Gary D. MILLER, *Latin Suffixal Derivatives in English and their Indo-European Ancestry*

Oxford University Press, 2006, 424 pages

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Latin Suffixal Derivatives in English and their Indo-European Ancestry. Oxford University Press, 'Linguistics', 2006. ISBN: 978-0199285051, Prix : 170 €, 424 pages

- 1 The purpose of Gary Miller's book is, in the author's own words, to "provide a reliable taxonomy and brief historical account of the major Latin suffixal derivatives in English". The book starts with an introductory chapter that deals with various subjects that are of direct relevance to derivation (recursivity, conversion, backformation, productivity, verbal typology). The remainder of the book consists of five chapters devoted to the study of as many types of derivational suffixes (non-deverbal nouns, noun suffixes on verb bases, non-deverbal adjectives, deverbal and deradical adjectives, verbal suffixes). Each chapter is divided into headings that deal with each individual derivative, and these headings are subsequently divided into sections and sub-sections that list and analyze the words that use a given suffix. For example, the section devoted to the *-ium* suffix is divided into three sub-sections: uncompoundable deverbals in *-ium* (*tedium*), preverb-compounded deverbals in *-ium* (*compendium*) and synthetic compounds in *-ium* (*primordium*). The length of these sections varies greatly, depending on the productivity of the various suffixes under study: some may occupy no more than a page while the section devoted to Chaucerian words in *-ion/-sion* covers two hundred words in twelve pages. In all, the book actually traces the histories of a total of over 3,000 words.

- 2 Scholars and students of comparative morphology, historical and comparative linguistics and lexicography will generally find that this work makes for very stimulating reading, especially in its treatment of the complex issue of competition between native and borrowed forms. It also goes without saying that it is essential reading for anybody who specializes in etymology. There are at least three other specific categories of scholars who will also benefit from reading the book: students of English whose native idiom is a Romance language (who will find that Gary Miller's work is a treasure-trove of so-called "false friends"), the opposite category (i.e. natives speakers of English studying any of the various Romance languages) and any students - whether linguistically oriented or not - with an interest in the field of medicine, as the book includes the etymology of most of the Latin-based words that are used to refer to the human anatomy.
- 3 Gary Miller's mastery of his subject is obvious. He draws heavily on his knowledge of Indo-European, a language about which he has extensively published over the past forty years (his interest in the subject actually goes back to his doctoral dissertation), and the bibliography is impressive both in scope and size. Each of the five main chapters starts with a comprehensive review of other scholars' work and summarizes (and occasionally challenges) the various hypotheses that have been advanced as to the origin of Latin suffixes and their relation to their Proto-Indo-European predecessors. An interesting instance of such discussion is the convincingly argued refutation of an interpretation by one of his colleagues of the stative suffix **-eh₁-* as an old athematic instrumental of the kind found in the Vedic *gúhā* (p. 234).
- 4 Gary Miller's work is by no means just another etymological dictionary, even though its index makes it relatively easy to locate any of the 3,000 words whose etymology is studied (incidentally, using page numbers as opposed to section numbers might have made the task a little easier). Despite the fact that it mostly consists of paragraphs describing the etymology of words that are listed in alphabetical order, it actually reads like a novel to anybody who has an interest in the Latin roots of the English language. It should however be noted that it is a worthwhile investment to read through the list of 291 abbreviations given at the beginning of the book, as their use is necessarily quite frequent in any work of this type. The verbatim reproduction of the paragraph devoted to the word *human* (p. 154) will give the reader an idea of the lengths to which the author goes to trace the origins of the words he has chosen to focus on, and of the level of care that both the reading and the writing of such a reference work implies:

HUMAN [1398 Trevisa] / HUMANE [c.1500] (all in the form *humai/yn(e)*; see 4.6) *húmānus* 'human; humane; civilized' (cf. *homō* 'human being' < **(dh)ǵhém-on* [**dhéǵom* 'earth']; the precise derivation of *húmānus* is unclear: Leumann LG i. 117, 364 bases it on a putative noun **húm* (< **hom* < **(dh)ghom*), but derivation from a structural case is very unusual 1.3.1; Old Latin had a stem *hemon-* (see *homuncule* 2.9.2), from which one can imagine a derivation **hemon-ānus* > **hōmōn-ānus* > **homon-ānus* (by copy/metathesis) > *húmānus*)
- 5 Let us hasten to add that the author does not always engage in such deep analysis and that some of the other entries are somewhat shorter. On a few rare occasions, Gary Miller actually omits what we would consider as interesting information, as is the case for the paragraph devoted to the word *suffrage* (p. 74), in which the noun *suffrāgium* and the verb *suffrāgarī* are listed without a mention of the ancient practice of using a broken piece of tile as a ballot.

- 6 For this reviewer, there is little room for improvement both in the content and structure of the book, although a few caveats should be raised. As mentioned earlier, Gary Miller's work makes use of a very imposing bibliography, which includes more than five hundred titles, and he frequently quotes or simply mentions his sources. In this respect, it would certainly have made sense to include an index of the authors whose work is quoted. Finally, a few words are strangely absent from the English Index (the omission seems to be limited to twenty of the words that are discussed on pages 74 and 75).
- 7 Let us conclude by saying that *Latin Suffixal Derivatives in English and their Indo-European Ancestry* is also unique in the way the wealth of information it contains is presented. The number of examples given for each suffix far exceeds that of other treatises on borrowed suffixes, and it one of the few books of its kind to focus on word formation patterns in English that are the result of borrowing from Latin. In this regard, it will doubtless prove useful reading to any scholar with an interest in English lexicology.
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AUTHORS

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François Maniez, Department of Applied Languages, University Louis Lumière-Lyon 2, France. Pr. François MANIEZ has been teaching translation, terminology and corpus linguistics at the University Louis Lumière - Lyon 2 since 1990. He is the head of the Master's Degree Applied Languages Program and director of the International Communication in the Health Sciences Master's Degree program. He is also a member of the CRTT (Terminology and Translation Research Center) and of ATALA (Natural Language Processing Association). His research interests include lexicology, terminology, translation studies and corpus linguistics applied to English for Specific Purposes, especially in the medical field.