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Meat and Meta-Linguistic Sources—
European Examples of Achieving Better Etymological Chronologies

Abstract

The article shows that etymological dictionaries' marginalization of ancient metalinguistic sources can lead to wrong chronological and semantic pictures of the development of words. This is shown by way of words for "meat" in French, English, German and Latvian. The information in etymological dictionaries is contrasted to metalinguistic sources (dictionaries, cohyponymic juxtapositions and translations). This makes it more probable that the onomasiological split of "meat" and "flesh" occurs in French (*viande* vs. *chair*) in the 17th century (not 14th century) and in English (*meat* vs. *flesh*) in the 18th century (not 13th century) (maybe due to the French model). It is also possible that, independently, the split in Latvian (*gaļa* vs. *miesa*) happened in the 17th century. Furthermore, work with ancient dictionaries suggests that it is unlikely the German *Mett* 'minced pork' ever had an intermediate meaning 'meat' (with folk-etymology as a more likely explanation for the shift from *mat* 'food' to *Mett* 'minced pork').

Sommaire

L'article ['Viande et sources métalinguistiques – exemples européens vers de meilleures chronologies étymologiques'] montre que la marginalisation par les dictionnaires étymologiques des sources métalinguistiques anciennes peuvent mener à de fausses images du développement chronologique et sémantique de mots. Cela est illustré avec les mots pour "viande" en français, anglais, allemand et letton. L'information dans des dictionnaires étymologiques est comparée à des sources métalinguistiques (dictionnaires, confrontations co-hyponymiques, traductions). La conclusion est que la séparation onomasiologique de "viande" et "chair" apparaît en français (*viande* vs. *chair*) au 17e siècle (pas au 14e s.), en anglais (*meat* vs. *flesh*) au 18e siècle (pas au 13e s.) (peut-être sur le modèle français). Il est aussi possible que, indépendamment, la séparation en letton (*gaļa* vs. *miesa*) se déroule au 17e siècle. De plus, le travail avec des dictionnaires anciens suggère qu'il est improbable que all. *Mett* 'porc haché' ne signifiât jamais 'viande' (faisant l'étymologie populaire le moteur plus probable du passage de *mat* 'nourriture' à *Mett* 'porc haché').

Zusammenfassung

Der Beitrag ['Fleisch und metalinguistische Quellen – Europäische Beispiele zu besseren etymologischen Chrono-logien'] zeigt, dass die Praxis etymologischer Wörterbücher, alte metalinguistische Quellen zu marginalisieren, zu einem falschen chronologischen und semantischen Bild der Entwicklung von Wörtern führen kann. Dies wird anhand von Wörtern für "Fleisch" in Französisch, Englisch, Deutsch und Lettisch. Die Information in etymologischen Wörter-büchern wird kontrastiert mit metalinguistischen Quellen (Wörterbüchern, kohyponymischen Gegenüberstellungen, Übersetzungen). Daraus lässt sich Folgendes schließen: Die onomasiologische Trennung von "Fleisch (zum Verzehr)" und "Fleisch (lebend)" erfolgte im Französischen (*viande* vs. *chair*) im 17. Jh. (nicht 14. Jh) und im Englischen (*meat* vs. *flesh*) im 18. Jh. (nicht 13. Jh.) (vielleicht aufgrund des französischen Vorbilds). Es ist möglich, dass unabhängig davon die Trennung im Lettischen (*gaļa* vs. *miesa*) im 17. Jh. erfolgte. Ferner lässt die Arbeit mit alten Wörterbüchern es unwahrscheinlich erscheinen, dass dt. *Mett* 'gehacktes Fleisch' jemals die Zwischenbedeutung 'Fleisch (zum Verzehr)' hatte (Volksetymologie ist für den Wandel von *mat* 'Essen' zu *Mett* 'gehacktes Fleisch' wahrscheinlicher).

Preliminaries

This contribution will show that when etymologists in their illustration of prior semantic stages do not resort to metalinguistic sources (beyond non-linguistic texts), they risk giving wrong chronologies. Sometimes their chronological classification is several centuries wrong. Moreover, semantic intermediate stages are assumed without any unequivocal proof. This will be shown by onomasiological views on the notion of "meat" in a few European languages.

1. Fr. *viande* 'food>meat' in the 14th century?

According to the FEW (14: s.v. *vivenda*; 2: s.v. *caro*; 2: s.v. *cara*), Lat. *vivenda* originally denotes food for human beings and gets restricted to 'meat' in the late 14th century, after *char* 'flesh, meat' changes phonetically into *ch(i)er* and becomes thus homonymous (or paronymous) with *chier* '(good) meal' during the 14th century (in contrast to Sp. It. *carne*, for example). The FEW writes that the difference between *chair* and *viande* until the 19th and early 20th century was that the former was used for the animal *flesh* determined as food, but not yet prepared as such, while *viande* is used for the prepared food on the table (FEW 2: s.v. *caro*). There are some chronological problems, though. If we look at the TLFi, then the first clear instances of *viande* as 'meat' instead of 'food' is from 1690, where it is once used humorously for 'chair de l'homme; human flesh' and once in the collocation *menuë viande* 'tender *viande*' to denote meat of deer and fowl. Strangly, Littré defines *viande* as "Toute espèce d'aliment" 'any sort of food'. In Littré's dictionary, which gives a general meaning of *viande*, there is a citation from 1686 that suggests that *viande* has at least become a specific type of food, otherwise the combination with *manger* 'eat' would not make sense ("Samedi 9 février 1686 : le roi dîna et soupa chez lui en particulier, parce qu'il mange de la viande et qu'il n'en veut pas manger en public" 'Saturday 9 February 1686: the king had dinner and supper alone, because he eats meat and he doesn't want to eat of it in public', Littré s.v. *viande*). In his 1651 cookbook. La Varenne uses *viande* in various ways, e.g. "les iours de viande" 'the days of *viande* [meat]', but then there is also "viande de carpe" '*viande* [meat] of carp' and "coupez votre viande, veau & volaille assez menuë" 'chop your *viande*, calf & fowl very fine'. A 1662 dictionary and colloquy still uses *chair salée* and *salted flesh* in the French and English of a supper scene (Anon. 1662: 46f.). Further, Oudin & Ferretti's (1663) dictionary uses *viande* several times in the sense of 'meal, dish', e.g. for the vegetarian *cicoriata* "viande faite de chicorée" and for *moronella* "viande d'oeufs de poisson" '*viande* of eggs of fish'. Cotgrave (1673) translates *viande* as "meat, food, sustenance, victuals [...]", adding the remark "(especially of flesh)". Under the lemma *viande*, Miege's (1677) English-French dictionary includes after the general meaning of 'food, meal' the sub-entry "*viande, chair,* meat, or flesh meat". In Richelet's (1680) dictionary, *viande* is more clearly defined as this: "Ce mot signifie chair d'animal, mais il ne se dit proprement que de la chair de boucherie, crüe & cuite, mais sur tout, lors qu'elle est cuite." 'This word signifies flesh of animal, but it is only properly said for butchery flesh, raw & cooked, but especially when it is cooked.' In Oudin & Ferretti's (1681) French-Italian dictionary the translations of *viande* are polysemous: 'carne', 'vivanda' and 'cibo', i.e. 'flesh', 'victuals', 'meal'. In sum, there is confusion since the mid-17th century and the polysemy is continued in the 18th century, where Boyer (1728), for instance, defines *viande* as "Meat, Flesh" (now as the first meaning), adding a sub-entry "Meat, viands, victuals, food". The development of the polysemy seems to be very similar to English, only a few decades earlier: from 'food' to '(prototypical) food', with "prototype" being understood as a real prototype for the upper classes and ideal for the lower classes.

2. E. *meat* 'food>meat' in the 13th century?

The OED (s.v. *meat*) gives 'food, as nourishment for people and fodder for animals' and quotes a passage from the Middle English Book of Genesis and Exodus (a1325 [c1250], Ms. Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 444, l. 3151) as the first instance of a semantic narrowing to "flesh of animals used as food". So does the MED (s.v. *mete*). In this illustration the split between living flesh and flesh as food would be paralleled by the pairs of domestic words and loans from French around 1300: *cow/beef, calf/veal, swine/pork, sheep/mutton, deer/venison.* However, the verses the OED refers to read: "Ilc man after his owen fond, / Heued and fet, and in rew mete[n], / Lesen fro ðe bones and eten, / Wið wriðel and vn-lif bread." Here, *mete* can well be interpreted simply as 'food', as every hyponym could be used for a referent if the linguistic context allows for identification and

will be used if it allows to respect the rhyme pattern. As a matter of fact, none of the instances of *mete[n]* in this book require an interpretation as 'meat' (regardless of what Morris [1865] gives as translation notes); all instances can equally be read as 'food', be in rhyming position (l. 363, 1487, 1537, 3657) or not (l. 573, 1017, 1492, 2084, 2255, 2294, 2976, 3347). Moreover, none of the MED records are clear uses of the word as 'meat, flesh of animals used as food'. The problem is that contexts make us think so from a modern perspective. For a clear instance, we would need dictionaries (or glossaries) or clear contrasts to co-hyponyms. In fact, the title of a 1545 cookery book makes clear that *meat* still has a wider meaning 'dish, meal': "A PROPRE new booke of Cokery / declaryng what maner of meates bee best in ceason for all tymes of þe yere and how thei ought to bee dressed and serued at the table bothe for flessh daies and fisshe daies [...]" (Anon. 1545). A 1571 dictionary (LH) glosses the French entry *chair* as E. "flesh" and the entry *viande* as "meat, foode". Similarly, Baret's 1574 trilingual dictionary has E. *fleash* = Lat. *caro* = Fr. *chair* and E. *meate* = Lat. *cibaria ~ cibus* = Fr. *viande*. Dawson's cookbook (1596), however, uses *meat* in a more narrowed sense of 'flesh of animals and fruit [at least oranges and artichokes]'. Later on, the solid part of fruits is renamed *flesh* again. In the 1623 edition of Markham's cookbook, *meat* seems to be used as 'main [solid] element of the meal': e.g. "take out the Capon or the other Flesh or fish, and dish it up dry in a clean dish; then powre the broth upon it and lay the fruite on the top of the meat" (Markham 1623: 74f.). Perceval and Minshue's (1623) dictionary, published the same year, glosses *cárne* as 'all manner of flesh' and *comída* as 'meat, dinner'. In Florio's (1659) dictionary of Italian and English *meat* is still 'food', as inidcated by its gloss "magnare, vivere, vivanda [...] nutrimento" and also translates It. *cibo* 'meal, dish', while It. *carne* is "all manners of flesh". In Cotgrave's (1673) dictionary of English and French the entry *meat* is also given generally as "[...] manger; nourriture" 'food', as well as in Miege's (1677) French-English dictionary, which lists *flesh-meat*, glossed "de la viande" 'of meat' as a sub-entry of *meat*. Still in Stevens' (1726) Spanish-English dictionary, *meat* is still 'meal, food' "comída, manjàr" and *día de carne* is still rendered as "flesh-day". In contrast, Altieri (1726), in his dictionary, paraphrases the lemma *carne* as "la parte la piú tenera degli animali ch'hanno sangue" 'the most delicate part of animals that have blood' and translates it as "flesh, meat". In Boyer's (1728) English-French dictionary, however, the entry *meat* is glossed as 'food in general' with an additional sub-entry "☞ (or Flesh) *Viande, Chair*". Thus, the polysemy has developed from 'food (portion)' to '(prototypical) food', with "prototype" being understood as a real prototype for the upper classes and an ideal one for the lower classes (cf. Grzega 2003). From then on, this polysemy, often with explicit sub-entries, reoccurs in dictionaries of the following years (Sewel 1735, Ludwig 1736, Altieri 1750) and is lexicographically continued well into the 20th century. For the further development of *meat*, the OED also notes that in some dialects *meat* is further narrowed down to 'bacon', 'pork' and 'ham' in England, 'mutton' and 'goat's meat' in South Asia and 'beef' in Hawaii. As French culture was fashionable in Europe in the 18th century, it is possible that influence from French on English triggered the shift in use. However, it is strange that this influence would only have happened in English.

3. Latv. *gaļa* 'meat < naked flesh'?

In Latvian, the word *gaļa* has evidently replaced an original *miesa* 'flesh, meat' for the concept "meat", leaving *miesa* to denote only 'flesh'. While *miesa* is well entrenched in Balto-Slavic languages, the ultimate origin of *gaļa* is unclear. According to Karulis (1992: s.v. *gaļa*) the lexeme *gaļa* may be either cognate with the (archaic) verb *galēt* 'to kill', so that the connection would be "killed (animal)", or it is cognate with Russian *голый golyj* 'naked', with a semantic bridge 'naked (= skinned) flesh'. The precise chronology is not further discussed. Viewing early sources, the onomasiological replacement of *miesa* by *gaļa* could have happened in the 17th century. Apart from dictionaries or glossaries, translations of texts are good metalinguistic sources. In the Bible translation of 1685 (JT), Lat. *caro* in the sense of 'meat' is given as *gaļļa* in 1 Corinthians 8:13,

while in Matthew 26:41 *meesa* is used for Lat. *caro* in the sense of 'flesh'. Likewise, in Elger's (1683, s.v. *mieso*) dictionary Pol. *mieso* is glossed as both "Gâlia" and "mêse". Depkin (1705), as well, only gives *gałła*. It had also appeared in the earliest Latvian dictionary, by Marcelius (1638, s.v. *Fleisch*): "Fleisch / Ghałła / Meessa.". However, Fürecker's (1650) dictionary, chronologically in between, does not seem to have listed *gałła* or any scribal variant in the section of the letter G nor his addenda on the last page. The entry *meesa* (Fürecker 1650: 157) is glossed "der Leib, das Fleisch" 'the body, the flesh', which at first sight seems to contrast it to 'meat', but the immediately following entry is *meesineeks* [today *miesnieks*], glossed "ein Fleischhauer" 'a butcher'. Regarding other words and notions included in the manuscript it can be assumed that, if the lexical type *gaļa* existed, it was maybe not very frequent. This may indicate that, albeit started in earlier decades, the onomasiological split was only completed during the second half of the 17th century. Although the replacement of the word for 'meat' as a simplex, but not in the morphologically related composite word for 'butcher' reminds one of the situation in French (where *charcutier* was kept, although *chair* was ousted by *viande*). Nevertheless, a more salient influence of French on Latvian in contrast to adjacent Polish or Russian does not seem likely in this respect.

4. G. *Mett* 'minced, fat-free pork < meat'? G. *Mett* and Du. *met* from Medieval Latin?

Paul relates *Mettwurst* (s.v.) and Northern German *Mett* (also s.v. *Mettwurst*) to OHG. *maz* 'food, dish, meal' and also lists MHG *met*. it is not clear why *met* should get restricted particularly to this type of meat. Moreover, in contrast to what Kluge & Seebold (s.v. *Mettwurst*) says, an intermediate meaning 'meat' seems missing. Neither Tiefenbach (2010) nor Köbler (2014) nor the MNHW have a clear record; moreover, not even the use of *Mett(wurst)* in the sense of 'pure pork' seems to be certain for Middle High German, as none of the works lists clear records either. That it is not 'food' in general, but something that can be part of a sausage is clear from a passage in the Redentiner easter play from 1464, when three ingredients are introduced this way: "Wen ik de worste maken scholde, / Dar dede ik in allent wat ik wolde, / Kolunen, lunghen unt met." 'If I should make the sausage / I put in it only what I wanted: [...]' (cf. Mone 1846: 89). Morhof's textbook on the German language defines *Mat* as 'food' and says "Indem alten Franckiſchen iſt Mets Ferculin" 'In Old Franconian there is *Mets* piglet' (Morhof 1682: 95); no intermediate stage 'meat' is given. The first text that seems to allow a clear interpretation of *Mett* in the sense of 'specially treated pork' is Adelung (1777: Sp. 489): "im gemeinen Leben einiger Gegenden, das reine von dem Fette abgesonderte Fleisch, von welchem die Mettwürste gemacht werden [...]; es ist ein altes Wort, welches ehedem Fleisch bedeutete [...], wie noch jetzt das in Upland übliche *Mat*, und welches zu dem alten **Mat** [...] Speise [...] gehöret" 'in common language of some regions, the pure fat-freed meat which *Mettwürste* are made of [...]; it is an old word, which once meant meat [...] like still now *Mat*, common in Upland [now part of northern Hesse], and which belongs to the old **Mat** [...] meal [...]'. While Adelung's description 'fat-freed, minced meat' is also the meaning in present-day German, one may argue that there was semantic variation, as Davidis' (1847: 404) recipe for making *Westphalian Mettwurst* explicitly includes slightly fatty and diced pork, not minced pork: "Weſtphäliſche Metwürſte: Durchwachſenes, auch etwas fettes Schweinefleiſch wird in kleine Würfel geſchnitten, nicht gehackt" 'Westphalian *Mett* sausages: marbled, also slightly fatty pork is cut into little cubes, not minced'. However, it may be explicitly the adjective *Westphalian* that explains the deviation from Adelung's definition. What Adelung means when he says what the word "once" meant is unclear: Does he know this as an earwitness or from hearsay? If he is indeed an earwitness, then this semantic shift could indeed have occurred in the 17th or 18th century for a rather short amount of time so that it did not seem to get conserved as a written record anywhere. It has to be kept in mind, though, that in 1777 met-*worst* was obviously a well entrenched "Saxon", or German, loan in Dutch, as a Dutch etymological dictionary from the same year already lists it, defining it as a long pork saussage: "met-worste. *Sax. Sicamb.* braed-worste. Lucanica, botulus:

farcimen ex carne porcina oblongum" (Kilian 1777: II, 387). In contrast to the OED (s.v. *meat*), which traces Du. *met* 'minced pork' via MDu. *met* 'lean pork' to Lat. *matia* 'tripe' in the 11th century, the MNW (s.v. *met*[IV]) states that Middle Dutch only knows *met* in the composite form *metworst* (and this is the situation in present-day Dutch as well); there is no record from the 11th century. Finally, Kluge & Seebold (2002: s.v. *Mettwurst*) connect G. *Mett(wurst)* with Lat. *mattea* 'tasteful dish of minced meat, herbs etc.' and assume mutual attraction. However, this Latin word lacks records in Modern Times either. In sum, explanations are needed for the phonetic equivalent between *Mat* and *Mett*, and the relation between 'meal, dish', 'meat' and 'fat-freed chopped pork'. Folk-etymological attractions between words may be the answer. *Mett* is original in Low German areas. It may have actually been a new coinage based on the Low German *met* 'food' and High German *Metzger* 'butcher', *metzgen* 'chop'. As for the etymology of *Metzger*, Paul ties (s.v.) the word—in the language since Middle High German times—to Lat. *matiarius*. It should be noted, though, that the verb *metzgen* 'chop, slaughter' suggests itself as a better basis of the agent noun since it already includes the -*g*-, which cannot be explained with the Latin basis. Secondarily, though, *Metzger* may have formally be reinterpreted as including High German variant of *met*, reminiscent of the common -*t*-/-*tz*- distinction (as e.g. in *kat/Katz* 'cat', *net/Netz* 'net', *setten/setzen* 'set'). Since pigs were the most popular animal as a source for a variety of food (they did not yield eggs or milk or fur or feathers, but a comparatively large quantity of edible parts), it should be of no surprise that butchers kills and sold predominantly pigs and their meat (comparable to the Swedish development of *fläsk* 'flesh, meat > pork'); thus a connection of *met* 'food' in connection with a similar sounding word for 'pig-chopper' can have lead to *met* 'chopped pork' (even without an intermediate stage 'meat').

Conclusion

To sum up, focusing on metalinguistic sources (dictionaries and translations) led to the following observations:
1. Living flesh and animal flesh to be used as food are onomasiologically separated in French and English in the 17th and 18th centuries – much later than proposed by the classical etymological dictionaries. In both languages the split is accompanied by the semantic/referential restriction of the word for "food" toward "meat".
2. In Latvian, the onomasiological split between "flesh" and "meat" (including the preservation of the "flesh" lexeme in the word for butcher) was complete in the 17th century. Despite the potential chronological and the onomasiological parallelism, a direct influence of French is unlikely. The origin of the new Latvian word for 'meat' remains obscure.
3. In German, the hypothesis of a semantic chain 'food' > 'minced or diced pork' with an intermediate stage 'meat' is neither attested nor convincing. Folk-etymology is an alternative suggestion.

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