

Technical Combining Forms in the Third Edition of the *OED*: Word-Formation in a Historical Dictionary

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1. Introduction

The *Oxford English Dictionary* is currently undergoing a complete revision—the first such revision to be carried out on the dictionary since its original publication as *A New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (hereafter *NED*) between 1884 and 1928. Since March 2000, the results of this revision have been published online at quarterly intervals at *OED Online* (<http://www.oed.com>); at the time of writing, this covered the alphabetical range from the beginning of the letter M up to ORATURE *n.* (‘a body of poetry, tales, etc., preserved through oral transmission as part of a particular culture, esp. a pre-literate one’) in the middle of the letter O. All in all, this covers well over thirty-two thousand entries and represents roughly one tenth of the full text of the dictionary.

Although this is the first revision of its kind, it is certainly not the first time the dictionary has been updated.¹ In 1989 a complete second edition was published (hereafter *OED2*) consisting of the original *NED* text amalgamated with the text of four supplementary volumes which had been published between 1972 and 1986. On top of this, *OED2*'s coverage was expanded by the inclusion of some five thousand new entries—a great many of these covering scientific and technical vocabulary—to ensure that the dictionary was better equipped to reflect the language of the twentieth century. In the years between 1993 and 1997, three volumes of additions to *OED2* were published. However, as should be clear from this very brief sketch, the aim of all work on the project prior to the start of this latest revision process has been simply to build upon the foundations of the *NED* rather than to subject the actual content of the original dictionary to any thorough, organized re-examination. As a result, the revision work on this third edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* (hereafter *OED3*) is the first time material written by the original editors of the *NED* has been re-evaluated since they finished their work in 1928.

It may be useful here to take a moment to very briefly summarize what the current revision process means in terms of actual manpower and where I fit into that picture. Editorial work is divided up between a number of groups. Two general Revision groups are responsible for reviewing and updating dictionary senses and definitions, as well as reassessing (and, whenever possible, supplementing) quotation evidence. Another group of editors is dedicated to drawing up entries for new words to be added to *OED3*, while three further specialist groups are dedicated to researching scientific entries, reviewing bibliographical citations, and researching what are sometimes termed “exotic” loanwords—those words which come into the English language from non-Indo-European donor languages—respectively. I work as one of nine editors in a group responsible for revising etymologies within the dictionary. Our job is to reassess and, wherever necessary, rewrite these in the light of over a century's worth of scholarship which has passed between the *NED*'s initial publication and the present day. The work of all of these in-house teams is further supplemented by the assistance of an army of external specialist consultants, library researchers, and contributors to the official Reading Programmes, as well as comments and materials sent in to us by interested members of the general public.

This paper will address some aspects of the editing process involved in the revision of etymologies in one group of items in particular. It will focus on the challenges presented by this group both in terms

¹ What follows is a very quick summary of the history of the project: for a fuller account of the beginning of the *NED* see e.g. Mugglestone (2000), Murray (1977), and Winchester (2003). Berg (1993: 117–18, 122–4, 197–203) details the history of the project up to the release of the second edition on CD-ROM in 1992.

of the research necessary to revise them and in the presentation of the results of that research within the structure of the dictionary.²

The group of items the paper will concentrate on is that of initial combining forms in technical registers. At this point, it will be useful to clarify how the term “combining form” will be used in this paper by giving a very brief description of how this term is understood within the working methodology of *OED3*. A combining form is an element used, either initially or finally, in combination with another element to form a word. For the purposes of *OED3*, a combining form differs from a prefix or suffix by being generally noun-like or adjective-like and having a relatively full lexical meaning. *OED3* differs from some treatments of combining forms by not restricting its use of the term to neo-classical compounds (although the examples which have been chosen for illustration within this paper could for the most part probably be termed neo-classical).

So, why choose to look at combining forms? The *NED* is widely acknowledged to have been innovatory in its decision to include this category of words within the dictionary. As such, this is one area in which it should be possible to clearly illustrate how *OED3* is building on the foundations laid down by the *NED* and *OED2*, as well as the ways in which current editors are now able to improve on that work as a result of the scholarship which has been carried out in the intervening years.

Within this paper I intend to illustrate the treatment of these entries in *OED3* by looking first at the main etymology section of a sample initial combining form entry, and then looking at the treatment of derivatives in these entries.

2. Combining Form Entries: Main Etymology Sections

The entry I have chosen (quite randomly) as an illustration of a main etymology section is *OPTO-comb. form*. Included below is the entry as it appeared in *OED2* followed by the *OED3* version.

opto- (*OED2* entry)

from Gr. ὀπτός ‘seen, visible’ and related words in ὀπτ-, used to form modern derivatives and compounds with the notion of ‘sight, vision’, or ‘optic’. See the following words.

opto-, *comb. form* (*OED3* draft entry, June 2004) **etymology and definition**

[< Hellenistic Greek ὀπτός seen, visible, and related words in ὀπτ- (see *OPTIC a.*) + -O-.

Chiefly combined with second elements of ult. Greek origin.

Attested earliest in an isolated formation in the first half of the 18th cent. (see *OPTOMETER n.*), and subsequently from the second half of the 19th cent.; most formations date from the 20th cent. Cf. French *opto-* (formations in which are found from the mid 19th cent., earliest in *optomètre*: see *OPTOMETER n.*), German *opto-* (formations in which are found from at least the late 19th cent.: see e.g. *OPTOGRAM n.*, *OPTOGRAPHY n.*.)]

Forming chiefly scientific words with the sense ‘of sight or vision, optic’.

It is possible to see some general differences between these two versions which reflect changes in dictionary style policy between the editions. For example, the *OED3* entry for *OPTO-* is now identified as a combining form: *OED2* did not label the entry with any specific part of speech, allowing potential ambiguity over whether *OPTO-* should be regarded as a combining form or a prefix; within *OED3*, the distinction between etymological information and purely semantic information has become much clearer, with the etymology now sitting within square brackets; any language name abbreviations present in the entry have now been expanded—here ‘Gr.’ has been expanded to ‘Greek’ and has now in fact been periodized to ‘Hellenistic Greek’. It is also possible to see that the Greek ὀπτ- element, cited as occurring in related words, is no longer the end-point of the etymological information in *OED3*, and

² This paper is not intended, of course, to give anything approaching a full overview of the etymological policy and procedures which have been set up for *OED3*: for a fuller account of these see Durkin (1999).

is instead now cross-referred on to the entry where its full further etymology can be found (OPTIC *a.*). This reflects *OED3*'s policy whereby an element in an etymology will, whenever possible, be cross-referred on to one entry (or "node") where a further etymology will be provided for it. The aim behind this is to cut down on unnecessary duplication of material while providing readers with a stream-lined method of navigating through the dictionary without sacrificing any detail. This is very much helped by the online publication format. While it would be potentially a highly cumbersome task for any reader to have to use this system within a multi-volume print edition, the online format means that one click on a hyperlinked cross-reference will instantly transport the reader to the required information. A related change can also be seen in *OED3*'s omission of *OED2*'s 'see the following words', a formula which shows that the *OED2* entry, unsurprisingly, is very much tied to the written page; it is no longer really possible to meaningfully use this formula when thinking in terms of online publication. (One further change which is not visible in the example as given here but can be seen when viewing the full entry is that, like all entries for non-obsolete words within *OED3*, OPTO- *comb. form* is now provided with a standard British and U.S. pronunciation).

However, in terms of this paper, the most important change is the new material which appears in the *OED3* entry. This new section takes the form of small-type etymological notes starting with 'Chiefly combined with second elements of ult. Greek origin' and followed by information on the earliest formations in English, alongside Romance and Germanic parallels. In OPTO- *comb. form*, this is a relatively short section but it illustrates the general information which can be expected to be covered within the main etymology section of any combining form entry in *OED3*.

For combining form entries, all main etymology sections will start with a transmission paragraph detailing the immediate origin of the form (in the case of OPTO- *comb. form*, the word comes into the English language from Hellenistic Greek). This will be followed by details of any foreign-language parallels wherever they are available and relevant to the English word (in the example above, French and German *opto-* are cited). Where the information is available, *OED3* also sets out to give details on when native formations in these languages, that is to say, new formations which are not borrowed from or modelled on a word in another language, begin to appear. In the case of the OPTO- *comb. form* entry, the etymology notes that formations in French *opto-* are found from the mid nineteenth century, while formations in German *opto-* are found from at least the late nineteenth century. This is one of the areas where *OED3* is able to significantly improve on the work of previous editions. The *NED* was severely limited in its ability to offer this kind of information to its readers as a result of the relative dearth of relevant source materials which could provide the data. As such, this is also one of the areas where it is possible to really appreciate what the passing of a century means in terms of advancements in scholarship available to *OED3* editors. The foreign-language source materials available to editors working on the project today—while varying in quantity and quality of coverage from language to language—are, in general and for the most part, far greater than those available to our *NED* counterparts.³ However, a special complication is brought into play when dealing with combining forms. Due to their very nature in forming highly specialized, technical vocabulary, the vast majority of these tend not to have received a great deal of significant coverage in most of the major etymological dictionaries. In light of this lack of dictionary evidence, *OED3* editors often find themselves forced to seek out information from other sources, and very often we are forced to rely on our own resources to achieve this.

Sometimes, for example, clues to a potential foreign-language source, or comparable form, are actually hidden within the existing *NED* or *OED2* entries. This is the case with one of the OPTO-derivatives: OPTOGRAM n. ('an image formed on the retina which, after death, has been rendered permanent by chemical fixatives'). Below, the *OED2* etymology, definition, and quotes are followed by their *OED3* equivalents.

optogram (*OED2* entry) etymology, definition, and quotations
[f. OPTO- + -GRAM.]

³ Space does not permit here to give even a brief overview of the foreign-language dictionary and corpora routinely drawn upon by *OED3* editors. For a preliminary selective listing see Durkin (1999).

Kühne's term for the image formed on the retina by the action of light, which may be rendered permanent by chemical means. So **optography** ..., 'the fixation of a visual image on the retina' (*Syd. Soc. Lex.*).

1878 FOSTER. *Phys.* III. ii. 416 In this way Kühne succeeded in obtaining promising 'optograms'. **1890** C. L. MORGAN *Anim. Life & Intell.* 276 If a rabbit be killed at the moment when the image, say, of a window, is formed on the retina, and the membrane at once plunged in a solution of alum, the image may be fixed, and an 'optogram' of the window may be seen on the retina.

optogram, *n.* (*OED3* draft entry, June 2004) **etymology, definition, and quotations** [Optogramm (W. Kühne 1877, in *Centralblatt f. die Med. Wissensch.* Jan. 3). Cf. slightly earlier OPTOGRAPHY *n.*

Cf. the following, app. showing an unnaturalized borrowing of the German word, with the plural form *Optogramme* mistaken for the singular:

1877 *Nature* 1 Feb. 296/2 In order to obtain a permanent photograph, or, as he terms it, *optogramme*, the effect of the light would have to be..prolonged.]

An image formed on the retina which, after death, has been rendered permanent by chemical fixatives.

1878 M. FORSTER *Text Bk. Physiol.* III. ii. 416 In this way Kühne succeeded in obtaining promising 'optograms'. **1890** C. L. MORGAN *Animal Life & Intell.* 276 If a rabbit be killed at the moment when the image, say, of a window, is formed on the retina, and the membrane at once plunged in a solution of alum, the image may be fixed, and an 'optogram' of the window may be seen on the retina. **1916** W. B. PILLSBURY *Fund. Psychol.* iv. 115 If the rabbit..is killed and the retina fixed as one would fix a photographic plate, a picture of the window can be seen on the retina. Such an optogram is shown in figure 42. **1978** R. EGAN '*Weekend*' *Second Bk. Ghosts* 124 A strangler who faced his victim for about five minutes in bright sunshine would, they say, be identifiable if the optogram could be developed within half an hour. **1993** *Sci.-fiction Stud.* **20** 356 From laboratory to legend to literature and cinema, optograms and their variants have..continued to fascinate scientists, storytellers, and the public. **1999** *Folklore* (Nexis) 1 Jan. 13 [They] asserted that the 'optogram' found in dead eyes could be developed, like a film.

As can be seen, we still believe that this word was formed by combining OPTO- and -GRAM, but we can now say that the motivation behind this came from the German word *Optogramm*. As the entry shows, *OED2* gave no explicit reference to any German model and German *Optogramm* was not found within any of the dictionary resources available to *OED3* editors. However, the clue to its existence is already hiding within plain sight in the *OED2* entry. In the first quotation there (from Michael Forster's 1878 *Text Book of Physiology*), the coiner of the German model is actually name-checked: 'In this way Kühne succeeded in obtaining promising "optograms"'. More obviously still, a look at the *OED2* definition reveals that the editors actually start off by noting that this is 'Kühne's term'. Chasing these references up through library research reveals that the man responsible for coining the German term in question is Willy Kühne, one-time professor of physiology at Heidelberg. His coinage of the term "Optogramm" can be traced to an 1877 paper in *Centralblatt für die medicinischen Wissenschaften*. Within the same article, he also coined the related term "Optographie" (used to describe the process of fixing a visual image on the retina by chemical means). This in turn is now cited as the German model behind English OPTOGRAPHY *n.*

Unsurprisingly, this kind of clue is not only to be found in inherited *OED2* quotations. New quotations added to the database as part of the current revision process can also provide similar help. An example of one such instance can be seen by comparing the *OED2* and *OED3* entries for MYELOGENETIC *a.*

myelogenetic, *a.* (*OED2* entry) **etymology, definition, and quotations** [f. MYELO- + GENETIC *a.*]

Concerned with the development of the spinal cord.

1900 *Lancet* 18 Aug. 529/1 The myelogenetic method which investigated the details of the central fibres by tracing the history of their development.

myelogenetic, *a.* (*OED3* draft entry, June 2003) **etymology, definition, and quotations**

[< MYELO- + -GENETIC, after German *myelogenetisch* (P. Flechsig 1900, in *Neurol. Centralblatt* **19** 828).]

Of or relating to myelinogenesis; = MYELINOGENIC *a.*

1900 *Lancet* 18 Aug. 529/1 The myelogenetic method which investigated the details of the central fibres by tracing the history of their development. **1933** B. GADELIUS *Human Mentality* ii. 57 Flechsig still took as his ground the above-mentioned myelogenetic differences, which led him to suppose a functional differentiation. **1988** *Jrnl. Anat.* **160** 219 The myelogenetic development of the corticospinal fibres in the internal capsule was studied using eight brains of the Yakovlev Collection.

As with OPTOGRAM *n.*, we still believe *OED2*'s account of the transmission of the word, but it is now possible for us to provide more detail. We still believe that the word is formed by combining MYELO- and -GENETIC, but it can now be seen that this is formed on the model of German *myelogenetisch*. We can do this as a result of the clue hidden in the 1933 quote from Bror Gadelius's *Human Mentality in the Light of Psychiatric Experience*, which has been added to the entry during revision. Chasing this reference up reveals that the term was coined by the German neuroanatomist and neuropathologist Dr. Paul Flechsig (1847–1929), in a 1900 article in *Neurologisches Centralblatt*.

Returning to the general structure of combining form entries in *OED3*, within the main etymology section, information on foreign-language parallels is followed by a succinct but detailed account of how the combining form comes into the English language. This section provides a summary covering loans, adaptations, and native formations, with information on when each of these begin to appear in the language. The material in this section will have been compiled from data gathered together from all of the entries where this combining form is mentioned—both the derivatives which sit under the headword entry and the words which have headword status of their own. As a result of this, the amount of information in this part of the etymology is determined to a great extent by the frequency, longevity, and complexity of the word within the English language. This can range from a great deal of information, e.g., in the main etymology section of the entry for MULTI- *comb. form* (included below), to the opposite end of the scale where we find entries in which this section is limited to only a very small amount of basic information, as in the case of NITRATO- *comb. form* (included below), where there are no relevant foreign-language parallels or models and the information on native formations can be summed up with just a single sentence.

multi-, *comb. form* (*OED3* draft entry, September 2004) **forms and (slightly truncated) etymology**

Before a vowel occas. **mult-**.

[< classical Latin *multi-*, combining form (see below) of *multus* much, many, cognate with *melior* (see MELIORATE *v.*) and ancient Greek *μᾶλα* very.

The compounds having this prefix in Latin belong for the most part to the early or late part of the classical period; they are chiefly of parasynthetic formation, in which *multi-* = 'many', as *multangulus* many-angled, *multicaulis* many-stalked, *multigener* of many kinds, but a certain number of objective or adverbial compounds also existed, in which *multi-* = 'much', as *multibibus* drinking much, *multicupidus* desiring much, *multiscius* knowing much. The earliest English words containing *multi-* came through Anglo-Norman and French into Middle English (MULTIPLY *v.*, MULTITUDE *n.*).

The earliest English borrowings directly from Latin were MULTIPLEX *a.*, MULTIFARY *adv.*, MULTILOQUY *n.*, MULTIPLICATOR *n.*, MULTIFORMITY *n.*, MULTIFARIOUS *a.*; they did not become numerous until the middle of the 17th

cent.

The majority of English words beginning with *multi-* before the late 16th cent. are related to or derived from *multiply* and *multitude*. This is also true for French, Italian and Spanish. Before the 19th cent., most Romance words beginning with *multi-* are taken directly from Latin. In other Germanic languages, forms corresponding to *multiply* are attested from the 15th cent. or later; in German, formations in *multi-* become frequent from the 20th cent., prob. under the influence of English. The first uses of *multi-* to form words within English date from the early 17th cent. (MULTIVARIETY *n.*, MULTILATERAL *a.*, MULTINOMIAL *a.*); it does not become common until the 19th cent. Formations become most frequent in the mid 20th cent. From the end of the 19th cent., formations in *multi-* are found with elements not ultimately of Greek or Latin origin (for an app. isolated earlier example see MULTITHREADED *a.*). See note s.v. MANY *a., pron., n., and adv.* D. on overlap between compounds in *multi-* and *many-*. Cf. also POLY-

A reduced vowel in the second syllable may also occur in compounds formed on *multi-*, e.g. *multiform* ... The position of the stress in such compounds differs in accordance with the general stress patterns of English, and may also vary contextually.]

nitrate-, *comb. form* (OED3 draft entry, December 2003) **etymology**

[< NITRATE *n.* + -O-. Cf. NITRITO-

Found only in a small number of formations exemplified below.]

When relevant, the main etymology section will also include a short note containing information on stress patterns (an example of this has already been seen at the end of the etymology at MULTI-*comb. form* above) or on variation in forms (an example of this can be seen in the entry for OCTA-*comb. form* below).

octa-, *comb. form* (OED3 draft entry, March 2004) **etymology**

[< ancient Greek *ὀκτα-* eight- (in e.g. *ὀκτάχορδος* OCTACHORD *a.*), alteration (after *ἑπτα-*HEPTA-) of *ὀκτώ-* OCTO-

Attested earliest in the second half of the 16th cent. in a small number of words ultimately of Greek origin in geometry (OCTAHEDRON *n.*, OCTAGON *n.*, OCTAGONAL *a.*, all partly via Latin, and OCTAGONIAN *a.*, an adaptation of an Italian word) and in prosody (OCTASTICH *n.*, directly < Greek), and in the 17th and 18th centuries in a larger number of classical loans from a variety of subject areas (as e.g. OCTATEUCH *n.*, OCTACHORD *n.*, OCTAPLES *n.*, etc.). English formations are found from the middle of the 19th cent., earliest in OCTAMEROUS *a.* and occur throughout the 19th and 20th centuries in formations from technical and scientific registers, esp. in chemistry. The second element of compounds in *octa-* is usually ult. of Greek or Latin origin. A number of words in *octa-* have variants in *octo-* (see e.g. forms s.vv. OCTAHEDRON *n.*, OCTAMETER *n.*, OCTADECYL *n.*, *octacarbon* s.v. OCTA- 2 beside contemporaneous *octocarbon* s.v. OCTO-, etc.). In many cases this is prob. due to remodelling after OCTO-, the more usual combining form in English. However, in other (esp. earlier) words it prob. reflects similar variation in classical and post-classical Latin words ult. < ancient Greek *ὀκτα-* which app. show substitution of classical Latin *octō-* OCTO- for this element: see e.g. forms and discussion s.vv. OCTAGON *n.* and *a.*, OCTATEUCH *n.*, OCTACHORD *a.* and *n.*; the same variation occurs also in French (see e.g. French forms cited s.vv.). For the converse phenomenon, see further discussion s.v. OCTO-

The position of the stress differs between compounds of *octa-* in accordance with the general stress patterns of English.]

3. Combining Form Entries: Dealing with Derivatives

I mentioned previously that in order to assess how these combining forms enter the English language it is first necessary to review all of the entries which contain references to them—both the derivatives which sit under the main entry and also any words which mention the combining form which have headword status of their own. For the rest of this paper, I intend to look at how these two categories are divided up, and, in doing so, illustrate how *OED3* editors decide what can stay subsumed under an entry for a combining form and what needs to stand alone as a separate headword.

The general structure of combining form entries in *OED3* falls into one of three patterns. The first of these is the one which has already been seen at *OPTO-* *comb. form*, where any and all derivative lemmas have been upgraded to headword status of their own. At the opposite end of the scale, we have an entry of the type represented by *NITRATO-* *comb. form*, where all of the words containing this combining form are included under the main entry. The last possible structure, and the one which is the case for the majority of combining form entries, is a mixture of these two: some derivative lemmas will be illustrated under the main entry while others will have headword status of their own.

The basic criterion determining what is and is not upgraded is the currency and semantic complexity of the word: common words will tend to be upgraded to headword status, as will ones which are polysemous or which display a number of interrelated strands of meaning, and which therefore need more space for illustration. For the residue, there is a linguistic test, which can be summarized as the following three-point rule:

- Combining form + English element

YES This can stay subsumed under the main combining form entry. This may require an etymological note if (a) the second element is not entirely predictable or (b) the formation is based on a foreign model.

- Combining form + foreign-language element

YES This can stay subsumed under the main combining form entry. This will definitely need an etymological note to explain the second element.

- Word borrowed from a foreign language

NO This cannot stay under the combining form entry and will need to be upgraded.

For the purposes of this paper, I have (again, quite randomly) tried to choose illustrative examples for each of these three scenarios, this time from the *OED3* entry for *NEO-* *comb. form* and its derivatives.

In the first scenario, if a derivative is formed by a combination of the combining form and another English element, it can stay subsumed under the main combining form entry. If the second English element is not entirely predictable, this might involve adding an explanatory etymological note. If the formation is on the model of a foreign word, a note will definitely need to be added with further information on the foreign model. An example of this can be seen in *OED3* at *NEOGENETIC a. s.v. NEO-* *comb. form*.

neogenetic a. s.v. neo- *comb. form* (*OED3* draft entry, September 2003) **etymology**
[after German *neogenetisch* (1880)]

This is another instance where the clue to a foreign-language parallel was already lurking in *OED2* but has been dragged out of the shadows in the process of reviewing all the existing quotation evidence for *OED3*.

neogenetic a. s.v. neo- (*OED2* entry) **quotations**

1882 GARSON & GADOW tr. *Gegenbaur's Jnrl. Anat.* XVI. 622 The first form we propose to call 'Palæogenetic', the second '*Neogenetic' atavism. **1886** SUTTON in *Proc. Zool. Soc.* 551 My object is to shew..that Neogenetic Atavism has no existence.

neogenetic *a.* s.v. **neo-** (*OED3* draft entry, September 2003) **quotations**

1882 J. G. GARSON & H. GADOW tr. C. Gegenbaur in *Jrnl. Anat. & Physiol.* **16** 622 The first form we propose to call ‘Palæogenetic’, the second ‘*Neogenetic’ atavism. **1889** *Bot. Gaz.* **14** 63 The old ‘neogenetic’ view..supposed that the organs of the protoplast could be newly formed after the cell is divided. **1924** *Mind* **35** 90 He [*sc.* C. Spearman] then proceeds to lay down three fundamental principles which he calls neo-genetic, as they and ‘they alone are generative of new items in the field of cognition’. **1998** *Microsc. Res. & Technique* **43** 332 The neogenetic process involves differentiation of duct-like (exocrine) epithelial cells to hormone-expressing cells.

The first quotation illustrating NEOGENETIC *a.* in both *OED2* and *OED3* is actually an 1882 translation of a paper by the German anatomist Karl Gegenbaur (1826–1903). The 1880 original of this has been traced and *OED3* is now able to offer the German parallel *neogenetisch* in the etymological note which has been added. A great deal of work has been done in-house on identifying translated sources and seeking out their originals, and, as a result, the editorial team of *OED3* now has access to a large working database of bibliographical information on these quotations and their sources.

A similar example of a hidden foreign-language model can be seen at the entry for NEOCHRYSOLITE *n.* This was a bold lemma under NEO- in *OED2* but has since been upgraded to headword status in *OED3*. The etymology in *OED3* now provides an Italian model for this term.

neochrysolite *n.* (*OED3* draft entry, September 2003) **etymology**

[< NEO- + CHRYSOLITE *n.*, after Italian *neocrisolite* (A. Scacchi 1876, in *Rend. dell’Accad. delle Sci. Fis. e Matem.* (Napoli) **15** 293).]

This is another instance where the clue to the Italian is hidden within the existing *OED2* material, only this time it is actually hidden much better. The crucial difference lies in what is left unspoken in quote 1892 in *OED2*.

neochrysolite s.v. **neo-** (*OED2* entry) **Dana quotation**

1892 DANA *Syst. Min.* (ed. 6) 455 *Neo-chrysolite...In small, black crystalline plates.

The ellipsis turns out to be skipping over the most interesting and important point (at least from the point of view of an etymologist)—as we can see if we compare the expanded version now provided in *OED3*.

neochrysolite *n.* (*OED3* draft entry, September 2003) **Dana quotation**

1884 E. S. DANA *Dana’s Syst. Mineral.* (ed. 5) App. III. 27 A variety is called neochrysolite, by Scacchi... In small, black, crystalline plates, crystallographically identical with chrysolite... Found in the cavities of the lava of 1631 [from Vesuvius].

This reference has now been chased up and, as a result, the coinage of the term has been found in a paper by the Italian mineralogist Arcangelo Scacchi (1810–1893). This information is now reflected in the etymological information provided in *OED3*.

To return to the three-point rule, in the second scenario, if the derivative is formed by a combination of the combining form and a foreign-language element, this can also stay subsumed under the main combining form entry. In instances like this, an etymological note will definitely be necessary in order to etymologize the foreign-language element. There are no examples of this under NEO- *comb. form*, so I have instead included the *OED2* and *OED3* versions of OCTOPHTHALMOUS *a.* (a derivative under OCTO- *comb. form* with the sense ‘having eight eyes’) below to illustrate the point.

octophthalmous *a.* s.v. **octo-** (*OED2* entry) **etymology**

[Gr. ὀφθαλμός eye]

octophthalmous *a. s.v. octo-* (*OED3* draft entry, March 2004) **etymology**
[< OCTO- + ancient Greek ὀφθαλμός eye (see OPHTHALMO-) + -OUS]

In this particular example, *OED2* already provided the foreign-language element in an etymological note. However, in *OED3*, this rather bare reference has now been fleshed out and the Greek element is now periodized and cross-referred on to the entry where its full further etymology can be found.

Returning once more to the three-point rule, in the third scenario, if a word is actually borrowed from a foreign language, as opposed to just being modelled on a foreign-language element, then this cannot stay under the main combining form entry, and will need to be upgraded to a separate entry. An example of this can be seen in the entry for NEO-FASCISMO *n.* ('a new or revived form of Fascism'). In *OED2*, this sat as a derivative under NEO- alongside NEO-FASCISM and NEO-FASCIST. However, as a result of the second element, this has to be a borrowing directly from Italian and, in *OED3*, this is now given as such.

neo-Fascismo, *n.* (*OED3* draft entry, September 2003) **etymology, definition, and quotation**

[< Italian *neofascismo* (a1926 in P. Gobetti) < *neo-* NEO- + *Fascismo* (see FASCISM *n.*.)]

= NEO-FASCISM *n.*

1928 *Observer* 29 Jan. 17/1 Herein lies an incident of neo-Fascismo which has no controversial element.

In the case of NEO-FASCISMO *n.*, the date of the Italian model comes from a dictionary source,⁴ rather than library research carried out by *OED3* editors.

Similarly, NEOCTESE *n.* and NEOCLASE *n.* (cited below) were both derivatives under NEO- in *OED2* but have now been upgraded to their own entries in *OED3*, both now being seen to be borrowings of French terms coined by the mineralogist François Sulpice Beudant (1787–1850).

neoctese *n.* (*OED3* draft entry, September 2003) **etymology, definition, and quotations**

[< French *néoctèse* (F. S. Beudant *Traité Élém. de Minéralogie* (ed. 2, 1832) II. 607) < *néo-* NEO- + ancient Greek κτήσις acquisition < κτᾶσθαι to acquire (of uncertain origin; cf. SHAH *n.*) + -σις -SIS.]

= SCORODITE *n.*

[**1833** *Rep. Brit. Assoc. 1831–2* 362 The termination *ite* has hitherto been most common: but *ose*, *ine*, and various others, appear to be coming into favour. Thus we have in Beudant's last edition..*neoctese*, [etc.].] **1854** J. D. DANA *Syst. Mineral.* (ed. 4) II. 419 The Neoctese, from Brazil, is shown..to be identical with Scorodite.

neoplase *n.* (*OED3* draft entry, September 2003) **etymology, definition, and quotations**

[< French *néoplase* (F. S. Beudant *Traité Élém. de Minéralogie* (ed. 2, 1832) II. 483) < *néo-* NEO- + ancient Greek πλάσις moulding, conformation (see -PLASIA).]

A hydrated basic sulphate of iron and magnesium, now regarded as identical with botryogen.

[**1833** *Rep. Brit. Assoc.* 362 The termination *ite* has hitherto been most common: but *ose*, *ine*, and various others, appear to be coming into favour. Thus we have in Beudant's last edition..*neoplase*, [etc.].] **1854** R. D. THOMPSON *Cycl. Chem.* 379/1 Neoplase, a synonyme of red sulphate of iron, and also of arsenide of nickel. **1993** A. M. CLARK *Hey's Mineral Index* (ed. 3) 490/1 *Néoplase*, syn. of botryogen.

⁴ Cortelazzo, M. A. and P. Zolli (eds.) (c1999, 2nd ed.).

In both these cases, the clue to this information can once again be seen in material which has been added to *OED3* during revision. Both of these entries now have two very slightly different versions of the same quotation—an 1833 quote from the report for that year of the British Association for the Advancement of Science—which identifies Beudant and his term. The quote is in square-brackets in the quotation paragraph of both of these entries as it cannot be taken as evidence of the English word, providing important information as to where the English word has come from instead. Like many other extremely useful quotations within *OED3*, these were submitted to the dictionary as a result of work carried out by contributors to one of the official Reading Programmes.

4. Conclusion

To conclude, this paper was intended as an illustration of some aspects of the revision of etymologies in *OED3* combining form entries. The available information is not perfect, and doubtless neither is our approach in all respects. But I hope that this paper has shown that we do have a lot more data available to us than there was available for the *NED*, and we hope that we have taken advantage of this to introduce a more consistent, transparent, and informative structure for treating combining form entries within *OED3*.

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