

THE CATHOLICON ANGLICUM (1483): A RECONSIDERATION

Gabriele Stein, Heidelberg

Introductory comments

Within the history of English lexicography, bilingual word lists with the language order Latin-English precede those with the order English-Latin. Stein (1985) compared the two earliest English-Latin dictionaries, the *Promptorium parvulorum* (1440) and the *Catholicon Anglicum* (1483) and suggested that the overall organization of the *Catholicon Anglicum* seems to be more geared towards the encoding language needs of the 15th-century English person learning Latin than was the case with the *Promptorium parvulorum*. In the present article, this suggestion is taken up and developed further by looking at the *Catholicon Anglicum* from learners' point of view. It is shown that the compiler's strategies to meet the learners' needs interestingly anticipate the pedagogical and lexicographical methods that became commonplace in learners' dictionaries only several centuries later.

In *The English Dictionary before Cawdrey* (1985), I compared the first Latin-English dictionaries, the *Medulla grammaticae* and the *Ortus vocabulorum*, and the first English-Latin dictionaries, the *Promptorium parvulorum* and the *Catholicon Anglicum*. Within the history of English lexicography, bilingual word lists with the language order Latin-English precede those with the order English-Latin. The sources of these types of dictionaries are the great Latin dictionaries of the Middle Ages as well as the works of classical Latin authors. Compilers of early Latin-English dictionaries could therefore put their headword list together by selecting Latin entry

words from the various sources consulted and then supply English translation equivalents for them. This is what they did, and when an English equivalent was not known or at hand, the space was simply left empty.

For compilers of early English-Latin dictionaries, the lexicographical task was more difficult. They had to compile an English headword list and had to decide which English spelling to choose for the lemma (obviously, more of a problem than where the English form merely glossed a Latin word). They might, of course, have turned around Latin-English word lists, making the English equivalent the headword and the Latin lemma the corresponding translation equivalent. That this was one of the lexicographical working practices becomes manifest from a close study of early bilingual dictionaries matching Latin and English.

Comparing the two earliest English-Latin dictionaries and trying to establish the lexicographical methods used by their compilers, I suggested in 1985 that the overall organization of the *Catholicon Anglicum* seems to be more geared towards the encoding language needs of the 15th-century English person learning Latin than was the case with the *Promptorium parvulorum*. The earliest dated manuscript of the latter goes back to 1440 and that of the *Catholicon Anglicum* to 1483, which puts nearly two generations between the two works.

In the present article, I would like to come back to this suggestion and develop it further by looking at the *Catholicon Anglicum* from a learner's point of view.¹

My textual basis is the only edition that exists of the work, provided by Sidney J.H. Herrtage and published in 1881. Herrtage had intended his edition as a companion to Albert Way's three-volume edition of the *Promptorium parvulorum*, published 1843-1865, and therefore introduced a number of symbols (a dagger, an asterisk) to indicate whether the entry word had already been discussed by Way in the *Promptorium parvulorum* edition or whether it was unique to the *Catholicon Anglicum*. These edito-

rial additions will be ignored here. The same holds for Herrtage's insertions of readings from BM Add. MS. 15,562. His expansions of contractions in the Monson manuscript will be silently adopted, without typographical indication.

Assuming that medieval Latin dictionaries and inverted Latin-English word lists constituted the working bases for 15th-century compilers of English-Latin dictionaries, their first task will have been to select from this rich word stock those lexical items that were to be included in their respective dictionaries. The respective compilers of the *Promptorium parvulorum* and the *Catholicon Anglicum* acquitted themselves well and in similar ways. They opted to exclude material that was regarded as too encyclopedic in nature, and thus only a few proper names appear in their dictionaries (cf. Stein 1985: 96-7; 110). They also excluded specialized vocabulary. Lexical coverage in the first English-Latin dictionaries was thus much smaller than in the Latin-English dictionaries: Huntsman's edition of the *Medulla grammaticae* has nearly 17,000 entries (Huntsman 1973: xxviii), whereas the *Promptorium parvulorum* has about 12,000 and the *Catholicon Anglicum* one third less, about 8,000 (Stein 1985: 110).

The next major task was to determine the order in which the headwords were to be arranged. It is here that the compiler of the *Promptorium* and the *Catholicon* took quite different decisions. The compiler of the *Promptorium parvulorum*, a Dominican friar from Lynn Episcopi in Norfolk, stayed within the tradition which had by then developed for bilingual word lists: the overriding lexicographical principle was the grammatical one, the alphabetical one was subordinate. The word list was divided into a "nominale", containing all lexical items which were not verbs, and a "verbale", listing all the verbs. Grammatical homonyms are thus separated. The unknown compiler of the *Catholicon Anglicum*, however, made alphabetical order the overriding principle, thus producing a single word list for his users instead of two, which must have made con-

sultation more difficult and time-consuming. Yet alphabetical order is interrupted and interspersed with word-family organization. This morphological principle may have been suggested to the compiler by the Latin source material. Take the entries based on the adjective lemma *soft*:

Softe; molis, molliculus, mulcibris.

to make **Softe**; mollificare, mollire,
de-, e-, mollitare.

to be **Softe**; mollere, e-, mollescere,
e-.

a **Softnes**; mollicia, mollicies.

In a Latin-English word list, alphabetical order would have linked the items *molis* (mollis), *mollere*, *mollescere*, *mollicia*, *mollicies*, *molliculus*, *mollire*, *mollitare*, etc. By changing the language order, the English translation equivalents *soft*, *to make soft*, *to be soft*, *softness* would have come to be headwords. The compiler then decided to leave the word family together, not entering *to make soft* under *m*, and *to be soft* under *b* as the Lynn friar might have done. Yet the compiler of the *Catholicon Anglicum* also assembled word family entries independently from a pre-given Latin alphabetical list, as can be shown with the lexical entries based on the verb *to eat*:

to **Ete**; epulari, con-, comedere, comessare, vessi, con-, edere, conex-, fagin grece, mandare, manducare, papare, prendere, pransare, pransitare.

Eteabylle; comessibilis, edilis,

an **Eter**; comestor.

an **Etynge**; comestio, commessacio.

Etynge; edax, edaculus, edens.

an **Etynge place**; pransorium.

Etyn; commestus, estus, esus, mansus,
pransus.

Clear proof that the compiler was concerned with observing word families in the headword structure of the *Catholicon Anglicum* as a lexicographical principle comes from his policy of providing antonyms for verbs and adjectives, e.g.:

to **Close;** vallare, sepire, circum-, ob-
to vn**Close;** dissepire, discludere.

Frendly; Amicalis, Amicabilis, hu-
manus, Amicus, & comparatur
Amicior, Amicissimus.

vn **Frendly;** inhumanus, inimicus;
inhumane, inhumaniter.

As we can see from the examples *to vn Close* and *vn Frendly* capitalization has been given the role of highlighting the lexical basis of the word family. Ordinarily, the use of capitals in early word lists was mainly to signal the beginning of a new line. In the *Catholicon Anglicum* it identifies the headword lexeme and thus even penetrates the word level when the word is a complex one, such as a prefixal derivative.

The examples quoted show another distinctive feature of the *Catholicon Anglicum*: English nouns are preceded by a determiner and verbs are listed with the particle *to*. In this case, too, it may have been the inversion of Latin-English word lists to English-Latin ones that prompted the compiler to give such “prelemmatic” items (cf. Stein 1997: 197). It was quite common practice in Latin-English word lists to render Latin nouns, whether or not preceded by a gender-indicating demonstrative (*hic, hec, hoc*), by an English translation equivalent, specifying at the same time the

grammatical class (*a* for countable nouns, a zero article for uncountable nouns, and *the* for nouns of unique reference). And verbs were preceded by the particle *to* to signal infinitive status. The compiler of the *Catholicon Anglicum* obviously decided to carry these grammatical features over into his English headword list. One may wonder why English native learners of Latin should be told that verbs in their mother tongue were preceded by *to*, or that nouns had to be used with a specific kind of determiner. There is no way of knowing whether the compiler may have meant to further his users' grammatical education in the mother tongue. Yet what is manifest from the compiler's decision is that in retaining the prelemmatic features he achieves a clear grammatical differentiation of homonyms. The searching eyes of the dictionary users would have been able to identify the lexical item they were looking for at a single quick glance.

It thus looks as if the compiler of the *Catholicon Anglicum* by means of prelemmatic grammatical elements and by capitalization of the headwords proper increased their accessibility for the dictionary users. And in linking this with a word-family organization he supplied his learners with the necessary linguistic items allowing rephrasing in a different form, thus helping the learners to express themselves in Latin. A further indication of the compiler's concern to enable his dictionary users to find what they are looking for is the cross-reference system in the *Catholicon Anglicum*, co-referring spelling variants and synonyms.

I turn now to the foreign language component of the dictionary to look into what the compiler singled out from the rich description of Latin found in his source material.

Variations in form are given, e.g.:

a **Bachelor**; bacalarius vel bacularius.

a **Brassure**; braciace vel brachiale.

a **Crab**; Arbitum vel Arbota.

In cases where a Latin vowel is contracted or should not be contracted, attention is drawn to the correct pronunciation:

vn **Lyke**; dissimilis, insimilis, dispar
 correpto -a- , separ omnis generis,
 correpto A in obliquis.
a **Manslaer**; assisini, grassator.
 homicida, letifur, correpto [i],
 plagiarius, sicarius, spiculator.
an **Oxe stalle**; bostar, -ris, produc-
 to A, bucetum.

For nouns grammatical gender as well as the genitive form is given, for adjectives the masculine, feminine and neuter form is provided, e.g.:

An **Abbacy**; hec Abbacia e.
Abbott; hic Abbas tis.
Abylle; hic hec Abilis & hoc le,
 Aptus a um, conueniens, congruus
 a um, consonus a um, Idoneus
 a um, hic hec vtensilis & hoc le.

The compiler is quite aware that with nouns referring to a person gender in English is covert and he therefore supplies the forms for the male and female in Latin, e.g.:

a **Diffamer**; diffamator, -trix.
a **Grawnter**; largitor vel -trix.
a **Leper**; saltator, -trix.

Occasionally, grammatical complementation is explicitly stated, e.g.

to **Counselle**; consiliare, consulere,
suadere, iudicare, & tunc con-
struitur cum datiuo caso.

a **Thowsande**; Millenarius, Millenus,
Millecies, mille indeclinabile & hec
milia -lium differentia (inter mille
et millia secundum Ugonem) mille
notat vnum millenarium, & milia
notat plures millenarios indeter-
minate, vnde recepit adiectiua, vt
duo milia, & potest esse oratio &
cetera; construitur cum genitivo
plurali.

The entry may be accompanied by an example showing the construc-
tional pattern in actual use:

Borñ; natus, ortus, oriundus &
construitur cum genitiuo, vt
'sum oriundus parcium tuarum'.

to **Seme**, or **it Semes**; decet, -bat
personale vel impersonale; vt toga
decet me, impersonale vt decet me
loqui.

to **Sit on A horse**; jnsedere & con-
struitur cum datiuo, vt: jnsedeo
equo vel eque.

But such illustrative examples also occur without a specific construction pattern having been outlined. They illustrate the use of adjectives, nouns, grammatical words such as *how* and *or*, and, above all, verbs. Here are some examples:

Berynge; ferax, vt, 'istud solum
est ferax frugum; jsta aqua est
ferax nauium;'

Stille; placidus, pacificus, quietus,
tacitus, taciturnus, tranquillus,
suspensus, vt: ille sedet suspensus.

a **Fronte;** frontispicium, vt frontispicium ecclesiarum.

an **Image;** jmago, caracer, effigies,
figura, sculptile, signum; vt:
vidi signum sancti johannis;
...

Howe; qualiter, quomodo, quam;
ut, nescis quam male loquitur iste
de te; vel sic, quam bene diligis
me, cum similibus.

Or; Aut, vel sev, que: vt iohannes
Robertusque legit; sive.

to **Parysche;** perire, valere, vt
valeant i. pereant inimici regis.

to **Plese**; libere, -bescere, placere,
per-, vacare vt vacat michi scrib-
ere. i. placet.

to **Set jn stede**; substituere, sufficere,
ut: sufficio te in loco meo.

to **Smyte out**; labifacere, vt: ego
labifaciam dentes tuos.

As we can see, the phrase and sentence examples are always introduced by the particle *ut* and they represent ordinary language use. They are not translated into English, the learners' mother tongue. Illustrative examples in the learners' mother tongue translated into the foreign language were to be one of the outstanding characteristics of the first English dictionary matching two vernaculars, John Palsgrave's *Lesclarcissement de la langue francoyse* of 1530 (cf. Stein 1997).

Scholars have drawn attention to the wealth of Latin synonyms included in the *Catholicon Anglicum* and the many superb synonym discriminations helping learners to pick the right Latin word when writing or composing a text (cf. Starnes 1954: 22; Stein 1985: 113-5). Here are some examples:

Dumme; mutus, elinguatus, sine
lingua est, elinguis habet linguam
set eius caret vsu.

an **Ere**; Auris hominum est, Auri-
cula brutorum, Ansa est olle,
Ansula diminutivum; Auricu-
laris, Auricus.

an **Example**; exemplum, exemplar,
exemplum est dictum vel factum

alicuius autentice persone mutacione dignum, sed exemplar est ad cuius similitudinem ad fit simile, jdea, parabola, paradiogma.

Such meaning differentiations may be accompanied by collocation patterns, e.g.:

a **Drope**; gutta est grauioris humoris ut mellis; guttula est diminutiuum, guttosus participium; stilla est leuioris ut aque: vel dicitur gutta dum pendet vel stat, stilla cum illa cadit; stillicidium, mitos, grece.

to **Sownde**; strepere, As-, per-, populi est, crepare, con-, crepitare, ignis crepitat, aqua murmurat, ferrum stridet, sonare, per-, re-, jn-, reboare, tinnire, tinnitare.

The semantic discrimination of Latin synonyms may also include mnemonic verses. These may be more personal in style, including pronouns of the first or second person, thus addressing or involving the dictionary learner, e.g.:

to **Drynke**; bibere, con-, potare, con-e-, haurire; versus:
¶ Poto, do potum; poto, sumo michi potum.
Calicare; bibit qui aliquid relinquit, ebibit qui totum bibit.
bibimus ex necessitate, Pota-

mus ex voluntate. Sebibere
est scorsum bibere.

to **Forgete**; descire, dediscere, ob-
liuisci, obliuioni tradere, igno-
r[ar]e; vnde versus:

¶ Hoc ignoramus quod notum
non memoramus,
Illud nescimus quod nunquam
mente subimus,
Obliuiscemur prius hoc quod in
Arte docemur.

The word-family principle which we have noted in the arrangement of the English headwords is also manifest in the Latin section of the dictionary. After the immediate translation equivalents further Latin derivatives of the latter are provided, thus offering more choice to the learner. Such vocabulary additions (by way of derivational formations) typically comprise:

- (1) Derived adjectives ('participium' is the term used for 'adjective' in the *Catholicon Anglicum*) for nouns, e.g.:

Crystalle; cristallus; cristallinus participium.

a **Daynte**; dilicee, lauticia, lauticie,
epule; delicatus, deliciosus, lautus
participia.

- (2) Diminutive derivatives for nouns, e.g.:

a **Fische**; piscis, pisciculus diminiu-
tium.

a **Hanselle**; Arabo, strena, strenula
diminutivum; strenicus & stren-
osus, participia.

- (3) Locative derivatives for nouns, specifying where the referent of the noun is found:

a **Crekethole**; grillarium, grilletum
est locus vbi habundant.

an **Ellyrtre**; Alnus; alnicetum est
locus vbi crescunt.

- (4) Words relating to ill-health may be followed by a derivative referring to someone who is a sufferer e.g.:

þe **Dropsye**; idropis; jdropicus qui
patitur infirmitatem.

þe **Emeraudes**; emoroide, emorois;
emoroissus qui patitur talem
infirmitatem.

- (5) Abstract and agential nouns derived from verbs may be listed, e.g.:

to **Discharge**; exonerare, -tor, -trix,
& -cio.

to **Ondyr putte**; supponere, -tor, -trix
& -cio; -ens participium.

Occasionally, the morphological analysis becomes an explanation of the word origin, as in:

A **Nampkyn**; Manifra, manupium A manu & pio i. purgare, manifra dicitur de manu & foros i. ferre.
 a **Schryne**; colossium, quia ibi coluntur ossa, capsula, capsula, capsella.

In content, such explanations resemble the type of special or usage notes found in modern dictionaries, added in an extra paragraph at the end of a dictionary entry. That the concept of such additional notes was not unfamiliar to the compiler of the *Catholicon Anglicum* emerges from entries like the following:

Odde; disper, inequalis, impar .i. sine pare. Et nota quod omnia composita de hoc par sunt omnium generum.

Vn Abylle; inabilis.

Regula

¶ Nota quod omnia huiusmodi idiomatajncipiencia ab vn sunt requirenda ad sua simplicia; verbi gratia **vnabylle** vbi **abylle**.

And just as modern learners' dictionaries draw attention to divided usage in such notes, the compiler of the *Catholicon* occasionally comments on differences in usage or even disputed usage. The comment may be general as in:

Hardes; stuppa; quidam dicunt
stupa.

Or it may relate to old use, as in:

a **Cankyr**; cancer, -is secundum
antiquos, sed modo est secunde
declinationis, cancer, -cri.

But in most cases, the differences in use are quoted with their authorities, e.g.:

a **Lawe**, fas est lex humana, jus est
lex diuina: versus contrarius
quem ponit hugo; versus:
¶ Ius est humana lex, sed fas
esto diuina.

Saw[n]dyrs; sandix, vel sandex secundum iannensem, est enim genus rubei coloris.

I have tried to show that the *Catholicon Anglicum* is concerned with the specific encoding needs of native-speaking learners. Indeed, its compiler addresses these needs, armed with strategies that interestingly anticipate the pedagogical and lexicographical methods that became commonplace in learners' dictionaries only several centuries later.

Note

1. I am grateful for the help and advice of Randolph Quirk, like me a long-standing friend of the dedicatee, Arne Zettersten.

Works cited

- Herrtage, Sidney J.H. (ed.) 1881. *Catholicon Anglicum, an English-Latin Word-book, Dated 1483*. London: Trübner & Co.
- Huntsman, Jeffrey F. (ed.) 1973. *Pepys MS 2002' Medulla Grammaticae: An Edition*. Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin.
- Mayhew, Anthony L. (ed.) 1908. *The Promptorium Parvulorum. The First English-Latin Dictionary. c. 1440 A.D.* Early English Text Society, Extra Series 102, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co.
- Starnes, Dewitt. T. 1954. *Renaissance Dictionaries: English-Latin and Latin-English*. Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Stein, Gabriele. 1985. *The English Dictionary before Cawdrey*. Lexicographica Series Maior 9, Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Stein, Gabriele. 1997. *John Palsgrave as Renaissance Linguist*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Way, Albert (ed.) 1843-65. *Promptorium Parvulorum Sive Clericorum, Lexicon Anglo-Latinum Princeps, Fratris Galfrido Grammatico Dicto e Predicatoribus Lenne Episcopi: Northfolciensi, A.D. Circa M.CCCC.XL*. 3 vols. London: Camden Society.