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# The medical entries in John Kersey's abridged *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum* (1708) or how to retain highly demanded lexical material in a short dictionary<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

The eighteenth century is characterised by efforts to make science accessible to the general public. In this sense, dictionaries played an important role as agents of popularisation of science. This essay focuses on a particular type of scientific entry, that of medical terms, included in John Kersey's *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum* (1708), an abridged version of Kersey's revision of Edward Phillips's *The New World of Words* (1706). Kersey's revision had featured the inclusion of a high number of scientific and technical terms from John Harris's *Lexicon Technicum*, but in the abridgement Kersey had to make editorial decisions to shorten this massive work but still include scientific entries that could be of interest to common readers. This study discusses these methods of abridgement and assesses the importance given to medical terminology in portable volumes of this kind by comparing Kersey's (1708) *Dictionarium* with the *Glossographia Anglicana Nova* (1707), since both shared the same target readership, the same purposes and the same emphasis on scientific terminology.

Keywords: medical terminology, abridged dictionaries, John Kersey, *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum*, *Glossographia Anglicana Nova*.

## 1. Introduction

In the latter part of the seventeenth century, medicine was not a matter of concern for scientists and experts only. The intense publication of recipe books and medical texts in pamphlets, journals and handbooks addressed

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to lay readers testifies to a widespread interest in medical issues, above all in therapeutic questions (Bennett 1989: 140-143; Curth 2002; Fissell 2007; Taavitsainen et al. 2011: 14-16). Besides, the introduction of medical entries in the early eighteenth-century encyclopaedia and in reference books such as dictionaries contributed not only to the popularisation of medicine, and of science in general, but also responded to the readers' demand for such contents (Layton 1965; Lonati 2014).

A landmark in the history of the English encyclopaedia is John Harris's *Lexicon Technicum* (1704). As Hayashi (1978: 72) notes, "Harris's emphasis was [...] placed upon the explication of terms relating to practical scientific subjects at the expense of those relating to the liberal arts. The immediate influence of this scientific encyclopaedia is evident in subsequent publications of English dictionaries". Thus, after the publication of John Harris's *Lexicon Technicum* in 1704, John Kersey undertook a revision of Phillips' *New World of Words* introducing some 20,000 terms in a volume published in 1706 (henceforth Kersey – Phillips). About half of the wordlist of the new revised dictionary comprised scientific terms mainly derived from Harris's *Lexicon Technicum* (Starnes – Noyes 1991: 84-85).

One year later, the editorial market provided readers with a small dictionary which also paid special attention to scientific terminology, the *Glossographia Anglicana Nova* (1707), whose anonymous author acknowledged his indebtedness to Harris's *Lexicon Technicum* (Hayashi 1984: 358). And soon after that, in 1708, Kersey published his *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum* (henceforth *Dictionarium*), an abridgement of Kersey – Phillips which likewise announced the inclusion of scientific entries. Therefore, in just five years, the editorial market put at the readers' disposal four reference books which took pride in their scientific contents.

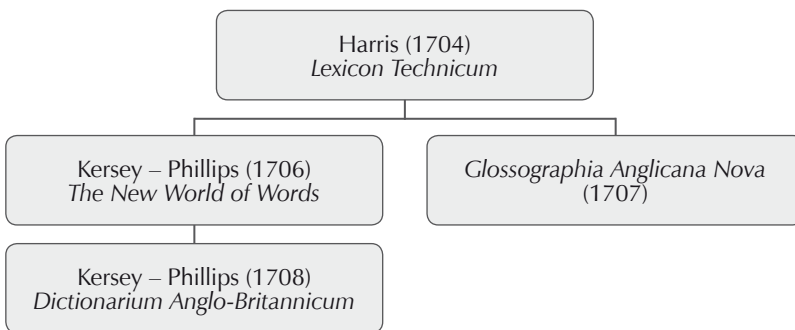


Figure 1. Dictionaries published in the first decade of the eighteenth century under the influence of Harris's *Lexicon Technicum* (1704)

The focus of this paper will be on the last of these dictionaries, Kersey's *Dictionarium*, which was presented as a low-priced reduced version of Kersey – Phillips. Since the latter had been subject to a thorough revision and enlargement due to the incorporation of a massive amount of scientific material, the question arises as to how Kersey managed to achieve both downsizing and inclusiveness. This article tackles this question by analysing Kersey's *Dictionarium*, which is particularly interesting for being the first abridged dictionary in the history of English lexicography. Its small format, its low price, its intended general readership and its announced inclusiveness makes it a good candidate to study the kind of medical information retained in a short dictionary and, consequently, perceived by the editorial market as attractive for the general reader. Besides, the comparison of Kersey's *Dictionarium* with a similar dictionary published just one year earlier, the *Glossographia Anglicana Nova* (1707), can help us to support the conclusions derived from the analysis of Kersey's dictionary.

Thus, this paper has a twofold aim: first, to discover the methods of abridgement adopted by Kersey in his shortened version of Kersey – Phillips, and, second, to assess the importance given to medical terminology in portable volumes of this kind by comparing Kersey's *Dictionarium* (1708) with the *Glossographia* (1707), two dictionaries that show many similarities in format, intent and coverage.

## 2. Kersey's *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum* (1708)

Before the publication of the *Dictionarium*, John Kersey had compiled what is considered the first general English dictionary (Read 2003: 222-223), *A New English Dictionary* (1702). In this work, Kersey included common words that had been put aside in former hard-word dictionaries (Lancashire 2005: 166; Miyoshi 2017: 104). This innovative approach gives Kersey a prominent place in the history of English lexicography (Landau 2001: 52-53), although his definitions were still "brief and often inadequate" (Landau 2001: 53), much in line with those in spelling dictionaries (Long 1909: 30).

Kersey's *Dictionarium* marks a return to the well-trodden path of the hard-word tradition (Read 2003: 223); however, it still managed to include everyday words together with dialectal, legal and, mainly, scientific terms in a small format, "thus for its size the work is unprecedented in flexibility and usefulness" (Starnes – Noyes 1991: 96). In fact, the *Dictionarium* presents a peculiarity: it is the first abridged dictionary in the history of English

lexicography and, paradoxically, it is “the first to add words by the tens of thousands” (Long 1909: 33). As an abridgement, it is not an original work, but a shortened version of Kersey’s revision of Phillips’s *New World of Words*, and, accordingly, it does not offer new material. Thus, whereas Kersey – Phillips was “designed as a reference work for advanced students of literature, science, and the arts” (Starnes – Noyes 1991: 69-70), Kersey’s abridgement widens the target audience to all kinds of readers. Hence, in the preface to his dictionary, Kersey himself recommends “the last Edition of Phillips’s Dictionary, set forth by us, with very large Additions and Improvements” (Kersey 1708: The Preface) to those who want to expand their knowledge. In this way, Kersey makes it clear what he had intended with this new shorter volume: “to provide a quick look-up reference work for a somewhat different group of users” (Osselton 2009: 148). However, the small size of his work does not prevent Kersey from boasting about the completeness and inclusiveness of his achievement.

In comparison, on the one hand, to previous expensive large dictionaries, and, on the other hand, to small limited ones, Kersey’s *Dictionarium* is presented as a low-priced “Portable Volume” (Kersey 1708: The Preface) containing a “large collection of words and phrases” (Kersey 1708: Title page) used by well-known authors. Certainly, as Starnes – Noyes (1991: 95-96) have noted, “Kersey’s vocabulary, estimated at 35,000 words, far surpasses that of any preceding dictionary with the single exception of the folio Kersey – Phillips”, from which it is derived.

But, given that Kersey’s *Dictionarium* is a shortened version of Kersey – Phillips, how did he manage to reconcile two seemingly contradictory concepts in his compilation, that is, completeness and brevity? I will try to answer this question by focusing on one type of entry, that of medical terms. The comparison of the medical terms contained in Kersey (1708) with those in Kersey – Phillips (1706) will allow me to identify the shortening strategies adopted by the compiler of the *Dictionarium*.

### 3. Medical terms in Kersey’s *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum* (1708)

Prior to the analysis of the medical terms contained in Kersey’s *Dictionarium*, it seems necessary to make some clarifications about the concept of “medical term” and the limits of this analysis.

For the purposes of this paper, medical term is used to designate human body disorders as well as those agents and elements directly involved

in the healing process, that is, the professionals who take care of these disorders, the instruments they use in their professional activities, generic or specific medicines, the treatments and techniques involved in the healing process, and the places where healing activities are developed. Therefore, anatomical, mineral and botanical terms, as well as chemical preparations, are not considered medical terms in this paper unless their therapeutic properties are reported in the definitions. Likewise, I have not considered those terms used to designate physiological and organic processes such as *sweat*, *urinate*, etc.

As for the limits of this study, the sample size has been restricted to the letters A and S, a decision that responds to the necessity of studying entries that may have a different, or rather, an unbalanced treatment on the part of the compiler. Indeed, whereas lexicographers are careful in the initial stages of their compilation process, they may rush through the final part of his dictionary due to physical exhaustion or editorial pressures, what Osselton has called "alphabet fatigue" (2007), which justifies the selection of entries located at the beginning of the dictionary as well as other ones from the middle or the end of the work. Taking into account these preliminary considerations, the extent of this survey is then restricted to the medical entries, as defined above, contained in the letters A and S.

#### 4. Kersey's methods of abridgement

As an abridgement, one of the main features of Kersey's dictionary is its intended conciseness. Despite the large folio format of Kersey – Phillips, Kersey managed to produce an octavo volume abridged dictionary (Kerling 1979: 196) retaining the informative load of the original. The methods adopted by Kersey to achieve his ends will be discussed in this section.

Van Sterkenburg (2003: 389) defines an abridged dictionary as "a dictionary made from a larger one which has been shortened by removing some of its parts, e.g. obsolete words or phrases". According to this definition, one way to reduce the size of a dictionary would be to eliminate a number of entries which, according to Landau (2001: 398), usually amounts to a third of the entries in the original dictionary. In other words, 66.6% of the total number of entries would be retained in the abridged version.

Regarding the *Dictionarium*, it would be a plausible hypothesis to consider a reduction in the total number of entries recorded in Kersey – Phillips, and accordingly, of the medical entries, as the main strategy used by Kersey to shorten the folio source into a small-format abridgement. For this

reason, the results of the manual count of medical terms in the alphabetical ranges under discussion were quite surprising, at the same time as revealing, since rather than the expected 290 medical entries resulting from the removal of a third of the original entries, the number of medical terms in Kersey's *Dictionarium* amounts to some 369, that is, almost 85% of the medical entries in Kersey – Phillips. Besides, the proportion of medical terms with respect to the total number of entries is very similar in both dictionaries, as shown in Table 1, and even the total number of entries in both dictionaries does not differ much.

Table 1. Comparison of (medical) entries in Kersey – Phillips (1706) and Kersey (1708)

	No. of entries in A, S	No. of medical terms (A, S)	Proportion of medical terms (A, S)
Kersey – Phillips (1706)	6,019	435	7 %
Kersey (1708)	5,727	369	6.4 %

Therefore, far from the expected drastic reduction in the number of headwords, we find a very high proportion of words being retained by Kersey in his abridgement of Kersey – Phillips, a fact which takes us to a second possible shortening strategy: cutting down the definitions. Pruning and remodelling of the explanations are in fact noted by Osselton (2009: 148) as the solutions adopted by Kersey to produce his “handy octavo volume”. But, how did Kersey undertake these significant alterations of the definitions? Can we identify certain systematicity in his shortening practices?

An analysis of the medical entries in Kersey will disclose different ways adopted by the author to reduce the length of the entries in Kersey – Phillips; most of them involve deletion, which will be indicated by Ø in the examples. However, generally speaking, Kersey retains those definitions that are originally short in Kersey – Phillips, as shown in (1):<sup>2</sup>

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|-----|---|--|
| (1) | Kersey – Phillips (1706)  | Kersey (1708)  |
| (a) | ACMASTICA, ( <i>Greek</i> ) a continued Feaver so call'd by some, the same with <i>Synochus</i> . | ACMASTICA, (G.) a continued Fever so call'd by some, the same with <i>Synochus</i> . |

<sup>2</sup> Different typographical schemes used in the dictionaries have been normalised as follows: headwords are in small caps and highlighted words in the original texts are in italics.

- |     |  |   |
|-----|--|---|
| (b) | ALBA PITUITA, A Disease, the same with <i>Leucophlegmatias</i> ; which See.                | ALBA PITUITA, A Disease, the same with <i>Leucophlegmatias</i> .                          |
| (c) | ALVIDUCA, loosening Medicines.   | ALVIDUCA, loosening Medicines.  |
| (d) | SARCOCELE, ( <i>Gr.</i> ) a Rupture, which consists in a fleshy swelling of the Testicles. | SARCOCELE, ( <i>G.</i> ) a Rupture, which consists in a fleshy swelling of the Testicles. |

And we even find a few cases of longer definitions that have not been shortened in Kersey's abridgement:

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| (2) | Kersey – Phillips (1706)   | Kersey (1708)   |
| (a) | AMAUROSIS, ( <i>Gr.</i> ) A Dimness or loss of Sight, without any outward Fault to be seen in the Eye.   | AMAUROSIS, ( <i>G.</i> ) A Dimness or loss of Sight, without any outward Fault to be seen in the Eye.   |
| (b) | AUGMENTUM FEBRICUM (among Physicians) a Reckoning from what time the Heat of a continual Feaver has seiz'd upon the Mass of Blood, till it come to the Height. | AUGMENTUM FEBRICUM ( <i>P.T.</i> ) a Reckoning from what time the Heat of a continual Feaver has seiz'd upon the Mass of Blood, till it come to the Height. |

As a general rule, however, Kersey took one of the following measures to shorten the length of the definitions in Kersey – Phillips.

Alternative names of diseases are omitted in the abridgement, as in (3a), where the phrases "It is also termed *Hoplochrycina* and *MagnesMicrocosmicus*" and (3b) "which some call the Running-Worm, others the Wild-Fire" are not recorded in Kersey's *Dictionarium*. The omission of the explanation by Kersey in the definition for *shingles* (3b) can be justified by the reference to "St. Anthony's Fire", which can be considered a cross-reference the readers can consult for further information:

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|-----|---|---|
| (3) | Kersey – Phillips (1706)  | Kersey (1708)   |
| (a) | ARMARIUM UNGUENTUM, ( <i>Lat.</i> ) a Weapon-Salve, by which Wounds (as some give out) may be cur'd at any Distance only by dressing the Weapon: It is also termed <i>Hoplochrycina</i> and <i>Magnes Microcosmicus</i> . | ARMARIUM UNGUENTUM, ( <i>L.</i> ) a Weapon-Salve, by which Wounds are said to be cur'd at any Distance only by dressing the Weapon ∅. |



- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| (b) | SHINGLES, a Disease, a sort of <i>St. Anthony's Fire</i> , which some call the Running-Worm, others the Wild-Fire; 'tis a spreading Inflammation about the Waste, which kills the Patient, if it get quite round [...]. | SHINGLES, a Disease, a sort of <i>St. Anthony's Fire</i> Ø. |
|-----|---|---|

In other cases, when we have binomial constructions of synonyms or quasi-synonyms in the definitions, one of them is omitted. Thus, the two words in the phrases “break or dissolve” (4a), “scrape or take away” (4b) and “contortion or wresting” (4c) in Kersey – Phillips (1706) are reduced to just one word in Kersey (1708). Furthermore, the examination of other definitions where one of the elements of the pairs is deleted by Kersey (1708) allows us to identify a frequent deletion pattern: in those cases where one of the terms is of Romance origin and the other one of Germanic origin, the Germanic one is preferred. Thus, in the definition of ABSCESS, the phrase “a gross Tumour or swelling” (Kersey – Phillips 1706) is reduced to “a gross Swelling” in Kersey (1708); likewise, in the phrase “imbibing or soaking them up” used in the definition of ABSORBENTS (Kersey – Phillips 1706), the Latinate element is deleted by Kersey (1708), who writes “soaking them up”. This practice can also be found in the definitions of ACANTABOLUS or ANTIADDES, among others.

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|-----|---|--|
| (4) | Kersey – Phillips (1706)  | Kersey (1708)  |
| (a) | SAXIFRAGA, Medicines that break or dissolve the Stone in Humane Bodies; also the Herb Saxifrage.            | SAXIFRAGA, ( <i>L.P.T.</i> ) Medicines that break Ø the Stone in Humane Bodies; also the Herb Saxifrage. |
| (b) | SCALPER, or SCALPING-IRON, a Surgeon's Instrument, to scrape or take away corrupt Flesh from the Bones.     | SCALPER or SCALPING-IRON, a Surgeon's Instrument, to scrape Ø corrupt Flesh from the Bones.              |
| (c) | SPRAIN, a violent contortion or wresting of the Tendons of the Muscles, occasioned by some sudden Accident. | SPRAIN, a violent Ø wresting of the Tendons of the Muscles, occasioned by some sudden Accident.          |

Another mechanism adopted by Kersey (1708) to shorten the length of the definitions consists in removing those explanations about the etymological origin of the medical terms included in Kersey – Phillips (1706), as shown in (5):

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|-----|--|---|
| (5) | Kersey – Phillips (1706)   | Kersey (1708)   |
| (a) | ARQUATUS MORBUS, the Jaundice, a Disease so call'd from its resembling the colour of the Rainbow, in <i>Latin</i> , <i>Arquus</i> or <i>Arcus Celestis</i> .   | ARQUATUS MORBUS, the Jaundice, a Disease Ø.   |
| (b) | SATYRIASIS, or SATYRIASMUS, an immoderate desire of Venery; it is also sometimes taken for the Leprosy, because that Disease makes the Skin rough like that of a <i>Satyr</i> : Also the Swelling of the Glandules or Kernels behind the Ears. | SATYRIASIS, or SATYRIASMUS, an immoderate desire of Venery; it is also taken for the Leprosy a Disease, Ø or the Swelling of the Glandules behind the Ears. |

Occasionally, the reduction only affects the reference to the branch of knowledge of the term, "Physick" or "surgery", as illustrated in (6):

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| (6) | Kersey – Phillips (1706)   | Kersey (1708)   |
| (a) | ACOSMIA, (in the Art of <i>Physick</i> ), an ill state of Health, with the loss of the natural Colour in the Face.   | ACOSMIA, Ø an ill State of Health, with the Loss of the natural Colour in the Face.   |
| (b) | ACRASIA, ( <i>Gr.</i> ) Indisposition, Disorder. Among some Writers in <i>Physick</i> , it is taken for the excess or predominancy of one Quality above another in the Constitution of a human Body. | ACRASIA, ( <i>G.</i> ) Indisposition, Disorder. Ø Also the Excess or Predominancy of one Quality above another in the Constitution of a Human Body. |

The examples in (7) illustrate the deletion of the English translations of many Latin and Greek headwords:

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| (7) | Kersey – Phillips (1706)   | Kersey (1708)   |
| (a) | APOSTEMA or APOSTEME ( <i>Gr. i.e.</i> a standing apart) a preternatural Swelling caus'd by corrupt Matter gather'd together in any Part of the Body and commonly call'd an <i>Impostume</i> or <i>Abscess</i> . | APOSTEMA or APOSTEME ( <i>G. Ø</i> ) a preternatural Swelling caus'd by corrupt Matter gather'd together in any Part of the Body. |

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|-----|---|--|
| (b) | AQUA INTERCUS, ( <i>i.e.</i> Water between the Skin) the Dropsy; a Disease. | AQUA INTERCUS, Ø the Dropsey; a Disease. |
| (c) | SACER MORBUS, ( <i>i.e.</i> Holy Disease) the Falling-Sickness.             | SACER MORBUS, Ø the Falling-Sickness.    |

Besides, many of the cross-references in Kersey – Phillips (1706) are not retained in Kersey's abridgement, as in the examples in (8):

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| (8) | Kersey – Phillips (1706)   | Kersey (1708)  |
| (a) | AFFECTUS ( <i>Lat.</i> ), [...] Among Physicians, it is taken for Sickness or any Disturbance in the Body. See <i>Pathema</i> and <i>Passion</i> . | AFFECTUS ( <i>L.</i> ), [...] Among Physicians, it is taken for Sickness or any Disturbance in the Body. Ø |
| (b) | SCLEROTES, or SCLEROTICA TUNICA, the horney Coat of the Eye. See <i>Cornea Tunica</i> .  | SCLEROTES, or SCLEROTICA TUNICA, horney Coat of the Eye. Ø   |
| (c) | SMALLPOX, an infectious Disease. See <i>Variolæ</i> .  | SMALLPOX, an infectious Disease. Ø.  |
| (d) | SPECULUM MATRICIS, a Surgeon's Instrument to open the Womb. See <i>Dilatatorium</i> and <i>Dioptra</i> .   | SPECULUM MATRICIS, a Surgeon's Instrument to open the Womb. Ø  |

In the case of diseases, Kersey may condense a detailed description provided in Kersey – Phillips (1706) in just a synonym, which, in practice, functions as a cross-reference, as in (9) or in (3b) above. However, these cases are exceptional because, although the definitions of the diseases in the *Dictionarium* are shorter than in Kersey – Phillips, giving a brief description is the usual rule in Kersey (1708):

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|-----|--|---|
| (9) | Kersey – Phillips (1706)   | Kersey (1708)                                     |
| (a) | ANGINA, ( <i>Lat.</i> ) an Inflammation of the Jaws and Throat, attended with a continual Feaver and a difficulty of Breathing and Swallowing; the Quinsey, which is of two sorts either <i>Spuria</i> or <i>Exquisita</i> , <i>i.e.</i> a bastard or a true Quinsey: Again the latter is four-fold, <i>viz.</i> <i>Cynanche</i> , <i>Paracynanche</i> , <i>Synanche</i> and <i>Parasynanche</i> ; which See in their proper Places. | ANGINA, ( <i>L.</i> ) Ø the Quinsey; a Disease. Ø |

- (b) APHTHAE, the Thrush, especially in Children; certain Wheals, Ulcers, or Pimples about inward Parts of the Mouth; as also about the Stomach and Guts, which when come to the height, fall off by piece-meals, and are often accompany'd with a Feaver, in those of riper Years. APHTHAE, the Thrush, a Disease. Ø

Kersey also leaves out the therapeutic properties of many plants and preparations which are reported in Kersey – Phillips, as shown in (10). In the case of ALE-HOOF (10b) we also have an instance of deletion of equivalent names, “also known by the Names of *Ground-Ivy, Cast-foot, Jill-creep-by the Ground* and *Hay-mids*”, as in (3) above, as well as a case of deletion of post-modifying prepositional phrase, “with round Leaves and blew Flowers”, as in (11).

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|---|---|
| (10) Kersey – Phillips (1706)   | Kersey (1708)   |
| (a) ADIANTUM ( <i>Gr.</i> ) the Herb Maiden-Hair, so call'd because its Leaves take no wet; being good for Coughs, shortness of Breath, as also for Pains in the Side, Kidneys or Bladder.  | ADIANTUM ( <i>G.</i> ) the Herb Maiden-Hair. Ø                          |
| (b) ALE-HOOF, an Herb with round Leaves and blew Flowers, so call'd because it serves to clear Ale or Beer: It is of admirable Virtue in Diseases of the Lungs, Stoppages of the Kidneys, Colick Pains &c. and is also known by the Names of <i>Ground-Ivy, Cats-foot, Jill-creep-by the Ground</i> and <i>Hay-mids</i> . | ALE-HOOF, an Herb Ø so call'd because it serves to clear Ale or Beer. Ø |

One of the most common practices to shorten the extension of the definitions consists in omitting not only synonyms, but also post-modifying prepositional phrases and relative clauses either in the middle or at the end of the definitions. This omission, though, does not blur the meaning of the medical term.

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|--|---|
| (11) Kersey – Phillips (1706)  | Kersey (1708)   |
| (a) ABSCESS ( <i>Lat.</i> ) a gross Tumour or swelling in any part of the Body, that may either be dissolved, or brought to run with Matter: It is commonly call'd an <i>Impostume</i> . | ABSCESS ( <i>L.</i> ) a gross Swelling in any part of the Body, Ø commonly call'd an <i>Impostume</i> . |
| (b) ALLIOTICUM, ( <i>Gr.</i> ) a Medicine, which by its cleansing Quality, alters and purifies the Blood.  | ALLIOTICUM, ( <i>G.</i> ) a Medicine which Ø alters and purifies the Blood.                             |
| (c) SALVATORY, a Surgeon's Box, with Partitions, to hold several sorts of Salves, Ointments and Balsams.   | SALVATORY, a Surgeon's Box, Ø to hold several sorts of Salves, Ointments &c.                            |

Truncating the definitions is the most common shortening practice in the abridgement. This involves the deletion of clause-final extended explanations that complete the meaning of entries in Kersey – Phillips. In (12a) and (12c), for example, the benefits of the surgical intervention explained in the definitions are not recorded in the abridgement. Similarly, Kersey eliminates the causes of the disease in example (12b):

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| (12) Kersey – Phillips (1706)  | Kersey (1708)  |
| (a) AMPUTATION, a Cutting away, or Lopping off: In <i>Surgery</i> , it is taken for the Cutting off any corrupted or putrefy'd Part or Member, to prevent the Infection from spreading through the whole Body. | AMPUTATION, a Cutting away, or Lopping off: In <i>Surgery</i> , the Cutting off any corrupted or putrify'd Part or Member Ø. |
| (b) ANOREXIA, a want of Appetite, a Loathing of Meat, occasioned by an ill Disposition of the Stomach.   | ANOREXIA, a want of Appetite, a Loathing of Meat Ø.  |
| (c) TO SCARIFY, (in <i>Surgery</i> ) to Lance or open a Sore, to make an Incision in any part of the Body, in order to let out Blood or corrupt Humours.   | TO SCARIFY, (in <i>Surgery</i> ) to lance or open a Sore, to make an Incision in any part of the Body Ø.                     |

Truncating also involves the removal of those parts of the definition usually introduced by "viz" or "as", which serve to illustrate or explain the meaning, as shown in (13):

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|---|--|
| (13) Kersey – Phillips (1706)   | Kersey (1708)  |
| (a) ANABROCHISMUS, (in <i>Surgery</i> ) a particular manner of drawing out the pricking Hairs of the Eye-lids that are turn'd inwards, viz. by means of a Thread of a fine Silk in the Eye of a Needle, which when doubled, the Hair is put through and so drawn out. | ANABROCHISMUS, (in <i>Surg.</i> ) a particular manner of drawing out the pricking Hairs of the Eye-lids that are turn'd inwards Ø. |
| (b) ANACARTHARSIS, a Medicine that Purges or Discharges Nature by some of the upper Parts; as any thing that provokes to Vomit, to Sneezing, or Spitting.   | ANACARTHARSIS, a Medicine that Purges or Discharges Nature by some of the Upper Parts Ø.   |
| (c) ANTECEDENT SIGNS, (in the Art of <i>Physick</i> ) such Signs or Causes as are observed before a Disease; as <i>An ill Disposition of the Pancreatick Juice or of the Choler</i> is the cause of many Diseases.  | ANTECEDENT SIGNS, (in the Art of <i>Physick</i> ) such Signs or Causes as are observed before a Disease Ø.                         |

In general, the words used by Bemis (2007: 80) to describe the pattern found throughout the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* can be applied to the shortening strategies displayed in Kersey's *Dictionarium*: "a kind of bare-bones approach to lexicography that leaves the reader with only a rudimentary understanding of a word's meaning". This does not mean, though, that Kersey breaks the basic principle an abridger must follow in his task, i.e. guaranteeing the comprehension of the word (Landau 2001: 398), but, as expected in an undertaking of this nature, Kersey had to discard much information in order to compile a portable dictionary out of a large folio volume.

But Kersey's *Dictionarium* was not the only attempt at marketing a handy small dictionary with a scientific bias in the first decade of the eighteenth century. A cursory comparison between the *Dictionarium* and a contemporary similar dictionary issued anonymously in 1707, the

*Glossographia Anglicana Nova*, will reveal a genuine interest in medical issues evidenced in the high number of medical entries contained in these short reference works.

### 5. Kersey's *Dictionarium* (1708) and the anonymous *Glossographia Anglicana Nova* (1707)

Just one year before the publication of Kersey's *Dictionarium*, the anonymous *Glossographia Anglicana Nova* (henceforth *Glossographia*) reached the market. This work is particularly relevant for this essay because it has many points in common with Kersey's dictionary. Apart from having been issued very close in time, with just one year of difference, they were addressed to a similar target audience. In addition, their emphasis on science brings them even closer.

The anonymous author of the *Glossographia* acknowledges in the preface to have drawn most of the scientific material from Harris's *Lexicon Technicum*: "Whilst I was compiling this, the ingenious Dr. Harris's *Lexicon Technicum* laid before me, to which I am indebted for a considerable part of this Book" (*Glossographia* 1707: A3r).<sup>3</sup> Likewise, as Kersey's *Dictionarium* is an abridgement of Kersey – Phillips and most of the new entries in Kersey – Phillips's dictionary were derived from Harris, the latter is also an indirect source of the *Dictionarium*. Furthermore, a number of entries in the *Glossographia* are also taken from Kersey – Phillips (e.g. ACME, ANGINA, APNCEA, ST. ANTHONY'S FIRE OR SPORADICI MORBI). Finally, the *Glossographia* is also announced as a portable volume; the compiler himself calls it "this little Book", and even the word "Abridgment" is mentioned in the preface.

Given these similarities in publication dates, target audience, emphasis on scientific terminology, sources and small size, it seems a plausible exercise to make a cursory comparison of these dictionaries which can reinforce the idea of a widespread interest in medical issues at the beginning of the eighteenth century, as suggested by the extensive inclusion of medical material in an inexpensive portable volume such as the one by Kersey.

The *Glossographia* is a small dictionary, with some 14,500 words (Starnes – Noyes 1991: 90) vis-à-vis the 35,000 words in Kersey's *Dictionarium*.

<sup>3</sup> As Harris's *Lexicon Technicum* and the *Glossographia* were released by the same publishers, the latter may have been conceived as a portable dictionary targeted to the general reader in order to ensure wider coverage of the market (Hayashi 1978: 75-76).

As illustrated in Table 2, the word list for the letters A and S comprises 2,209 words and, accordingly, includes fewer medical terms, some 203.

Table 2. Comparison of (medical) entries in the *Glossographia* (1707) and Kersey (1708)

	Total No. of entries (approx.)	No. of entries in (A, S)	No. of medical terms (A, S)	Proportion of medical terms (A, S)
<i>Glossographia</i> (1707)	14,500	2,209	203	9,1%
Kersey (1708)	35,000	5,727	369	6,4%

Except for 4 terms which are not recorded in Kersey (1708), the *Glossographia* does not incorporate new entries. However, in proportional terms, if we take into account the total number of words in the letters under study, the presence of medical terms is higher in the *Glossographia* than in Kersey's dictionary.

As for the definitions, although the wording may be different, the contents are practically the same in both short dictionaries, as shown in (14):

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>(14) <i>Glossographia</i> (1707)</p> <p>(a) ACANTABOLUS, an Instrument like a Pair of Pincers, which Surgeons use to take any prickly Substance out of the Gullet.</p> <p>(b) ACIDULÆ, any Medicinal Waters that are not hot.</p> <p>(c) ACOUSTICKS, (<i>Gr.</i>) are Medicines or Instruments which help the Hearing.</p> <p>(d) SACCULI MEDICINALES, little Physical Bags filled with several Simples, and applied to the Part affected.</p> <p>(e) SEMEIOTICA, is that part of Physick which treats of the signs of Health and Sickness.</p> | <p>Kersey (1708)</p> <p>ACANTABOLUS, a Surgeon's Instrument, like a Pair of Pincers, to take out any thing that Sticks in the Gullet.</p> <p>ACIDULÆ, any Medicinal or Spaw-Waters that are not hot.</p> <p>ACOUSTICA or ACOUSTICKS, Medicines or Instruments which help the Sense of Hearing.</p> <p>SACCULI MEDICINALES (<i>L.P.T.</i>) several Simples, ty'd up in little Bags, to be apply'd to the diseased Part.</p> <p>SEMEIOTICA, that part of Physick which treats of the Signs of Health and Sickness.</p> |
|--|--|

However, some entries in Kersey present more information than the corresponding ones in the *Glossographia*, as illustrated in (15):



- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (15) <i>Glossographia</i> (1707)  | Kersey (1708)  |
| (a) ABAPTISTON or ANABAPTISTON, a Surgeon's Instrument; see <i>Modiolus</i> . | ABAPTISTON or ANABAPTISTON, (G.) a Surgeon's Instrument, a kind of Trepan to lay open the Scull.                                 |
| (b) AMAUROSIS, a Disease in the Eyes.   | AMAUROSIS, (G.) a Dimness or loss of Sight, without any outward Fault to be seen in the Eye.                                     |
| (c) ASPYXIA (Gr.) is the highest Degree of Swooning.                          | ASPHYXIA, (P.T.) a Cessation of the Pulse throughout the whole Body; which is the highest Degree of Swooning, and next to Death. |

Whereas on other occasions, as in (16), the *Glossographia* features definitions which are more complete than the ones in Kersey:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (16) <i>Glossographia</i> (1707)  | Kersey (1708)  |
| (a) ACME, (Gr.) a Term used by Physicians signifying the Height of a Disease; some Diseases have four Periods, 1. The <i>Arche</i> of beginning, 2. the <i>Anabasis</i> , i.e. the Growth or Encrease, 3. the <i>Acme</i> when the Matter of the Distemper is fully ripe, 4. the <i>Paracme</i> or the declining of it. | ACME, [...] Among Physicians, the height of a Disease. |
| (b) ANGINA, (Lat.) an Inflammation of the Jaws and Throat, attended with a continual Fever, and a Difficulty of Breathing and Swallowing. The Quinsy.   | ANGINA, (L.) the Quinsey; a Disease.                   |

Perhaps the more noticeable difference between these dictionaries lies in the spelling of the medical entries. Whereas Kersey systematically records a Latinate spelling, the same entries present an anglicised spelling in the *Glossographia*. In this sense, the anonymous author is following Harris's practice of anglicising the Latinate forms he took from Stephanus Blancardus' *A physical dictionary* (1684), as noted by Lonati (2007: 103-104). Examples of these different spelling practices are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Anglicised and Latinate spellings in the *Glossographia* (1707) and Kersey's *Dictionarium* (1708)

<i>Glossographia</i> 's (1707) anglicised spelling	Kersey's (1708) Latinate spelling
Acrasy	Acrasia
Acrisy	Acrisia
Alopecy	Alopecia
Allogotrophy	Alogotrophia
Scletoricks	Sclerotica
Spasmedicks	Spasmodica

In general, though, both dictionaries are good examples of portable, low-priced volumes addressed to a wide audience that seemed to be eager to read and understand medical texts. The analysis of the methods of abridgement found in the *Dictionarium* has revealed Kersey's awareness of the target readers of his work. Thus, he omits elements that could be of interest to advanced readers but not to the general public, for example, information related to classical languages (e.g. synonyms of Romance provenance (4), the etymological origin of medical terms (5), or translations of Latin and Greek headwords (7)), as well as specific medical details, such as the therapeutic qualities of plants (10), or the causes of certain diseases (12b), among others. Similarly, the anonymous author of the *Glossographia* eliminates Latinate spellings and adopts anglicised forms, which probably sounded more familiar to the general reader. It can be inferred that these dictionaries were designed as useful and practical look-up reference works and, in this sense, they served their function well. The wide range of areas covered by the medical entries contained in both dictionaries reveals the readers' various interests as well as the terminology they were likely to find in non-specialised medical texts. Just to illustrate the type of medical entries that are given more prominence, Table 4 presents a classification of the main categories arranged in ascending order taking into account the number of terms within each category. Thus, the most abundant group includes those terms that designate diseases or any pathological disorder that may affect bones, muscles, organs or any physiological process. This group includes the terms designating both the diseases and the diseased. Then, the second most numerous group contains those generic terms referring to medical substances that have a distinctive therapeutic property or action. Much smaller are other groups which contain terms referring to medical instruments, remedies, stages in a pathological process, etc. (Only those groups containing more than 10 entries have been recorded.)

Table 4. Medical contents contained in the *Glossographia* (1707) and Kersey's *Dictionarium* (1708)

Main medical contents covered	<i>Glossographia</i> (1707) No. of entries (approx.)	Kersey (1708) No. of entries (approx.)
Diseases and pathological disorders (terms that designate both the diseases and the diseased): <i>acrasia, aneurism, spina ventosa, stone-colick*</i>	83	161
Medicines categorised according to the effects produced on the human body: <i>absorbents, analepticks, sarcoticks, somnifera</i>	60	100
Surgical and medical instruments: <i>abaptiston, ancteres, Scamnum Hippocratis</i>	11	22
Terms to refer to medicines and remedies: <i>absolutorium, alephanginæ, apozeme</i>	10	18
Terms related to the different stages in the development of diseases: <i>acme, acrisia, attenuation</i>	10	19
Medical and surgical techniques: <i>amputation, arteriotomy, scarification</i>	10	13
Botanical/animal/mineral elements and chemical preparations with therapeutic applications: <i>acidulae, ale-cost, saxifrage</i>	7	19

\* The terms included follow the spelling in the *Dictionarium*.

## 6. Conclusions

Harris's *Lexicon Technicum* constituted a turning point in the history of specialised lexicography and proved to be pivotal in the inclusion of medical terms in general reference works. After its publication, and in just four years, the readers had at their disposal three dictionaries which were enriched with the incorporation of medical terms mainly drawn from Harris: Kersey – Phillips, Kersey's *Dictionarium* and the *Glossographia*. The release of these works with a marked interest in scientific terminology in such a short space of time clearly indicates the readers' demand for this kind of information in reference works.

Kersey's *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum* is especially relevant in the history of English lexicography for being the first abridged dictionary. This

shorter version of Kersey – Phillips placed a special emphasis on scientific terminology, which is not surprising since Kersey himself had been responsible for the revision of Phillips's *New World of Words*, a process that had entailed the inclusion of a high number of scientific terms from Harris's *Lexicon Technicum*.

The comparative analysis of the medical terms contained in the letters A and S of Kersey – Phillips and Kersey's *Dictionarium* has revealed that, despite the size difference between the original folio and the octavo abridgement, Kersey decided against sacrificing the high number of medical headwords that had been introduced in Kersey – Phillips. In this way, he gave credit to the merits he had assigned to his abridged version in the preface to his dictionary: completeness and inclusiveness. But if the reduction of the dictionary did not affect the number of entries, it necessarily affected the extension of the definitions to achieve the intended conciseness. Kersey adopted different strategies to prune and remodel the definitions which embraced the omission of cross-references, of synonyms, of translations from Latin and Greek, of indications of the branch of knowledge, of examples, and of detailed explanations, among other elements. The application of these measures allowed Kersey to retain a large number of medical entries in a limited space.

In order to assess Kersey's practices in the production of his abridgement, the *Dictionarium* has been compared with another short dictionary published just one year earlier: the *Glossographia Anglicana Nova*. They shared the same target readership, the same purposes and the same emphasis on scientific terminology. The analysis of their medical entries confirmed that medical terminology awakened a great interest among contemporary readers, so much so that even short dictionaries devoted considerable space to this type of contents. Certainly, as Kersey acknowledges, the *Dictionarium* did not offer detailed definitions – after all, it was just a look-up reference work; however, it provided enough surface information for the general public to become familiar with medical material. For a full understanding or a full scope, as Kersey reminds the readers, the market offered other dictionaries.

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