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The Development of the English Suffix '–dom'

L'articolo si prefigge di illustrare il progressivo sviluppo del suffisso inglese –*dom* a partire dal sostantivo OE *dōm* 'giudizio, opinione'. Dopo un breve *excursus* storico su questo concetto linguistico relativamente nuovo, l'indagine vera e propria verterà principalmente sia sull'aspetto morfologico del processo sia su quello semantico.

Prendendo in considerazione ogni definizione di ciascuna parola attestata dagli albori della scrittura anglosassone fino agli anni '80 del secolo scorso, l'analisi risulterà duplice: da un lato si cercherà una corrispondenza con alcune lingue coeve affini all'OE (antico islandese, antico alto tedesco, antico sassone e gotico) delle parole meno recenti (OE – ME), dall'altro verrà effettuata un'analisi statistica riguardante la produttività di questo suffisso con particolare attenzione ai diversi tipi di basi (sostantivi, aggettivi o verbi) delle varie parole.

Nella seconda parte dell'articolo verranno illustrati i cambiamenti e le evoluzioni di significato occorsi al suffisso durante gli anni, partendo dalla ampia gamma semantica del sostantivo anglosassone *dōm*.

1. *Introduction*

1.1. *Underlying theoretical principles*

In this article an instance of grammaticalization in the English language will be investigated, i.e. that process leading to the creation of the English suffix -*dom*.

Grammaticalization has been considered as a distinct topic in linguistics only from the beginning of the last century. The term grammaticalization[1] was firstly coined by the French linguist Antoine Meillet, while arguing about the processes causing new grammatical forms to emerge[2]. He indicates mainly two of them: analogy and what he labelled as 'gram-

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[1] This term has been often replaced in much literature by "grammaticization".
[2] Meillet's essay "*L'évolution des formes grammaticales*" is to be considered nowadays as the starting point for any further investigations on this subject: it was published in 1912.

maticalization'. Analogy is defined as the process whereby new paradigms come into being through formal resemblance and hence it cannot be considered as a primary source for the development. Grammaticalization, instead, may be regarded as such, since it is the passage of an autonomous word to the role of a grammatical element.

This far-reaching term will be used in this work drawing on two of the most-accepted definitions enunciated so far. The first was posited in 1965 by Jerzy Kuryłowicz (cited in Heine / Claudi / Hünnemeyer 1991: 3) and it can undoubtedly be considered the "classic definition" by now:

> Grammaticalization consists in the increase of the range of a morpheme advancing from a lexical to a grammatical or from a less grammatical to a more grammatical status, e.g. from a derivative formant to an inflectional one.

The second definition is more recent, it was worked out by P. J. Hopper and E.C. Traugott (Hopper / Traugott 1993: xv) and states that it is:

> [...] the process whereby lexical items and constructions come in certain linguistic contexts to serve grammatical functions, and, once grammaticalized, continue to develop new grammatical functions.

As it can be argued from the first definition, Kuryłowicz hinted at the fact that the increase of the morphemic range must be conceived as a sort of continuum whereby the lexical item starts from its "fully lexical" source domain to progressively shift its semantic range towards its "fully grammaticalized" target domain. This progressive shift is characterized by unidirectionality[3], a trend that leads the lexical item from a less grammatical unit to a more grammatical one and cannot be reversed.

A full investigation on this process is beyond the scope of this article: it will not thus be possible here to examine the whole path to the creation of the suffix *-dom* starting from the OE substantive *dōm* 'judgement'. Unfortunately, there is no record so far in the OE writings that may sub-

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[3] Some linguists may disagree on this statement. As a matter of fact, two counter-examples have been put forth: *degrammaticalization* and *regrammaticalization*. The former takes place when the direction of grammaticalization is reversed (i.e. when a more grammatical unit develops into a less grammatical one), whereas the latter applies when forms without any functions acquire grammatical functions.

stantiate the early stages preceding the grammaticalization itself. The phrase 'early stages' is here meant to designate the typical widening of adjectival possibilities affecting a syntagmatic head, in this case the OE substantive *dōm*, just before blending into a suffix. These stages must be therefore partially inferred and taken for granted since the survey can but begin with the analysis of the first suffixed word ever attested[4].

In order to knowingly follow and recognize the consequential steps of this specific case of grammaticalization, it is convenient here to briefly summarize the theoretical stages characterizing any instance of the process itself, thus proving that what happened to OE *dōm* is no exception. It is here sufficient to draw on the work by B. Heine, U. Claudi and F. Hünnemeyer (Heine / Claudi / Hünnemeyer 1991), since it provides a good sketch of the further investigations on grammaticalization diachronically: for the reader it will be here indicated only the most essential ones with no claim whatsoever to be exhaustive[5].

Not every full word is likely to be grammaticalized in the same way, it all depends upon its frequency of use in the language. The lexical items that are recruited for grammaticalization must necessarily be characterized by a very frequent and general use in the language already as independent morphs themselves. Once these words start to undergo grammaticalization, their use further increases, triggering further developments along a temporal continuum through a sort of chain reaction.

The first step is represented by the generalization of their meaning, which entails, in its turn, a remarkable widening of the range of their uses. As this range widens, their frequency sensibly increases in the common use of language, with the result that people speak them more and more casually with the passing of time. From a morphological point of view, this casualness of pronunciation automatically leads to a phonological reduction and, in certain cases, ultimately to a fusion, transforming the items into grammatical affixes, an abstract nominal suffix in the case study.

Semantic generalization affects only the first stages of grammatical-

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[4] The data for this survey will be drawn from the comprehensive analysis of this specific case of grammaticalization carried out in Bongetta's graduation thesis (Bongetta 2002). Since that analysis comprises 462 suffixed words yielding 552 definitions altogether, it cannot be elucidated here in an exhaustive way: this article will therefore focus only on its main outcomes and basic conclusions suggesting its full consultation for a prospective in-depth study.

[5] The literature on this subject has grown considerably in the last decade.

ization, though. During this process, in fact, two opposite semantic phe-
nomena happen subsequently. In the early stages, lexical items undergo
a sensible widening of their meanings, due to their increasing use in the
language, while in full process of grammaticalization, the semantic
range of these items begin to be progressively narrowed.

This 'bleaching model', as it is usually called by now, is mainly char-
acterized by the strictly unidirectional trend towards abstractness: it
works as a "filtering device", as it were, that gradually bleaches out all
lexical content of an item while retaining only the grammatical one. This
progressive thinning-out towards abstractness of the semantic range do
not imply by any means, though, that also the meanings themselves un-
dergo a sensible reduction. On the contrary: the more the semantic range
shifts towards abstractness, the more the number of meanings of a single
item is likely to increase. By the weakening of semantic contents, mean-
ings are emptied of their specificities so that lexical, more concrete con-
tents are gradually reduced to grammatical, more abstract functions. This
new entity, that is an item no longer independent but not yet fully gram-
maticalized, develops into a "more general" morpheme with a more gen-
eral distribution, since it begins to be used in a wider range of contexts.
This increasing frequency of use is the major cause for this entity to ac-
quire and develop new semantic meanings in the course of grammatical-
ization and even once the new morph is fully grammaticalized.

In his study on the incipient, less easily accessible stages of gram-
maticalization, Paul Hopper (adapted from Heine / Claudi / Hünnemey-
er 1991: 20) has suggested five stages underlying the possible develop-
ments that may affect a lexical item in the course of this process.

1. **Layering** When new layers emerge within a functional domain, old-
   er layers are not necessarily discarded but may remain to coexist and
   interact with the new layers;

2. **Divergence** When some entity undergoes grammaticalization, the re-
   sult is that there are now "pairs of multiples of forms having a com-
   mon etymology but diverging functionally";

3. **Specialization** "The narrowing of choices that characterizes an
   emergent grammatical construction";

4. **Persistence** When a grammaticalized meaning B develops, this does

not necessarily mean that the earlier meaning A is lost; rather, B is likely to reflect A – at least as long as B has not yet undergone "morphologization";

5. **Decategorialization** Grammaticalization leads to a decrease in cardinal categoriality of the entity concerned. This implies a loss of optional markers of categoriality, such as modifiers on the one hand, and of discourse autonomy on the other.

All these stages are present in a process of grammaticalization with a different intensity from case to case, causing the more or less abstractness of the grammaticalization itself.

As for the several shifts of meaning occurring in grammaticalization, they are performed mainly through two tropes, or rather through a close interaction of these tropes: metaphor and metonymy. Only 'emerging metaphors'[6] can be observed in the course of grammaticalization in that an existing predication can be introduced in new contexts or can also be applied to new situations, thereby acquiring an extended meaning. It must be also highlighted that the term 'metonymy' will be here used in a wider sense that includes also related tropes, such as synecdoche, which refer to associations based on contiguity.

There are basically two patterns of interaction between these tropes. The first pattern takes place when metonymy functions within a metaphor, since the expression is basically metaphoric but metonymy is part of it. The second one is characterized by the coexistence of the two tropes in some uses of the expression whereby the metaphorical interpretation is the normal one but can be supposed to derive from the metonymic one. As it can be seen, metaphor and metonymy are not always separable in practice, though they are clearly distinct in principle.

1.2. *Criteria for the choice of the data and scope of the analysis*

In order to give credit to the huge corpus of data collected for this survey, it is here convenient to explain the criteria of their choice and

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[6] That is metaphors that do not form new expressions when they arise.

tabulation. The detailed analysis of the suffix starts from the early stages of English up to modern times. As it was not possible for brevity's sake to include every word containing this suffix, some noun categories have not therefore been taken into consideration. These categories comprise nominal compounds, mainly because almost every Germanic compound formed by a "creative" speaker is felt to be acceptable, even though it has never been heard before and, for the same reasons, also the derivatives, like *under-kingdom*, since they are clearly referable to the 'X + -dom' word[7] (X= base[8], in this case *kingdom*) and they have usually been created afterwards through analogy.

Every word definition will be taken into account and the argumentation will touch on many different linguistic aspects. Firstly, research will be carried out to discover what kind of base is preferably selected by this suffix. Then its productivity concerning both all definitions and single words will be investigated and lastly its frequency will be examined. Thus it will be possible to see whether most of the words have survived in the course of the history of the English language.

Further comparative research will be made on the early stages of each cognate language, in order to discover whether this process of suffixation has been a linguistic development concerning only English or whether it has affected the whole Germanic area.

The same methods adopted to highlight the productivity and frequency of this suffix will then be applied only to the OE and ME definitions, in order to see whether the early trend of this suffixation process has been preserved till modern times.

The main sources on which this analysis is based are:

- The *Oxford English Dictionary* (abbreviated in "OED" from now on in this work). This will make it possible to indicate with relative certainty the first (and last, if necessary) date of attestation for each word;
- The *Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* by Bosworth and Toller;
- The *Middle English Dictionary* by Kurath and Kuhn. This reference

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[7] Formal transparency is, in fact, a necessary condition for productivity (cf. Koefoed / van Marle 2000: 306; van Marle 1988).

[8] According to Iacobini (2000: 868), the more appropriate term would be 'lexeme' (cf. also Aronoff 1994: 1-59).

work makes it possible to highlight the continuity or the semantic development of each word during the Middle English period.

The analysis of this suffix starts with the collection of every word attested from Old English to 1980s, since the sources used do not cover more recent times. This is not so detrimental for the results of this analysis, though, since linguistic changes usually take a long of time to come completely to an end: two decades are therefore to be considered as almost irrelevant.

As far as the parameters adopted in the tabulation of data is concerned, each word has been classified according to its definition, the year of its first attestation, the year of its last date of attestation, if any, and the origin of its base (adjective, noun, verb, etc.). Moreover, a further column, headed "REMARKS", contains any spelling variation that occurred in the OE and ME dialects[9]. It also contains indications for the frequency and usage of the words (e.g. if it is rarely used or if it is a slang term, if it is a nonce word or was already obsolete etc.).

Words have been subdivided into three different time periods: the first spans the Old English period, the second spans Middle English and the third Modern English[10].

Although there is no total agreement on precise dates, the following watersheds are the most widely adopted:

- **Old English**: 650 – 1150;
- **Middle English**: 1150 – 1450;
- **Modern English**: 1450 onwards.

Each different definition of a word was treated initially as a separate entry (e.g. *freedom* has 21 different definitions, so the word has been tabulated as "freedom[1]", "freedom[2]", "freedom[3]" and so on). Subsequently, only the oldest attestation of each word, labelled as a 'pure entry', has been taken into consideration.

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[9] It must be remembered that English orthography was completely standardized only from the 18th century onwards.

[10] It is more accurate to adopt the term 'Modern English' instead of 'Present English' because many definitions born in the so-called 'Present English era' are no longer current, so they are no longer "present", as it were.

2. *Analysis of the corpus*

2.1. *Morphological analysis*

Since the corpus comprises 552 definitions altogether, for brevity's sake, only an excerpt of the most relevant ones for the subsequent analysis will be here shown and this is the table.

Table 1

ID	WORD	DEFINITION	FIRST DATE	LAST DATE	ORIGIN	REMARKS
1	**Kindom**	Kingdom	700	1426	Noun	It is a parallel formation to kingdom and was of much more frequent use in OE, in ME it was already obsolete. It has many variants. *Cynidom*, *cynedom*, *cinedom* up to the 11th century; *kinedom* from the 12th to the 14th century; [...]
60	**Churldom**	The state of being a churl or bondman	1386	†	Noun	It was already obsolete
77	**Murderdom**	The practice of murdering	1525	†	Noun	It was already obsolete and rarely used

ID	WORD	DEFINITION	FIRST DATE	LAST DATE	ORIGIN	REMARKS
101	**Masterdom[4]**	Masterful behaviour	1596	†	Noun	It was already obsolete
149	**Intermingledom**	An intermingling	1753	–	Verb	It is a nonce-word
175	**Cookdom**	a. The office or position of cook; b. The domain of a cook or of cooks	1829	1874	Noun	It is a nonce-word used twice
189	**Parentdom**	The realm, domain or body of parents	1840	–	Noun	It is a nonce-word
223	**Christdom[2]**	'The rule of Christ "whose service is perfect freedom"' (Davies)	1850	–	Proper Noun	It is a nonce-word
552	**Yuppiedom**	The condition or fact of being a yuppie; the domain of yuppies; yuppies as a class	1984	Current	Noun	It was originally a U.S. term. It is used in colloquial contexts. It has a coeval variant, *yuppydom*

As it has been said before, the research on this suffix throughout its history yielded 552 entries: since these comprise 90 subsequent definitions, 462 pure entries have been inferred.

It should be noted that this suffix has undergone most of its development mostly in the Modern English period: only 19 words (about 4%) were coined in the Old English period and the same number during Middle English. So, Modern English words represent a very high 92% of the whole de-

velopment, with 424 items out of 462. The label 'Modern English', though, can be misleading nowadays because it spans too many centuries, five and a half in all. So further investigations were conducted to see whether there was one particular century that was more prolific than the others. And there was: a remarkable 75% of words (320 out of 424) were coined in the 19th century, followed by 12% (53 words) coined in the last century.

Another important aspect of this analysis is to see what kind of bases form these words, from a morphological point of view. Here is the table.

Table 2

BASE	OCCURRENCES	PERCENTAGE[11]
Noun	371	80%
Adjective	32	7%
Noun of a People	20	4%
Proper noun	12	3%
Verb	11	3%
Noun Phrase	6	1%
Others	10	2%
TOTAL	*462*	*100%*

The line labelled 'Others' contains occurrences of various types that are too few to be statistically relevant, if dealt with singularly.

The first fact that emerges is that there is an overwhelming majority, 80%, of noun bases. However, if every nominal base is considered, the percentage of noun bases rises to 89%, with 413 words out of 462.

Another relevant statistical survey is to see the "longevity", as it were, of this suffix, that is how many occurrences are still in use. It is opportune to apply this type of reckoning both to the pure entries, to see how many words are still current nowadays, and to all the entries, to see how many definitions have died out. Here is first the table concerning the pure entries.

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[11] Since this type of reckoning is made on words, figures have all been rounded to the unit. A 1% deviation must always be allowed for, especially for the smallest percentages. At first sight, the table may thus look somewhat bizarre since the ratios between the occurrences do not fully correspond to the ratios between the percentages. This procedure applies to every table in this work.

Table 3

WORD FREQUENCY	OCCURRENCES	PERCENTAGE
Current[12]	363	79%
"Pure" Nonce Word	52	11%
Dagger ('†')	22	5%
Living Hiatus[12]	19	4%
Nonce Word used twice	6	1%
TOTAL	*462*	*100%*

- The label 'pure nonce words' indicates the *hapax legomena*, that is all the occurrences in the table used only once;

- The 'dagger' stands for all the occurrences in the table with a period of attestation that is so short that the exact date of their death is not attested;

- 'Living hiatus' has been used to indicate all the occurrences in the table that have died out.

Table 3 shows that 79% of the words are still current. Such a high percentage was only to be expected, since 92% of the words have been coined in the Modern English period: this fact makes them less liable to die out.

6 nonce words have been used only twice: this is remarkable because the term 'nonce word' is usually a synonym for '*hapax legomenon*'. Moreover, it is of no less consequence that these words were all coined during the 19th century.

It is now even more interesting to examine the longevity of this suffix considering all the definitions, to see whether the trend set by the pure entries is maintained. Here is the table.

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[12] Since the table refers to the pure entries, the current words should actually be 359 and the ones that have died out 23. This would have been misleading, though: the pure entries have been argued only to have the exact number of the words. 4 more current words (*bishopdom*, *christendom*, *kingdom* and *masterdom*) have thus been added, since at least one of the definitions of each word is current. So these words must be considered as current, though their initial definition has died out.

Table 4

WORD FREQUENCY	OCCURRENCES	PERCENTAGE
Current	423	77%
"Pure" Nonce Word	53	10%
Living Hiatus	42	7%
Dagger ('†')	28	5%
Nonce Word used twice	6	1%
TOTAL	*552*	*100%*

Table 4 shows that only one subsequent definition turned out to be a nonce word: this is the second definition of *christdom* (No. 223), coined and used in 1850. It is remarkable that 38% of these nonce words (20 terms out of 53) were coined during the eighties of the 19th century. It is even more surprising that 6 of them, 11% of the total, were all firstly used in 1887. Since the first nonce word used twice, *cookdom* (No. 175), appeared in 1829, it can be affirmed that the Victorian age and even more the *fin de siècle* period were very creative and permissive, if only from a linguistic point of view.

The percentage of current definitions keeps up with that of current words: the outcome of this survey gives 79% of current words and 77% of current definitions.

Since the analysis focuses mainly on the first stage(s) of the language, particular attention has been paid to the Old and Middle English periods. The focus has thus been shifted on the early stages of English, in order to see whether the 19th century linguistic "creative heyday", as it were, mirrors a general trend, right from the beginning.

The same statistical surveys have been applied only to the OE and the ME entries: this new smaller corpus consists of 38 pure entries, 19 for each period, as mentioned previously, for a total of 67 definitions. Here is first the table showing what kind of base forms these words.

Table 5

BASE	OLD ENGLISH WORDS		MIDDLE ENGLISH WORDS		TOTAL WORDS	
Noun	12	32%	10	26%	22	58%
Adjective	6	16%	6	16%	12	32%
Verb	1	2%	2	6%	3	8%
Noun & Adj.	–	–	1	2%	1	2%
TOTAL	*19*	*50%*	*19*	*50%*	*38*	*100%*

Table 5 shows that a general trend had already been set in the Old English period. This suffix has always had a majority of words formed by a noun base, followed by adjectival and then verbal ones. It should be noted that the majority of noun bases is not so predominant as throughout the history of the suffix: a pretty high 37% of the adjective-based words (12 out of 32, 6 for each period) were coined in the early stages of English, that is more than one third.

As far as the longevity of these words is concerned, as usual, firstly the pure entries and then all the definitions have been taken into consideration. Here is the table concerning the pure entries.

Table 6

WORDS FREQUENCY	OLD ENGLISH WORDS		MIDDLE ENGLISH WORDS		TOTAL WORDS	
Current[13]	10	26%	5	13%	15	39%
Dagger ('†')	–	–	9	24%	9	24%
Living Hiatus	9	24%	5	13%	14	37%
TOTAL	*19*	*50%*	*19*	*50%*	*38*	*100%*

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[13] The current words should actually be 9 for the OE period and 4 for the ME. 1 current word more for each period has been added: *christendom* for the OE period and *kingdom* for the ME. See note 12.

Here are some remarks: firstly, almost half the words, 39%, are still current, a remarkably high percentage for such a small corpus. Moreover, what is most striking is the total absence of nonce words. This was to be expected mainly for two reasons. Firstly, because the percentage of the OE/ME words, just 8%, tends to exclude such instances and secondly, the cultural background of these early words may have also affected this choice with the prevalence of the Scholastic theories[14].

The following table concerning all the definitions coined till the end of the Middle English period proves that the same trend is preserved.

Table 7

WORD FREQUENCY	OLD ENGLISH DEFINITIONS		MIDDLE ENGLISH DEFINITIONS		TOTAL DEFINITIONS	
Current	13	19%	19	29%	32	48%
Dagger ('†')	–	–	10	15%	10	15%
Living Hiatus	14	21%	11	16%	25	37%
TOTAL	*27*	*40%*	*40*	*60%*	*67*	*100%*

Table 7 shows that the subsequent definitions could not but stress the general trend shown by the pure entries: the percentage of current words is even closer to half, 48%. Considering what was said before about the cultural background of these words, it is no wonder that the number of occurrences appreciably increased in all three frequency categories far more in the Middle English period than during Old English. In other words, the previous balance between the two periods gives way to a slight predominance of Middle English as far as the coinage of new definitions is concerned: 60% in the Middle English period vs. 40% during Old English.

In order to carry out a complete and accurate analysis of this suffix, a

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[14] Old English and Middle English approximately span the Mediaeval age and in that period Scholasticism prevailed. Since this movement strongly criticized everything that was not an imitation of the past, this philosophy might have affected writers psychologically, if only from a purely linguistic point of view, with the result that nobody dared to coin new words. This trend faded into Humanism: in confirmation of this, no instances of short-lived words are to be found during the Old English period.

comparative aspect has also been taken into consideration: it concerns the comparison of English with some other languages of the Germanic family.

Starting from the common Germanic stem of the base, investigations were conducted to see whether it had also developed as a base in the other coeval languages of the family. Moreover, knowing from the start that *dōm* and most of its cognate Germanic words were gradually grammaticalized, the aim was to see whether some other Germanic language had developed words formed by the cognate base and the cognate form of this suffix. In order to prove whether this phenomenon had affected all the Germanic area, at least one language for each branch of its great late tripartition into West Germanic, East Germanic and North Germanic has been included. It has thus been sufficient to consider Gothic for the East Germanic branch, Old Icelandic (also called Old Norse) for the North Germanic and Old High German for the West Germanic branch. Moreover, it seemed opportune to include also another language belonging to the West Germanic branch, Old Saxon, since it is the closest to Old English: they both belong, in fact, to the subgroup of the so-called Ingaevonic languages.

Including here all the 38 words would go beyond the scope of this article: only a small sample will therefore be indicated in this work, just comprising the most relevant words for the subsequent analysis. For a better and easier understanding, a hyphen, "–", has been put over any long vowel of any language (the only exceptions are: "ȳ" for /y:/ and "ǣ" for /æ:/), thus disregarding the spelling conventions of the singular languages. Here is the table.

Table 8

		ETYMOLOGICAL STEM				
ID	**WORD**	**OLD ENGLISH**	**OLD HIGH GERMAN**	**OLD SAXON**	**GOTHIC**	**OLD ICELANDIC**
1	**Kindom** 700	Germanic *kunja-*				
		cyn, cynn	*kunni, chunni* 'kind, class, tribe, nation'	*kunni, cunni* 'race'	*kuni*	*kyn* 'a kind, kin'
		cynedōm	–	–	–	–

2	**Bishopdom** 887	The base is from Romanic **biscopo* (< Vulgar Latin *(e)biscopus* < Latin *episcopus* < Greek *'επίσκοπος* 'overlooker, overseer' [< *'επί* 'on' + *σκόπος* 'looking'; *σκοπός* 'watcher'])				
		bisceop, biscep, [...] *bisceopdōm, biscepdōm, biscopdōm*	*piscof, biscof* *piscoftuom* 'bishopric[...]; priesthood'	*biskop* –	*aipiskaupus* –	*biskup, biskop* –
4	**Wisdom** 888	Germanic **wīsa-*				
		wīs *wīsdōm*	*wīs, wīsi* *wīstuom*	*wīs* *wīsdōm*	*weis* –	*vīss* *vīsdōmr*
8	**Lord-dom** 897	The base is a compound, coined only in OE				
		hlāford (<*hlāf-weard*) *hlāfordōm*	– –	– –	– –	late ON *lāvarðr* (adopted from ME) –
13	**Heathendom** 1000	Germanic **haiþina-, *haidana-* 'steppe-dwelling, wild' as a loan translation of Latin *pāgānus* 'villager, rustic'				
		hǣðen *hǣðendōm*	*heidan, heidin* *heidantuom, heidentuom*	*hēðin* 'heathen, pagan; Samaritan' –	*haiþnō* 'a heathen, gentile woman' –	*heiðinn* *heiðindōmr*
15	**Richdom** 1023	Germanic **rīkja-*, early adoption of Celtic *–rīx* (cf. Latin *rēx*) 'king'				
		rīce *rīcedōm*	*rīhhe, rīhhi, rīchi, rīche* '[...] mighty, stately; rich' *rīhhituom* '[...] authority; riches, wealth'	*rīki* *rīkidōm* 'power'	*reiks* 'mighty, with authority, great [...]' –	*rīki, rīkr* *rīkdōmr* 'power, wealth'

20	**Thraldom** 1175	Germanic *þrāhila-, þrahila-* The Old Icelandic form serves here as the base				
		þræl ME *thraldom, thraldōm, [...]*	*dregil, drigil* 'servant' (properly 'runner')	–	Close to: *þragjan* 'to run'	*þræll* (< *þrāhila-)
22	**Uselldom** 1200	Germanic *un-sēl-* The Old Icelandic form serves here as the base				
		ME *ūsel* ME *ūseldōm*	– –	– –	– –	*ū-sæll* 'un-happy' –
31	**Thrildom** 1375	The base in a ME alteration of THRALL [see No. 20], coined in Scottish English				
		ME *thril, thrille* ME *threldom, thryldom, thrildome*	– –	– –	– –	– –
38	**Flirdom** 1450	The base is probably connected to the verb 'to flird', coined in ME but of obscure origins. This verb is related to another verb coined in ME, 'to fleer', probably of Scandinavian origin				
		ME *flērien, flire* ME *flirdome, flyrdom, flurdom*	– –	– –	– –	– –

As it can be seen, some bases come from a non-Germanic linguistic family.

Since the non-Germanic bases do not come from the same source, they have been subdivided in a table as follows:

Table 9

BASE	OLD ENGLISH WORDS		MIDDLE ENGLISH WORDS		TOTAL WORDS	
Germanic	10	26%	9	24%	19	50%
Ecclesiastical Latin (< Greek)	4	10%	–	–	4	10%
Latin	2	5%	1	3%	3	8%
Middle English Formation	–	–	7	18%	7	18%
Germanic Derivative	1	3%	1	3%	2[15]	6%
Old English Compound	1	3%	1[15]	2%	2	5%
Celtic adoption	1	3%	–	–	1	3%
TOTAL	*19*	*50%*	*19*	*50%*	*38*	*100%*

Table 9 shows that half of the words have a base that comes from Germanic. It should be noted that two of them have a base that does not actually come directly from Germanic: the bases of *thraldom* (No. 20) and *uselldom* (No. 22) seem to come directly from Old Norse.

This fact is not at all surprising since it can be explained on historical grounds: as a matter of fact, the bases of these two nouns, *thrall* and † *usell* 'unhappy' respectively, were coined in the late Old English / early Middle English period and they seem to come from everyday language.

As has been shown in table 8, during the Middle English period a *thrildom* (No. 31) was attested: the base is a Middle English alteration of *thrall*, coined in Scottish English. This new dialectal base also gave birth to a verb, to another derivative, *thrillage*, and to a metathetic variant, *thirl* (with *thirlage*, *thirler*, *thirling* and *thirldom*). It is remarkable that the nouns *thrill*, *thrildom* and *thrillage* seem to have the same living

[15] See note 11.

hiatus, from 1375 to 1470, while the verb and the metathetic variants span the 16th and the 17th century.

This fact fully reflects the historical background of that period. The first Scottish variant is attested in 1375, at the height of the Middle English period: this was possible since there was no longer a standardization of spelling at that time, so educated people wrote as they spoke. Bearing in mind that Scotland remained under Norwegian rule till the late 15th century, the Scottish *i*-spelling must actually have been affected by the late ON tonic vowel development.

A pre-eminent feature of the early Middle English period is that the long tonic OE vowel /a:/ gradually turned into /ɔ:/, while the correspondent long tonic ON vowel /a:/ turned into /e:/ in the same period. Since Scotland was a peripheral zone of the Norwegian dominion, it must have been a very conservative area from a linguistic point of view. So the reconstructed ON form of *thrall*, **þrāhila-* with an /a:/, must have got to Scotland as such, without ever turning into *þrǽll*. When the ON vowel shift occurred, **þrāhila-* apparently turned into *threll /θreːl/, which later developed into *thrill*, the only form attested.

It should also be noted that this process of loans seems to have been mutual. The base of *lord-dom* (No. 8) is a compound coined only in Old English: late Old Norse adopted and turned it into *lāvarðr* during the Middle English period.

Old Norse was not the only language that had a great influence on English. Table 9 shows that 7 bases, 18%, come from Latin. It should be remembered that Britain was a part of the Roman Empire for almost five centuries, from 55 B.C. to 410 A.D.. Moreover, from 1066 on, Britain was ruled by Romance-speaking Normans: their language, Old French, undoubtedly contributed to reinforcing the few Latin loans borrowed during the Old English period.

In table 9 two types of Latin loans have been distinguished: those bases reflecting native Latin words and at most reinforced by Old French, and those belonging to Ecclesiastical Latin with words borrowed in their turn from Ecclesiastical Greek.

The first category comprises three words: *masterdom*, *falsedom* and *heathendom* (No. 13).

The first two were later reinforced by the correspondent Old French bases, while the third is a calque that was coined by the Visigothic bish-

op Wulfila, according to the OED, which then spread across the whole Germanic area.

Four words belongs to the second category: *bishopdom* (No. 2), *christendom*, *martyrdom* and *popedom*: they were all coined during the Old English period. Also in this case, Old French may have contributed to reinforcing their bases, since both countries had been christianised by the Roman Church.

2.2. *Semantic analysis*

Considering the 552 entries, it should be noted that there has been a relevant development of the meaning throughout the history of this suffix. For a thorough understanding of this development, it is opportune to start analysing the meanings of the full word, that is OE *dōm*, also taking into consideration the three major Anglo-Saxon dictionaries.

Holthausen (1974) subdivides the meanings of OE *dōm* into 8 classes as follows:

1. *Urteil*, *Beschluss*, *Erklärung*, 'judgement, sentence; decision, determination; explanation';

2. *Gesetz*, *Sitte*, 'law; custom';

3. *Gerechtigkeit* 'justice';

4. *Meinung*, *Rat* 'opinion; [a piece of] advice';

5. *Wahl*, *Bedingung* 'choice; condition';

6. *Macht*, *Gewalt* 'might, power; governance';

7. *Ruf*, *Würde*, *Ruhm*, *Glanz*, 'fame, reputation; dignity; glory; effulgence';

8. *Hof*, *Versammlung* 'court; assembly, meeting'.

A similar decision has also been made by the Bosworth–Toller dictionary (Bosworth / Toller 1972; Toller 1966), which subdivides the meanings into 6 great classes. In order to underline the continuity and further development of these meanings, these 6 classes have been tabulated next to the ME meanings given by the Kurath-Kuhn Middle English dictionary (Kurath / Kuhn 1963).

Table 10

CLASS	BOSWORTH-TOLLER & SUPPLEMENT	KURATH-KUHN
I	Doom Judgement Judicial sentence Decree Ordinance Law A case for settlement Question	The Last Judgement, *also* the judgement of the - soul at death, *also* the judgement seat of God A judgement or verdict pronounced by God A trial by ordeal An adverse verdict, condemnation, damnation A judicial decision, a sentence at law Justice or an instance of it A law or custom A trial, lawsuit, hearing before a judge Righteousness Crisis
II	A ruling Governing Command Direction Ruling	The execution of a sentence, punishment The act of judging A command, an order A commandment of God Destiny, fate The administering of justice
III	Might Power Dominion Majesty Glory Magnificence Honour Praise Dignity Authority Reputation Judicial body, court	The power to rule or govern, dominion Ability to make judgements or decisions; the - application of this ability, discrimination Ability to control dreams; imagination Ability to perceive; perception (of a stimulus) The power or authority (given to Christ) to - judge mankind A court, *also* a public assembly, a royal or - papal court
IV	Will, free will Choice Option Discretion	The act of choosing or deciding; a judgement, - decision, resolution Advice, counsel, opinion, consent, a medical - opinion

CLASS	BOSWORTH-TOLLER & SUPPLEMENT	KURATH-KUHN
V	Sense Meaning Interpretation	Interpretation, explanation
VI	State Condition	

What is remarkable is that the Bosworth-Toller dictionary already gives two entries for the word: one as a full word, as shown in the previous table, and one already as a suffix, that is -*dom*. This means that OE *dōm* had already grammaticalized into -*dom* during the Old English period[16]. The shortening of the vowel is due to the fact that English suffixes have always been unstressed from the aforementioned period on and have thus undergone the usual Germanic weakening of the unstressed syllables culminating in a *schwa*: its pronunciation nowadays is, in fact, [-dəm].

In the following table (Table 11) there are the meanings indicated in the suffix entry by the Anglo-Saxon dictionary with their Middle English correspondences.

Through a comparison of table 10 and table 11, it should be pointed out that the grammaticalization of OE *dōm* has led to a drastic semantic narrowing, only the third and the sixth class have been maintained: this represents a clear evidence of Hopper's 'specialization stage'. Moreover, this new suffix also developed a new independent meaning right from the beginning of its existence, the meaning of 'property' that will be of great consequence for the development of this suffix.

It is not difficult to link this new meaning to the third class: starting from 'authority, power, dominion', there must have been an objectiviza-

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[16] Some scholars consider this term as an *affixoid* for the early stages of the language (cf. ten Hacken 2000: 355; Marchand 1969: 293; Naumann / Vogel 2000: 931; Stepanova / Fleischer 1985: 141-147). The suffix must have originated as the second component in the compound (cf. Olsen 2000: 901; Henzen 1965).

Table 11

BOSWORTH-TOLLER & SUPPLEMENT	KURATH-KUHN
Office Power Authority Dominion Right Property	Office (< Noun) Rank (< Noun) Status (< Noun)
State Quality Condition	State (< Noun and Adjectives) + Specialized Senses: • *HALIDOM* 'a sanctuary'; • *LECHEDOM* 'a remedy'; • *WISDOM* 'a proverb or saying'.

tion of these meanings, from 'power' to 'what is under the power, authority, dominion of X' (X= base), that is 'the property of X' (X= base). This new "objectivized" meaning must have been created immediately alongside the grammaticalization of the suffix, since its first two attestations, belonging to *kindom*, the previous term for *kingdom*, are given by the OED as:

> **a700** *Epinal Gloss.* 859 *Respuplica*, *cynidom*.

> **c855** *O.E. Chron.* an. 47 (Parker MS.) *Claudius..Orcadus Þa ealond Romana cynedome* [Bæda *rice*] *under Þeodde.*

As can easily be seen from these quotations, the sense of property was also immediately associated with a geographical territory[17]: in the

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[17] According to Adams (2001: 69n10), in OE *cynedom* meant solely "'power of a king'". The Latin equivalent for the second attestation (Bosworth / Toller 1972: 183), "*Claudius Orcadas insulas Romano adjecit imperio*", is ambiguous, though: '*imperium*' already included both the 'power' and the 'territory' meaning. The latter was already "in embryo" in OE, as it were, though it fully flourished only in ME.

second attestation, the term was interchangeable with *rice* 'reign' in other coeval texts. This is remarkable since this new shifted meaning, roughly a 'territory under the authority of X' (X= base), starts to be widely used from the late Old English period.

Every definition of all the words attested during Old English or Middle English has been taken into consideration and tabulated here in a "cascading diagram". This should make it possible to highlight the general shifting of meaning of this suffix throughout the English language.

The terms have been inserted according to their roots and first attestation. Black bars act as a watershed between OE / ME and ME / Mod E, while roots in *italics* indicate that two or more definitions of the same word were initially attested at the same time.

Table 12

CONDITION	PROPERTY (⇒ LAND)	AUTHORITY POWER	OFFICE	PEOPLE AS A WHOLE	DOMAIN REALM (fig.)
	700 *Kin-*	700 *Kin-*			
887 *Bishop-*		887 *Bishop-*	887 *Bishop-*		
888 Wis-					
893 Christen-					
Theow-					
897 Lord-					
900 Martyr-					
		950 Alder-			
971 Hali-					
		1000 King-			
		1023 Rich-			
			1050 Master-		
		1121 Kin-			
	1123 Earl-	1123 *Pope-*	1123 *Pope-*		
				1131 Christen	

CONDITION	PROPERTY (⇒ LAND)	AUTHORITY POWER	OFFICE	PEOPLE AS A WHOLE	DOMAIN REALM (fig.)
1175 Thrall-					
1200 Usell-					
1225 Wretch-					
	1250 Swikel-	1250 King-			
1300 Shrew-				1300 *King-*	1300 *King-*
			1305 Kin-		
1320 Wretched 1362 Thee-					
1375 Sweer- Thril-					
1380 Willer-					
	1385 Sheriff-				
1386 Churl-					
					1389 Christen
	1425 Thane-				
1440 Wick-					
		1475 Master-			
			1596 Sheriff-		
	1807 Bishop-				
1850 Heathen-					
				1857 Bishop-	
					1904 Sheriff-

It should be noted, though, that it has not been possible to subsume all the definitions under these six labels. For example, *leechdom* 'a medicine, remedy' has only one definition but it cannot even be included in that table.

Borrowing the Kurath-Kuhn terminology, it can be argued that in such instances, *-dom* has developed a specialized sense. These specialized senses continue to be attested in Modern English, too, both as subsequent definitions and independent terms.

Since there are too many specialized senses to be listed, it is convenient here to mention only the independent terms and subsequent definitions attested during the Old English and Middle English periods:

- Three subsequent definitions of *wisdom* 'kinds of learning, branches of knowledge'; 'knowledge [...], enlightenment, learning, erudition, [...]; practical knowledge or understanding [...]'; 'wise discourse or teaching';
- *Swikedom* 'deceit, fraud; treachery, treason';
- The above-mentioned *leechdom*;
- Two subsequent definitions of *martyrdom* 'slaughter'; 'torment, torture; extreme pain or suffering';
- Two subsequent definitions of *halidom* 'a holy thing, a holy relic; anything regarded as sacred'; 'a holy place, chapel, sanctuary';
- The first definition of *heathendom* 'the belief and practice of the heathen';
- *Witchdom* 'witchcraft';
- Both definitions of *whoredom* 'the practice of playing the whore, or of intercourse with whores; illicit sexual indulgence in general; fornication, harlotry'; 'acts of sexual immorality';
- *Wrakedom* 'revenge';
- *Falsedom* 'treachery, untruth; a falsehood'.

From these few examples alone, it can be argued that these specialized senses have all something in common. Comparing these definitions, they all seem to designate the 'hallmark of X' (X= base) in a more or less concrete way. Some terms designate concrete objects representing the 'characteristics of X' (X= base), like *leechdom* or the two definitions of *halidom*. Some other terms are more abstract: they seem to represent a 'mental image of X' (X= base) or the 'effect, practice of the condition of X' (X= base), like the two definitions of *martyrdom*, *swikedom*, *witchdom*, both definitions of *whoredom*, *wrakedom* or *falsedom*.

These specialized senses increased appreciably in modern English: some of them explicitly ended up designating a 'behaviour of X' (X= base) (cf. the fourth definition of *masterdom* [No. 101]) especially in the 19th century, like the first definition of *rebeldom* 'rebellious behaviour', the second definition of *rascaldom* 'rascally conduct; a rascally act', *poodledom* 'typical behaviour of a poodle' or *Dogberrydom* 'behaviour, attitude of a Dogberry'.

Going back to table 12, it can be argued that the "cascading diagram" of the OE / ME definitions already mirrors the general trend, set by the progressive shifting and development of the suffix throughout the English language. Firstly, it should be pointed out that at the very beginning of this suffix three meanings already co-existed:

1. 'The condition of being X' (X= base);
2. 'Property belonging to X' (X= base), that led in the short run to 'the territory under the control of X' (X= base);
3. 'Power, authority wielded by X' (X= base).

As has happened with the full word, -*dom* must have immediately developed the nuance of 'the office held by X' (X= base) directly from the power / authority meaning. It should be noted, in fact, that most of the definitions meaning 'the office of X' (X= base) were initially attested in the same year as the 'power / authority' definitions: instances of this are *bishopdom* in 887 (in which the suffix -*hood* includes both senses nowadays) and *popedom* (in which both senses co-existed in the definition from the start). As table 12 shows, two meanings prevailed during the Old English period: the 'condition' and the 'power, authority' held by X (X= base) .

The first semantic shift of some consequence appeared in late Old English through a definition of *Christendom* in 1131. The OED definition reads:

> **3. a.** Christians collectively; the church.
>
> **a1131** *O.E. Chron.* an. 1129 *Nu wærð swa mycel dwyld on Cristendom swa it næfre ær ne wæs.*

This new sense of 'group, community of people' was partly reinforced by a Middle English definition of *kingdom* first attested in 1300. The OED says:

> **2.** An organized community having a king as its head; a monarchical state or government. [...]
>
> **a1300** Cursor M. 2127 (Cott.) *þe mast cite..And mani riche kingdon* [Gött. *mani a noÞer riche kingdame*].

It should be noted that it is not completely clear which previous definition may have given birth to this new meaning. It can be argued that this sense of community may have come from both the idea of 'power, authority', that is 'people under the authority, power of a king / of the Church', and from the meaning of 'territory, land' metonymically, that is from 'the territory owned and ruled by the king / the Church' to 'the inhabitants of that territory'. Going back to the two aforementioned patterns of interaction between metonymy and metaphor, it can be argued that this semantic shift reflects the second pattern. There is, in fact, a coexistence of the two tropes and the normal metaphorical interpretation is derived from the metonymic one: the content, the community in this case, is expressed by the container, i.e. the territory / land.

What strikes one most in the analysis of the table is that this semantic shift immediately gave birth to another slight development attested in the same year, 1300, and with the same word, *kingdom*. The OED definition reads:

> **4**. *trans.* and *fig.*
>
> **a.** The spiritual sovereignty of God or Christ, or the sphere over which this extends, in heaven or on earth; the spiritual state of which God is the head. [...]
>
> **a1300** *Cursor M.* 1615 (Gött.) *Forto bring þaim..Als his aune his kingdam tille.*
>
> **b**. Used in reference to the spiritual rule or realm of evil or infernal powers.
>
> **a1300** *Cursor M.* 18245 *Nu es all vr kingdom for-dune, O man-kind mon we gett ful fune.*

As the labels at the beginning of the quotation show, this new semantic development shifts to a translational, figurative ground: it goes more deeply into the abstract. During the Middle English period there was another definition of this type: that of *Christendom* in 1389. For the first time the OED explicitly uses the word 'domain', thus meaning a wider degree of abstraction:

3 [...] c. The countries professing Christianity taken collectively; the Christian domain.

1389 in *Eng. Gilds* (1870) 36 *3ef ony broÞer..deye in straunge cuntre, in cristendom or in hethenesse.* [...]

1849 Trench *Mirac*. Prelim. Ess. vi, A Christendom 'commensurate and almost synonymous with the civilized world'.

As the quotations show, the semantic meaning tends to become more and more abstract with the passing of time during Modern English.

Since Modern English is too wide a period of time to be covered with only one analysis, it is convenient to subdivide this wide time span into separate centuries. Considering all the 485 Modern English definitions as a whole, there are two features that turn out to be a constant throughout the centuries. The first is the fact that there is a great prevalence of the meaning 'the condition of being X' (X= base); the second is that Modern English gave birth to a considerable use of what will here be called 'parallelisms', that is definitions that already contain two or more meanings as subdivided in table 12.

At this juncture, it is appropriate to remember that the clean-cut meaning subdivisions, shown in the last table, such as 'people as a whole' vs. 'domain, realm' or 'authority / power' vs. 'office', are totally arbitrary and have been created only for the purpose of highlighting the semantic shift of the suffix. Some meaning subdivisions are so weak, in fact, that such parallelisms were to be expected, in a certain sense.

As mentioned previously, what strikes one most at first is the totally asymmetrical prolificacy during the various centuries of the Modern English definitions. Apart from the above-mentioned constant of the 'condition' meaning throughout the centuries, the analysis of these 485 definitions yielded the following considerations, worth mentioning:

- 40 definitions were first attested up to the end of the 16th century. There is a prevalence of the 'territory' meaning and of the following parallelism 'condition + power / authority';
- 35 definitions were first attested during the 17th century. There is a prevalence of the 'territory' meaning, even if the 'people as a whole' meaning begins to be used quite often, especially in the parallelisms with the 'territory' meaning. It should be noted that these first 'peo-

ple as a whole' definitions mostly designate a religious group, like the third definition of *bishopdom* 'Episcopal order; episcopate; also in a concrete sense bishops collectively', the second one of *Christiandom* 'Christians collectively; the church; a particular body or community of Christians; the countries professing Christianity taken collectively; the Christian domain, the Christian dispensation' or *Protestantdom* 'the Protestant communities collectively';

- 13 definitions were first attested during the 18th century. Since the number of the attestations is so small, there is no prevalence whatsoever: the only thing to be noted is that every parallelism contains the 'condition' meaning;

- 342 definitions, more than 70%, were first attested during the 19th century. As has already been said, this suffix seems to have had its heyday of linguistic productivity only in the 19th century. There is therefore a prevalence of many meanings: 'people as a whole', 'domain, realm in a figurative way' and most of all many parallelisms. Looking at these parallelisms more closely, it should be noted that the same meanings mentioned before co-exist: among them there is, in fact, a sensible prevalence of the 'people as a whole' meaning both with 'condition' and with 'domain, realm' or sometimes with the coupling 'condition + domain, realm'. It could also be argued that this productive heyday widened the base type of the 'people as a whole' definitions: not only did the bases with religious groups continue, like *Mormondom*, *Greekdom* or *Shakerdom*, but some other bases also ended up explicitly designating peoples or tribes, like *Saxondom*, *Yankedoodle[do]dom*. These bases widened further from the very beginning of the century, also designating other groups of people, like *studentdom* or a body of things considered collectively, like *noodledom*[18];

- Lastly, 55 definitions were first attested during the 20th century. There is a prevalence of the 'domain, realm' definitions and also of many parallelisms: among them, the 'people as a whole' meanings often couple with 'condition', with 'domain, realm' or both.

The last part of this analysis on the Modern English definition will deal with a small group of definitions, three first attested in the 16th century and one in 1828. These definitions are chronologically: *priestdom* 'a. the office of priest, priesthood; b. with possessive, as a mock title;

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[18] Since the referents of these bases are usually animate, though, Adams (2001: 61) maintains that they "refer to animate 'collectivities'".

c. the rule or dominion of priests', the third definition of *masterdom* 'mastership', the second definition of *bishopdom* 'the personality of a bishop' and the fourth definition of *princedom* 'the personality of a prince'. All these definitions represent 'the personality of X' (X= base), they are used as a term of address: in other words, they designate the addressee. Since the first attestation, *priestdom*, was a parallelism formed by this new way of addressing (here as a mock title), an 'office' definition and a 'power / authority' meaning, it can be argued that this new type of definition may be considered as a slight nuance or as a specific use of an 'office' definition.

It should also be pointed out that the first three definitions have all died out: also in this case *-dom* gave way at the beginning of the 16th century to another Germanic suffix of condition, *-ship*. This suffix had formed parallel words that co-existed with the *-dom* definitions for a short period of time and ended up prevailing over them[19].

Lastly, the only definition coined in the 19th century and still current, though rarely used, that is the fourth definition of *princedom*, might be explained through phonetic reasons: it might be maintained that *-dom* was preferred to the widely-adopted *-ship* because it would probably have avoided the unpleasant consonant cluster [-sʃ-] in *princeship.

3. *Conclusions*

This work has shown the progressive development of OE *dōm* during the history of the English language. As happened with other full OE words that eventually turned into a suffix, like *hād* (> Mod. E. *–hood*) or *scīpe* (> Mod. E. *–ship*), this term already started to grammaticalize in the Old English period. However, unlike them, this term has also survived till modern times as a full word: it corresponds, in fact, to the Mod. E. *doom*.

Although they obviously derive from the same OE term, it should be noted that there has been a clear-cut partition of the original meanings between the full word and the suffix: this is a typical case whereby the lexical item has been affected by Hopper's 'divergence stage'.

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[19] For an exhaustive explanation of the word-to-word blocking process cf. Rainer (2000: 878; cf. also Wurzel 1988).

As regards the full word, the Mod. E. *doom* seems to have retained only the semantic field corresponding to the first two classes indicated by the Bosworth-Toller dictionary. These two original meanings, roughly 'judgement' and 'the ruling, execution of this judgment', already progressively shifted onto a religious ground in the Middle English period, meaning 'the Judgement of God, the Last Judgement' or also 'destiny, fate', maybe in the sense of the 'reward / punishment from God'. These are, in fact, the only extant meanings that continued during Modern English, even if *doom* nowadays rather tends to designate a destiny that nearly always has a negative connotation, something that will bring about some apocalyptic, catastrophic consequences.

As regards the "parallel life" of the grammaticalized term, it has been demonstrated that this suffix also underwent many semantic developments in the course of the English language. From the very beginning of its existence, in fact, it did not retain every meaning of the correspondent full word: it inherited only the senses of 'condition' and 'power / authority / office'. Moreover, this suffix even developed two new meanings of its own, both from the Old English period. One of them designates for the first time something concrete starting from an abstract base: it indicates an object that is the 'hallmark of X' (X= base), like *halidom* meaning 'sanctuary'. The second new sense, 'property', began to be used at the end of the Old English period designating 'the territory ruled by X' (X= base), being this territory considered one's property.

During Middle English -*dom* took on two other new meanings that would become pre-eminent in Modern English: they both seem to have developed metonymically from the 'territory' meaning. The first designates, in fact, 'a body or group of people having the characteristics of X' (X= base)[20], while the second is much more abstract: it represents the 'domain of X' (X= base), that is every single thing, be it abstract or concrete, that has to do with the base, the "world, realm" of the base, as it were.

With regard to the types of bases linking to this suffix, there is a great majority of nouns, even proper ones, forming a substantial 89%, followed by adjectives and verbs. What strikes one most, though, is that

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[20] Also in the other cognate languages there seems to have been a semantic shift of this type: in Present Dutch –*dom* is a collective suffix nowadays (cf. Booij 2000: 367; Booij 1994).

every noun base used in Old English or Middle English designates a certain type of person: object-designating bases will begin to be used only starting from the Modern English period[21].

This semantic development should not be misleading, though: a shift of meaning, be it slight or of some relevance, does not imply an automatic abolition of the previous sense whatsoever. In other words, there has been a general semantic drift, but nearly every meaning of this suffix is still productive today and co-exists with the others. Using Hopper's terminology once again, it can be argued that *–dom* has also been affected by the 'layering stage'. In addition, the more recent the definition is, the greater is the likelihood that it includes two or more meanings at a time. Those few senses that did not survive, have been substituted either by other coeval Germanic suffixes or by Latinate terms expressing the same abstract concept: for example, the first definition of *bishopdom* was substituted by *bishophood* and the second definition of *Christendom* by *Christianity*.

As for the process of suffixation of this word, it was a phenomenon that affected most of the Germanic languages. A key factor that may have caused this to happen is the fact that every meaning of the cognate terms inherited by the Germanic full word, the noun **dōma-s* 'judgement', always conveys a great degree of abstraction. Moreover, every grammaticalization seems to have started from the early stages of all these cognate languages, just like in English.

At first sight, the productivity of this English suffix has been massive (462 words had been coined up to the eighties of the last century) but also very irregular throughout the centuries. 92% of its words, in fact, have been coined in Modern English (75% of them in the 19th century), while the remaining 8% are equally split between Old English and Middle English, 19 terms each.

In short, this work has, hopefully, illustrated the development of the OE noun *dōm* into a suffix. This suffix is one of the oldest of the present-day English language since the process of grammaticalization already began in the Old English period. It can be argued that there are two aspects that make its suffixation somewhat anomalous.

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[21] This mirrors the animacy / agency hierarchy found in morphosyntax (cf. Waugh / Lafford 2000: 277; Croft 1990: 111-117).

The first interesting aspect is that this suffix has preserved every meaning developed subsequently, thus mirroring Hopper's 'layering stage': many newly-coined words, in fact, retain several meanings at a time in the very same definition. In addition, this semantic process seems to have settled only in the 19th century, after eleven centuries: this is a remarkably long period of time even for a suffixation process.

The second anomaly is that this suffix turned out to be a "late bloomer", as it were: its productivity had its heyday only in the 19th century with a considerable upswing in newly-coined terms and also many *hapax legomena*. Moreover, this suffix is still very productive nowadays not only with new words but also with new definitions formed with the older terms.

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