

The LaLaLexiT Digital Glossary: Users' Manual

Andrea Arrighini

Università Ca' Foscari Venezia
andrea.arrighini@unive.it

Abstract

La presente guida illustra le caratteristiche e il funzionamento del glossario digitale *LaLaLexiT* (*Late Latin Lexicon in Transition*), il primo dedicato al lessico latino della transizione tardoantica. Si tratta di un'edizione nativa digitale: al termine di una serie predefinita di passaggi, che comprendono un doppio referaggio anonimo degli articoli scientifici di carattere lessicografico, i dati inseriti nel backend vengono trasmessi, in modo agevole e intuitivo, al frontend dell'editore, che procede con la pubblicazione delle singole voci, ciascuna dotata di DOI.

Parole chiave: glossario; edizione nativa digitale; archivi digitali; Latino tardo; letteratura latina tardoantica.

The present guide explains the features and functions of LaLaLexiT (Late Latin Lexicon in Transition), the first digital glossary dedicated to the Latin lexicon of the Late Antique transition. It is a born-digital edition: after the completion of a predefined sequence of steps, including a double-blind peer review of the lexicographical scholarly articles, the data entered in the backend are transmitted, in an easy and intuitive way, to the publisher's frontend, where the individual entries are published, each assigned a DOI.

Keywords: glossary; born-digital edition; digital archives; Late Latin; Late Latin Literature.

Supported by the NextGenerationEU Program, the PRIN 2022 project *LaLaLexiT* (*Late Latin Lexicon in Transition*) began in October 2023. Its Principal Investigator (hereafter, PI) is Dr. Martina Venuti, who leads the two research units based at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and at the University of Eastern Piedmont (Unit Coordinator: Dr. Alice Borgna).

The primary goal of the project is to build the first open access digital glossary dedicated to the Latin lexicon of the historical transition in Late Antiquity. The research is based on a significant selection of texts, both prose and poetry, composed between the 3rd and the 7th centuries AD, by Christian and Pagan authors. It focuses on words as a tool to explore the historical, cultural, and literary dynamics of Late Antiquity. The lemmas analysed fall into the following semantic categories, which are regarded as highly representative:

1. Pluralisms and nationalisms; 2. Migrations and exiles; 3. War and pacification; 4. Power management and political reforms; 5. Cultural and social trends; 6. Conservation and religious conversion; 7. Resilience and palingenesis.

As will be specified, the glossary consists of lexicographical entries that do not merely record the occurrences of a single word, but provide a reasoned commentary with the aim of tracing its history and development in Late Antiquity.

The project aims to compile at least 40 lexicographical entries. The first entries were published in 2025 as an open access online resource by Edizioni Ca' Foscari (see below)¹. The following pages will describe in detail the entire process of compiling a lexicographical entry. As will become clear, the *LaLaLexiT* glossary represents a significant example of a born-digital edition and is the outcome of a fruitful synergy between academic research, digital design, and scholarly publishing. Another relevant aspect concerns the interaction of this resource with existing digital libraries, such as *Musisque Deoque* (hereafter, *MQDQ*)² and *Digital Library of Late Latin Texts* (*DigiLibLT*)³.

Research methodology

The choice of lemmas is made by the authors of the lexicographical entries in agreement with the scientific advisors. The selection is not bound by rigid criteria. However, preference is given to words already attested in the archaic and/or classical period that acquire particular relevance in Late Antiquity, words that undergo significant semantic changes in this period, neologisms coined by Late Antique authors, and, more broadly, words of particular interest for investigating the social, cultural, historical, and political dynamics of the Late Imperial age, preferably not (yet) included in the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*.

Once the lemma has been selected, the author of the entry proceeds to identify and collect significant occurrences with the aid of digital databases such as *MQDQ*, *DigiLibLT*, and the *Library of Latin Texts* (*LLT*, by Brepols). As stated above, the entries for each lemma do not claim to be exhaustive, but rather aim to reconstruct the history of a word through the Late Antique occurrences considered most significant.

Once this preliminary research has been concluded, the authors begin working directly in the backend of *LaLaLexiT*. Its features and functionalities will be illustrated through the example of an already published entry.

¹ <https://edizionicafoscari.unive.it/it/edizioni4/riviste/lalalexit/>

² <https://www.mqdq.it/>

³ <https://digiliblt.uniupo.it/>

Backend

The lexicographical entries are written directly in the backend, developed by Luigi Tessarolo. The architecture of this environment, user-friendly and intuitive, was designed to facilitate the work of multiple authors and to promote the subsequent transfer of data to the frontend. The backend⁴ can be accessed using credentials provided by its administrators, unique to each contributor.

The functioning of this platform will be illustrated through the example of *legifer*. Each entry includes four text fields: lemma (with a summary, in both Italian and English, to be provided), selected passages, scientific commentary, references (Fig. 1).

The screenshot shows the LaLaLexiT backend interface. At the top, the user is logged in as 'Martina Venuti (administrator)'. Below the header, there is a navigation bar with a 'List of lemmas' button and 'Preview', 'Save', and 'Delete lemma' buttons. The main content area is titled 'LEGIFER' and has four tabs: 'LEMMA', 'SELECTED PASSAGES', 'SCIENTIFIC COMMENTARY', and 'REFERENCES'. The 'LEMMA' tab is active, showing a form with the following fields: ID: 22, Editor: Andrea Arrighini, Production date: 27-12-2024, Modification date: 21-10-2025, and Status: COPY_EDITING_V_RECEPITA.

Fig. 1 – After logging into the backend, the author fills in the text fields illustrated here: lemma, selected passages, scientific commentary, references.

Text entered in any field does not require any digital markup and follows specific editorial guidelines, which align with the backend features and were established by the research team in collaboration with the editorial staff of the publishing house (ECF, Edizioni Ca' Foscari). The editorial guidelines are described within the introduction page of the digital glossary (see above).

The section 'Selected passages' includes the occurrences previously selected, listed with a progressive numbering. For each occurrence, it is necessary to specify the Late Antique author and the work in which it appears, using a drop-down menu. If the options already existing in the database are not satisfactory, the compiler can enter the authors' names and work titles manually. The platform also requires indicating whether the occurrence is included in *MQDQ* or *DigiLibLT*. This clarification will later allow establishing a connection with these digital archives (see below).

If the occurrence is not present in either *MQDQ* or *DigiLibLT*, it is still possible not to select a corpus. In the fields below, the compiler records the reference details, entering the numbers of the book, chapter and, where applicable, paragraph in which the occurrence appears. If the quotation comes from a work included in *MQDQ* or *DigiLibLT*, it is essential to verify the connection with the previously specified database, as the correct insertion of the occurrence in the glossary depends on the successful outcome of this check. However, even when the compiler has to fill in the 'Context' field manually, the word under study is always marked using the # symbol – as in the example: SIDON. *carm.* 23,110: Chilon, #legifero# prior Lycurgo.

This procedure is repeated for each selected occurrence. Once the insertion is complete, the 'Selected passages' section displays the list of passages that will be cited in the entry: this is a numbered list, in which the Latin passages are usually recorded in chronological order or according to an order explained in the commentary section. The markup of the word is

⁴ <https://www.lalalex.it/public/backend>

confirmed by bold text and the label ‘MQDQ’ highlights the successful connection with the digital archive (Fig. 2):

	Work	Context	Corpus
1	AVSON. <i>ludus</i> 72	legifer uenit Solon	MQDQ
2	SIDON. <i>car.</i> 2,166	quicquid legifero profecit Sparta Lycurgo	MQDQ
3	SIDON. <i>car.</i> 23,110	Chilon, legifero prior Lycurgo	MQDQ
4	PAVL. NOL. <i>car.</i> 22,39	legifer antiquo uenerandus nomine Moyses	MQDQ
5	PAVL. NOL. <i>car.</i> 26,35-36	Legifer ut quondam Pharil tellure tyranni / Pascha sacrum Moyses prima sub lege dicauit	MQDQ
6	PRVD. <i>perist.</i> 2,363-364	talem reuertens legifer / de monte uultum detulit	MQDQ
7	SIDON. <i>epist.</i> 8,14,3	quem licet primum in medio plebis heremitidis sanctificationis oleo legiferi fratris dextra perfuderit	
8	ALC. AVIT. <i>car.</i> 2,295	legifer ut quondam uates sub rege superbo	MQDQ
9	ALC. AVIT. <i>car.</i> 5,67	uirgam forte manu gestabat legifer heros	MQDQ
10	ALC. AVIT. <i>car.</i> 5,371-372	primo conspicuus fulgebat in ordine ductor / legifer	MQDQ
11	VEN. FORT. <i>car.</i> 5,5,45	legifer hoc reboat	MQDQ
12	VEN. FORT. <i>car.</i> 9,2,25	legifer ipse iacet Moyses	MQDQ
13	RVT. NAM. <i>red.</i> 1,77	tu quoque, legiferis mundum complexa triumphis	MQDQ
14	VEN. FORT. <i>car.</i> 9,1,102	belliger hinc radias, legifer inde micas	MQDQ

Fig. 2 – After filling in the ‘Selected passages’ field, the author checks the accuracy of the data. The selected sources are listed in a modifiable numerical order. The word in bold (here *legifer* and its inflection) represents the correct markup of the lemma under analysis, while the label ‘MQDQ’ ensures the connection to this digital archive. See also Fig. 5.

The ‘Scientific commentary’ section provides the main outcome of the author’s research. This usually includes etymology and earliest attestations of the word, followed by an analysis of the selected occurrences to retrace the Late Antique history of the lemma. Each entry discusses the occurrences by carefully analysing the literary contexts in which they appear and comparing them.

Also in this field, which allows writing in Roman, italic, or bold characters and has a Greek keyboard function, the text does not need to be marked up, with a minor exception: the insertion of a @ symbol followed by the number associated with each occurrence in the ‘Selected passages’ list makes it possible, within the published glossary, to preview the textual segment under analysis in a pop-up, by hovering the cursor over the numbers that appear in bold. This function works already within the backend ‘Preview’ (see below) and makes the glossary much more readable (Fig. 3).

L'aggettivo trova invece diffuso impiego in età tardoantica, quando compare prevalentemente in testi poetici. Sulla scia del precedente ovidiano e di quello apuleiano, Ausonio e Sidonio Apollinare lo utilizzano per definire due celebri legislatori greci, rispettivamente l'ateniese Solone, uno dei saggi protagonisti del *Ludus septem sapientium* (cf. Cazzuffi 2014, 52-3), e lo spartano Licurgo @1 @2 @3. Diversamente, per gli autori cristiani a partire da Lattanzio (*inst.* 4,17,7) il *legifer* per eccellenza è Mosè, a cui, secondo la testimonianza veterotestamentaria (*Es.* 34), Dio affidò le Tavole della Legge: l'accostamento del termine a questa figura biblica compare in Paolino di Nola, Prudenzio, Sidonio Apollinare, Alcimo Avito e Venanzio Fortunato @4 @5 @6 @7 @8 @9 @10 @11 @12 (per la ricezione di Mosè nella cultura greca e romana cf. Gager 1972; Guida 2014).

Fig. 3 – The author fills in their commentary for each selected occurrence in the 'Scientific commentary' field. Numbers associated with occurrences are indicated by the markup @number (highlighted in red). The compiler points out the most up-to-date bibliography referenced in their commentary (highlighted in green).

The last form, 'References', is divided into several sections. In the first one, 'Categories', a drop-down menu allows selecting the semantic macro-categories to which the word belongs, with multiple choices: these are the same categories listed in the Introduction (see above). In the case of *legifer*, the categories involved are 'Power management and political reforms', 'War and pacification', and 'Resilience and palingenesis'; next, the compiler fills in the 'Keywords' field. The 'Bibliography' section must be populated with the bibliographical information for the studies cited within the commentary (see Fig. 3).

The completion of this field proceeds through several steps, accessible via the 'Edit bibliography' button. First, the compiler has to specify the type of the cited publication (Edition, Monograph, Article/Essay, Encyclopedia entry, Reference book, Website). Next, it is necessary to enter the abbreviated form in which the bibliographical entry is quoted in the commentary, i.e., in the sequence Surname – Year of publication (e.g., Fo 1989). This abbreviated form is then clarified in the subsequent field with a full description (e.g., A. Fo, *Ritorno a Claudio Rutilio Namaziano*, «Materiali e discussioni per l'analisi dei testi classici» 22 (1989), 49-74). It is also possible to enter a link to the referenced publication (the research team has chosen to include only DOIs or stable links to publications that are fully open access). When a bibliographical entry has already been cited in the *LaLaLexiT* database, it can be recalled through a drop-down menu without needing to be re-entered. Finally, in the 'Repertories' section, the compiler records the details of the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* entry, if already published, including a link to the open access version of this resource (e.g., for *legifer*: *TbLL* VII 2, 1973 (Hübner), 1105.30-51; link: https://publikationen.badw.de/en/thesaurus/lemmata?filter_modus=neutral#55231).

At the conclusion of the entire process of compilation, the author can access a 'Preview' function. This allows all the content to be examined in a 'print' layout, with the lemma followed by abstract, selected passages, commentary and references. This step is particularly useful, since the author can easily verify the accuracy of the entered data and the applied markup. In particular, within the 'Commentary section', the compiler has the opportunity to verify the correct rendering of the @number sequences (Fig. 4).

Tommasi 2020, 155-8; per i numerosi riferimenti al m...
Oltre un secolo dopo Rutilio Namaziano, Venanzio Fortunato (VEN. FORT. *car. 9,1,102*: *belliger hinc radias, legifer inde micas*) due (11) (12) riportano ancora una volta a Mosè, il terzo si rivela di un certo interesse. In *car. 9,1,102* (14) il re franco Chilperico viene infatti elogiato per la sua capacità di rifulgere come uomo d'armi (*belliger*) e di brillare come legislatore (*legifer*; cf. George 1992, 48-57 per un commento all'intero componimento). Tale occorrenza dell'aggettivo, qui sostantivato, si inserisce in un pentametro caratterizzato dalla successione di due serie speculari separate dalla cesura pentemimera: ciascuna è infatti realizzata da un aggettivo composto (*belliger – legifer*), da un avverbio di moto da luogo (*hinc – inde*) e da una voce verbale che pertiene al campo semantico della luminosità (*radias – micas*). Venanzio Fortunato dà quindi prova di sfruttare appieno l'origine epica del composto, in armonia con la cifra panegiristica del *car. 9*, e mostra al contempo, come gli è proprio, di rifunzionalizzare il gioco letterario verso un contesto culturale del tutto nuovo (cf. Manzoli 2016).

Fig. 4 – The screenshot, from the 'Preview' section, shows an excerpt from the 'Scientific commentary'. Numbers in bold correspond to the 'Selected passages' list. Hovering over each number allows the reader to view the context of the source without switching to a different screen.

Peer review and editing

Once the entry has been completed, the author submits it to the PI, who provides a first evaluation, consulting, if necessary, the other members of the research team and/or the experts on the scientific board. If the entry meets the criteria required by the project, it is forwarded to at least two anonymous referees, appointed by the PI. This phase is managed directly through the backend: using a dedicated button, the author submits the entry to the publisher's Peerflow platform (see below). Here, the referees can download the entry and proceed with the evaluation by completing a predefined form.

When the peer review process is completed, also using the Peerflow platform, the PI approves the release of the evaluations to the author, who receives an email notification containing a link redirecting to the results of the peer review process as well as the suggestions provided by the referees.

If the entry has been accepted for publication (with or without revisions requested), the author accesses the backend again and submits the final version. Through the backend, the entry is then submitted to a final check by the publisher's editor and then, once again via the backend, published with its unique permalink DOI.

Publication

The digital glossary *LaLaLexiT* is published by Edizioni Ca' Foscari (ECF) with a specific permalink⁵. Its homepage, available in both Italian and English, provides a range of materials offering detailed information about the research project, the features of the digital glossary, and the editorial guidelines adopted for the entries (see also the website of the project)⁶. Of particular note is the section 'General bibliography', which brings together, for the benefit of users, all the bibliographical references cited in the published entries.

⁵ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLX/T/2375-1355>

⁶ <https://pric.unive.it/projects/lalalexit/home>

Access to the digital glossary is possible either by clicking the button ‘View the digital glossary’ or by selecting one of the alphabet letters displayed below it. When selecting a specific lemma, readers are directed to a new page where they can view the lexicographical entry, where the organization of information, with expandable sections, closely reflects the backend, with the addition of the publication date, copyright information, the DOI that uniquely identifies the entry, and metadata. The ‘Selected passages’ section allows users to see immediately which sources are linked to *MQDQ* or *DigiLibLT*: in the example below (Fig. 5), the label ‘MQDQ’, displayed in blue, redirects to the website of this resource, and, more precisely, to the passage in which the word under study occurs Fig. 5.

× Fonti selezionate

1. AVSON. *Iudus* 72: **legifer** uenit Solon [MQDQ](#)
2. SIDON. *car.* 2,166: quicquid **legifero** profecit Sparta Lycurgo [MQDQ](#)
3. SIDON. *car.* 23,110: Chilon, **legifero** prior Lycurgo [MQDQ](#)
4. PAVL. NOL. *car.* 22,39: **legifer** antiquo uenerandus nomine Moyses [MQDQ](#)
5. PAVL. NOL. *car.* 26,35-36: **Legifer** ut quondam Pharii tellure tyranni / Pascha sacrum Moyses prima sub lege dicauit [MQDQ](#)
6. PRVD. *perist.* 2,363-364: talem reuertens **legifer** / de monte uultum detulit [MQDQ](#)
7. SIDON. *epist.* 8,14,3: quem licet primum in medio plebis heremitidis sanctificationis oleo **legiferi** fratris dextra perfuderit
8. ALC. AVIT. *car.* 2,295: **legifer** ut quondam uates sub rege superbo [MQDQ](#)
9. ALC. AVIT. *car.* 5,67: uirgam forte manu gestabat **legifer** heros [MQDQ](#)
10. ALC. AVIT. *car.* 5,371-372: primo conspicuus fulgebat in ordine ductor / **legifer** [MQDQ](#)
11. VEN. FORT. *car.* 5,5,45: **legifer** hoc reboat [MQDQ](#)
12. VEN. FORT. *car.* 9,2,25: **legifer** ipse iacet Moyses [MQDQ](#)
13. RVT. NAM. *red.* 1,77: tu quoque, **legiferis** mundum complexa triumphis [MQDQ](#)
14. VEN. FORT. *car.* 9,1,102: belliger hinc radias, **legifer** inde micas [MQDQ](#)

Fig. 5 – The screenshot shown here represents the frontend view of the backend ‘Selected occurrences’ section (see Fig. 2). Sources are listed in numerical order, and the word under analysis appears in bold as a result of the backend markup using the # symbol. Clicking on the label ‘MQDQ’ redirects users to the MQDQ website, where they can immediately view the exact context of the selected poetic occurrence.

As in the backend ‘Preview’, the ‘Commentary’ section allows users to view the contexts of the cited sources by hovering over the corresponding number. Through the links provided in the list of bibliographical references, users can directly access the scholarly work of their interest. On the right-hand side of the page additional references appear, already mentioned in the backend description (‘Categories’, ‘Keywords’, ‘Repertories’). At the time this user guide was completed, the digital glossary contained 22 entries:

1. *abiectio*⁷; 2. *apostata*⁸; 3. *caelicola*⁹; 4. *captator*¹⁰; 5. *Christianismus*¹¹;
6. *conflagratio*¹²; 7. *conuersio*¹³; 8. *impostor*¹⁴; 9. *lapsus*¹⁵; 10. *legatarius*¹⁶;
11. *legifer*¹⁷; 12. *postliminium*¹⁸; 13. *reciduius*¹⁹; 14. *regeneratio*²⁰; 15. *renascor*²¹;
16. *renouatio*²²; 17. *sc(b)isma*²³; 18. *soloecismus*²⁴; 19. *traditor*²⁵; 20. *translator*²⁶;
21. *uersutus*²⁷; 22. *usurpatio*²⁸.

Future perspectives

The population of the *LaLaLexiT* glossary is still evolving. All entries published so far, as well as those forthcoming, are written in Italian. However, the project is open to contributions from any scholar wishing to submit one or more entries based on their research interests and in accordance with the glossary's criteria and features. In this case, contributions in English, Spanish, French, or German will also be welcome.

⁷ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/011>

⁸ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/002>

⁹ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/010>

¹⁰ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/019>

¹¹ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/005>

¹² <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/009>

¹³ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/008>

¹⁴ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/012>

¹⁵ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/006>

¹⁶ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/007>

¹⁷ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/003>

¹⁸ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/013>

¹⁹ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/021>

²⁰ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/017>

²¹ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/018>

²² <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/016>

²³ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/015>

²⁴ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/001>

²⁵ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/014>

²⁶ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/004>

²⁷ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/022>

²⁸ <http://doi.org/10.30687/LLXT/2375-1355/2025/01/020>