

Humanities Collections and Reference Resources  
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Final Performance Report  
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- Project title: “The Middle English Compendium Reborn: Expanding Content, Improving Access, and Stabilizing Technology”
- Project director (P.I.): Paul Schaffner
- Project Institution: University of Michigan
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# Narrative

*This grant, we believe, was the fifth awarded by the National Endowment to the Middle English Dictionary (MED) and its related resources at the University of Michigan: three were given during the course of the original (print) Dictionary; one was given two decades ago in aid of the digital conversion of the Dictionary as part of the new online Middle English Compendium; and this latest, now concluded, was intended to accomplish the renovation or rebirth of the now-digital Dictionary and Compendium, in ways specified in our application and summarized below. We are grateful for this sustained interest on the part of the Endowment, and happy to regard the Endowment as our partners in this protracted enterprise.*

## Seven problems we meant to address

In that spirit, let us start with the big picture and suggest that when we looked at our online Compendium three years ago -- that is, when we looked at the online Middle English Dictionary, Bibliography, and Corpus -- we saw at least seven reasons for concern. To anticipate, the net result of our work over the past two years has been to resolve or at least greatly alleviate all seven of these concerns. This does not mean that there are not still things to be worried about while moving forward, and no future tasks to be undertaken, but it does mean that this two-year, grant-funded project should be counted an unqualified success, not least because we are now confident that there *is* a way forward, and that the Dictionary and Compendium *do* indeed have a future.

**Problem 1. The MED had never been finished as its editors imagined it.** Every dictionary, in the course of its creation, accumulates material toward its eventual revision, whether that revision take the form of a supplement or a second edition. The Oxford English Dictionary, for example, followed up its original publication with a pair of supplements, then embarked on a process of continuous revision that it calls its third edition. The University of Wales dictionary was no sooner published than it began again at "A- " with a second edition. The MED's editors always planned a Supplement, setting aside thousands of 'Supplement slips' over the course of about forty years. When MED reached its 'Z- ' volume in 2001, and its offices were shut down, those Supplement slips were sent to the University archives, and have languished there ever since, useless to all but the most assiduous of researchers. *A primary goal of this project, therefore, was to make as much of that supplementary material as possible available to all in a useful and convenient way.*

**Problem 2. The MED had not kept up with scholarship.** By the time of our application, roughly twenty years' worth of new editions and studies had been published, without being reflected in either the Dictionary or its Bibliography. Major bibliographies, corpora, handbooks, and indexes had appeared, year after year, without being tied to the MED in any way. The MED remained

effectively frozen in the late '90s. A second goal of this project has been not only to allow some of this newer work to speak through the Dictionary, and to be accessed via the Bibliography, but to set in motion a process whereby new work could continue to be reflected in the Dictionary and Bibliography expeditiously and regularly. In our application we referred to this as a transformation from 'an essentially static resource to an essentially dynamic one able to accept, store, and publish additions and corrections on an ongoing basis.'

**Problem 3. The online platform.** The platform on which the online MED rested (and rested is perhaps the right word, given its moribund status) was inadequate in two respects: it was very difficult, verging on impossible, to update with new data; and it was technically obsolescent, employing orphan software no longer supported, always at risk of failing completely at every routine system upgrade. A third major goal of this project, albeit one funded entirely by the University of Michigan Library, without recourse to grant or cost-share funds, was to stabilize the underlying technology, allowing for regular updates of the data, and working with widely supported, regularly updated, off-the-shelf software that should ensure the technical viability of the site for the foreseeable future. Without achieving this goal, the other problems could not be solved: there was no purpose to correcting the MED if we had no ready way to publish the updates, and little incentive to update the data without the confidence that the system would survive from one month to the next.

**Problem 4. The online interface** to the Compendium, though it had some quite powerful search features, was as obsolescent as its technical underpinnings. Aesthetically, it belonged to the web of 1996, not an entirely negligible concern, since younger users found it baffling, especially when coupled with marked inconsistency in the input of searches (some were case sensitive, some not; some assigned special functions to certain letters, others did not; some used wildcards, others modified regular expressions, and so forth), and an output that many found cryptic. A fourth goal, the resolution of which was likewise entirely University-funded, was to create a search and display interface that reflected intervening advances in interface design; was careful to follow accessibility guidelines; was consistent in the way that it treated data at both the input and the display stage; that tested itself against actual users; that avoided idiosyncratic kludges of all kinds; and was, if possible, mobile-friendly. Some of improvements to the interface required corresponding improvements in the data, and at this point the interface work impinged most directly on the grant-funded data improvements: e.g., the expansion of abbreviations into search facets could best be accomplished by expanding the abbreviations in the data itself; searching for variant spellings could best be improved by 'unpacking' the compactly expressed listings of spellings in the data itself; and introducing a search by modern English reflex -- one of the most frequently requested improvements -- required that we assign a modern English equivalent to most of the Middle English headwords.

**Problem 5. The sheer scale of the needed data improvements**, combined with the labor-intensive character of historical lexicography, made a full-scale revision, essentially a rewrite, of the MED an unrealistic proposition at best. The original MED took seventy years to write: no one was going to fund someone to spend the next seventy rewriting it. Our goal was

to discriminate between essential revisions and inessential, find a way to undertake the former while deferring (without foreclosing) the latter, and adopt procedures and protocols calculated to accommodate this cost/benefit approach to lexicography.

Problem 6. **The Corpus lacked critical mass.** The Corpus component of the Compendium has always been the weakest and least consequential of its three parts, but to be genuinely useful as a searchable body of primary ME text ancillary to the Dictionary, it required a significant volume of primary material, and a significantly broad distribution of dates and genres. Our goal in this case was to roughly double the number of texts, increase their generic diversity, and perhaps thereby even -- a long-cherished hope -- give the resultant corpus enough gravity to attract further volunteer or commercial contributions to it, whether public domain texts, pre-prints, or 'incidental' transcriptions, those made by individual scholars in pursuit of other ends. The first half of that goal we could be confident about achieving; whether it will ever attract external submissions remains to be seen.

Problem 7. Finally, as a result of problems 1-6, our impression was that the Compendium, and even the Dictionary itself, was **faltering as a vital node** in the network of resources that together serve to document the history of English and its kindred and neighbor languages. Our goal, laid out in conference papers as early as the early '90s, has always been to do everything we could to remove artificial barriers between MED and other historical dictionaries (especially OED), and between MED and smaller projects such as the Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English and the Digital Index of Middle English Verse. The language itself, of course, knows no such siloes. Our interim goal, for this project, was not quite so ambitious, merely to 'hold up our end' as regards the currency and relevance of our information: to link as granularly as feasible to other resources, provide the means whereby others could link to us; exchange data if possible; and cooperate whenever and however we could with our fellow lexicographers and fellow scholars.

That was the situation as we saw it three years ago; all of our decisions with respect to this project have been directed toward addressing one or more of these seven problems. The project's success, we believe, should be assessed primarily in how well those problems have in fact been resolved. And we are sanguine about that assessment.

## Departures from our work plan

### Changes relatively few

The staff members involved in this project were exactly those named in the proposal, their assignments differed very little from those proposed three years ago, and the overall workflow was very much what we expected it to be. Our estimates of the project's scope have been

largely borne out, though the proportions and priorities attached to its component parts have required a little adjustment. Some tasks were a bit easier than expected (unpacking spelling lists; linking to the *Digital Index of Middle English Verse* and to the *Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English*); some were a bit harder (adding references to the eleventh volume of the *Manual of Writings in Middle English*); some were considerably harder (evaluating and incorporating all of the 'Supplement slips'); and some low-priority items ended up even further down the list, displaced by new tasks occasioned by developments in the world of Middle English scholarship. As the itemized progress report below demonstrates, we met or exceeded almost all of our quantifiable targets. Some *methods* (as opposed to goals) required modification for reasons of efficient workflow, but overall we did exactly what we promised to do and did it as we thought we would.

## Change 1: Allocating staff

As I indicated in last year's interim report, my evolving judgment (as manager) of the skills and aptitudes of the available staff, as well as their expressed preferences, led to some slight changes in the allocation of staff. Paraphrasing the interim report, the "OED map" task, which was originally intended to be distributed amongst all the staff, was instead taken on by one student worker (Alyssa Pierce [B.A., linguistics; MS information]) who is good at it, a fact which also had the effect of prolonging it well into year two, and a bit beyond. Similarly, the task of extracting significant quotations from recent editions was and continues to be taken on by another student, Evan David, an undergraduate, destined for a linguistics masters program this Fall, who has the curiosity necessary to excel at this task. And the extraction of missing MED entries from J. Norri's recently published *Dictionary of Medical Vocabulary* was taken on by yet a third student (Sarah Huttenlocher, another undergraduate, en route to a year at Oxford) The two regular staff members (Latta and Logarbo) have gladly surrendered these more constrained tasks and have in turn specialized in the editing of Corpus texts and the routine treatment of Supplement slips (Latta), and in the resolution of more difficult Supplement slips (Logarbo) respectively. In general, staff members have preferred more keenly than I expected to specialize in a narrower set of tasks and to focus on them, rather than spread their attention more thinly and broadly. I have been content to follow this model.

One area was left very vague -- unfunded and unstaffed -- in the proposal, namely development work on a new platform and interface for the Dictionary and Bibliography components of the Compendium. (The Corpus component sits on the Library's default text-indexing and -distribution platform and will migrate with the rest of our collections within the next few years; it was expressly excluded from this project for that reason.) However, the Dictionary and Bibliography components urgently required replacement for reasons suggested above as Problem 3 and Problem 4. At the time of our proposal the Library's information technology division was unwilling to specify what form that replacement might take, what sort of experimentation would be involved, or how much staff time it would require, leaving its

commitment advisedly vague. In the event, the Library has devoted all or part of the time of six staff members to the provision of a new MED platform and interface during the first half of calendar 2018: three database programmers for Solr, Ruby, and XSLT work (Bill Dueber, Tom Burton-West, and Gordon Leacock); a project manager (Nabeela Jaffer), an interface designer and usability tester (Ben Howell), and an interface developer (Bridget Burke, working chiefly with the Blacklight interface), along with unassigned but significant work by others, especially our retrieval specialist Chris Powell. Similar (probably the same) staff will be devoted as needed during future cycles for any necessary improvement or repair.

## Change 2: 'Normalizing' bibliographic information

In the proposal, I expected to 'pre-normalize' all added quotations. Wisely or not, I instead decided to normalize the bibliographic references of added quotations, in swathes, only after they had been added. This is a common library cataloguing issue: do you do authority control at the point of entry? Or afterwards? Or both? I ended up choosing 'both.' This allowed me to work only on quotations actually used; to work on *all* the new quotations, rather than only those that had been rekeyed 20 years ago and were thus available for pre-normalization; to combine this task with other global changes, such as the redating of manuscripts and other sorts of revision; and to catch systematic problems when considering quotation in batch mode. Aside from this minor tweak to workflow, our processes were as expected, though of course with tactical details needing constantly to be worked out.

## Unchanged: High-priority tasks accorded...high priority

Almost all our efforts were focused on the highest priority tasks, labeled as such in the proposal, namely

- The attachment of material from Supplement slips to the appropriate entries
- The correction of jknown errors.
- The extraction of new 'virtual Supplement slips' from recent editions
- The enlargement of the Bibliography to cover recent work and undocumented earlier work quoted in the Dictionary
- The unpacking of spelling lists to make them more amenable to search
- The completion of the MED to OED entry-by-entry map
- The provision of modern English equivalents to as many Middle English words as possible, to populate a search by modern English word
- Ad-hoc modifications to the data structure in response to the needs of the programmers working on the new platform and interface.

This last included some tasks labeled as low-priority in the proposal, such as the expansion of abbreviated language and field-label terms, but which became high priority when needed (e.g.) to populate the facets in a new faceted search interface.

As indicated in the interim report, changes to priorities and proportions have been subtle, mostly the result of two circumstances: first, that the Supplement slips have proven more various, and more problematic, than we hoped, and therefore a bit more labor-intensive to process (see Appendix). Many slips, for example, say simply, 'modify definition' -- but fail to say how, or why. Others say, 'this is a new spelling' -- but it isn't. Or 'See notes on p. 72' -- without indicating the burden of said notes, or indeed in which book we should hope to find page 72. Each slip raises its own issues, and each needs to be resolved, lest we pass on inaccurate or incomplete information.

Secondly, Middle English scholarship has been more productive during the last twenty years than we thought, more editions have appeared than we expected, and the pace appears to be accelerating, especially as regards hitherto neglected areas such as scientific and medical texts and local documents, as given in more detail in the interim report. Rather than examine thirty new editions for potential expansions to the Middle English lexicon, as expected, we have examined more than a hundred and are not done yet. In keeping with our forward-looking focus on continual updating and ongoing relevance, I have thought fit to allocate appropriate resources (mostly student-worker hours) to this surge in scholarship, which is indeed continuing beyond the grant period, at least through this summer, drawing on the last of our MED gift funds for this purpose (the bulk of which was consumed as matching funds).

### Change 3: Low-priority tasks minimally adjusted

The overall effect of these developments has been that high-priority tasks took more of our time than we expected, leaving low-priority tasks a bit less room to maneuver. There was also some minor movement amongst the low-priority tasks. One task, updating references to the *Linguistic Atlas of Later Middle English* so as to point to the new electronic version, was postponed, since little additional actual information was to be added that way; adding references to the eleventh volume of the so-called 'Severs/Hartung manual' (*The Manual of Writings in Middle English*) was likewise postponed, largely because it proved tricky to align the groupings assigned to sermon collections in the MED's bibliography to that in the Severs manual. Supplement slips having more to do with style than substance, e.g. those suggesting that an MED entry needed to be rearranged to suit the MED's inhouse style, were designated as low priority on the spot: noted but ignored, since (and this was our criterion in all decisions), the result would simply be a change of presentation, with nothing new added to the sum of human knowledge. A few of the low-priority items, especially that of locating and identifying the defined word in every quotation in the MED, identifying and tagging words cited as etyma, and identifying, tagging, and unpacking compounds and phrases mentioned within the prose of definitions, have been on

every to-do list since 2000, but have stayed there for a good reason: they are both immensely valuable and incredibly labor-intensive, to the point of near-impossibility. So we did not get them done this time either. We await an algorithmic solution to these tasks.

One low-priority task is in progress, and seems likely to be completed, namely identifying and linking internal cross references within the Dictionary. And two new tasks have joined the list: one low-priority task that escaped mention in the proposal, namely to locate and tag the numerous Linnaean binomials in the Dictionary, with a view toward updating them to current standard terminology, is well under way, though not yet complete. And a second task, or set of tasks, which arrived with the publication of J. Norri's *Dictionary of Medical Vocabulary* in 2016, and its appearance in our offices in 2017, really merit a high-priority designation. Norri's *Dictionary* added hundreds of words to the Middle English lexicon, even if his Latinate terms be excluded; added many additional quotations for known words; and supplied all the words he touched with exceptionally thorough and precise definitions. We needed to find a way to incorporate the results of his work without usurping his work, and settled on a compromise: adding 'skeleton' or 'stub' entries for all of the genuinely English new vocabulary; and adding 'see also Norri...' notes to many, many other words. This task, which took several months, had the effect of knocking some of the low-priority tasks down a peg.

## Unfinished tasks; sustainability

A number of tasks are described as unfinished, or nearly finished, in the itemized accounting below; and even those that are complete may demand additional action. Even a complete MED-OED mapping, for example, will require revision as we add more entries to the MED; even when all assembled supplemental information (new and old) is attached to the appropriate entry, many of those entries will require review to integrate that information more fully into the entry in question; the 'low-priority' tasks listed as optional under this grant will remain on our to-do list till they are done. In short, maintenance of a dictionary, even an historical dictionary of a dead language, is an ongoing responsibility. The Library has regarded itself as custodian of the MED, and heir to the responsibility for its maintenance, since the creation of the Compendium in 1997 and the closure of the original MED editorial offices in 2000. At present, we have gift funds to support our student workers through the summer, and Library funds to support our two regular staff through June of 2019, and myself, the director of the current project, indefinitely. Any shortfalls in the achievement of the immediate goals of this project we expect to make up during the course of this year -- most of them by the end of this summer. Upkeep and continued revision of the data we expect to continue through 2019 and beyond, but how exactly to accomplish that, and under what sort of organizational structure -- whether, for example, the Middle English Dictionary project should seek more formal ties to the academic side of the University, a rapprochement with the English Department -- will be open for internal discussion over the course of this year, aided by the momentum and stir this grant-funded work has created. In any case, the technical side of maintenance -- the maintenance of the web site,

platform, and interface -- will continue to be the responsibility of the Library's Digital Content & Collections Unit, as it has been. Having made the investment in its creation, the Library remains committed to its viability in the long term.

## Itemized performance report

The largest task we set ourselves was to improve the data, revising, correcting, and enlarging all three components of the Middle English Compendium (Middle English Dictionary, Bibliography of sources, and Corpus of primary texts), and in so doing not only to update them once, but to open them to further regular updates in future. Second, we needed to refine the data so as to improve both its potential for search and its potential for productive interaction with sibling dictionaries and similar resources. Third, in parallel with data improvement and refinement, we needed to specify and produce a platform onto which the data could be migrated, a platform that would allow the regular updates and expanded interaction that we have prepared it for. The itemized list below groups the project deliverables, both the achievements and the shortfalls, under these three categories.

*(\* Note: Deliverables described as 'quantified' in the proposal, and supplied with a numeric goal, are here marked with an asterisk; the following table lists and summarizes them.)*

| <b>Quantified deliverable</b>   | <b>Estimated</b> | <b>Accomplished</b>          |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| Supplemented MED entries        | 7,000            | 8,000                        |
| New MED entries                 | 1,600            | 2,000                        |
| New (or altered ) Bib entries   | 30               | 365                          |
| Newly texts in the Corpus       | 100              | 143                          |
| New MED-OED links               | 20,000           | 19,165 and still in progress |
| MED entries with unpacked forms | 13,000           | 16,770                       |
| Stencils normalized in MED      | 50% (1,500)      | 80% (2,500)                  |

## Category 1: Material added, corrections made

### Additions and corrections to the Dictionary

#### **Schema change to allow additions.**

*What we promised:* A set of 'hooks' in the eMED that will allow the incorporation of supplementary material.

*What we achieved:* a simple new element <supplement>, whose contents consist of any combination of citations (bibliographic reference plus quotation text) and notes. Reusing existing elements for its content made it easier to include the new material in any global (scripted) changes; it also made it easier to style the results in the new interface.

#### **Schema change to queue up additions for further treatment.**

*What we promised:* a system for ranking new inclusions on "degree of incorporation and degree of reliability."

*What we achieved:* a simple XML attribute with coded values indicating what attention any particular addition still required. I.e., rather than labelling additions with what had been done to them, we label them with what still needs to be done (B=proofread against the **book** source; E=seek **extra** information; R=requires special **review** by managing editor Paul Schaffner; N=**normalize** the stencils to standardized form (impose authority control); I=**incorporate** the information into the current entry as indicated in the attached notes; L= post the entry for special attention by chief editor Robert **Lewis**). Marking what needs to be done expresses not just the degree of integration, but the degree of reliability, e.g. "needs to be reviewed" (todo="R") indicates a less reliable addition than "no further review necessary."

#### **Inventory of the Supplement**

*What we promised:* Sort the slips as they arrive from the archives into a semblance of order, assign them a rough priority.

*What we achieved:* done.

*What is left to do:* impose some order on the three remaining boxes of unsorted slips (left as optional under the proposal)..

#### **Addition of 'Supplement slips'**

*What we promised:* to incorporate to at least minimal level the bulk of the available Supplement slips into the text of the eMED, leaving aside the most problematic.

*What we achieved:* exactly that. All of the organized Supplement slips have been gone through one by one and either (in exceptional cases) rejected, or (in most cases) added to the appropriate entry in the form of added quotations, corrections, or new entries. The most problematic slips have been passed over but flagged as such for future attention.

*What is left to do:* the problematic slips may in some cases be worth review by a different set of eyes. The three boxes of unorganized, sometimes quite mysterious and opaque, slips remain as

well, and these should if possible be given some semblance of organization and added if useful to the eMED.

### **Addition of new i-prefix entries**

*What we promised:* to enter and incorporate the text of several new entries being edited by Robert Lewis, mostly in the vexed area of words prefixed by 'i-'.

*What we achieved:* all entries so edited have been entered.

*What is left to do:* any further entries edited by Dr. Lewis will be similarly entered.

### **\*Supplementation of existing entries.**

*What we promised:* Add supplementary material to approximately 7,000 MED entries.

*What we achieved:* individual corrections of some kind (i.e., excluding batch changes made to all entries) were made to approximately 12,000 entries; entries with added material in a new supplement block of draft additions number approximately 8,000.

*What is left to do:* nothing, except insofar as finding additional material will require yet more supplementation of existing entries, an ongoing and never-ending process.

### **\*Creation of new entries**

*What we promised (or rather, guessed):* to create approximately 1,600 new entries.

*What we achieved:* we have created approximately 2,000 new entries, many of them skeletal 'stub' entries sufficient to indicate the existence, spelling, part of speech, and evidence for a new word, and usually some indication of its meaning and derivation. We also 'deprecated' about 50 entries, i.e. flagged them for deletion as duplicating other entries, or as ghost words.

*What is left to do:* more new entries, as evidence is found which demand them, another task belonging to routine updating of the data.

### **Preparation for collecting new 'virtual Supplement slips'**

*What we promised:* "to create a means to...collect...supplementary material from more recent discoveries and publications."

*What we achieved:* created a simple set of templates and procedures for creating new slips.

*What is left to do:* adapt the system to new publications as they appear.

### **\*Actual collection of new virtual Supplement slips (via a revived reading program)**

*What we promised:* we promised no numbers here, but guessed we'd find 100 - 200 quotations that represented new information for the MED.

*What we achieved:* we set about the collection of new material more vigorously than anticipated, collecting roughly 1,600 entry-changing quotations from this source.

### **\*Incorporation of new virtual slips into the MED**

*What we promised:* to incorporate them all (estimated to be 1-200)

*What we achieved:* incorporation of about 300 of the 1600 collected, a victim of our own success in reading for new information.

*What is left to do:* incorporation of the remainder (probably this summer)

**\*Addition of information from Norri's *Dictionary of Medical Vocabulary***

*What we promised:* nothing; the book came as a surprise.

*What we achieved:* we created 468 new stub entries based on entries in Norri's dictionary, in cases in which MED lacked the word altogether. We also introduced 8,601 notes into 5,368 MED entries, referring readers to specific entries in Norri's dictionary for more detailed treatment.

**Introduce corrections based on an annotated copy of the MED**

*What we promised:* not mentioned in the grant proposal per se, but our goal was to make all the necessary corrections pencilled into a copy of the MED formerly kept in the old MED production department.

*What we achieved:* completed.

Additions and corrections to the Bibliography

**\*Add recent (and previously undocumented) editions to the Bibliography**

*What we promised:* about 30 new or altered entries (i.e., works)

*What we achieved:* much more than this. Leaving aside corrected and updated entries, we created approximately 365 new entries, comprising more than a thousand new stencils, and referencing about 400 new editions.

**Update manuscript datings**

*What we promised:* this was not foreseen in the proposal at all, but was undertaken in response to collaborative overtures from OED.

*What we achieved:* so far the redating of about 125 stencils in the Bibliography and and more than a thousand matching citations in the Dictionary, with more to come; the beginning of a fruitful collaboration with OED.

**Update references to the Severs manual, volume 11**

*What we promised:* to introduce all appropriate references

*What we achieved:* postponed

**Revise the Bibliography schema to accept links to new resources**

*What we promised:* only assumed in the proposal

*What we achieved:* hooks were added to the schema to accommodate links to the *Digital Index of Middle English Verse* (DIMEV), the *New Index of Middle English Verse* (NIMEV), Jolliffe's *Handlist of works of spiritual guidance*, the *Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English* (LAEME), and the *Index of Middle English Prose* (IMEP).

**Update references to LALME; add references to eLALME**

*What we promised:* 'to experiment...with adding links to eLALME'

*What we achieved:* we added about 130 additional references to LALME, but only experimented with eLALME.

#### **\*Add references to LAEME**

*What we promised:* 'to introduce links to LAEME'

*What we achieved:* we added 321 references to LAEME, complete as far as we can tell (LAEME is difficult to navigate).

#### **\*Add references to DIMEV and NIMEV**

*What we promised:* 'to experiment with adding links to DIMEV' (NIMEV went unmentioned).

*What we achieved:* we introduced fairly comprehensive references to both DIMEV and NIMEV (the former numbering about 2,400 references)

#### **\*Add and update manuscript repositories**

*What we promised:* no explicit mention in the proposal

*What we achieved:* about 23 libraries and other repositories were added, and others changed, based on information on manuscript movements extracted from recent editions.

## Additions to the Corpus of Middle English

### **New texts added to the Corpus**

*What we promised:* approximately 100 new texts, manually keyed, proofread, and edited for structure.

*What we achieved:* 143 new texts, keyed, proofed, and edited; this year converted to an XML format appropriate to the DLXS text-class platform underlying our current Corpus site. These additional texts enlarge the online Corpus by about a third in terms of bytes, but more than double its size, as regards texts and titles considerably.

What is left to do: nothing.

### **Document the new texts**

*What we promised:* Though not explicitly mentioned in our work plan, we do need to create a bibliographic header (effectively: a catalog record) for each text, as well as an item in the Corpus's static contents page.

*What we achieved:* the original bare title list (prepared prior to keying) has been replaced with bibliographic headers.

*What is left to do:* some tweaking of the metadata and manual revision of the static page listing available texts (several days' work, mostly on the part of Library cataloguers, not MED staff.)

### **Increase the generic diversity of the Corpus**

*What we promised:* nothing explicitly.

*What we achieved:* a considerable increase in generic diversity, since the new texts fall into many genres including monastic rules and advice for nuns, cook books, chronicles, post-Biblical apocrypha, medical works in prose and verse, medical recipes, glossaries and dictionaries, chivalric romances, sermons, religious and polemical tracts, saints' legends, the Romance of the Rose, works of lay instruction, financial accounts, proverbs, poetry, hymns, songs, carols, a marriage contract, and personal letters.

## Category 2: Data refinements

### Data refinements in the MED

#### **\*Form expansion**

*What we promised:* to “expand compressed spelling variants to make them searchable and incorporate those expanded forms into the eMED data,” estimating the number of affected entries to be about 13,000.

*What we achieved:* exactly that, using a modified schema to allow alternative spellings to alternate within a single <ORTH> tag, with the intention of displaying the familiar compressed forms to the user, but indexing the hidden unpacked forms for search. The number of affected entries turned out to be closer to 17,000.

#### **OED links**

*What we promised:* “to complete the mapping of MED entries to OED entries,” and sub-lemmas, etc., estimating the number of entries added to the map to be about 20,000.

*What we achieved:* we are nearly there, probably about 95% there. All letters of the Dictionary have been mapped except S-, which is in progress; we have also begun mapping our new entries to OED entries, and that too is in progress. The newly mapped entries so far number 19,165.

#### **Normalized modern English equivalents**

*What we promised:* to perform and complete this task along with the OED mapping, since many Modern English equivalents are taken directly from the OED headword. But it is logically a distinct process, and sometimes involves fabricating a pseudo-English equivalent for a ME term. This is an important addition to the MED data, since on it depends our new ‘modern English lookup’ search, much asked for.

*What we achieved:* the same progress as with the OED mapping process.

#### **Linking previously unlinked stencils**

*What we promised:* to “resolve at least half of the unnormalized and unlinked citations in the Dictionary to corresponding entries in the Bibliography, thereby subjecting them to authority control. Our goal for new links was 1,500 citations.

*What we achieved:* reduction of the unlinked citations from 3,160 to 611 (i.e., about an 80% reduction), adding about 2,500 new links. This does not count the nearly 12,000 new links added when considering also newly added quotations. Of the 611 remaining, many will likely not be linked soon, since most (about 400) are quotations from the slip collections of the OED, with no further information available, and a good number are quotations from non-English works, chiefly Latin and French materials adduced for comparative purposes.

### **Tagging of etyma**

*What we promised:* nothing, this was removed from the revised proposal.

*What we achieved:* most implicit etyma made explicit, e.g. etymologies of the type ‘from the verb’ or ‘from next’, replaced with searchable words.

*What is left to do:* Tagging of source words as such is not yet done.

### **Tagging of phrases**

*What we promised:* nothing, this was removed from the revised proposal

*What we achieved:* we did not undertake this, except insofar as the swung dash employed in the print dictionary as a stand-in for the headword has been replaced in the interface with the headword itself.

*What is left to do:* explicit tagging of phrases and unpacking of abbreviated and compacted phrases remains a difficult, but desirable, improvement.

### **Marking and linking internal (inter-MED) cross-references**

*What we promised:* nothing; a low-priority task in the proposal, left optional.

*What we achieved:* we have begun to experiment with the algorithmic identification of cross references, so far only in the etymology statements, a necessary precursor to linking them to the correct target entry. So far, 18,758 cross references have been identified and tagged as <XREF>.

### **Expand abbreviated language labels**

*What we promised:* nothing; a low-priority task in the proposal, left optional.

*What we achieved:* expansion of all the language labels in the MED, in order to use them as a search facet. The schema was modified to allow this.

### **Expand abbreviated usage (semantic field) labels**

*What we promised:* nothing; a low-priority task in the proposal, left optional.

*What we achieved:* expansion of all the semantic-field abbreviations in the MED, in order to use them as a search facet. The schema was modified to allow this.

### **Identify and tag Linnaean binomials**

*What we promised:* nothing; not mentioned in the proposal.

*What we achieved:* we have begun to experiment with the identification and tagging of Linnaean names in the definition blocks of the Dictionary, with a view toward correcting anomalies and eventually updating the terminology to current standards -- some of the terms in the MED

probably date to the OED's use in the 19th century. Progress to date: identified and tagged 725 taxonomic terms.

## Data refinements in the Bibliography

### **Expand abbreviated LALME and LAEME region labels**

*What we promised:* not in the proposal

*What we achieved:* all regions mentioned by LALME or LAEME, whether abbreviated or not, were marked with a new element (and the schema modified to allow this), partly to allow expansion of some cryptic abbreviations in place (e.g. "WRY" = "West Riding of Yorkshire"), and partly to allow the counties to be used as search facets when querying the Bibliography in the new interface.

## Category 3: New Platform and Interface

*What we promised:* "to devote enough development capacity, as well as the necessary contributions from the Library's web-design staff, to ensure that the MEC will continue to be available freely and functionally online." -- without specifying how, and without requesting any funding for this.

*What we achieved:* After some initial specification writing and exploration last year, the Library's IT department decided not to attempt either a one-off customized system like the present one (with its difficult maintenance issues) or a comprehensive reference-work platform within the Hydra/Fedora architecture, but instead to selectively use off-the-shelf components that we had used for other collections served by the Library, chiefly Solr for the back end and Blacklight for the front end. These are current, frequently updated, and widely supported pieces of software, making them relatively easy to maintain; they are also used elsewhere in the Library, making regular maintenance far more likely. And they make re-indexing revised data a trivial matter (less than an hour for a reindex), making updates to the data on a regular basis likewise trivial. Working from these assumptions, and following the feature specifications prepared by the P.I. of this grant, Library programmers set to work in earnest in January of 2018, with their work so timed that they should be able to have a functioning system in place coincident with the arrival of the revised data in its most mature and finished form. By the end of the grant period (30 April), an 'alpha' version was in place with all the revised data loaded; user testing was conducted by Ben Howell in the interim, our interface designer, leading to some changes; a brief history of the Dictionary and Compendium was added in June, along with a set of help files to assist searching. By the time of this report (31 July), the new system is fully functional, has moved onto a public-facing server, and is in the process of being exposed via an selectively publicized 'soft rollout' to a few interested bug-testers -- or at least that was the intention, but word of it has already appeared on Twitter, on scholarly emails lists (e.g. that of the New Chaucer Society), and on the Dictionary Society of North America web page, so our official

announcement next week will likely come as a surprise to few. The unofficial notice on the DSNA page is included in the appendix to this report, and has already led to an invitation to provide a paper to next year's DSNA conference and an article to the society's journal. The new site can be found here:

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary>

For comparison, the old site, still in place, can be found here:

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/mec/>

Our plan is to run both the 'old MED' and the 'new MED' in tandem for the next several months, and then in the Fall make such improvements and repairs to the new platform as our experience in the meantime suggests are necessary, turn off the old system, and redirect existing links to the new system at an entry-by-entry level. So far, reaction has been wholly and reassuringly positive, with only a few typos and one navigation bug reported to date (both by Andrew Hawke of the University of Wales Dictionary.) We judge this effort, and this product, even in its current state, to have more than fulfilled the promises made in the grant proposal, and to have genuinely opened the way toward an ever improving, ever growing, constantly updated MED and Compendium.

## Summary

Reverting to the seven problems we hoped to address.

1. We have broken the spirit of Problem 1, the unpublished and languishing Supplement slips, whose presence in the University archives has been a constant reproach. Most of these slips are now available for consultation exactly where they belong, attached to the MED entries, something we have only dreamed about for decades, and something which has been hoped for for more than half a century. And those that remain will soon follow them into the public view.
2. Falling behind. Adding hundreds of new editions has brought the Bibliography abruptly into the present era; actually reading and consulting these editions and as a result adding 1,600 quotations from their texts so far (and more every day) promises to catch MED up to something resembling the state of the art. The new interface, with its facility for rapid reindexing, promises to keep it there.
3. Platform. Here in S.E. Michigan, at least one automotive metaphor is required. In terms of our technical underpinnings, we are transitioning from driving a 1940s Chevy truck -- beautiful in its way, and certainly functional, but liable to break down at any minute, and

just try finding parts -- to a 2018 F-150: capable, popular for good reason, easily repaired, and still under warranty.

4. Interface. I am sure that we will need to tweak it a little, but even as it stands, the new MED interface seems to strike the right balance between utility to scholars and comprehensibility to novices. It is standards-based and accessible and mobile-friendly. What else could one want?. Its clean and informative look has an immediate appeal. Probably no one is more accustomed to the old interface than I am myself, since I have used it regularly since I helped create it in 1998. But even I have taken to the new system immediately. Perhaps they are merely being polite, but reports from our first users are so far similarly positive: "I am *very* impressed and very, very pleased." -- John Wilkin (Univ. of Illinois); "It's been a long time coming, and is clearly the result of a great deal of painstaking work." -- Anthony Esposito (OED); "Using it already as I work on my translation of Piers Plowman A. Great work and deep thanks!!" -- Michael Calabrese, CSULA Dept. of English; "Congratulations on such an extensive update! That must have been an enormous undertaking. The website looks really clean and clear and modern (and I like all the search options available from the front page). And the search limitations by source language or part of speech or subject label - very nice!" -- Heather Pagan, Anglo-Norman Dictionary; "Very cool, Paul, and what an achievement on your part -- congratulations! I'm beginning to noodle around in it -- no corrections or error reports yet -- and I can't wait to do more." -- Michael Adams, Indiana University.; "A first glance at the new interface shows how successful your work has been in making the MED more welcoming for neophytes as well as for established, expert users. I'm sure this will show through soon in how much (and how well) the MED is consulted, used, and cited." -- Philip Durkin (OED); "...easier to use and looks much more modern" -- Andrew Hawke (University of Wales Dictionary); "On first glance, the site itself seems very well designed and intuitive to use. I'm especially pleased to see the 'Modern English word equivalent' search option, which is a neat use of the OED↔MED links that seems obvious when you see it, but I don't think had occurred to me" -- James McCracken (OED).
5. Coping with scale. To get the most important work done in a timely manner meant sacrificing some things. This was perhaps our most controversial decision (as is obvious from the fact that OED has congratulated me already on my 'candor' in even discussing it), namely this, as expressed in our first publicity email: "[The MED will lose] its veneer of authority and comprehensiveness, since we are adding much semi-digested material without having the time to incorporate it fully; many 'stub entries' on the Wikipedia model, and many draft additions, all marked as such. *Making the material available seemed important enough that it was worth exposing the fact (which was always true) that the MED, like almost any dictionary, is always a contingent set of surmises, always a semi-informed work in progress.*
6. The Corpus is certainly bigger and more diverse, and will certainly serve as a more representative sample of the language. Whether it will also serve to attract more texts into itself remains to be seen.

7. Finally, I believe that the MED has put itself back into the conversation, where those who study and document the language work with and talk with each other. As regards features, our new links to LAEME and DIMEV especially may help; more importantly, we have begun collaborating much more directly, lexicographer-to-lexicographer, with other projects. MED and OED now enjoy a data exchange, swapping the entire raw text of their respective dictionaries every year. MED and OED have likewise begun to collaborate on matters of attribution and dating. And we are in contact with our fellows at such sibling dictionaries as the Dictionary of Old English (Stephen Pelle), the Anglo-Norman Dictionary (Heather Pagan), and the University of Wales Dictionary (Andrew Hawke). All thanks to the NEH!

## Appendix

1. Sample 'stub' entry.
2. Sample interface pages
3. First unofficial notice of the 'new MED' (DSNA website and newsletter)

# Item 1: Sample new MED entry

## Sample 'stub' entry

New entries have decimal IDs, to slot them in with existing entries in sequence

Searchable expanded spelling

Displayable compact spelling (in this case, the same)

Expansion of part-of-speech abbreviations

Expansion of language abbreviations

```
1 <?xml version="1.0" encoding="US ASCII" ?>
2 <?xml-stylesheet type="text/css" href="http://www-personal.umich.edu/~pfs/mec/code/med.css"?>
3 <!DOCTYPE MED SYSTEM "http://www-personal.umich.edu/~pfs/mec/code/med.xml.dtd">
4 <MED>
5 <ENTRYFREE ID="MED33376.5" SEQ="33376.5" RESP="pfs">
6 <FORM><HDORTH><REG>pilot</REG><ORIG>pilot</ORIG></HDORTH> <POS><PS EXPAN="noun">
7 n.</PS></POS> Also <ORTH><REG>peilotte</REG><ORIG>peilotte</ORIG></ORTH>.</FORM>
8 <NOTE>Stub entry.</NOTE>
9 <ETYM>From <LANG><LG EXPAN="Middle French">MF</LG></LANG> <HI REND="B">pilot(e</HI>.</ETYM>
10 <SENSE>
11 <DEF><USG TYPE="FIELD" EXPAN="Nautical">Naut.</USG> A person familiar with shoals, channels, etc.
12 and charged with guiding a boat or ship, navigator, pilot.</DEF>
13 <EG>
14 <CIT CD="1458"><BIBL><STNCL RID="HYP.197.19981211T105002"><DATE>(1458-9)</DATE> <TITLE>
15 >Let.Sou.</TITLE>in <TITLE>Sou.RS 22</TITLE> <MS>Sou SC.2/9/2</MS></STNCL><SCOPE>16
16 </SCOPE></BIBL>
17 <Q>I..wolde haue taken the pylot.</Q>
18 </CIT>
19 <CIT CD="1480"><BIBL><STNCL RID="HYP.XXX558.20180724T095900"><DATE>(1480)</DATE>
20 <TITLE>Acc.Purser</TITLE> in <TITLE>RHS ser.4.7</TITLE> <MS></MS></STNCL><SCOPE>27
21 </SCOPE></BIBL>
22 <Q>Ffor a peylotte to bryng the schep out at the bare of Welva to yn to the Streys.</Q>
23 </CIT>
24 </EG>
25 </SENSE>
26 <supplement todo="E"><note>New entry. Second quot. taken from OED.</note></supplement>
27 </ENTRYFREE>
28 </MED>
```

- Coded summary of entry status
- Newly added stencil (marked by XXX in the ID)
- Addition of 'supplement' block (draft additions)
- Expansion of subject labels into search facets

## Item 2: Sample pages from new interface in its beta version

The screenshot displays the Middle English Compendium website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo and the text "Middle English Compendium". Below this, there are tabs for "Dictionary", "Bibliography", and "Quotations". The main heading is "Middle English Dictionary", followed by a descriptive paragraph: "The world's largest searchable database of Middle English lexicon and usage for the period 1100-1500. An invaluable resource for lexicographers, language scholars, and all scholars in medieval studies." A search bar is prominently featured, with a dropdown menu open showing options: "Headword (with alternate spellings)", "Entire entry", "Headword (with alternate spellings)", "Headword (preferred spelling only)", "Definition and notes", "Etymology", "Associated quotes and manuscripts", and "Modern English word equivalent". The search bar contains the text "Search..." and a "Search Q" button. Below the search bar, there are three columns of text: "How to use the dictionary", "More ways to search", and "History of the MED". The footer contains three sections: "Middle English Compendium", "Help and information", and "Contact Us".

**Middle English Compendium**  
Middle English Dictionary  
Bibliography  
Corpus

**Help and information**  
Search Help  
History of the MED

**Contact Us**  
Contact Us  
mec-info@umich.edu

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/?utf8=✓&search\_field=hrefsq=diad\*

**M** Middle English Compendium About Help Contact Us

Dictionary Bibliography Quotations

Headword (with alternate spellings) diad\* Search

Limit your search

Part of Speech

|           |   |
|-----------|---|
| noun      | 6 |
| adjective | 2 |
| verb      | 1 |

Subject Labels

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Law                   | 2 |
| Surgery               | 2 |
| Alchemy and chemistry | 1 |
| Medicine              | 1 |
| Nautical              | 1 |
| Theology              | 1 |

Source Language

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| Old English    | 3 |
| Old French     | 3 |
| Greek          | 1 |
| Latin          | 1 |
| Medieval Latin | 1 |

1 - 8 of 8 diad\* x Sort by Relevance 20 per page

**diadama** n.  
Additional spellings: *diadama*  
2 quotations in 1 sense  
Sense / Definition ?Pyrites. ...

**diadēme** n.  
Additional spellings: *diademe*  
26 quotations in 4 senses  
Sense / Definition (a) A monarch's crown or diadem; (b) a crown-like headdress; the papal tiara; (c) a crown or wreath awarded for virtue or victory. ...

**diadēmen** v.  
Additional spellings: *diademen*  
1 quotation in 1 sense  
Sense / Definition To crown (sb.). ...

**diadocus** n.  
Additional spellings: *diadocus*

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/dictionary/MED11510/track?counter=2&search\_id=1404

Headword (with alternate spellings) Search... Search

Related Dictionary Entries

Oxford English Dictionary  
(Please note that the OED is a subscription resource)  
[diadem, n.](#)

Back to Search Start Over Citation

**Middle English Dictionary Entry**

**diadēme** n. Quotations: Show all Hide all

Entry Info

|           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| Forms     | diadēme n. |
| Etymology | OF & L     |

Definitions (Senses and Subsenses)

1. (a) A monarch's crown or diadem; (b) a crown-like headdress; the papal tiara; (c) a crown or wreath awarded for virtue or victory. Hide 14 Quotations

Associated quotations

(a) a1350 *Opon a somer* (LdMisc 108) 112 : His diademe of dyamans droppede adoun.

(a1387) *Trev.Higd.(St-C.H.1)* 3.247 : He..made hym a dyademe and a corone of gold [L diadema ex auro sibi fecit].

(a1387) *Trev.Higd.(St-C.H.1)* 3.437 : After þis Alisaundre took þe cloþinge and þe dyademe of þe kyng of Pers.

c1425(a1420) *Lydg.TB (Aug.A.4)* 5.2663 : Septer & crowne, swerd & diademe, So as a kyng lyf

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/bibliography/?f1f8=-/s/search\_field=bib\_keyword&q=Capgrave

Middle English Compendium About Help Contact Us

Dictionary Bibliography Quotations

Entire entry Capgrave Search

Limit your search

LALME Region

Norfolk 6

1 - 7 of 7 Entire entry: Capgrave Sort by Relevance

John Capgrave, [Description of Rome](#) [Capgr.*Rome*]  
9 stencils from 3 manuscripts

John Capgrave, [Life of Saint Katherine of Alexandria](#) [Capgr.*St.Kath.*]  
18 stencils from 4 manuscripts

John Capgrave, [Abbreviation of Chronicles](#) [Capgr.*Chron.*]  
11 stencils from 2 manuscripts

John Capgrave, [Abstract of Sermon on the Twelve Orders under the Augustinian Rule](#) [Capgr.*Aug.Orders*]  
3 stencils from 1 manuscript

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/bibliography/?f1f8=-/s/search\_field=bib\_keyword&q=Capgrave

Life of Saint Katherine of Alexandria

Entry Info

External References: *IMEV* 6  
*NIMEV* 6  
*DIMEV* 69  
*Manual* 2.V.157(h)

Manuscript, print, and LALME references: London, British Library, Arundel 396 . (Pref. MS)  
London, British Library, Arundel 20 .  
London, British Library, Arundel 168 .  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawl. poet. 118 .

Editions, facsimiles, and other sources: *The Life of St. Katherine of Alexandria*, by John Capgrave, ed. C. Horstmann, *Early English Text Society, Original Series* 100 (1893; reprint 1987).

MED title stencils and sources:

**Arun 396**  
c1450 Capgr.-*St.Kath.* (Arun 396) :: *The Life of St. Katherine of Alexandria*, by John Capgrave, ed. C. Horstmann, *Early English Text Society, Original Series* 100 (1893; reprint 1987).odd pp. 3-261; pp. 262-403.

**Arun 20**  
a1500 Capgr.-*St.Kath.* (Arun 20) :: *The Life of St. Katherine of Alexandria*, by John Capgrave, ed. C. Horstmann, *Early English Text Society, Original Series* 100 (1893; reprint 1987).passim. See also Variants below.

**Arun 168**  
c1450 Capgr.-*St.Kath.* (Arun 168) :: *The Life of St. Katherine of Alexandria*, by John Capgrave, ed. C. Horstmann, *Early English Text Society, Original Series* 100 (1893; reprint 1987).fns. pp. 405-426.

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/bibliography/81b794/track?counter=1&search\_id=1408

Back to Search Start Over

### Middle English Bibliography Entry

## Cursor Mundi

**Entry Info**

External References: *IMEV* 694, 780, 788, 959, 1775, 1786, 1885, 2153, 2685, 3208, 3976  
*NIMEV* 694, 780, 788, 959, 1775, 1786, 1885, 2153, 2685, 3208, 3976  
*DIMEV* 1155, 1285, 1296, 1574, 2931, 2945, 3092, 3474, 4265, 5020, 6363  
*Manual* 7.XX.31

Manuscript, print, and LALME references:

London, British Library, Cotton Vespasian A.3. (**Pref. MS**)  
**LALME**: vol. 1. 108 (two entries, q.v.). Hand A. LP 18. WRY. Hand B. LP 100. WRY.  
**LAEME**: Item 295. Hand A. Fols. 2r-91v; 93va line 9-95vb line 19; 99ra-112yb; 119rb-139va line 36; 139va line 37-163ra. Very hard to date. Yorkshire, West Riding.  
London, College of Arms 57.  
**LALME**: vol. 1. 117. "MS in one hand. ... its language belongs to Lichfield." Staffs.  
London, British Library, Additional 31042.  
**LALME**: vol. 1. 101. "The hand of Robert Thornton." NME.  
London, British Library, Additional 36983 (olim Bedford).  
**LALME**: vol. 1. 102. Hand A. LP 8200. Beds.  
Oxford, Bodleian Library, Fairfax 14.  
**LALME**: vol. 1. 149. "The hand of 'Stokynbrig'." LP 6. Lancs.  
Göttingen, University Library Theel 107.  
**LALME**: vol. 1. 89. Lincs and WRY.

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/bibliography/?utf8=&search\_field=bib\_keyword&q=Cursor+Mundi

Entire entry Cursor Mundi Search

Limit your search

LALME Region

- West Riding of Yorkshire 2
- Bedfordshire 1
- Cambridgeshire 1
- Derbyshire 1
- Gloucestershire 1
- Hampshire 1
- Lancashire 1
- Lincolnshire 1
- Norfolk 1
- Northamptonshire 1
- Northern Middle English 1
- Somerset 1
- Staffordshire 1
- Warwickshire 1

LAEME Region

- Berkshire 1
- East Riding of Yorkshire 1
- West Riding of Yorkshire 1
- York 1

1 - 10 of 10 Entire entry: Cursor Mundi Sort by Relevance

**Cursor Mundi** [*Cursor*]  
67 stencils from 10 manuscripts

**Distichs of Cato (3)** [*Cato(3)*]  
3 stencils from 1 manuscript

**South English Legendary: Temporal (Passion of Christ)** [*SLeg.Pass.*]  
22 stencils from 5 manuscripts

**"Saluator mundi domine ffader ..."** (incipit) [*Saluator mundi domine ffader*]  
3 stencils from 1 manuscript

**"Saluator mundi domine To ..."** (incipit) [*Saluator mundi domine To*]  
3 stencils from 1 manuscript

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/help/extended

**M** LIBRARY | Middle English Compendium About Help Contact Us

Dictionary Bibliography Quotations

General search information  
 Dictionary searches  
 Bibliography searches  
 Quotation searches  
 Special characters (p, d, 3, etc.), accents, and ambiguous letters  
 Expanded search options for phrases, wildcards, etc.

### Expanded search options for phrases, wildcards, etc.

Several more advanced search operations are available if the basic search proves insufficient. The complete set of valid searches is summarized below.

Middle English Compendium search examples

| Search goal   | Syntax                                  | Examples / Notes  |
|---|---|---|
| Find any of several words                               | Enter several terms separated by spaces | <b>man woman child</b> will find entries that have any of those three terms.  |
| Find an exact phrase                                    | Enclose phrase in double quotes         | <b>"man and woman"</b> will only match when those three terms appear next to each other in that order. Note that the "and" here is <i>not</i> a boolean search operator.<br><br>Also note that no other operations (wildcards, booleans, etc.) work within phrases. |
| Search for words with a common prefix (wildcard search) | Append an asterisk (*) to the prefix    | <b>hel*</b> will find entries that contain a term that begins with <b>hel</b> (e.g., <i>hel, helable, helde</i> )   |
| Allow one   | Use a question mark (?) to              | <b>w?man</b> will match any of  |

File Edit View History Bookmarks Tools Help

https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/quotations?utf8=✓&search\_field=quote\_everything&q=had+y+wiste

Quotation including citation had y wiste Search

« Previous | 1 - 100 of 108.415 | Next » Quotation including citation: had y wiste Sort by Relevance

Close thy honde yn thy fyste, And kepe the wel fro `had-y-wyste'.

Associated bibliographic data [?a1425 Const.Masonry\(I\)\(Roy 17.A.1\) 76d](#)  
 Associated headword [kepen v.](#)

Ilk a man may not haue his lyste; perfore be ware of Had I wyste.

Associated bibliographic data [a1400 Prov.Wisd.\(Bod 9\) 7B](#)  
 Associated headword [had-I-wiste n.](#)

Holde thy thombe in þy fyste, And kepe þe well fro had y wyste.

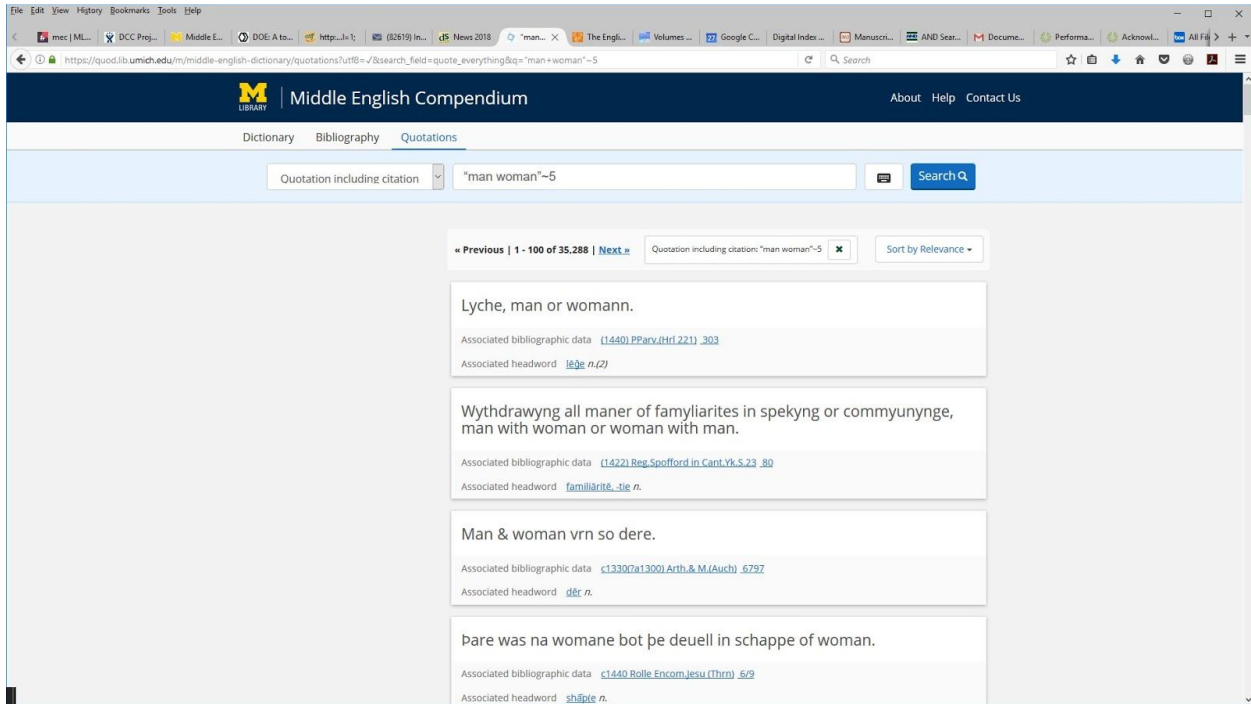
Associated bibliographic data [c1450 RyI.Prov.& R.\(Ryl Lat 39d\) 103](#)  
 Associated headword [had-I-wiste n.](#)

Friendship, sone, is ylle to triste; Eche man be ware of 'had y wiste.'

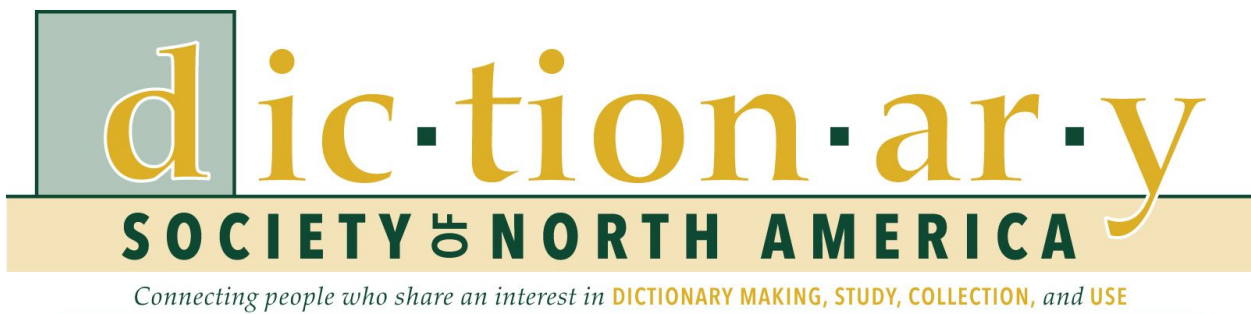
Associated bibliographic data [c1485\(?a1400\) Child.Bristow \(Hrl 2382\) 15d](#)  
 Associated headword [trusten v.](#)

Their eien be blerid, their chekes bothe lene & blew; And thus for had I wiste, they suffer losse & wo.

Associated bibliographic data [a1550 \\*Binlew CAlch.\(BodeMus 63\) 52h](#)



### Item 3: First online notice of ‘new MED’



### Middle English Dictionary Renovation

A year ago, we at the University of Michigan Library reported that long-deferred revision of the online *Middle English Dictionary* and its associated resources had begun, thanks to support from the National Endowment for the Humanities (awarded under its Humanities Collections and Reference Resources program), as well as the University of Michigan Library, which has taken up the challenge of Michigan’s decades-long commitment to historical lexicography. Though no dictionary revision is ever complete, and least of all this one, we can now report that the immediate goals of the project have been met, and that our revision efforts have borne fruit in the form of a new online platform and interface, bolstered by improved and enlarged data. We

have been making changes in all three of the components of the Middle English Compendium (Dictionary, Bibliography, and Corpus), but only the former two of three are getting the new interface, for now. The Corpus is merely getting new texts (roughly doubling the total, as well as expanding the genre coverage), but remains temporarily housed on the old interface.

Changes to the *data* underlying the Dictionary and Bibliography fall roughly into four categories: enlarging the content (more quotations, more senses, more entries, more works cited, etc.); updating the data (to reflect changes in scholarly consensus, and the recent appearance of reference works like the *Digital Index of Middle English Verse* and the *Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English*); correcting the data (where it was wrong or misleading); and ‘opening’ the data to make it less print-oriented and more computer-searchable.

Changes to the *interface* partly reflect changes in the data — for example, we now include a search by modern English reflex based on improved links between MED and OED; and partly reflect a more modern sensibility with regard to the user experience. We have given up the ‘90s look and embraced something a little cleaner and mobile-friendly, with some modern tricks like marginal facets (by part of speech, subject label, and language of etymon) and type-ahead word selection.

Finally, changes to the underlying indexing *platform* move the MED from an obsolescent, vulnerable and heavily customized one-off system to one employing modern and far more nearly off-the-shelf components, ensuring the continued viability of the site, as well as making it far easier to update regularly and frequently—something we intend to do.

The ‘old’ MED and the ‘new’ MED will run concurrently for a few months, at least till we work the bugs out of the new system (please report any you find), and probably till we add an ‘advanced search’ with cross-field Boolean options to the new system.

The URL for the new MED is: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/m/middle-english-dictionary/>

### **What the new MED gains:**

- Changes to roughly 12,000 entries.
- Draft additions to about 8,000 of those...
- ...including 10,000 additional quotations.
- 2,000 wholly new entries (mostly in draft or ‘stub’ form).
- A smarter, more modern interface, with some faceting.
- A more informative results list, making it easier to choose the desired entry.
- A (beta) lookup search by modern English reflex.
- The expansion of many cryptic abbreviations; the resolution of 80% of the surviving blind (undocumented) bibliographic references
- Improvement of the ‘other spellings’ search by resolving all those difficult-to-parse parenthes(es) and -dashes.

- More nearly comprehensive linking to OED and DOE.
- Redatings of some manuscripts, done in coordination with OED.
- About 350 works added to the bibliography, including most of the major editions of the past twenty years.
- References to DIMEV and LAEME (from the Bibliography) and to J. Norri's *Dictionary of Medical Vocabulary* (from the Dictionary).
- About 150 additional texts in the associated Corpus of Middle English.
- *The ability to be updated as often as new material is available.*

#### **What the new MED loses:**

- Some of the more sophisticated but less used multi-field Boolean searches (at least for the time being).
- Its frozen-in-time quality.
- Its veneer of authority and comprehensiveness, since we are adding much semi-digested material without having the time to incorporate it fully; many 'stub entries' on the Wikipedia model, and many draft additions, all marked as such. *Making the material available seemed important enough that it was worth exposing the fact (which was always true) that the MED, like almost any dictionary, is always a contingent set of surmises, always a semi-informed work in progress.*

#### **What will stay the same:**

- The same familiar structure.
- The same text, aside from corrections, etc.
- The same editorial principles.
- A continuous editorial tradition (some of the same lexicographers)
- An unchanged platform for the Corpus, at the moment, since it sits on a generic library text-serving platform that will be upgraded separately.

#### **Work still in progress:**

- Ongoing correction and supplementation.
- Identification and regularization of taxonomic 'binomials'.
- Identification of internal cross-references and implementation as links.
- Identification and unpacking of cited phrases and compounds.
- Expansion of the inconsistent lists of spellings.

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**Staff:** Paul Schaffner (editor, P.I.); John Latta and Mona Logarbo (editors); Robert E. Lewis (MED chief editor emeritus; volunteer editor); Evan David, Sarah Huttenlocher, and Alyssa Pierce (editorial assistants); Chris Powell (eagle-eyed retrieval specialist); Bill Dueber, Gordon Leacock, and Tom Burton-West (programmers); Ben Howell (interface designer); Bridget Burke (interface developer); and Nabeela Jaffer (implementation project manager).