

Transcribing and Interpreting Digital Recipe Manuscripts Workshop

Abstracts

SAA 2018

"Cleere as beaten snow"*

Kristen Bennett posted Dec 5, 2017 5:11 AM

Although the *OED* describes “snow” as “A dish or confection resembling snow in appearance, esp. one made by whipping the white of eggs to a creamy consistency,” dated 1597, in the Baumfylde MS, “A receipt for snow” refers both to the “dish” and an ingredient. My initial searches of recipes for/involving snow in *EEBO* and using CQP web have yielded many fascinating results for uses of “snow” as both ingredient and recipe dating (so far) from 1577. Generally, “snow” appears to be a flexible way to describe a dessert (often involving frothy beaten egg whites, or an ingredient in a dessert that can be somewhat vague. Later, in the 19th Century, it becomes a kind of all-purpose descriptor for foods including snow-eggs, snow-cheese, snow-cake, and more.

I propose a two-part project. First, I would like to contribute a series of blog posts to *EMROC* that use Baumfylde’s recipe as a starting point for contextualizing recipes for/involving “snow” historically. How did people make them? How did they incorporate “snow” (as food) into the language when it wasn’t coming from the sky? I will also try out a few recipes to see how “snow” tastes (some of these recipes make me skeptical). Second, I should also like to open a discussion about the challenges of tagging a recipe like “snow” that is also often an ingredient. Plus, while it suggests seasonality, it may have nothing to do with seasonality (I shall also investigate when people make “snow” to glean insight here). Moving forward, I should like to teach my students how to transcribe and encode recipes using TEI guidelines. Dromio, of course, brilliantly simplifies the encoding process, but I hope that suggesting methods for oXygen-based encoding and transcriptions will be useful.

*I borrowed my title - most curiously - from Thomas Watson's *Hekatompathia*. I thought it odd, yet wonderful, to describe a lover as well-beaten egg whites.

The Early Modern Pantry

Danielle Rosvally posted Dec 6, 2017 2:49 PM

Given my background, I tend to see data in everything. With the Baumfylde manuscript, I see a unique opportunity to deconstruct the early modern pantry. What does Mary Baumfylde assume that her readers will have on hand? Which ingredients are most common? And which can be connected to a medicinal use, use as cooking supplies, or both? I'm creating a database that documents the ingredients referenced in Baumfylde, and questions like this will be a matter of extracting and visualizing from there. These are merely examples of what I might find once I have data to play with, and I welcome further questions as I go about putting together the data.

"Usability Testing" Digitized Recipe Books

Margaret Simon posted Dec 8, 2017 11:33 AM

For this seminar, I will continue to pursue research into how transcribing early modern receipt books is experienced by various constituencies, both scholarly and novice, work I have previously undertaken solely via written student reflections. I would like to create a series of video recordings capturing first encounters with the Baumfylde MS (or other receipt MS) in order to better understand how such texts are perceived by different groups of users. The videos would be in the spirit of “usability testing” except with a view not just to the technical aspects of digitization platforms and transcription software but also to the haptic and embodied experience this work requires. My institution provides certain affordances for this project because our department includes programs in linguistics, creative writing, literature, film, and language, writing, and rhetoric. Ideally, I would film scholars from each area working with the chosen text in order to pursue both the above stated research questions and to solicit each scholar’s perhaps different disciplinary questions about the text at hand. I would like to know how staging an interdisciplinary team to transcribe might raise questions not evident to me as a primarily literary scholar. If time permits, I would also like to record graduate and undergraduate student users, and someone who works professionally as a chef, again with an eye to articulating how receipt books can be surprisingly intersectional, enfranchising scholars and enthusiastic amateurs from both inside and outside the academy.

Cooking the Baumfylde Manuscript

Marissa Nicosia posted Dec 8, 2017 5:52 PM

Over the next few months, I am going to transcribe, update, and prepare a variety of recipes from the Baumfylde manuscript and post my findings on [Cooking in the Archives](#). I already tried this recipe for “[Bisket](#)” that has lots of sugar, eggs, and spices, but no butter. They were wonderfully flavorful and had a slightly strange texture. My first post, which I anticipate completing in January 2018, will feature a description of the manuscript (much like [this post in UPenn MS Codex 644](#)) in addition to a transcription, recipe, photos, and discussions of key ingredients. I also plan to investigate how print sources have informed this manuscript (like I do in [this post about UPenn MS Codex 785](#)). Finally, I want to take this series of posts as an opportunity to reflect on making and knowing. One premise of *Cooking in the Archives* is that I can learn something about historical recipe manuscripts by cooking from them. I’ve been thinking and writing about maker’s knowledge most recently by engaging with conversations about “carnal sociology” and “embodied ethnography” in sociology (Waquant, Cruello)

Early Modern Undergraduate Transcription and Editing

Jennifer Forsyth posted Dec 10, 2017 5:11 PM

My ultimate goal for this workshop is to develop a framework for undergraduates (and, potentially, graduate students—I only teach grad classes every few years) to transcribe, edit, publish, and perform research on a variety of early modern texts. Ideally, these texts would contribute more or less directly to an understanding of the Shakespeare plays we are reading that semester and/or themes linked to those plays, such as the senses, humors, or gender; notably, as recipes fulfill all of those, they would make ideal material for study.

In order to accomplish this goal in a meaningful way, one in which the students' work would see publication, I have identified the following steps, though I only expect to make it partway through this list during our workshop:

- a) Identify any sites and/or institutions that would be willing to work with us, either because they already have a history of and procedure for working with undergraduates or because they wish to expand into that area.
- b) Identify a list of texts (books similar in length to Baumfylde, e.g.) that would provide me with enough material for classes for at least the next five years, assuming the optimistic rate of one text per semester.
- c) Network with other professors across my institution and at other institutions who are performing similar work with their students in order to avoid replicating efforts.
- d) Collect materials already available and prepare instructional materials that provide clear directions on how to transcribe, edit, publish, and perform research on those texts.
- e) Make those instructional materials available via an open-access site.
- f) Design an undergraduate digital humanities course that would involve studying literature both by performing more traditional literary analysis and by working to prepare and use texts in a digital lab.

I know many of us have interests that seem to overlap in this area; I would love to work with others who are developing similar projects.

Mary's Metheglin

Keith Botelho posted Dec 10, 2017 8:45 PM

I am currently writing a book on bees in early modern England, and for this workshop, I will take stock of the uses of honey in Mary Baumfylde's receipt book (through 41v—before 1702). In four receipts, small amounts of honey are used as an ingredient: "For a canker in the mouth" (5r); "Against Deafnes" (35r); "A Secrett Quintessence" (36r); "For a Canker" (40r). For these receipts, I will briefly examine how honey is used and what we might conclude about where Baumfylde gets her honey. Might we assume that she keeps bees? I want to focus, however, on Baumfylde's recipe "To Make White Metheglin" (20v//21r), which calls for "a gallon of the finest honey you can get." A gallon! Metheglin is a traditional spiced mead from Wales, a popular drink in seventeenth century England. I want to consider her recipe alongside those found in Sir Kenelme Digby's *The Closet of the Eminently Learned Sir Kenelme Digby Opened* (1669), which contains numerous recipes for white metheglin, including ones from Lady Hungerford, Lady Morice, and Lady Windebanke. How do these recipes compare, and might we think of Mary Baumfylde as their metheglin foremother? Finally, I have convinced a fellow colleague (who also happens to be an experienced brewer) to help me make Baumfylde's metheglin recipe, and I'll detail our process of making (and drinking) a seventeenth-century recipe.

Parts and Wholes: Binaries and Bodily Unity

Nancy Simpson-Younger posted Dec 11, 2017 12:18 AM

In the 1987 foreword to *Awakenings*, Oliver Sacks describes the tension between part-based and person-based perspectives on disease. While a purely part-based approach overlooks “the unity of the organism,” dwelling in “reductive” specifics, a purely “romantic” approach prioritizes holistic description above part-based treatment methodologies--but with less practical results (xxiv, xxv). For Sacks, the great question of 20th-century medical writing is whether these two approaches can be reconciled, providing a practical, treatment-focused perspective that still sees the whole person. But is this dichotomy a uniquely modern phenomenon, or did earlier medical writers also wrestle with the tensions between part-based and person-based views of medicine? Written by a range of different hands between 1626 and the eighteenth century, the Baumfylde manuscript allows us to examine the nature of part-based and person-based medicine before the 20th century. In juxtaposing treatments for “a sore brest” with recipes for “biskitt” and cure-all ointments, the manuscript provides a gathering point for collective knowledge that both embraces the binary (addressing body parts and whole bodies in separate recipes) and rejects it (through recipes that affect both parts and wholes, as well as recipes that can be eaten non-medicinally but humorally). Finally, the manuscript also expands our understanding of medicalized parts and wholes through its status as a collaborative document that changes over time—not a palimpsest, but a collection of parts that is perpetually re-conceptualized and re-inscribed. When an eighteenth-century hand adds a Pope excerpt to the pages, affirming that beauty is found in “the Joint force and full result of all” the subordinate parts, the manuscript itself is reframed as a corpus that evolves its own shifting identity, an agent that conditions views of bodily parts, wholes, and their relationships.

Shakespeare's Sister, Paleography, and the Baumfylde Manuscript

Keri Behre posted Dec 11, 2017 1:27 AM

Undergraduate Research Project for LIT 379: Early Modern Literature & Culture

My Early Modern Literature & Culture class, subtitled “Shakespeare’s Sister,” is themed on the idea of the fictional woman conjured by Virginia Woolf in *A Room of One’s Own*. Woolf evokes the character, whom she calls “Judith,” to illustrate the myriad ways that women writers have historically been rendered invisible throughout history. Aided by the theoretical approach of the “hidden transcript,” we use reading, writing, commonplace books, and our own curiosity and experiences to delve into the complexity of early English literature by, for, and about early modern women.

I am proposing to create a new unit for this class focused on paleography, transcription skills, and the Baumfylde Va456 manuscript. I will begin the unit by providing some basic undergraduate-focused training in early modern paleography and in the use of DROMIO. Then, I will have the students transcribe the Baumfylde manuscript (or a portion thereof), and further research their transcription with the goal of creating an annotated digital edition. Finally, students will collaboratively select and create some of the recipes, finalize their annotations as informed by the recipe recreations, and write about their experiences and the connections they were able to make with early modern literature.

I would like to end the unit for my students by inviting them to participate in EMROC's Transcribathon 2018, where they will have the experience of knowing that their work can be a real, and lasting, contribution to making available the writing of early modern women, bringing the project full-circle to the outcomes of the class.

Finally, I will write a blog entry about the experience, including links to my students' work, and submit it to the Early Modern Recipes Online Collective website.

Undergraduate Transcription and Editing Project

Brian Harries posted Dec 11, 2017 10:45 AM

Gaywyn Moore and I are working on two halves of a project that we hope to implement jointly at both Concordia University and Missouri Western University.

The ultimate goal of our project is to create a cooperative endeavor that will with involve a large undergraduate research component at both universities. Students will assist in the accessing, transcribing, and editing of a discrete set of texts in both printed and manuscript format. We hope to publish our work in a digital format online, or in book form, if possible. The project aims to provide scholarly editions of little known early modern dramatic texts, along with ancillary documents that situate them within 16th-century understandings of historiography and confessional positions.

My tasks will focus on developing a course in Transcription and Textual Editing that students at both universities will take, either in plenary or independent study format, as a precursor to participating in the undergraduate research project outlined above. The course will likely use Erick Kelemen's *Textual Editing and Criticism* as the main textbook, engaging the Baumfylde Manuscript as well as digital examples from the Folger Library, the Newberry Library, the Bodleian collections, and the Digital Scriptorium, among others, along with printed examples from EEBO. As my project for this workshop, I will develop the course syllabus, defining the specific SLOs and structuring the units and shape of the class. I will identify a selection of practice texts and exercises to introduce students to the elements of paleography and typography. I also plan to create a culminating project, in which students will transcribe, edit, and annotate a short text for an academic audience

Undergraduate Research for Transcription and Editing EM Texts

Gaywyn Moore posted Dec 11, 2017 5:57 PM

Brian Harries and I are developing a course/program that we anticipate will be an ongoing collaborative undergraduate research project between our two universities. The ultimate goal of our project is to create a cooperative endeavor that will involve a large undergraduate research component at both universities. Students will assist in the accessing, transcribing, and editing of a discrete set of texts in both printed and manuscript format. We hope to publish our work in a digital format online, or in book form, if possible. The project aims to provide scholarly editions of little known early modern dramatic texts, along with ancillary documents

that situate them within 16th-century understandings of historiography and confessional positions.

My goals for this project include developing criteria for selecting students and identifying departments and courses for student recruitment at each participating university; articulating the student tasks in the undergraduate research project which will build upon the textual editing course (such as applying transcription and editing rules to a specific text, footnoting and glossing meanings or editing dilemmas, writing textual histories, and learning to use Dromio and other tools to collate work between students and universities); and identifying possible early modern texts for the course and the following research project.