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THE HISTORY OF BREWING THROUGH ANALYSIS Of TERMINOLOGY

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Abstract: ***While not quite ubiquitous, the production and enjoyment of alcohol is shared by many cultures dating back to prehistory. Alcoholic beverages are mentioned in many Old English works. Mead, for example, is prominently mentioned in Beowulf. However, there is nothing written about how it is produced. The first writings about the technical process of brewing do not appear until the 16th century. Most research into the history of brewing comes from archaeology. This paper analyses the origin of brewing terminology using the OED to determine when the terms entered the English language, and from which language they were borrowed. The results showed that the most basic terms were of an older, Germanic origin. A second wave of terms entered from French starting in the 12th century. A third wave of Dutch words were borrowed starting in the 14th century.***

Keywords: *brewing, history, English, Germanic, French, Dutch, German*

This paper contains information that was part of the author's master's degree work. All work is original and previously unpublished. Some language may be the same as in the original assignments.

This paper's working hypothesis was that there were three main sources for brewing terminology: Germanic, French, and Modern German. Furthermore, these words would have entered English at different times and have been limited to certain topics. 20% of words would be Germanic and would have been inherited by Old English and refer to basic elements of beer, such as ingredients. 30% of words would have entered English in the Middle English period from French and would be related to how beer is consumed, such as places to drink. Finally, technical words that describe the modern process of making beer would have entered English during the Modern English period from German and would represent 50% of the total vocabulary.

The hypothesis is that many of the basic words would come from Germanic. The ingredients of beer would have been well established prior to the Norman Conquest. Beer would have already had a long history of production, and those terms would likely remain.

The rationale for the influence of French comes from the borrowing that happened after 1066. In particular, many words related to food have a French origin [1, p. 104].

In the past two hundred years, German brewing has been exported to every corner of the globe. It is expected that the spread of German-style beer would have come hand-in-hand with Modern German brewing terms and would be part of the proliferation of new words due to scientific advances in the 19th century [2, p. 224].

To test the hypothesis, the author created a list of brewing and beer terms. Using the *OED*, the origins of the words were researched, focusing on the language it was borrowed from and when it entered the English language.

A comprehensive list of brewing terms would be impractical, so some choices were made to pare them down to a manageable number. The author focused on words that are currently in use, and not only historic. Most styles of beer, such as stout or IPA, as well as other types of alcohol, except for a few that have been included for comparison, were excluded

Several sources were cross-referenced to create the word list. The starting point was the brewing glossary in Charlie Papazian's *The Complete Joy of Homebrewing* [3, p. 397]. Papazian is a recognized expert in the field of brewing. Papazian's glossary was compared to words that were used in Richard W. Unger's scholarly book *Beer in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*. Unger also gives a summary of the brewing process and explains the various terms that are used. [4, p. 1-14]. Finally, the author drew on his own personal experience as a homebrewer to choose words that are relevant and commonly used in the community. He has been active in homebrewing for over ten years.

Below are five tables that summarize the author's findings from an analysis using the *OED*. They are organized by the origin of the words: Germanic, French, Modern German, Dutch, and "Other". An analysis these words using the *OED* revealed that the largest group of words were of a Germanic origin.

Table 1: **Germanic Loan Words** [5]

Word	Old English Spelling	Type of Word
(ale, n.)	Alu	beverage
(barley, n)	Bærlíc	ingredient
(beer, n.1)	Béor	beverage
(brew, v.)	Bréowan	process
(malt, n.)	Mealt	ingredient
(mash, n.)	Masc	process
(vat, n.1)	fat	equipment
(wort, n.)	wyrt	process
(yeast, n.)	gist	ingredient

Germanic words that were inherited by English make up the largest proportion of the total list at 32%. Looking at the types of words, they include very basic words including beverages, ingredients, equipment, and words to describe the brewing process.

Table 2: **French Loan Words** [6]

Word	Original English Spelling	Date of Borrowing	Type of Word
(bar, n.)	barre	Late 12th century	place
(barrel, n.)	barayl	14th century	container

(brewery, n.)	brewerie	Mid-17th century	place
(cask, n.)	caske	15th century	container
(ferment, v.)	ferment	14th century	process
(pint, n.)	pinte	Mid-14th century	measurement
(public house, n.)	publike house	Mid-16th century, shortened by 1800	place
(tavern, n.)	taverne	Late 13th century	place

The overall proportion of French words was only slightly less than Germanic, at 28%. These largely include places to drink and containers for beer. These words were borrowed between the late 12th century and the mid-17th century. The one exception is *ferment*, which describes the action of the yeast making alcohol.

Table 3: **German Loan Words** [7] [8]

Word	Original English Spelling	Date of Borrowing	Type of Word
(enzyme, n.) Greek via German	enzyme	Mid-19th century	scientific process
(lager beer, n.)	lager bier	Mid-19th century	beverage
(trub, n.2)			process

Only three German words appeared on the list, one of which is originally Greek. The total proportion is 11%. The word *trub* is noteworthy because it does not appear in the *OED*. Merriam-Webster describes it as having a German origin but does not specify when it was borrowed. It seems likely that it dates to the mid-19th century, along with the other words on this list. Aside from the dates of borrowing, there is no pattern to the types of words.

Table 4: **Dutch Loan Words** [9]

Word	Original English Spelling	Date of Borrowing	Type of Word
(bung, n.1)	bunge	Mid-15th century	equipment
(gyle, n.1)	gyyl	Mid-14th century	process
(hop, n.1)	hoppe	15th century	ingredient
(isinglass, n.)	isonglas	Mid-16th century	ingredient

These Dutch words represent about 14% of the total words. The date of borrowing ranges from the mid-14th century to the mid-16th century. They are largely technical words. Clearly there was an influx of technical brewing information from the Netherlands in the Middle English period.

The borrowing of the word *hops* is of particular interest, as it is now considered to be a basic and necessary ingredient for beer. This points to the nebulous definition of beer in the past. Early archaeological evidence shows that ancient beer contained a variety of sugars and herbs [10, p. 11]. Historians also describe a pre-hop drink called *gruit*. Its exact composition is unknown, but it is thought to be a combination of herbs, including bog myrtle. Production of gruit had ceased by 1800 [11, p. 30-31].

Table 5: **Other Languages** [12]

Word	Origin	Original English Spelling	Date of Borrowing	Type of Word
(carboy, n.1)	Persian	carboy	Early 18th century	equipment
(draff, n.)	Possibly unrecorded Old English	draf	Late 13th century	process
(draught, n.)	Possibly unrecorded Old English	draht	c1200	storing/serving
(grist, n.2)	Unclear, possibly related to Old English *grindan*	grist	Mid-15th century	ingredient
(keg, n.)	Old Norse	cag	Mid-15th century	container
(pitch, v.2)	Unknown	picch	Late 13th century	process
(siphon, n.)	Latin	syphon	Mid-17th century	equipment

Looking at the preceding chart, there are some noteworthy findings. The Persian origin of carboy was unexpected and appears to be an outlier. It also seems likely that some of the words that are thought to be unrecorded Old English words could possibly originate in Germanic.

Overall, the original hypothesis must be rejected. It was anticipated that the number of loan words would increase in time, though in fact the largest portion is Germanic. The large number of Germanic words, 32% overall, that were inherited by Old English does not support the hypothesis. This is likely explained by the ancient origin of brewing.

The number of French words was both expected and surprising. Indeed, many of the words borrowed from French were related to serving beer. French represented over 70% of the words related to drinking, which generally matches the hypothesis.

One unexpected finding was that the overall proportion of French words is nearly as high as Germanic. Another surprise was that some of the scientific words (fermentation, etc.) came from French. This suggests that the common view of Germans exporting modern, scientific brewing knowledge to the rest of the world is more complicated than is generally thought. This would suggest that scientific research related to brewing was also happening in France.

Modern German words were much less common than hypothesized, only 11%. The words that exist do fit the hypothesis in regard to their purpose. They are largely words related to the brewing process and also types of beer. One word, *enzyme*, is a relatively recent scientific addition.

The biggest surprise was the presence of a number of Dutch words, 14%. Some of these included key words such as *hops*. Other Dutch words are also related to the production of beer. In all, 20% of the brewing terms were borrowed from Dutch. This suggests the sharing of brewing techniques between the Low Countries and England in the Middle English period.

In conclusion, the linguistic evidence shows that the foundations of brewing terminology are of Germanic origin and were inherited by Old English. The influx of French loan words after 1066 contributed to how we enjoy beer (pint, tavern, public house). During the same period, or perhaps a little later, Dutch brewing innovations introduced new ingredients and techniques that refined the process. Finally, in the past 200 years, Modern French terms define the scientific processes, and German industrial practices further changed the brewing process. A logical next step for this research would be to focus more thoroughly on one aspect of brewing and create a more exhaustive list of terminology.

Table 6: **Appendix 1: Summary of Findings**

Language	Overall	Brewing Terms	Drinking Words
Germanic	32%	35%	0%
French	28%	5%	71%
Dutch	14%	20%	0%
German	11%	10%	0%
Latin	7%	5%	0%
Persian	4%	5%	0%
Old Norse	4%	0%	14%

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