

## REED AND THE *OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY*

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At the METh meeting held in Southampton in March 1995,<sup>1</sup> discussion touched on the stated intention of REED's founders that the published volumes of records would provide a valuable resource for scholars in fields other than those of early drama, music, and ceremony. It was claimed that, so far, little wider use seemed to have been made of the series by (for example) social or economic historians.

It is pleasant to be able to report that, in one respect at least, the situation has begun to improve. Readers of the *REED Newsletter* may have seen a note in a recent issue<sup>2</sup> which drew attention to preparations currently in progress for a fully revised third edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and invited scholars working in various historical fields to comment to the Chief Editor of the *Dictionary* on 'any discrepancy between the material on which they are working and an entry in the *OED*'. The note added that the Chief Editor would particularly welcome information on 'any textual material that is likely to modify the dating and status of words and meanings listed in the second edition of the *Dictionary*'.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to issuing such general invitations to scholars to contribute their own incidental findings, the editors preparing the third edition have established a thorough and systematic reading programme, employing a number of part-time freelance researchers to search a wide range of printed sources for suitable material. I have been one of those researchers since autumn 1994, working on Late Middle English and Early Modern materials. After laying the foundations, as it were, with L.F. Salzman's *Building in England*, I moved on to tackle the REED series.<sup>4</sup>

So far my research has covered only York<sup>5</sup> and (most of) Chester,<sup>6</sup> but the results at this stage are most encouraging: the documents of those two cities alone have yielded a substantial quantity of material, much of it not part of the terminology of drama and related activities.

This article is an interim report on the work, illustrating the various categories of modification into which selected material may fall (dating, status, meaning), the range of vocabulary found even in these two volumes, and some of the interesting problems encountered by anyone using REED for

the purposes of lexicography and language history generally, rather than for those of theatre history.

Before citing any specific examples, I hope it will be useful to outline the general brief of researchers engaged in reading for the *OED*: this is a less succinct, but more detailed version of the Chief Editor's request for information quoted above. The researcher looks for any word, variant form, combination of words or usage which adds to or modifies the existing *OED* definition; for quotations which show a word in use earlier or later than the earliest or latest dates (respectively) recorded in the *Dictionary*, or which fill significant chronological gaps (the rule of thumb is a century) in the existing quotations. Any occurrence of a particular word in a context which helps to clarify its meaning or usage is also worth collecting.

Whenever a suitable example is found, it is entered on a quotation slip, giving the appropriate headword at the top and including the reason for its selection (e.g. the example antedates any currently recorded in the *OED*), the date of the example (very important, of course, for the historical purposes of the *Dictionary*), reference to the source, and a brief quotation of the context in which it was found. The process of compiling a slip is usually straightforward — but not invariably. My experience of *REED Chester*, for instance, is that a local variant of any word may be virtually unintelligible: it is hard to check the Chester version against the *OED* unless one knows which word to look up in the first place. It would not immediately (if ever) have occurred to me, for instance, that 'guttes' was not a crude reference to offal; fortunately the comprehensiveness of the Chester glossary came to my aid, telling me that *guttes*, *govttes*, *gouttedes* and seventeen other variants represent *Goodtides*, the common local name for Shrovetide. Such an example also exemplifies the difference between the theatre-historical and the lexicographical approaches to *REED*: for the former, the importance of these multifarious references to *Goodtides* lies in their reflection of the popularity of local Shrovetide traditions; for the latter, the importance is in the dialectal implications of the term *Goodtides* itself, and in the number and nature of its variant forms. Interestingly enough, although the *Chester* glossary gives the term in the standard form *goodtides*, the *OED* has a main entry for *gut-tide*, which perhaps better reflects actual usage.

The compilation of a slip may also present other challenges. The headword entered on a slip must correspond to that in the *OED* under which the example may be entered (unless it is a previously unrecorded word); but the establishment of a headword for an unusual doublet or combination may not be easy. The craft names so common in *REED* civic records have posed

occasional problems of this sort: I spent some time searching for *burn-leader* and *water-leader* under *burn* and *water* respectively, before eventually finding (with editorial assistance) that *water-leader* has its own main entry, and *ledares of burn* come under *leader*.

Lastly, the quotation of the context is of great importance to the slip, but contexts can be frustrating. It is not only that so many REED records are in Latin or French: so long as the word itself is obviously in English (and of course scribes frequently resort to English, with or without the false beards of loosely attached Latin endings), the quotation may nonetheless demonstrate its usage at a particular date. But lists, for instance, are generally unhelpful contexts, and REED records are full of those too. The 1415 lists of guilds assigned to Corpus Christi plays in the York A/Y Memorandum Book, for instance, are immensely valuable to students of the York Cycle, but the quotation 'Hartshorners *Suscitatio Lazari*' tells us nothing whatsoever about the nature or activity of a hartshorner. Indeed, the addition of the play title would — for Dictionary purposes — probably be confusing rather than illuminating. In such a case the word itself (in the exact form found in the context) has to suffice, but it is usually possible to quote a brief clause or sentence which adequately illustrates, even though it does not extend or otherwise modify, the contemporary meaning and usage of the word.

Of course, one of the chief pleasures of this kind of research is the 'detective' element: the hope of turning up something new or particularly illuminating on the next page which will, even slightly, alter our knowledge of the history of the language. In fact most findings are individually modest, but the cumulative effect can be considerable. A recent count showed that my survey of *REED: York* and about half of *REED: Chester* had resulted in the compilation of 186 slips for submission to the *Dictionary*, in six categories: gap-filling (as I mentioned above, the chronological gap between existing quotations is usually of about 100 years); ante-dating of the earliest recorded *OED* example; post-dating of the latest recorded example; variant forms (orthographical or dialectal); words, combinations, or usages not previously recorded ('not found' or 'new combination'); and a miscellaneous category containing various oddities: unrecorded grammatical status (e.g. *default* used adjectivally), or English examples of words recorded only as Scots.

The commonest category found in REED material so far is that of gap-filling (74 examples): these examples supplement quotations already in the *OED* and help to establish continuity of usage in a particular period. Sometimes my findings have surprised me — not because the words themselves are unusual but rather the reverse: it was the existence of the gap

that surprised me. *REED*: York supplied three words for which the *Dictionary* has no fifteenth-century quotations: *brotherhood* in the sense of fraternity or guild; *doomsday*; and *jester*. Similarly *REED*: Chester provided a *morris dancer* which usefully fills a gap (for that particular combination) between 1532 and 1621. (It has occurred to me that in these cases my surprise reflects only my REED background, in which such words are bound to be most commonly found). These gap-filling examples do not usually clarify meaning, but they do add to the picture of words in use, in non-specialised or at least non-literary contexts.<sup>7</sup>

For the purposes of my statistical exercise I have included in the gap-filling category some examples which, while not required to fill a wide chronological gap, do help to illuminate meaning or extend recorded usage. I have not found many such examples so far, but one from York shows an interesting early use of the phrase *cap of maintenance* (found in the *OED* under *maintenance*). The *OED* definition — ‘a kind of hat or cap formerly worn as a symbol of official dignity or high rank, or carried before a sovereign in procession’ — does admit some slight uncertainty (‘The sense of *maintenance* here is obscure’). The earliest quotation in the *Dictionary* is from the *Digby Mysteries* (sic) — in fact from the stage direction for the entry of the six jurors wearing hats of maintenance in *Wisdom*, and given a date of circa 1485.<sup>8</sup> Given the slight variation in usage of the phrase, and the doubt as to meaning, any early example which is reasonably full may help to clarify contemporary usage and understanding of the term. The York example is more or less contemporary with the *Dictionary*’s earliest quotation (possibly earlier: see note 8), and moreover of a definite date. It is part of a contemporary account of Henry VII’s first Royal Entry into York:<sup>9</sup>

The king harde his Evensong in the mynster chirche having A blew  
mantell aboue his Sircote And on his hede his cap of maintenance for  
he was coronwed on the morn.<sup>10</sup>

This is interesting because it shows the monarch himself wearing the cap; the text implies that he wore it as a sign of his office during attendance at church, reserving his crown for the keeping of more secular state the next day (‘the morn’), as the document goes on to mention. Such an example does shed a little light on the contemporary understanding of a term. Few single examples can do more, but it is by means of the accumulation of all these small pieces that the entire jigsaw of language history is put together.<sup>11</sup>

The second commonest category into which my REED examples fall is that of ante-dating: so far, York and Chester between them have yielded about

seventy of these. I say ‘about’ because in a handful of cases there is some doubt as to which precise sense of the headword is illustrated by the example — it may ante-date the quotations for one sense but not for another. In such cases, as indeed generally, I simply submit what I have found, with notes where appropriate, and leave the tricky matter of final selection to the *OED* editors. Some bring forward the earliest recorded date by as little as four or five years; even those are worth submitting. Others modify the picture more significantly. Some suggest traditions of local or regional usage: *hewster* (=‘dyer’), the earliest occurrence of which in *Chester* is 1398–99, has only one quotation in the *OED*, much later (1600) and also from *Chester*. The several occurrences of the word in the *REED* volume help to establish a real and long-standing currency of the word at least in *Chester* itself.<sup>12</sup> The 1462 *York* example of *rehearse* (in the sense of ‘rehearsal’), which ante-dates the earliest *OED* quotation (from *Coventry*) by twentyeight years, is probably well known to most *REED* users and *METH* readers: ‘Item at ye ferst rehers in kakkys and alle iiij ob’.<sup>13</sup>

Other examples of ante-dating cover a range of dramatic and musical, and also more general, terms: *ballad*, *clavichord*, *show*, *wait*, *luter*; *ironware*, *sapling*, *gallery*, *garn* (=yarn), *gate* (=street) — the last two, both from *York*, reflect northern dialectal tradition. The word *cotterel* (from the famous 1433 *York Mercers’ Indenture*)<sup>14</sup> is a particularly interesting example, not only because it ante-dates by well over a century the earliest *OED* quotation (1570), but also because its precise meaning is difficult to pin down. The *OED* defines it as a mainly northern word related to *cotter*, which in turn is defined as ‘a pin, key, wedge or bolt which fits into a hole and fastens something in its place’. The *REED: York* editors gloss it simply as a bolt, which does seem likely in the context: ‘iiij Irens to bear vppe heuen iiij finale coterelles & a Iren pynne’. The four *cotterels* look as if they correspond to the four irons; they seem not to be pins, since a single pin is listed separately. The *cotterels* evidently helped in some way to attach the heaven to its supports. Several of the *OED* quotations suggest that a *cotterel* is a specialised kind of metal pin, used to secure a bolt in place; but they are all much later. This particular quotation does not provide much help to the student of practical theatre (I should not care to be asked to reconstruct an authentic *Mercers’ Doomsday* pageant solely on the basis of this information); but it has a twofold lexicographical value: firstly in establishing a much earlier currency for the word than has previously been recorded in the *Dictionary*, and secondly, in that its early date tends to confirm the note in the *OED* definition:

Closely related to *cotter*, n.2 ... So far as evidence has been found, *cotterel* is the earlier.

(The earliest quotation for *cotter*, n.2, is 1649).

Of my other categories, ‘not found’ is probably the most interesting: terms not previously listed (as far as I can discover) in the *OED*. Some cases are straightforward: I have compiled slips for the combinations *pageant-green* and *pageant-garth*,<sup>15</sup> neither of which I found under *pageant*, nor under *green* or *garth* respectively. (Various ‘theatrical’ combinations, such as *pageant-house* and *pageant-master*, are listed under *pageant*, however.)

A few other examples not so far recorded in the *OED* are more puzzling. *York* in 1475<sup>16</sup> gives us *hamydown*, which the editors gloss as ‘a kind of purse’. In the context of a record dealing with the making and selling of leather girdles and related goods, this is perfectly plausible, and it may well (though I have not checked) be attested in the *MED* or *Yorkshire Dialect Dictionary*. But it did present a challenge: given the vagaries of late medieval orthography and dialectal variation, where in the *OED* should I look to see whether it was recorded? I looked under *ha-*, *he-*, *ho-*, and then under each of those vowels as initial; with single *m* and double *m* followed by *-y-* and *-i-* and, having failed to find it in any form I could think of, made up a ‘not found’ slip for it in the form in which I found it in *York*.

It will be noted that a number of the examples I have given, though all from REED volumes, are not themselves part of the terminology of drama, music, or ceremony. In fact, one of the most striking features of the lexicographical use of drama records is the great preponderance of non-REED terms which are potentially useful for the *OED*. Only nineteen words or combinations (like *summer-game* above) out of the total of 186 in my little survey are specifically related to what we might call REED activities. Of course the discovery that terms important to me as a REED editor and researcher are also likely to contribute something to the history of the language is always pleasant; but it is at least equally fascinating to discover the very wide range of other useful terms — reflecting many aspects of contemporary life — contained in REED collections. Apart from the more obvious occupational and local government terms which reflect the classes of documents most commonly extracted for REED (*capmaker*, *searcher*, *sheriff’s-peer*, to take three at random), I have also made up slips for terms from building and topography, agriculture, food and cookery, clothing, arms and armour, and many others less easy to categorise. *Strewing* (*York* 1544),<sup>17</sup>

which helps to fill a sixteenth-century gap in the existing *OED* record, occurs in the context of floor covering:

... resshes and other suche fflowres & strewing as they thinke honeste  
& comely.

The heavy preponderance and wide range of these more general terms tends (at least on the evidence I have gathered so far) to confirm the hope of those engaged in the project that REED volumes could indeed be a valuable resource in fields beyond the immediately obvious.

It has also been interesting to see how little duplication of lexicographically interesting examples there appears to be between one REED collection and another. More may emerge as more volumes are searched; but the potential for dialectal and regional variation is (in theory at any rate) as wide as the geographical range of volumes; and it is not simply a matter of differences in form and local usage of particular words, but in vocabulary reflecting the different activities and customs practised in different parts of the country. Even the two northern city collections of York and Chester — sharing traditions of craft guilds, play cycles, bands of waits, entertainment of visiting dignitaries, and so on — nonetheless demonstrate some local variation. Chester, for example, has regular records of Shrovetide customs (as well as its own evidently localised term, *gut-tide* or *goodtides*), which have no equivalent in York. The York bakers had their own local speciality, *mainebread*; Chester feasts are frequently celebrated with haggises. (These of course are not peculiar to Chester, even though Chester scribes' spelling of them — *hagoosscys* is my favourite — may well be; the point is that the word does not appear in York, or at least in REED: York.) It is to be hoped that the range of activities recorded — and therefore of related terms which may be of interest to the *OED* — will be correspondingly widened in volumes for more southerly counties which reflect different kinds of local organisation and customs, dramatic or otherwise.

The value of REED's organisation of volumes by locality in contributing to our knowledge of the geographical range and historical development of dialect is also potentially significant: I have found, for instance, a dialectal form in York (*troune* for *throne*) which is listed specifically as Scots in the *OED*. Examples like this help, in their modest way, to modify the dialectal map of the language, and it will be interesting to see how many more turn up in the course of the work.

My comparison of York and Chester has brought out another way in which REED volumes may differ: that is, on chronological grounds. That

may surprise anyone who knows REED, since the project has a *terminus ad quem* of 1642; but the material in a single collection may be concentrated in the earlier or later part of the period. REED: York reaches the year 1500 on page 183, REED: Chester on page 23, giving York an obviously greater concentration of earlier records, from which, not surprisingly, sixty-six out of my total of seventy ante-dating examples have been taken. That presumably contributes to the low degree of duplication of useful terms between the two.

So far in this article I have discussed mainly findings which I have been able to enter on slips for submission to the OED. But some of the most intriguing examples I have come across in my REED survey so far are those which have proved too problematic in one way or another to be submitted. Some of the problems are of a general nature — antiquarian material, however carefully it seems to have been transcribed, presents problems of dating — and some concern the form or meaning of specific words. I have on several occasions encountered a word evidently unrecorded in the OED which, by existing in the records in various forms or uncertain meaning, has defeated my best efforts to find a headword under which to enter it, even as 'new' or 'not found'. In *Chester* — where unintelligible spelling variation appears to be more or less normal — I have found one example, interesting and frustrating in about equal measure. The editor glosses it under *barage* as 'carriage, transport', but the REED volume contains a total of thirty variant spellings including the first, ranging from the straightforwardly recognizable *bearage* to the puzzling *byryche*. It presents an initial problem of deciding which is the 'real' form of the word; I have failed to find it in the OED under any of the more likely variants, and considered making up a slip for it as 'not found', probably under *bearage* rather than the form used in the glossary.<sup>18</sup> But then another difficulty presented itself: that of finding a quotation which would clearly illustrate the meaning and exemplify the usage of the word. For a 'new' word that would be particularly important; but bald items in accounts which simply list a sum for the *byryche* of an object are unhelpful. In addition, it is sometimes hard to distinguish one or other of the many variants of *barage* from the several variants of *baredge* (for example, *berage* and, mysteriously, *abereach*). The latter (glossed in *Chester* as 'drink money') is entered in the OED as *berrage*, a now obsolete form of *beverage*.<sup>19</sup> The sometimes cryptic expression of the accounts in which both words tend to occur has left me in confusion as to how many words we are dealing with here, and what either, or any, of them may mean — notwithstanding the valiant efforts of the editor (and, no doubt, REED staff) to impose glossarial order on documentary chaos. Admittedly some examples of *barage* are clear

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enough, as long as the meaning of the word is assumed: the formula 'paid for the barage of the gleaves' occurs frequently in accounts, and appears to record payment for the carrying, or bearing, of the *glaives* (small silver arrows) used in the Chester Shrovetide celebrations. But I am still trying to make sense of this:

The *arsedon* is easy, incidentally: it is ‘arsedine’, a zinc-copper alloy, gold coloured and used like gold leaf. But in this grammatical muddle it is hard to read *beregh* as either ‘carriage’ or ‘beverage’. As a result of examples like this, both *barage* and *baredge* continue to lurk among my notes and at the back of my mind; but neither has, so far at least, found its way on to a slip for submission to the *OED*.

Elsewhere, simpler cases of semantic ambiguity have forced me, reluctantly, to abandon hopes of submitting interesting examples to the Dictionary. In *Chester* (1592–93)<sup>20</sup> we find a petition from Thomas Beedle requesting the financial assistance of the Mayor and Council. He describes himself as:

a verey poore man brought vp in the occupacion of a Bowier and in  
the trade of makinge of Instrumentes of Musick and Longe staves, for  
her Maiestes seruice.

Since the *OED* gives no examples of *bowyer* in the musical sense, I wondered whether this example might be submitted as an illustration of it; but since Beedle was obviously a long-staff maker as well as an instrument-maker, it is impossible to tell whether his bows were designed for use with violins or arrows, and I have found no other record of Beedle (or any other maker of both arms and instruments) which resolves the ambiguity. I took editorial advice, and left it out.

One final case will serve to illustrate the fascination of this kind of research even when it is, for the researcher's immediate purposes, frustrating. I spent some time following this one up, and making copious notes. It may prove to have been a wild-goose chase, but it is not a cock-and-bull story, even although it is a tale of cocke and saunders.

The York Corpus Christi Account Rolls for 1449–50<sup>21</sup> contain, among a very long list of expenses on food for the Corpus Christi supper, these items: ‘cooco vj d & in saunders ij d’. The translation is given as ‘on coconut (?), 6d; and on sanders, 2d’. The editors gloss *sauders* as ‘horse-parsley’ (*Alexanders*). I checked the OED for both *coconut* and *Alexanders*, and

found the date improbably early for *coconut* (the earliest *OED* reference is to 'Coquo-nuts' in 1613, and the earliest to *coconut* in a specifically culinary use is dated 1830), and that *Alexanders*, though represented by several quotations, was not cited or illustrated at all in the shortened form of *sanders* or *saunders*. However, I was interested to find that *sanders* is recorded by the *OED* as a form of *sandalwood*, and quotations showed that it was used in the later Middle Ages as a food-colouring, which seemed eminently appropriate in this case; a quotation dated tentatively '(?)c. 1390' (from *The Forme of Cury*) is unequivocal on that point: 'Color it with saundres a lytel'. Other fourteenth- and fifteenth-century quotations also show culinary use, though not all or definitely for colouring. It seems to me, on the basis of this research, that the *saunders* of the *York* record is sandalwood rather than horse-parsley. It is probably worth recording here, for the benefit of readers interested in contemporary eating habits as evidenced by *REED* volumes; unfortunately this potential emendation of the *REED*: *York* glossary is of no use to the *OED*, which has plenty of examples of *sanders* to which the *York* record adds nothing particularly useful.

I turned to the *OED* again in an attempt to find an alternative meaning for the odd, possibly Latinised English, *coco*. I found *cocke* promising: the *OED* lists it as obsolete, found in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the forms *cok*, *cocce* and *cocco*, and defines it as 'scarlet'. I wondered whether the *York* *coco* could be an editorial misreading of *cocco*, and applied to Toronto for assistance. Alexandra Johnston, and William Cooke of the *REED* staff looked at the microfilm of the document<sup>22</sup> and suggested that the word (which is not clear in the manuscript) might best be represented <.>oco — a slightly disappointing revision, which might nevertheless, in the context, represent a form of *cocke*. This result, while not absolutely contradicting the idea that the *York* account shows a pair of terms both denoting food colouring and so, logically, listed together, leaves too much doubt about the reading to make it a helpful illustration for *cocke* in the *OED*<sup>23</sup> — so, unless a more conclusive example comes to light of *cocke* (or any of its contemporary variants) used as a food colouring, my tale of *cocke* and *saunders* must end there, as far as the *OED* is concerned.

As I noted early in this article, research on *REED* for the *OED* is still in its early stages; findings from the next volume or two may produce a different picture. But results for *York* and *Chester* suggest that *REED* is a potentially rich source for lexicographical research.

*Wantage*

## NOTES

1. The meeting was held jointly with the Wessex Medieval Centre, University of Southampton.
2. *REED Newsletter* 18:2 (1993) 21–22.
3. *The Oxford English Dictionary*, second edition, edited John Simpson and Edmund Weiner (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989).
4. L.F. Salzman's *Building in England* (Oxford UP, Oxford, 1966). I suggested the idea, but it was readily accepted by Edmund Weiner, the editor to whom I report. I am grateful for his interest in using REED as a source for the *OED*, and for his guidance and encouragement in general. I thank him also for lending me an article which reports on similar work he has done using local history documents: I found it very helpful in the preparation of this article. Edmund Weiner 'Local History and Lexicography' *The Local Historian* 24:3 (August 1994) 164–173.
5. *Records of Early English Drama: York* edited Alexandra F. Johnston and Margaret Rogerson, 2 volumes (Manchester University Press, 1979).
6. *Records of Early English Drama: Chester* edited Lawrence M. Clopper (Manchester University Press, 1979).
7. Texts collected for REED are not exclusively non-literary: *REED: York*, for instance, includes the text of the speeches made, in highly aureate verse, by Ebrauke and others to welcome Henry VII to the city in 1486. But the bulk of the material comes from accounts, minutes, ordinances and other such factual records of mundane business.
8. On the dating of the *Wisdom* gathering in Bodleian MS Digby 133, see *The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian MSS Digby 133 and E Museo 160* edited Donald C. Baker, John L. Murphy and Louis B. Hall *EETS OS* 183 (1982) lxiii–lxv. The editors 'would, on the basis of style of writing and the watermark of the paper, suggest a date of 1490–1500 for the Digby *Wisdom*'. That is a few years later than the date suggested in the *OED*.
9. The REED extract is taken from BL MS Cotton Julius 12, which the editors describe as a compilation of the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries.
10. *REED: York* 150.
11. The jigsaw metaphor, on reflection, seems too mechanical, in the light of the *OED*'s aim of demonstrating the growth and development of the language.
12. Other examples of the word *hewster* are in 1499–1500, and 1539–40 (three examples).

13. REED: *York* 95; from the Mercers' Pageant Accounts, MA:D63.
14. REED: *York* 55; from the Mercers' Pageant Documents, MA:D63.
15. REED: *York* 218, dated 1518; both from Mercers' Account Rolls, MA: D56KKK. The accounts are in Latin, but the pageant terminology itself is English.
16. REED: *York* 107; Girdlers' ordinance, from the A/Y Memorandum Book Y:E20.
17. REED: *York* 283: an order for the Corpus Christi procession, from House Book Y:B17.
18. 'Where variant spellings of the same form occur, the first spelling in alphabetical order has normally been chosen as headword. However, where this would result in an odd or rare spelling becoming a headword, a more common spelling has been given precedence' (REED: *Chester* 536, 'Introduction to Glossaries'). So the headword in this case is *barage*, although the spelling *bearage* better suggests the meaning and likely derivation of the word (from the verb *to bear*).
19. In a paper discussing problems of interpretation of drama records, given at the REED Colloquium of 1978, Peter Meredith also noted the confusing similarity of *barage* and *baredge*, and their forms. They present equally interesting problems for the drama historian, though of course the implications are different in practical terms: he suggests very plausibly that the *bereghe* mentioned in one item might denote 'carriage' as a physical object: 'the body of the carriage [i.e. the pageant wagon, for which "carriage" is a characteristic Chester term] as opposed to its under-carriage'. See Peter Meredith "Item for a grone — iij d" — Records and Performance' REED: *Proceedings of the First Colloquium* (REED, Toronto, 1978).
20. REED: *Chester* 169; from Assembly Petitions CCA:A/P/1/38.
21. REED: *York* 79; Corpus Christi Account Rolls Y:C99:3.
22. I am grateful to Professor Johnston and Dr Cooke for the readiness, and indeed enthusiasm, with which they responded to my enquiry.
23. Since all existing OED quotations for *cocke* (as also for *scarlet*) show it more as a fabric dye than a food colouring, it must be admitted that the York example — even without the doubt as to the initial letter of the word — is probably too uncertain in meaning to make it a useful *Dictionary* contribution.