

The Compilation of CoER: The Corpus of Early English Recipes

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Abstract

The Corpus of Early English Recipes (CoER) aims at compiling Middle English and Renaissance recipes of varied contents. These fall within the categories given in the electronic catalogue for the indexing of Middle English scientific manuscripts by Voigts and Kurtz (2002), namely alchemical, book production, clothworking, cosmetic, culinary, dental, dyes and pigments, falconry, fishing, etc.; with the exception of the categories magic and taking birds, which are not included in CoER. The project has developed rapidly since it started in 2005 with the addition of new material. The team seeks the compilation of no less than three million words; at present, we have collected nearly 500,000, mostly Middle and early Modern English medical texts.

The present paper describes the objectives envisaged for the Corpus, the material the team has selected for compilation and the criteria followed for such a selection of texts. The Corpus is innovative in the sense that we are typing the texts directly into machine from the original sources: manuscripts and printed books (not from already published critical editions). Besides, I will point out the problems found during the transcription process, and the ways in which the team has solved them following an agreed methodology. This presentation will also cover aspects related to the computing tools for text compilation and data retrieval. CoER will allow scholars to analyse both the use of English with the constraints imposed mainly by the variables of situation, but also the textual realisations regardless their topic.

References

Voigts, Linda Ehrensam and Patricia Deery Kurtz. 2001. *Scientific and Medical Writings in Old and Middle English: An Electronic Reference*. CD-ROM. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

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