

**John Considine.** *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe: Lexicography and the Making of Heritage*. 2008, xiv + 393 pp. ISBN: 9780521886741. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Price: £55 / \$99.

Dictionary history or history of lexicography does not belong to one of the most studied metalexigraphic disciplines, although the International Society for Historical Lexicography and Lexicology regularly convenes conferences and publishes proceedings, and much literature (mainly in the Western world and mainly dealing with Western lexicography) has been published during the last five decades. Furthermore most of the work done deals with the subject quite specifically. General or versatile monographs are rather rare. Because of this, John Considine's *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe* is a long-awaited and long-overdue work.

The overall subject demarcation of the book is partly geographically, partly linguistically motivated (cf. p. 17): Only Western European lexicography is dealt with, and also only partly, i.e. primarily English, German and French lexicography as well as Western European dictionaries with Latin (classical Latin and post-classical Latin) and Greek (ancient Greek and Byzantine Greek). Peripherally also Castilian (that is Spanish), Italian, Dutch, Danish and Swedish lexicography are treated and even more peripherally (Western) European dictionaries with Hebrew. The reason for this demarcation may be that these eight languages — i.e. English, German, French, Castilian, Italian, Dutch, Danish and Swedish — were the first eight vernaculars in the world to be the subject of lexicographical codification in printed dictionaries.

The specific time demarcation is the early modern period, i.e. from approximately 1500 to the French Revolution (1789–1799). Therefore it is difficult to understand why European lexicography from the 1700s is not discussed at all. The book actually deals only with lexicography from the 1500s and the 1600s.

Completeness is not pursued; many significant dictionaries are just mentioned in passing or not at all (cf. p. 17). The reader should not expect a general history of European dictionaries (p. 17):

This is not a general history of western European lexicography but a discussion of one group of themes in lexicographical thought, based on a selection of case-studies.

About the specific subject demarcation, i.e. the demarcation of the dictionary as a document type, the author states (p. 17):

I have not confined myself to the discussion of dictionaries in any narrow sense of the word, but have also considered a number of short wordlists and other studies of words.

But the argument also transgresses this demarcation when the author says (p. 18):

Lexicographical thought, which is the subject of this book, has not always been expressed in the writing of dictionaries; Guillaume Budé, who never published a dictionary but had major influence on lexicography, is a good example.

However, by far the major part (based on an estimate of about 90 per cent) of the works discussed (based on an estimate of between 150 and 300 titles) are regular dictionaries or glossaries.

The number of works discussed is relatively high, but it is only a very minor part of the actual number of dictionaries and glossaries produced in early modern Europe. In Europe, in the years from 1467 to 1600 (as far as is known), 858 German dictionaries and glossaries were published. And in the course of the 1600s, a further 1 150 German dictionaries appeared.

With the exception of the outside matter — consisting of the preliminaries, acknowledgements, information about conventions and abbreviations, conclusion, afterword, bibliography and index — the book contains eight chapters. Chapter one, having also the function of an introduction, deals with the association between dictionaries and ideas of heritage, i.e. cultural, intellectual, historical and linguistic heritage. Chapters two and three treat the heritages of the classical world and focus inter alia on the first dictionaries of the age of print; chapter two deals mostly with the work of Robert Estienne from the 1530s and the 1540s; chapter three is devoted solely to his son Henri Estienne and his work from the end of the 1540s to the beginning of the 1590s. Chapters four, five and six deal with the heritages of the early medieval Germanic world; chapter four discusses the rediscovery of the vernacular heritages and primarily treats Germany and the Netherlands in the sixteenth century and the first ten or twenty years of the seventeenth; chapter five deals with England from the early sixteenth century to around 1650; chapter six discusses England and Scandinavia and the learned Franciscus Junius from the second part of the seventeenth century. Chapter seven deals with Charles du Cange, his outside world and lexicographical activities from the 1670s and onwards and discusses the seventeenth century's relation to the heritages of the worlds of post-classical Latinism and Byzantine Grecism. Chapter eight comments on three ways in which seventeenth-century lexicographical thought built on and went beyond these heritages.

*Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe* is an erudite book written by a well-read scholar — a true scholar in the very positive sense of the word; a philologist interested in book history and historical bibliography. Therefore the reader will not mind the extensive use of footnotes (chapter five for instance, which is only less than 50 pages long, contains 223 footnotes, and chapter four, which is 55 pages long, contains 247 footnotes). But when the total of 1 271 footnotes in the book for a greater part contain — sometimes quite long — quotations mostly in Latin, moreover in classical Latin and in post-classical Latin, and further-

more in Italian, French, German, ancient Greek, Old High German, Old English as well as other Germanic languages from medieval times of which the greater part (based on an estimate of about 80–90 per cent) are not translated, the — obviously less learned — reader has the feeling that he is deprived of a whole book presented concurrently with the one he is reading. That quotations in modern German and French, and furthermore German, French and English from the 1500s and 1600s are left untranslated is to a certain extent acceptable, for they should mostly be understandable to a contemporary reader.

The book impresses with the extensive source materials on which it is based, as the 1 271 footnotes and the comprehensive 52 pages long and carefully written bibliography bear witness. Not only printed sources from earlier times are quoted but also non-printed material, manuscripts from the 1500s and 1600s, of which quite a few today only exist in one or a few copies. It is a highly praiseworthy accomplishment, that John Considine, who is an associate professor in the Department of English and Film Studies at the University of Alberta in Canada, has managed to gain access to these rare manuscripts at different European national libraries.

Considine's insight and understanding is impressive. For instance, in the chapter about Scandinavian dictionaries he eschews Jacoby (1990), whom he does not cite once, but instead resorts to Haugen (1984) and Molbech (1826). (About Jacoby (1990), who is highly untrustworthy and full of errors, cf. Gundersen (1994).) It is incorrect though, as is mentioned on page 236, that *Dictionarium Herlovianum* (1626) is the first known Danish–Latin dictionary in print — *Hortulus synonymorum* (1520) is in fact the first.

In a few cases, the book gives an uneven treatment of details: At one place several pages are devoted to an extensive exposition of the price of a given dictionary in the 1500s (parenthetically: which contemporary reader, who is not a historian, actually has sufficient knowledge of the monetary units and values at that time to interpret the given information?), while at another place elementary and important facts are lacking. When, for instance, did *Forensia* (a law dictionary from probably the 1500s) appear? Nothing in the book suggests that it is not known, rather the impression is created that the author has neglected to inform the reader.

It is regrettable, that the relations between textual criticism and lexicography are only dealt with very briefly and superficially (by and large only on pages 41 and 316). As is evident from page 316 of the conclusion, this aspect is very interesting and much more could have been presented on it:

The earliest forms or cognates of the European vernaculars — languages such as Old French, Old High German, Gothic and Old English — could not be registered with the same lexicographical techniques as the classical languages. Their texts were not as readily accessible, and they were not as well edited: indeed, the people who studied them encountered a circular problem, for the making of dictionaries depends on the availability of edited texts, and the editing of texts in obsolete language varieties depends on the availability of dictionaries. The early history of lexicography of these language varieties therefore looks like an anti-

climax after that of the great ordered registrations of the classical lexical heritages: a wordlist here, a glossary to a handful of freshly and imperfectly edited law-codes there, a few manuscript pages of onomastical notes, a series of dictionary projects that did not reach publication.

The most significant and recurring deficiency of the book is the general lack of metalexigraphic reflection. The reader has to reach page 85 before finding for the first time a metalexigraphic term (*macrostructure*); only very much later on page 231 he finds another term (*cross-references*), and eventually on page 315 *macrostructure* once again occurs. The use of metalexigraphic vocabulary is almost wholly absent. *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe* is evidently written by a philologist with a profound interest in historical bibliography for other philologists with the same interest. It could also have been written by a learned librarian. The book will certainly be of great value and use primarily for philologists, librarians, book historians, historical bibliographers, and secondarily for historians and cultural historians. Dictionary historians, in so far as these regard themselves metalexigraphers, and metalexigraphers in general, will find the book lacking in metalexigraphic reflection.

It is a question of which fundamental conception one has (or does not have) of the document type called *dictionary* or *lexicographic reference work*. The author misses the fundamental realisation that a dictionary is a reference tool, a tool conceived for information retrieval to help specific users in specific user situations (regardless of whether it concerns the historic present, the Renaissance, or the Antiquity). The book might as well have dealt with any other type of document than the dictionary or the lexicographic reference work.

Now and then the reader finds a valuable quotation, for instance that of Robert Estienne from 1536 (translated by Considine, p. 47): 'What really earns the praise which is ours by right is, I say, our diligence in arranging our material, each word in its right order', which could have been used each time when lexicographic structures and, among these, access structures are mentioned — but it could not have been put into greater use, because the author does not reflect on access structures at all.

The overall aim of the book is given in the conclusion (p. 314-315):

I have tried to demonstrate in this book that an understanding of lexicography as shaped by ideas of heritage frees the history of dictionaries from too heavy a dependence on certain potentially arid kinds of narrative of the form '61 per cent of the entries in Y derive from entries in X', and engages it with broader and more humane questions about lexicology, the history of linguistics, the history of learned culture, indeed the history of culture in general.

The idea, which is repeated throughout the book, that dictionaries tell stories of personal and cultural heritage, is from a metalexigraphic point of view partly problematic, partly irrelevant. Regarding the former: Who has ever thought, that dictionary history or history of lexicography is about establishing whether '[so and so many] per cent of the entries in Y derive from entries in X'? Re-

garding the latter: It is self-evident that history of lexicography is history of culture in general (or on the whole, history in general, in so far as with history is meant the state of flux of all conditions of human life: institutions, norms, ideas, trends etc.). One can also argue for the fact, that the history of lexicography and the history of linguistics partly or at least in the 1500s, 1600s and 1700s went hand in hand. But whether dictionaries tell stories of personal and cultural heritage is from a metalexigraphic point of view unimportant. Most objects, if not all, created by human hand tell stories of either personal heritage, or cultural heritage or both at the same time. Therefore it is of no importance that dictionaries also have this quality or feature. It would have been interesting if this book on dictionaries in early modern Europe had concentrated on some of the core aspects of theoretical and practical lexicography: (1) user profiling or user adjustment; (2) data adjustment; (3) access adjustment; and (4) functionality. In other words: What ideas did lexicographers have in early modern Europe, when it came to user profiling, i.e. the question of how a given dictionary which is to be made for a given user group in accordance with optimising the genuine function of the dictionary as a tool for information retrieval should be adjusted in the best possible way? And how were these ideas put into practice? What ideas did lexicographers have in early modern Europe, when it came to data adjustment, i.e. the question of how the given data should be treated in the most optimal way in accordance with a user group? And how were these ideas put into practice? What ideas did lexicographers have in early modern Europe, when it came to access adjustment, i.e. the question of how the given data should most appropriately be made accessible in accordance with the subject or the language dealt with and the user group? And how were these ideas put into practice? What ideas, if any, did lexicographers have in early modern Europe about the functionality of dictionaries in accordance with the user needs that were to be accommodated? None of these questions are responded to in the book, because its aim is to describe the history of culture as manifested in dictionaries.

The book is provided with a meticulously written index, which is laid out in traditional flush-and-hang style with indented subentries. By page turns the main entry is repeated and marked with '(cont.)', so that the user can keep a sense of perspective; see for instance p. 392 'Swedish language (cont.)', which is an entry continued from the previous page. The index is six per cent (19 pages) against the body text (322 pages) and is therefore a so-called 'six per cent index', which actually is quite enough (cf. Mulvany 2005: 69-73). However, it displays a few unfortunate gaps: *Observationes in Ciceronem*, a dictionary from 1535, which is dealt with on page 63 and is important because it is a work of the so-called 'Ciceronianism' (a linguistic school from the Renaissance and early modern Europe, which maintained a rather conservative language view and reluctance towards post-classical Latinism), is not indexed either as main entry under its title or as subentry under the author's name (Mario Nizzoli, also known as Nizolius).

It is furthermore unfortunate, that double entries do not appear consistently, i.e.:

*Celt'hellenisme ...*

...

Trippault, Léon

*Celt'hellenisme ...*

Sometimes book titles are indexed having main entry status; sometimes they have only subentry status and are therefore only to be found under their respective authors. *Celt'hellenisme*, an etymological dictionary from 1582, is not indexed; it can only be found under the author's name (Trippault). The unfinished *Teütsche Sprach und Weißheit*, which was published by Georg Henisch in 1616, is not indexed either, not even under its Latin title *Thesaurus linguae et sapientiae germanicae* — only under the author's name. This is also the case with *Expositiones terminorum legum anglorum* (1520), a law dictionary written by John Rastell, and with many other works.

The importance of double entries is well-known and accepted amongst indexers — cf. for instance Wellisch (1995: 151-155), Booth (2001: 115) and Mulvany (2005: 83-84) — but can also be vindicated as follows: On page 127 one reads about a dictionary of plant names from the 1500s, that is a specialised dictionary, and one now remembers having read something previously in the book about another specialized dictionary, a law dictionary, with the title *Forensia*. One now wishes to reread the pages about *Forensia* in order to approach closer to some kind of an outline of specialised lexicography from the 1500s, but one cannot find the pages in question, because *Forensia* is not indexed. Therefore one has to skim the pages backwards one by one (from page 127 until one finds the book title *Forensia*, which happens on page 36, 34 and 32); here one can see, that a person named Guillaume Budé has written the book. In the index one indeed finds 'Budé, Guillaume' and as subentry here '*Forensia* 32, 34, 36'.

All in all, *Dictionaries in Early Modern Europe* is an exceptionally erudite, thorough and trustworthy book, written by a learned scholar, indisputably of great value and use for philologists, book historians and historical bibliographers. For the greater part, however, the book is of little value for metalexigraphers.

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