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## ON THE RISE OF THE ORDINAL NUMBER *SECOND* IN MIDDLE ENGLISH

The article discusses the late Middle English replacement of the ordinal number *other* by the Romance loanword *second*. The major cause of the change was the ambiguity and polyfunctionality of the older native word. The study is based on the language material from the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus*, the *Middle English Compendium* and the *Anglo-Norman Dictionary*.

### 1. Introduction

In Molencki (2016) we discussed the origin of the ordinal number *first* in Medieval English, which in late Middle English totally replaced several earlier Old English words used in this function. The process was more or less contemporary with the rise of the ordinal number *second* in English and its quick ousting of *other* and *after* when they meant ‘second of more than two’ (cf. Mustanoja 1960: 306). The illustrating language material comes from the *Dictionary of Old English Corpus* (DOEC) and the *Middle English Compendium* (MEC) and the abbreviated reference notation follows the standard practices used in the dictionaries based on these corpora: the *Dictionary of Old English* (DOE) and the *Middle English Dictionary* (MED).

Another interesting parallel between the first two numbers is the fact that the cardinal and ordinal forms display suppletion in most Indo-European languages (cf. Hurford 1975, 1987; Veselinova 1997; Stolz 2001). This means that ordinal numbers are derived from roots which are different from those found in their cardinal counterparts. Table One shows the situation for the numeral *two/second* in ten Indo-European languages, out of which half use suppletive forms derived from unrelated roots (marked in bold):

TABLE ONE

Language	<i>two/second</i>
Sanskrit	<i>dvi/dvitīya</i>
Greek	<i>δύο/δέυτερος</i>
Latin	<i>duo/secundus</i>
Hittite	<i>da/danna</i>
Avestan	<i>duua/bittiya</i>
Armenian	<i>yerko/yerkrord</i>
Lithuanian	<i>du/antras</i>
Albanian	<i>dy/dytë</i>
Old Irish	<i>dá/alyos</i>
Old Church Slavonic	<i>два/вьторъ</i>

## 2. Medieval *oþer* and *æftera*

Following the pertinent qualitative and quantitative phonetic changes (including the Ingvaenic spirant law, whereby the nasal was lost and the vowel underwent the compensatory lengthening; cf. Reszkiewicz 1973: 51, 74; Hogg 1992: 82), the Old English word *oþer* was a regular and direct continuation of Proto-Germanic *\*anþaraz* derived in turn from Proto-Indo-European *\*antero-s/al-tero-s*. The Indo-European word was made up from the morpheme *\*al-* denoting ‘beyond’ and the comparative suffix *-tero-*, thus meaning ‘something more strange and/or remote’, and was reconstructed on the basis of such attested ancient forms as, for example, Sanskrit *ántara-s* ‘other, foreign’, *an-yá-s* ‘other, different’, Latin *al-ius*, *al-ter* ‘other’, Lithuanian *antras* ‘second’. The cognate early Germanic forms are included in Table Two:

TABLE TWO

Language	<i>two/second</i>
Gothic	<i>twai/anþar</i>
Old High German	<i>zwene/andar</i> (Middle and Modern High German <i>ander</i> )
Old Saxon	<i>twene/ ôðar, âðar, andar;</i>
Old English	<i>twa, twegen*/oþer; æftera</i>
Old Frisian	<i>twa/ôther (oder, ander)</i>
Old Norse	<i>tveir/annarr</i>

\* For a detailed discussion of the Old English cardinal numer *twegen/twa* see van Mengden (2010:75-80).

The Old English word *oper* was multifunctional, as it could be used as an adjective, pronoun and numeral (cf. Bosworth and Toller 1898, s.v. *oper*). Below are typical instances of the Old English ordinal numeral *oper*:

- (1) **ÆGr** 26.11 seo **oðer** *declinatio* hæfð syx geendunga. ‘The second declension has six endings.’
- (2) **Mt** 22.26 (Ru) *similiter et secundus et tertius usque ad septimum* gelice 7 se **oper** 7 se þridde oþ to þæm siofund. ‘And likewise the second and the third up to the seventh.’

As a numeral *oper* competed with another Old English word *æftera*, which was originally an adjective used in locative sense as ‘later, closer to the back’, hence the sense ‘second’, both ‘latter, second of the two’ and ‘second of more than two’ (cf. *DOE*, s.v. *æfterra*), as in e.g.:

- (3) **HomS** 44 60: on þam þriddan dæge æt þære **æfteran** tide dæges on heofonum æteoweð fyrentacen. ‘On the third day at two o’clock PM a token of fire appeared in the sky.’
- (4) **Mart** 5 Au 8, A.18: ond Cristene men ... hine bebyrgdon on þære **æfteran** mile fram þære ceastre þe is nemned Augusta. ‘And the Christians buried him on the second mile from the town which is called Augusta.’

The words could be used interchangeably as can be seen in the free variation between *æftera* and *oðer* in some glossaries and glosses, e.g. in the *Lindisfarne Gospels Mt 22.26* for the Latin *secundus* we find in the Old Northumbrian gloss **ðe æftera l ðe oðer**; cf. also Esquibel and Wojtyś (2016). A similar variation can be found in the Alfredian prose:

- (5) **Or** 1 14.35.26 her endað sio **forme** boc, 7 onginð **sio æfterre**. vs.
- (6) **Bede** 18.92.26 Her endað **seo æreste** boc 7 onginneð **seo oðer**. ‘Here ends the first book and begins the second.’

However, *oðer* was much more common. In Ælfric’s *Grammar* (13.17, 118.1, 282.15) the ordinal number *secundus* is rendered by (*se*) *oðer*, but the prepositional *secundum* ‘according to’ is consistently translated as *æfter* (270.2). In Middle English *æfter* appeared only in very early texts, most of which were copies of Old English texts:

- (7) **c1150(OE) Hrl.HApul.(Hrl 6258B)** 109.82/11: Wið fefore, þe ði **æftran** dæge to cumeð. ‘With the fever which comes on the second day.’
- (8) **c1175(?OE) HRood (Bod 343)** 2/12: Ða on þære **æfteræ nihte**, ne durstlæhte he hine þær to ræstene. ‘Then on the second night he did not dare to rest’
- (9) **(1296) Sub.R.Sus.in Sus.RS 10 50: Will le Aftere** [?William the Second].

The typical Middle English numeral denoting ‘second’ between the 12th and the mid-14th centuries was *other*:

- (10) ?c1200 *Orm*.13430: Affterr **patt forrme daz3** patt was I Paradiss blisse...3uw iss nu baþe god & ned...To flittenn o **þiss oþerr daz3** Fra deofless. ‘After the first day that I was in the bliss of paradise...and for you it is both good and fitting...to escape from the devils on the second day.’
- (11) c1275(?a1200) *Lay. Brut* 3050: He to scipe wende.. þene **oðerne** dæi he com to Denemarke. ‘He boarded the ship and on the second day came to Denmark.’
- (12) a1450 *PNoster R.Hermit* 23/14: þat is **þat oþer poynt** of þe pater noster, and is on englische þus myche to seye: halewed be þi name. ‘This is the second verse of Pater Noster, which is as much to say in English: hallowed be Thy name.’

(*The other* is still used in Present-day English in the sense ‘the second out of two’, but there was no such restriction yet in Old and Middle English, where *other* was a polysemantic term meaning ‘other, different, variant’ and ‘second’. Such ambiguity must have led to misunderstandings, which was remedied by a new French loanword.

### 3. New word *second*

According to the *OED* and the *MED*, the word *second* is first attested in 1297, i.e. in the period when thousands of Romance words were being borrowed into English. Its Middle French/Anglo-Norman etymon was *seco(u)nde*, obviously continuing the Latin gerundival form *secundus* ‘following’ of the *verbum deponens sequi* ‘to follow’ (cognate with Old English *seon* ‘see’ from the Germanic \**sekhwan* also continued in Gothic *saihwan*, Old High German *sehan*), ultimately from the Proto-Indo-European root \**sekw-*. Below are some examples of the Anglo-Norman usage of the word in the 13th and 14th centuries:

- (13) Le **secunde** comaundement si est tel: vous ne tuerez nul homme. *Mirour de seinte Eglyse* 31 a1250 ‘The second commandment is such: you will not kill anyone.’
- (14) a nostre palais de Westm’, le **seconde** jour de Juyl, l’an de nostre regne quarantisme primer *Foedera* year 1367 ‘at ourPalace of Westminster on 2 July, the 40st year of our reign.’
- (15) William le Mareshall son auncestre les porta al coronement **le Roi Edward le second**. *Foedera* year 1377 ‘William the Marshal, his ancestor, brought them to the coronation of King Edward II.’

The word is found in parallel bilingual French and English texts, as in (16) and (17). The best evidence of its novelty status is the manuscript variation: while in older versions we still find *other*, in later texts, especially in the 15th century mostly *second* is used as in examples (18, 19) from the *Chronicles of Gloucester* and (20, 21) from the different manuscripts of the *Cursor mundi*, where while all the three 14th century manuscripts still have *other*, the 15th century southern Trinity MS systematically has *second*. This means that in the 15th century the scribe must have perceived *other* in this context as weird. A similar variation can be observed in the early and late versions of Wycliffe's Bible, as is shown in (22):

- (16a) Le an **secunde** apres le encorounement vs.  
 (16b) þe 3ere **secunde** after his corounment **c1350 Peter Langtoft's Chronicle** 267 'The second year after his coronation...'  
 (17a) ceste rule enseigne le englysh dez voz parolez de ffraunceys et en tiel manere **la primer** Rule enseigne pur scrivere, **la secunde** pur lire, **la tierce** pur entendre. vs.  
 (17b) Pat rule techēþ þe englyse of our wordez of frensh & in swych manere **þe fyrste** Rule techēþ to wryte, **þe secunde** to rede, **þe þryde** to understand. **c1400 Femina** Trinity College Cambridge B.14.40 'This rule teaches English from our French words and in such manner the first rule teaches us to write, the second to read and the third one to understand'  
 (18) **c1325 Glo.Chron. (ClgA.11)** 8576 In **þe secunde** [**þe oþer** αβ] 3er...of is kinedom · Þoru out al engelond · so gret erþgrine com. 'In the second year of his reign there was a big earthquake all over England.'  
 (19) So þat in **þe teþe** 3er · of þe kinges croune. [**þe teþe**] **þe oþe** α; **þe oþer** β; **þe secunde**] 5231 'so that in the second year of the king's crown.'  
 (20a) *Cotton*: Her begins at noe þe lede **þe toþer** werld right for to del  
 (20b) *Fairfax*: Here be-gynnys in noe þe lede **þe toþer** werlde for til dele  
 (20c) *Göttingen*: Here bigines at noe þe lede **þe toþer** world for to sede.  
 (20d) *Trinity*: Here bigynneþ of Noe lede **þe secunde** world for to sede.  
*Cursor mundi* 1626 'Here Noe's people begin to populate/seed the second world.'  
 (21a) *Cotton*: þe first it gas, **þe toþer** it hise,  
 (21b) *Fairfax*: þe first gas **þe toþer** hit hyes  
 (21c) *Göttingen*: þe first gas, **þe toþir** it hise  
 (21d) *Trinity*: Þe furste gooþ **þe secunde** doþ hizē  
*Cursor mundi* 21278 'The first one goes (slowly), the second one hurries.'  
 (22a) (**a1382 WBible(1) (Bod 959)**) Josh.10.32: Þe hoost disposyd by enuy-ron a3eyn fou3te hit..& he took hit **þat oþer day** and the oost disposid

- bi enuyroun, aʒenfauʒt it... and he took it **that other day**, and smoot in mouth of swerd, and eche lijf that was in it
- (22b) **a1425(c1395) *WBible(2)* (Roy 1.C.8)** [*WB(2)* vr. **in the secounde dai**; L altero] and whanne the oost was disposid bi cumpas, he fauʒt aʒens it. and he\*. took it\*. **in the tothir\***. [**secounde I.] dai**, and smoot\*. bi the scharpnesse of swerd, and\*. [he slowʒ I.] ech man\*. [lijf I.], that was thereynne.

*King James Bible*: And the Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which took it on the **second** day, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein.

Thus by the end of Middle English *other* became obsolete in the sense of ‘second of more than two’ and some late uses were most likely deliberately archaic, as in (23, 24) with reference to the ordering of kings who had the same names (the second Henry vs. Henry the other).

- (23) **c1400 Trevisa *Higden’s Polychronicon*** [folio 447a] Kyng **Henry the Firste**. His brother nexte, callede **the firste Henry**... now comes **þe secounde Henry** Peter Langtoft *Chronicle* 167 (*Henricus secundus factus est rex*) ‘King Henry I, his next brother, called the first Henry.. now comes the second Henry.’
- (24) **a1500 *Conq.Irel.*(Rwl B.490)** 89/8: **The kyng henry the othyr** was a man same rede, roun hede, and rounde grey eyyn. ‘King Henry II was a man with red round head and round grey eyes.’

#### 4. Conclusion

In the 15th century *second* finally replaced the native ordinal numbers *other* (and *after*), most likely owing to polysemanticity of the earlier words, which now specialized mostly as grammatical words. An additional factor was the heavy functional load of the pronoun *other* and the adverb/preposition *after*, which also developed a new function of the subordinating temporal conjunction more or less at the same time (*æfter þæm þe/þæt* > *after that* > *after*; cf. Moléncki 2005).

Parallel processes affected other West Germanic languages at the time, where forms derived from the cardinal number were replacing the original *ander*: German *zweite*, Dutch *tweede*, Frisian *twadde*. We can read in the Grimm brothers’ *Deutsche Wörterbuch* (s.v. *ander*): ‘im 14. jh. zuerst an stelle von *ander* bezeugt... vom 14-17 jh. nur dünn belegt, da *ander* noch weiterlebt... und mundartlich heute noch gebräuchlich ist’. Nevertheless the Scandinavian languages have preserved the Common Germanic form of the ordinal number *second*: Swedish *andra*, Danish *anden*, Norwegian *annen*, Icelandic and Faroese *annar* (thus in Scandinavia the second floor is still ‘the other’ floor). English,

however, introduced new forms of the first ordinal pronouns, which were both loanwords: Norse *first* and French *second*.

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