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Peer review

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Early Modern Digital Review

Early Modern Digital Review is an online, open-access, and refereed journal publishing high-quality reviews of digital projects related to early modern society and culture. It is committed to productive evaluation of both established digital resources and recent tools and projects. Its publications are distributed online by the journal and its partners, and in print by *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme.*

terms such as *cabeceras* (county seats), *sujetos* (subjects), and *villas* (towns) in the documents, and to shed light on changes in settlements between the late postclassic era and the end of the sixteenth century. The second seeks to clarify the representation and political structures between 1577 and 1585.

DECM offers and will continue to deliver results of great value for the digital humanities, history, and archaeology, especially those areas focused on the study of the territories of New Spain. The GTA and other tools are not openly available, but it is expected that they will be released soon as the project is committed to open access. This project, along with many others, shows that digital humanities involves not only the application of digital tools to a given case, but the design and adaptation of digital tools and methodologies to the chosen theoretical framework.

ERNESTO PRIANI SAISO
Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México
https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v44i3.38001

Jenstad, Janelle, project dir.
Map of Early Modern London. Other.
Victoria, BC: University of Victoria, 2021. Version 6.6. Accessed 15 August 2021.
mapoflondon.uvic.ca.

The Map of Early Modern London (MoEML) is a major, web-based project exploring information about the city of London from 1550 to 1650. The version of MoEML reviewed here (6.6, 2021) represents more than twenty years of scholarship, and the contributions of more than five hundred people. In reality, MoEML is not one project but rather seven interoperable projects, supported by six different databases. Put very simply, MoEML takes complex, historical urban data about places, people, and organizations mentioned in early modern primary source material and links that data together so that users can explore their interrelationships by moving from page to page on the project site. For studying London's built environment and human geography as documented in the early modern English corpus, MoEML has become the definitive scholarly starting point, and will remain so for some time to come.

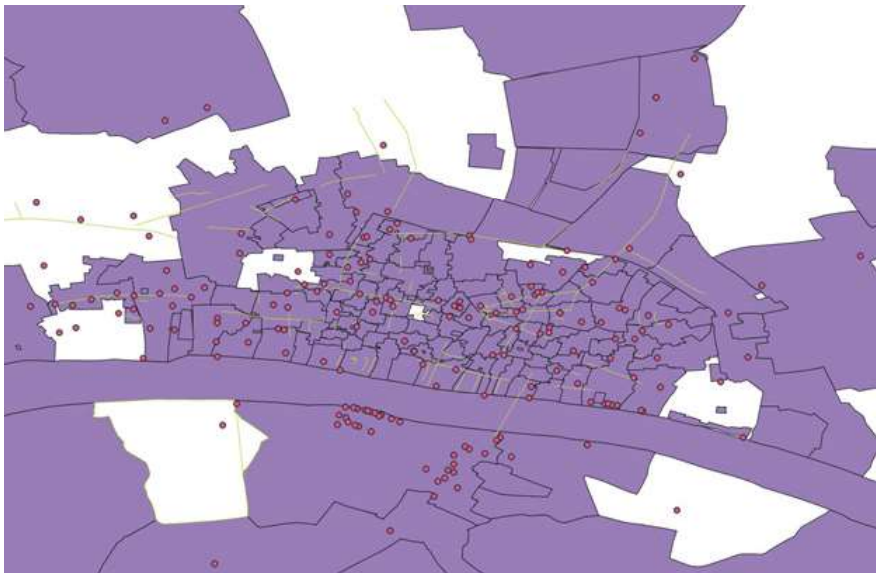
Despite the project's title which might suggest that it is focused only on one historical map, or primarily on visualizing data about early modern London, an interest in cartography is just one of the scholarly activities with which the project has been concerned. The larger endeavour includes TEI-XML encoded transcriptions of early modern literary and historical texts, meticulous historical research on past people, places, and organizations (organized in thematic groupings known as a "personography," a "placeography," and an "orgography"), as well as the creation of a glossary of key terms and bibliography for exploring the early modern city.

In particular, MoEML has partially transcribed and encoded early modern texts rich in place names found within London, in particular generic forms such as mayoral shows and royal entries for which urban spaces are the main theatre of action. A reader of early modern English texts about London will take considerable pleasure in reading with this open, web-based resource as their companion. When a text mentions an easily locatable location, such as "Fleete-ſtreet," or difficult-to-locate places that no longer exist or have since changed names, such as "St. Mary Hospital (Barkingchurch)," MoEML is the erudite guide of choice to learn about how these places have been described over time in the textual record. Conversely, if we find a name of a person, we can follow a hyperlink path of information leading us from that person's name to textual descriptions, related places, or relevant organizations, thereby enriching our understanding of the context in which that person lived.

MoEML incorporates elements of geo-visualization as well. If any of these items have been associated through historical research with places found on the 1561 woodblock printed map of London by surveyor Ralph Agas, they can be visualized on the "Agas map," or if the user chooses, on a contemporary OpenStreetMap base map, allowing them to be situated in space as we know it today. MoEML will be as useful to the scholar engaged in close reading as to the general reader curious about the geographies of London's past. To borrow a term from contemporary digital scholarship, it provides us with a cultural "time machine" by bringing together data from the past and structuring it using interoperable technologies.

MoEML is a TEI P5 XML project, meaning that all project materials and documentation are encoded using the P5 guidelines of the TEI and they validate against the entire TEI schema. From every page of the extensive project website, the user can view the last update of different XML versions that sit

behind the site. More specialized users can benefit from the availability of this data to reuse in other scholarly projects.



Map 1. A visualization in QGIS of the point, LineString, and polygon JSON objects in the project's gazetteer.

An important point to underscore is that MoEML was not created, first and foremost, as a historical GIS (geographic information system) project, aiming to locate social, historical phenomena in real geographies of the city. As the project director explains, MoEML identifies "'referring strings' of characters that people have chosen to indicate spaces made meaningful by human habitation, practices, travel and events," and creates linked data from them.[1] MoEML, in other words, helps us understand both the place and the space of early modern London. The project eschews formal, geographic ontologies in favour of a "bottom up," imminent classification of space. Of course, the project has found features that can be located in historical urban space, and it

1. Janelle Jenstad, "Building a Gazetteer for Early Modern London, 1550–1650," in *Placing Names: Enriching and Integrating Gazetteers*, ed. Merrick Lex Berman, Ruth Mostern, and Humphrey Southall (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 131, doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt2005zq7.14.

has published this data in the form of a gazetteer preserving variant spellings which will be interesting to digital humanists working on mining corpora or named entity recognition (NER). The gazetteer of nearly five hundred located places collected by MoEML is available to view as an alphabetized list in the project site or as a downloadable geoJSON file, consisting of point, LineString, and polygon JSON objects (as visualized in Map 1 above). It is fair to say that the data created thus far by MoEML has modelled a scholarly infrastructure for projects about early modern London.

My review of MoEML thus far has focused on what has been achieved by a large team from the corpus of early modern texts. It is interesting to note how the project's transparency of method and interoperable standards, as well as its notion of audience and inclusion of materials that suggest ways the project is applicable to the classroom, point toward potential enrichment of the project data and reuse. Since 2014, MoEML has had a number of pedagogical partners, consisting of faculty-student partnerships for editing and documentation of stubs or incomplete items in its databases. This has led to avenues for vetted, scholarly publications by a diverse group of young scholars around the world: in this reviewer's opinion, encouraging signs for the sustainability of a project through reuse and reinvention. Furthermore, since 2020 and version 6.3, MoEML is available in versioned static releases with documentation, allowing the project not only to be interoperable in the present but to be preserved for posterity.

One of the more impressive elements of MoEML is the care with which scholarly labour has been documented within the project, underscoring the diverse efforts that render contemporary digital scholarship possible. In addition to the main project director, the project website acknowledges four project leaders, project-specific advisory board members, programmers, designers, managers, staff, research assistants and affiliates, linked projects, and a list of current and past contributors that includes, at the time of writing this review, nearly five hundred people. This careful attention to contribution bears witness to the way the project has been carefully managed and how its components have been entrusted to a community of scholars, including many undergraduates.

The use of linked technologies extends beyond the interoperability of the textual editions, the map, and other early modern data to document such contributions in this complex and long-standing digital project. It does so by

means of a project namespace for all contributors, linking them to their project roles, contributions, teams in which they worked, and project documents that mention them. These ways of linking contribution to contributor(s) bear witness to the complexity of social scholarship and collaboration within teams and across institutions and disciplines. Such interlinked, social scholarship is all the more common in the age in which we live, but is rarely documented with such granularity. There is, in other words, an ethical argument about the value of intellectual labour in such distributed scholarly projects built into MoEML's structure which few projects make with such clarity.

DAVID JOSEPH WRISLEY
New York University Abu Dhabi
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Horodowich, Elizabeth, and Alexandre Nagel, project creators.
Amerasia: An Inquiry into Early Modern Imaginative Geography. Other.
New York: New York University, Institute of Fine Arts, 2020. Accessed 2 September 2021.
ifaresearch.org/amerasia.

With Amerasia: An Inquiry into Early Modern Imaginative Geography, Elizabeth Horodowich and Alexandre Nagel have created an interactive experience that builds upon their article, "Amerasia: European Reflections of an Emergent World, 1492–ca.1700," published in the *Journal of Early Modern History* in 2019.[1] The digital project explores the sixteenth-century phenomenon of Europe conceptualizing Asia and America as an overlapping, conjoined space. This connection between the two continents gave rise to cultural signifiers that became transplanted in the European imaginary to the Americas, so that maps and related book illustrations featured mosques in late sixteenth-century Mexico, and elephants described by Marco Polo make an appearance in Canada. The web-based project offers a case study of this variety of cartography through the map of Caspar Vopel (1511–61), titled *A New Complete and Universal Description of the Whole World According to*

1. See vol. 23 (2019): 257–95, dx.doi.org/10.1163/15700658-12342635.