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FURSCA 2024

This summer, I spent my 8-week period at Albion finding and studying primary sources relating to pre-modern natural disasters, specifically the Great European Famine of 1315-1317. The goal of this research was to amass a collection of these primary sources, and then to encode them using TEI and upload them to UnfortunateCreatures.org, my advisor Dr. MacInnes's online database of pre-modern natural disaster narratives. The point of this research was to make it much easier for future scholars to find and analyze sources relating to this natural disaster using the Internet. With climate change causing modern natural disasters to become more common, it is important to look to the past to find new conclusions on these issues.

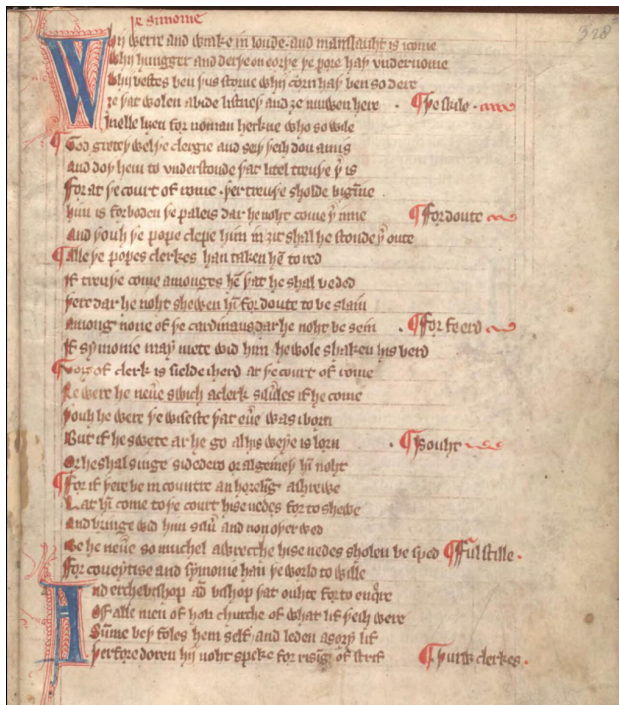
Overall, I definitely did achieve my initial goals for this summer, although the results ended up being slightly different than how I had expected. I set out with the goal of creating a list of around ten to thirteen primary sources relating to the famine, as well as encoding two primary sources using TEI. Instead, I ended up creating a list of about five sources, and encoding all five of these through TEI. So far, only one of these encoded documents has been uploaded to UnfortunateCreatures.org, but the rest are sure to follow once Dr. MacInnes has finished checking over them. The process of identifying and finding these five documents was extremely difficult and time consuming, so I decided that it would be better to just encode all of the documents that I was able to find. This way, my entry in UnfortunateCreatures.org would have a good deal of encoded narratives rather than just stubs with no information.

This FURSCA experience has greatly benefited me in my life at Albion College. It has given me perspective on what a career in history might look like, if I do plan on pursuing that

path. Although I do not entirely know whether I will be studying medieval history as part of my future career, this project has definitely cemented my desire to remain a history major at Albion College. I am proud of the accomplishments that I have made here, and I am planning on presenting my findings in the Elkin Isaac symposium in the spring. This project has allowed me to experience what Albion is like in the summertime, as well as helping me gain perspective on what I want to do in the future.

Many thanks to the Strosa Research Fund for making this amazing experience possible! I could not be more grateful for this opportunity.

**Photos:**



**Left: De Simonie- Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, NLS Adv MS 19.2.1, 1330's, ff.328r-334v.**  
<https://auchinleck.nls.uk/mss/simonie.html>.

(text chunk 3): Anno etiam illo post reges/sum dicti regis ludouici/ bro inundatione pluuije. Et/ quia bona terre male recep'ta fuerunt. Et in multis locis devastata. incipit karisti/a bladi et salis in tantum/ quod raseria salis. ui. libras/ vendebatur. Et de die in die/ karisti/a augebatur/

(text chunk 4): Anno millo. trecentesimo/ sexto decimo circa diem/ maij creuerat peruria et karisti/a. Et fuit in nostro climate aer/

(text chunk 5): interperatus et male ordina'tus. Et raseria bladi vende'batur. lx. solidi. Et raseria ave/nc. xxvij. solidi. Et raseria pisorum/ xlv. solidi. Et vix pro pecunia/ poterant reperiri. Et cepit/ ppl's in multis locis parum de/ pane comedere quia non habebant. Et multi fabas or/dea. vecias. & grana quecumque/ habere poterant miscebant/ sicut poterant. de hoc panem/ faciendo. & comedendo. Et/ propter intemperiem aeris/ et famem validam ceperunt/ corpora debilitari. Et infirmi/ tates nasci. Ex quo secuta/ est mortalitas talis ac tanta. quod ab aliquo tunc vixit/ non fuerat visum aut au'ditum huius simile. Et te/stiflor quod in tornaco tant' viri quam mulieres de potos/ibus. de maly. et de medio/cribus. senibus et iuuenibus/ diuitibus et pauperibus tanta/ copia moriebantur cotidie/ quod aer erat quasi totus/ corruptus. Et quod presbyteri/ prochiales sepe qua parte ver'ti nesciebant. Et tanta co/pia pauperum mendicantium/ in vicis moriebantur super/ flumis et ubique. quod per consilia/rios ciuitatis fuit ordinatum/ et commissum certis personis ui/

(Folio 87r): corpora pauperum sic morien'tium portarent circa scaldam/ in valle de vigne. et alys/ locis et ultra scaldam in loco/ vocato folais. ibique eos sepe/ferrent. Et pro qualibet perso'na habebant taxatum sala'rium/

**Left: Gilles Le Muisit, Tres Tractatus, Bibliotheek Kortrijk, Codex 135, fol. 86v, 86r.**  
**Annotation: This transcription has been made by Caroline Lippitt.**

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(text chunk 4): In the year one thousand three hundred and sixteen, around the month of May, there was a severe scarcity. And the weather in our region was...

(text chunk 5): ...intemperate and badly ordered. And wheat bran was being sold for sixty shillings, oat bran for twenty-seven shillings, and pea bran for forty-five shillings, and they could hardly be found for money. And in many places, people began to steal and devour bread crumbs because they did not have any food. And many tried to mix whatever beans, barley, old seeds, and grains they might have, for making bread to eat. Because of the intemperance of the air and the severe hunger, the people's bodies weakened, and pestilence arose. From this followed a great mortality, the likes of which had not been seen or heard of from anyone living in our time. And it is asserted that in Tournai, so many people; men, women, the powerful, the middle class, the commoners, the old, the young, the rich, and the poor, died daily that the air seemed almost entirely corrupted. The parish priests often didn't know which way to turn. And so many paupers died in the streets; on dung heaps and other places, that by the councillors of the city it was ordained and commissioned that certain persons would...

- (Folio 87r): ... carry the bodies of the dead paupers around the scaldam in the Valley of Vigne. And in other places, beyond the scaldam in a place called Folais, they buried them there. Each of the workers (body collectors) had a fixed salary.

**Left: Gilles Le Muisit, *Tres Tractatus*,  
Bibliotheek Kortrijk, Codex 135, fol. 86v,  
86r. Annotation: This translation has been  
made by Caroline Lippitt, using ChatGPT,  
and was created using images of the *Tres  
Tractatus* manuscript posted on Flickr by  
the Bibliotheek Kortrijk.**