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Geoffrey Williams, Galleron Ioana, Clarissa Stincone. Announcing the Dictionary: Front Matter in the Three Editions of Furetière's Dictionnaire Universel. Proceedings of the XIXth EURALEX Congress 2021, Democritus University of Thrace., pp.393-402, 2020, Proceedings of the XIX EURALEX Congress. halshs-03096034

**HAL Id: halshs-03096034**

**<https://shs.hal.science/halshs-03096034>**

Submitted on 4 Jan 2021

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**EURALEX XIX**  
Congress of the  
European Association  
for Lexicography

**Lexicography for inclusion**

**7-11 September 2021**  
Ramada Plaza Thraki  
Alexandroupolis, Greece

[www.euralex2020.gr](http://www.euralex2020.gr)

**Proceedings Book  
Volume 1**

Edited by Zoe Gavriilidou, Maria Mitsiaki, Asimakis Fliatouras

**EURALEX Proceedings**

ISSN 2521-7100

ISBN 978-618-85138-1-5

Edited by: Zoe Gavriilidou, Maria Mitsiaki, Asimakis Fliatouras

English Language Proofreading: Lydia Mitits and Spyridon Kiosses

Technical Editor: Kyriakos Zagliveris



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**2020 Edition**

# Announcing the Dictionary: Front Matter in the Three Editions of Furetière's *Dictionnaire Universel*

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## Abstract

The front matter of a dictionary provides important information as to the background to a work and what is to be expected inside. Although they can be read as standalone texts, it is only when linked to the actual dictionary content that their full potential is realised. This is very much the case for the prefaces to Furetière's *Dictionnaire Universel*, first published posthumously in 1690 and then to go through two major revisions in 1701 and 1725/27. As Furetière left no preface, we start with his *factums*, texts that details his fight with the *Académie Française* who wanted to impede publication. We then have the preface by Bayle of 1690 and then the front matter produced by the two revisers, Basnage de Beauval and Brutel de la Rivière. This was a highly innovative dictionary as both an encyclopaedic work and one with a pedagogical intention. We explore the declarations in the prefaces and the encyclopaedic and linguistic content concentrating on the 1701 edition that is currently being fully digitised in XML-TEI. Citations from largely contemporary texts were used to illustrate entries leading to a very wide knowledge network of late seventeenth century science. Basnage also experimented in illustrating usage through examples, grammatical and pronunciation information.

**Keywords:** Front matter; historical dictionaries; digitisation; history of ideas

## 1 Introduction

“Il n’y a point de Livres qui apportent plus d’utilité au Public, et moins de gloire à l’auteur”. Antoine Furetière (1619-1688), *Factum*. (1859a: 3.)

(There is no book that brings more value to the public and less glory to the author).

Although it is possible to treat prefaces as standalone texts, the important information they contain only acquires its full sense when seen in the light of a systematic analysis of the dictionary contents. This is very much the case for the three principal editions of Antoine Furetière's *Dictionnaire Universel*, henceforth DU, published at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This paper will look in detail at the claims made in the front matter of these works, whilst cross linking these to the fully digital versions actually in preparation.

The history of the DU from its initial publication in 1690 to its final edition in 1727 displays an interesting series of actions and reactions. The first action is the publication itself which provoked a hurried first edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française* (1694), accompanied by the *Dictionnaire des Arts et des Sciences* (1694). Unwilling to lose a profitable product, the publisher, Leers, commissioned a new edition under the editorship of Henri Basnage de Beauval, this being published in 1701. In order to undermine the Protestant publishing industry, the Jesuits of Trévoux immediately started on a plagiarised version (Trévoux 1704), cleansed of so-called protestant heresy. This was brought out in 1704 and was the beginning of a long series of dictionaries that gradually distanced themselves from the Basnage's version of the DU. On the Protestant side, *Trévoux* was met with a partially revised version in 1708. This was more a reprint than a revised edition, as changes were minor. The front matter does not change as a truly revised version was planned but this was brought to a stop by the death of Basnage in 1710. A revised Trévoux dictionary came out in 1721, followed by another edition of the DU in 1725/1727, under the editorship of Brutel de la Rivière, an edition that will prove to be the last one, because of the publishers' death. All of this was documented in fierce exchanges in the scholarly journals of the time, and reflected in the front matter of the three editions.

Front matter is abundant in the three editions, as this includes the *privilège*, the right to publish, and, notably in the case of the Brutel edition, comments from the publishers. Working in the context of the French nationally funded BasNum project,<sup>1</sup> our aim here is to use this front matter to study the development of a work that was highly influential in the rise of encyclopaedic dictionaries and of encyclopaedia in the eighteenth century. After a presentation of the background and of the general principles of the three major contributors to the three main versions of the DU, we will concentrate on two aspects: the encyclopaedic nature of the dictionary and the pedagogical dimension of this work. Working from the fully digitised texts, we shall show just how powerful a lexical and encyclopaedic model was thus gradually being built.

## 2 The Three Editions of the *Dictionnaire Universel*

By the time the *Dictionnaire Universel* was published in 1690, its author, Antoine Furetière, had already been dead for two years. It was thus the Protestant émigré philosopher Pierre Bayle who wrote the preface. However, Furetière had already

<sup>1</sup> <https://anr.fr/Projet-ANR-18-CE38-0003>

published his *Essai* (1684), a proof of concept destined to show that he had not plagiarised the, as yet far from published, dictionary of the Academy, and a series of *factums* (Furetière 1859), pamphlets against members of the French Academy who were attempting to prevent publication of his dictionary.

Dedicated to the King of France, Louis XIV, the *Essai* (1684) is quite clear in what Furetière had set out to achieve. The aim is to build an encyclopaedia that will be usable by foreigners and will ensure a place for the French language in posterity. This was not to be a rival dictionary to that of the Academy, but an overview of the French language of the late seventeenth century with all the necessary terms from the arts, crafts and sciences. Such a presentation was vital in defending Furetière's right to publish (the *privilège*), as the *Académie* had a monopoly on the creation of a dictionary of general language usage. Nevertheless, the *Essai* brought forth fierce opposition from the Academy, which had hitherto failed to produce its own more limited work. Furetière's response was the above-mentioned *factums*. The main thrust of the first one (Furetière 1859a), printed in Amsterdam in 1685, is a defence of his right to a privilege to create and publish a dictionary in his own name. In the second, he uses sarcasm to the full and attacks individual members of the *Académie*. In the first *factum*, he denies the demand of the *Académie* for a monopoly on all monolingual dictionaries for a period of twenty years on the basis that they have not opposed their *privilège* in other cases. He also refutes the accusations of plagiarism from the *Académie* challenging to prove that that had not consulted other works as those of Vaugelas and Ménage. Both are essentially legalistic in nature and not our main concern here, as this has been amply done by Rey in his biography of Furetière (Rey 2006).

Furetière lost the following legal battle, which led him to contact the great Dutch publishing house Leers, who published the work posthumously in 1690. This was not so unusual procedure as many French intellectuals, Catholic and Protestant, used the Dutch publishers as a means of getting around the censor. The dictionary was well-received, including by Louis XIV himself, despite the embargo from France, and was read widely. Indeed, it is this edition that was used by Bluteau when writing his dictionary of Portuguese (Verdelho & Silvestre, 2007) and the work was also present in the library of Matthias Moth, who was engaged in his dictionary of Danish (Eegholm-Pedersen, personal communication).

Whilst the writings of Furetière were essentially defending his work, the preface by Bayle in 1690 introduces the finished dictionary. What Bayle insists upon is the advantage the French language is taking upon ancient and modern languages, that do not benefit from such an extensive description as that of the DU. Comparing Furetière's work to the admirable lexicons produced by the Estienne and other Latin and Greek scholars, he underlines that the DU offers "*la langue de tous les jours*" (everyday language), which is irremediably lost for the ancient languages, since it did not pass in the books and other writings we have inherited from these old times. The DU becomes therefore a model for all the nations, and Bayle invites scholars from all over Europe to build similar works about other idioms. While it is not clear if, in Bayle's opinion, all languages are worthy of such a complete description, nor what his or Furetière's view were on the evolution of the language, the approach is extremely distinct to the one taken by the *Académie*. The DU appears thus not as an instrument for freezing the language in a point of perfection, which is what the academy was vainly hoping to achieve, but as a snapshot of the ways of speaking in France at a certain moment in time.

To this idea of capturing the general use rather than the "*bel usage*" Furetière adds another, promised to a great future, that of describing the objects, notions and entities the lexical units are designating, as much as glossing upon the words. The dictionary offers thereby a simple means to acquire accurate knowledge about a wealth of domains, so that one can engage into an informed conversation with the specialists of the various disciplines, trades, arts and crafts. This is all the more interesting as Furetière, Bayle states, has managed to convey a great deal of information without being pedantic or 'dry'. There is something 'curious' to be read in each entry, instruction and agreement going hand in hand in this impressive work. The dictionary being a great success, a totally revised and corrected second edition, with a new preface in addition to that of Bayle, was produced by the Protestant refugee Henri Basnage de Beauval (1657-1710) in 1701. The 1701 preface demonstrates why there was a need for revision and how this was carried out. He underlines the extent of his revisions, but never claims the work as his own.

Basnage's first goal is, of course, to revise and correct the numerous errors of Furetière's work, answering thus the call for improvement launched by Bayle in his *Préface* of the 1690 edition:

Pour conclusion on avertit le public, qu'on est bien éloigné de croire qu'il manque rien à cet Ouvrage. Un Dictionnaire est un de ces livres qui peuvent être améliorés à l'infini ; & quoy qu'on ne les gâte que trop souvent dans les dernières Editions, il faut pourtant convenir, qu'en general la première n'est qu'une ébauche en comparaison de celles qui la suivent [...] (Furetière 1690)

(To sum up, we warn the public that we are fully aware about everything this work is still missing. A dictionary is one of those books that can be continuously improved; and even if, in fact, the last editions do more harm than good, one must agree that the first one is more of a sketch of the following ones [...])

In fact, Basnage goes far beyond correcting and completing the entries, and generally tends to perform these activities with a new vision about what the dictionary should be. The most noticeable initiative is probably the decision to reinclude the "*bel usage*" that Furetière has left aside as being the task of the *Académie*:

On a cru que pour bien remplir le titre de *Dictionnaire universel*, il fallait qu'on y pût y apprendre à parler poliment, aussi bien qu'à parler juste, & dans les termes propres à chaque Art. (Basnage 1701)

(We believe that in a fully universal dictionary one should find learning material for speaking politely, as well as for speaking in an accurate manner, and with the appropriate terms from each domain.)

Writing largely after the quarrel between Furetière and the *Académie*, and in a foreign country, Basnage has not to worry about the *privilège* protecting the prestigious French institution. He can afford to diverge from his predecessor in his strategy to underline the specificity of the DU, that he places elsewhere than in the somewhat artificial distinction between 'specialised' and the 'common' language put forward both by Furetière's *factums* and by Bayle's preface. So great is his

certitude about the quality of the product he delivers, that he can even afford to quote the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* as a resource for this very 'polite language' whose re-inclusion is announced in his preface. However, he reserves also the right to mention points of view about the correctness of a word, genre, spelling or pronunciation, etc., that are not in line with those of the *Académie*:

peut-être aussi que l'on ne sera point fâché de revoir les raisons de douter; ces sortes de contestations forment, & raffinent le bon goût: ce n'est pas peu de chose que de sçavoir douter par raison. (Basnage 1701)  
(maybe one would not be unhappy to find reasons to doubt; this kind of discussions form and strengthen good taste: it is important to base ones' doubts on reasoning.)

Added to the fact that all over the dictionary Basnage pays attention to other sociolinguistic specificities (regionalisms and expressions of a specific trade being underlined as often as the fact that such or such word is *bas* (low) or *familier* (colloquial), these disagreements show that, rather than supporting the ideal of a 'perfect' French language, the reintroduction of the 'polite speech' is the result of a larger interest for the idiomatic variety, of which *l'usage de la Cour* (use of the Court) is just one example.

A second innovation mentioned in the *Préface* are the quotations from "the most excellent authors". Actually, their works as building materials of the DU are mentioned on the title page of the first edition, in 1690, but while Furetière hints towards a writer from time to time, Basnage decides to introduce short abstracts from their works in a large number of entries. On the one hand, his goal is to counteract in a personal way the 'dryness' of the alphabetic work, an aspect for which we have seen above that Furetière has already received much praise from Bayle. On the other hand, this addition aims less to set models for the right or the elegant use of a word, even if quotations could have such an effect, as an aftermath, but to help differentiating between various senses of the same word, a particularly difficult point in Basnage's view. Finally, Basnage is clearly less interested in the 'excellency' of the quoted authors, than in their efficiency in illustrating a semantic nuance, and while keeping the same claim on the title page, out of reverence for Furetière, he confesses in the *Préface* that he quoted everybody without praising or blaming, "*je les cite tous également*" (Basnage 1701).

As we will see in the next part of this paper, these innovations are far from covering the entirety of the changes performed by Basnage; nor do they occupy the entire *Préface*, in which many other aspects are discussed, such as the use of a 'historical orthography', in opposition to those appealing to adopt a phonetic orthography for French, or the elimination of the 'proper names', better suited in the *Dictionnaire historique* of Moreri. But they are clearly salient elements allowing to perceive and to understand Basnage's reinterpretation of the idea of an "universal" dictionary. While following Furetière's intuition about the necessity to offer a book in which the words and the things they designate are described together, Basnage is clearly re-equilibrating the balance in favour of a more lexicographic approach, attentive to the many layers and aspects of the language, as well as to the contexts, practices, ideas and mentalities that leave their imprint on it. Perfectly conscious about the impossibility to produce an entirely 'universal' dictionary, Basnage has a more holistic vision of it, aiming to create a work that accurately reflects the complexity and the intricacy of the language. This is quite different to Furetière who appears, maybe perforce, more interested in the 'margins' and the non-conventional, and who approaches the vocabularies of sciences, arts and crafts with quite the same picturesque vein that he uses to describe the manners of the bourgeois living rue Mouffetard.<sup>2</sup>

The Basnage edition was reprinted in 1702 and 1708, and certainly several times in between, but there was no revised edition until 1725. Basnage was fully aware of the shortcomings of his edition of the DU and was busy revising it at the time of his death in 1710, having only reached the beginning of the letter E. As the dictionary was not just considered by its publishers as a work of intellectual importance, but also of great commercial value, finding a new editor was vital. The choice fell on another refugee, Jean-Baptiste Brutel de la Rivière. This period from 1710 to publication in 1725 is detailed by Brutel in his preface where he explains how work stopped at the death of Reinier Leers in 1714 and was only picked back up in 1721 at the instigation of consortium of six Dutch publishers who had bought the rights from Leers' inheritor. The first volume appeared in The Hague in 1725 with the other two volumes in 1727.

The new edition benefits from a Dutch *privilege* and is dedicated to the Prince William VIII of Hesse-Kassel. The new *Préface*, that follows the two previously commented ones, shows that Brutel remains globally faithful to the idea of a universal dictionary, but rather in Furetière's sense. He reminds and even insists on the French language as the courtly *lingua franca* of the period, a key argument in Bayle's preface too, but somewhat less important for Basnage whose approach is more 'philosophical' in the terms of that time. He announces the introduction of new terms from a variety of arts and sciences, and the title page displays, indeed, new domains, such as mythology, dance, fencing and economy.<sup>3</sup> However, in addition he considers fit to add proper names and information about the various 'sects',<sup>4</sup> that Basnage has excluded. He is also insisting on the increases he made in the number of the *vieux mots* (old words) covered by the dictionary, as well as in the number of *termes des relations* (foreign terms, introduced in France by ambassadors and tradesmen). This disparate list of changes the preface covers suggests that additions have been made less because they were completing the picture about the complexity of the language, and more because they appear 'curious' and offering the proper kind of instruction and recreation to the *honnête homme*. This figure is clearly the target Brutel has in mind when revising the dictionary, with a very strict definition about what is 'honest' and what is not. Indeed, whilst Basnage was a lawyer with very wide interests, Brutel was a pastor and man of letters who was keen to impose his view, notably on moral issues.

<sup>2</sup> This is the setting of his 1666 novel, *Le Roman bourgeois*.

<sup>3</sup> He eliminates, in exchange, weaponry, maybe because he considers it not enough differentiated from other *arts mécaniques* (mechanical arts).

<sup>4</sup> Following the tolerant spirit of Basnage, he emphasises though the neutrality of his approach when increasing matter pertaining to all religions.

Therefore, while he continues Basnage's habit of quoting, he pays increased attention to the 'excellency' of the authors:

J'ai puisé les exemples que je cite dans nos meilleurs Auteurs; j'ai choisi ceux qui en fixant l'usage de la Langue, contiennent quelque pensée fine, quelque trait ingénieux, ou quelque maxime importante, propre à éclairer l'esprit, ou à purifier le cœur. (Brutel 1725)  
(I have picked up the examples I quote from our finest authors; I have chosen those that settle the right use, while conveying some delicate thought, some clever thinking, or some moral recommendation, so as to enlighten the spirit or to purify the heart.)

He becomes therefore quite angry with the publishers that put back in the texts quotations from authors he disapproves of, such as Rabelais, and headwords that he excluded, and he insists that the reader does not consider these as being his doing. In addition, Brutel is concerned with a level of correct usage that goes towards the pedantic, and has been criticised by Basnage in his own foreword. In order to update spelling to the latest conventions, he made use of the most recent, 1718, edition of the *Dictionnaire de Académie Française*, which he praises as being "à un point qui n'est pas éloigné de la perfection" (at a point that is close to perfection). He draws upon Desmarais' and Buffier's grammars, and claims even to have made wide use of the *Trévoux* dictionary - a rival work, but corresponding to his views about correctness in language use and moral mission of a book.

As announced by its front matter, this third version appears therefore far more prescriptive. Its audience is also more restricted, as Brutel dedicated his work to "le monde poli et savant" (the polite and educated world). To a certain extent, both the dedicatory epistle and the *Avertissement des Libraires* try to counterbalance this, by insisting on the superiority of the DU as opposed to the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* and to the plagiarising *Trévoux*. However, this is clearly the end of the line in a very interesting lexical and encyclopaedic endeavour, and the following dictionaries in the 18<sup>th</sup> century will not pick up the thread, while often making use of the materials Furetière and Basnage gathered.

### 3 The Dictionary as an Encyclopaedia

As underlined above, the encyclopaedic dimension is important to the three main authors of the DU (Furetière, Basnage and Brutel). In his second *factum* (Furetière 1859a), Furetière points out that whilst the members of the *Académie* might be able to judge polite literary language, they were utterly incompetent when it comes to the usage of terms from trades and professions, which were also part of everyday usage when conversing, to use his examples, with an architect, a military person, a courtier or a lawyer. This argument is stated again by Bayle in the *Préface* of the first edition:

On ne sera plus réduit, comme le sont tant de gens, dans les matieres même les plus communes, à recourir au mot vague de chose, de piece, & à faire des postures de mains & de pieds, (manieres qui passent avec raison pour rustiques) afin d'exprimer la figure, la situation, & l'étenduë de ce dont on parle. Cet Auteur apprend à tout le monde, non seulement la nature des choses par leur matiere, leurs usages, leurs especes, leurs figures, & leurs autres proprietes, mais aussi les termes propres dont il se faut servir pour les décrire.

(One will not be obliged any more to use the vague words of 'thing', 'piece', as most of people do, even when speaking about very common things, or to gesticulate with hands and feet (all manners that are rightly considered as rustic) so as to indicate the figure, the position or the size of what one is talking about. This author teaches everybody the nature of each thing, its materials, its usages, the different sorts it comes in, but also the appropriate terms for describing these.)

The same idea is obviously integrated by Basnage and Brutel to their own approach, even if they do not insist on it in their preliminary material, referring the reader to what has been previously written on the subject.

However, the methods for building the encyclopaedic contents are quite different, as we will see in what follows. Also, this is a dictionary and not a terminology, and consequently, it is not systematic in its coverage. To take but an example, for the verb *abatre* (Furetière 1701) gives seven senses, only two of which it designates clearly as being terms by supplying a domain name. In other cases, as with the verb *battre*, there are no terminological uses at all, although examples could be deemed as giving specialised usage. Still, the evolution of title pages and the term coverage indicate that Basnage and Brutel tried to improve the situation as compared to Furetière, and while one cannot talk, in the case of the DU, about a full "knowledge tree", one can see this being gradually sketched as the dictionary grows.

#### 3.1 Building the Encyclopaedic Contents

Furetière, as Basnage and later Brutel, builds on a great deal of bibliographical material, that is gradually being identified within the BASNUM project. He insists on the increase and the update of the information he provided from the most recent specialised works in the various arts and sciences he covers. However, Basnage also took a different road, since, in addition to quotes and new ideas from books, he calls upon a medical doctor with knowledge of medical and natural sciences to rewrite specialised entries, as well as upon a mathematician:

Je ne mets pourtant pas sur mon compte les articles d'Algèbre. Cette science m'est inconnue. Je ne m'approprie point non plus ce qui regarde la Medecine, l'Anatomie, la Pharmacie, la Chirurgie, & la Botanique. Je n'ai point voulu me fier à moi-même là-dessus. Un habile Mr. Regis, Medecin à Amsterdam homme s'en est chargé.

(I do not declare as mine the entries about algebra. I do not know this science. I do not claim either anything pertaining to medicine, anatomy, pharmacy, surgery and botanical sciences. I did not want to trust myself on these matters. A knowledgeable man, Mr. Regis, doctor in Amsterdam, took charge of these.)

Basnage anticipates thus one of the most powerful features of the *Encyclopédie* by Diderot and d'Alembert (1751), whose interest comes to a great extent from the fact that a team of more than 200 contributors provided specialised knowledge for the various entries (Proust 1962). This work has been explored by Leca Tsiomis (1999) who details the debt to the *Dictionnaire Universel* of Furetière.

The play off between Furetière, Basnage and Régis is interesting to observe and will be done through authorial studies as

the full text becomes available. The question is already receiving a partial analysis in looking at trees and gardens. Insofar as he had to work quickly, Basnage often just revised sections of Furetière's work, or simply copied verbatim. This can be illustrated with the word *JARDINAGE* (gardening), where the italics show the additions by Basnage:

*JARDINAGE*. subst. masc. L'art de cultiver les jardins. [...] Le jardinage a été mis depuis peu de temps en un haut point de perfection par le Sr. Le Nôtre. *La Quintinie est encore allé plus loin, & nous a donné une ample instruction sur le jardinage. Mr. Fatio a donné, depuis quelques mois (1699) au public un livre sur le jardinage où il enseigne les moyens d'employer utilement les reflexions du soleil.*

Whilst Furetière only mentions André Le Nôtre, Basnage adds two more recent publications, that of the agronomist Jean Baptiste de La Quintinie (1626-1688) (*La Quintinie* 1690) and a highly influential paper published by the Royal Society from the astronomer Nicolas Fatio de Duillier, (1664-1753) dealing with the orientation of walls and greenhouses for fruit growing (Fatio 1699).

In cases of botanical interest, such as *COIGNASSIER* (Quince), we find a total rewrite of the entry, which clearly points to an intervention from Dr Régis.

*COIGNASSIER*, ou *COIGNIER*. s. m. Arbre qui porte les *coins*, & qui ne devient jamais fort grand à cause de la pesanteur de son fruit qui fait pancher ses branches vers la terre. Son bois est tortu, pâle & blanc par dedans, assez ferme & égal. Ses feuilles sont semblables à celles du pommier, fort cotonnées sur le dos, lisses & vertes de l'autre côté : elles ne sont point decoupées sur les bords. Ses fleurs ressemblent à celle des roses sauvages : elles sont composées de cinq feuilles presque rondes & de couleur de chair. Sa semence est renfermée dans son fruit : elle rend l'eau dans laquelle on la fait tremper, épaisse & mucilagineuse. Son fruit est appelé *coin*, il en sera parlé en son lieu. Quelques Jardiniers disent que le *coignier* est le mâle, & le *coignassier* la femelle. La Quintinie pretend qu'il n'y nulle difference. On a donné au *cognassier* le nom de *cydonia*. Ce mot vient de Cydon ville de Candie, d'où ce fruit fut porté en Grece. On l'appelle aussi *malus cotonea*. Les meilleures especes viennent de Nevers & d'Orleans.

In the above example, the underlined text is all that remains from Furetière.

In the cases cited above, Basnage gives the full name of the author, in other cases an abbreviation is used. In the front matter to the 1701 edition, Basnage provides a list of abbreviations for works and authors cited in the text. We have as yet no idea as to why or how this list was made as it is far from complete consisting as it does of some 117 authors, twelve works and one institution – the *Académie Française*. Given that Basnage was working sequentially through the letters of the dictionary, taking the revised pages immediately to the printer, it is probable that this list represents the works and authors seen on a first reading of Furetière's edition. One of the tasks being carried out during mark-up is to list all the cited sources and to complete a prosopographical profile for each author, linking when possible to their ISNI code so as to reduce ambiguity. Current work has led to 240 cited authors and 32 printed sources. This will increase when the named entity analysis is carried out with a post-sorting between authors cited and persons simply mentioned.

Works cited show the extent of interaction amongst members of the Republic of Letters. It also shows a widening of the net from Furetière's essentially Paris-centred knowledge base, to a Europe-wide one known by the Protestant diaspora. It also brings to the fore the influence of the learned academies such as the Royal Society and the Berlin Academy, both of which Basnage was a member.

### 3.2 Term Coverage

Bayle was quite clear as to what differentiated the DU from that of the *Académie*:

Mais pour Monsieur Furetiere, il ne s'est pas proposé les termes du beau langage, ou du stile à la mode, plus que les autres. Il ne les a fait entrer dans sa compilation que comme des parties du tout qu'il avoit enfermé dans son dessein. De sorte que le langage commun n'est icy qu'en qualité d'accessoire. C'est dans les termes affectez aux Arts, aux Sciences, & aux professions, que consiste le principal. (M. Furetiere did not intend to concentrate on words from the polite language, or the fashionable style. He put them in his dictionary only insofar as they are parts of a whole that he intended to cover. The common language can be found in this work at a very accessory place. The largest part of it concerns the terms from arts, sciences and crafts.)

The title page of the 1690 edition offers an impressive list of arts, sciences and professions to be covered by the DU, as it can be seen in the following figure:



# DICTIONNAIRE UNIVERSEL,

*Contenant generalement tous les*  
**MOTS FRANÇOIS**  
tant vieux que modernes, & les Termes de toutes les  
**SCIENCES ET DES ARTS.**

## S Ç A V O I R

**La Philosophie, Logique, & Physique, la Medecine, ou Anatomie, Pathologie, Therapeutique, Chirurgie, Pharmacopée, Chymie, Botanique, ou l'Histoire naturelle des Plantes, & celle des Animaux, Mineraux, Metaux & Pierrieres, & les noms des Drogues artificielles:**

**La Jurisprudence Civile & Canonique, Feodale & Municipale, & sur tout celle des Ordonnances:**

*Les Mathematiques, la Geometrie, l'Arithmetique, & l'Algebre, la Trigonometrie, Geodesie, ou l'Arpentage, & les Sections coniques, l'Astronomie, l'Astrologie, la Gnomonique, la Geographie, la Musique, tant en theorie qu'en pratique, les Instrumens à vent & à cordes, l'Optique, Casprique, Dioptrique, & Perspective, l'Architecture civile & militaire, la Pyrotechnie, Tactique, & Statique:*

**Les Arts, la Rhetorique, la Poësie, la Grammaire, la Peinture, Sculpture, &c. la Marine, le Manege, l'Art de faire des armes, le Blafon, la Venerie, Fauconnerie, la Pêche, l'Agriculture, ou Maison Rustique, & la plus-part des Arts mechaniques:**

*Plusieurs termes de Relations d'Orient & d'Occident, la qualite des Poids, Mesures & Monnoyes, les Etymologies des mots, l'invention des choses, & l'Origine de plusieurs Proverbes, & leur relation à ceux des autres Langues:*

**Et enfin les noms des Auteurs qui ont traité des matieres qui regardent les mots, expliquez avec quelques Histoires, Curiositez naturelles, & Sentences morales, qui seront rapportées pour donner des exemples de phrases & de constructions.**

*Le tout extrait des plus excellens Auteurs anciens & modernes.*

Recueilli & compilé par feu

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**TOME PREMIER.**



Figure 1. Frontispiece of Dictionnaire Universel 1690.

From a modern point of view, this long enumeration appears as somewhat disorganised for several reasons: disciplines going together from our point of view are quoted in different places (see, for instance, 'physics' put near 'logic', while 'optical' appears after 'music' and 'wind and string instruments'), some distinctions are puzzling ('mathematics' is quoted apart from 'geometry', 'arithmetic', 'algebra' and 'trigonometry', as well as 'conical sections'), the global order does not correspond to our modern separation between 'hard' and 'soft' sciences, and we do not immediately perceive what several labels, such as 'artificial drugs', or 'mechanical arts', refer to. However, by looking closer one starts to perceive some principles of organisation. Italics and roman fonts alternate as the list is split in several paragraphs, so as to ease the reading and to create disciplinary blocks. To these, we can add the attention paid to the punctuation, with commas, semicolons and colons carrying semantic baggage. While the first indicate that the arts and sciences they separate are intellectually close, the second are triggers, a list within a list, as for the various applications of mathematics, with trigonometry and astronomy commanding each a different set of subdomains. Finally, columns underline an epistemic gap, as the one between the paragraph stating with *philosophie*, and the second one gathering the juridical sciences. Also, inside each 'paragraph' Furetière goes from the more speculative sciences to the applied ones: by the ideas of the time, physics is, indeed, related to philosophy, and the medical sciences are based on it, while civil or military architecture, as well as tactics and

pyrotechnics, derive from mathematics.<sup>5</sup> As for the particular place legal disciplines receive in this title page, this is to be related both to Furetière's specialisation, and to its historical place and development in the higher education institutions of the time.

Apart the addition of his name and role, Basnage de Beauval does not change this title page, even if in fact he is not strictly following the domain repartition thus listed. The digitisation of his DU shows that he deals with more than 370 declared term fields, from *accoucheur* (midwife, also *sage femme*) to *voltigeur* (acrobat), a figure that indicates the extension he gives to Furetière's view about the variety of arts, sciences and crafts. However, since this remodelling of the knowledge map is not declared as such in the front matter, we will not elaborate further on it in this paper.

In 1725, the divergence from Furetière is such that Brutel feels the need to remodel the title page, while staying as close as possible to the original work. Certain disciplines are now printed in capitals, while others remain in lower case, while the line breaks add further meaning about the place of each domain in the organization of knowledge. The first 'paragraph' of the list therefore reads:

LA PHILOSOPHIE, LOGIQUE ET PHYSIQUE, LA MEDECINE;  
Anatomie, Pathologie, Therapeutique, Chirurgie, Pharmacie, Chymie, Botanique ;  
l'Histoire naturelle des Plantes, des Animaux, Minéraux, Metaux & Pierrieres,  
& celle des Drogues naturelles & artificielles:

Together with other changes that one can observe between this list and that of Furetière (such as the modification of *pharmacopeia* in *pharmacie*, or the elimination of the coordination between *botanique* and *histoire naturelle des plantes*), this reorganisation is telling about the evolution of the encyclopaedic contents of the DU, both respectful of the intentions of the founding father and brought up to date thanks to extensive reading.

This does not mean that the imbalance one can find in the 1690 edition is entirely corrected. Some domains continue to get better coverage than others, with legal language being very well represented (since both Furetière and Basnage were lawyers by training), even if Brutel obliterates the importance of jurisdiction by spelling it in lower case in his title page. As we have already seen, agronomy, and related fields, get detailed treatment as it was very much a fashionable subject at the time. Architecture (see Williams 2020) was another area that received great attention, as well as maritime matters at a time when sea travel had such great importance.

Mapping terms to domains is a complex task, especially in areas as law where the interrelation of different fields is far from easy to anyone not acquainted with seventeenth century French legal practice. The same goes for numerous domains so one essential task is to relate the domain names to current spellings, to the domain names used in *Encyclopédie* (Diderot and d'Alembert 1751), and also to a modern natural ontology that will facilitate access to terms in the new digital edition. The initial stage in mapping the terminological usage is by identifying the formulae that link senses to a domain. The most frequent are "*terme de* [domain]" (term of [domain]), "*en termes de* [domain]" (in terms of [domain]). There are 3997 of the former and 2828 of the latter, which gives an idea of the scope of dictionary. In addition to these, specialised usage may also be given using the formula "*en* [domaine]". This is too vague for automatic extraction until the definitive list of domains has been established, but, for example, there are 396 terms for *medicine* (medical practice, note that the accent on *médecine* was not used at the time) and a further 180 for *en médecine*. This leads to another problem as *medecine* refers to general practice, but we also find related fields as *chirurgie* (surgery), *anatomie* (anatomy) as well as *arracheur de dents* (puller of teeth) and other practitioners as *apothicaire* and *herboriste* or the *accoucheur*, mentioned above. Sometimes we have both a domain and a practitioner as in *jardinage* (gardening) and *jardinier* (gardener) or *charpenterie* (carpentry) and *charpentier* (carpenter). Why the authors use one or another is not necessarily clear as yet, but it is to be hoped that a fully digitized version of the three editions will help shedding some light over the reasons behind the lexicographic practices.

#### 4 The Dictionary as a Learning Tool

Judging by the *Factums* and what Bayle says in the *Préface*, Furetière intended the DU as a learning tool, addressed on the one hand to foreigners that need to speak the most widely used language in Europe at the time, and to the other hand to the "honnêtes hommes" interacting with specialists from the various disciplines and trades. Basnage is going even further, making the continuous study of the language a characteristic of any fully educated man, beyond any utilitarian aim:

On sçait bien qu'il ne faut pas être trop pointilleux, & qu'on énerve, ou qu'on desseche le discours à force de le limer, & de le polir. Une régularité trop grammaticale a quelque chose de pedantesque : mais aussi le mauvais choix, ou même la trop grande négligence des expressions, est un défaut beaucoup moins supportable. Il n'y a pas grand honneur à bien sçavoir sa langue, & il y a de la honte à ne la sçavoir pas. Ensorte que si les observations, ou si l'on veut, les minuties de Grammaire dont ce Dictionnaire est rempli, ne sont pas fort essentielles pour parler, quand on ne parle que pour se faire entendre, elles ne sont pas tout-a-fait meprisables pour ceux qui se piquent de parler exactement, poliment, & noblement.

(One knows that one should not be too strict, and that speeches become bland and diluted when they are too polite. Being too grammatically rigorous is pedantry: but picking up the wrong expressions, or in a too negligent way, it is an even greater error. There is no honour in knowing one own's language, but there is shame not to know it. As a consequence, the observations, or even the minute grammatical details this dictionary is full of, are not essential for speaking, when one speaks only to communicate, but they are not

<sup>5</sup> To give another example from the contents of the DU, in ship building and maintenance, carpentry is often to be found related to *marine* (maritime, 1042 terms) and *mer* (sea, 145 terms), as well as in fortification, as this is the period of the great military architect and engineer, Sébastien Le Prestre, marquis de Vauban (1633-1707), generally known simply as Vauban.

altogether useless to those who try to communicate in an exact, polite and noble way.)

In both cases, this means that the contents of the dictionary have to be modelled so that linguistic regularities and particularities of French are clearly displayed.

Although Basnage eschews grammatical pedantry and recognises that modern languages are more easily learned through usage than through grammar, his attention to the grammatical and pedagogical aspect of his dictionary is undeniable.

For Basnage grammar is, together with use, the tool that allows one to master the language. This point is made all the clearer when one reads the statement (which is already in Furetière):

REGIME, en termes de Grammaire, est la syntaxe ou concordance que des mots doivent avoir les uns avec les autres suivant les règles de la Grammaire, ou l'usage de la Langue. (*REGIME*)

(REGIME, in terms of Grammar, is the syntax or concordance that words must have with each other according to the rules of Grammar, or the use of Language.)

In fact, his work appears to be a form of learner's dictionary through various facets that emerge clearly from the comparison with the Furetière's edition. First of all, on several occasions Basnage simplifies the more tortuous thought of his colleague: for example, what Furetière had expressed through a metaphor is replaced by the corresponding concept (*son fruit* in Furetière becomes *un enfant* in Basnage under the entry *MÈRE*). In other cases, the simplification concerns Latin sentences. In fact, Basnage translates into French particularly meaningful passages of Scripture that Furetière had reported in Latin. For instance, in *DIEU* entry, Basnage's *Je suis qui je suis* translates Furetière's *Ego sum qui sum*.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the so-called grammatical words such as personal pronouns and possessive adjectives, mostly ignored by Furetière, find ample space in Basnage as well as the treatment of prepositions, although they are present in Furetière, is much better articulated in Basnage.

As stated above, the Basnage edition is undoubtedly the most inclusive of the three because it aims to describe the French language in its entirety. This description always relates to the reader of the dictionary to whom Basnage provides orientation tools in such a vast universe, both in the process of reception and in that of production of the language. Indeed, the lexicographer gives, where they exist, the orthographical variants of the entries, the connotations of the senses (*il est neutre* – it is neutral), the register indications (*ce mot est populaire* – this is a people's word), the diachronic specifications (*ce mot est vieux* – old word) as well as the diatopic ones (*mot Picard* – word from Picardy). In short, the reader of Basnage knows exactly in which context to use a certain term, in the book of which author can meet such or such archaism, in which region of France to expect a certain word, etc.

Understanding the structure of the language being studied is certainly a first step towards its acquisition. It is not surprising, therefore, the presence in the dictionary of the suffixes used in the formation of the French language's lexicon (e.g. *IEL. IEN. IER. IEZ*). This clarifies Basnage's desire not to overlook any aspect of the subject he is dealing with and consequently, to be useful to as many readers as possible. Some paragraphs are pointedly dedicated to a specific section of his audience, for instance *ces remarques ne regardent que le Poètes* (the following observations concern only poets).

Quite often, in the various senses of an entry, the reader encounters suggestions for use (e.g. *il faudroit dire* – one should say) and constructions to avoid (e.g. *J'aimerois mieux l'éviter en disant* – I'd rather avoid this formula by saying), very similar to those a teacher would give to his or her students.

Two other elements contribute in a decisive way to characterise Basnage's work as a learner's dictionary: the information he gives about pronunciation, and verb inflections he provides. Being Basnage a pioneer in the adoption of both innovations, it is inevitable that an accurate and systematic work cannot be expected. Still, he provides a wealth of material to reflect upon.

The 1701 edition records the pronunciation of about 780 lemmas. Although Basnage indicates the pronunciation in various ways through the work, three patterns can be recognized which sometimes combine with each other:

- The invitation to read or not to read one of the letters contained in the headword: in this case, one often encounters formulae of the type *x se prononce* and *x ne se prononce pas* (such and such letter is to be pronounced or not). In the case of h, he invites to aspire it (*aspirez l'h* – aspire the h).
- The indication of the pronunciation of the whole word in capital letters, introduced by *Prononcez*.
- The indication of the headword's syllabic quantity by means of sentences of the type *la première syllabe est brève* (the first syllable is short).

Sometimes, in order to save time and space, Basnage adopts the expedient of indicating the pronunciation within a single entry and making it count for all the headwords of the page. For example, under *HAILLON* one reads: "L'h de ce mot & de tous ceux qui sont dans la page suivante, s'aspire & se prononce." (The 'h' of this word and all the following ones on the next page are to be pronounced).

As for the inflections, the Basnage edition contains the conjugation of about 240 verbs. The lexicographer's idea was probably to provide conjugation only for irregular verbs, unfortunately there is no uniformity in the treatment of inflections. Perhaps Basnage intended to indicate in the dictionary the only forms that in his view were more difficult to infer from a general knowledge about verb inflection in French. The cost of printed paper has probably also played a role in the selection of entries to be completed with such grammatical information. All in all, the result is quite unsystematic, with some verbs inflected exclusively at the first singular person of indicative present (*On conj. J'accourcis* – One inflects *J'accourcis*, entry *ACCOURCIR*), others illustrated with the first singular person of imperfect and present perfect (*Je m'accouplai, je me suis accouplé*, entry *ACCOUPLER*), or the first singular person of indicative present, imperfect and simple future (*Je m'accoude; je m'accoudai, je m'accouderai*, entry *ACCOUDER*) and so on. In addition, in the cases of derived verbs, the

<sup>6</sup> This may also be important from another point of view since it highlights the divergent approach to the Bible texts of Catholics and Protestants. However, this aspect will not be discussed here.

inflection sometimes is given (see *REDIRE*), and sometimes not (see *ADJOINDRE*).

Regardless of the result, the effort of inserting headwords' pronunciation and verbs' inflections within the dictionary could denote a certain closeness to the linguistic and cultural needs of the French community in exile in the Netherlands, of which Basnage himself was a part.

## 5 Conclusion

In conclusion, it is clear that the *Dictionnaire universel* was a highly innovative work, and that the changes that Basnage tried to bring in were way ahead of his time. Comparing the three series of front matter allows us to seize the originality of the work, but only by linking the points raised in the prefaces to what is actually happening in the dictionary itself can the degree of innovation be grasped. The very title page and the *factums* of Furetière underline the encyclopaedic nature of the work, considering the terms of arts, sciences and trades that are covered. However, only through access to the full dictionary in a digital format can the breadth of coverage be seen and a qualitative analysis of the degree to which individual domains are handled. What is not immediately obvious is the breadth of the knowledge base developed by Basnage. This started a tradition that led to the work of Chambers, and then onto the *Encyclopaedia* of Diderot and d'Alembert. The influence was real, but is not always recognised. The failure of the consortium, who bought up the rights to the dictionary from Leers, to develop, promote and distribute the work, inevitably led to the rival Trévoux dictionaries taking the limelight.

The other oft overlooked innovation concerns the pedagogical aspect of the dictionary. The prefaces give general information as to a type of audience, the learned French for Furetière who was working still in the context of a developing academy tradition. What is clear though is that Basnage's work as editor of a learned journal, coupled with the fact that he was working in a non-French speaking country, opened vistas in the way the work of Hornby in Japan would lead to modern learner's dictionaries. Basnage was developing a clear linguistic model that analysis brings to the fore. He was interested in teaching the language and therefore developing means for production of language rather than just a description of language. Basnage was working to tight deadlines and so never had the opportunity to go further with the innovative changes he introduced and Brutel was clearly far more normative in his outlook. As work goes on, it will become clearer just how ahead of his time Basnage was.

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### Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to the support received from the Consortium Cahier, part of the national HumaNum infrastructure that allocated seed money enabling work to begin on the digitalisation of the 1701 *Dictionnaire Universel* and to the French National research council for the BasNum project. The BasNum project is a four year French nationally funded BasNum programme (ANR-18-CE38-0003-01). We are also grateful to Andrés Echevarría, a research student in the Master's in Digital Publishing at the Université de Bretagne Sud Lorient for his work in encoding the front matter which is now freely available on the website of the LiCoRN Research Group - <http://www.licorn-research.fr/Basnage.html>