that accompany another legal genre, diplomas.[7] The first person to be referred to as *cancellarius* in Latin (but simply as *min preost* in contemporary English documents) is Regenbald of Cirencester (fl. 1050–1086). He had served as chancellor and keeper of the seal and relics (*sigillarius*) to Edward and continued to be employed by William for some time after the Conquest. It is presumed from his name that Regenbald was of German, possibly, Lotharingian origin, and from the charters that he attested as witness that he had started his service at the court in c.1050 (Keynes 1988). In the late 1060s, Regenbald was succeeded as chancellor by Herfast (d. 1084), a Norman clerk, who, similarly, served William both as chaplain and chancellor. In 1070, Herfast was promoted to bishop of East Anglia. The early 1070s are associated with chancellor Osbern (d. 1103), who had come to England in the 1040s as one of Edward's chaplains. If his association with a single document (Bates 82) is correct, this Osbern was the brother of William Fitz Osbern, one of the most influential Norman magnates and royal steward of William I (Bates 1998: 98–9, 346). In 1072, Osbern was consecrated bishop of Exeter. For most of the 1070s, the chancery was headed by Osmund (d. 1099). As his predecessors, Osmund was of continental birth, but, unlike them, he extended his administrative activities also across the Channel (Bates 1998: 99). In 1078, he became bishop of Salisbury but continued his involvement in royal administration into the reign of William II. His episcopal scribes took part in the Domesday inquest of 1086, and Osmund himself may have participated as a circuit commissioner for the South-West

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7   For technical definitions and distinctions between writs and diplomas, see Sharpe (2003: 248–54).

(Webber 2011).[8] His successor was Maurice (d. 1107), who enjoyed an equally long tenure (1078–1085) and combined the offices of the royal chaplain and chancellor as before. Maurice's chancellorship was characterised by a more pronounced centralised supervision of document production and suppression of local diplomatic styles (Bates 1998: 100–1). His elevation to the see of London happened at the same royal court in Gloucester, at Christmas 1085, that also announced the plans for the Domesday survey. The last chancellor of William I's reign was probably Gerard (d. 1108). Coming to England from Rouen and rising to prominence as a royal clerk, he must have acted as chancellor for about five years and, remaining in the royal service for the next five, was appointed to the bishopric of Hereford by William Rufus in 1096 and to the archbishopric of York by Henry I in 1100 (Bates 1998: 101–2).

The presence of Regenbald and Osbern on this list shows that foreign clerks had been employed in the royal service at least a generation before the Conquest. It is possible that people with such experiences and connections would be particularly helpful and sought after in the transitional period of the late 1060s, e.g. in the preparation of William's writ for London (example 1). Having acquired some pragmatic competence in legal Old English and Anglo-Latin and mastered non-verbal practices of the royal household and the Anglo-Saxon fiscal administration, these officials could be exceptionally suited to perform their bureaucratic tasks during the early period. At the same time, they were also aware of continental conventions. The Conqueror would have to rely on them not only as representatives of the pre-1066 administration but also as officials who possessed the weak ties to the wider administrative community at the level of shires. At the Norman end of their social networks were the newly arrived royal clerks like Herfast and Osmund who fulfilled similar secretary functions in William's household while at the same time serving as his chaplains (Timofeeva 2022: 160–4). The careers of the early Norman chan-

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8   Indirect evidence for Osmund's probable competence in English is writ Bates 185, which contains an extended code-switch in the middle of the document (roughly one third of the text is franchises in English lumped between a Latin salutation and announcement followed by the witness list) and is witnessed by Osmund, with his name being placed ahead of that of Lanfranc and five other high-ranking witnesses (Bates 1998: 606–7).

cellors are remarkably similar, but there are also other traits that they share with the new ecclesiastical elite (bishops and abbots) in general.

H. R. Loyn observes that the bishops appointed in the 1070s went on to enjoy twenty-three-year-long tenures on average (like Osmund or Maurice), with some of them staying in office for over thirty years, which points to a purposeful appointment of young men of continental origin (they were Normans, French, Lorrainers, Italians, but never English) to ensure institutional continuity of the English Church (Loyn 1988: 225–6; 2000: 72). This was where the will of Archbishop Lanfranc and the ties within this peer group worked in concord. Loyn hypothesises that '[a]fter 1070, there is a sense of group solidarity among them, brought about by their origins, by their consciousness of common purpose, and by their awareness that they were operating in conquered territory' (2000: 72). This group came from similar high social backgrounds, and its members were typically trained in Normandy, above all at the Abbey of Bec, one of the leading schools in northern Europe and the most influential monastery in the Anglo-Norman world, a place where three archbishops of Canterbury (Lanfranc, Anselm (c.1033–1109) and Theobald (c.1090–1161)) had been teachers and abbots at various times (Pohl & Gathagan, eds. 2017). The solidarity among this generation of higher clergymen was further enhanced by regular provincial councils, now held annually, often in conjunction with royal assemblies. Just such a sequence of meetings over Christmas 1085 at Gloucester, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, preceded the Domesday inquest (Loyn 2000: 73).

The presented evidence points to the emergence of a distinct *community of practice* in the 1070s consisting of royal and episcopal chaplains and chancellors as well as of bishops and abbots that controlled most of the senior clerical appointments and, possibly, clustered around the alumni of Bec Abbey. In cognitive anthropology, such communities are characterised by mutual engagement, joint enterprise and a shared repertoire of verbal and non-verbal practices (Wenger 1998; Meyerhoff 2002; Eckert 2006). In the context of the late eleventh century, we can reconstruct the Anglo-Norman chancery as a joint enterprise whose aim was to support the new elite with effective francophone administration and to co-opt new members who would ensure the stability of its institutions. Their communal activities (collecting commissions and data for charters, drafting, dictating, authenticating, producing fine

copies, translating from Latin into the vernaculars and back) could foster a feeling of mutual engagement, establish collaborative relationships and chancery norms, create a shared understanding of the joint enterprise that bound administrators together. As they engaged in joint activities, maintaining the old and inventing new ones, chancery officials also produced a shared repertoire of practices, including linguistic norms. Moreover, starting the appointments in their twenties, community members would be at an age that could still allow for successful second-language acquisition, especially at the lexical level, although not native-like competence. In order for these administrators to acquire any English at all, however, interaction with other strata of actors was necessary.

2.3 Other actors

On one hand, it seems inevitable that Norman chancellors would employ Norman scribes. Given the strong connection between the royal chancery and the episcopate as well as the almost total replacement of the latter with church leaders of continental origin in the 1070s and 80s, a major reshuffling of the senior staff in episcopal chanceries would follow not much later. Similarly, with lay magnates, as the Norman element kept increasing among the tenants-in-chief and subtenants (Baxter & Lewis 2017: 402), so must Norman scribes/family priests have dispersed along with their lords' households – from the southeast to the west and north. Since the vernacular had not been used in continental Norman administration, the adoption of Latin as the universal written code of the new elite was a natural consequence of these demographic developments, just as the introduction of *barones* among the terms of address (as in example 2) reflected the fact that the royal writs were now predominantly saluting Norman barons rather than English thegns (cf. Loyn 1963: 320; Baxter & Lewis 2017: 402). But this was just the top of the administrative pyramid.

It seems equally inevitable that superstrate actors had to rely on English collaborators both at the central level (when the writ for London (example 1) was compiled) and in local courts (when royal writs were announced in or translated into English). In the annal for 1087 of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* as preserved in the Peterborough (E) copy, the chronicler famously claims that

he had once served at the Conqueror's court (*we ... oðre hwile on his hirede wunedon*). It is apparently to this experience that we owe his description of William's personality in the same annal. Other Englishmen are known to have been employed by the king. And although Frenchmen dominated high religious offices by the mid 1080s, at least one bishop (Wulfstan of Worcester), four abbots and two priors were still English (Williams 1995: 126–32). Most importantly perhaps, English scribes have been shown to have participated in the Domesday inquest – both at the level of circuit returns (hearings in shire courts) and during the compilation of the Great Domesday (the final stage of the project).[9] In particular, the main hand of the Great Domesday Book is assumed to have been 'either a native Englishman' or someone 'who had lived in England from an early age' (Rumble 1987: 84, quoted in Baxter 2011: 292). The work on the manuscripts of the Exon Domesday and Little Domesday has demonstrated that native scribes, or at least scribes trained in English scriptoria, were employed also at the level of circuit returns, even though French scribes were in the majority (Baxter 2011: 289–92 and references therein). The earlier stages of the inquest – when fiscal material was collected by the royal agents as well as when it was submitted and inspected by shire courts – were always multilingual undertakings, involving both Norman and English actors. On the bureaucratic side, as many as 7,600 jurors must have participated in court sessions, hearing and verifying the returns over the spring and summer of 1086. And a further 50,000 people must have taken part as witnesses. This big category consisted mostly of Englishmen who represented *vills* (i.e. Domesday administrative units, such as villages, hamlets and farms) and

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9   The inquest was conducted in three successive stages: First, the data on land and other property were collected at the local manor level. This work was likely to be performed by locally based English officials. Second, these returns were checked and authenticated at the shire level, also involving centrally appointed commissioners. This stage would necessitate multilingual interaction: code-switching and translating between English, Latin and French. Third, the collected data were summarised into seven circuit returns and entered into the Little Domesday (containing the records for Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex) and the Great Domesday (describing the other six circuits) (Baxter 2011; see also *Hull Domesday Project* at https://www.domesdaybook.net/domesday-book/structure-of-domesday-book/circuits).

included one priest, one reeve and six *villani* (i.e. villagers, the most substantial group among the unfree peasantry) per *vill* (Baxter 2011: 286).[10]

This section has demonstrated that, on one hand, the Norman political takeover was accompanied by an equally extensive replacement of senior administrative staff. Most chanceries were headed by clerks of continental extraction and employed continental scribes. The ties between them suggest that together they formed a close-knit community bound by a sense of solidarity and common origin. This community met regularly and had the resources to both select and enhance its verbal and non-verbal norms. On the other hand, it also possessed the weak ties to representatives of lower administration at the level of shires and hundreds, cities and boroughs or monasteries and parishes. French speakers and users were represented predominantly at the top of the administrative pyramid, but their verbal practises could penetrate further down the social scale. At the same time, both Englishmen and assimilated foreigners of the Edwardian period were also present at the highest level, and their expertise must have been particularly important in the transitional late 1060s, informing the selection of these practises and the accompanying lexical choices. Thus, we have a close-knit community, probably a community of practice, at the centre, and a loose-knit community of officials, jurors and witnesses at the shire level and below, who would provide the weak ties for the diffusion of the chancery innovations to the countryside, as predicted by the sociolinguistic theory (Milroy 1987; Milroy & Milroy 1992; Milroy & Llamas 2013).

3 Multilingualism in William I's administrative documents

We have already discussed at some length that the switch of the royal chancery into Latin in 1070 was an important socio-political development. Linguistically, the switch was a compromise that required participation of both Norman and English actors to achieve it. Above all, common administrative terminology had to be selected, e.g. terms for social ranks or land measurements. When English bureaucrats had to deal with native terms in the pre-Conquest period,

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10   For Domesday terminology, see *Hull Domesday Project* at http://www.domesdaybook. net/domesday-book/data-terminology.

they typically rendered them into Latin with lexical equivalents. For example, Old English *ealdorman* and, later, *eorl* were translated into Anglo-Latin as *dux*, and Old English *þegn* as *minister*. After the Conquest, however, there arose a mismatch between the Anglo- and Continental Latin usages, as 'a Norman user of Latin would think *minister* too lowly for baron, [and] *dux* … too exalted … for earl' (Sharpe 2017: 248–9, at 248). So, the Latin terms had to be renegotiated in accordance with the new socio-political situation. In relation to the new land ownership, both *ealdorman* and *þegn* soon became outdated and replaced by *comes* and *baro* depending on the status, continental title and the extent of landed property in England, while *dux* was 'retained only at the higher level' for the duke of Normandy, the duke of Aquitaine and the duke of Brittany (Sharpe 2017: 249). In relation to the old land ownership and to the shrinking class of English thegns, however, a latinised version of the English term *thegnus* or *tainus* started to be used. The distribution of such terms as *comes* and *baro* in centrally produced documents is so consistent as to suggest a purposeful lexical choice at the highest bureaucratic level, a kind of 'official' decision (Sharpe 2017: 247–53). Such a decision could be reached if pre-Conquest administrators were consulted on questions of semantics and, possibly, also on the suitability of a direct borrowing versus a calque or translation equivalent. In general, though, the practice of post-1070 clerks was to create new terminology via borrowing rather than morphological or semantic replication (cf. Trotter 2011). Below, we shall survey a selection of such terms, trace their distribution in the charters of the Conqueror and the Exon Domesday and point to possible paths of their diffusion.

3.1 French terminology

3.1.1 Barons, counts and viscounts

Since elite replacement was among the most important socio-economic consequences of the Norman Conquest, we would expect that its imprint on the lexicon of English and Anglo-Latin would be felt soon after the fateful events of 1066, just as its presence in the landscape would be made visible by the newly constructed Norman castles. Accordingly, the terminology for new aristocratic ranks shows up in the linguistic record immediately.

Among the titles that are attested in Anglo-Latin legal documents sometimes as early as 1066, we find *baro*, *comes* and *vicecomes*. Of these, *comes* had been used in the pre-Conquest period to refer to continental counts and to Anglo-Saxon ealdormen (Ashdowne *et al.*, 2012–; henceforth DMLBS s.v.). In the late 1060s, it was still associated with the titles of Norman rulers and sometimes, more specifically, with the titles of the Conqueror's sons, but the sense 'English count, feudal earl' also became frequent (Bates 1998: 1014–15). The process by which *comes* acquired new meanings is that of semantic borrowing. With *baro* and *vicecomes*, we are dealing with direct lexical borrowings. Semantically, as already observed, *baro* (OF *ber*, *baron* (?) < Frk.) 'baron, royal vassal, or tenant in chief' had a partial overlap with þegn, while *vicecomes* (*vice-* + *comes*; cf. OF *vicomte*) 'viscount; chief financial and executive officer of the Crown in a shire, sheriff' had a partial overlap with *scīr-(ge)rēfa* 'a shire-reeve, sheriff' (DMLBS s.vv.). In all three cases, the transfer of new lexemes triggered supralexification[11] of the target semantic field both in Anglo-Latin and English, although with the latter, these lexical developments are not registered until centuries later, e.g. the first attestation of *viscount* in Middle English dates to 1387 (McSparran *et al.*, 2021; henceforth MED, *Oxford English Dictionary online*, 2021; henceforth OED s.v.). Similarly, in most cases, the Latin documents of William I's reign provide our earliest evidence for the existence of these terms in Anglo-Norman. For example, the first attestations of *baron* are from c.1113 (*Anglo-Norman Dictionary*, 2021; henceforth AND s.v. *baron*) and of *visconte* from 1215 (AND s.vv. *visconte* and *vicomté*). All three terms are used extensively in charters of the Conqueror, primarily in lists of addressees and witnesses. The totals in Bates's collection are 115 tokens of *baro*, 718 of *comes* and 225 of *vicecomes* (Bates 1998: 1012, 1014–15, 1039; Timofeeva 2022: 153–5). By comparison, in *Exon Domesday*, the same Latin lexemes occur 193, 1277 and 112 times, respectively. It should also be noted that latinised forms of Old English lexemes *ealdorman*, *earl* or *scirefa* are not used in *Exon Domesday*, nor is the Latin term *minister* used as equivalent to þegn (for latinised forms of þegn see below).

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11   Supralexification is 'the complication of pre-existing semantic fields through borrowing terms which add to the complexity of the post-borrowing system' (Grant 2015: 435).

3.1.2 Chancellors and chaplains

As mentioned in section 2.2, in their function of royal-household priests and clerks, chancellors and chaplains had certainly been known before the Norman Conquest, and similar offices must have existed at episcopal and aristocratic courts. But the priests employed in administration were not yet seen as specialised enough to warrant distinct labels. In both Latin and Old English, such genitive phrases as 'his/the king's clerk/priest' could refer to both 'chancellors' and 'chaplains'.[12] It was only in the middle of the eleventh century that the position of the king's chancellor began to develop towards 'the effective head of the government under the king' (*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 'Lord chancellors of England and Great Britain (1060s–2017)'; see also Keynes 1988), and it was likely at this point that the need for a specific term arose, just as chancellors started to be pointed out by name in the records. From this time onwards, the kings would still employ several chaplains but only one chancellor. Once the term *canceler/cancellarius* was selected, in this case borrowed from Norman/Latin, by English chancery clerks and their Norman colleagues, it would be able to diffuse to other professionals running local administrations. As with barons and viscounts, the names of the chancellors followed by their office would be read out in local courts, and their audiences would also gradually acquire the new term as well as familiarise themselves with who was currently holding the office. A few decades later, *canceler* was first recorded in the annal for 1093[13] of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* copied by one of the Peterborough scribes in 1121. We would remember that the likely author of his exemplar had lived at the court of William I and would have known the changes at the royal chancery first-hand, including new terminology (Irvine 2004: xviii–xxiii, lxxxiv–lxxxviii; DOE s.v. *canceler*; OED s.v. *chancellor*; Timofeeva 2022: 155–6). In Bates's database, *cancellarius* features thirty-three times (s.v.), predominantly in witness lists, but no chancellors are recorded as landowners in *Exon Domesday*.

12　On two occasions a compound term *hired-preost* 'household priest' is used in pre-Conquest charters (Cameron *et al.*, 2018; henceforth DOE s.v.)

13　See also the annals for 1123 and 1137, which are part of the Peterborough Continuations (Irvine 2004: ic–ci).

The case of *capellanus* 'chaplain, clerk ministering to religious needs of household' is very similar. Bates lists sixty occurrences in the corpus of William I's charters (s.v.). DMLBS cites only two examples of *capellanos* that are earlier than 1066: the first reference is to bishops in one of Alcuin's letters (Alcuin, *Ep*. 264) and the second to priests serving King Alfred (Asser, *Life of Alfred* 77.13). In both cases, the authors seem to have been influenced by the Frankish usage, in which 'the title of the clerks (*clerici capellani*) who were charged with the custody of the cope (*cappa*) of St. Martin, the most precious of the possessions of the Frankish kings' (Stevenson 1959: 305), was extended to 'the clerk of the royal chapel' and, later on, to 'chaplain'. This meaning is attested continuously in Anglo-Latin only from the 1060s on, which is a few decades earlier than in English (OED s.v. *chaplain*; MED s.v. *chapelein*) and Anglo-Norman (AND s.v. *chapelein*). Our earliest evidence for English is a manumission charter from the late eleventh century (Rec 10.6.2 (11.7)) and two annals in the *Peterborough Chronicle* for 1099 and 1114 (DOE s.v. *capellan*; Timofeeva 2022: 156). Six chaplains (*capellanus*) are mentioned by name in *Exon Domesday*.

3.1.3 Manors and mansions

There are two new terms that can refer to 'estate, manor, manor house' in post-Conquest Anglo-Latin, *manerium* and *mansio*. DMLBS gives a clear indication that the first lexeme is a Latinisation of an Anglo-Norman term dated to the 1070s (cf. OED s.v. *manor*). *Mansio*, on the other hand, is a classical term that can denote 'a dwelling place' in general. Before 1066, a wide array of Anglo-Latin and Old English lexemes – *mansa, vicus, villa* and *burh, ham, hired* – could be used to refer both to the 'estate, household' and 'the lord's house on an estate', but they became peripheral in official texts in the later eleventh century, with borrowing causing supralexification in this semantic field too. As with the previous examples, Anglo-Latin may be an indication of these two terms being also current in Anglo-Norman and English at a date much earlier than their recorded history in vernacular dictionaries: in AND, *maner* 1 is recorded c1200, *maner/manor* in English is first attested in c1300 (MED, OED s.v.); *mansiun* dates to the third quarter of the twelfth century in Anglo-Norman, *mansioun* to c1375 in Middle English (AND, MED, OED s.v.).

As with titles, it is conceivable that the activation of these terms in Latin and French during court sessions and collection of taxes and labour duties on the manor could have led to their wider adoption from land officials and reeves to common labourers.[14]

Although *manerium* and *mansio* are largely synonymous, it is interesting to observe that they have distinct distributions in the two sub-corpora. In Bates's edition, *manerium* is the majority term, with 101 occurrences (1998: 1027). In *Exon Domesday*, it features only twenty-six times, with a concentration of eleven tokens in the final quires of the manuscript (97–9 and 101) and with twelve occurrences being part of collocations *manerium regis* 'king's manor' (10) or *manerium comitis* 'count's manor' (2). The default term for 'estate' as the basic unit of land survey in *Exon Domesday* is *mansio*, with 3,382 occurrences distributed evenly across all entries that describe estates and groupings of estates into fiefs. Bates's edition, by contrast, contains only twenty-one tokens of *mansio*. It would be tempting to see *mansio* as a regional south-western Latin norm or, alternatively, as a Salisbury norm, but the present configuration of *Open Domesday*, the online copy of the complete Domesday Book,[15] does not allow to verify this claim. Given the extremely high incidence of *mansio* in *Exon Domesday*, it is reasonable to suggest that in the process of the 1086 inquest the term could spread to the native English actors of the circuit.

3.1.4 Arpents and virgates

Among the new terms in which estates were measured, we find *aripennis*, *arpentus* (OF *arpent* < Gall.) 'arpent, measure of land, esp. of vineyard' and *virgata* 'virgate, one quarter of a hide, i.e. about 30 acres' (on *hides* see below). DMLBS marks *aripennis* explicitly as a Gallicism and dates the earliest examples to 1080. In AND, there are no instances of *arpent* before the second half of the twelfth century (s.v.). The record in English is from the Early Modern period (1580, OED s.v. *arpent*), although MED quotes one instance

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14   A reconstruction of such multilingual encounters on the fourteenth-century manor is presented by Ingham (2009).

15   See *Open Domesday* at https://opendomesday.org.

of a derivative *arpentier* 'a surveyor of land' in a1475 (s.v.). Since the delay in English attestations is much longer than with previous lexemes, one may suspect that the term remained too specialised or even exotic. It refers predominantly to vineyards, which at the time were a distinctly Norman cultural innovation (Loyn 1963: 367–8). In Bates's edition, instances of *aripennis* (seventeen in total) are found almost exclusively in charters and writs produced for Norman beneficiaries. The only exception, Bates 21, a writ for the Abbey of St. Martin, Battle (a Norman foundation), announces a gift of thirty arpents of meadow in Bodiam, Sussex, to the abbey and points out that they are to be measured according to the measure of Normandy (*scilicet triginta arpennos pratorum mensuratos mensura Normannie*). Both the donor and the beneficiary of the writ were also Normans. The almost total absence of arpents in *Exon Domesday* (two occurrences) confirms our intuition that vineyards were slow to take root in the South-West and, likely, elsewhere, and that their measurement units were of little consequence in England. As far as meadows, fields and pastures were concerned, they measured in different and more traditional units.

The estates of Domesday were assessed in Anglo-Saxon hides (see 3.2.2). A hide was roughly equivalent to the amount of land that could support a household and measured about 120 acres, its size subject to variation by region and type of soil. A hide could be divided into four virgates: terminologically, *gyrd* 'yard, yardland' in Old English, *virga* in Anglo-Latin before 1066, and *virgata* in Anglo-Latin after 1066. All three terms are seemingly semantic equivalents (cf. AND s.v. *virge*). Furthermore, the former two, *gyrd* and *virga*, share both the basic meaning 'twig, rod' and the metonymical extension 'unit of land'. Twigs of certain length were used to measure fields (Maitland 1987[1897]: 384–5), hence 'twig, rod' > 'the length of a twig' > 'unit of measure' > 'unit of land'. The equivalence between *gyrd* and *virga* was established already in the Old English period (Timofeeva 2022: 157). After the Conquest, the derivative *virgata* – displaying only the extended meaning 'measure, unit' – was added to the pool of Latin terms, with the virgate emerging as the principal unit 'on which the burdens were imposed' (Poole 1955: 43). The terminological equivalence of *gyrd* and the centrality of virgates to land-cultivation must have obstructed the adoption of the Latinate *virgate* into English, the earliest quotation in OED dated to 1655 (s.v.). In Bates, *virga*

and *virgata* are represented equally – twenty-one and twenty-two occurrences, respectively, although there is a concentration of sixteen instances of *virga* in Bates 53, listing 'purchases made for the abbey of Saint-Etienne of Caen by abbots Lanfranc, William and Gilbert' (1998: 249). Although *virgata* eventually became the more standard option, it is interesting to observe variation both in Norman Latin and in post-Conquest Anglo-Latin usage. In *Exon Domesday*, *virga* is the majority term with 1,239 occurrences, while *virgata* is attested only twenty-seven times. Possibly, this is another regional feature.

Overall, both *arpents* and *virgates* appeared specific enough to be borrowed into Anglo-Latin. *Virgata* was a transparent equivalent to *yard* and *yardland*, while *aripennis* was a cultural loan with limited currency. Given that peasants' duties and payments in Domesday Book and later manorial documents were frequently calculated in relation to land measurements (Poole 1955: 42–3), it is not inconceivable that common people had at least passive familiarity with such terms (Timofeeva 2022: 157).

3.2 English terminology

3.2.1 Earls and thegns

We have observed above that the terminology for high aristocratic ranks was considerably reshuffled in the aftermath of the Conquest and redistribution of land,[16] pressing several old terms into the periphery of the lexical field. As a result, *ealdormann* and *þegn* underwent semantic shift in English and have retained their original senses only in restricted historical contexts (OED s.vv. *ealdorman*, *alderman*, *thegn*, *thane*). In Anglo-Latin, *minister* 'thegn' fell out of use, partially replaced by *baro*, while *dux* shifted from 'ealdorman' to 'duke', and *comes* was extended to 'English count, earl'. It turned out, however, that the term *þegn* was useful in administrative documents, since it highlighted

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16   In this process, 'five thousand [Anglo-Saxon] thegns were replaced by no more than a hundred and eighty Norman barons' (Loyn 1963: 320), which was reflected in similar developments at the general level: 'landed wealth became more sharply concentrated, for lordship over the property of 37,000 landholders was acquired by 1,150 new tenants-in-chief' (Baxter & Lewis 2017: 402).

the difference in wealth and status between the old thegns and new barons. *Thegnus* or *tainnus* was introduced into Anglo-Latin (DMLBS s.v. *thegnus*) as well as Anglo-Norman (AND s.v. *thein*). In Bates's edition, this English loan-word is used eleven times across ten Latin writs. *Exon Domesday* contains 434 instances of thegns (*tagnus*, *tannus*, *tegnus*), frequently collocating with past references (e.g. *ea die qua rex Eduuardus* 'on the day that King Edward') or verbs in the perfect (e.g. *tenuit* 'held (land)'). It is plausible that court sessions and the Domesday inquest would facilitate diffusion of English-based termi-nology also among the Norman nobles when the records would be read out and translated into the vernaculars. Since *thegns* had become obsolescent, their currency was more likely to remain restricted to these legal settings – indeed DMLBS records no instances of *thegnus* after 1200, and the only attes-tation of *thein* in AND is dated to c.1150.[17] More topical terms, however, had a better chance of spreading beyond them.

3.2.2 Hides and hundreds

Among the administrative terms that were adopted from English, we find *hida* (< OE *hīd* f) 'hide, unit of arable land' and *hundredum* (< OE *hundred* n) 'hundred, territorial division of shire; hundred-court' (DMLBS s.vv.; AND s.vv. *hide, hundred*). As with many previous terms, Latin equivalents were available in the pre-Conquest period but went out of use in centrally pro-duced administrative documents after 1066: *cas(s)ata* 'farm, household; hide', *familia* 'household; hide', *mansa* 'hide; estate' (DMLBS s.vv.; DOE s.v. *hid*) and *centuria(ta)* 'division of land, hundred' (DMLBS s.vv.). Accordingly, these terms are not found in either William's charters or *Exon Domesday*. The only exception, Bates 183, with its mention of fifteen *cassatas* of land at Navestock, Essex, is a twelfth-century forgery. As far as 'official' terminology is concerned, *hida* is attested 117 times in Bates and 2,150 in *Exon Domesday*, *hundredum* 44 times in Bates and 389 in *Exon Domesday* (of these the major-ity occur in the Geld account in quire 4 and in the Hundred list in quire 14, with the prevailing spelling <hundret>). Unlike *thegns*, both terms have a

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17   In Les leis Willelme, an Anglo-Norman treatise on English laws and customs (https://earlyenglishlaws.ac.uk/laws/texts/leis-wl1/).

long currency in the insular varieties of Latin and Norman. The attestations of *hide* (AND s.v.) and *hida* (DMLBS s.v.) are recorded until the middle of the fourteenth century, and a derivative *hidagium* 'hidage, royal tax on land calculated by hide' is used in Anglo-Latin into the late thirteenth century. *Hundreds* appear as Anglo-Norman *hundred* until the late fourteenth century (AND s.v.), and as Anglo-Latin *hundredum* into the fifteenth century (DMLBS s.v.), i.e. up until the switch of administrative records back into English and the emergence of the standard variety.

3.2.3 Taxes and gelds

In the early eleventh century, King Æthelred introduced an annual land tax to pay Scandinavian mercenary troops to fight against other Scandinavians. In Anglo-Norman sources, the tax came to be known as *Danegeld*, although in Old English it was also referred to simply as *geld* (or *gyld*) and was distinguished from the more infamous *gafol* 'tribute, gavel; payment, debt' that was collected to pay off the invaders. The term *gafol* entered Anglo-Latin as *gab(u)lum* and Anglo-Norman as *gable* (DMLBS s.v.; AND s.v. *gable*[2]). There are three occurrences of *gablum* in Bates's edition and only one in *Exon Domesday*. The latter is interesting since DMLBS data suggest that *gablum* was a common term for 'rent, tribute' in Domesday records outside Exeter. Moreover, it was commonly used in compounds to denote specific rents and payments in kind, e.g. *hors-gabulum, huni-gabulum, hus-gabulum* (s.v. *gabulum*; cf. similar Middle English compounds in MED). In Anglo-Norman, by contrast, only a narrowed sense 'debt, interest payment' is attested, along with several derivatives: *gabler* 'to earn interest (by usury)', *gableur, gablier*, etc. 'usurer' (AND s.vv.).

The geld payments to subsidise the army were reintroduced by William and extracted for the first time already in 1067, using hides as taxable units (Williams 1995: 12). Thus, *geld* was not only a useful term but also a partly innovative concept. In fact, it has been argued that the informed extraction of geld payments was one of the main purposes of the Domesday inquest (Maitland 1987[1897]: 3–6). The term was borrowed into Anglo-Latin as *gildum, geldum* and Anglo-Norman as *gelde*, also in the broader meaning 'payment; tax payable to the king' (DMLBS s.v.; AND s.v. *gelde*[1]). The term shows up 31 times in Bates and 2,358 times in *Exon Domesday*, of these 2,136 in a colloca-

tion *reddidit gildum* 'yielded geld, tax' (cf. examples 3 and 4 below). Outside the Exeter manuscript, Domesday records frequently feature the verb *reddo* taking *gablum* as object, which may point to yet another regional variant. In insular varieties of Latin and Norman, both the basic form and several derivatives are used extensively into the fourteenth century (AND s.v. *geldable*; DMLBS s.vv. *geldabilis, gildare*).

3.3 Examples from Exon Domesday

By way of final illustration, I include here two random excerpts from *Exon Domesday* (abbreviations expanded and translations following *EXON* project, bold emphasis added to highlight the terms discussed in this paper). They are taken from two different quires of the manuscript and are written in two different hands. Nevertheless, at the level of the protocol, abbreviations, lexis and phraseology, these entries are uniform and suggest a standardised approach to data collection and record, possibly, according to a centrally devised questionnaire (cf. Baxter 2011). At the same time, these examples demonstrate two of the norms that we have tentatively identified as regional: the use of *mansio* 'estate' (rather than *manerio*) as a taxable unit and of *gildum* 'geld' (rather than *gablum*) as a calculation of tax revenue. These lexical variants are likely to have originated within the community of Salisbury commissioners and scribes who had been charged with the inquest of the South-West.

3. § Abbas h*abe*t .i. **mans*ionem*** q*ua*e uocat*ur*. Euestia. q*uam* ten*uit*. Wluold*us* abb*as* die qua rex E*duuardus* f*uit* v*iuus* et m*ortuus*. et redd*idit* **gildu*m*** p*ro* .i. **hida**. Hanc potest arare .i. carr*uca*. Inde h*abe*t abb*as* .i. carr*ucam*. in d*omi*nio (Somerset, Wellow Hundred; f. 186b3; hand 'eta')

    '§ The abbot of Bath has 1 estate which is called 'Eversy', which Abbot Wulfweald held on the day that King Eadweard was alive and dead, and it paid geld for 1 hide. 1 plough can plough this. Of it the abbot has 1 plough in demesne.'

4. § Giroldus **capellan*us*** h*abe*t .i. **mans*ionem*** q*ue* uocat*ur* Escapeleia.
q*uam* tenuit .i. **tegn*us*** ea die q*ua* rex E*duuardus* f*uit* u*iuus et*
m*ortuus et* reddidit **gildu*m*** p*ro* .i. **uirga**. *et* .i. ferlino. Hec **mans*io***
deb*et* d*omi*nice **mansioni** regis q*ue* uocat*ur* Tauetona p*er* annu*m*
.x. sol*idos*. de c*on*suetudine. (Devon, Exminster Hundred; f. 456a3;
hand 'alpha')
'§ Gerald the chaplain has 1 estate which is called Shapley, which 1
thegn held on the day that King Eadweard was alive and dead, and
it paid geld for 1 virgate and 1 ferding. This estate owes to the king's
demesne estate which is called South Tawton, 10 shillings a year
from custom.'

4 Discussion and conclusions

Both the sociological analysis of the post-1066 situation and the individual lexical case studies have demonstrated that contact-induced effects of the Norman Conquest in the administrative domain were immediate and far-reaching. Legal Anglo-Latin and, presumably, English were flooded with Norman and, more generally, Gallic terminology denoting social ranks and occupations, administrative units and measurements (section 3.1). Insular Latin and, by extension, Norman were at least equally affected by the influx of English lexis denoting penalties and crimes, rights and privileges (example 2), as well as metrical and administrative units, titles and social positions (section 3.2). Moreover, traditional Old English legal genres were recast in written Latin (and spoken Norman), replicating the structure of the vernacular formulas and templates.

Most of these developments were set in motion by the new community of Norman chancellors and scribes operating from the royal and episcopal quarters from at least the early 1070s and, possibly, clustering around a group of ambitious young men with close ties to the Abbey of Bec in Normandy. We have tentatively identified this group of actors as a community of practice, because of their in-group solidarity, common goals and a shared repertoire of practices. At the same time, the swiftness of the post-Conquest changes was greatly facilitated both by the existence of a developed English network of centralised and local scribal and administrative communities and, likely,

by the cooperation of the first few elderly chancellors who had served under Edward the Confessor and maintained the ties to these communities, while at the same time cultivating even older ties to the continental networks of their youth. This socially multidimensional network of administrators was instrumental in the diffusion of lexical innovation from the royal and episcopal scriptoria to more peripheral actors in shires and hundreds.

It is important to emphasise that from 1070 on, both the scribal offices and administration in general (lay and religious) were headed predominantly by the Normans, and it was under them but with collaboration of many English scribes and administrators that old lexical norms must have been renegotiated and new norms established. The processes of lexical selection and focusing continued into the 1080s, informing the work of Domesday commissioners both during the initial stages of data collection at the manor level and hearings at courts, and, especially, later when the returns were summarised and translated into Latin at the circuit level, such as those surviving in *Exon Domesday*. As a result, some of the lexemes (*baro*, *vicecomes*; *hida*, *hundredum*) became supralocal, while others (*mansio*, *virga*; *gildum*) appear to have been more region-specific. Most of the innovative terms surveyed here (e.g. *baro* or *manerium*) caused supralexification, bringing about obsolescence and semantic shift as well as genre and register layering in their respective semantic sub-domains. Although our observations concern primarily lexical change in post-1066 insular Latin, it is conceivable that, through the weak ties of the new bureaucracy, English and Anglo-Norman were at least equally affected. However, the dominance of Latin in administration and in written registers more generally delayed the attestations of innovative lexical features considerably. N

OLGA TIMOFEEVA
UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH

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