Prosopography and Database Design in the Medieval Londoners Project

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Home page of the project website

ABOUT THIS PROJECT

This website introduces resources available for research about medieval London and its people, focusing in particular on documentary and narrative sources in print, but also highlighting archaeological and cartographic sources that illuminate the physical and material world that medieval Londoners inhabited.

An important component of the website is the Medieval Londoners Database (MLD), which records the activities of London residents between c. 1100-1520, and is searchable by name, gender, burgess status, location (ward, parish, and street if available), occupation, civic office, and guild. For more on this database and our invitation to provide data, click on Search for Londoners.

The banner depicts the first stone bridge of London, begun in 1176 and in use until the 1830s. The scene is from the top part of a manuscript illumination in British Library, Royal MS 16 F.ii, f. 73 (done c. 1483, in Bruges).

https://medievalondoners.ace.fordham.edu/
Omeka exhibition on medieval objects in the Museum of London


MEDIEVAL LONDON: INTRODUCTION

Welcome! These collections of short essays and images of medieval London objects, buildings, streets, and other sites were originally compiled by students at Fordham University’s London Centre’s study abroad program in Spring 2015. These reports were part of their coursework for MVST 4654: Medieval London, an interdisciplinary capstone class focusing on the archaeology and history of medieval London. In Fall 2017, students enrolled in the same course (this time offered by the History department as HIST 4654: Medieval London), added their reports on medieval objects.

For this interdisciplinary capstone course, each student researched and wrote on a medieval object at the Museum of London, describing the physical object (its dimensions, materials used, color and appearance, manufacturing process) and how medieval people used it (for what, when and where), particularly in terms of the object’s association with medieval London. In addition to posting a photograph of the object, students were also to locate and post additional images of this type of object to illustrate its medieval context.

https://medievallondon.ace.fordham.edu/

The second assignment (for the 2015 class only) was a report on a medieval site, such as churches, monasteries, cemeteries, civic
Sample page from Resources section

https://medievallondoners.ace.fordham.edu/chronicles/

Navigation
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CHRONICLES

Liber de Antiquis Legibus

Chronicles of the Mayors and Sheriffs of London 1188-1274

Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II
'Annales Londoniensis' in Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II, ed. W. Stubbs, Rolls Series, vol. 76:1 (London, 1882), pp. 4-25:1. Written by an anonymous citizen of London who drew on a monastic chronicle compilation called Flores Historiarum (printed in the Rolls Series, vol. 95), but added details about the city of London. His account of the years 1293-1316 (with a lacuna from the years 1301-1307) is completely original. This volume also includes the 'Annales Paulini', another abridgement of the Flores that begins with the first of Edward I's reign (1272) and ends at 1297.
Aims of the Medieval Londoners Project:

1) To develop a digital resource that can be contributed to and used by undergraduate and graduate students

2) To create a collaborative learning environment for students and other team members

3) To provide an accessible online resource for students, scholars, and members of the public to discover more about the people who lived in medieval London and the online and print resources that contain information about them

4) To create an off-the-shelf online prosopographical database that does not require significant funding or custom coding
What is Prosopography?

• A research method that systematically brings together data about a specific group of persons in order to reveal patterns that result from or influence historical processes

• Collective biography of a defined social group whose individual members are insufficiently documented for a biographical approach (defined by what they have in common, such as occupation, political rank, place of residence, family ties, gild membership …)

• Large data sets can compensate for scarce or missing data

• Focuses more on the average or typical characteristics of the group than the unusual.
1. The approach was formalized in the late 19th century by classicists who concentrated on collecting biographical data about members of a political elite to understand the acquisition and use of political power.

2. In the 1970s, growing use of the technique to study large groups of badly documented individuals of lower status: search for the ‘typical’

3. 1970s–90s saw a proliferation of large-scale, well-funded collaborative projects using computers (first mainframe, then PCs)

4. Late 1990s–early 2000s: move to online prosopography in the late: emergence of structured or ‘factoid-oriented’ prosopography

5. Now: digital prosopography and the semantic web (interoperability)
How older textual prosopographies are structured into factoid prosopographies


Factoid list for *Eadburg* in the Prosopography of Anglo-Saxon England [PASE]

http://pase.ac.uk/jsp/pdb?dosp=VIEW_RECORDS&st=PERSON_NAME&value=257&level=1&lbl=Eadburg
PASE faceted search on the textual edition cited in one factoid for Eadburg

http://pase.ac.uk/jsp/pdb?dosp=VIEW_RECORDS&st=PERSON_NAME&value=257&level=1&lbl=Eadburg
Fields in the Medieval Londoners Database [MLD]

Record_ID: for each entry
Person_ID: Same number for each individual
Person_Record_ID: e.g., 100.003 = third record for individual with Person_ID of 100
Title
Document_Forename
Document_Surname
Standard_Name
Alias
Identifier: A=alien, C=clergy, M=married couple, V=widow or widower W=woman, etc.
Citizen
Gild
Occupation
Occ_Flag: indicates quality of data in Occupation field
Activity: Details about individual’s appearance in the record (similar to Factoid, but less structured)
Ward
Parish
Street
Civic_Office
Gild_Office
Property: B=buyer, O=owner, T=tenant, etc…
Will: W=will-maker, H=heir, E=executor, etc…
Flag_Year
Year
Date_Range
Doc_Date
Rec_Type
Source
Document
Contributor
Cataloguer
Wiki_URI: link to Wikidata ref to a Londoner
HOP_URI: link to History of Parliament member bio
Notes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rec_ID</th>
<th>Prev_ID</th>
<th>Perno</th>
<th>Standard_Name</th>
<th>Guild</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Over_Flag</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Ward</th>
<th>Parish</th>
<th>Civic_Office</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Contributor</th>
<th>Cataloguer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1225</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100.002</td>
<td>Abbott, John</td>
<td>Mercer</td>
<td>mercer</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mercer: LKB (LMA MS. CCL/AD/01/010) fo. 35v. See also Mercers MS Warden's Accounts 1447-1448 nos. 98v and 100a (the Mercers receive and pay money for Abbott as a Mercer sheriff). See also Beaven I.287 and 271.</td>
<td>Mercer</td>
<td>Alderman, William Abraham, Vintner</td>
<td>August 17, 1446 [Sworn August 26]. [Nominated: Es-Sheriff Beaumont, John Crichton, T. Davy] (Prior) and or Concurrent offices: S. 1447–48.</td>
<td>1428</td>
<td>MASHL</td>
<td>Lancashire, Anne</td>
<td>Fostano, K. &amp; Kow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>950</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>101.001</td>
<td>Abraham, William</td>
<td>Vintner</td>
<td>vintner</td>
<td></td>
<td>Elected Sheriff, chosen by Mayor.</td>
<td>Sheriff</td>
<td>1447</td>
<td>MASHL</td>
<td>Lancashire, Anne</td>
<td>Fostano, K. &amp; Kow</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2366</td>
<td>945</td>
<td>945.001</td>
<td>Abynden, Nicholys de</td>
<td>Vintner</td>
<td>vintner</td>
<td></td>
<td>Served as Common Sergeant-at-Arms Common Crier (LBF, 57)</td>
<td>Common Sergeant-at-Arms/ Common Crier</td>
<td>1343</td>
<td>Simon, London, 166.</td>
<td>Howes, D.</td>
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<td>2203</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>102.003</td>
<td>Abynden, Simon de</td>
<td>Draper</td>
<td>draper</td>
<td></td>
<td>Served as Alderman. Simon de Abynden, Draper 1316 [Acting Aug. 29, 1317, Acting July 6, 1318] 1 Removed to Tower.</td>
<td>Broad Street</td>
<td>Alderman</td>
<td>1316</td>
<td>Beaven I, 70</td>
<td>BHO</td>
<td>Duchovni, E.; How</td>
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<td>2944</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>102.004</td>
<td>Abynden, Simon de</td>
<td>Draper</td>
<td>draper</td>
<td></td>
<td>Served as Alderman. Simon de Abynden, Draper 1318 [Acting July 26, 1318, Present May 13, 1322] 2 From Broad Street. Elected Alderman of Billinge gate, January 16, 1320, but was re-elected for Tower two days afterwards. Died, 1322; Will enrolled July 26, 1322 [H.R. 51 (11)]. (Prior) and or Concurrent offices: S. 1318–20.</td>
<td>Tower</td>
<td>Alderman</td>
<td>1318</td>
<td>Beaven I, 197</td>
<td>BHO</td>
<td>Duchovni, E.; How</td>
<td></td>
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<td>633</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>102.001</td>
<td>Abynden, Simon de</td>
<td>Draper</td>
<td>draper</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Elected Sheriff.</td>
<td>Sheriff</td>
<td>1319</td>
<td>MASHL</td>
<td>Lancashire, Anne</td>
<td>Fostano, K. &amp; Kow</td>
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<td>2120</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>102.002</td>
<td>Abynden, Simon de</td>
<td>Draper</td>
<td>draper</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Served as Alderman. Simon de Abynden, Draper (Sheriff) January 16, 1320. From Tower, declined to remove. (Prior) and or Concurrent offices: S. 1318–20.</td>
<td>Billinge gate</td>
<td>Alderman</td>
<td>1320</td>
<td>Beaven I, 22</td>
<td>BHO</td>
<td>Duchovni, E.; How</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Team Members

Medieval Londoners Project

Project Manager and Editor: Maryanne Kowaleski (Joseph Fitzpatrick SJ Distinguished Professor of History and Medieval Studies) has designed the database structure, set the protocols for name linkage, done initial name linkage, written the descriptions of sources, and serves as the contact person with external collaborators. She is also Webmaster for the Center for Medieval Studies and has published research on medieval maritime history, towns, demography, gender, and the digital humanities.

Technical Director: Katherina Fostano (Visual Resources and Digital Coordinator for Art and Music History and Medieval Studies) has set up and maintains the digital platforms for the WordPress and Omeka sites, established instructions and work flow for web-scraping data, is responsible for creating the Linked Open Data functions of the database, and serves as the contact person with Fordham IT.

Data Developer and Analyst: Elizabeth Duchovni (M.A. student, Medieval Studies) heads our efforts to automate the conversion of html source material into database records within our Londoners schema. Using a variety of open source tools (primarily Perl and jq), she has helped create customized programs for data validation, extraction, and reformatting. In addition, she advises on issues of database content and name linkage. She has a Ph.D. in Mathematics and is writing a thesis on medieval English navigation between the years 1200 to 1500. Her interests also include medieval Icelandic literature, paleography, and the history of the English language.

Contributing Editor and Visual Design: David Howes (M.A. Student, Medieval Studies) has taken the lead on the WordPress design of the website, entered information on civic officeholders into the database, worked on name linkage, and helped to correct data before upload to the Omeka database. He is writing a thesis on accountability and the English majority from 1191 to the Reformation. His other interests include civic ceremonies, English-French relations from the twelfth to the thirteenth centuries, and urban culture.

https://medievallondoners.ace.fordham.edu/about-us/