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# Textile Terminology in Old High German between Inherited and Loan Words

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## Textile Terminology in Old High German between Inherited and Loan Words

Roland Schuhmann

A particular language consists of course not only of words inherited from its respective parent language but contains also a certain amount of loan words (however, this amount differs depending on the respective language). This universal principle then also holds true for the speakers of the Germanic languages. The vocabulary of the Germanic languages includes not only the lexicon inherited from Proto-Indo-European but a range of languages later on heavily influenced it. In the times before the documentation of the Germanic languages, the two most important sources that influenced the Germanic lexicon were Celtic and (prolonged) Latin.<sup>1</sup> Influence in the lexicon is found in nearly every part of the daily life vocabulary, ranging from words for food and beverages via commercial products to Christian

terminology. These borrowings of words in the most cases took place together with the objects or concepts themselves.<sup>2</sup> The research paradigm that investigates these kinds of correlations between words and the underlying objects or concepts is best summarized under the term ‘Wörter und Sachen’.<sup>3</sup>

One of the fields, where (due to *e.g.* new techniques, materials, temporary fashions) a priori a high amount of borrowings of objects (and concepts) is to be expected, is the lexical field of textiles and the terminology used for textile production. A detailed analysis of the vocabulary used for textiles and the techniques in the older Germanic languages is largely missing.<sup>4</sup> In the following, a survey of the vocabulary that denotes textiles in the Old High German language will be carried out in order to answer the following questions:

1. It is not the place here to discuss if there was also an influence on the Germanic lexicon by one (or more) unknown substrate language as often is suggested. According to the advocators, about one third of the Germanic lexicon is of non-Indo-European origin and therefore stems from one (or more) substrate language (cp. the examples given in Vennemann 2003, 1-7).
2. Exceptions are words like Old High German *koufo* ‘merchant, trader’, Old English *cȳpa*, *cēpa* ‘merchant’, Old Icelandic *kaupi* ‘buyer, customer’, Runic Swedish (personal name) *Kaubi*, Old Swedish (personal name) *Køpe* borrowed from Latin *caupō* ‘publican’ (cp. *EWA* 5, 727). Of course, merchants were known in the Germanic world.
3. Cp. Heller 1998.
4. An exception is the outdated volume three of Heyne 1899-1908. Recently Hofmann 2013 published a study on the Old Frisian textile vocabulary.

- What is the proportion between inherited and borrowed terms for clothes and fabric in Old High German and in which areas are the respective groups mostly concentrated?
- In what time can the highest influence be found and from which origin is this influence?
- In what lexical fields are the loanwords found?
- Can the integration of different loanwords in Old High German be determined?
- Are there examples of several inherited and borrowed words for the same concepts and how do they compete?

### Working steps

In order to answer the aforementioned questions, it was necessary to go through the Old High German dictionaries<sup>5</sup> because specialised lists that comprise the terms denoting textiles (both the underlying material and the final products) do not exist. Since a sufficiently large word group was needed for this investigation, a fairly wide textile concept was applied, including the materials and all objects that could have been made out of them. However, some types of words were not included: Neither verbal expressions for the material production or fabrication were taken in (like *nāen* ‘to sew’), nor were adjectives derived from attested nouns (like *filzīn* ‘felt...’ to *filz* ‘felt’); in contrast, a word like *bissīn* ‘linen’ was integrated in the list because no underlying noun is present. This resulted in a list of in total 511 words denoting textile material and their potential products. Included in this list were thus also products that could have been made out of textile material although that is not in every case clear (like *bīgurtil* ‘purse’ or *būtil* ‘bag, purse’ – they could of course also have been made out of leather or another material). They were taken in because in most cases a deepgoing semantic analysis is not possible for the simple fact that many words are transmitted in glosses, thus without any further Old High German context. To state it clearly, the very detailed semantic analyses found in, e.g., *Althochdeutsches Wörterbuch* are in fact based less on the

information that can be extracted from the Old High German words and their context. Rather they rely more on the analyses of the underlying Latin words they translate. Their inclusion into the list of textile words was even more unproblematic, because in the end they did not seem to change the overall picture.

This unstructured, merely alphabetical list was afterwards sorted according to different aspects that were relevant for this study: inherited versus loanwords, first occurrence of the single words, semantic fields and derivational affiliations.

### Difficulties in determining borrowed words

In this list of 511 words, 154 potential loanwords can be detected, which would result in a proportion of 30.1% of loanwords in the textile terminology of Old High German. However, the exact determination of what is a loanword is not exactly easy. Obviously words like *humerāle* ‘humeral veil’, *kussi* ‘cushion, pillow’, *purpura* ‘purple (robe)’ or *tunihha* ‘tunic, garment’ can without any further problems be classified as loanwords but there are more difficult cases, cp. e.g. the following three examples:

- Old High German *kozso* ‘blanket, dress, skirt, coat, cowl’ has its only counterpart in Old Saxon *kott* (also Latin-Old Saxon *cottus*, *cottis*), seemingly continuing a Proto-Germanic *\*kutta(n)-*. Old French *cot(t)e*, Old Provençal *cota* ‘small garment with sleeves’ are often thought to be borrowed from an unattested Old Dutch *\*kotto* that is assumed to be also the basis of Middle Latin *cottus* ‘cloak, coat’. However, it cannot be ruled out that the Germanic words are borrowed from Middle Latin *cottus* as was also proposed.<sup>6</sup>
- Old High German *līn* ‘linen garmen, wick’ has counterparts in all Germanic languages, cp. Runic **lina-**, Gothic *lein*, Old Saxon, Old English *līn*, Old Dutch, Old Frisian *līn-*, Old Icelandic *lín*, continuing Proto-Germanic *\*līna-* ‘wick’. From Germanic the word was apparently already quite early borrowed into the Finnic languages as *liina*.

5. For that purpose the following dictionaries were used: Schützeichel 2012; Köbler 1993; Splett 1993.

6. Cp. *EWA* 5, 731-732.

A comparable form is found in Latin *līnum* and Old Irish *lín* ‘flax, wick’. Besides these forms with a long stem vowel also words with a short stem vowel are found having the same meaning: Greek Mycenaean *ri-no-* /*lino-*/, Greek *λίνον*, Old Church Slavonic *\*lbnъ* (deduced from the adjective *lbněnъ*), Lithuanian *linai*, Latvian *lini* and Old Prussian *lynno*. These words reflect the ablauting forms Proto-Indo-European *\*leyno-* and *\*lino-*. It is sure that the Albanian word *li* was borrowed from Latin. However, it is unclear whether the Celtic and the Germanic words also represent borrowings from Latin, as it is often assumed based on general historico-cultural reasons. From a purely linguistic point of view, this matter must rest undecided, even more because the cultivation of flax reaches back into the Neolithic.<sup>7</sup>

- c. Old High German *rok* ‘garment, cowl’ has correspondences in Middle Low German, Old Dutch *rok*, Old English *rocc* and Old Frisian *rock* (Old Icelandic *rokkr* was borrowed either from Old English or Middle Low German), all continuing Proto-Germanic *\*rukka-*. Besides this there is an apparently related, however unexplained form Proto-Germanic *\*χrukka-* ‘garment’ that is continued in Old High German *hrok*, Old Saxon *hroc* and Old Frisian *hrock*; this was borrowed into Middle Latin (pl.) *hrocci* that developed into Old French *froc* ‘monk’s habit’. It is generally compared with Old Irish *rucht* ‘tunica’ from Proto-Celtic *\*ruktu-* and Middle Welsh *rhuch(en)* ‘coat’ from Proto-Celtic *\*rowkkā*. These could point to a common ancestor Late Proto-Indo-European *\*ruk(k)-*, *\*rowk(k)-*. However, it is often argued that because of the differences *\*r-* and *\*χr-* these are all rather loanwords from an unknown (substrate) source.<sup>8</sup>

If these three examples would turn out to be inherited words and not loanwords, the overall numbers would be decreasing dramatically because of the derivations of these three words. In this case there

would be a total number of one hundred and twenty-one loanwords, so a percentage of 23.7%.

### Inherited vs. borrowed words

This uncertainty in determining what is a loanword and what can be a loanword should be kept in mind when answering the question of the distribution of loanwords through time. For this analysis, the Old High German period was divided into the respective centuries. It should be noted that only the first attestation of a word was taken into account as being relevant. That means that when a word has two or more attestations, only the first one is counted. The others are neglected. This is done for each word, regardless if it is inherited or borrowed. However, every lexicon entry is listed. So, when for example *mantal* occurs for the first time in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and the compound *fēhmantel* ‘coat’ in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, of course both are listed separately.

It is perhaps important to say something about the later centuries mentioned here. It is true that according to the standard view – which is not doubted here – Middle High German displaces Old High German somewhat in the midst of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, in fact it would be necessary to stop at that time. However, there is a lot of Old High German or better Old High German like material from later times, namely material consisting out of copies from older material or manuscripts that are assumed to stand in an Old High German tradition.<sup>10</sup> Of course, this means that a part of the later material is overlapping with words also found in Middle High German.

The results of this analysis are displayed in Table 1. Of course, the percentage in the last line must be taken with a pinch of salt. Nevertheless, an increase through the centuries can definitely be detected. This tendency is also confirmed by what is known from Middle High German; here quite an enormous influence from Old and Middle French can be seen.<sup>11</sup>

### Donor language(s) of the loanwords

7. Cp. *EWA* 5, 1299-1302.

8. Cp. Sijts 2010 s.v. *rok* (kledingstuk); <http://www.dwds.de/?view=1&qu=Rock>.

9. Cp. Braune & Reiffenstein 2004, 1.

10. Cp. Stricker 2009.



Table 1.

century	total number of words	(presumably) number of loanwords	percentage of loanwords
< 8th	2	0	0.0%
8th	66	16	24.2%
9th	137	38	27.7%
10th	80	21	27.5%
11th	101	30	29.7%
12th	100	35	35.0%
13th	23	12	52.2%
14th	2	1	50.0%

The question of the donor language or languages on the Old High German textile terminology can be answered quite easily. Only two can be identified: on the one hand Latin (ranging from Classical Latin via Vulgar to Middle Latin), and on the other hand Old French. In the vocabulary for textiles and their products, no Slavonic words can be detected, differing for example from the lexical field of animal skin processing. In this field Old High German *kursin(na)*, *krusina* ‘coat made of pelt’ is found from the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century (cp. also Old Saxon *kursina*, Middle Low German *kōrsen[e]*, Middle Dutch *corsene*, Old Frisian *kersne*, Old English *crūs[e]ne*). It was borrowed from Proto-Slavic \**kъrъzъno* ‘coat made of pelt’ (continued e.g. in Old Russian *къръзно*).<sup>12</sup>

From Classical Latin comes for example the words *līn* ‘linen garment, wick’ (if it is really borrowed from Latin *līnum*), *pfuluwi* ‘pillow’ from *pulvīnus* ‘little cushion, small pillow’ or *pfūmāri* ‘weaver of damask’ from *plūmārius* ‘id.’. From Vulgar Latin words like *oral* ‘cloth’ and *orare* ‘veil’ were derived. The Middle Latin influence is the strongest during the Old High German period. One example may suffice here: the word Old High German *kugulla* ‘hood, cowl’ was borrowed from Middle Latin *cuculla* ‘id.’ In Middle Latin the feminine form nearly completely replaced the older, Classical Latin, masculine form *cucullus* ‘id.’. This replacement can be seen in the Romance

languages too, where the masculine form *cucullus* is only continued in Italian *cocollo*, Sardinian *cucudhu*, *cugudhu*<sup>13</sup> and Rumanian *cucuiu*, whereas continuants of the feminine *cuculla* are far more widespread, cp. Italian *cocollo*, French *coule*, Provençal *cogolla*, Spanish *cogulla* and Portuguese *cogula*. The Middle Latin feminine form is also underlying the loans in the other Germanic languages, cp. Old Saxon *kugula*, Middle Dutch *kogele* and Old English *cugele*.<sup>14</sup> The Old French influence on Old High German starts in the 11<sup>th</sup> century and is found in only three loanwords, namely in *bōnit* ‘tiara, diadem’ from Old French *bon(n)et* ‘material for headgears’, in *kussīn* ‘cushion’ borrowed from Old French *co(i)ssin* ‘id.’ and in *zindāl* ‘silk’ coming from Old French *cedal* ‘id.’.

So apparently textile terminology entered the Old High German language area only from the West and perhaps South.

### Semantic fields of the loanwords

The semantic fields of the Old High German loanwords concerning textile terminologies are in some parts well defined:

1. A first group represents specific materials and the products made out of them. It comprises words like *bambas* ‘cotton dress’, *bissīn* ‘linen’, *bokkerat* ‘rough linen’, *bōnit* ‘tiara, diadem’, *?līn* ‘linen garment, wick’, *pfelli* and *pfellōl* ‘garment made of silk’, *pfūmlīh* ‘brocaded’, *polomid* ‘colourful garment made of damask’, *purpura* ‘purple (robe)’, *saban*, *sabano* and *sabo* ‘cloth, linen, linen-cloth’, *serih* ‘silk’, *sīda* ‘silk’, *zindāl* ‘silk’.
2. A second group comes from the special clothes worn by clerics. In this category fall amongst others: *alba* ‘alb, cassock, headband’, *fezitrāga* ‘altar-cloth’, *fīnkūn* ‘monk’s shoes’, *humerāl* and *humerāle* ‘humeral veil’, *kasul* ‘chasuble’, *rāginna* and *rezina* ‘garment of a monk’, *stōla* ‘priestly stole’, *umbrāl* ‘humeral veil’, *zistella* ‘pilgrim’s bag’.

11. Cp. Suolahti 1929.

12. Cp. *EWA* 5, 923-924.

13. The Sardinian words were kindly pointed out to me by Dr. Salvatore Gaspa.

14. Cp. *EWA* 5, 852-853.

3. A third group covers the semantic field of cushions. This group comprises in fact only two words, namely *kussīn* and *pfuluwi*. These two will be treated into more detail below.
4. A last disperse group contains words for all kind sof garments. Cp. e.g. *fāska* and *fāski* ‘wrap’, *kappa/kappa* ‘cap, hat, hood, cloak’, *kelisa* ‘boot, shoe’, *kemis* ‘dress’, *kozza* and *kozso* ‘blanket, dress, skirt, coat, cowl’, *kugula* ‘hood, cowl’, *mantal* ‘coat, wrap’, *menihha* ‘sleeve’, *pfait* ‘jacket’, *rok* ‘garment, cowl’, *rosa* ‘rough coat’, *sok* ‘shoe’, *suftelari* ‘winged shoe’, *tunihha* ‘tunic, garment’, *witta* ‘band’, *zicklāt* ‘round skirt for ladies’.

Finally, some words remain that do not fall into a homogenous category.

### Integration of the loanwords

The question how well loanwords in the lexical field of textiles were integrated in Old High German cannot be answered on the basis of which words prolonged in Middle or even New High German because this procedure would lead to wrong results. Cp. e.g. a case like Old High German *armilo* ‘sleeve, fetter’ that was not a productive word but survived into German.<sup>15</sup> In the following, the adopted approach will rather rely on the productivity in Old High German itself. In other words, the answer to the question of how ‘alive’ loanwords in the language were, is based on derivational patterns and the possibility to be chosen as parts of compounds.

For comparison the group around inherited Old High German *wāt* ‘garment’ can be taken. From *wāt* two derivations do exist, namele *giwāti* and the as a simplex unattested *\*wāti*. Whereas *wāt* itself is only attested as a simplex, the derivation *\*wāti* is attested in three compounds: *bettiwāti*, *dingwāti* and *līnwāti*. The attested simplex *giwāti* is even attested in eight compounds: *beingiwāti*, *bettigiwāti*, *dinggiwāti*, *ingiwāti*, *mūzgiwāti*, *sīdgiwāti*, *wantalgiwāti* and *wībgiwāti*. So all in all, the wordgroup around Old High German *wāt* seems to be quite productive.

Under the loanwords for textiles there are of course several that under this definition were not

integrated at all because they do not take part in derivations and compounding. Examples for them are *alba* ‘alb, cassock, headband’, *amit* ‘shawl’, *balz* ‘belt, baldric’ or *polomid* ‘colourful garment made of damask’.

However, also the complete opposite is found. The two words for ‘cushion, pillow’ can serve as an example for that. In Old High German the words *pfuluwi* ‘pillow’ borrowed from Classical Latin *pulvīnus* ‘little cushion, small pillow’ and *kussīn* ‘cushion’ borrowed from Old French *co(i)ssin* ‘id.’ exist. As is shown by the donor language the time of the borrowing lies far apart from each other.

The word *pfuluwi* is attested in the 8<sup>th</sup> century and shows in Old High German three different derivations: *pfuluwīn* attested in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, *pfuluwīlīn* in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and *pfuluwo* in the 12<sup>th</sup> century (all three with the meaning ‘pillow’). So during the whole Old High German period it is possible to create new derivations to *pfuluwi*. The word *pfuluwi* is also found in the compound *houbitpfuluwi* ‘pillow’ in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. The later derivation *pfuluwīn* is present in the compounds *houbitpfuluwīn* ‘pillow’ in the 10<sup>th</sup> century and *stuolpfuluwīn* ‘stool pillow’ in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

Therefore, it is clear that the word group around *pfuluwi* was quite well integrated in the Old High German language. The rate of productivity is not that high but it is in fact constant.

Even if *pfuluwi* seems to have been quite well integrated in Old High German this is even more the case with the later borrowed *kussīn* ‘cushion’. The word was adopted on the turn of 10<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> century and is first attested in the compound *wangkussīn* ‘pillow’. In the 11<sup>th</sup> century it becomes very productive. There are two derivations: *kussi* ‘cushion’ and the diminutive *kussilī/kussilīn* ‘small cushion’. The word appears also in two further compounds, *houbitkussīn* and *wangkussilīn* ‘pillow’. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century two further compounds are found, namely *ōrkussilīn* ‘little pillow’ and *ōrkussīn* ‘pillow’ showing that the derivation was still in use.

So the integratedness of *kussīn* ‘cushion’ seems to have passed off much more quickly than it was the case with *pfuluwi* ‘cushion’. This may have

15. Cp. *EWA* 1, 338.

been the reason why the latter one was replaced by *kussīn* ‘cushion’ later on in the history of the German language.

### Inherited and borrowed words denoting the same concept

To round up this short overview on textile terminologies a look may be taken at some cases where in Old High German both inherited and borrowed words are transmitted for the same concept:

- a. ‘belt’: There are some inherited words denoting belts: *bruohhah*, *fazilo*, *gurt* (together with the derivations *gurtil*, *gurtila* and *gurtilīn*; also widespread in compounds), *umbisweif* and *windica*. In the 10<sup>th</sup> century the word *balz* ‘belt, baldric’ appears that is borrowed from Latin *balteus* ‘belt, girdle’.<sup>16</sup> This word is not attested in derivations or compounds, was in other words not integrated in Old High German. It disappeared in the further history of German where the already in Old High German most widespread word *gurtil* asserted itself.<sup>17</sup> The situation is opposite to the one in English, where *belt* is nowadays the most common word while *girdle* was driven back.
- b. ‘coat’: The semantic field of ‘coat’ is already in Old High German beginning to be dominated by borrowed words. Inherited words are *hulla*, *lahhan*, *ludilo*, *skekko* and *trembil*. Of these, *hulla* is used for every kind of wrap, *lahhan* is used to denote every kind of floating garment and *ludilo* refers in fact to the material the coat is made of, so only *skekko* and *trembil* truly denote coats. Only *lahhan* is productive in the sense mentioned above. The borrowed words are *kozza/kozso*, *mantal*, *rok* and *rosa*. Of these four, the first three are very productive in Old High German, both in derivations and compounds. It does in fact not astonish that of these nine words only the productive ones are continued in later

language stages. However, *lahhan* stopped to be used as a word that could designate coats, which is not astonishing because more apt words were available. *Kozza/kozso*, *mantal* and *rok* continued to be existent in later language stages. Of these, only *mantal* is the word for ‘coat’ in the standard language, whereas *kozza/kozso* and *rok* are used dialectally.

- c. ‘sleeve’: In Old High German there is one inherited word for the sleeve, namely *armilo* that has no productivity whatsoever. There are also two borrowed words, *menihha* and *menihhilo* that come from Latin *manica* and probably *manicula* ‘sleeve’. The unproductive *armilo* could only hold up well because the connection with the derivational basis *arm* ‘arm’ was at no time lost. Against this connection the loanwords stood no chance.
- d. ‘hair-lace’: One of the most surprising semantic wordgroups in Old High German is that for the hair-lace. There are quite many inherited words to denote this object: Besides the simplex *rīsil*, that is more commonly used in the meaning ‘veil’, compounds are found, which have as first member either *fahs* or *hār* ‘hair’: With *fahs* the compounds *fahsreidī*, *fahsreita*, *fahsreitī*, *fahssnuor*, *fahswalko* and *fahswinta* are found, with *hār* the words *hārskeida* and *hārsnuor*. There is also one compound found that has a borrowed element in it, namely *fahswitta* with *witta* ‘band’ from Latin *vitta* ‘band, ribbon’. The borrowed word did not stand a chance – perhaps not so much, because *-witta* did not make it, but rather because *fahs* got out of use.<sup>18</sup> For ‘hair’ only Old High German *hār* was continued<sup>19</sup> but also these compounds came into disuse (German *\*Haarschnur* would perhaps still be understandable). German *Haarband* replaced these words, although interestingly no corresponding compound with *-band* is found in Old High German.

16. Cp. *EWA* 1, 447-449.

17. Cp. *EWA* 4, 705-706.

18. Cp. *EWA* 3, 15-17.

19. Cp. *EWA* 4, 826-828.



## Conclusion

This short overview of textile terminologies showed that quite a large amount of the Old High German words in this lexical field is borrowed. The borrowings only come from the West (or South) into Old High German, so from Latin and its continuant Old French. Between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> century there is a gradually rising amount of loanwords. Three semantic fields can clearly be distinguished, namely special, unknown materials and their products, garments for clerics and cushions. The integration of the loanwords reaches from 'not at all' to 'very good'. Although integration is an important element for the continuing use of borrowed words, it is definitively not the only reason.

It is obvious that this study here is only a first small step towards a detailed analysis of the textile terminology in Old High German. The latter must not only deepen the type of analysis presented here but also include a semantic study of the words used as well as the verbs and all derivations. In a second step, the historical and archaeological evidence should be subjoined.

## Abbreviations

- Althochdeutsches Wörterbuch* = Karg-Gasterstädt, E. & Th. Frings *et al.* (eds.) (1959ff.), *Althochdeutsches Wörterbuch*, Bd. 1 ff. Berlin.
- EWA* = Lloyd, A., O. Springer & R. Lühr (eds.) (1988ff.), *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Althochdeutschen*, Bd. 1 ff. Göttingen.

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