

Bobrowski 1967, statt 1957 (34); Neue Deutsche Hefz (38); bombardieren statt bombadieren (138); 1.14, statt 1.11 (175); Fraktion, statt Frakton (193).

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Ernst Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*. Unabridged, one-volume edition. Elsevier Publishing Company, Amsterdam-London-New York, 1971, xxvi + 844 pp. Dfl. 90.00

This book is the fruit of great labour. It is also pretentious and amateurish. The labour that must have gone into it is obvious from its size. The pretence and the amateurish character appear after closer scrutiny.

The introduction bodes ill. The author claims that "modern lexicography has remained far behind the achievements of philology. As a rule, even the most authoritative English etymological dictionaries give such etymologies as reflect the level reached by philology about half a century ago. In most cases etymologies given up by serious science long ago are still wandering out of one dictionary into another and continue living with tenacity, apparently ignoring the truths established in the field of philology in the course of the latter decades. One example may suffice to prove this. Despite the fact that Tocharian (this language extinct long ago but newly discovered at the end of the Nineteenth Century) occupies a very important place among the Indo-European languages, Tocharian references appear only quite exceptionally in the etymological dictionaries of the English language. This is so much the more striking, because Tocharian may help us understand the development of many a word in the different Indo-European languages, inasmuch as the words of the Tocharian language often represent the transitory form – "the missing link" – between the Old Indian and the other Indo-European languages. In this dictionary Tocharian words are regularly referred to together with the other Indo-European equivalents." (p. ix). A little further the author claims that his dictionary contains the true etymology of several hundreds of words whose origins are given as "unknown" or "uncertain" in all other dictionaries.

No examples are given, however, of etymologies which have been "given up by serious science long ago", or which would have been established in this dictionary for the first time. Nor could I find any references, in the actual entries, to literature or other sources, so that the user would be able to check on Klein's innovations, – except for some Semitic words, such as *Jeroboam*. There is a list of abbreviations of books and journals "frequently referred to". The list contains fifteen titles only, and the 'frequently' must not be taken too seriously. The list of "other literature consulted" contains twenty-one titles, hardly sufficient to back up any claim of "serious science". No literature about Tocharian is given. One wonders if the entry *carnival* should be taken as an example of up-to-date philology; "from Medieval Latin *carne, valē*, "O flesh, farewell!". Serious philologists, such as Onions (*The Oxford Dictionary of English Etymology*, Oxford 1966 – ODEE) or Meyer-Lübke (*Romanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg 1935), give very good documentation showing that the origin of this word, in all likelihood, is *carnelevamen*, "the lifting of meat". Kluge (*Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, Berlin 1963) dismisses the

derivation as given by Klein as folk-etymology, and proposes, apart from *carnelevamen*, a possible, though less likely, *carrus navalis* as part of a festive procession at the reopening of the shipping season.

The author is particularly proud of the medical terms given in his dictionary: the Introduction contains one and a half pages of examples of medical terms with their complete entries from the letters *a*, *b* and *c*. Not only is this list uncalled for, it contrasts rather sharply with the lack of examples that could give substance to the author's philological claims.

Klein also prides himself on his familiarity with the Semitic languages. He includes about 750 words (the number given in the Introduction) of Semitic origin. This is rather overzealous. It has already been pointed out by F. C. de Vries, in his review of the earlier two-volume edition of this dictionary (*Neophil.* L (1966) pp. 475/6, and Lii (1968) pp. 113/4) that a very large number of these words are simply not part of the English language: *alacran*, *alberca*, *alcazaba*, *Aldebaran*, *alfa*, *Alhagi*, *aljofaina*, etc. The fastidious exposé, at the end of the Introduction, of the Hebrew and Arabic writing systems is further evidence of a tendency to give more prominence to Semitic elements than is warranted by the facts. Other spelling systems, such as Greek, or, for that matter, Brahmi (the script used for Tocharian), are not explained at all.

Among the Semitic languages Hebrew is given a place of honour. Words whose origin is unknown are often said to be (probably) derived from Hebrew. *Ganglion*, for example, which is a loanword from Greek (γαγγλίον), is derived as follows: "prob. stands for γα-γλ-ιον and is a loan word from Heb. *galgál*, "anything round; a wheel", from the base of *gálál*, "he rolled", *gilgél*, of same meaning; see *gelilah*. For the dissimilation of the first *l* in *galgál* to *n* in Gk. γαγγλίον cp. Engl.-Fr. *gonfalon*, *gonfanon*, "flag". Boisacq, however (*Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, Heidelberg-Paris 1916) and Frisk (*Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg 1960 (vol. I); 1970 (vol. II)) both give the origin of the Greek word as uncertain, and propose various hypotheses, but not the one given as certain by Klein. Klein gives no sources, so that we must rely on his authority. His authority is not very impressive, however, in the light of his startling disregard for sound laws. The dissimilation from *galgál* to *gangl-* is hardly motivated by an appeal to the dissimilation from *gonfanon* to *gonfalon* in a very different language. In Greek, *galgál* would have dissimilated, to *gargal-*, as appears from ἀργαλέος ("painful"), which derives from *ἀλγαλέος, with the stem ἀλγ- meaning "pain".

The word *axe*, whose etymology is uncertain according to Frisk and Boisacq (s.v. ἄξιον), and Ernout-Meillet (*Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine*, Paris 1959) (s.v. *ascia*), is given as "prob. of Semitic origin; cp. Akkad. *ḥaš(š)innu* Aram.-Syr. *ḥatzina*, 'ax'." Again, no literature is given.

Words of undoubted Semitic origin, but not necessarily or even probably Hebrew, are simply given as derived from Hebrew. *Sack*, for example, is said to go back, via Latin *saccus* and Greek σάκκος, to Hebrew *śaq*, "sackcloth, sack, bag". All the dictionaries, however, which I consulted on this word (ODEE, Frisk, Boisacq, Ern.-Meillet) simply give the origin as Semitic. Ern.-Meillet adds that the precise process of borrowing „n'est pas exactement déterminable". At any rate, Phoenician is at least as likely a source as Hebrew, given the early commercial contacts between Greeks and Phoenicians (sack was a packing material).

The word *albatross* derives, via Portuguese *alcatraz*, *alcatruz*, from Arabic *al-qādūs*, which means “machine for drawing water, water-carrier”. The name was originally applied to the Pelican, which was thought to carry water in its pouch. According to ODEE, it is “usually taken to be alteration, by association with Lat. *albus* white, of *alcatras*”, but “the changes of sense and form are a serious difficulty”. Klein has no difficulty with changes of sense or form. He gives the interference of Latin *albus* as a certainty, and mentions no problems. The Arabic *al-qādūs* he derives, with all dictionaries, from *al-* “the” and Greek *κάδος*, “jar”. This, he says, “is a loan word from Heb. *kadh* of same meaning”. The Greek etymological dictionaries, however, do not agree on *κάδος*. According to Frisk, it is a “Mittelmeerwort”; according to Boisacq it is an “emprunt phénicien”. One wonders why Klein wants it Hebrew.

The reason is probably that Klein is a man with a mission: “the sincere pursuit of peace on earth – which was one of my cardinal aims in writing this dictionary”, he writes at the end of his Preface. The Preface is rather curious. It opens with the following sentence: “This dictionary is a modest tribute of my devotion to Canada, whose citizen I am proud to be, the country in which the spirit of the Bible has dominion from Sea to Sea, the country in which the Human Rights are a happy, living reality, a reality called upon to serve as a shining example to mankind.” Then, after a flourished acknowledgement to the Canada Council for a grant made, there is a sad account of the author’s near relatives who died in Nazi concentration camps (these are also mentioned in a lavish dedication) or survived the horrors of the war, as well as an account of his pastoral activities as a rabbi. The Preface ends with a wish for peace on earth, quoted from above. One infers that the author hopes to promote peace by showing how much Western civilisation owes to Jewish culture. If so, his academic standards have suffered in the process, a not uncommon phenomenon when writers are driven by some form of cultural chauvinism. (I found a charming example of this in L. Sainéan, *Les sources indigènes de l’étymologie française*, Paris 1925, Vol. I, p. 371, where the word *bahut* is discussed. First, Sainéan admits that the origin of this word is unknown, then: “. . . Nous l’ignorons. Toujours est-il que ce nom de meuble est foncièrement français et c’est de la France qu’il s’est répandu ailleurs.”).

De Vries (*Neoph. Lii* (1968) p. 114) already pointed out Klein’s lack of concern for sound laws, also mentioned above in connection with *ganglion*. In many ways, Klein’s methodology is pre-Neogrammarian. There is also a certain amount of inconsistency and neglect. Sometimes, the meaning of the word discussed is not given, as in the case of *awl* (according to ODEE: “small tool for piercing holes”). In the case of the “intensive prefix” *a-* no examples are given of words containing such a prefixed *a-*. ODEE, by contrast, gives a fair list: *abide*, *alight*, *arise*, *amazed*, *ashamed*, *ago*, *accurse*, *aghast*, the last two being new formations, according to ODEE, – an aspect not mentioned by Klein when he deals with these two words. For unknown reasons he derives *arise* from *rise* preceded by the prefix *a-* “on”, and not the intensifying *a-*, which is the correct derivation. I presume he was led astray by the analogy of the overwhelming majority of the cases where *a-* is indeed “on”.

That Klein is not a man prone to doubts appears also from his treatment of Latin and Greek words. *Authentic* derives from Greek *αὐτο-* (“self”) and **ἐντης*. The derivation of this second element is uncertain. Walde (*Lateinisches*

etymologisches Wörterbuch, Heidelberg 1910; s.v. *sons*) and Ern. Meillet (s.v. *sons*) propose to derive it from the same Indo-European base as underlies *sons*, "guilty": "self-responsible". Frisk gives as "probable" a derivation from the base underlying Greek ἀνῶ, "accomplish". The latter etymology is given as certain by Klein. When discussing the words *pair* and *pornography*, he relates Latin *par* "equal" and *pretium* "price" with Greek πέρνημι "sell", from a base **per-* "equal". For *pair* this common origin is said to be "probable", but for *pornography* it is given as certain. It is to be noted that the Greek word is commonly assumed to be derived from a base **per-* meaning "through". πέρνημι would thus have the original meaning "I get across".

What Klein's dictionary has in common with other existing dictionaries is the omission of so-called obscene words, such as *fuck* or *cunt*, – but Klein would hardly seem the kind of man who would innovate on this score. Yet, it would be interesting to see the analogous forms of *fuck* or *cunt* in other Germanic languages. One might wonder, for example, whether *cunt* is cognate with Latin *cuneus* or whether it is English *cut* with a nasal infix.

In spite of all these shortcomings, however, the book is still a useful source of information. The author has placed greater emphasis on remote origins than most other dictionaries: a great deal of information for which one would have to consult dictionaries of other languages has been brought together. He is often rewarding on historical detail. Thus he mentions that the word *gas*, which is usually taken to be an invention by the Brussels chemist Van Helmont (1577–1644), formed after Greek χάος, was in fact used by Paracelsus for "air".

The general presentation of the book and the quality of the print are excellent. It is a pity, however, that a rather bad mess on p. 287 has been overlooked: a column and a half of print has simply been repeated, which has resulted in the loss of that amount of text. The blurb on the inside of the jacket is a sad example of editorial neglect. The language is impure ("Volumes I and II, published respectively in 1966 and 1967, . . ."; ". . . the important transition form between the Old-Indian and the Indo-European group of languages to which English belongs"), and philology is treated even more harshly than by the author: ". . . 40 languages ranging from old Greek and Roman to . . .". It is a strange book.

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William L. Alderson and Arnold C. Henderson, *Chaucer and Augustan Scholarship*. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1970, xiii + 271 pp., Paper. \$ 6.—. net.

The late Professor W. L. Alderson was interested in the impact of Chaucer on the eighteenth century and, as an essential preliminary to this, he set himself the task of analysing the scholarly merits of the Chaucer editions available to the Augustan reader. At the time of his unexpectedly early death this part of his work was almost complete. His colleague, Professor Arnold C. Henderson, has added a final chapter, done some updating of the bibliography and notes, and seen the book through the press. We should be grateful to Dr. Henderson