Review: [untitled]
Author(s): Robert A. Hall, Jr.
Reviewed work(s):
   Dizionario etimologico italiano by Carlo Battisti ; Giovanni Alessio
   Prontuario etimologico della lingua italiana by Bruno Migliorini ; Aldo Duro
   Dizionario moderno by Alfredo Panzini
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ian Soviet Socialist Republic. To complete our characterization of the book we quote some characteristic passages from this article:

... The Sounds and forms of the Baltic languages of Academy Member Endzelin is a continuation and conclusion of a series of researches. . This book will become an indispensable aid for the preparation of specialists in Baltic languages in Latvia as well as in other republics, because it is the first attempt at a comparative phonetics and a comparative morphology of the Baltic languages, and because it is written by the greatest scholar and unquestionably recognized authority in the field. ... Yet, if the author had not been so faithful to the rules of 'classical' IE linguistics, he would have been able to separate the weak points in the IE conception, he would have been able to initiate a series of indispensable tasks to revise the traditional views, and to make it possible to overcome the errors and blunders of the epoch before the Revolution. ... In the rather multiple—in all aspects—Lithuanian and Latvian dialects we find many obscure differences also in the field of accentology. Academy Member J. Endzelin, in this book as well as in many of his previous works, gives rather abundant facts concerning the place of accent and intonational varieties in his discussion of the phonetic system as well as in the survey of the morphology. He often suggests to the reader pertinent literature, abstaining from comments on this rather variegated picture of the Baltic accentology, although the contradictions in the investigations of accentology, where unsuccessful efforts are made to reconstruct the intonational system of the Prim. IE, clearly indicate that the theory lacks foundation. ... The composition of the book would have gained much if the organic mutual relations between morphology and phonetics as well as lexicology had been taken into consideration. The mechanical separation of phonetics from the morphology and a consequent ignoring of syntactical comments give the book a rather episodic character. The survey of word derivation is based on the classification of the suffixal elements considering their consonantal feature only. It clearly indicates that the author tends in the direction of the formal school. Such a method of discussion has deprived the author of the possibility of fixing even the closest historical perspective in the elaborating of this important part of linguistics. ...

JOSEPH DAUGMAN, University of Wisconsin


For many years it has been a commonplace to remark that Italian has had no adequate etymological dictionary. Earlier efforts along this line were not lacking, but all previous etymological dictionaries have been very poor. To date, the most reliable sources for Italian etymologies—outside of Meyer-Lübke's Romanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch and the data scattered through the handbooks of historical grammar—have been the etymological notes appended to the entries in two descriptive-normative dictionaries: the Vocabolario della

1 F. Zambaldi, Vocabolario etimologico italiano (1889; 2d ed., 1913); O. Pianigiani, Vocabolario etimologico della lingua italiana (1907); E. Levi, Vocabolario etimologico della lingua italiana (1914).

2 Cf. the reviews of these dictionaries listed in R. A. Hall Jr., Bibliography of Italian linguistics 128–9 (Baltimore, 1941).
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R. Accademia d'Italia and the Cappuccini dictionary as revised by Migliorini. Several projects were initiated in the 1930's and 1940's, to meet the need for a reliable, scientifically sound Italian etymological dictionary; the first two books reviewed here represent the first fruits of two of these projects.

The Battisti–Alessio Dizionario etimologico italiano (DEI) is conceived on a grandiose scale; the first volume, of over 800 pages, brings us only through the entry caudisono. The introduction sets forth the principles on which the work is conducted; it is particularly noteworthy for its liberal attitude towards technical terms and foreign and dialectal loans, which have traditionally been banned from Italian dictionaries. Control of secondary reactions to standard Italian is passing from the hands of an ultra-conservative élite into those of a wider segment of the speech-community, and the old, narrow purism formerly represented by the Accademia della Crusca is becoming old-fashioned and giving way to a better-informed, more inclusive, and more tolerant attitude. The main body of the dictionary consists of double-column pages, with entries in alphabetical order; in each entry the key word is followed by indication of grammatical form-class, semantic grouping (medical, botanical, etc.), century of earliest attestation (for some but not all entries), definition, and etymology. No scholarly references are given, nor are divergent interpretations mentioned; these are promised for a future supplement which will also include discussion of criticisms of the DEI.

In view of the underlying principles and the scale of the DEI, it might be expected to prove a work of extremely great value, and its appearance ought to be a milestone, perhaps the most important milestone, in the history of Italian linguistics. But although it is far superior to its predecessors, the DEI does not live up to expectations. Its catholicity is, if anything, exaggerated, to the extent of listing an enormous number of learned words like acrocefalosindattilia and calomobio, whose formation is transparent and whose inclusion is hardly justifiable in an etymological dictionary. The definitions given, especially for technical terms, are very interesting and enlightening; but they tend to occupy more than their proper share of space. It is also unfortunate that the plan of the dictionary (as stated specifically on p. xxi) calls for such a bald, dogmatic presentation of the etymologies. This procedure greatly diminishes the value of the book as a scholarly reference work for specialists, and is definitely misleading and harmful to non-specialists, for whom the DEI is in large part intended. It

3 Roma, 1941; only the first volume has been published. The etymologies for this work were prepared by C. Merlo, essentially on the basis of Meyer-Lübke's REW.


5 Other etymological dictionaries by D. Olivieri and by A. Prati are announced as ready for publication, but have not yet appeared.


7 Cf. the criticisms directed at the DEI by G. Rohlfs, HA 187.180-2 (1950).

8 Though very desirable in a descriptive dictionary, since such learned and technical words are far more common in everyday usage than scholars customarily realize; as the editors of the DEI say (xiii): 'È proprio una caratteristica dei vocaboli tecnici, e specialmente di quelli sportivi, l'inserirsi nell'uso comune con una sorprendente rapidità.' This is a point which is especially significant for the study of derivation; cf. Karl G. Bottke, Symposium 3.355-6 (1949); John van Horne, Lg. 26.101 (1950).
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is always bad when a work of this kind presents conclusions to the lay public as if there were no doubt, no discussion possible, thus strengthening the non-technical reader's already strong tendency to accept without question the ipse dixit of a linguistic 'authority'.

The Migliorini-Duro book is far less ambitious than the DEI, but may perhaps be said to have succeeded more fully within the limitations set by its authors. Based essentially on the etymologies prepared by Migliorini for the new edition of Cappuccini's dictionary (cf. fn. 4), it covers the main elements of the Italian lexicon, without the immense accretion of learned words and foreignisms found in the DEI. Its modesty of scope is implied in the title Prontuario; like the DEI, it gives no bibliographical references, but this is more easily excusable in a relatively short handbook. No definitions are given for the key words; derivatives are listed under their bases, with very few cross-references. Both the DEI and Migliorini-Duro draw the line carefully between popular and learned developments, a distinction which is of capital importance in Italian (with its conservative phonology) and which has in general been neglected by Italian dictionaries.

Panzini's Dizionario moderno, now in its ninth edition, to a certain extent complements the Migliorini-Duro Prontuario by furnishing the Italian public with etymological and semantic explanations of (as the subtitle puts it) 'le parole che non si trovano nei dizionari comuni'. Panzini's dictionary has been very popular and widely used in Italy; for each of its successive editions until his death in 1939 he reworked the book almost completely, and the present volume (the second posthumous edition) has had the benefit of etymological revision by Schiaffini and of an extensive appendix of new (post-1939) words compiled by Migliorini. The Dizionario moderno has no exact parallel in English lexicography; it may best be compared, perhaps, to Fowler's Dictionary of modern English usage, except insofar as it is restricted to neologisms and foreign borrowings. Panzini was one of the leading Italian novelists of his time, and brought to his lexicographical work all the attractive qualities of his polished, easily-flowing style and of his gentle sense of humor, coupled with a moderate purism which was in tune with the general outlook of the Italian intellectual classes. As a result, even where Panzini is not strictly scientific and objective—and he let his personal likes and dislikes enter into his discussion as much as Johnson or Littré did—his judgments are always interesting and valuable at least as a reflex of his own personality and the biases of his culture and times.

It is good to have these works available; the modern scholar, with the DEI or with Migliorini-Duro and Panzini at his disposition, is in a far better position to do further research on Italian word history than were his predecessors. And yet none of the works that have appeared so far is wholly satisfactory. Perhaps we should distinguish between an etymological dictionary (one of the classical type, like Meyer-Lübke's REW, Gamillscheg's Etymologisches Wörterbuch der französischen Sprache, or von Wartburg's Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch, that gives full details of word-history, disputed views, and scholarly references) on the one hand, and an etymology dictionary (listing nothing but etymologies, without further paraphernalia) on the other. In terms of this dis-

9 The first edition appeared in 1905.
tinction, we now have two good etymology dictionaries for Italian; but a good, complete etymological dictionary is still to come.

ROBERT A. HALL JR., Cornell University


Kranzmayer deals with the work of the Styrian chronicler who called himself Otacher ouz der Geul, i.e. Ottokar 'from the Gaal' in the region of the upper Muhr valley in Styria (Steiermark). He probably lived from 1260 to 1321; between the years 1301 and 1319 he composed a rimed chronicle of one hundred thousand lines dealing with the history of Austria from 1254 to 1309. The chronicle has been edited, with a glossary and introduction, by Joseph Seemüller in Monumenta Germaniae Historica 5, Parts 1 (1890) and 2 (1893). The first chapter of Kranzmayer's monograph, Die steirische Chronik und ihr Dichter (5–22), treats briefly Ottokar's biography, other contemporary Austrian writers, and the composition of the chronicle. The second chapter, Die Wesenszüge der Ottokarschen Sprache (23–108), constitutes the main part of the study, a critical analysis of Ottokar's vocabulary and of the phonology of his rimes in the light of modern dialects and Middle High German conventions with respect to orthography and riming. The third and final chapter, Sprachliche Zäsuren in der Reimchronik (108–25), uses formal statistics to establish three main passages with an unusual number of new rime-words and new forms, which mark pauses in the composition of the chronicle and thus divide the work into four stylistically distinct parts. The first of these pauses coincides with Ottokar's second journey to Prague (1304), the third with his diplomatic mission to Spain (1314). Kranzmayer's statistics reveal after the first caesura an increase in certain Middle German features taken to be typical of the dialect of Prague, with a corresponding decrease in features typical of the Middle Bavarian speech of Vienna; after the last caesura Ottokar's own South Bavarian dialect seems to prevail more strongly than at any other time in his life. The monograph ends with a useful Sach- und Wortweiser (127–38).

It was through the work of Zwierzina, published in ZfdA 44 et seq., that the riming-practice of MHG writers was first shown to be our best source of information concerning the authors' phonemic systems, rather than the varying orthography of the scribes as reflected in different manuscripts. The presence of literary rimes imported from other dialects, traditional rimes, occasional impure rimes, and eye-rimes necessitates considerable caution in evaluating a poet's riming-practice; but on the whole his use or disuse of particular forms as rimes to each other is assumed to reveal identity or difference of the phonemes which occur in them in the poet's dialect, even though they do not indicate specific sound-values. Kranzmayer, who has the advantage of thirty summers of field-work in the Austrian Alps, and of the huge material collected (though not yet published) by the Bairisch-Österreichische Wörterbuchkommission of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, rightly maintains that Zwierzina and his followers