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REMARKS ON THE NOTIONS “DOGMATIC” AND “ANALYTIC” IN ETYMOLOGICAL LEXICOGRAPHY¹

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Abstract

This author’s aim is to show that the general notion “dogmatic dictionary” actually comprises various scholarly etymological dictionaries that should be distinguished from each other due to their different informational potential.

1. Preliminary remarks

Anyone interested in etymology and etymological lexicography will certainly have heard Anatoly Liberman’s terms “dogmatic” and “analytic” concerning etymological dictionaries. Actually his EngLib is the only real representative of what he calls analytic dictionaries whose essence is a presentation and a thorough discussion of possibly *all* etymological suggestions and interpretations proposed for a given word. Dictionaries whose authors do not care much about adducing and discussing older opinions in the specific entries are called “dogmatic” by him.² Unfortunately, that term is prone to give negative associations, quite against Liberman’s will, cf. the following statement: “In my work I call dictionaries like Skeat’s and Kluge’s dogmatic and those by Feist and Walde-Hofmann analytic” (Liberman 2010b: 60) – neither Skeat and Kluge can be considered unprofessional nor did Liberman wish to arouse

¹ My sincere thanks go to Robert Woodhouse (Brisbane) for both his help with English (incl. the terminological choices) and the factual discussion.

² For a short characterization and assessment of Liberman’s ideas and dictionary in a comparative context see Stachowski 2011: 190sq., 198.

such suspicions. Besides, Feist and Walde-Hofmann are, in point of fact, far apart from what Liberman offers in his analytic dictionary (EngLib).

In other cases we can at the best expect an etymologist to inform the dictionary user about who suggested the specific etymology and, much more seldom, explain why he is rejecting this or that previous etymology.

Since popular dictionaries do not, on the whole, inform the readers about the references and polemics they are, in Liberman's terms, dogmatic.

The varying intensiveness of the analytic character of various etymological dictionaries as well as the unwelcome associations of the term "dogmatic" and its connection with the very idea of a popular etymological dictionary – all this makes the question reasonable whether other terms and/or taxonomies are also possible.

2. Technical remarks

When talking of professional (i.e., non-popular) etymological dictionaries I mean in what follows exclusively those devoted to one language only whereas dictionaries of whole linguistic families (as, e.g., DraBur) are excluded here because the scope of adduced and discussed words forces the lexicographer to structure his entries in a different way than is the case in a dictionary of a single language. If one goes through various types of etymological dictionaries (see Malkiel 1976: 28–35 ["Range"], 73–78 ["Scope"]) one inevitably arrives at the conclusion that no "interspecific" comparisons should be made.

One may doubt whether the question of listing the works and ideas of one's predecessors actually deserves so much attention. It is true that the quality of etymologies *is* more important than given or omitted references. However, two remarks should be made in this context. First, there is no conflict between the quality of the etymologies and the structure of the entries, that is, citing predecessors does not involve any decline in the quality of the etymologies. Second, we have to answer one important question: is a correct etymology *without* references and discussion equally as good as one *with* references and discussion?

I am not going to present a survey of all etymological dictionaries or even discuss all the paramount ones. I will refer only to a very limited number of them, believing that these sufficiently feature all the telling elements we need to understand the possibility and the sense of introducing intermediate categories between "analytic" and "dogmatic". Liberman's (2010b: 47) opinion that "a bird's eye view of any subject [cannot] replace a series of more specialized works" spurred me to publish these remarks.

3. Popular dictionaries

A prime example of a popular etymological dictionary is FreMat. There are no bibliographical references or polemics here. In the entries, an average user can find what he really expects: short and readily understandable etymologies. Some of them

are questionable or just incorrect but a “semi-mythical general reader” (Lieberman 2010b: 51) will be anyway happy to learn that French *polka* ‘a folk dance in Central Europe’ is a feminine form of *polski* ‘Polish’ and he will not ask what happened to the consonant *-s-* (why not *polska*?) or wonder why the French edition of the Wikipedia informs us, sub “Polka (danse)”, that “La *polka* est une danse originaire de Bohême (actuelle République tchèque)” if it has a Polish name (I presume he will know that *polski* is a Polish word by himself because the original formulation³ does not inform him about this detail). He will be likewise happy to read that French *mammouth* ‘mammoth’ comes from Russian *mamont*, *mamut* which was borrowed “d’un dialecte de la Sibérie orientale” (FreMat 313). Even though he cannot know that the Russian variant *mamut* is a reflex of French *mammouth* (as is the case with almost all European names of this animal, and even the Latin biological term *Mammutus* in actuality reflects the same French word; for the French origin of Russian *mamut* cf. the dates of attestations adduced in fn. 4) he might ask why French changed Russian ⟨on⟩ = [ɔn] ~ [ǎn] into ⟨ou⟩ = [u], and whether the “dialect” the word originates from cannot by any means be identified in a somewhat more informative way. He might ask but he will not because “[t]hose who consult an etymological dictionary expect a solution rather than an exhaustive survey” (Lieberman 2005: 4), and “fortunately for lexicographers, those who consult the dictionary are not usually critical” (Weekley 1924: 782).⁴

Nevertheless, the popular FreMat well accomplishes its task – it is short, convenient and generally correct. Its special feature is the total lack of an introduction – one is tempted to say: “Right so. A general reader does not read introductions anyway.”

³ “Polka: XIXe s.: féminin de *polski* (polonaise)” (FreMat 404).

⁴ However, if the reader of this study is a professional and critical dictionary user he may be interested to find a general survey of statements concerning the origin of the word *mammouth* (and its English thread) in Stachowski 2000. – A very peculiar case in this respect is GerKlu. Its 18th edition (1960) explains the word as a derivative of Yakut *mamma* ‘land’ (this word does not exist at all in Yakut) and the French word *mammouth* as one in which the Russian sequence of characters *on* was misread as *ou* in French (since the French word is attested in the 18th century for the first time it means that Russian was known, at least to some persons, in 18th century France; this is of course to some extent possible but the fact that *on* is written ⟨OH⟩ in Russian and is, thus, not very similar to Latin ⟨ou⟩ makes the possibility of misreading ⟨OH⟩ as *ou* less possible); further: the mammoth is supposed, according to this edition, to have been first discovered during excavations made by a Russian called Ludloff (in reality, he was a German, the author of a *Grammatica Russica*, who made no excavations and whose real name was Heinrich Wilhelm Ludolf). – The 22nd edition of GerKlu (1989) does not contain the word *Mammut* at all. – In the 25th edition (2011) of GerKlu the French word is derived directly from Russian *mamut* (which is a bit complicated because the Russian variant *mamut* was in use for some time in the 19th century only [RusČer vol.1: 506a], that is about a hundred years after the first French attestation; besides, the Russian source does not explain the French and English *-th*) and as the ultimate source a Yurak term is given (adduced as *jěaŋ-ŋammurəttəə* in lieu of the correct *jěā ŋammurəttəā*) that was first proposed in Kiparsky 1958 (not cited in GerKlu) and then criticized by Uralists. The most popular etymology by Heaney and Helimski (for further details and the bibliographical data see Stachowski 2000) as well as the discussion in Stachowski 2000 and Futaky 2001 are not mentioned at all. – The fact that GerKlu always gives some bibliographical references does not, as can be seen, guarantee its scholarly reliability.

RumRoh is quite a different case. It gives, quite like FreMat, no bibliographical data and no discussion in the entries but it does have an introduction. We read there that RumRoh is a preliminary version of a planned comprehensive dictionary and that is why the author declined to include any commentaries.⁵ A common situation is that a popular edition of an etymological dictionary is a short version of a full edition, and its conciseness results from removing professional discussions, information on the chronology and philological sources as well as other technical details, that is, all the elements which previously were put through examination of etymologists and are too special for a general reader. The situation with RumRoh is quite the contrary: the short version is a popular edition of a non-existing version and its conciseness results from non-existence of a full version with arguments and details that, by the same token, were never discussed by professional etymologists.

In the light of what has been said above I hesitate to call RumRoh a popular dictionary. Maybe rather a “preliminary sketch” or a “collection of private notes” is the proper taxonomical term?⁶

After this excursus we can now come back to popular dictionaries. Our next example after FreMat is a Polish school dictionary of etymology, PolDłu. It is an obvious thing that a school dictionary can only be of a popular character. Thus, one readily accepts that it only has a short bibliography consisting of fifteen titles, and they are all dictionaries (FreMat has none, so the Polish school dictionary is doing very well). A really weird thing is the fact that specific Polish words are compared with the lexis of different Indo-European languages, for instance, a pupil who looks up the word *dzień* ‘day’ in PolDłu will find, in the entry, its cognates in Gothic, Latin, Latvian, Lithuanian and Sanskrit, as well as of course its Proto-Slavic etymon. That is the standard situation throughout this dictionary. I cannot help asking myself what an average pupil can think of this list at times when even Latin is widely unknown to his generation. Even those few who know what Gothic is will not conceive the sense of enumerating non-Slavic words that do not actually sound like the Polish headword. I would rather suggest giving, in school-time, a short course in etymology that can prepare the pupils for using at least an ordinary popular etymological dictionary.

FreMat is more popular and more useful than PolDłu because it does not require from its readers any linguistic knowledge. Nevertheless, they can both be used as examples for rather typical popular dictionaries.

⁵ RumRoh “ist ein Entwurf für ein später zu erarbeitendes Rumänisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch. [...] Aus diesem Grunde ist in der Regel darauf verzichtet worden, die jeweilig angegebene Etymologie zu kommentieren.” – This and all other passages adduced here from RumRoh stand on the first page of the introduction.

⁶ Such a published collection of etymological slips is, for instance, TurRäs, in which some headwords are not even supplied with a suggestion of an etymology (e.g. “mtü. [= Middle Turkic] *čikin* ‘ährenbildende Futterpflanze, die zwischen Weinstöcken angepflanzt wird”, and not a word more [TurRäs 111], or with some cognates: “kmk. [= Kумык] *čille* ‘Puppe, Kokon’, krč. [= Karatchay] *čille* ‘Seide’, blk. [= Balkar] *cille* id.” [loc. cit.]) while others feature more or less normal etymologies (e.g., “osm. [= Ottoman] *dolajy* ‘Kreis, Umkreis’, Postp. [= postposition] ‘wegen’ < *dolaj* ‘Umfang, Umgebung’ < *dola* ‘winden’ < **tolya*” (TurRäs. 139).

4. Professional dictionaries

The level of professionalism of non-popular etymological dictionaries varies from one author to another, and it usually depends on three factors: the author’s personal preferences, his conception of the future user of his dictionary as well as the question of whether or not there exist other etymological dictionaries for the given idiom.⁷ This is the case with *TurKab*, being a first etymological dictionary of Cyprian Turkish. Its author has attempted to write a dictionary for any educated person. He concisely cites older authors and calls the user’s attention to problems and discussions⁸ but he generally avoids real polemics and technical (esp. phonetic) discussions. This is, it seems, a reasonable compromise.

Another feature of *TurKab* is the treatment of Greek loanwords that are, to be sure, especially numerous in Cyprian Turkish. Let us see how the author explains the origin of Cyprian Turkish *bastelli* (= literary Turkish *pestil*) ‘dried fruit pulp’: < Cyprian Greek *pastellin* παστέλλιν ~ Byzantine Greek *pastilos* παστίλος < Greek *pasteli* παστέλι < Italian *pastello* (*TurKab* 93). Greek words are written first in Latin characters and only then in Greek ones. An etymologist does not, as a matter of fact, need a Latin transcription but the author probably reckoned that his fellow turkologists outside Cyprus may have problems with the Greek alphabet and very especially with its orthographical rules (as, e.g., Greek <ου> = [u], <γυ> = [ji], and so on) but he also knew that those who knew Greek would prefer to see the original notation and not to hesitate whether in the given word with, say, Latin <ο> should be written <ο> or <ω> in Greek or where the original accent lay. Again, we have a solution that is a compromise made for two different groups of dictionary users. The author apparently clearly had in mind his future readers.

At least one element distinctly demonstrates the author’s scholarly approach. The dictionary contains an 18-page presentation of Cyprian Turkish phonology (*TurKab* 27–44). There can be no doubt that this part of the dictionary was intended for professional linguists. Similarly, a 47-page etymological list of Turkish loanwords in Cyprian Greek, added at the end of the dictionary (*TurKab* 627–673) confirms our assessment. The list brings valuable information for Greek dialectologists and etymologists rather than for Turkish intellectuals.

Although *TurKab* only sporadically presents discussions with the author’s predecessors and the bibliographical references are somewhat limited it certainly deserves to be considered a scholarly work.

⁷ The two last factors complement each other. They are especially important in the case of non-descriptive dictionaries (such as etymological ones) as well as any dictionary of a language without a rich lexicographical tradition; for instance, we can read the same idea in authors of dictionaries of endangered languages: “[...] the dictionary maker[s] must be mindful of the possible future users of their work” (Ogilvie 2011: 398). In both cases the user may have no other source of this sort at his disposal that could be considered more crucial than the etymologist’s own preferences.

⁸ Cf. the entry *gazzan* ‘kettle, cauldron’ with an indication concerning polemics: ‘Sözcük üzerindeki tartışmalar için bkz. [...]’ (*TurKab* 270), that is: ‘For the discussion of this word see [...].’

Another dictionary that also takes place between popular and strictly professional ones is PolMal, a small dictionary of Polish geographical names. Frequent bibliographical references and etymologies underpinned by chronologically dated philological sources as well as non-linguistic circumstances like historical facts and geographical conditions confer a professional quality to this dictionary. On the other hand, however, the author avoids discussions and the introduction (unlike the phonological one in TurKab) presents only basic information on types and structure of geographical names, being thus a rather popular element in this publication.

In sum, both TurKab and PolMal are reliable publications intended for both etymologists and non-etymological intellectuals.

One big step further towards an analytic dictionary was made by the authors of KomLyt, an explicitly scholarly work of great value for etymologists, not exclusively for those specializing in Uralic. A survey of phonetic equivalents in various Fenno-Ugric languages given right at the beginning (KomLyt 9–28) can only have been intended for professional historical linguists, and the same feature can be observed throughout the whole main body of the dictionary. At least one entry deserves to be cited by way of example:

Under Komi *zep* (~ dial. *žepj* ~ *žep*) ‘pocket’ the following information is given:

- a) this Komi word is of Turkic origin;
- b) it also occurs in numerous non-Turkic languages;
- c) the Turkic word is borrowed from Arabic [with bibliographical references⁹] [cf. (j)];
- d) the usual assumption is: Komi < Russ.dial. [with bibliographical references];
- e) the assumption in (d) is questionable because of (f) and (g);
- f) northern Russian dialectal forms usually display *ž-* [with bibliographical references];
- g) the change of Russ. *ž-* > Komi *ẓ̌* is out of the question;
- h) rather Y. Wichmann was right although he presented his idea in a very uncertain way¹⁰ [with bibliographical references];
- i) the authors’ own suggestion is to distinguish between Komi *ẓ̌* < Old Chuvash (as proposed by Wichmann) and Komi *ž-* < Russ. *ž-*;
- j) in addition: Turkic *žeb* [‘pocket’ – M. S.] < Arabic *žeb*¹¹ [with bibliographical references] [cf. (c)].

That is certainly a highly expert way of demonstrating etymological reasoning. A general reader would be quite happy to learn that Komi *zep*, etc., is a Russian loanword. Only the most aspiring persons would try to remember that two different sources are possible. None would like to know more.

⁹ The abbreviated references are usually limited to one title only. On the other hand, they are given frequently so that virtually every claim is equipped with a bibliographical indication.

¹⁰ “весьма неуверенно” (KomLyt 105a).

¹¹ Actually, the correct Arabic form is *žayb*.

A Slavic etymological dictionary at the same scholarly level is a (regrettably unfinished) Polish dictionary PolSła. The numerous references and abundant discussions based on reasonable arguments secured PolSła a high (some would say, the highest) place in the lexicographical ranking of Slavic linguists (see Boryś 2010: 17).

The best completed Polish etymological dictionary certainly is PolBor. However, it essentially differs from KomLyt and PolSła in that it is published as a “dictionary for everybody” (probably, the fact that it appeared in the *Wydawnictwo Literackie*, i.e. the ‘Literary Publishing House’ was of some importance to its form and structure). There can be no doubt that its author successfully saw to a high etymological quality and solidity of his ideas and arguments. But the total exclusion of bibliographical references and serious limitations of discussion considerably lower its usefulness in etymological research. It is true, PolBor is 861 pages long and allowing for other persons’ ideas would destroy the initial plan of producing a one-volume dictionary. On the other hand however, relatively long explanations could have been put in a shorter form. Gerard Clauson’s Old Turkic dictionary can deservedly be criticized for some important reasons (the most significant one being the notorious lack of clear or indeed any etymologies except in trivial cases); nevertheless, Sir Gerard’s device of abbreviating long “etymological set phrases” deserves our attention. That is the case, e.g., with *a.o.o.* = ‘and other occurrences’, *c.i.a.p.a.l.* = ‘common in all periods and languages’, *s.i.m.m.l.* = ‘survives in most modern languages’ (TurCls XXXIII, XXXVI). In view of the possibility of including analytic parts in standard etymological dictionaries these abbreviations will probably gain in importance in the years to come.

Because of its weird combination of characteristic features LthSmo is quite a special case. If one skips the introductory parts and focuses on the etymologies only one will have no doubt about the decidedly professional character of this dictionary. Apart from the general impression one can also try to formulate specific elements determining this perception. I, for instance, would like to emphasize two aspects: detailed morphological, phonological and partially also semantic analysis on the one hand and different levels of reconstruction (Proto-Baltic, Proto-Slavic, Proto-Balto-Slavic, Proto-Indo-European) on the other.

If we now go back and cast a glance at pages XXI–XXVII we will find there a glossary of some linguistic terms. Liberman (2010b: 51) mentions “a recent handbook of linguistics for literary scholars” that “provides its readers with the definitions of such terms as *vowel* and *consonant*.” There is no *vowel* in the glossary in LthSmo, that is true, but we find there the entry “*vocalism* – a vowel or a diphthong being a part of a morpheme”¹². What is one to make of an etymological dictionary written for professional Indo-European linguists that provides its readers with a glossary of such terms? In this case, a thinkable explanation could possibly be that not everybody would include both elements of a diphthong in *vocalism*. However, one finds here

¹² “*Wokalizm* – samogłoska lub dyftong w składzie morfemu” (LthSmo XXVII).

also terms like *affix*, *derivative*, *folk etymology*, *Indo-European*, *lexeme*, *morpheme*, *nomen*, *protolanguage*, *suffix*, and so on.¹³ This part of the dictionary is clearly written for beginners (originally, a proto-version of LthSmo was prepared for students) and it markedly conflicts with the professional character of the entries.

Since no references at all are given and no discussions are found in the entries LthSmo is doubtless a dogmatic dictionary.

5. Analytic vs. non-analytic

LthSmo is dogmatic and highly professional. But the term “dogmatic” is often negatively interpreted in that it suggests an arrogant, dictatorial, intolerant manner of speaking, as well as lacking flexibility and openness to someone else’s opinions.

That is why I would rather prefer some other term, one free of such connotations. We can, for instance, distinguish some types of etymological dictionaries as far as both their author’s attitude towards older etymological literature and the level of popularity vs. scholarliness is concerned.¹⁴

- popular: – monodic (e.g., FreMat, PolDłu)
- polylytic (e.g., PolMal)
- scholarly: – monodic (e.g., FinToi, LthSmo, PolBor, SlnSno, SweHel)
- polylytic (e.g., GerKlu, RumCio, RumPuş, TurKab)
- analytic (e.g., EngLib, GerHie, KomLyt, PolSła, RusČer)
- exhaustive (? a planned continuation of EngLib)

The terms used may be explained as follows:

monodic (< Greek *hodós* ‘way’) – a dictionary that generally gives but one etymology for each entry even in cases where the etymology is disputed; a monodic dictionary can sometimes fleetingly mention other etymologies but it does not attempt at discussions;

polylytic (< Greek *lýein* ‘to loose, to resolve’) – a dictionary that regularly mentions other etymologies and/or bibliographical sources but generally avoids discussion;

analytic – a dictionary that gives a possibly full scholarly treatment of etymologies;

exhaustive – a dictionary that aspires to treat all etymological suggestions with full discussion for a whole language or a reasonably comprehensive section of the lexis.

¹³ On the other hand, some terms, far less known, are used in the entries but omitted in the glossary, as e.g. *antevocalic* (see *laistýti* ‘to smear, plaster’) or *causative* (see *stérti* ‘to stiffen, become numb’), and so on.

¹⁴ Some dictionaries are, of course, more and some are less analytic. However, a scheme of more categories would be rather inconvenient. The rule is approximately the same as that formulated for semantic fields in Berryman (1994: 35): “There are many words that fit easily into more than one category, but a more complex system would have made word entry prohibitively time-consuming.”

Lieberman’s (2010a: IX) claim that “[o]utside the area of English most modern etymological dictionaries are analytic” was questioned in Stachowski (2011: 190) and we can now say that Lieberman’s statement is more or less true for what we would like to call “analytic (but not exhaustive)” whereas EngLib is an introduction to a future dictionary that will, as we all hope, deserve to be called “exhaustive”.¹⁵

A phonological survey in the introductory part of a dictionary is intended for professionalists preeminently representing philologies different from that of the given lexicographer. It is generally of little interest to fellow specialists in the same domain (providing, the author does not propose a shockingly distinct set of phonetic equivalences) and will not at all fascinate the unprepared non-professionals. Which means that the presence of a phonological introduction doubtless excludes the popular character of a dictionary.

Users of analytic dictionaries can form a more or less general view on the diversity of thinkable etymologies just while reading the specific entries. Those who use polylytic dictionaries will, by contrast, have to read and interpret by themselves what was said in the sources mentioned in form of abbreviations only in the given dictionary.

The most dangerous case is a scholarly monodic dictionary because its readers can find no signals in the entries pointing to the fact that the specific etymology is not necessarily the only or the commonly accepted one. No choice is offered to them and the author’s opinion, even if possibly questionable, is presented as the only existing solution. That is why the term “dogmatic” should, if ever used, be limited to exclusively this group of etymological dictionaries.

6. Final remarks

A few additional features were cursorily mentioned above but left without discussion. The problem of classificatory criteria in lexicography, especially in its etymological branch, still remains open. In this context I would like to emphasize a factor that is usually disregarded or just overlooked: an author’s ability to omit everything that need not be discussed or even mentioned in a dictionary of a given type (as, e.g., meticulous listing of all variants in all languages of the given linguistic family, even if they do not contribute by any means to the etymology; abbreviations like those in TurCls [see above] will suffice (they could even be shorter, e.g. *c.a.p.l.* instead of *c.i.a.p.a.l.*, and *s.m.m.l.* instead of *s.i.m.m.l.*); an author who gives up enumerating his sources should not list all phonetic variants because otherwise users of his dictionary will not be sufficiently informed – they will not be anyway). This skill is of paramount importance at times when we all complain about problems of scope and bulk as well as paper limitations.

¹⁵ Even a short glance into Berryman (1994) convinces everybody how complex the realization of such a project is. An idea that a single etymologist could comb through the whole etymological literature, especially without a computer, by himself is absolutely unrealistic.

Another criterion, usually unwittingly disregarded, is the principle of etymological or historical order of meanings enumerated in a headword because:

Genealogical principles demand that the sense of a given English word closest to the etymon [...] must be treated as the primary sense, and must stand first in an account of the word [...]. Historical principles, on the other hand, demand that the first recorded sense of the English word should stand first in its history, whether or not it appears “logical” that it should do so [...] (Considine 1996: 368)

It is quite clear that etymological principles sometimes collide with historical ones. The problem does not only concern historical-etymological dictionaries since purely etymological works are also dependent on chronologically ordered philological sources. The question has been known to lexicographers since at least 1860 when the guidelines for the arrangement of entries in the *Oxford Etymological Dictionary* were laid down, item 6 reading:

The *Meanings*, deduced logically from the Etymology, and so arranged as to show the common thread or threads which unite them together. (Considine 1996: 366)

I am not sure that the problem has ever been thoroughly discussed by modern etymological lexicographers.

It is a great dream to have *at least* three etymological dictionaries for every language: an analytic, a scholarly polylytic and a popular monodic one. The dream does not appear very realistic today but its important advantage is making us aware of how many pages still can and should be written on the origin of words (as well as on that of verbal collocations, phraseologisms, blend words, obsolete technical terms, slang words, dialectal archaisms, nonce words, and so on). Etymologists are not menaced with intellectual joblessness.

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