

Oxford English Dictionary News

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Editorial

As the editors work their way through the *OED* text, one of the issues which arises from time to time is the question of whether a particular entry, or pair of entries, should be treated as one word or two.

At what point should two prominent variants of what appears to be the same word part company, so the individual history of each can be clearly told? Semantic 'twins' which have had to be extensively thought about in this way over the past 12 months include the pairings *madam* and *madame*, *megrin* and *migraine*, *mask* and *masque*, and *marzipan* and *marchpane*. *Marzipan* and *marchpane* were in fact treated as a double headword in the First Edition of the *OED*, on the understanding that the two words derived ultimately from the same Italian etymological roots. While this is indeed the case, additional research has shown that both variants have distinct enough histories to justify inclusion in the *OED* as separate headwords. Peter Gilliver, in his *Tale of Two Treats*, shows how the *OED*'s treatment of *marzipan* and *marchpane* has changed in the light of this extra evidence.

As well as the publication of the range *mast* to *meaty*, this quarter we celebrate the first anniversary of *OED Online*. Mark Dunn, of the *OED* Publication Group, describes some of the highlights of that year. The success of the electronic version has demonstrated beyond doubt that the decision to take the *OED* into the 21st century with the technology of the era was the right one. Curiously, however, the publication of electronic sections of *OED* text as it is revised mirrors the OUP's decision over a century ago to publish the First Edition of the *OED* in fascicles, as James Murray and his editors completed each section of the alphabet. Contemporary technology, then, has served to enhance *OED*'s established editorial traditions, while making the text available to a wider public than ever before.

Bernadette Paton, Newsletter Editor and Principal Editor,
Oxford English Dictionary

Some recent *OED* releases: a tale of two treats

As each fascicle of the original *OED* was published, it became customary for it to be prefaced by notes drawing attention to some of the words included which were of particular interest, especially as far as etymology was concerned.

For example, when the range of words published in *OED Online* in December 2000, *marciaton*—*massymore*, appeared in print in 1905, particular mention was made of the following words as being 'interesting on account either of etymology (on which in many instances new light has been thrown) or of sense-development': *marmalade*, *marquis*, *marriage*, *marry*, *marshal*, *martinet*, *martingale*, *martlet*, *marvel*, *marzipan*, *mask* sb.3, *mason*, *masquerade*, *mass* sb.1.

A striking illustration of the extent of the revision work we are now carrying out is the fact that all of these entries, selected by editor Henry Bradley as 'highlights' of the range, now contain so much new material of interest 'on account either of etymology...or of sense-development'. Much of the new information comes directly from our own primary research, examining the historical record of English; but much also depends on the new light



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New additions to the Appeals list

For the serious linguist, the March *OED Online* update contains two of the most complex entries published so far: the verb **may** and the pronoun **me**.

cast by recent scholarship on the history of other languages, as we can see by looking at just one example from this list.

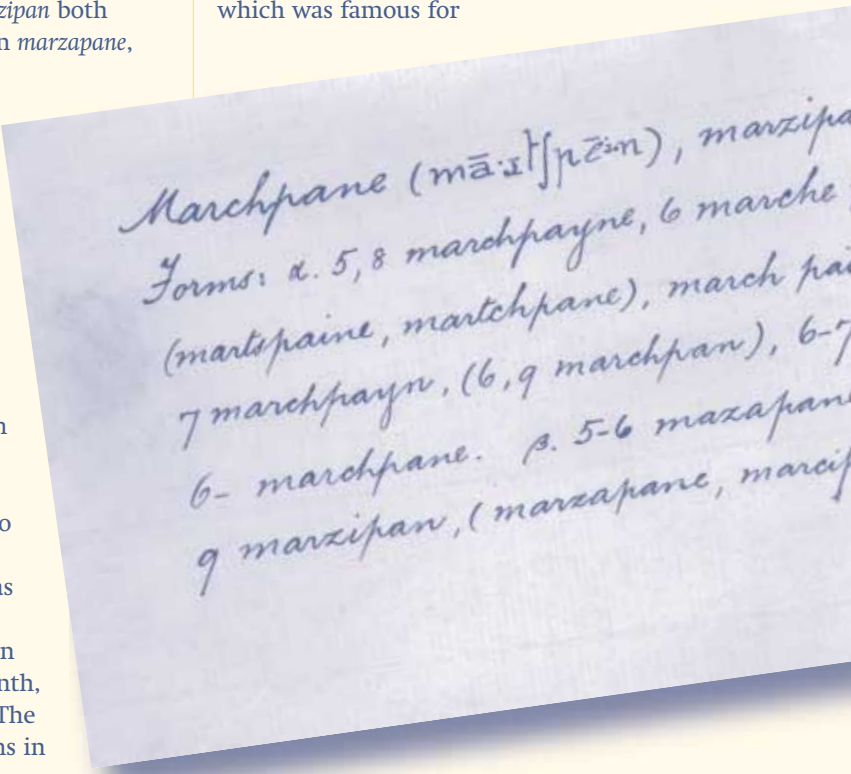
The *OED*'s coverage of the word *marzipan* has undergone profound change. In the First Edition of the *OED*, if you looked under *Marzipan*, you would find only the cross-reference 'Marzepa(i)ne, Marzipan: see MARCHPANE.' The entry for this word carried a double headword 'Marchpane, marzipan', and all the different spellings - *marchpane*, *marzipan*, and over a dozen others - were all placed together in a single entry, with only the general comment in the etymology that 'the Eng[lish] forms [of the word] come from various continental sources'. In fact the spelling *marchpane* was predominant throughout the nineteenth century (and indeed long before that), so the decision to place the entry under this heading must have seemed reasonable. However, in the course of the twentieth century the spelling *marzipan*, and the three-syllabled pronunciation which goes with it, have almost completely replaced the older *marchpane*: certainly the latter is now rarely found outside historical contexts.

Although *marchpane* and *marzipan* both derive ultimately from Italian *marzapane*, they have a claim to being distinct words, and in the revised *OED* they are treated as such: the entry for *marchpane* was published online in September 2000, and *marzipan* appeared in the next batch, three months later. The entry for *marchpane* now offers an explanation of how this form of the word - first found in English in 1516, spelled 'march payne' - came to be so different from its Italian etymon. The first element, as well as showing an English sound change, may have been influenced by *March* (the month, named after the god Mars). The etymology cites parallel forms in

Latin dating from around 1500 (*martiapanes* and *panis marcius*), both suggesting that the word was thought to be linked to March or to Mars in some way. And the second element, *-pane*, seems to have been assumed to be the same word as Latin *panis* or French *pain*. Certainly this 'more Anglicized' form of the word seems to have been in more general use in English than the 'foreign-looking' *marzipan*: we do know of spellings similar to the latter from as early as 1542 ('marzepaines', in an English translation of Erasmus), but they remained rare until the 19th century.

Plausibility would not, however, be enough were it not for a curious aspect of the words which correspond to *marzipan* in some of the other European languages: Italian *marzapane*, Spanish *mazapán*, French *massepain*.

What, then, is the ultimate origin of *marzipan* (and its cousin *marchpane*)? The original *OED* entry comments that 'Its etymology is obscure', and does no more than mention one scholar as having 'ingeniously' suggested a link with 'Arabic mauthabān "a king that sits still"'. Once again, recent scholarship allows the new *OED* entry to put forward a new derivation: in this case Italian philologists have furnished the basis for a link with - remarkably - the Far East. In Myanmar (Burma) there is a port, near the town of Moulmein, called Martaban, which was famous for



Marchpane (mā:stʃpɛɪn), marzipan
Forms: α. 5, 8 marchpayne, 6 marche
(martepaine, martchpane), march pa
7 marchpayn, (6, 9 marchpan), 6-7
6- marchpane. β. 5-6 mazapan
9 marzipan, (marzapane, marcip

the glazed jars which it exported to the West, often containing preserves and sweetmeats. Delicacies are often associated with the containers in which they are traditionally imported (ginger being an obvious example); it seems plausible enough that a name associated with a special container should transfer its association to the thing contained.

Plausibility would not, however, be enough were it not for a curious aspect of the words which correspond to *marzipan* in some of the other European languages: Italian *marzapane*, Spanish *mazapán*, French *massepain*. In each case the relevant word once also had another meaning, denoting various kinds of container - a casket in 15th-century French and 14th-century Spanish (specifically for confectionery in the case of French), and a container of a certain capacity in Venetian documents in the 13th. And then there is also the fact

...it seems plausible enough that a name associated with a special container should transfer its association to the thing contained.

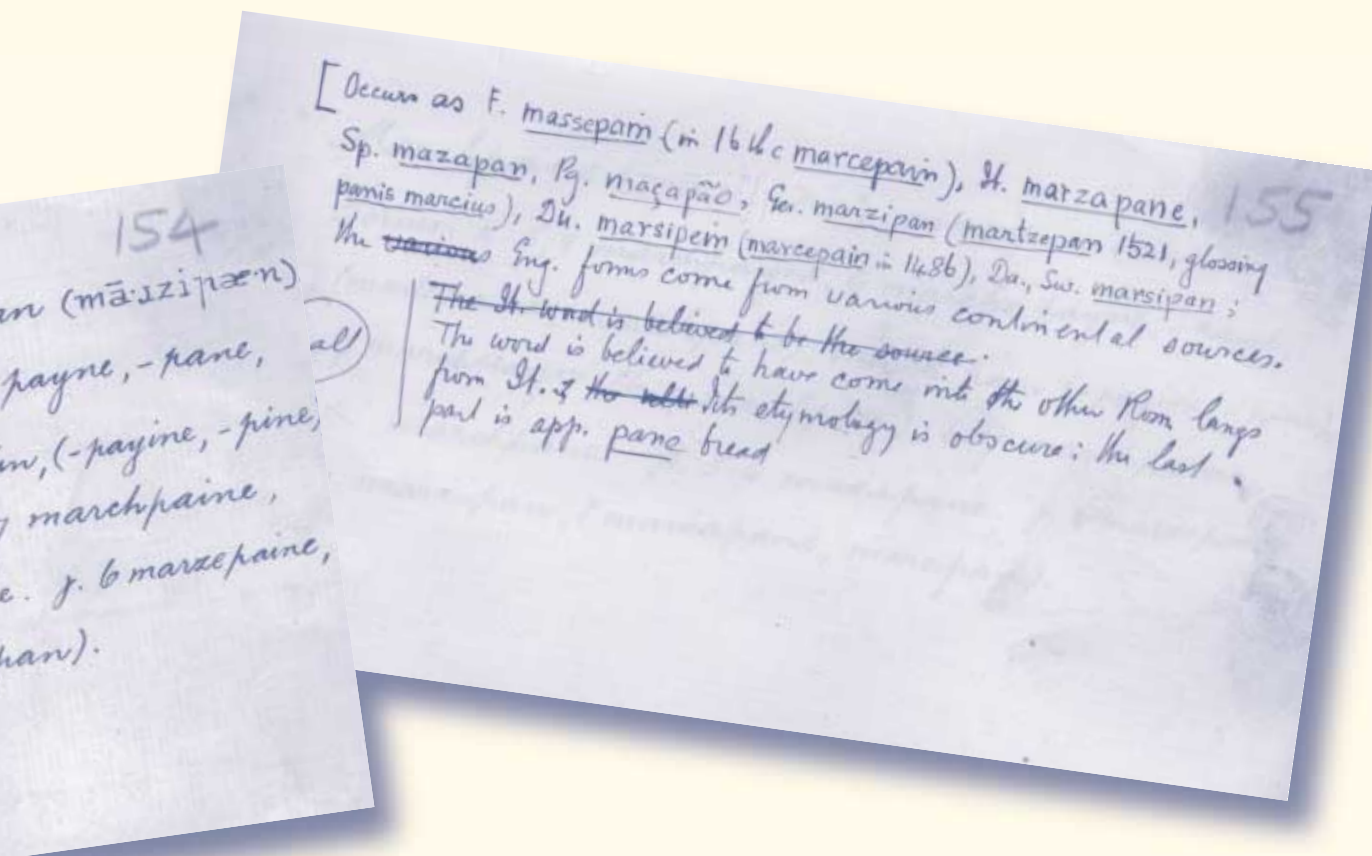
that *Martaban* is still known for its pottery: the same batch of recently published *OED* entries which contains *marzipan* also

contains an entry for *Martaban jar* (sometimes simply *Martaban*), this being a kind of large glazed earthenware jar. (The same jars have also arrived in English via Afrikaans: the ships of the Dutch East India Company carried them to South Africa, where even English speakers came to call them *Martevaans*. By the same exacting criteria that separated *marchpane* and *marzipan*, we distinguish *Martaban (jar)* from *Martevaans* - the latter has its own entry in the *OED*, now published for the

first time.) Thus in these entries, as in almost every entry published online to date, we can demonstrate that we have learnt, and can pass on, more information about 'etymology...or...sense-development' than ever before.

Peter Gilliver, Associate Editor, *Oxford English Dictionary*

Revision of the entries in the March *OED Online* update documents earlier origins for many words, including **mastermind** (earliest evidence antedated from 1720 to 1692), **matchmaking** (1794 to a1627), **mathematics** (1581 to ?1545), and its US abbreviation **math** (1890 to 1847).



An early draft of part of the *OED* etymology of *marchpane* by editor Henry Bradley. The etymology was substantially expanded and revised before its eventual publication in 1905.

oed.com – the story so far

Since the launch of *OED Online* in March last year, four batches of new and revised entries, hot off the workstations of the editors, have been published on the web site in a smooth quarterly cycle.

Every three months, the *OED* Technology Group extracts the latest completed batch from the database and processes it, in order to simplify the complex tagging used by lexicographers into a more streamlined form suitable for the online version of the Dictionary. The Publication Group checks the processed text, making sure (among other things) that revised entries are correctly linked to the corresponding Second Edition entries. The text is then passed back to the Technology Group for a final electronic spit and polish, before being whisked across the world to HighWire Press in California, who insert the entries into the web site's database. The Publication Group previews the updated site, which, when it has been approved, is made 'live' to subscribers. By this time the next batch is due for extraction by the Technology Group.

The range of entries covered by the new edition now runs from *M* to *meaty*, a total of 5474 entries, of which 759 are new to the *OED*. The size of the text is approximately double that of the corresponding range in the *OED*'s Second Edition.

One of the advantages of publishing the Dictionary online has become apparent in the last year, namely the ability to update and republish an entry when further information on the word comes to light. This has been the case with the entry *machicote* (a skirt worn by native American women). The discovery of recent evidence has enabled us to remove the

The range of entries covered by the new edition now runs from *M* to *meaty*, a total of 5474 entries, of which 759 are new to the *OED*.

'Obs.' label, and to give a contemporary spelling for the headword. Similarly, earlier evidence was found for the mathematical term *Maclaurin's series*, which also provided a reference to Maclaurin's first publication of the series. Both the antedating and the reference can now be seen in the entry.

As well as the Dictionary itself, other material has been published on the site. In June 2000 we added the Bibliography to the Second Edition to the Help text, and in September the prefatory material from the printed Second Edition was converted into HTML and placed in the public part of the site (<http://oed.com/public/archive>).

Also added to the public pages was an appeal for help with locating quotations cited from Dr Johnson's Dictionary (<http://oed.com/public/readers/johnson.htm>). These were originally accepted on Johnson's authority, but we are now attempting to check the quotations, some of which have proved difficult to trace owing to their incomplete bibliographical references.

To help users of *OED Online*, we have produced a Quick Reference Guide, which is available as a downloadable PDF file from the Help text. The last three issues of *OED News* have also been available in PDF form (see <http://oed.com/public/news>), and the newsletter is now published quarterly, to coincide with each update of the Dictionary.

Mark Dunn, Senior Editor, *OED* Publication Group



Plants from all over the world are featured in the March *OED Online* update, including the **masu** from Alaska, the **matagouri** from New Zealand, the **matico** from South America, the **matsu** from Japan, and the **mazzard cherry** from Devon.

Quotable quotes

Some thoughts from the *OED* and its files on

Avant-garde music...

1665 R. Boyle *Occasional Reflections*, He commanded the Fiddlers to be thrust out of his Seraglio, upon a mis-apprehension that they were playing, when they were but tuning.

...and the voice of experience.

1824 *Blackwood's Mag.* June 635 Never boozify a second time with the man whom you have seen misbehave himself in his cups.

The *OED* forum

The *OED* Forum is a series of occasional lectures (usually one or two per University term) instituted in 1993, and sponsored by Oxford University Press in association with Kellogg College, Oxford. John Simpson, the chief editor of the *OED*, and Edmund Weiner, the deputy chief editor, are both fellows of Kellogg College, and the *OED* Forum is usually held there.

The March *OED Online* update improves its match-fitness for several sports and games, with terms such as **matchplay** (golf), **match point** (tennis, etc.), **mate** (chess), **maul** (rugby), and the **meat** of a bat (cricket).

There is no specific brief for the lectures. Any aspect of the English language (past or present), or of lexicography, or of general linguistics may be treated. Subjects vary widely within this broad range. As indeed do speakers (who may be local or visitors to Oxford): members of the *OED* and other dictionary projects, graduate students, distinguished academics, and well-known writers have all spoken about their work.

The *OED* Forum is advertised throughout Oxford and is open to all. After the lecture questions are taken from the floor and, after the formal conclusion of the lecture, drinks are served providing an opportunity to chat informally with the speaker and other members of the audience.

A series of three special *OED* Forum presentations was held at the Oxford University Press in late 1999 and early 2000 to publicize the launch of *OED Online* in March 2000.

Past *OED* Forum speakers and subjects have included: David Parsons (University of Nottingham) 'The Vocabulary of English Place Names'; Michael Barnes (University

College, London) 'The Norn Language of Orkney & Shetland'; Carole Biggam (University of Glasgow) 'Digging up the Plant Names of Anglo-Saxon England'; Jennie Miell (*OED*) 'Dwile Flonkers & Internauts: New Words in the *OED*'; Bernard O'Donoghue (Wadham College, Oxford) 'Irish Poetic Language before Yeats'; Penny Silva (*OED* & Rhodes University) 'Dictionaries for Africa: Righting the Wrongs for South African Languages'; Jean Aitchison (Worcester College, Oxford) & Michael Dummett (New College, Oxford) 'Rules, Change, & Standards in English'; Danielle Clarke (University College, Dublin) 'The Language of 17th-Century Women's Writing'; Tom Paulin (Hertford College, Oxford) 'Ireland's Missing Dictionary'.

If you would like to receive information about future *OED* Forum lectures, or if you would like to propose the name of a speaker, please write to:

Dr Samantha Schad,
OED, Oxford University Press,
Great Clarendon St., Oxford OX2 6DP, UK.
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Appeals

Words or phrases which appear on the Appeals List are those currently being drafted or revised for the *Oxford English Dictionary* for which the documentary evidence is incomplete. Often these are slang or colloquial items which cannot be researched in specialist texts and are most likely to be turned up by a general reader in popular or non-specialized literature.

Usually the appeal is for an earlier example than our current earliest (e.g. 'antedate 1970' for a word for which our earliest example comes from 1970), but sometimes the appeal is for an interdating where there is a large gap in the *OED's* quotation evidence (e.g. 'interdate 1589-1910'). Occasionally we ask for a postdating (e.g. 'postdate 1875'), if an editor feels that an item being revised is still current but has failed to find any recent examples through the usual avenues of research.

I could murder a
(curry, pint, etc.)
antedate 1986

monopolizing, -ising (adj.)
postdate 1891

mop bucket
antedate 1941

Murphy's law
antedate 1956

mushy peas
antedate 1981

musical statues
antedate 1955

No More Mr Nice Guy
antedate 1973

off one's tits
antedate 1994

smart casual
antedate 1982

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Oxford English Dictionary

Oxford University Press
Great Clarendon Street
Oxford OX2 6DP, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 1865 267660
Fax: +44 (0) 1865 267811
E-mail: oed3@oup.co.uk

OXFORD DICTIONARY RESEARCH CENTRES

OUP Australia

Australian National Dictionary Centre
Linnaeus Cottage
Australian National University
Canberra, ACT 0200
Australia
Fax: +61 (0) 2 6249 0475
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North and South America
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198 Madison Avenue, New York
N.Y. 10016, USA
Marketing Director
Scholarly & Professional Reference:
Rebecca Seger
Tel: +1 212 726 6081
Fax: +1 212 726 6440
E-mail: americasinfo@oed.com

UK, Europe, and Rest of the World
Oxford University Press
Great Clarendon Street
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Online Sales & Marketing Manager:
Susanna Lob
Tel: +44 (0) 1865 267229
Fax: +44 (0) 1865 267811
E-mail: worldinfo@oed.com

Head of Publicity, Trade & Reference
Kate Farquhar-Thomson
Tel: +44 (0) 1865 267423
Fax: +44 (0) 1865 267457
E-mail: farquhak@oup.co.uk

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