

Metadata Analysis: The Online Catalog of The Pierpont Morgan Library

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The Morgan Library & Museum

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"Lose not heart"  
J. D. Salinger's Letters  
to an Aspiring Writer

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## **The Morgan Library and Museum**

A universal institution fixated on the European and American societies, the Morgan, located in New York, houses one of the world's leading collections of manuscripts, rare books, and works of art. The Morgan Library and Museum began as a private library of banker Pierpont Morgan (1837 -1913), one of the distinguished collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. He compiled a collection of manuscripts, early printed books, and old drawings and prints beginning in 1890. In 1924, the library had become too significant to stay in private hands of the Morgan family and was presented as a public intuition, making the library and its resources accessible to scholars and the public alike. Over the years, The Morgan Library and Museum attained rare materials as well as imperative music manuscripts, early children's books, and materials from the last century. Patrons are able to search the online catalog of The Pierpont Morgan library via CORSAIR (The Morgan, 2013).

## **CORSAIR**

CORSAIR is single database delivering amalgamated access "to over 250,000 records for medieval and Renaissance manuscripts, rare books, reference books, literary and historical manuscripts, paintings, and other works of art" (The Morgan, 2013). The catalog holds "about 95 percent of the Morgan's holdings" (The Morgan, 2013). CORSAIR functions as one of the biggest repositories of medieval imaginings, "providing links to more than 58,000 digitized images from the Morgan's collection of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts" (The Morgan, 2013). Patrons can leaf through every elucidated folio within a manuscript, or search for

individual imaginings by illustration type, place or date of creation, and subject, artist's name (The Morgan, 2013).

The Keyword/Browse search form permits people “to search for words or exact phrases anywhere in the catalog record, use search codes to target specific types of information, or browse lists names, subjects, titles, or call numbers” (The Morgan, 2013). People can select from seven different types of search: keyword or phrase search, expert search, name browse, name–title browse, subject/genre browse, call number browse. Keyword or phrase search is a search for all words anyplace in the record in any order, or exact phrases, and it is automatically added between search terms. Expert search is a search for words or phrases using Boolean operators or search codes. Name browse is a search of standardized names and references to variants; the result is a list beginning with a search term or closest match. Name-title browse is a search that is particularly useful for finding works with many versions and varying titles, or musical works; the result is a list that will include all works by given author or creator, sub-arranged by title. Title browse is a search of all title fields; the search must begin with first word of the title and must match the word order of the title. Subject/genre browse is heading search of standardized subject and genre terms, date, cross references, and scope notes. Call number browse is a search of call numbers, and the result is a list beginning with the closest call number found (The Morgan, 2013).

The depth of detail is extraordinary for an online catalog; many records comprise synopses of the subject of individual letters, extensive notes about origin, and thorough narratives of bindings. Specialized indexes assist researchers to discover all of the Morgan's holdings connected with a given name, date, or place. For example, with a single search, a researcher fascinated in the Renaissance poet Robert Barlow can locate records for manuscripts and letters in original of an author, early printed publications of novels, first illustrations, photographs, and personal assets pertaining to Barlow and the time. Records are given for a search result: detailed record, brief record, and MARC record (The Morgan, 2013). The detailed record includes such elements as location, call number, book mark, record ID, accession number, author/artist, title, published/created, variant title, provenance, associated names, formatted place, subjects, and department/collection. The brief record contains such elements as location, call number, record ID, accession number, title, published/created, and department/collection. The MARC (Machine Readable Record Catalog) record contains descriptions, subject headings, call numbers, publication information, author (s), and the Library of Congress Control Number (The Morgan, 2013).

The screenshot displays the CORSAIR (The Online Catalog of The Pierpont Morgan Library) website. The browser's address bar shows the URL: [corsair.themorgan.org/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?v1=1&ti=1.1&Search\\_Arg=Robert%20Baron&Search\\_Code=GKEY%5E&CNT=50&PID=bKA17Vn9kMTUQ96zFWHJaH3oH\\_r&SEQ=20131206174302&SID=3](http://corsair.themorgan.org/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?v1=1&ti=1.1&Search_Arg=Robert%20Baron&Search_Code=GKEY%5E&CNT=50&PID=bKA17Vn9kMTUQ96zFWHJaH3oH_r&SEQ=20131206174302&SID=3). The website has a red header with navigation links: Home, Museum, Collection, Research, About, Support, Shop, and Contact. Below the header, there are buttons for 'New Search', 'Return To Headings List', 'Return To Titles List', 'Help', 'Previous Searches', and 'Exit'. The search results section indicates 'Displaying 1 of 392 entries'. The record is titled 'Detailed Record' and includes a 'Brief Record' and 'MARC Record' tab. The main content area provides detailed information about a manuscript, including its location, call number (MA 0960), record ID (104260), accession number (MA 960), title (Armorial - manuscript written and decorated in England), date of writing (1597 or later), description (1 item (124 p.), bound; 31.8 cm), summary (Emblazoned arms of British rulers and nobles, in chronological order, beginning with a noble who 'came to England w[ith] w[illiam]m Conqueror' through one created Earl 'sondaye the 23th [sic] of october in the year of our Lord god 1597.' Each entry features a shield painted with arms, a short account of the bearer's entry into England, notable achievements, famous ancestors/descendants, and investiture into peerage (secretary hand in dark brown ink), and a blazon (later italic hand in black ink). Monarchs' arms represented larger than others, and centered on page, without descriptions.), housed in (Blue cloth drop-spine box (33.7 cm)), credit (Purchased by J.P. Morgan Jr., 1919.), language (English), script (secretary hand), notes (With two notes on armor on the front flyleaf (first note is from Guillim's Display of Heraldrie) and a quote from Ovid on the back flyleaf. Written primarily in secretary hand with blazons in a later italic hand. Formerly identified in the Morgan's catalog as The Baron Book (i.e., Robert Cooke's Armorie of nobiliti). Possibly related to Robert Cooke, Robert Glover, and Thomas Lant's work on the English baronage, 'The Armorie of Nobiliti' (see British Library, Royal MS 18 C. XVII). Binding: Modern vellum by Deborah Evetts; formerly 19th-century half calf, possibly by Bretherton (one board retained with item); original vellum wrapper also retained with item. Variant Title: Formerly identified as: Baron book - manuscript probably written by Robert Cooke in the time of Queen Elizabeth - emblazoned arms of English nobility. Provenance: 'Monsieur Guillim' written on front flyleaf, thought by Sir Thomas Phillipps to have been owned by the antiquarian Sir John Mohun ('Mohuns [illegible]' written below full-page arms on p. 2); 'John Hunt [illegible] 1795' written front flyleaf and John Hunt (in another hand) written on the original vellum wrapper; Sir Thomas Phillipps (his MS 11934); purchased by J.P. Morgan Jr. from the London dealer Quaritch in 1919. Associated Names: Cooke, Robert, d. 1592. Armorie of nobiliti. Glover, Robert, 1544-1588. Armorie of nobiliti. Lant, Thomas, ca. 1556-1600. Armorie of nobiliti. Guillim, John, 1565-1621, former owner. Mohun, John, Baron, 1603-1644, former owner.

## Evaluation

For a new user, the Morgan delivers a help page dedicated to using CORSAIR. It submits instructions and examples of how to do a keyword/browse search, guided search, search history, search limits, search codes, titles list, headings list, cross references, record displays, printing and saving. In addition, the help page offers search strategies, search codes, departmental research guides, guides to accession numbers, research services, and guides to collections. The help page is extremely accessible and informative. If any user, from expert to novice, need information on using CORSAIR, it is a click away. By accessing the help page for CORSAIR, a

new user can become comfortable with an online search from the comfort of their home; therefore, the user can search the invaluable materials offered at the Morgan.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, The Morgan Library and Museum offers a metadata system called CORSAIR for patrons so that they can access material via online. CORSAIR operates as one of the largest repositories of medieval image, and it provides links of digitized images from the Morgan's collection. The Morgan affords a help page devoted to operating CORSAIR, submitting instructions and examples of how to do searches within the catalog. As an experienced researcher or a novice, one can see that the Morgan offers a great experience for research abilities to patrons.

## References

The Morgan Library and Museum. (2013). CORSAIR. Retrieved from  
<http://corsair.themorgan.org/>