

# The Potential of the Historical Thesaurus of English

Christian Kay  
University of Glasgow

Historical Text-Mining Workshop, Lancaster 20/7/06

# Historical Thesaurus of English

- Oxford English Dictionary (OED, second edition)
- Dictionaries of Old English
- 650,000 meanings in 26 major semantic fields.

<http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/sesll/englang/thesaur/homepage.htm>

# State of Play

- MS Access database
- Apache HTTP
- MySQL
- PHP (Hypertext Preprocessor)
- *Thesaurus of Old English*: TOE-online
  
- <http://libra.englang.arts.gla.ac.uk/oethesaurus/>
- <http://www.oenewsletter.org/OEN/reports.php>

# Basic searches

<http://leo.englann.arts.gla.ac.uk/historicalthesaurus/>

Synonyms in category 03.01.01.03.03. ./ 02. . . . - n - (.grandfather)

Main heading	Word						
Grandparent	ealda fæder	n	OE				
Grandparent	ieldra fæder	n	OE				
Grandparent	eldfather	n	OE -	1460			
	< ealdefæder						
Grandparent	grandsire	n	c	1290	-	1876	ai&dl
Grandparent	aiel	n		1377	-	1502	
Grandparent	belsire	n		1377	-	a	1631
Grandparent	grandfather	n		1424			-

# Lexical Searches for the Arts and Humanities

(AHRC-ICT Resource Development Project AR112456)

- to demonstrate how a project developed largely to meet the needs of one field (English Historical Linguistics) can have applications in other disciplines.
- to demonstrate how electronic resources can enhance, and indeed promote, research in the Arts and Humanities.



# Historical Thesaurus of English



Sections Available

About HTE Online

Results Layout

Search Menu

Links

## Please select the type of search you wish to do.

This will search the whole database and display the section names(s) where a target word is located. Then proceed to browse headings, words and dates under concept. This is especially useful where a word occurs in more than one section.

### [Browse](#) -

### [Synonym search](#) -

As above and leads on to display synonyms under the chosen heading.

### [Label](#) -

List words and dates with selected style & status labels.

### [Affix](#) -

Lists words with specified affixes, the dates and the headings under which they occur.

### [Part of speech](#) -

Lists words restricted by part of speech, the dates and the headings under which they occur.

### [Dates](#) -

Choose type of date search then follow on to choose section for date search.

# Currently available searches

- **Browse** Search the whole database and display the section names(s) where a target word is located. Then proceed to browse headings, words and dates under concept.
- **Synonym search** As above and leads on to display synonyms under the chosen heading.
- **Label** List words and dates with selected style & status labels.
- **Affix** Lists words with specified affixes, the dates and the headings under which they occur.
- **Part of speech** Lists words restricted by part of speech, the dates and the headings under which they occur.
- **Dates** Choose type of date search then follow on to choose section for date search.

# Computational potential

- Detailed and logical taxonomy
  - Clothing     $\Leftrightarrow$     A hat with a bobble
  - Clothing: 8751 lexical entries; 2212 headings
- Text mining using contemporary words
- Probability-based methods disambiguating polysemous word forms
  - Was *gout* discussed in this 16th century medical text? Are there other books on the subject?

# Synonyms in category 01.02.01.01.04.17.06/ 05. . . . - n - (.gout)

## Main heading Word

Disorders of joints	fotadl	n	OE
Disorders of joints	fotcoþu	n	OE
Disorders of joints	fotwærc	n	OE
Disorders of joints	lipa	n	OE
Disorders of joints	drop < dropa	n	OE + 1559 (2)
Disorders of joints	podagre	n	c 1290 - 1578
Disorders of joints	<b>gout</b>	n	c 1290
Disorders of joints	podagra	n	1398
Disorders of joints	arthritic n		1486
Disorders of joints	arthritis n		1544
Disorders of joints	joint-sickness	n	1545 + 1684
Disorders of joints	leaping gout	n	1562
Disorders of joints	goutiness	n	1632 + 1820
Disorders of joints	wind-gout	n	1662

# Contact

Prof. Christian Kay  
Dept. of English Language  
University of Glasgow  
12 University Gardens  
Glasgow G12 8QQ

<http://www.arts.gla.ac.uk/sesli/englang/thesaur/homepage.htm>