

## Historical Lexicons in Medieval and Early Modern English and French

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The TAPoR (*Text Analysis Portal for Research*) network operates a Lexical Analysis Laboratory in the Robarts Library at the University of Toronto. The lexicographical projects associated with TAPoR Toronto include the *Old English Dictionary*, *Aalma* (a database in medieval French), the *Lexicons of Early Modern English*, and the *Mayors and Sheriffs of London* (to date, to 1558). These four projects share a scholarly objective, the accurate representation of ancient languages, both terms and names, so that researchers in all TAPoR institutions can access them, whether in SQL databases or in textbases created with XTeXT (Isagn Inc.), through Geoffrey Rockwell's TAPoR portal at McMaster University.

Anne Lancashire is converting her index of the *Mayors and Sheriffs of London (MASL)*, recently published in a book on medieval London history, into an online database so that it can be enhanced and updated well into the future. The conversion process was not an easy one. Relationships among dates and proper names that appear straightforward on the page become problematic within a database designed especially for them. The book is not identical with the structured intelligence that goes into an SQL database. Lancashire describes how working with a web development group of digital librarians expands the historical research that went into the book.

Jennifer Roberts-Smith, a doctoral student in English at Toronto, discusses how *Lexicons of Early Modern English*, a text-database of over 120 glossaries and dictionaries published in England between 1480 and 1702, contributes to her reassessment of the prosody of Shakespeare and his fellow dramatists. Roberts-Smith, a director and a member of ACTRA, shows that the language of metrics in the Early Modern period is a musical one. From words like *tune* as used by lexicographers like Robert Cawdrey, it is possible to infer that Elizabethan and

Jacobean dramatic verse has "an inherent temporal rhythm that guides actors as to the relative pace of their delivery." Many historical scholars have observed that Renaissance English, lexically, offers many of the same problems to a modern reader as does a foreign tongue. This estrangement may now be extended to metrics.

Brian Merrilees is undertaking an online edition of fifteen manuscript glossaries of medieval French that vary widely but are, as a group, termed the *Aalma*. One challenge in this project is to find a way to give a full collation of variant readings from many manuscripts at the same time as to maintain the integrity of the various manuscript versions. For a long time Merrilees has worked very productively with *WordCruncher*, a 1980s interactive concordancer. Faced with the challenge of constructing an online hybrid, at once a collection of well-edited texts and a large index of variant readings, Merrilees is experimenting with a new generation of SQL database and XTeXT textbase technologies.

Lancashire, Roberts-Smith, and Merrilees differently show how, once digitized within a structured form, lexical and onomastical materials conspire to become a semantic web.

(Ian Lancashire)

### Mayors and Sheriffs of London (MASL)

**Anne Lancashire**

*Mayors and Sheriffs of London (MASL)* is a searchable database covering at present all mayors and sheriffs of the city from 1190 to the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558. This list initially appeared in print as an Appendix (pp. 308-355) in London historian Caroline M. Barron's *London in the Later Middle Ages*, published by Oxford University Press in early 2004.

Such reference lists of London mayors and sheriffs have existed from early times: in medieval and early modern chronicle histories (in manuscript and in print), and in urban historian John Stow's *A Survey of London* (first published in 1598). Most of these early lists are, however, incomplete, and contain many inaccuracies, so that British institutions such as the Public Record Office and the Corporation of London Records Office have had to compile their own handlists, for reference, for staff working with London records. While more accurate than the original lists, these handlists are also not complete; the names, for example, of mayors and sheriffs replacing those who died in office are sometimes omitted, and the specific replacement dates are almost never included. Before the more modern handlists were compiled, C.L. Kingsford, a scholar working in the early 20th century on London chronicles, had already corrected Stow's *Survey of London* list in a two-volume edition of the *Survey* published in 1908; but Kingsford did not fill out to any significant extent the material Stow had provided. Above all, none of these early lists or the more recent records offices'

lists normally include the livery company memberships of the two sheriffs (and occasionally, early on, of the mayor as well) holding office each year.

*MASL* includes for each mayor and sheriff not only specific term-of-office dates (including, for mid-term replacements, the dates of both election and swearing-in where these dates differ and can be found) but also, above all, the occupation or company membership of each individual, where this could be ascertained from early manuscript and/or print records. Company membership of mayors and sheriffs is an important factor for London historians to consider, given the importance of the companies from earliest times, as political organizations, in the government of the city. *MASL* allows its users to search for mayors and sheriffs by name, by year, or by company; it can also provide chronological listings of mayors and sheriffs for a defined period of time; and it notes the sources of all information provided, through a searchable list of references. It is currently in the late stages of construction, with links being provisionally added to the web sites — where these exist (as they increasingly do) — of the companies themselves. Once the 1190-1558 list has been tested and debugged, gradually more years will be added, in chronological order, so that eventually the list will reach the present day. Gradually also references such as biographical sources on the various mayors and sheriffs will be introduced. As a database, *MASL* can be revised, corrected (as more historical work is done), and extended in whatever directions its users find helpful.

A number of problems have been encountered in moving *MASL* from print form into an electronic database. For example, the spelling of names in the early period was not stable; and any one mayor or sheriff might have a name spelled in several different ways. When the user consults a printed list, s/he visually and rapidly scans the printed pages looking for an approximation or version of the name in which s/he is interested. The user of a searchable database, however, must type in a name, choosing a spelling. If this is not the spelling the database has used, the name will not be found. We have therefore had to wrestle with what to do about alternative spellings. Another problem is that a printed list will begin with an introduction explaining how it is to be used: for example, what its date ranges mean; but the user of an electronic database does not normally stop to read an introduction but simply types in the name or date s/he is looking for. How does one convey to such a user the information s/he needs, with a list as complex and problem-based as *MASL*, so that s/he will not misinterpret the information s/he is finding?

Yet another problem involves livery companies. At any given time in London's early history, about 100 of these companies existed — composed at first of members of specific occupations or trades, such as goldsmiths, grocers, shoemakers, ironmongers, and weavers — at first, for the purposes of regulation of trade,

community religious worship, and the provision of social assistance to members in need, but increasingly, from the mid-15th century on, for purposes such as business connections of all kinds, political clout, and social status. Many of these companies still exist today, functioning as essentially private clubs, and as still an important part of political, social, and business connections in the city. Many of the companies from the earlier periods, however, no longer exist (some companies died; others grew up to replace them and in turn expired); and in order to provide appropriate information on company memberships to *MASL* users, who will not — unlike the users of the printed list — have a book on London history in their hands, a good deal of extra work will be involved in eventually linking information on these now extinct companies to their names in the database, along with providing links to the web sites of still-flourishing companies which have developed a web presence. Further expansions then also become possible: for example, references to reliable company histories.

*MASL*, in short, can be developed into an extremely useful reference tool for various aspects of early London history, and can be continuously updated and expanded, but presents interesting challenges in the conversion from print to database. One major advantage of the database, however, as correctable and expandable, lies in the fact that users will be able to make corrections and to add material from their own research; they will be invited to send to the *MASL* editor their corrections and additional information, which will then be checked and, credited to them, added to the site. Reference works such as *MASL*, which can be easily updated in this way, and also linked to other historical sites and records collections, would seem to be especially suited to electronic database format.

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## In tune with the times?: English Renaissance metrics and the Lexicons of Early Modern English

Jennifer Roberts-Smith

The *Lexicons of Early Modern English* is a database of more than 120 keyed, thoroughly proofed electronic transcriptions, minimally tagged for lexical content, of lexical works dating from 1480 to 1702. They are accompanied by a bibliography and a search engine. *LEME*'s coherence, simplicity and accuracy are its key attractions.

These conditions are essential to a project like mine, which I suspect is typical of many humanities research projects in that it requires efficient access to a large corpus of related works free from the interpretive intervention of modern habits of thinking. Trusting an instinct I felt as an actor, I set out to discover whether Shakespeare systematically used syllable-duration in the metre of his plays. There are, of course, no scanned transcriptions of complete verse works for the stage dating from Shakespeare's lifetime extant; nor were Shakespeare and most of his contemporary playwrights inclined to write prosodies. However, the analogy between metre and music that is implied by my hypothesis — that if syllables have durations, they are like musical notes — was commonplace in the works of literary prosodists writing during Shakespeare's lifetime. This analogy has been attributed by scholars for at least 100 years as belonging to the sixteenth-century movement which aimed to dignify English poetry by showing that it was similar to Classical poetry. But modern linguists have shown that the analogy was linguistically sound: Philip Sidney, for one, accurately identified the phonological durations of the English syllables he employed in his quantitative verse (Kristin Hanson 2001). Sidney, however, was arguably an elitist, whose work was not published during his lifetime and whose esoteric quantitative metrical experiments even he lost faith in: he abandoned them. The question is, were the musical-metrical prosodists also arguably esoteric elitists? They use musical vocabulary to describe English, as well as Classical, metres; but can their accounts of English metres be trusted to be accurate, empirical, and accessible to the ordinary auditor, rather than eccentric, abstract, and nationalistically ambitious? *LEME* makes this question answerable.

*LEME*'s evidence is provided in five ways. First, the corpus is comprised entirely of lexical works. This limits the potential for the errors of interpretation that can easily be made when a modern reader is trying to deduce meaning from a word's literary context: lexical works name the things in the world to which words point and place words in the context of their synonyms. Second, *LEME* returns search results in the context of entire word entries, identifies the sections of works in which results appear, and provides electronic links to the entire works cited in the search results. This minimises the alternative hazard

of interpreting a citation too far out of context. Third, the *LEME* works represent a broad range of linguistic contexts: they are bilingual dictionaries, monolingual dictionaries, glossaries of hard or foreign words, rhetoric handbooks, grammars, glossaries of technical terms or 'words of art'. Patterns of word usage can hence be analysed according to topical context and register. Fourth, since *LEME* searches entire lexical works, not merely representative quotations as, for example, the *Oxford English Dictionary* does, patterns of word usage can be analysed statistically. It is possible, for example, to say confidently that the English metrical term *tune* is used in four of the thirteen works in the corpus in which it occurs, exclusively in the sense employed by George Puttenham (attrib.) in his *Arte of English Poesie*. (Roberts-Smith 2003) Fifth, the minimal tagging structure of the *LEME* database provides efficient access to patterns of equivalence that may not be apparent in un-tagged searchable texts. The *LEME* headword tag, for example, is used to identify words being explained, a status indicated by a variety of conventions in the original texts which may not be apparent in the keyed text: the graphical arrangement of words on a page, perhaps, or the kind of type in which the word is set. A search for the word *tune* will return a result showing that in none of 251 occurrences of the word in the *LEME* corpus is it used as a headword (Roberts-Smith 2003). These five avenues of access have allowed me to assess the demographic and chronological currency of the usages of a series of metrical terms common in literary prosodies.

For prosodists such as Puttenham, Webbe, Gascoigne, and Campion, these terms fall into two categories: English words, like *tune* or *ditty*, and words borrowed from Classical languages, like *accent* and *iambic*. When they use the unfamiliar Classical terms, they are at pains to explain them using the plain English words; but their explanations do not always match those given in contemporary bilingual and monolingual English dictionaries, as they are represented in *LEME* database. *LEME* shows that English Renaissance prosodists' lexical eccentricities reveal the limitations of their comparison between English metre and Classical metre. In some cases, they find it necessary to broaden the signification of Classical metrical terms to include elements they believe to be unique to English metre (stress, for example); in other cases, they limit Classical terms to exclude elements of English metre which have fallen out of fashion (rhyme, for example). These observations will not be surprising to scholars of English metrics: they show the neo-Classical reform project at work. What may be surprising is that a comparison of the lexical ranges of Classical and English metrical terms in the Lexicons database reveals that the English terms were inherently musical: they indicated syllable duration and vocal pitch in addition to stress and number and they could almost always be used to refer to spoken or sung compositions with equal accuracy and frequency. So the comparison between metre and music was widespread, commonplace, and English; it was not merely

a function of the metrical reform project which coloured the prosodies.

In combination with lexical analyses of the same words in Shakespeare's works, this evidence argues that Shakespeare thought of his own verse in musical terms. A survey of Shakespeare's works shows that his usage of metrical terms matches those found in the dictionaries rather than those found in the prosodies. In other words, this aural and vernacular poet still saw the gulf between Classical metrics and traditional, native English metrics. He thought of himself as writing English metre, tuneful iambics, perhaps.

The *LEME* database, then, has provided me with an empirical basis for further investigation of my topic. If Shakespeare equates *tune* with *time* in *As You Like It* (5.3.32) does he think of the metre of his own dramatic verse, which William Webbe the prosodist and Robert Cawdrey the lexicographer would both call its *tune*, as literally incorporating *time* in the form of relative syllable duration? Is Shakespeare writing musical verse with an inherent temporal rhythm that guides actors as to the relative pace of their delivery? If this is the case, do we need to revisit our understanding of the English Renaissance dramatic iambic, to locate it in the context of the native English metrical tradition revealed by the lexical works in the *LEME* database?

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## The Aalma Project: research in early French lexicography

### Brian Merrilees

'Aalma' was the name given by the great French romaniste Mario Roques to a group of Latin-French glossaries compiled in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and which served as language learning tools in Medieval France. These glossaries are of particular interest in the history of French lexicography both on account of their number, fifteen known to date, and on account of their importance in the development of French vocabulary. Roques edited one text, the version found in Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. lat 13032, in 1938; another from Lille had been edited in the 19th century, but no edition exists that takes into account all versions of the *Aalma*. The aim of my research group at the University of Toronto is to produce, first of all, searchable on-line editions of what we believe to be the key versions of the *Aalma* and in addition add to a database we have been assembling for the past several years of medieval French lexicographical material. Later a printed edition will be envisaged.

To date we have transcribed five versions of the *Aalma*, Paris, BnF. lat. 13032, Metz Bibl. mun. 510 et 1182, Lille, Bibl. mun. 147, Salins, Bibl. mun. 44. We are currently transcribing Exeter Cathedral, ms. 3517 and St Omer, Bibl. mun. 644, and we have

done a sample letter (B) from Paris, BnF, lat. 14748, Paris, BnF, lat. 17881, Paris, BnF, lat. 7679 and Epinal, Bibl. mun. 224. In addition we have a full transcription of one of the first dictionaries printed in France, the *Catholicum parvum* done in Paris around 1484 by Antoine Caillaut, who used Metz 510 as his printer's copy.

All material transcribed is added to a local database of lexicographical materials using an old DOS program, *WordCruncher*, developed in Utah in the 1980's. This admirably simple program has been a boon to non-technical scholars like myself. Text preparation is minimal, no high level of mark-up is required and the indexing process is rapid. Given that everything in our database has been copied, laboriously, from manuscript and microform, this is a great advantage and we have been able to use this program above all others in our analytical work.

Our only online venture so far has been a simple database search of the *Aalma* in BnF lat. 13032. Here we checked and corrected the Roques text and set up a search using Active Server Page. Again this was simple and effective. It is still on our website:

[http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~merrilee/2003/searchset\\_temp.htm](http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/~merrilee/2003/searchset_temp.htm)

There are also excerpts from other dictionaries can also be found there under the 'Research' rubric on my website: <http://www.brianmerrilees.com>.

This, however, is not enough. We aim to expand the Paris 13032 base to include several other versions of the *Aalma*, probably one version at a time. We are looking for suitably uncomplicated software that will translate the *Aalma* texts into a coherent base. Our next experiment will be with *XTeX*, an Ontario-based text search-engine, and from there we shall seek other proposals.

What we seek essentially is a minimally marked text entry from which maximal benefit can be drawn. If this can be done in a DOS context, as we have found with *WordCruncher*, then it behooves us to find something equally simple for on-line presentation.

On a different tack, we have applied a database program to the comparison of 10 versions of the *Aalma*, using *Microsoft Access*. Here we entered the letter B from those versions and obtained a preliminary indication of the relationships between the various versions. Here is a small sample (not all versions contain each lemma):

Bacca ('bay')

Paris 13032	braie, fruit d'olive ou de lorier et aucune fois est mis pour tout fruit, principalement d'arbres sauvages
Metz 510	fruit de lorier ou aucune fois pour tout fruit sauvaige
Metz 1182	baie, fais (sic) d'olive ou de lorier
Lille 147	fruit d'olivier

Salins 44	fruit d'olive ou d'olivier fructus olive vel lauri quandque pro quoque fructu ponitur ...
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Exeter 3517	fruit de olive ou de lorier .i. fructus lauri vel olive
St Omer 644	braie, fruit d'olive ou de lorier et aucune fois pour tous fruis et especialment de arbres sauvages

Biceps ('two-headed')

Paris 13032	cil qui a ii chiex
Metz 510	celui qui a deux testes
Metz 1182	celuy o celle qui a deux chiefs
Lille 147	qui ha ii testes
Salins 44	ce qui ha deux chief
Exeter 3517	qui a ii. chiefz ille qui habet duo capita
St Omer 644	ce qui a ii quiefs

We have recently had microfilms of two of the versions digitized and can therefore put the manuscript image alongside the text as we transcribe it on a large screen. A second large screen sits beside the main screen for calling up references, such as our own *WordCruncher* database, the *Trésor de la Langue française*, Douglas Walker's *Lexique de l'ancien français*, the emerging *Dictionnaire du moyen français* from ATILF in Nancy and the *Patriologia latina* site produced by Chadwyck Healey.

Transcribing from microform or manuscript is a slow process. Our task is nonetheless made easier with the technologies and electronic resources at our disposal.

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