Renaissance and Reformation
Renaissance et Réforme

Union First Line Index of English Verse, 13th-19th Century. Database

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presents, *LEME* also happens to be one of the most robust bibliographies of early modern language-learning documents available, covering 250 works and providing a bibliography totalling 1,400 works under the remit of "lexicons" or "language-learning resources."

A scholar with no interest beyond the bibliographic data for all these language-learning documents will still find *LEME* to be a rich resource as a starting point. As a companion to other linguistic databases such as the *OED* and its Historical Thesaurus, *LEME* offers a way to triangulate contextualization within editorial projects, provides additional details regarding pronunciation for metrical and other voice-based scholarship and practice, and opened the landscape for subsequent projects like VARD.[5] In our post-*EEBO*-TCP data deluge, *LEME*'s focus on material linguistic history is utterly essential for scholars and practitioners of early modern language, variation, and change.

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Carolyn W. Nelson et al., eds. *Union First Line Index of English Verse, 13th-19th Century*. Database.
Washington DC: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2009. Accessed 30 June 2019. https://firstlines.folger.edu/.

The Folger Shakespeare Library's *Union First Line Index of English Verse* is one of the fundamental digital tools for the scholar of early modern English verse. The database offers more than 250,000 first lines from English verse in manuscripts from the thirteenth to the nineteenth century (with a focus on 1500–1800), and also some printed verse from 1603 to 1710. The *Union Index* is the result of a compilation of indexes from various major libraries, namely the Bodleian, the British Library, the Folger, Harvard, the Huntington, Leeds, and Yale's Osborn Collection. It also includes metadata from other first-line indexes, including Meredith Sherlock's manuscript sources for Rochester's poetry and Steven W. May and William A. Ringler Jr.'s *Elizabethan Poetry: A Bibliography and First-Line Index of English Verse, 1559–1603* (London: Thoemmes Continuum,

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5. VARD is a software programme developed to pre-process early modern English corpora for spelling variation: ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/vard/about/

2004). Other indexes such as the Wing records and *STC* (*Short-Title Catalogue*) were added in subsequent stages and more material is continuously added in the hope to make this tool increasingly inclusive. As the *Index*'s homepage states, Carolyn W. Nelson started to compile these indexes as a series of Excel spreadsheets; thanks to the Folger Shakespeare Library and Heather Wolfe, the Folger's Curator of Manuscripts, this compilation of indexes was made freely accessible online from 2009. The website also offers a short introduction to the project and its history, as well as search instructions, a list of updates and additions made to the site, and a list of the many sources used. Contact information for scholars wanting to suggest other material to be added to the database is also provided.

The interface design looks perhaps somewhat old fashioned ten years after its original creation; however, usability is clear. There are various ways of searching the database: the basic search allows the user to search all the record and filter results by repository. The advanced search offers to search a keyword or keywords (AND, OR options are available, as well as "begins with" or "does not contain") and directly apply them specifically to the first line, author, title, last line, shelfmark, reference number, names, translations, and musical setting. The sources of the verses can be easily found, as both the shelfmark and foliation, as well as the reference number, which points to the item number in the original index, are always provided. In the case of print verse, the STC number is provided, which can help the search of the printed source on *EEBO*, for example. Lastly, when selecting one item from a search result list, a new window dedicated to this entry opens with additional details, such as "First Line," "Author," "Title," "Second Line," "Last Line," and so on, however not all of this information is always given and what is provided can greatly vary from one entry to another.

Sometimes information in the detailed record, like reference numbers (see Crum H0164 below), cannot be called up with a search. Such inconsistencies make searches somewhat unpredictable. Some important information is also added to the shelfmark: for instance, in the case of uncertain authorship of a verse, both the assumed author and the attribution given in the manuscript are given. So, the first line entry "Happy grave which dost enshrine" (Ref Nbr Crum H0164) is listed under author "Morley, George (1597–1664)?," but alongside the shelfmark "Rawl. poet. 142," in brackets, also appears the attribution given

in the manuscript, that is "attr. W. Strode" (see Figure 1). This level of detail is fundamental for researchers interested in studying attribution.

Union First Line Index of English Verse
13th-19th Century (bulk 1500-1800)

First Line:	Happy grave which dost enshrine
Author (Last name, First):	Morley, George (1597-1664)?
Title:	'Epitaph' [on Mary Prideaux. A conclusion to S803]
First Line (Transcribed):	
Second Line:	
Last Line:	Clothe it so neatly as its own.
Library:	Bod
Shelfmark:	Rawl. poet. 142 (attr. W. Strode)
Folio:	f. 44v
Ref Nbr:	Crum H0164
Number of Lines:	
Verse/Stanza Form:	
Publication Author/Editor:	
Publication Title:	
Publication Date:	
Gender:	
Musical Settings:	
Names Mentioned:	Prideaux, Mary
Other Names:	
Translations/Imitations:	
Notes:	

Figure 1: Detailed record for "Happy grave which dost enshrine."

One slight issue to bear in mind when searching keywords is spelling: unfortunately, there is no option to search for variant spellings of the same word, so using words with a more stable spelling is preferable. Another possibility is to use advanced search and manually search spelling variants, like "old" and "olde:" when entering "old" as keyword (the keyword search is applied everywhere in the record), 14,400 records are found, whereas when searching "olde," only 222 are displayed. Searching a whole verse can also present limitations, as differences in punctuation or spelling could compromise such searches. For instance, James Shirley's "the glories of our blood and state"

matches two records, but these do not include the more popular variant "the glories of our birth and state," which bears forty-two matches in the *Index*. In order to obtain all forty-four records in one search, one has to search in the "First Line" the stable part of the verse, i.e., "the glories of our" and "Shirley" as "Author" so to limit searches to this author. Exact phrases can also be searched in quotation marks (this is not true for single words).

Another matter to note is that when searching one single word in the "First Line" selection, as for example "old," the records given include all first lines with words containing "old' in them, as in "hold' or "behold," or even "golden," for a total of 17,363 records. The trick in order to obtain only results of first lines with the word "old" in them is to use the advanced search option and in addition to search "First Lines" containing "old" add search "Keyword" containing word "old." In this case, one obtains 5,627 records with exclusively first lines with the word "old" in it. The "Search Instructions" section on the website does not go into much detail, so in my experience a degree of trial and error and playing around with searches is required in order to get the best results out of the *Index*. Finally, items are by default listed in alphabetical order of first line, but it is possible to change this order by selecting the category on top of each column: for instance, it is possible to display items in their order of appearance in the manuscript (or printed book) by clicking on "Folio" (See Figure 2).

One important "limitation" of the *Union Index* to remember is that the database is not complete; not all existing verse in archives is present here, but also, generally more information can be gathered from the original indexes and by looking at the manuscripts themselves. The *Union Index* is an excellent finding aid and starting point for any search on early modern English verse, but it does not aim to be a substitute for archival research. Most importantly, it does not offer a complete list of the manuscript contents: for example, prose and dramatic verse are excluded from the indexes. Library catalogues or *CELM* (*Catalogue of English Literary Manuscripts, 1450–1700*) can offer complementary resources that can help build a more complete picture.

Figure 2: Search results for "rawl. poet. 142" ordered by "Folio" number.

Apart from these slight limitations, the *Union Index* is overwhelmingly a useful research tool. The different search options can fuel varying types of studies. Searching by shelfmark will offer a quick overview of the verse content of a manuscript or printed book. This could be useful to the scholar who wants to have a more general idea of the content of a manuscript or printed book, and to contextualize a particular poem or author within a collection. Searching by first line will help in picturing the circulation, in various sources, of a single poem or extract of a poem. It could interest the scholar of reception, studying how poems were circulated, or the editor interested in variants, but it could also offer material to the scholar interested in annotations and attribution. As

mentioned above with the Strode attribution, this type of search could raise questions about the authorship of some poems, allowing scholars to compare, for example, attributions given to a poem in various manuscripts. This open access digital tool offers researchers the ability to quickly compare material from different archives. In general, the Folger's *Union First Line Index of English Verse* is an excellent first step in helping trace a manuscript, a poem, and an author.

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Kassell, Lauren, Michael Hawkins, Robert Ralley, John Young, Joanne Edge, Janet Yvonne Martin-Portugues, and Natalie Kaoukji, eds.
The Casebooks of Simon Forman and Richard Napier, 1596–1634: A Digital Edition. **Edition.**
The Casebooks Project. Cambridge: University of Cambridge. Accessed 6 March 2019. casebooks.lib.cam.ac.uk.

The Casebooks Project, a digitized archive of eighty thousand medical and astrological consultations, presents the casebooks of two early modern English medical practitioners. One, urban, was Simon Forman who practised in London. The other, rural, was Richard Napier who practised in Great Linford, Buckinghamshire. They, and occasionally their associates, recorded cases from 1596 through 1634 in casebooks intended for the use of the practitioners themselves. Entries contain a mixture of English and Latin, many abbreviations, erratic punctuation, astrological casts for nearly every patient, and notes, some unrelated to the case beside which they are jotted.

Despite the difficulties the casebooks present to modern readers, their value as a source for social and medical history, the demographics of a medical practice, and understanding how early modern English people from all walks of life lived and died is unrivaled. For those who wish to find out whether (and how) an event, person, or subject (witchcraft, for example) is mentioned and treated in these manuscripts, this digital project makes it possible to search and browse the enormous trove of manuscript material in a number of ways.