ChartEx: Mining spatial descriptions in medieval charters

Sarah Rees Jones, Roger Evans, Helen Petrie
London Digital Humanities Group
11 December 2012
1. Project overview

• DIGGING INTO DATA CHALLENGE

• “As the world becomes increasingly digital, new techniques will be needed to search, analyze, and understand these everyday materials. Digging into Data challenges the research community to help create the new research infrastructure for 21st century scholarship”

• UK: AHRC, ESRC, JISC
• US: NEH, IMLS, NSF
• CAN: SSHRC
• Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research
ChartEx Project Team

- **University of York.** History, Human Computer Interaction
- **University of Brighton.** Natural Language Processing
- **University of Leiden.** Data Mining
- **University of Washington.** History, Web Services
- **University of Toronto.** History and Digital Archives
- **Columbia University.** History and Digital Libraries

- **Data Repositories:** The National Archives (UK), Borthwick, DEEDS Project Uo Toronto, Columbia Digital Humanities

- **Advisory Panel:** various cognate projects
408. Grant by Thomas son of Josce goldsmith and citizen of York to his younger son Jeremy of half his land lying in length from Petergate at the churchyard of St. Peter to houses of the prebend of Ampleford and in breadth from Steyngate to land which mag. Simon de Evesham inhabited; paying Thomas and his heirs 1d. or [a pair of] white gloves worth 1 d. at Christmas. Warranty. Seal.


January 1252 [1252/3].

SOURCE: VC 3/Vi 326 (161 mm. x 137 mm.)

ENDORSEMENT: Petergat', Donacio facta vicariis de domo que fuit Thome aurifabri; Simonis Evesham.

SEAL: Slit.' Hole in MS.

NOTE: See 403.
Why Charters?
History: the analysis of social, cultural and economic networks

- First establish the locations in which people lived
- Then map other data (here about poverty) on to those pattern.
- ChartEx – going beyond the manual capture of data

Pauper Lives Project, Univ Newcastle
Why Charters?
Heritage: going beyond buildings to people and lived environments
ChartEx: Digging with Technology

• Automatically identify key parts of documents and extract them using natural language
• Automatically identify new relationships and knowledge through data mining
• Allow users to explore and understand the information available with user interfaces that support the types of complex tasks professional researchers do
ChartEx architecture

Charter Documents

Data Mining

Analysed integrated documents

Analysed individual documents

Language processing

Researcher’s workbench
2. Manual markup

Training data for NLP and DM
NLP Training Methodology

50 documents

Unmarked Documents

Newly marked documents

Training documents

NLP
Step 1a: Identify Entities

• Initial examination charters for entities about actors, sites and events............

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Step 1b: Identify Relationships between Entities

- Initial examination of charters for relationships between entities ...
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Representing relationships

1d every Christmas

GRANT

rent

from

subject

to

length

breadth

Dimension1

Dimension2

from

to

Petergate

Ampleford

Steyngate

Simon’s land

Jeremy

Thomas

Josce

father

occupation
goldsmith

father
Step 1c: BRAT tool

ChartEx NLP architecture
(work in progress)
Data Mining
(work in progress)
3. Interaction
Virtual Workbench

• Contextual inquiry conducted with 8 historians
  – “Bring your own charters” sessions
  – Studied how historians work with documents, the ways they construct their mental models of a problem and the types of information they record
Virtual Workbench (2)

• Transcription and analysis identified three distinct stages of work:
  – Working with collections – finding documents of interest
  – Investigating relationships – exploring a small set of documents for particular entities
  – Building models – creating own view of data contained in documents, sometimes adding external knowledge

• Currently most systems only support the first step well, and occasionally the second step
Virtual Workbench

We have a first prototype design for the virtual workbench, based on the results of the contextual inquiry.

We are now doing evaluations of a low fidelity prototype with potential users.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archive</th>
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<th>Document text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>00...11</td>
<td>...Vestibulum Thomas justo interdum risus ...</td>
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### Archives included in search:
- Borthwick
- TNA
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- Vicars Choral

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**Date Range:** 1291-1293  
**Collection:** Vicars Choral  
**Repository:** YODL  
**Edition:** Charters of the Vicars Choral of York Minster  
**Languages Available:** English  
**Document Text:**
Grant by Thomas son of Josce goldsmith and citizen of York to his younger son Jeremy of half his land lying in length from Petergate at the churchyard of St. Peter to houses of the prebend of Ampleford and in breadth from Steyngate to land which mag. Simon de Evesham inhabited ...
Grant by Thomas son of Josce goldsmith and citizen of York to his younger son Jeremy of half his land lying in length from Petergate at the churchyard of St. Peter to houses of the prebend of Ampthill and in breadth from Steyngate to land which mag. Simon de Evesham inhabited; paying Thomas and his heirs 1d. or [a pair of] white gloves worth 1 d. at Christmas. Warranty. Seal. 

Witnesses: Geoffrey Gunwar, William de Gerford(b),[f] chaplains, Robert de Farnham, Robert le Spicer, John le plastrer, Walter de Alna goldsmith, Nicholas Page, Thomas tailiater, Hugh le bedel, John de Glouc', clerks, and others.

Document Details:

Language: English
Date: January 1292
Held by: York Online Digital Library
Source Reference: VC 3 VI 326
Source: Charters of the Vicars Choral of York Minster
Description: Deed describing a transfer of land from Thomas of York to his son Jeremy.
Grant by Thomas son of Josce, goldsmith and citizen of York to his younger son Jeremy of half an land lying in length from Petergate at the churchyard of St. Peter to houses of the prebend of Ampthill and in breadth from Steyngate to land which mag. Simon de Evesham inhabited; paying Thomas and his heirs 1d. or [a pair of] white gloves worth 1 d. at Christmas. Warranty. Seal.

Witnesses: Geoffrey Gunwic, William de Gerford[b], chaplains; Robert de Farnham; Robert le Spicer; John le plaster, Walter de Ain, goldsmith; Nicholas Rang; Thomas talliater; Hugh le bedell; John de Gloc; clerks, and others.

Document Details:

Language: English
Date: January 1292
Held by: York Online Digital Library
Source Reference: VC 36/1 326
Source: Charters of the Vicars Choral of York Minster
Description: Deed describing a transfer of land from Thomas of York to his son Jeremy.
Grant by Thomas, son of Josce, goldsmith and citizen of York to his younger son, Thomas, half a land lying in length from Petergate at the west to houses of the prebend of Ampthill and in breadth from Steyngate to land which Simon de Evesham inhabited; paying Thomas and his heirs 1d. or [a pair of] white gloves worth 1d. at Christmas. Warranty. Seal.

Witnesses: Geoffrey Gunward, William de Gerford(by), chaplains, Robert de Farnham, Robert le Spicer, John le plasterer, Walter de Ayns, goldsmith, Nicholas Pagge, Thomas talliator, Hugh le bedel, John de Glode, clerks, and others.

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- **Source Reference:** VC 3/VI 326
- **Source:** Charters of the Vicars Choral of York Minster
- **Description:** Deed describing a transfer of land from Thomas of York to his son Jeremy.
Grant by Thomas, son of Josco, goldsmith and citizen of York to his younger son Jeremy of half an acre of land lying in length from Petersgate at the churchyard of St. Peter to houses of the prebend of Ampleford and in breadth.

Witnesses: Geoffrey Gunwar, William de Gerford, Robert de Farnham, Robert le Spicer, John the plasterer, Walter de Aina, Nicholas Fage, Thomas the goldsmith, Hugh le bedel, John de Gloc, clerks, and others.

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Date: January 1292
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Grant by Thomas, son of Josce, goldsmith and citizen of York to his younger son Jeremy of half the land lying in length from Petergate at the churchward of St. Peter to houses of the prebend of Ampthor. Person: P98. From Steyngate to land which mag. Simon de Evesham inhabited; paying Thomas and his heirs 1d. or [a pair of] white gloves worth 1d. at Christmas. Warranty. Seal.

Witnesses: Geoffrey Gunward, William de Gerfold(b)y, chaplains, Robert de Farnham, Robert le Spicer, John le plaster, Walter de Alno, goldsmith, Nicholas Page, Thomas talliator, Hugh le bedel, John de Glod, clerks, and others.

Show markup:
- Person
- Place
- Transaction
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- Date

Advanced Markup

Document Images

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Related Documents:
- VC408
- VC495
- VC497
- VC503
- VC634

Related Entities:
- Actors
- Locations
- Events

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**Document Images**
- Image 1
- Image 2

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Grant by Thomas son of Josce goldsmith and citizen of York to his younger son Jeremy of half his land lying in length from Petergate at the churchyard of St. Peter to houses of the prebend of Ampleford and in breadth from Steyngate to land which was Simon de Evesham inhabited; paying Thomas and his heirs 1d. or [a pair of] white gloves worth 1d. at Christmas. Warranty. Seal.

Witnesses: Geoffrey Gunwar, William de Gerford[b], chaplains, Robert de Farnham, Robert le Spicer, John le plastrer, Walter de Aina goldsmith, Nicholas Page, Thomas talliatar, Hugh le bedel, John de Glouc’, clerks, and others.

Document Images:

Document Details:

- Language: English
- Date: January 1292
- Held by: York Online Digital Library
- Source Reference: VC 3/VI 326

Description: Deed describing a transfer of land from Thomas of York to his son Jeremy.
Grant by Thomas son of Josce goldsmith and citizen of York to his younger son Jeremy of half his land lying in length from Petergate at the churchyard of St. Peter to houses of the prebend of Ampleford and in breadth from Steyngate to land which mag. Simon de Evesham inhabited; paying Thomas and his heirs 1d. or [a pair of] white gloves worth 1 d. at Christmas. Warranty: Seal.

Witnesses: Geoffrey Gunwar, William de Gerford[b], chaplains, Robert de Farnham, Robert le Spicer, John le plastrer, Walter de Aina goldsmith, Nicholas Page, Thomas talliator, Hugh le bedel, John de Glouc, clerks, and others.

Document Details:
Language: English
Date: January 1292
Held by: York Online Digital Library
Source Reference: VC 3/VI 326
Source: Charters of the Vicars Choral of York Minister
Description: Deed describing a transfer of land from Thomas of York to his son Jeremy.
Grant by Thomas son of Josce goldsmith and citizen of York to his younger son Jeremy of half his land lying in length from Petergate at the churchyard of St. Peter to houses of the prebend of Ampleford and in breadth from Steyngate to land which mag. Simon de Evesham inhabited; paying Thomas and his heirs 1d. or [a pair of] white gloves worth 1d. at Christmas.

Warranty. Seal.


Document Details:
Language: English
Date: January 1292
Held by: York Online Digital Library
Source Reference: VC 3/Vi 326
Source: Charters of the Vicars Choral of York Minster
Description: Deed describing a transfer of land from Thomas of York to his son Jeremy.
Grant by Thomas son of Josce goldsmith and citizen of York to his younger son Jeremy of half his land lying in length from Pettergate at the churchyard of St. Peter to houses of the prebend of Ampleford and in breadth from Steyngate to land which mag. Simon de Evesham inhabited; paying Thomas and his heirs 1d. or [a pair of] white gloves worth 1 d. at Christmas. Warranty. Seal.

Witnesses: Geoffrey Gunwar, William de Gerford[b], chaplains. Robert de Farnham, Robert le Spicer, John le plasterer, Walter de Aina goldsmith, Nicholas Page, Thomas talliator, Hugh le bedel, John de Glouc[c], clerks, and others.

Language: English
Date: January 1292
Held by: York Online Digital Library
Source Reference: VC 3/M 326
Source: Charters of the Vicars Choral of York Minster
Description: Deed describing a transfer of land from Thomas of York to his son Jeremy.
Grant by Jeremy, son of Thomas de Paor of his land that extends from the churchyard of St. Peter's to Steyngate to the his son David for the tenure of his time in York.

[Further text from charter not available]
Grant by **Jeremy** son of **Thomas de Pado** of his land that extends from the churchyard of St. Peter’s to Steyngate to the **his** son **David** for the tenure of **his** time in York.

[Further text from charter not available]
Grant by Jeremy, son of Thomas de Peck, of his land that extends from the churchyard of Peter's to Steyngate to the land of David, for the tenure of the land. Person: P99

[Further text from charter not available]

**Document Details:**
- **Language:** English
- **Date:** November 1297
- **Held by:** York Online Digital Library
- **Source Reference:** VC 3/Vi 495
- **Source:** Charters of the Vicars Choral of York Minster
- **Description:** Deed describing a transfer of land from Jeremy to his son David.
Grant by Jeremy, son of Thomas de Paccor, of his land that extends from the churchyard of Peter's to Steyngate to the his son David for the tenure of [Further text from charter not available]

Entity: P99

Related Documents:
- VC234
- VC306
- VC408
- VC495
- VC499
- VC507

Related Entities:
- Actors
- Locations
- Events

Document Details:
Language: English
Date: November 1297
Held by: York Online Digital Library
Source Reference: VC 3/VI 495
Source: Charters of the Vicars Choral of York Minster
Description: Deed describing a transfer of land from Jeremy to his son David.
Grant by Jeremy son of Thomas de Paor of his land that extends from the churchyard of St. Peter's to Steyngate to the
his son David for the tenure of his time in York.
...

[Further text from charter not available]
Grant by Jeremy, son of Thomas de Paor, of his land that extends from the churchyard of St. Peter's to Steyngate to the
his son David for the tenure of his time in York.

[Further text from charter not available]
Document Text:
Grant by Jeremy, son of Thomas de Paor, of his land that extends from the churchyard of St. Peter's to Stleygate to the north of David for the tenure of 20 years in York.

[Further text from charter not available]

Show markup:
- Person
- Place
- Transaction
- Date

Document Images:
- Image 1
- Image 2

Document Details:
- Language: English
- Date: November 1297
- Held by: York Online Digital Library
- Source Reference: VC 3/VI 495
- Source: Charters of the Vicars Choral of York Minster
- Description: Deed describing a transfer of land from Jeremy to his son David.
Document Text
Grant by Jeremy son of Thomas de Poar of his land that extends from the churchyard of St. Peter's to Steyngate to the his son David for the tenure of his time in York.

[Further text from charter not available]

Document Images

Document Details:
Language: English
Date: November 1297
Held by: York Online Digital Library
Source Reference: VC 3/VI 495
Source: Charters of the Vicars Choral of York Minster
Description: Deed describing a transfer of land from Jeremy to his son David.

Entity: P98
Related Documents
VC408
VC495
VC504
VC505
VC609
VC707
VC777
VC930

Related Entities
Group by: Document
Actor
Person
Institution
Location
Event
Grant by [Jeremy] son of [Thomas de Poar] of his land that extends from the churchyard of St. Peter's to Steyngate to the his son [David] for the tenure of [his] time in York.

[Further text from charter not available]
Description: Deed describing a transfer of land from Jeremy to his son David.
Grant by Jeremy son of Thomas de Poar of his land that extends from the churchyard of St. Peter's to Steyngate to the his son David for the tenure of his time in York.

[Further text from charter not available]

[Further text from charter not available]
Grant by **Jeremy** son of **Thomas de Paor** of his land that extends from the churchyard of St. Peter's to Steyngate to the his son **David** for the tenure of his time in York.

[Further text from charter not available]
Grant by Jeremy son of Thomas de Paor of his land that extends from the churchyard of St. Peter’s to Steyngate to the his son David for the tenure of his time in York.

[Further text from charter not available]

Document Details:
Language: English
Date: November 1297
Held by: York Online Digital Library
Source Reference: VC 3/VI 495
Source: Charters of the Vicars Choral of York Minster
Description: Deed describing a transfer of land from Jeremy to his son David.
Grant by [Person] to [Recipient] of property. [Further text]

Document Details:
- Language: [Language]
- Date: [Date]
- Held by: [Held by]
- Source Ref: [Source Ref]
- Source: [Source]

Description: [Description]
4. Challenges
Markup challenges

• Designing a markup scheme – we used the KANGA methodology (originally from the OS)
• Annotating documents – we used BRAT
• Interdisciplinarity – we used our HCI team to elicit the markup language from our Historians and applied it using a tool designed for Bio-NLP markup!
• Maintaining focus on task in hand was sometimes difficult
• Establishing good markup practices (inter-annotator agreement tests etc.) required effort

Issues with Charter data

- Medieval shorthand (especially of Latin)
- Status of ‘apparatus’ – editorial additions or corrections made over the years
- OCR errors (of course)
- Different markup conventions, or different interpretation of markup conventions such as EAD (Eg main transaction type – data or metadata?)
- Interesting relationships and mixing between Latin and English
- Information omitted during transcription – notably, locations. (TNA are putting them back for us!)
5. Conclusions
Conclusions

• Steady progress overall – markup phase completed successfully, technical work now coming into its own

• Interesting interdisciplinary challenges – methodologies, analytic approaches, vocabularies etc.

• Lots of positive engagement from all parties to keep us all sane!