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A Worlde of Wordes: Dictionaries and the Rise of Middle English Lexicography

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wŏrd *n.* Also **-e**, **word**, **wourd**, **-e**, **wurd(e**, **wrd**, **vord**, (early SWM) **weord**, (errors) **worth**, **wor**, **-urð**, (errors) **worder**, **-wordum**, **wrode**, **porde**, *pl.* **wordes**, etc. & **wordise**, **worddis**, **word(d)us**, **wourdus**, **wirdes**, **wurdus** & (early) **word(e(n**, **wored**, **woerdes**, **wuord**, (infl.) **worda(n**, **wordæ**, **wordum**, **wurden** & (?error) **wurves**, (errors) **worþes**, **owrdes**. [OE **word**, **wurd**.]

1. (a) A word as a lexical item or grammatical form, a string of characters representing a minimal unit of meaning, a word in isolation: also, a word or group of words as represented in graphic form, writing, embroidery, or the like: ?also, the intended sense of a word or idea as distinct from its sound or production [quot. ?1200]. (b) a word as an acoustic phenomenon, the sound of a word or production of speech sounds; (c) an item in the lexicon of a specialized discipline, a technical term; (d) with ref. to the act or process of translation or explication: an individual unit of meaning, an isolated verbal element; in adv. phrases: **~ after (bi, for) ~**, **after the ~**, etc., word by word, verbatim, literally; also, unabridged, not in paraphrase or summary [sometimes difficult to distinguish from sense 2b.(f)].

(a) a1150 *Ps. Lamb.* 72: Þæt hiette Scarð geseowen. Aetforen þan cyrige þas word, Mane, Thecnel, Phares. *Ibid.* 103/17: Þu cweðst, 'Cras', þæt is Leden word & is on ure þeodan 'Tomorgen'. ?c1200 *Orm.* 109: He ne maȝȝ nohht.. Onn Ennglissh writenn nihhte word bute wite he wel to soþe. *Ibid.* 9565: All swa summ þe reord gap aȝȝ Biforenn i þi spæche, & siþþen folȝheþþ aȝȝ þe word Swa summ þe reord itt leadeþþ, Rihht all allswa comm Sannt Johan Biforenn Crist to manne. a1225 *Trin.Hom.Cr.* 17: Þeȝȝre þe alle writen is cleped credo. After þe formeste word of þe salme. **(1340)** *Ayenb.* 101/3: þis vord þanne þe deþ beþenche at alle þe times þet þou zayst þet þ[ere] after. *Ibid.* 114: þis word 'zeterday' þe iuwe clepeþ 'sabat' (a1350 *Chastising of God's Children* 2.SN 6,2 Cryst hos light thus he gan to rede, 'O lord, o leith, o god with oute mo, O cristendom and fader of alle also Abouen alle and oueral euerywhere'; Thise wordes al with gold ywriten were. c1390(?c1350) *Jos. Arim.* 3: Þer þe bataylle [Sceaftesbiri] was, þe leue of Ebreu weren I-writen of ȝore. **(a1387)** Trev. *Barth.* (Add.Seymour) 1320/18: 'Fauus' cometh þis word of gruw 'fagin'. **a1450** (?1420) Lydg. *TG* 308: Hir woord wiþoute variaunce Enbrouded was, as men myȝt se: 'De mieulx en mieulx', with stones of perre. **a1425** **Treat. Uroscopy* 451/1688: It are said condilomata of þis word 'condilon', id est round. **c1425** *Lin-O.Accedence*

A WORLDE OF WORDES: Dictionaries and the Rise of Middle English Lexicography

Curated by Frances McSparran and
Robert E. Lewis

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Special Collections Library
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan

The phrase "A Worlde of Wordes" is borrowed from *A Worlde of Wordes, Or Most Copious, and Exact Dictionarie in Italian and English*, collected by John Florio. London: Arnold Hatfield, 1598.

Preface

Such an accomplishment! From the first vision and first articulation of plans for national and period dictionaries of English to the completion of the Middle English Dictionary, decades, and even lifetimes, have passed. Begun tentatively at Oxford and Cornell Universities, the project got underway in earnest at the University of Michigan in 1930. Seventy-one years later the last fascicle is being sent to the publisher and thirteen volumes comprised of 55,000 entires and over 900,000 quotations are completed.

This exhibit honors the men and women, the process, and the scholarship responsible for this feat. Curated by professors Frances McSparran and Robert E. Lewis, the exhibit traces the early attempts to analyze the English language, to address "the interest, curiousity, and anxiety about the right use and right understanding of words." Professor McSparran presents an overview of glosses, glossaries, word-books, vocabularies, lexicons, and dictionaries from the thirteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Professor Lewis reviews the history of the *Middle English Dictionary*. The seventy-one year story is told through photographs, a display of original sources used in the search for quotations, early examples of fascicles to reveal compositing and production processes, and a re-creation of an editor's desk, complete with sorting board and a myriad of slips.

The Special Collections Library is indebted to Professors McSparran and Lewis. Frances McSparran is an Associate Professor in the Department of English Language and Literatuare and Chief Editor of the Middle English Compendium. Robert E. Lewis is a Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature and the fifth (and last) editor of the *Middle English Dictionary*. We extend many thanks to both curators for their excellent work in preparing this exhibit. Thanks are also extended to the staff of the Special Collections Library who participated in the publishing of the catalog and the mounting of the exhibit: Mark Chaffee, Kathleen Dow, and Veronica Woolridge.

Kathryn L. Beam
Curator, Humanities Collections
Special Collections Library

Case 1

A Worlde of Wordes: Dictionaries and the Rise of Middle English Lexicography

This exhibit focuses on the strains of interest, curiosity, and anxiety about the right use and right understanding of words that encouraged the making of glosses, glossaries, word-books, vocabularies, lexicons, and dictionaries. Because this year (almost fifty years after the publication of the first fascicle) the University of Michigan is celebrating the completion of the *Middle English Dictionary*, the story begins in the Middle English period, with some of the early evidence for this curiosity about words and their meanings in the form of glosses and glossaries. From this we progress to examples of dictionary-making in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries, to the nineteenth-century precursors of the *Middle English Dictionary*, and finally to the MED itself, a twentieth-century project spanning the years 1930 to 2001.

Glosses

The term *gloss* refers here to the practice of adding marginal or interlinear translations of words in a text which may be difficult or obscure, or in a foreign language. Glosses can be seen as the first step on a course that will lead, by way of glossaries, or collections of glosses, to dictionaries. Dictionaries assemble larger collections of words and explanations, are not restricted to a single text, and elucidate the lexis or vocabulary of a language. In this exhibit case are glosses for words added by some later readers to a celebrated Old English text.

"The Pastoral Care; King Alfred's Translation of St. Gregory's 'Regula Pastoralis.'" MS Hatton 20, Bodleian Library, Oxford. *Early English Manuscripts in Facsimile*, volume VI. Copenhagen: Rosenkilde and Bagger, 1956.

This opening, folio 1 of Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Hatton 20 (formerly Hatton 88), shows part of a famous Old English text, King Alfred's preface to his translation of Pope Gregory's *Cura Pastoralis* (*Pastoral Care*), a Latin work of guidance for bishops. In his preface, Alfred talks about a perennial problem: education, and how to improve it. The manuscript was copied around the end of the ninth century, in the Old English period, but

marginal and interlinear glosses on this one copy show that the preface was studied, altered, and glossed by various hands in the following centuries. Two of these later hands are singled out here as evidence of the age-old practice of glossing or translating interesting or difficult words as one reads or studies a text.

The 'tremulous hand' of Worcester (13th century)

A single, thirteenth-century scribe working at Worcester added over 50,000 glosses for Old English words in at least twenty manuscripts, including this one. His additions are fascinating as evidence of Middle English scholarly interest in Old English texts, and the lexical difficulties some of these posed for a reader of a later period. Some of his glosses are Middle English, but most are in Latin. The scribe's interest in the older material he was examining is indicated not just by the glosses, but by his habit of updating vowels and consonants of the Old English period to the forms of his own time and place, and by his addition of punctuation and word division markers. He added forty-four glosses to this preface, which may be identified by their large size, and by the tremor visible in the formation of many letters. Examples include *nuncius* line 6, *eciam* lines 15, 17, and *spedde* line 8.

John Joscelyn (16th century)

In the second half of the sixteenth century this manuscript was rediscovered by Archbishop Matthew Parker and his secretary John Joscelyn. As part of his project to collect material for an Old English dictionary, Joscelyn added another layer of glosses, which are easily identified by the small neat slanting script, first visible in the note beginning *in alio libro...* in the top right-hand margin. Examples of his glosses are *iubet* 'ordered' in line 1, and *mente* in line 3.

Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader in Prose and Verse. Edited by Henry Sweet; revised by C. T. Onions. 13th edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954.

Four centuries later, an anonymous twentieth-century student of Old English studied the same text, and added an abundance of glosses to this battered 1954 edition of *Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader*, a college textbook. The dense layer of translated words illustrates how difficulties of translation have multiplied over a distance of eleven centuries.

On loan from a private collector.

Walter de Bibbesworth. ***Le Traité de Walter de Bibbesworth sur la Langue Française.*** Edited by Annie Owen. Genève: Slatkine Reprints, 1977.

In the late thirteenth century, Walter de Bibbesworth, an Englishman fluent in French, composed his *Tretiz* (1140 lines of verse), in French. His English patroness, Dyonise de Mountechensi, wanted her English-speaking children to learn the French vocabulary that would be useful to them later in estate and household management. Many of the French words in the various manuscripts of the *Tretiz* are glossed with their Middle English equivalents (see display), which highlight for English speakers the problems with word meanings they might encounter in French.

The two French couplets below, quoted from a more recent edition of the *Tretiz* than that on display, show how Walter uses amusing nonsense verse to juxtapose homonyms (two or more words having the same or very similar spelling and/or pronunciation) and the problems they present. The Middle English glosses for the French homonyms *reyne* 'queen,' *reyne* 'frog,' *rey* 'king,' *rey* 'net,' *reume* 'realm,' and *reoun* 'furrow' underscore his point.

Cambridge University Library MS Gg.1.1

Je vie une **reyne** [manuscript gloss: *quene*] sanz **rey**	I saw a **queen** without a **king**
Pur une **reyne** [manuscript gloss: *frock*] fere desray	Become distressed on account of a **frog**
Ki enmye le **reume** le **rey**	Which in the middle of the **king's realm**
En un **reoun** [manuscript gloss: *forwe*] sist en un **rey** [manuscript gloss: *nette*]	Was sitting in a **net** in a **furrow**

Glossaries and Vocabularies

In the later Middle Ages and following centuries, numerous bilingual glossaries, vocabularies, and dictionaries designed to aid the study and use of French and Latin were produced. They were intended for scholars, teachers, students, households, and merchants. Some were created for a limited audience, and contained the specialized vocabulary needed for a specific craft or for trading. Thus, *A Lytell Treatyse for to Lerne Englysshe and Frensshe* (late fifteenth century) was composed to equip the reader "that [he] maye doo [his] marchaundyse/In Fraunce and elleswhere," by learning French numbers, metals, cloths, spices, parts of the body, weapons, foods, and days of the week.

Other vocabularies, several of which are illustrated here as examples of this body of teaching and learning aids, contain groups of words, topically organized by field, including terms for God, heaven and earth, the sky, the stars, the world, beasts and birds, man and his diseases, houses and households, food.

Glossaries: Arranging the Entries

Alphabetization may seem to us the norm for arranging glossaries and dictionaries, but other arrangements have also been used in earlier centuries. Arrangement of words according to topic or field produces groups of words, which are rarely alphabetized; the groups are usually small, and, in the case of special technical vocabulary, may have originated as lists made as the words were met in reading. In 1553, John Withals published *A Shorte Dictionarie for Yonge Beginners* in English and Latin, in which the words were arranged, not alphabetically, but under headings, such as: "the names of Byrdes, Byrdes of the Water, Byrdes about the house, as cockes, hennes, etc., of Bees, Flies, and others." Earlier examples of this type are on display. When alphabetization is adopted, the arrangement may be alphabetical by the first or first two letters only; full alphabetization was adopted slowly in the Middle Ages. The *Promptorium Parvulorum* (c.1440), see Case 2, is alphabetized by all letters, but with frequent lapses.

"The Preface to a Fifteenth-Century Concordance," from British Library MS Royal 17.B.l, edited by Sherman M. Kuhn. In ***Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies***, volume 43:2 (April 1968).

In 1978, Sherman Kuhn, then editor of the MED, edited the fascinating preface to an early fifteenth-century Biblical concordance, where a thoughtful compiler discusses some of the problems he met in arranging entries. These must parallel closely the experience of the makers of glossaries and dictionaries, especially in the centuries before print. All had to face, as this compiler did, considerable spelling variation in the practice of scribes. He describes some of this spelling variation, the problems it raises, and the solutions he arrived at in order to alphabetize his material, and instructs his readers how to look up words.

A Volume of Vocabularies, Illustrating ... the Languages Spoken in This Island, from the Tenth Century to the Fifteenth. Edited by Thomas Wright. London: Privately Printed, 1857.

Vocabulary of the Names of Plants

This thirteenth-century, trilingual vocabulary glosses the Latin names of plants in both Anglo-Norman and English, so as to serve both Anglophone and francophone users. No alphabetization of entries is attempted. The classification of plants here as hot or cold—*Chaudes Herbes, Inter Frigidum et Calidum, Inter Frigidum et Calidum Temperatum*—shows that the vocabulary was intended for medical use.

A Pictorial Vocabulary

The opening on display is from a fifteenth-century illustrated topical vocabulary, with groups of words arranged by field. Many, but not all, of the sketches in the margin or blank spaces throughout are illustrative, positioned near the lexical item they illustrate. Here the drawing labeled *vestimentum* refers to the second entry on the facing page, and the head with a hat refers to *Hoc capellum*, Anglice a hat.

This may be the only illustrated vocabulary produced in England before the seventeenth century, and is a harbinger of illustrated dictionaries to come, such as **Blount's** *Glossographia* (1656) with three rather rough woodcuts, and two of **Bailey's** eighteenth-century dictionaries, each illustrated with almost five hundred small woodcuts.

CASE 2

Anglicus Galfridus. ***Promptorium Parvulorum*. The First English-Latin Dictionary.** Edited by Anthony L. Mayhew. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1908.

The *Promptorium* is a substantial collection of about 12,000 English words, many accompanied by synonyms, and followed by Latin equivalents, e.g., "Daplyyn, or Talkyn: ffabulor, -aris, -atus, -ri: Confabulor, -aris, -atus, similiter declinatur...." The author is careful to use paraphrase or explanatory glosses in English to distinguish shades of meaning for the different Latin glosses, as in: "Dullyn, or makyn dulle in wytt:... Dullyn or makyn dulle in egge toole... Dullyn, or lesyn e egge," where *egge* refers to the edge of a blade.

The *Promptorium* was compiled about 1440 by a Dominican of Lynn, Norfolk, though the text on display is from a later manuscript copied about 1475. Entries are in alphabetical order, but with independent alphabetical arrangement for two classifications of words, *Nominale* (nouns, adjectives, adverbs) and *Verbale* (verbs and verb phrases), with *Nominale* entries for words beginning with *a-* preceding the *Verbale a-* entries. (The opening on display deals with *Verbale* entries.) This procedure of independent alphabetization of these two grammatical classes is followed in various other contemporary works. The extensive and varied vocabulary, the linking of synonyms, the uses of explanatory glosses to distinguish meaning, and the presence of Latin equivalents have made the *Promptorium* an important resource for the *Middle English Dictionary*, where it is quoted more than nine thousand times.

Early Dictionaries

Richard Mulcaster, a London schoolmaster, was ahead of his time when in his *Elementarie* (1582) he wishes for a "perfit English dictionarie" which would "gather all the words which we vse in our English tung, whether natural or incorporate, out of all professions, as well learned as not, into one dictionarie."

The dictionaries of the English language produced in England in the following century, from Cawdrey (1604) on, make no claim to be comprehensive—to "gather all the words." One after another their title pages claim to explain and teach the meaning of "hard" words, where "hard" usually means foreign loan-words or specialized or learned vocabulary, although for some lexicographers it might also include obsolete or dialectal words. An occasional but growing interest in old, obscure, or obsolete English words begins the slow movement towards an historical dictionary of the English language, although almost three centuries will pass before *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (now the *Oxford English Dictionary)*, the great and comprehensive historical dictionary of the English language, will begin to publish. Shown here are two editions of medieval texts which highlight the need for the coming lexicographers to deal with old words in English.

Geoffrey Chaucer. ***The Workes of Ovr Ancient and Learned English Poet, Geffrey Chavcer, newly Printed....*** Edited by Thomas Speght. London: Printed by Adam Islip, 1602.

At least eight printed editions of Chaucer appeared in the sixteenth century, though none included a glossary, so Speght's editions of 1598 and 1602, complete with glossaries, filled a real need. In the absence of any monolingual English dictionary before Robert Cawdrey's *A Table Alphabeticall* (1604), Speght's Chaucer glossaries served all interested in old or obsolete words until Urry's 1721 edition which included a new glossary. Speght's glosssaries are especially relevant to this exhibit because they were borrowed from extensively by dictionary makers in search of sources of old or obsolete words. They drew on them either directly or indirectly through the other lexicographers who had been there before them.

In the prefatory address to the readers, Speght describes some general features of Chaucer's English which may cause his readers difficulty, and disarms critics of his explanations of "old words" by explaining that those who "vnderstand the Dialects of our tongue, especially in the North, and haue knowledge in some other languages, will judge [him] otherwise." The open-

ing on display shows how he uses these sources as authorities. It is headed with a table of abbreviations for both foreign languages and dialects within Britain, "many of them deriued from the Saxon tongue." Comments like these show his realization of the importance of etymology and the linguistic history of English to glossarial and hence lexicographical technique.

A glance at the entries on the first page shows the alphabetical order, but also reveals lapses occurring sometimes after the first two letters: *abet* precedes *abedge*, *agre* precedes *agramed*, etc. He identifies word origin by his system of abbreviations, gives several glosses on occasion, gives an explanatory note and page reference for *Alnath*, and, for many later entries, supplies encyclopedic explanations and commentary.

William Langland. ***The Vision of Pierce Plowman ... Whereunto are added certayne Notes and Cotations in the Mergyne ....*** 2nd edition. London: by Richard Grafton for Roberte Crowley, 1550.

Crowley (?1518-1588) produced the first print edition of *Piers Plowman*, which precedes **Speght's** Chaucer (1602) and offers an interesting contrast to it. Crowley's prefatory matter (see display) presents enthusiastic praise for the work and its critique of corruption in religion, but he provides the reader no assistance with the language, although it is patently more difficult than that of Chaucer. He says only, "The Englische is according to the time it was written in, and the sence somewhat darcke, but not so hard, but that it may be vnderstande of suche as will not sticke to breake the shell of the nutte for the kernelles sake." Crowley's second edition adds "certayne notes and cotations in the mergyne," but these are topical, or provide references for Scriptural citations.

Crowley's *Pierce Plowman* is contemporary with various early editions of Chaucer, but the text had yet to find the enthusiastic readership enjoyed by Chaucer which stimulated the numerous early editions of his works and encouraged Speght. Crowley's edition, however, illustrates both the growing interest in early texts, and the accompanying need that glossaries and historical lexicography eventually filled.

John Bullokar. ***An English Expositor, or, Compleat Dictionary: Teaching the Interpretation of the Hardest Words.*** Cambridge: John Hayes, 1684.

Bullokar's *Expositor*, first published in 1616, follows on Robert **Cawdrey's** *A Table Alphabeticall* (1604). Cawdrey's dictionary aimed at "conteyning and teaching the true writing, and understanding of hard usuall English wordes" borrowed from other languages, and explained through "plaine English words" for the benefit of "Ladies, Gentlewomen, or any other unskilfull persons."

The *Expositor* goes beyond Cawdrey in both scope and size—it has about twice as many entries—and makes some important innovations. In his entries, Bullokar follows some existing Latin-English dictionaries by identifying the field to which items of specialized vocabulary belong, for example, "A terme of Logicke," "A terme used in Astronomy." In the context of this exhibit a more important innovation is that the *Expositor* is the first English dictionary of "hard" words to include "sundry old words now growne out of use." Bullokar includes one hundred and thirty-five old words, such as *aye* and *eld*, and identifies them with an asterisk.

Thomas Blount. ***Glossographia: or, A Dictionary, Interpreting the Hard Words ... now Used in our refined English Tongue ....*** 5th edition. London: Thomas Newcomb, 1681.

Thomas Blount (1618-1679) was a barrister whose varied publications also included a law dictionary. His *Glossographia* (first edition 1656), like other dictionaries of the period, is primarily a dictionary of "hard" words, and of the specialized vocabularies of divinity, law, and the various arts and sciences. He draws heavily on two Latin-English dictionaries for entries and definitions, and illustrates in a fairly extreme form the reliance of many seventeenth-century lexicographers on existing bilingual dictionaries as sources.

He is of interest in the evolving practice of lexicography because he rejects vigorously the argument that "old obsolete Words may be very necessary for understanding of such ancient Authors as *Chaucer*, *Gower*, &c....since one in a thousand never heard of their Names, nor ever saw or read their works." Several later dictionary makers who share this view cite him with approval. The most significant feature of his dictionary is his effort to supply etymologies, either by an abbreviation for the source language, the citation of the word from the source language, or a speculative and sometimes ill-judged attempt to explain the word.

Case 3

Edward Phillips. ***The New World of English Words: or, A General Dictionary ....*** London: Printed by E. Tyler for Nath. Brooke, 1658.

Edward Phillips (1630-?1696), a nephew of John Milton, made ambitious claims for this dictionary. This first edition is a handsome volume, with a striking title-page comprehensive in its claims of coverage of hard words, of the terms belonging to forty-one fields ranging from theology to fishing, of information on proper names, mythology, and "all other Subjects that are useful, and appertain to our English Language."

Phillips' principal source was **Blount's** *Glossographia*, published shortly before, from which he derived part of his preface and hundreds of entries. A comparison of the title-pages of the two dictionaries shows the first evidence of the borrowing. Blount reacted vehemently to the plagiarism and the errors in Phillips' *New World of English Words* by publishing in response, *A World of Errors Discovered in the New World of Words, or General English Dictionary...* (1673) (see Blount's title-page for this work and address to the reader).

For its fifth edition (1696), *The New World of English Words* underwent thoughtful revision, and new material was added, including Chaucerian words.

Henry Spelman. ***Glossarium archaiologicum: continens latino-barbara, peregrina, obsolete, & novatae significationis Vocabula....*** London: apud Aliciam Warren, 1664.

Sir Henry Spelman (?1564-1641) was a scholar and antiquary, whose efforts to further Old English studies followed in the tradition of Archbishop Parker. He belonged with Sir Robert Cotton and William Camden to the Society of Antiquaries, and both engaged in and encouraged work on the early periods of British history. As a preliminary to a projected study of English law, he compiled a glossary, based on early charters and other records, published as *Archaeologus in modum glossarii* in 1626. The second volume, *Glossarium archaiologicum*, was published posthumously in 1664.

Spelman's glossaries were important resources for seventeenth- and eighteenth-century lexicographers who introduced etymological information into their dictionaries. **Blount** lists Spelman on the title page of his *Glossographia* (1656) as one of his etymological authorities (though he had access only to Spelman's first volume), as do **Skinner** in his *Etymologicon Linguae Anglicanum* (1671) and **Bailey** in his *An Universal English Dictionary* (1721).

Stephen Skinner. ***Etymologicon Linguae Anglicanae ....*** London: T. Roycroft and H. Brome, 1671.

This etymological dictionary of the English language, compiled by Stephen Skinner (1623-1667), was first published after his death in 1667. The work of predecessors interested in Latin etymology, of English lexicographers who treated etymology in their dictionaries, and of writers interested in the history of the English language and its native elements all helped to shape his lexicographical concerns.

Skinner is especially interesting in the context of this exhibit because he published as the third appendix to his dictionary a separate list of over three thousand old and obsolete words, which could thus be seen as an early dictionary of Middle English. He describes this appendix as "an etymological list of all the old English words which have been with us from the time of William the Conqueror onwards, and which have not been used for well over two generations, excluding those that clearly reek of Latin."

Chaucer's language was becoming increasingly remote from readers as time passed, and the collection would have served educated readers of Chaucer and other medieval texts, and antiquaries. In his entries Skinner cites Chaucer, Lydgate, Gower, *Piers Plowman* and others (see, for example, the entry for *Abay*). His major sources for "the old English words" were **Speght's** glossaries, on which he drew very heavily, but he augmented this from his own reading, and other dictionaries, and he produced the longest and most scholarly collection yet available. His collection was in turn to be mined by later lexicographers such as **Bailey**, who acquired material from Speght second-hand through Skinner.

Elisha Coles. ***An English Dictionary, explaining the Difficult Terms ... together with the Etymological Derivation of Them ....*** London: Printed for Peter Parker, 1708.

Elisha Coles (?1640-1680) was a teacher who produced both an English dictionary (first edition 1676) and an English-Latin/Latin-English dictionary (1677) a few years before his early death. The title-page defines the scope of his English dictionary, which comprises hard words, including the

specialized vocabulary pertaining to the arts and sciences, old words from Chaucer and other medieval writers, dialect words, cant words, and information on etymology.

In a highly interesting preface "To the Reader," Coles sets out some of his practice and theory. He declares himself a "faithful interpreter" of the varied linguistic resources of the English language. He has studied his predecessors: "I know the whole Succession from Dr. Bullokar to Dr. Skinner; from the smallest volume to the largest Folio." He has, he says, refined and enlarged his collection of words to some thirty thousand, and his ordering of entries is strictly alphabetical. He has added many dialect words and phrases, and, rejecting Blount's shunning of old words, he has retained and greatly augmented the collection of such old words "as occur in Chaucer, Gower, Pierce Ploughman, and Julian Barnes." He justifies their inclusion not only for "unfolding those Authors that did use them, but also for giving a great deal of light to other words that are still in use." His selection of these "old" words was, in fact, largely determined by his use of **Skinner** and, indirectly through Skinner, of **Speght's** glossaries.

Coles indicates the language of origin of words by an abbreviation (*Br.* for British, etc.), and is much more consistent about doing so than his predecessors. Blount had been the first dictionary maker to stress the value of etymologies, but after him, little attention was paid to etymology by others like **Bullokar**, Cockeram, or **Phillips**. Coles also indicates dialectal use by abbreviations for counties and regions: *Che.* for Cheshire, *Nf.* for Norfolk, *No.* for North Country, etc.

Case 4

John Kersey. ***Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum: or, A General English Dictionary ....*** 3rd edition. London: Printed for J. Phillips, 1721.

Kersey (fl. 1684-1720) was the first professional lexicographer, and he produced in the *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum* a practical compact dictionary for ordinary people, "Compil'd and Methodically Digested, for the Benefit of *Young Students, Tradesmen, Artificers, Foreigners*, and others, who are desirous thoroughly to understand what they *Speak, Read, or Write.*"

Published initially in 1708, Kersey's was the first abridged English dictionary. His principal source was his own thoroughgoing and successful

revision of Phillips' *The New World of Words* (1706). His revision of Phillips and his *Dictionarium* represent striking advances in methodology and comprehensiveness. Besides hard words and current legal and scientific vocabulary, the *Dictionarium* includes a large number of everyday words, dialect words, and some obsolete words.

Kersey's list of abbreviations covers etymologies (*L. Latin, G. German*, etc.) and specialized and regional vocabulary and phrases, such as *H.P. Hunting-Phrase, H.T. Hunting-Term, L.T. Law Term, C. Country-Word*, and *W.C. for West-Country.*

Nathan Bailey. ***An Universal Etymological English Dictionary ....*** 16th edition. London: Printed for R. Ware [and others], 1755.

This was the most popular of all English dictionaries before Johnson, running to thirty-two editions and issued between 1721 and 1800. It was one of a series of fine dictionaries produced by Bailey (d. 1742): the *Dictionarium Rusticum, Urbanicum, & Botanicum* (1704) (usually ascribed to him), *An Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (1721), *Dictionarium Britannicum* (1730), greatly enlarged in 1736, and *Dictionarium Domesticum* (1736).

The title-page, which borrows heavily from **Kersey**, offers the usual advertisement for the contents, giving first place to the etymological information provided in "proper Characters" for most words in the English language, and promising, among other features, a large collection of words and phrases used in ancient documents, and the dialects of England.

The introductory material discusses both the history of the English language, and the sources of the etymological information supplied by Bailey: "very few of the Etymological Words are my own, but I have generally the suffrage of Somner, Camden, Verstegan, **Spelman**, Casaubon, D. Th. Henshaw, **Skinner**, Junius, Menagius, Minshew, and other great names."

Bailey borrows from various sources, but depends most on Kersey for his word-list and definitions. Note, for example, in the opening on display, clear borrowings from Kersey for: *dote, dotard, dote assignanda, dotkin, double*, but note also the addition of *douchtrin,* glossed as 'daughter,' with its reference to Chaucer. He has an extensive collection of old words, assembled from Skinner and Coles, and also from the glossary to Urry's recent edition of Chaucer.

Nathan Bailey. ***Dictionarium Britannicum, or, A more Complete Universal Etymological English Dictionary Than any Extant ....*** London: Printed for T. Cox, 1730.

Bailey's *Dictionarium Britannicum* (1730) is a fine dictionary combining the best features of his earlier works, and was not surpassed until the publication of the great *A New Universal Etymological English Dictionary* (1755), thirteen years after Bailey's death. That dictionary, although edited by Joseph Scott, consisted mostly of Bailey's work, and was the last in this evolving tradition, appearing in the same year as Johnson's *Dictionary*, which was to set a new standard.

The title-page proclaims the comprehensiveness of the *Dictionarium Britannicum*, with its explanations of the specialized vocabularies of arts and sciences covering sixty categories from Agriculture to Trigonometry. It contains old, obsolete, and dialect words, but the collection has been purged; for example, *douchtrin*, glossed as 'daughter,' present in Bailey's *Universal Etymological English Dictionary* of 1721, has disappeared. This may reflect changing conditions in the editing of older texts. More editions provided with glossaries were appearing (compare Hearne's 1725 edition of Robert Mannyng's *Chronicle of England*, on display in Case 5), and no general dictionary could include the detailed information they provided.

Samuel Johnson. ***Dictionary of the English Language.*** London: W. Strahan..., 1755.

Johnson's dictionary is remarkable for its lucidity, its success in establishing shades of meaning, and, above all, for its illustrative quotations. Johnson (1709-84) believed his dictionary should record the English language in its golden age, beginning with Sidney and Spenser, and his chosen time frame, whenever possible, was about 1560-1710. Spenser himself had described Chaucer's language as the "pure well of English undefil'd" and Johnson's own contemporaries considered Chaucer the first great English poet. Johnson, however, turned to his preferred sources, his "wells of English" as he called them, and Chaucer is cited only fourteen times, a striking contrast to the over two thousand citations of Spenser. His wonderful preface (on display) sets out his lexicographical practice. His rationale for rejecting or preserving obsolete words, for example, is a subjective judgment as to whether or not they deserve revival. He rejects many words in Bailey, Phillips, and others, when he is convinced that they "are not read in any book but the work of lexicographers."

In offering etymologies, Johnson was forced to explore "northern words," and he could not rely on his own linguistic knowlege, as he could with Latin and Greek. Consequently, he relied almost entirely on **Skinner** (with almost four hundred citations) and Junius (one hundred and twenty-two citations) for the information he provides on Middle English words. Elsewhere, he cites **Spelman**, and Minskew.

Visitors to this exhibit interested in learning more about Johnson's *Dictionary* may consult a parallel text web version, *A Dictionary of the English Language, The First and Fourth Editions*, edited by Dr. Anne McDermott of the University of Birmingham, available and bookmarked on the computer nearby.

Case 5

Later Glossaries

Glossaries reappear here for the first time since the beginning of this exhibit. The early glossaries displayed in Case 1 suggested some of the organizational models available to the makers of early dictionaries, but the glossaries displayed here are in the tradition of the **Speght** glossary to Chaucer, or its successors. Speght became a source for the historical element (the "old" or "obsolete" words) in various early dictionaries. In their turn, the glossaries attached to the steady stream of scholarly editions of English texts in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were to become important sources of data for historical lexicography, and a necessary antecedent to it. Glossaries thus become invaluable sources of words and citations for work on the lexicography of the Middle English period.

Peter of Langtoft. ***Peter Langtoft's Chronicle, (as illustrated and improv'd by Robert of Brunne) from the Death of Cadwalader to the End of K. Edward the First's Reign.*** Transcribed ... by Thomas Hearne. Oxford: Printed at the Theater, 1725. 2 volumes.

Thomas Hearne (1678-1735) was a celebrated antiquary. Of him a satirist wrote: "Pox on't, quoth Time to Thomas Hearne, / Whatever I forget you learn." He was a forerunner of the new age of Middle English studies, which was to produce editors like Thomas Percy, Joseph Ritson, and Sir Frederic **Madden**. When he edited Robert Mannyng's Middle English version of Langtoft's *Chronicle*, he provided a seventy-nine page glossary which is idiosyncratic, highly interesting, and learned, but which seems primarily

designed for fellow antiquaries.

The opening on display shows some of its characteristics. For most entries Hearne gives a simple gloss, without identifying parts of speech or etymology, but he also includes learned legal notes (see *Demaynes*), textual comments (see *Daneis*), and a couple of etymologies. Elsewhere he cites **Skinner**, Somner, and others as etymological authorities in discussion of word origins. The note which ends on p.562, left column, is the conclusion of a lengthy digression which began on p.544, which includes several transcripts of documents relating to the destruction of images, and concludes with the description of a portrait of "beautiful Rosamund" which had also been destroyed. The entry for *ded* shows his unhelpful habit of grouping homographs. In this case the entry form *ded* represents a single spelling form for two Middle English words for 'death' and 'did,' while *dede* 'death' is treated separately below.

"That Great Desideratum"

The remaining items in this and Case 6 display some landmarks on the way towards a comprehensive dictionary for the Middle English period; they include nineteenth-century Middle English dictionaries, and a volume from the first edition of the great historical dictionary of the English language, *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (*The Oxford English Dictionary*). The display of dictionaries allows viewers to examine the evolution of Middle English lexicography by comparing entries for a single word from one dictionary to another.

Metrical Romances of the Thirteenth, Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries: Published from Ancient Manuscripts. Introduction, Notes, and Glossary by Henry Weber. Edinburgh: G. Ramsey and Co., 1810.

Henry Weber (1783-1816) assisted Sir Walter Scott in his medieval and editing projects and planned to produce by himself a major edition of metrical romances, a project which had to be curtailed for lack of financial backing. He is included here because his preface (on display) to the three volumes actually published conveys his disappointment over the failure of his hopes, not just to publish the romances, but "to collect materials for some future compiler of that desideratum, a dictionary of the ancient English tongue after the conquest." This seems to be the earliest reference anticipating the various projects in historical lexicography to come later in the century, and was echoed by **Madden** in 1828.

Layamon, fl.1200. ***Lazamon's brut.*** Edited by Sir Frederic Madden. London: Society of Antiquaries of London, 1847.

Sir Frederic Madden (1801-1873), editor of a number of Middle English texts, was one of the best Middle English scholars of his generation. He produced a magisterial edition of the two manuscripts of Layamon's *Brut*, which will not be finally superseded until ongoing work on a new edition is complete. His forty-one page glossary differs greatly from that of Hearne's. Where Hearne is discursive, Madden is thrifty with definitions, and he produces a splendid, detailed, but austere record of the words of the text, their meanings, and their various spelling forms, classified by part of speech and grammatical case or tense where appropriate. With this he supplies volume and line references which take the reader to the relevant passage of text. See, for example, the entry for the noun *draenc* or, for a more complex entry, the verb *don*. This, however, is a glossary primarily useful for philologists or lexicographers, less so for the general reader.

In Madden's first edition of a Middle English text, *Havelok the Dane* (1828), he expressed his hope that its glossary would be "an additional contribution towards that great desideratum, a dictionary of the Old English Language." ("Old English" is used here in a more expansive sense than that current today, and covers Middle English.) This is certainly true of his edition of Layamon's *Brut*, which has been an invaluable resource for later historical lexicographers. He would be gratified to know that *The Middle English Dictionary* quotes the text over fourteen thousand times, and cut-up photographic copies of the glossary (see slip on display) have been used as sources of data for over three and one-half thousand entries.

James Orchard Halliwell. ***A Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words, Obsolete Phrases, Proverbs, and Ancient Customs, from the Fourteenth Century.*** Brixton Hill: Printed for Private Circulation only, 1852. Volume 2.

James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps (1820-1889) was an antiquary and collector, a protégé of Thomas **Wright**, and an avid collector of books and manuscripts. Through his own library and that of Sir Thomas Phillipps, later his father-in-law, he had access to enormous collections of manuscripts, early printed books, documents and other records, and this is reflected in his *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words*. His dictionary gives an early and important treatment of archaic words because he could draw on manuscript copies of many unpublished texts, and many of his illustrative quotations were indeed taken directly from them. This made him a valuable re-

source for nineteenth- and twentieth-century lexicographers in search of data for the Middle English period.

Like **Hearne**, Halliwell arranges his entries by form rather than by sense. This can be seen in the opening on display, where, for example, under the single form *3erne*, rather than providing entries for four distinct words, he lists four senses for one headword. This approach obviously has some practical advantages for readers who simply want to understand the Middle English words they meet in a text, but it prevents them from grasping anything about the history, various forms, and various senses they may meet for any one of the four words represented by the single headword *3erne*. Alternative spelling forms for the same word may, and do, turn up far removed from one another in his dictionary. Thus, there is no indication here that on p. 328 one will find *Earne* 'to yearn,' an alternate form of *3erne* 'to yearn; to desire," or that other spelling forms for any of the four words may be scattered through the dictionary.

CASE 6

Nineteenth-Century Dictionaries and the Rise of Middle English Lexicography

Herbert Coleridge. ***A Dictionary of the First, or Oldest Words in the English Language.*** London: John Camden Hotten, 1862.

Herbert Coleridge (1830-1861) was the first editor of the projected **New English Dictionary**, but he died at the age of thirty-one before his work was far advanced. In his preface to this publication, he describes it as "the foundation-stone of the Historical and Literary portion of the Philological Society's proposed English Dictionary." In 1859, he had published *A Glossarial Index to the Printed English Literature of the 13th Century*, a preliminary version of the dictionary on display. The revised and expanded version shown here provides "an Alphabetical Inventory of Every Word Found in the Printed English Literature of the 13th Century," but, he says, it is more than an *index verborum*, or wordlist, since he has added "a certain amount of explanatory and etymological matter." His focus on the thirteenth century reflects a view then current, that an earlier state of the language, Semi-Saxon, preceded the period he deals with, and that English literature could be assumed to begin about the middle of the thirteenth century.

The opening on display shows Coleridge's treatment of entries: glosses are given for almost all words; forms are grouped by headword, which may cover several parts of speech (see *dream*, *dry*); attestations are recorded.

Francis Henry Stratmann. ***A Dictionary of the Old English Language Compiled from Writings of the XII, XIII, XIV, and XV Centuries.*** 3rd edition. Krefeld, Germany: Printed for the Author, 1878. ***Supplement***, 1881.

Francis Henry Stratmann (d.1884) published this dictionary at his own expense, bringing it out in various revised forms from 1864 to 1881 as he acquired new materials. Despite the title, which reflects Stratmann's original view of period division, this is a dictionary of Middle English, and Stratmann had replaced *Old English* with *Middle-English* in the revised edition he was working on at the time of his death in 1884.

In his preface to his revised and re-edited edition of Stratmann's dictionary, **Henry Bradley** praises Stratmann's great learning and extraordinary industry, but points out serious practical defects in Stratmann's organization and presentation of his material. He observes that Stratmann was little concerned with meaning, and concentrated on etymology to such a degree that senses are at times indicated only by Latin words, or not at all, and words are very frequently glossed only by an obsolete or dialectal word derived from Halliwell-Phillipps' *Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words* (thus producing an entry like *skorklin*, 'scorkle,' 'ustulare').

Stratmann's alphabetical arrangement of entries was determined by etymology, with results which are often baffling to users. Bradley illustrates this from the verb *amaien*, which Stratmann placed not under *a*, nor under the prefix *a-*, but under the prefix *es-*, on the grounds that its OF etymon often appeared as *esmaier*. Words which in Old English began with *hl-*, *hn-*, *hr*, were listed under *h-*, even though in these combinations the letter *h* is commonly omitted in Middle English spelling. There is philological reason behind Stratmann's organization, but his dictionary often frustrated its users.

Eduard Mätzner. ***Altenglische Sprachproben nebst einem Wörterbuche.*** Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1878. Volume 2, part 1.

Eduard Mätzner (1805-1892) provides in his fine dictionary the fullest treatment of Middle English vocabulary offered by any of the Middle English dictionaries produced in this period, but unfortunately publication stopped

after the beginning of the letter *M*. **Henry Bradley** commented on the precision and completeness of Mätzner in the preface to his revision of Stratmann's *Dictionary*, and Mätzner's citations were added to the **Middle English Dictionary's** collections of quotations.

The entry for *droppen* (see display) illustrates Mätzner's systematic treatment of entries. The beginning identifies the part of speech (*v.*), the Old English form of the word, and cognates in other Germanic languages. The basic division in the entry is between transitive (*a.*) and intransitive uses (*b.*), with the different senses as sub-categories. Fourteen quotations, easily identifiable from the citations and the list of sources at the beginning, illustrate the senses. A final note comments on the rare form *drouppen*.

Anthony Lawson Mayhew and Walter W. Skeat. ***A Concise Dictionary of Middle English from A.D. 1150 to 1580.*** Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888.

A. L. Mayhew (1842-1916) and Walter Skeat (1835-1912) produced a concise and serviceable dictionary based on the glossaries attached to eleven anthologies of Middle English texts, published by Clarendon Press for use in the universities. The glossaries were combined, and references in each entry were keyed to the appropriate volume of texts. Consultation of the glossary of that volume would then provide the student with precise reference to the specific text and line reference. The original plan was to confine entries to the Clarendon series, but the editors decided to supplement these glossaries with additional material from other sources. Thus *druerie*, in the opening on display, gives a reference to Halliwell's *Dictionary* (HD), and supplies as supplement to the etymological section a reference to a note in *Notes and Queries*.

Henry Bradley. ***A Middle-English Dictionary ....*** New edition, rearranged, revised, and enlarged. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891.

After **Stratmann's** death, the copyright to his materials was purchased by the Clarendon Press, and handed over for revision to Henry Bradley, who joined the staff of the *New English Dictionary* in 1886 and was to become second Editor in 1887. Bradley's re-arranged and enlarged revision, *A Middle-English Dictionary,* was published in 1891, and was the most widely used period dictionary of Middle English until the *Middle English Dictionary* appeared, fascicle by fascicle, from 1954 onwards.

Bradley revised many of the features he criticised in Stratmann's dictionary preface, but he was not satisfied with other compromises he had to make because of time constraints. He was dissatisfied with the normalized orthography used for quotations by Stratmann, but had not the time to restore the original spelling forms of the Middle English sources quoted. One of his major accomplishments was to supply entries for many words of Romance or Latin origin neglected by Stratmann, who was much more interested in the Germanic component of the lexis of Middle English.

The entry for *droppen* (complete on this opening) provides etymological information comparable to **Mätzner**. The entry is much shorter and less analytic than Mätzner's, with six citations, two accompanied by quotations, and a suggestion to compare this headword with *bi-droppen*. This is, however, a one-volume dictionary, and not designed on the expansive scale of Mätzner's.

A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles (Oxford English Dictionary). Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1897. Volume 3.

In 1857, at a meeting of the Philological Society in London, Dean Trench read a paper on "Some Deficiencies in Existing English Dictionaries" which argued for a dictionary which would offer "an inventory of the language; much more, but this primarily." He continued, "it is no task of the maker of it to select the *good* words of the language.... The business which he has undertaken is to collect and arrange all words, whether good or bad.... *He is an historian...not a critic.*" He argued that the dictionary should be historical, that it should trace when words or senses entered the language or died out, in so far as incomplete historical records would allow this to be possible. Colleagues initially proposed collecting materials for a supplement to existing dictionaries, but it was instead decided to produce *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*, recording the history of words after 1100. With the appointment of James Murray as editor in 1879, active editing began.

On display is a volume of the first edition of the dictionary, where the entry for *drop*, verb, allows viewers to compare the arrangement and fullness of entries in the *New English Dictionary* alongside the earlier or contemporary Middle English period dictionaries of the second half of the nineteenth century. A third edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (the name currently used) is in preparation, and will eventually replace the revised and enlarged second edition now available on the web.

droppen (v.)
Entry from the online version of the Middle English Dictionary.

This printed reproduction of the MED entry for *droppen* shows the sophistication of analysis made possible by the MED's rich collection of quotation slips, advances in lexicographical practice, and the scale of the project—close to fifteen thousand pages. Five major senses, with a total of nine subdivisions of sense, are illustrated by seventy-seven quotations. In the electronic version, manuscript information is supplied with every quotation, and the bibliographical information for each quotation is available with the click of a mouse. Access to the Middle English Compendium is available from the computer nearby by clicking on the bookmark for the site.

The Middle English Dictionary at the University of Michigan

The idea for a dictionary of Middle English (the variety of English spoken and written between circa 1100 and circa 1500) based on historical principles goes back to 1919, when William Alexander Craigie (1867-1957), the third editor of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), proposed a series of national and period dictionaries of English to extend and supplement the treatment in the OED, and these dictionaries began to take shape in the 1920s. The present *Middle English Dictionary* (MED) began life at the University of Michigan in 1930 when the OED donated all of its Middle English slips (both those used in the printed dictionary and those rejected) and Cornell University transferred both the materials assembled before 1914 by Ewald Flügel for his projected Chaucer dictionary and the Middle English supplementary material collected at Cornell between 1925 and 1930 under the auspices of the Modern Language Association of America. The reason for the choice of Michigan was that it was thought that the progress of the MED might be facilitated by the presence at the University of the files for a dictionary of Early Modern English (the variety spoken and written between circa 1500 and circa 1700), which Charles Carpenter Fries (1887-1967) had begun to assemble a few years earlier.

During the years of the first two editors, Samuel Moore (1930-34) and Thomas A. Knott (1935-45), which coincided with the Depression and World War II, the main activity of the small staff, assisted by a number of volunteers, was to carry out an extensive reading program to supplement the original collection of citations. (The reading program has continued until recently for newly edited or reedited texts, with the result that our collection

now contains over three million quotations from all genres of Middle English, including surnames and place names, taken primarily from printed editions but supplemented from manuscript facsimiles for works and genres not available in printed editions, such as documentary material, medicine, popular science, and the like.) In addition, between 1930 and 1945 the staff completed a dialect survey (published in 1935), experimented with editorial plans, and did some preliminary editing according to a limited plan devised by Knott.

It was not until 1946-47, however, when newly appointed editor Hans Kurath devised and put into practice a more ambitious editorial plan (closer to the one envisioned by Moore) that the editing began to be carried out in a systematic way. The new form of editing began with the letters E and F, and then went on to A through D, which had been edited according to Knott's plan but were postponed for re-editing until Kurath's plan had been tried out on new letters. This plan consists of definitions conveyed in the briefest form possible, a copious display of quotations, and a full and systematic treatment of spellings, grammatical forms, and regional variants. It has been followed in broad outline and basic essentials ever since. During the remainder of Kurath's editorship (1946-61) and into that of his successor, Sherman M. Kuhn (1961-83), the editing progressed slowly but deliberately, with a staff that fluctuated between four and seven part-time editors, reaching the middle of the letter M by the end of 1974.

From 1930 to 1974 the project was supported almost entirely by the University of Michigan, except for some assistance in the 1930s from the American Council of Learned Societies and the Rockefeller Foundation. In 1974, in order to hasten the completion of the editing, application was made to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for funds to expand the editorial staff; the application was successful, and in 1975-76 eight new full-time editors were appointed. In 1980 the National Endowment for the Humanities began to provide both outright and matching funds, and from 1980 to the end of 1996 the editing was supported jointly by the Mellon Foundation and the National Endowment, with contributions from well over two hundred individuals and institutions who responded to fund-raising appeals in North America during 1993-96 helping to support the final stages. Between 1975 and 1996, during the remainder of Kuhn's editorship and into Robert E. Lewis's (1982-), with a staff that fluctuated between seven and thirteen editors (nearly all full time), the editing proceeded at a faster rate, despite the fact that the amount of data was increasing (especially during the 1980s) through the continuing extraction of quotations from newly edited texts. Finally, in late 1997, roughly fifty years after it began according to Kurath's plan, the editing

was completed by a reduced staff of editors—a milestone in the history of the MED.

The first fascicle (the early part of the letter E) was published by the University of Michigan Press in 1952, and between then and 1984 fascicles (normally of 128 pages) appeared at an average rate of two per year, progressing from E and F to A through D, then from G to the end of P. In 1984 the original typewriter-generated system of producing final copy was replaced with a computer-assisted system, and since then fascicles have appeared at an average rate of three per year, from Q through the recently published W-8 (the last part of W). The copy for the final X-Y-Z fascicle will be ready for the printer in May of 2001, at which point the MED will run to some 15,000 pages in thirteen volumes, with approximately 55,000 separate entries and 900,000 quotations. The final revised editorial plan (which will describe the editorial policies and practice as they have evolved over the years) and a comprehensive bibliography will be completed during the summer of 2001.

Since 1997, thanks to a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and with support from various units at the University of Michigan, an electronic version of the MED has been in preparation, under the direction of John Price-Wilkin and Frances McSparran; it constitutes one of the three resources in the Middle English Compendium now in progress (the other two are the HyperBibliography of Middle English Prose and Verse, based on the MED bibliographies, and the Corpus of Middle English Prose and Verse, a series of fully searchable electronic texts linked to the HyperBibliography). The letters A through P of the print MED were keyboarded and then encoded in SGML, and the electronic files of Q through the end of the alphabet have also been encoded in SGML, with the result that all of the existing print MED is now available on-line, and the remainder will go on-line as soon as it is completed, making the contents of the MED more accessible for various kinds of searches than would be possible in the print MED.

The MED, which has been called "the greatest achievement in medieval scholarship in America" and the "most important single project . . . in English historical lexicography being carried out anywhere today," should never have to be redone, at least not from scratch—only supplemented periodically to cover newly edited texts, to correct inadequacies and omissions, and to revise definitions as scholars uncover new information on medieval life, culture, and technology. But even without any supplementation, the MED, with its full documentation of the technical and specialized vocabularies of the period along with the more general and literary ones, will continue to be the definitive treatment of its subject long into the future.

An Editor's Desk

The basic unit of work assigned to an editor is the box, roughly 16" deep and containing up to about 4000 quotation slips. A box normally contains a number of words separated by cardboard guidecards; it may occasionally, in the case of commonly used words, contain only one. After the editor has completed draft entries for the words in the box, they are checked by a reviewer for their adequacy, accuracy, and consistency with MED conventions and then examined by the editor-in-chief to ensure a uniformity of style and quality in their organization, definitions, and form sections and etymologies. The reviewed entries are then entered in the computer, printed out, and proofed, and the illustrative quotations checked against the texts in the MED library. The final camera-ready copy is then printed in fascicles (customarily 128 pages in length, double columns, with large format that is reduced to 8.5 x 11 inches before printing).

The **sorting board** shown, the creation of MED associate editor Oscar Johnson in the 1940s, is very useful as the editor constructs the definitions. It can first be used to sort the quotation slips by date, with a slot for each century or part of a century. It can then be used to separate senses or subsenses, with tentative definitions clipped to the backs of the slots in which the illustrative quotations are dropped. As the sorting, interpretation, and building up of senses continue, the editor may separate the contents of one slot into two or three, or combine the contents of more than one slot into a single one, and in this way by the end of the editing process will have all of the senses and subsenses arranged and labeled.

The sorting board is most useful for large words (occasionally, for the largest words, like the verbs *setten* or *taken* or *willen*, two or more boards will be required). It can also be useful for smaller words as well as for displaying a set of related words or indeed any set of words that would benefit from being looked at together, such as those that could easily be confused (homonyms, for example) or unrelated words that have a similar semantic pattern.

The original *Bibliography* of MED texts, published by the University of Michigan Press in 1954, and the 1984 *Supplement* were consulted by the editors for the styling of the short titles and the locations of the corresponding texts in the MED library.

Displayed on the left are cut-ups (arranged by headword) from J. S. P. Tatlock and A. G. Kennedy's Chaucer Concordance (1927), which the editor would examine and transfer to the preferred editions of Chaucer's works. On the right is *The Riverside Chaucer* (general editor, Larry D. Benson, 1987), which is now the preferred edition for all of those works except the *Canterbury Tales* and the *Romaunt of the Rose*; the text involved here is the *Boece*, Chaucer's translation of Boethius's *De Consolatione Philosophiae*.

CASE 7

The Editing Process: Photographs from the Early 1960s

The first step in constructing an entry is to arrange the slips for each word in chronological order. In the first photograph above Suksan Kim chronologizes the slips and then passes them on to editors Helen Kao and Charles Palmer, who study them for their meanings, arrange the slips in semantic categories, write the definitions, and then pass their draft entries on to the chief editor Sherman Kuhn, who reviews them, determines the etymology, and writes the form sections. In the last photograph on the right Kuhn (center) is shown conferring with editors Margaret Ogden (left) and John Reidy.

CASE 8

The Compositing Process in the Early 1960s

In the photograph above compositor Mary Wilde types the text of the final copy on an IBM electric typewriter; for this process two typewriters are used, one for the secretarial font and another for the boldfaced font. She then (in the photograph on the right) does the page make-up, taping the two columns onto a larger sheet of paper. Two final pages are shown, the first page of the first fascicle published by the University of Michigan Press in 1952 (the beginning of the letter E) and one from the letter G, composited at about the time of the photographs.

CASE 9

The Reading Program

Between 1930 and the end of World War II much of the time and energy of the limited MED staff was devoted to the collecting of data in the form of quotations through a systematic reading program. This is the most time-consuming part in the creation of any dictionary, but it is an absolutely essential element, for without a thorough and reliable method of gathering data, there cannot be a reliable dictionary.

The nucleus of the MED's collection of quotations is the OED Middle English collection, estimated at various sizes at various times but probably amounting to approximately 430,000 slips. It provided, as Sherman Kuhn has said, "an excellent readymade collection, [but] it did not fully solve the collecting problem" ("On the Making of the Middle English Dictionary," *Dictionaries* 4 (1982): 19). For one thing, the OED reading program showed a bias towards imaginative literature, and also, as editor Samuel Moore observed, "some of the works read and excerpted for the O[E]D had been inadequately dealt with by nineteenth-century readers and a few significant works had been missed altogether. Moreover, untrained readers . . . showed a tendency to fix upon the unusual in language, the 'quaint' word or the 'bizarre' turn of speech, to the neglect of common words used in ordinary senses and in everyday constructions. To a lexicographer, both the unusual and the commonplace are important . . . In short, there were gaps in the O[E]D collection which could be remedied only by further collecting" (Kuhn, p. 19). Moore did this by enlisting nearly all the outstanding Middle English scholars of the time, as well as others, not to mention members of his own staff (nearly 200 people were involved), and they read all available Middle English texts, both literary and other. By the time of Moore's death in 1934, the collection, which had begun with some 600,000 slips (counting both the OED and Cornell donations), had grown to nearly 900,000 slips.

The reading program was continued under the next editor, Thomas Knott, in three areas which had either been ignored or slighted before: (a) English words in Latin and Old French documents—a rich source of "the names of household utensils, tools of trade or agriculture, articles of food, local taxes, folk customs, etc." (Kuhn, p. 19); (b) scientific and technical works, in medicine, both human and veterinary, alchemy, astronomy, music, law, and the like; and (c) place and personal names, which often give us our first occurrences of words remaining from Old English. By the end of Knott's editorship it was estimated that the total number of slips in the files was 1,360,400.

The reading program continued under Kurath and Kuhn, and has continued to the present, as editions of hitherto unpublished Middle English texts began to appear with ever-increasing frequency after World War II and many previously edited texts began to be reedited, especially from the 1970s onward. The collection now contains over 3,000,000 quotations from all genres of Middle English, taken primarily from printed editions but supplemented from manuscript facsimiles for works and genres not available in printed editions, such as documentary material, medicine, popular science, and the like.

For analyses of the MED reading program see two articles by former associate editor David Jost, "The Reading Program of the Middle English Dictionary: Evaluation and Instructions" and "Survey of the Reading Program of the *Middle English Dictionary*" in *Dictionaries* 6 (1984): 113-27 and 7 (1985): 201-13, respectively.

Examples of slips donated by the OED contain the short titles assigned by the MED along with those assigned by the OED. Note on the backs of some the three categories stamped on all slips by the OED: 'OED Copy' (that is, used in the original published OED), 'OED Unused,' and 'OED Suppl.' (that is, originally intended for use in the 1933 Supplement).

Some examples of slips transferred from Cornell University. These are nearly always on 3 x 5 inch cards, sometimes with a full quotation but more often with just a reference to the text and page or line number in question. Note on the backs of some the stamps assigned to these slips. When used in the MED, these cards were taped to larger slips for ease of handling.

Some examples of slips generated at the University of Michigan at various times in its history. Sometimes they were handwritten; sometimes typewritten; sometimes stenciled, for ease of use in more than one word (thus the term "stencil" used at the MED for short title). Note the one blue manuscript reproduction, the relevant passage of which the MED editor has transcribed, with short title.

And some slips created by ingenious editors that were nearly included!

Case 10

Then and Now

From its beginnings in 1930 to 1975 the MED was housed in cramped quarters on the fifth floor of Angell Hall. Shown is a photograph of the main editors' room.

When the staff was expanded in 1975 as a result of a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the project was moved to an off-campus building at 555 South Forest (the corner of South Forest and South University), where it has remained to the present, first on the fourth floor and, since 1982, on the third floor. This is a photograph of the "big room" on the third floor, where most of the editors had their desks.

The Staff In 2001

Back row, from left: Rina Kor, Robert Lewis, Chris Scherer, Mona Logarbo
Front row, from left: Karen Pritula, Lidie Howes, Mary Jane Williams, Marilyn Miller
Missing: Olivia Bottum

Head of Production Lidie Howes (left) and Systems Analyst Marilyn Miller looking over a final page of a W-fascicle.

Bibliographer Mary Jane Williams working on the final bibliography, which will combine the original 1954 and supplemental 1984 bibliographies and add the texts that have been introduced into the corpus since 1984.

Case 11

Two Texts Frequently Used by the MED

Chauliac

Guy de Chauliac's *Chirurgia Magna*, written in Latin in 1363, was one of the most important and influential of medieval surgical texts. It appears in a number of Middle English versions, of which two full translations were made in the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century. One of these the

MED calls *Chauliac(1)*, the preferred manuscript of which is New York Academy of Medicine 12. For a long time, in the absence of a printed edition, the MED used a facsimile of the manuscript as its preferred edition; between 1964 and 1988, however, Björn Wallner published separate editions of five (of seven) books, and the MED now uses these printed editions wherever possible.

The other full translation the MED calls *Chauliac(2)*, edited from the unique manuscript, Paris Bibliothèque Nationale anglais 25, by Margaret Ogden, a specialist in medieval medicine who was an editor on the MED from the 1930s to the early 1970s; before the appearance of her edition in 1971 a facsimile of the manuscript was also used as the preferred edition.

The facsimile of New York Academy of Medicine 12 is open to a section of Book II. Wallner's edition, bound in red, and Ogden's edition of the Paris manuscript, bound in brown, are open at the corresponding place; a photocopy of Chauliac's Latin text appears to the left. Note the references in the margins of all texts, which enable the MED editor to move easily from *Chauliac(1)* to *Chauliac(2)* and to the Latin original.

Cursor Mundi

The *Cursor Mundi* is a huge verse history (in nearly 30,000 lines) of mankind from the Creation to Doomsday, composed in the north of England during the first quarter of the fourteenth century (though all of the nine extant manuscripts are circa 1400 or later). The poem exists in two main versions, a northern (edited by Richard Morris) and a southern (edited by Sarah Horrall and others). The northern version was heavily extracted, by one person, for the OED, and those slips frequently turn up in the MED entries. The interest of this text for the MED is twofold: (1) because Morris's edition has the manuscripts laid out in parallel columns, and with others able to be put side by side for comparison, one can see how subsequent scribes changed what they had in front of them as they wrote; and (2) because eight of the nine manuscripts have been localized by the *Linguistic Atlas of Late Mediaeval English* (1986), the text is an important source of dialectal spellings.

Here Morris's edition of four parallel manuscripts appears in the center of the grouping, with the same passages from the fragmentary manuscript from the Royal College of Physicians in Edinburgh (edited consecutively by Morris in a later volume) and from the preferred manuscript of the southern version, Arundel LVII from the College of Arms in London (bound in blue) on either side.

Case 12

The Production Process in 2000

In 1984, in order to speed up publication, the typewriter-generated system of producing copy was replaced with a computer-generated one. Since then the reviewed copy (in slip-form) has been entered in the computer, printed out and inserted in what is called the "A-notebook" (above), which is then proofed and the quotations checked against the original texts, and read through by the Head of Production and again by the Editor-in-Chief. The corrections are entered in the computer, and the copy is printed out again, in a single column with justified margins, and inserted in what is called the "B-notebook" (a page of which appears in the center). Finally the two-column final pages are printed in large format (a recent example is on the right) and sent to a local printer, Cushing-Malloy, for photographing and printing in fascicle-form (usually of 128 pages), with pages that are 8.5 x 11 inches.

Case 13

Physical Appearance

A page from an A-fascicle, produced on the two electric typewriters.

When the typewriter-generated system was replaced with the computer-generated system in 1984, the format of the earlier page was kept, as in this page from an S-fascicle.

With the first T-fascicle, thanks to a customized package of Times Roman softfonts, formatting changes were incorporated to increase readability (the most important of which were italicized short titles for the Middle English texts and boldfaced dates), and these changes have been retained throughout the rest of the alphabet, as seen in this fascicle for the letter 'W'.

The physical appearance of the on-line MED text can be seen in Case 6 and at the computer terminal to the right. The electronic version of the MED is one of three resources in the Middle English Compendium as described on these introductory pages for the MEC.

Case 14

Chief Editors

Samuel Moore (1930-34)

Thomas A. Knott (1935-45)

Hans Kurath (1946-61)

Sherman M. Kuhn (1961-83)

Robert E. Lewis (1982-2001)

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