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Etymology in Romance

Éva Buchi and Steven N. Dworkin

Summary

Etymology is the only linguistic subdiscipline that is uniquely historical in its study of the relevant linguistic data and one of the oldest fields in Romance linguistics.

The concept of etymology as practiced by Romanists has changed over the last one hundred years. At the outset, Romance etymologists took as their brief the search for and identification of individual word origins. Starting in the early twentieth century, various specialists began to view etymology as the preparation of the complete history of all facets of the evolution over time and space of the words or lexical families under study. Identification of the underlying base was only the first step in the process. From this perspective, etymology constitutes an essential element of diachronic lexicology, which covers all formal, semantic, and syntactic facets of a word's evolution, including, if appropriate, the circumstances leading to its demise and replacement.

Keywords

(Comparative) reconstruction, dictionary/dictionaries, etymography, etymology, etymon, historical linguistics, lexicography, lexicology, lexicon, methodology, semantics

1. Introduction

Within the field of linguistics, etymology is the only subdiscipline that is uniquely historical in its study of the relevant linguistic data. It is one of the oldest fields in Romance linguistics. Practitioners of Romance etymology tend to study the history of individual words or word

families in specific Romance languages rather than across the entire family. Almost every Romance language and many of their regional varieties have at least one etymological dictionary devoted to the history of its vocabulary (or at least to the identification of relevant word origins), the most notable being such multi-volumed works as the *Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (FEW, 1922-2002), the *Lessico Etimologico Italiano* (LEI, 1979-), the *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico* (DCECH, 1980-1991), and the *Diccionari etimològic i complimenari de la llengua catalana* (DECat, 1980-2001).

Each etymological problem is unique and the solutions are often complex, a situation that is not conducive to the formulation of theories on the nature of lexical change. Although specialists continue to work on language-specific etymological questions, etymology is not currently at the forefront of work in Romance historical linguistics, a situation that may result in part from its lack of engagement with broad theoretical issues. Most studies still appear in the form of journal articles or *Festschrift* contributions. There is currently underway a new pan-Romance project, the *Dictionnaire Étymologique Roman* (DÉRom), with a new (and controversial) methodological underpinning, namely the rigorous application to the Romance data of comparative reconstruction to capture more accurately the phonological and morphological reality of proto-Romance (in essence a set of registers of spoken Latin) and the semantic scope of the etymological base. This project has reawakened an interest in Romance etymology among a new generation of Romanists. Indeed, to remain vital and relevant within the framework of Romance linguistics, etymology must go beyond the details of individual lexical histories and make an effort to link its findings to our understanding of the nature and processes of language change.

This article seeks to offer an overview of current work and pressing issues in the field of Romance etymology, a topic recently touched upon in Chambon (2013), and in the essays gathered together in Glessgen & Schweickard (2014) and Dworkin, García Arias & Kramer

(2016). It is not an historical or bibliographic survey of the long history of this discipline. Although not designed as systematic histories of Romance etymology, Craddock, Dworkin & Poghirc (1980) (which covers the period from 1945), Malkiel (1993), and Pfister & Lupis (2001) offer reliable overviews (up to the time of their publication). In addition, Groß (2014) is a thorough catalogue with succinct descriptions and brief critical observations of all pan-Romance and single-language etymological dictionaries published at the time that he prepared his survey.

2. Historical background

In the first half of the nineteenth century, etymology played a central role in the constitution of Romance linguistics as an organized scholarly discipline. The emphasis in linguistics at that time was on the historical evolution of the members of a language family rather than on their structural description. In order to identify and classify the sound changes that marked the evolution of each Romance language from its (oral) Latin starting point, it was necessary to have a solid foundation of reliable etymologies for the relevant Romance words. In turn, the clarification of the relevant patterns of sound change provided evidence for the possible identification of new etymologies. In 1875 the pioneering American linguist William Dwight Whitney (1827-1894) declared, echoing thoughts expressed earlier in Germany by Jakob Grimm: “The whole process of linguistic research begins in and depends on etymology” (quoted in Malkiel, 1993: 20). Within the framework of Romance linguistics, the symbiotic relationship between etymology and historical grammar can be seen in the scholarly production of Friedrich Diez (1794-1876) and Wilhelm Meyer-Lübke (1861-1936). Diez authored both the first comparative Romance historical grammar: his three-volume *Grammatik der Romanischen Sprachen* (Diez 1836-1844) and the first pan-Romance etymological dictionary: his *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der romanischen Sprachen* (Diez 1853, with subsequent revised editions). A similar combination, illustrating the indissoluble link between etymology and

historical grammar (especially the study of sound change), can be seen in the work of Wilhelm Meyer-Lübke, author of a four-volume *Grammatik der Romanischen Sprachen* (Meyer-Lübke 1890-1902), of historical grammars of Italian and French, and of the last complete pan-Romance etymological dictionary, the *Romanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (REW, 1st ed. 1911-1920, 3rd definitive edition, 1935). Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century the leading European and American journals devoted to Romance linguistics regularly published articles, often written by the same scholar, dealing separately with specific problems of historical grammar and etymology. Indeed, this fusion of etymological research and other aspects of Romance historical linguistics is observable in the *oeuvre* of such distinguished Romanists as Hugo Schuchardt (1842-1927), Jakob Jud (1882-1952), Walther von Wartburg (1888-1971), Yakov Makliel (1914-1998), Kurt Baldinger (1919-2007), and Max Pfister (1932-2017).

In this first period in the history of Romance etymology, the emphasis was on the search for and identification of word origins, the goal of etymology since the time of the Greeks. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, as a result of the work of such scholars as Hugo Schuchardt, Jakob Jud, and Walther von Wartburg, and continued later by such distinguished specialists as Yakov Makliel and Kurt Baldinger, students of the historical study of the Romance lexicon began to take as their mandate the description of the complete history of the word or word-family at issue. Identification of the word origin was but the obligatory starting point. It was incumbent on the analyst to discuss such topics as the word's formal and semantic development, its relationship to semantically-related items, the derivatives that it produced, and, if relevant, the circumstances leading to its obsolescence or demise. In essence, etymology in the old sense was becoming the required starting point for research in the newer field of diachronic lexicology (also called etymology).

3. The place of etymology within linguistics

Etymology no longer occupies a central place in the edifice of contemporary Romance linguistics. A number of factors have contributed to this situation. Of all the linguistic subfields, etymology is the only one that is exclusively diachronic. Whereas one can speak of synchronic and diachronic phonology, synchronic and diachronic syntax, one cannot, despite attempts by some generativists in the 1970s, postulate the existence of synchronic etymology (but see Baglioni 2016: 16-18 for a synchronic approach to “transparent” etymologies). With the advent of structuralism after the posthumous publications of Ferdinand de Saussure’s *Cours de linguistique générale* (1916), descriptive approaches to linguistic analysis came to dominate Romance linguistics for many decades. Consequently, historical Romance linguistics entered a long period of decline, especially in North America. Descriptive linguistics places a high value on theory and methodological discussions. Historical linguistics is currently enjoying a renaissance on both sides of the Atlantic, but the emphasis falls on broad issues of the nature and processes of language change rather than on the resolution of individual language-specific issues. Etymology, even when considered broadly as diachronic lexicology, still tends to focus on individual lexical items without making a concerted effort to link its findings with relevant broader questions.

Although originally coined as a *riposte* to the Neogrammarian view of sound change, the maxim universally attributed to Jules Gilliéron (1854-1926) “each word has its own history” (see Malkiel, 1967) applies equally well to the identification of etyma. Yakov Malkiel, one of the leading writers on questions of method and practice in Romance etymology, has stressed the unique and complex nature of etymological solutions (Malkiel, 1956). As a result of the emphasis on individual problems and the unique nature of their solutions, Romance etymology has not lent itself to the formulation of theories on the nature of lexical change, although there was in the past no shortage of literature on certain questions of the methodology to be applied

in the solution of etymological cruxes, especially the relative weight of the roles to be assigned to phonological and semantic evidence in the resolution of etymological problems. Some of the ideas on the intimate relationship between etymology and historical grammar espoused in the writings of Yakov Malkiel, one of the few Romanists to deal specifically with the relationship of etymology to the other branches of (historical) (Romance) linguistics, may yet prove to be critical in strengthening the position of etymology within the edifice of contemporary Romance linguistics.

Some linguists active in the early 21st century may feel that etymology is not a rigorous discipline based on scientifically-valid hypotheses and methodologies. It certainly is the most humanistic of all the subfields of Romance linguistics, as, ideally, the history of a word has to be studied within the broadly cultural framework of the language(s) in which it is found. Within Romance linguistics, an excellent example of this culture and history-based approach to etymology as word history appears in the numerous studies by Henry (1902-1990) and Renée Kahane (1907-2002) on Mediterranean loanwords (especially those of possible Byzantine Greek background, see Kahane & Kahane, 1979). One of the most prolific Romance etymologists of his day, Leo Spitzer (1887-1960), often stressed the role of intuition and creative inspiration in the resolution of etymological problems. The Italian specialist Vittorio Bertoldi (1888-1953) titled his introduction to etymology *L'Arte della etimologia* (1952). True, there have been etymological disputes in the past, like the controversy between a rigorously Neogrammarian approach, based on phonetic laws (see Salvioni, 1906), and its more socially and semantically motivated counterpart (see Schuchardt, 1885), and an etymological debate is currently under way in the framework of the DÉRom (see 4.1.), but there are not many clearly identifiable schools and clearly defined competing theories of Romance etymology, a situation that may help fuel the belief held by many linguists (including Romanists) that etymology lacks a firm scientific footing.

4. Major works in Romance etymology and etymography

4.1. Romance languages as a whole

Although etymology may no longer be central to historical Romance linguistics, many specialists continue to publish quality research in Romance etymology and diachronic lexicology. Current work in this field falls into two categories: the study of the origin and history of individual lexical items or word families, of which the findings usually appear as articles in specialized scholarly journals or homage volumes (*Festschriften*), or the preparation, either in print or online, of etymological dictionaries of varying scope and proportion. Multi-volume etymological dictionaries with detailed entries presenting such material as the chosen solution, an overview of previous etymological hypotheses, dates of first (and, if relevant, last) attestation, a description of the word's semantic evolution, and a listing (with possible discussion) of its derivatives, represent the ideal way to synthesize the results of etymological research. In addition to Meyer-Lübke's pan-Romance REW, which still continues the concept of etymology as the search for word origins, there exist etymological dictionaries of varying scope and detail for almost all Romance varieties. Of the so-called national Romance languages, Italian and French are the languages best served with full-blown etymological dictionaries (such as the ongoing LEI and the largely completed FEW, respectively) whose entries reflect the status of etymology as word history, whereas much work remains to be done to prepare such etymological dictionaries for Romanian and Portuguese (in both its European and Brazilian varieties). The extant dictionaries for both languages continue the tradition of etymology as the identification of word origins, and are, for the most part, dated. The etymological dictionaries for Catalan (DECat) and Spanish (DCECH), both prepared by Joan Coromines (Coromines in the Spanish work), though not as extensive and detailed as FEW and LEI, are excellent sources of information and major achievements, considering that they are essentially the work of one scholar whose idiosyncracies and prejudices often color his analyses. Many of the entries in

these two dictionaries straddle the line between etymology-origin and etymology as word history.

Of the current ongoing Romance etymological dictionaries, the most extensive and ambitious in scope is the *Dictionnaire Étymologique Roman* (DÉRom) co-directed by Éva Buchi and Wolfgang Schweickard. This project is an effort to replace the venerable, but outdated in many respects, *Romanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (REW), whose definitive edition reflects the state of the discipline in the year of its publication, 1935. In its initial stages the DÉRom has limited its purview to five hundred selected inherited lexical items that have survived on a (more or less) pan-Romance scale. The underlying methodology of the DÉRom provoked at the outset a somewhat acerbic debate between its directors and several veteran and highly respected practitioners of Romance etymology (e.g., Kramer, 2011, 2014; Varvaro, 2011a; 2011b and the responses of Buchi & Schweickard, 2011a; 2011b; Blasco Ferrer, 2016). Its starting point is two essays by Jean-Pierre Chambon (2007; 2010). In essence, Chambon, former director of FEW, declares that Romance historical linguistics must return to the strict and consistent application of the comparative method in the same way as experts in the history of language families that lack documentation of the acrolect variant of the protolanguage. In this way he seeks to bring historical Romance linguistics into line with the practices of the diachronic study of general linguistics. Comparative reconstruction should not be used only as a supplement, when necessary, to the traditional Romance practice of starting from the textual evidence of written Latin. In short, the Romanist should not turn to or be influenced by the available data from written Latin, but rather should apply the principles of comparative reconstruction to the pertinent data in order to arrive at the relevant Proto-Romance base or bases, which can then be compared to the recorded Latin word. For veteran specialists in Romance etymology, this is easier said than done. A senior member of the DÉRom, Yan Greub, has stated, “[I]l fallait faire un grand effort sur soi pour exclure (provisoirement) notre

connaissance du latin de nos raisonnements” (Greub, 2014: 275). In many respects DÉRom is a return to the older concept of etymology as the search for and identification of word origins. Nevertheless, many DÉRom entries contain material and analyses relevant to the history of the reconstructed base at different temporal levels of Proto-Romance (Celac & Buchi, 2011: 365-366; Buchi & Schweickard, 2014b: 23-25) and even, in the footnotes, of the individual Romance languages.

Following another operational principle laid down by Chambon, the Proto-Romance bases appear in phonemic transcription, since what is being reconstructed is a linguistic form of the spoken language, of which the written Latin form is often a very imperfect representation. Nevertheless, as is the case in etymological dictionaries of other language families, in the data section the Romance material is presented in standard spelling. In some cases where there is no standard orthography and a large number of formal variants are on record in the modern dialect dictionaries and linguistic atlases (e.g. Friulian, Francoprovençal, Gascon, etc.), a compromise or blended form (known in French as a *forme typisée*) is presented in half brackets. Although each DÉRom article obligatorily contains toward the end a reference (with dating of first attestations) to the appropriate *corrélat du latin écrit* (“written Latin correlate or equivalent”), non-specialist users of this work might benefit from the placing of the written Latin form alongside the reconstructed base at the beginning of the entry (a suggestion already made by Colón, 2013: 150). To date (11/02/2019) DÉRom has published online (www.atilf.fr/DERom) 168 entries, many of which also appear in Buchi & Schweickard (2014a: 325-647; 2016: 371-516). Readers can choose to consult the online DÉRom entries by the reconstructed proto-Romance etymon, by the written Latin correlate, by the form of the entry in the REW or even by Romance cognates. These options are obviously not available for the entries reproduced in the aforementioned printed version.

The DÉRom has expanded in certain interesting and crucial ways facets of the scholarly

community's already acquired knowledge about the etyma at issue. The first is the breadth of Romance material that provides the linguistic input for the reconstruction; it far exceeds what is available in the REW. The DÉRom includes in the comparative effort data from the numerous Romance varieties that are not national standard languages. The second is the requirement that the comparative method be applied to the semantic scope of each Romance form in order to determine the semantic range of each Proto-Romance base. Semantics has long been a stepchild not only in Romance etymology (Buchi, 2012), but also in the tradition of those language families where comparative reconstruction is common practice (see for instance Orel, 2003: xii for Germanic). The authors of DÉRom entries are required to reconstruct on the basis of the Romance evidence, not only the form, but also the meaning(s) and the syntactic properties of the Proto-Romance bases. The meaning is presented as a componential definition, and not merely as a French gloss of the meaning of the Proto-Romance etymon. A commentary explaining and justifying the formal and semantic reconstruction is an obligatory component of each article, as is a descriptive statement on the form, the meaning and the part of speech of the written Latin correlate (which, in some instances, is attested only very late and, in a handful of cases, not at all). Semantic reconstruction poses several methodological questions (Chauveau, 2014; 2016); linguists do not understand the processes of semantic change as well as they do sound change. The study of the semantic history of each word is an area where etymology can make a major contribution to general historical linguistics. The third important contribution of the DÉRom is the light thrown on formal lexical variation in the spoken language (whether one calls it Proto-Romance or spoken Latin). The DÉRom data have shown that certain developments often explained as individual local innovations in language specific historical grammars are actually attested on a wider geographic basis in several Romance varieties, and consequently reflect (regional, social and/or pragmatic) variation at different chronological stages in the protolanguage (for more detailed discussion and examples, see Dworkin, 2016:

10). A list of publications based on research carried out in the preparation of DÉRom articles is available on the project's website.

4.2. Romanian

After decades of preparation, the first volume, covering the letters A-B, of the Romanian Academy's *Dicționarul etimologic al limbii române* (DELR) finally appeared in 2011. The entries essentially continue the older view of etymology as the search for word origins. Most entries merely gloss the headword in Romanian and French, indicate the etymology and date of first attestation, usually without any discussion, and list relevant derivatives. In some controversial cases, the entry records (without critical discussion) previous hypotheses, e.g., s.v. *a băga* TR.V. 'to introduce, lead into' and *băiat* M.N. 'boy'. Volume 2 (*Ca-Cizmă*) contains more information regarding the word's semantics, geographic diffusion, stylistic features, and, in the case of words whose etymology is controversial, a discussion of the competing hypotheses (cf. Celac, 2017: 252).

One methodological issue continues to roil specialists in Romanian etymology, namely the concept known as *etimologie multiplă* 'multiple etymology'. This notion was developed by A. Graur (1950) with specific reference to the many neologisms that entered Romanian after the eighteenth century as loanwords from other European languages, principally Latin, French, Italian, German, modern Greek, Russian, and other Slavic languages. It claims that a given word may be borrowed from more than one language, either at the same time or at different moments in the history of the language. This same analysis can also be applied, according to Graur, to calques (and perhaps to derivatives). Two examples presented by Graur and discussed critically by Celac (2017) are Rom. *director*, simultaneously taken from Latin, French, Italian, German, and Russian, and Rom. *ofițer*, borrowed from Italian, French, Russian, Polish, and Bulgarian. Additional examples from the first volume of the DELR are *acord*, *artilerie*, *batalion*, *brigadă*. Although it can happen that a lexical item or certain senses of a lexical item

may be borrowed independently by different speakers or writers, the analyst must take care not to convert this approach into a handy catch-all explanatory mechanism; cf. the critiques in Schweickard (1986), Buchi (2010: 21-22), and Celac (2017).

4.3. Italian and Italo-Romance

Installments of Pfister's (and now Schweickard's) LEI (see Aprile, 2004) continue to appear with regularity. In its general macrostructure this dictionary very closely follows FEW in whose "workshop" (located in Wartburg's home) Pfister had received his formal instruction (cf. Chambon & Greub, 2018: 9-10). The entries are arranged alphabetically according to the proposed etymon. To accelerate production, different teams have been working on separate letters of the alphabet. As of 2019, 153 installments have appeared: the letters A and B in their entirety, as well as parts of C, D, and E, and several installments devoted to words of Germanic origin. Aprile (2004: 205-227) discusses in detail changes concerning the presentation of such matters as lexical markings, indications of gender, identification of Italo-Romance varieties, datings, abbreviations, etc. LEI has generated a series of valuable metalexical studies gathered together in [LEI] (1992), Aprile (2004), and Lubello & Schweickard (2012).

Alongside LEI, different varieties of Italo-Romance have recently received individual etymological dictionaries, not only distinct languages like Ladin (see EWD), but also Italian dialects. Schweickard (2016a: 900-901; 2016b: 516-517) offers a rapid bibliographic overview of such works. In 1975 Alberto Varvaro announced a project to prepare an etymological dictionary of Sicilian, of which one volume (A-L), prepared in collaboration with Rosanna Sornicola, appeared in 1986 (see VES). For various reasons described in the Introduction to this volume, the author had to put this work aside until 2011. Prior to his death in 2014, Varvaro was able to see through to its completion the two volumes of his *Vocabolario Storico-Etimologico del Siciliano* (VSES). This work, which contains revisions of many of the entries of the 1986 edition, does not claim to survey historically the entire Sicilian lexicon. Varvaro

has chosen 600 word families that do not have clear formal and semantic correspondences in Italian. In addition to the raw lexical material, each entry discusses the reasoning behind the choice of etymology and offers a miniature word history. For a critical appreciation of the VSES, with discussion of various entries, see Blasco Ferrer (2014). Other regional etymological dictionaries include the collaborative and extensive *Repertorio Etimologico Piemontese* (REP; cf. Schweickard, 2016a).

4.4. French, Francoprovençal, Occitan, and Gascon

The early FEW volumes (cf. Büchi, 1996: 3-5), encompassing the letters A and B and partially C-F, emphasized lexicon taken from Old French and rural Gallo-Romance dialects and essentially ignored the standard language. Von Wartburg quickly realized the importance of tracing the evolution of the lexicon of the literary language as well (von Wartburg, 1929), and so changed the design of the entries in the remaining volumes. Starting in 1967, the FEW team, headed first by von Wartburg himself, then successively by Otto Jänicke, Carl Theodor Gossen, Jean-Pierre Chambon, Jean-Paul Chauveau and now Yan Greub, began to publish a systematic revision of all entries for the letter A to bring them structurally and methodologically in line with the rest of the work. These revised entries have been published as Volume 25, completed in 2002. Since then, FEW has begun the process of revising the entries for the letter B (see the detailed description and discussion in Chauveau & Büchi, 2011: 105-107). The new version for the letter B will appear only online; several entries can be downloaded at <http://www.atilf.fr/FEW>, and the 25 volumes of the paper dictionary are available online (for the time being only in image format, see FEWe).

Two other important ongoing projects in French etymology merit mention here. The *Dictionnaire Étymologique de l'Ancien Français* (DEAF), covering Old French (842-ca. 1350), was conceived in the tradition of etymology as word-history. Originally structured on the model of FEW, DEAF introduced several innovations to stress the semasiological analysis of each

word. Since he wished to await the revision of the Old French materials in the FEW volumes for the letters A-F, Baldinger chose to begin DEAF with the letter G. The paper version ends with the letter K (published in 2008), the letter F having been subsequently added (2018); six more installments (for D-E) are planned before the (alas, premature) end of the project in 2020. One can consult online not only the dictionary, but also –with caution– the lemmatized materials for the remaining letters (see DEAF*él*). DEAF articles contain much information relevant to Gallo-Romance beyond the Old French period as well as to related etymological issues in other Romance languages (cf. Chauveau & Buchi, 2011: 107-108).

The online *Trésor de la Langue Française Étymologique* (TLF-Étym) is in the process of revising selectively as needed the etymologies in the *Trésor de la langue française* (TLF), itself a dictionary of nineteenth- and twentieth-century written French. Chauveau & Buchi (2011: 108) identify many of the revised etymologies offered here; see also the description, discussion, and examples in Steinfeld (2016).

4.5. Catalan, Spanish, and Portuguese

Students of the history of the Catalan lexicon can turn to the ten-volume *Diccionari etimològic i complementari de la llengua catalana* (DECat), a project initiated by Joan Coromines in 1927, but much delayed by many difficult (political and academic) circumstances in its author's lengthy career. As Baldinger (1998) points out, this work, important and valuable as it is for its many original etymologies and valuable Catalan regional data, is far from perfect.

Specialists in the history of the Spanish lexicon have at their disposal only two dictionaries that represent the results of original research, the six-volume *Diccionario crítico etimológico castellano e hispánico* (DCECH) of Joan Corominas and José Antonio Pascual (1980-1991), a revised version of Corominas's *Diccionario crítico etimológico de la lengua castellana* (DCEC, 1954-1957), and the less rigorous and less reliable *Diccionario etimológico español e hispánico* of Vicente García de Diego, first published in 1954, followed by a posthumous

second edition (1985). The latter work remains somewhat useful for the amount of dialect material that it contains, although many of its proposed etymologies are open to question. The DCECH (cf. Badia i Margarit & Solà, 2008) is a major, essentially single-handed scholarly accomplishment. Nevertheless it suffers from major defects. Despite the dates of the second edition, this work in many ways reflects research carried out by Corominas in the 1930s and 1940s in the preparation of its predecessor, the DCEC. The new edition offers some revised etymologies, new dates of first attestations (many of which now need revision as a result of material made available in databases such as CORDE), and additional textual examples. However, for the most part, the authors have studiously ignored the bulk of the etymological literature that appeared from the pens of numerous reputable scholars in the years between the two editions of the dictionary. Both versions of Corominas's magnum opus have received justified criticism for their lack of systematic attention to semantic developments, relevant derivatives, and recent vocabulary, as well as the acerbic and personal attacks against many of his colleagues and critics. Perhaps more understandable (though not necessarily justifiable) on the human side is the influence of Corominas's personal positions and prejudices, e.g., the role of Catalan loanwords in the history of Spanish, and his (excessive?) recourse to alleged pre-Roman, Mozarabic and onomatopoeic bases. In a programmatic paper, David Pharies (2014) has called for the preparation of a new Spanish etymological dictionary. He outlines a plan for an online etymological dictionary that he tentatively titles *Diccionario etimológico virtual del español* (to which he gives the acronym DEVE) involving the participation of a large team of collaborators. At the time of this writing this project is only in the early planning stages. Even if it moves forward, the DEVE will take decades to complete.

There is no progress to report in the field of Portuguese etymology and diachronic lexicology. Students of the history of the Portuguese lexicon still must rely on José Pedro Machado's inadequate and outdated *Dicionário da língua portuguesa* (DELP, first published in 1952-

1959), essentially a work in the etymology=word origins tradition. The Brazilian specialist Mário Eduardo Viaro has prepared two introductory manuals, one (Viaro, 2013² [2004¹]) focused specifically on Portuguese etymology and the other (Viaro, 2014² [2011¹]) on the general methodology of etymology as a linguistics discipline. The various iterations (both print and digital) of the *Dicionário Houaiss da Língua Portuguesa* (Houaiss & Villar, 2001; 2012-) contain etymologies and dates of first attestations. However it is not an etymological dictionary, but rather a monolingual dictionary that contains (quite reliable) etymological information (see Benarroch, 2014). Benarroch (2013) discusses the contribution of the DÉRom to Portuguese etymology.

4.6. Other Romance languages

Specialists in Sardinian etymology can turn to the *Dizionario Etimologico Sardo* (DES), originally published in three volumes in the 1960s. This work represents the culmination of a lifetime of research devoted to the history of the Sardinian lexicon by its author, Max Leopold Wagner (1880-1962). It concentrates on the succinct presentation of word origins and the regional variations of the headword. Of course, philological work on Old Sardinian as well as lexicography has made considerable progress since then, so that a revision of the materials from primary sources is now a desideratum (see Maxia, 2017: 289-290).

Scholars seeking information on the history of the lexicon of Dolomitic Ladin have at their disposal the *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Dolomitenladinischen* (EWD) prepared by a team under the direction of Johannes Kramer. Each entry presents the headword, the proposed etymon, a list of early attestations, and a concise linguistic commentary that places the lexeme at issue in a wider Romance context. Although some authoritative dictionaries of Romansch (in particular DRG) and Friulian offer etymologies in their entries, they are –with the exception of the *Dizionario etimologico storico friulano* (DESF), unfortunately limited to the letters A-E– not etymological dictionaries.

5. Pressing tasks in Romance etymology

At the beginning of the 21st century, Max Pfister (2001: 21) stated: “Premessa necessaria è la constatazione che le grandi scoperte in campo etimologico sono state compiute da Diez, Meyer-Lübke e von Wartburg. Agli odierni ricercatori, in questo settore dei nostri studi, rimane una piccola messe, che man mano si assottiglia” (‘a necessary starting point is the fact that the great discoveries in the field of [Romance] etymology have already been made by Diez, Meyer-Lübke, and von Wartburg. Nowadays, researchers in this area of our discipline have been left only with a small crop [of unsolved etymologies], whose numbers are slowly being whittled down’). Although not entirely inaccurate, this statement is misleading and runs the risk of being counterproductive by discouraging further research. It is true that Diez, Meyer-Lübke, and von Wartburg identified correctly many of the inherited Latin etyma that have come down into the Romance languages, especially those that survived on a pan-Romance scale. However a significant quantity of their proposed solutions have been called into question by later workers, many of whom have formulated new hypotheses, including alternative spoken Latin bases, not all of which have gained universal acceptance. It is probably true that etymologists will not identify many documented Latin bases that have not already been proposed as etyma for Romance words whose origins remain obscure. However, there remains more than just a small harvest of words whose origins are still controversial or that have remained refractory to a satisfactory analysis. This is especially true for lexical units of non-Latin origin that have survived in Romance in only one language or only in a handful of regions. The need for FEW to devote three full volumes (21-23), arranged by semantic concepts, to Gallo-Romance words of unknown or doubtful origin shows the enormous amount of material in just one Romance region still awaiting convincing etymological solutions (cf. also Baldinger, 1988-2003). Many of the relevant words are found in regional varieties or in technical languages like farming or seafaring. One can state that one of the most pressing issues today in Romance etymology is

the resolution of these numerous individual difficult cases. However one must be realistic and ask whether it is reasonable to expect to be able to identify with a strong degree of certainty etymologies for every lexical item in each Romance language. In some cases one can at best speak only of the relative probability of the proposed solutions.

It is not feasible to list here the thousands of words that continue to be etymological cruxes; selected examples taken from Romanian, Italian, French, and Spanish will be offered. Romanian examples include *a arăta* ‘to show’, *a băga* ‘to introduce, insert’, *creț* ‘curly, crimp, frizzy’, *a lepăda* ‘to strip off’, *mire* ‘bridegroom’, *păstaie* ‘gloss’, *a răbda* ‘to have patience, to endure’, *scorbură* ‘tree hollow’, *străin* ‘foreign, stranger’. For a discussion of further examples, see Boerescu (2017).

Among Italian examples one can quote *ambascia* ‘shortness of breath; pain, agony, distress’, *andare* ‘to go’, *avaria* ‘damage (at sea)’, *brezza* ‘breeze’, *capriole* ‘caper, jump, somersault’, *goffo* ‘clumsy, awkward’, *gomena* ‘nautical cable’, *gondola* ‘gondola’, *lusinga* ‘allurement, flattery, charm’, *mascarpone* ‘mascarpone cheese’, *piolo* ‘peg, pin’, *pizza* ‘pizza’, *ruffiano* ‘procurer, pimp’, *storpiare* ‘to cripple, maim’, *trippa* ‘tripe; belly’.

Examples of French words that remain etymologically obscure or at least controversial are *agacer* ‘to annoy’, *aller* ‘to go’, *badigeon* ‘white-wash’, *bistrot* ‘type of restaurant’, *brin* ‘blade of grass’, *calembour* ‘pun’, *camion* ‘truck’, *caniveau* ‘gutter’, *complot* ‘plot’, *danser* ‘to dance’, *échouer* ‘to fail’, *foulard* ‘scarf’, *frotter* ‘to rub, scrub’, *gamin* ‘young lad’, *gauche* ‘left’, *gausser* ‘to scoff, mock’, *giboulée* ‘sudden shower, downpour’, *haricot* ‘green bean’, *ivre* ‘drunk’, *moquette* ‘carpeting’, *pantoufle* ‘slipper’, *pingre* ‘stingy’, *regretter* ‘to regret’, *requin* ‘shark’, *rêver* ‘to dream’, *tirer* ‘to pull’, *tripe* ‘tripe’, *trouver* ‘to find’. Some of these items have been the subject of new and convincing analyses, e.g. Chauveau in FEW 22/2, 259a-260b on *bistrot* and Chauveau (2012) on *haricot*.

Pharies (2014: 370) offers several examples from Spanish, among them *adrede* ‘deliberately’,

ascua ‘ember’, *atisbar* ‘to peep’, *bellaco* ‘sly; rascally’, *bizarro* ‘brave; gallant’, *brisa* ‘breeze’, *(de) bruces* ‘facedown’, *caspa* ‘dandruff’, *chanada* ‘trick; swindle’, *chatarra* ‘scrap’, *corazón* ‘heart’, *cursi* ‘trite; ordinary’, *deslizar* ‘to slip in, slide under’, *entresijo* ‘secret, mystery’, *esguince* ‘sprain’, *frambuesa* ‘strawberry’, *galbana* ‘laziness’, *gancho* ‘hook’, *gringo* ‘American’, *guiar* ‘to guide’, *listo* ‘ready; clever’, *loco* ‘mad, crazy’, *matar* ‘to kill’, *mocho* ‘blunt’, *perro* ‘dog’, *semilla* ‘seed’, *sobaco* ‘underarm’, *tomar* ‘to take’, *torta* ‘(pan)cake’, *tuerca* ‘nut (hardware)’.

Unresolved etymologies open possible new perspectives for research in Romance etymology. The following observations are not limited to the small selection of words listed above. Are there semantic fields that seem to contain a high portion of words of unknown or doubtful origin? In a number of Romance languages the word equivalent in meaning to ‘boy’ has been an etymological crux. Most scholars accept today the Germanic origin of Fr. *garçon* and the Arabic provenance of It. *ragazzo*. However, there seems to be no consensus regarding the sources of Rom. *băiat*, Fr. *gamin*, *gosse*, ‘kid, urchin’, Sp. *chico*, *mozo*, *muchacho*, *niño*, and Ptg. *rapaz* (alongside etymologically obscure *rapariga* ‘girl’). In several Romance languages some of the basic verbs of motion, especially those meaning ‘to go, walk’, are etymologically obscure; witness Rom. *a merge* and It. *andare*, Fr. *aller*, Cat. *anar*, Sp. Ptg. *andar* (cf. Pfister, 2011; Buchi, 2008: 286-293). A number of nouns and adjectives that denote negative or undesirable states or qualities constitute etymological cruxes in many Romance languages, e.g., It. *goffo* ‘clumsy, awkward, dull’, *matto* ‘mad, insane’, *pazzo* ‘crazy’; Fr. *gamin*, *gosse*, both meaning ‘kid, urchin’, *goinfre* ‘glutton’, *pingre* ‘stingy’; Sp. *bobo* ‘silly, stupid’, *borracho* ‘drunk’, *chocho* ‘senile, demented’, *cursi* ‘tasteless; cheap’, *lerdo* ‘lumbering, slow-witted’, *loco* ‘crazy, mad’, *sandio* ‘simple, foolish’, *tonto* ‘silly, foolish’. The basic term for ‘small, little’ is often etymologically obscure, cf. It. *piccolo*, Fr. *petit*, Sp. *pequeño*, *chico*, Ptg. *pequeno*. A handful of the etymologically obscure lexical items are found in more than one Romance

language or in more than one region. Does this areal distribution mean that a Proto-Romance/Latin base must be involved? One must allow for the possibility that the word in question arose in only one Romance region and then spread as a loanword. An excellent example of this problem is the series of verbs constituted by It. *tirare*, Fr. *tirer*, Cat. Sp. Ptg. *tirar* ‘to pull; to throw’. In the case of It. *brezza*, Fr. *brise*, Cat. Sp. *brisa*, the date of first attestation may throw light on at least the diffusion of the word. The fact that it is first attested in Catalan in the fifteenth century led Coromines to suggest that this word spread with Catalan sailors throughout the Mediterranean as a nautical term. However he admits his inability to identify the origin of the Catalan noun. A similar situation holds with regard to It. *avaria*, Fr. *avarie*, Cat. *avaria* ‘damage to merchandise at sea’, Sp. *avería* ‘breakdown, damage’: the Italian (or, more specifically, the Genoese) word seems to have spread across the Mediterranean to France and to the Iberian Peninsula. Although the French, Catalan, and Spanish nouns may be Italianisms (and thus not etymological cruxes with regard to their immediate origin), none of the Arabic or (Byzantine) Greek sources proposed for It. *avaria* has gained widespread acceptance. Whereas it is generally agreed that Occit. Cat. *dansar*, Sp. *danzar*, Ptg. *dançar* are all borrowings of OFr. *danser*, the origin of the French lexeme continues to be controversial. In like fashion Fr. *race*, Cat. *raça*, Sp. *raza*, Ptg. *raça* may have It. *razza* as their immediate source. Although it still may be an etymological crux for many, Nocentini (2010 s.v. *razza*¹), following Contini, analyses the Italian noun as a borrowing and semantic expansion of Fr. *haras* ‘horse breeding’. A similar problem arises with It. *trippa*, Fr. *tripe*, Sp. *tripa*, probably borrowings of It. *trippa*, itself of disputed origin.

Studies of the origin and history of such words continue to appear in the discipline’s leading journals (e.g., *Revue de linguistique romane*, *Romance Philology*, *Romanische Forschungen*, *Vox Romanica*, *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie*), as well as in homage volumes. Many of these articles propose new solutions to long-standing problems, but add very little to the

discussion of etymological theory and methodology. Only time will tell if the new answers to old questions will gain general acceptance in the scholarly community.

6. Possible new avenues for Romance etymology

Etymology is in a strong position to make valuable contributions to other branches of historical (Romance) linguistics. It is certainly not necessary to belabor the obvious link between etymology and historical semantics. Traditionally, etymologists have focused on primary nouns, verbs, and adjectives, listing at the end of the relevant entry the suffixal and prefixal derivatives of the primitive as well as the compounds in whose genesis it has participated. There is rarely any historically-slanted analysis of these derived formations. Such is the treatment of derivatives found in LEI, FEW, and in a more haphazard fashion, in DECat and DCECH. These formations deserve far better treatment at the hands of etymologists. The origin of the affix itself, the creation of the relevant derivatives, their integration into the language and subsequent history are all legitimate concerns of etymology. It is significant that David Pharies (2002) entitled his excellent diachronic study of Spanish suffixes and suffixoids *Diccionario etimológico de los sufijos españoles y otros elementos finales*, as he here seeks to identify the origin of each suffix, and to trace its diffusion, semantic and functional evolution over time through the lexicon of standard and regional varieties of Spanish. Buchi & Chauveau (2015) illustrate how the type of etymological reconstruction practiced in the DÉRom can serve as a starting point for the history of suffixation in Romance. The formation of compounds is an act of lexical creation and thus should form part of the etymologist's brief. Mailhammer (2015: 427) labels such analysis "morphological etymology".

At the outset, each new derivative and each new loanword constitute a neologism. The systematic study of neology, the processes involved in the genesis of neologisms, has become a growing field in Romance lexicology. Traditional etymological studies tend to focus on words of long standing in the history of the lexicon and to ignore the relevant historical issues in the

creation of recent neologisms, while dictionaries of neologisms often ignore the circumstances surrounding the creation of the new lexical item.

The principles of etymological research can also be applied to the study of the genesis and history of phraseological units (also known as idioms or fixed expressions). This line of research involves the intersection of individual word history combined with the accompanying processes of grammaticalization and/or lexicalization. With regard to the Romance languages this field is only in its infancy. Echenique Elizondo et alii (2016) offers an introduction, with rich bibliography, to work in this new area dealing with the history of “fraseología española”.

The etyma of most lexical units are situated as well on the lexical level, be they inherited (Proto-Romance */ka'βall-u/ M.N. ‘horse’ is the etymon of Sard. *kaváddu* M.N. ‘horse’, It. *cavallo* etc.), borrowed (Russian *ukaz* M.N. ‘decree’ is the etymon of Rom. *ucaz* M.N. ‘edict of the Russian tsar’, Fr. *oukase*), or coined within the language under consideration (Sp. *coger* TR.V. ‘to take’ is the etymon of Sp. *escoger* TR.V. ‘to choose’). An important exception to this rule was discovered by Benveniste (1958) under the name *delocutives*, i.e. lexical units derived from (parts of) utterances (whose status as direct imports from speech was not acknowledged by his predecessors), like Fr. *cessez-le-feu* M.N. ‘ceasefire’ < *Cessez le feu!* ‘cease fire!’), an utterance typically addressed by a general to his troops. Romance etymology began to study this field only fairly recently, for Gallo-Romance (Chambon, 1989; Büchi, 1995) and Spanish (Thibault, 2005). Clearly delocutives constitute a growing research field in Romance etymology, in particular for less frequently studied languages.

Another productive research area is concerned with *pragma-etymology* (Chambon 2013: 311): the etymology of lexical units that present pragmatic content. Examples are It. *guarda* ADV. ‘(discourse particle used for introducing a reservation), look’ in *L’hanno ammazzato era ricchissimo qualcuno l’avrà fatto fuori – guarda che soffriva di cuore* and ‘(discourse particle introducing a hesitation), you know’ in *Preferirei fare una, guarda, pubblicazione pura delle*

lettere, whose origin is an imperative form of It. *guardare* TR.V. ‘to look’ (Waltereit, 2002), or Fr. *enfin* ADV. ‘(discourse particle used for summing up a development), well’ in *Ne m’a-t-il pas appris la musique, le dessin, la grammaire, enfin tout ce que je sais?* and ‘(discourse particle used for correcting an earlier comment), at least’ in *Autour de vous, vos camarades sont tous pareils? – Tous... enfin, tous ceux qui existent, qui réfléchissent*, which ultimately go back to Fr. *enfin* ADV. ‘finally’ (see Buchi & Städtler, 2008 for the precise etymological scenario). Dworkin (in press) offers a pan-Romance overview of current research on the lexical genesis of pragmatic and discourse markers.

Finally, it would be interesting to test if Chambon’s finding about alleged French loanwords from (Auvergne) Occitan (Chambon, 1997) holds as well for similar situations in other Romance languages (for instance for purported borrowings from Italian dialects in Italian): it appears that contrary to a general belief, French borrowed only marginally from Occitan. In fact, Occitan loanwords were introduced mostly into a (often quite circumscribed) regional variety of French, from which they then spread, often centuries later, to general French. For instance, French *fourme* F.N. “type of semi-hard blue cheese” (attested since 1829; also *fourme d’Auvergne*) was not directly borrowed from (Auvergne) Occitan *fourmo*, but from Auvergne French *fourme* (attested since 1421): it is to be considered an internal borrowing (Chambon, 1997: 43-44; see as well Gouvert, 2007, on alleged Francoprovençalisms in French).

To conclude, it would be unrealistic to expect etymology to regain the central position it held in the early days of historical Romance linguistics. Nevertheless, etymology, understood both as the search for and identification of word origins, and the preparation of complete lexical biographies, is still a vibrant and forward-looking field that has much to offer to (historical) (Romance) linguistics.

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