

## WORKSHOP of the Seminar of 23 January 2012



Speaker: **Teodor Hrishev**

Topic: **Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources**

### Introduction

The *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* is a bilingual dictionary (Latin - English) that covers a period of 1100 years, from 540 AD to 1600 AD. It represents the Latin written in the British Isles or by Britons, who lived and worked in Continental Europe during this period of more than one thousand years. The *Dictionary* also represents the Latin used by authors coming from Continental Europe but who had a career in the British Isles. The *Dictionary* deals with the works of more than 2,300 named authors, many anonymous writers, and an enormous amount of diplomatic and administrative documents. The Latin corpus from the British Isles is the largest of its kind and it dwarfs most other corpora. The 2,300 named authors are only the tip of the iceberg. The volume of administrative and diplomatic documents, most of them kept in the National Archives in Kew, Surrey, is almost ten times as great. Since Latin used to be the official language in the British Isles for the good part of a millennium, it would be safe to assume that the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources*, together with the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is the lexicographical tool for unlocking the meaning of words in this fairly productive period. In it one can clearly see the continuation of the tradition of classical Latin, late classical and early medieval Latin, humanist Latin and Latin of the early modern period. The *Dictionary* is an essential resource and a handy tool for philologists, historians, legal scholars, theologians, economic historians, political scientists, historians of science, musicologists, and others.

Scholars started collecting quotations for the *Dictionary* in 1924 and the *Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources* was published in 1934 and the revised edition of the *Word-List* was published in 1965. The actual drafting of the *Dictionary* started in 1965 and the first fascicule (A to C) was published in 1975. The *Dictionary* is expected to be completed in 2014 and to go on-line (free of charge) in the same year.

The *Dictionary* is a research project of the Faculty of Classics, University of Oxford, and it is funded by the Packard Humanities Institute, the Arts and Humanities Research Council, the John Fell OUP Research Fund, and the British Academy, which also owns the copyright. The *Dictionary* is published by the Oxford University Press (OUP).

Teodor Hrishev (EP, Bulgarian Translation Unit) was assistant editor of the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* between 1997 and 2007.

## **KEYWORDS for DISCUSSION**

1. How to develop a user-friendly interface?
2. Is there such thing as too much information in a dictionary article? What does one expect in a dictionary article?
3. Is it realistic to expect a final product free of any typos or errors in general? Is perfection attainable?
4. Where do new words come from?

## **CONCLUSIONS and SUGGESTIONS** (by the participants)

**The participants managed to cover the proposed subjects for discussion and concentrated mainly on issues concerning:**

**workflow;**

**verification of sources and quotations;**

**types of sources;**

**the making of a dictionary article;**

**quality control and quality management and their limits;**

**The speaker's aim was to introduce the project and draw parallels with other projects, e.g. the *Oxford English Dictionary*. The participants asked quite a few and very intuitive questions about the methods of work, availability of the dictionary, and future online access.**