

## Formats of Etymology: the Case of 'Beer' and 'Juniper' in Votic

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### Abstract

In this paper I will deal briefly with a particular aspect of etymological dictionary (micro)structure, viz. the need to increase the survey's range and depth according to the relevance of the diffusional, non native, vocabulary. I will present two sample voices from my still unpublished *Short Etymological Glossary of the Votic Language* (a dying Baltofinnic language of Ingermanland), discussing the etymologies of 'beer' and 'juniper'. I will conclude in favour of the adoption of a high depth and wide range etymological treatment for languages, like Votic, whose vocabulary, for various (historical, geopolitical, cultural, etc.) reasons, has a large diffusional percentage. It is my opinion that such a practice could improve the historical and etymological knowledge of the entire European lexicon, especially in the cultural domain.

### Introduction

Etymological dictionaries are a rather elusive "literary genre": metalinguistic debate on this topic is still rather uncommon in historical lexicography (Malkiel [1976] being one of the most relevant exceptions) and, even if some general types are clearly recognisable, almost every dictionary follows its own specific recipe, and usually discussions are only found within its particular domain.

In this paper I want to argue briefly on one particular aspect of etymological dictionary (micro)structure, viz. the need to increase the survey's range and depth according to the relevance of the diffusional, non native, vocabulary in the language concerned. To this end I will present two examples of my still unpublished *Short Etymological Glossary of the Votic Language* [Barbera 1994] (shortly VoEG) which I am currently revising for publication. Western Votic is a dying Baltofinnic (shortly BF) language<sup>1</sup>.

Before starting it would perhaps be convenient to better specify, even briefly and very informally, the three aspects of the structure of an etymological dictionary which are most relevant to the following discussion.

The first two are very obvious. The *depth* represents how far the etymon is followed: the depth can span from the first direct antecedent (for ex. Italian < Latin, English < Old English) to the farthest reachable reconstruction (for ex. Uralic, Indoeuropean, ecc.). The *range* expresses the width with which the spreading of an etymon is captured, both from a genealogical point of view (list of cognates) and from a diffusional, transversal one (internationalisms, *Kulturwörter*, *Wanderwörter*, etc.).

The third aspect, that I call here *orientation*, is more interesting (the other possible term *directionality* is, in my opinion, too biased by its use in bilingual dictionaries – this can raise the relevant and more theoretical question of whether an etymological dictionary is, in any case, inherently bilingual; but we cannot unfortunately pursue this topic here). The orientation depends on the relation between the lemmatic entry and the dictionary etymological article. In a *bottom-up* dictionary the etymon is the lemma itself and the target language word is

displayed inside the article. Such a structure is typical of scientific dictionaries of large size (where the articles tend to grow into nearly monographic essays: cf. for ex. FEW [Wartburg 1922-...] and of reference character (cf. IEW [Pokorny 1959-69]), often covering more than one single language. In a *top-down* dictionary, on the contrary, the lemma is the target language word and the etymon lies inside the article. This structure is the normal (and more convenient) layout of most monolingual (in the sense of covering only one single language vocabulary) etymological dictionaries currently in use.

To return to our subject, it is well known that there are languages, often in isolated positions, whose native inherited lexicon is the striking majority of their vocabulary, and, on the contrary, other languages whose borrowed lexicon amounts to a much more consistent part: Icelandic and English are two opposite Germanic well known examples.

In Votic only about 55% of the lexicon is of native (Baltic and Uralic) descent, and this is due to the special position amid BF languages and in the Baltic crossroad. Indeed, Votic on one hand lies almost in the middle of BF language spreading, and is a sort of shelter for different, often archaic or elsewhere lost, BF traditions; on the other hand it also lies in an area of historical collision of different cultural and linguistic traditions that are otherwise fundamental to the construction of European identity, viz. Baltic (BA), Slavic (SL) and Germanic (GE, both Teutonic and Swedish). The etymological (top-down) dictionary of such a language would be conveniently tailored with maximum depth and very large range: in other words, its format would be larger than average top-down etymological dictionaries, and closer to the monographic structure of bottom-up dictionaries.

### ‘Beer’

As a first piece of evidence for this practice, I will now present an old *Kulturwort*, fairly widespread in Europe, and reasonably well known, namely the word for ‘beer’.

Please note that here I will reproduce the whole voice from VoEG<sup>2</sup>, with only a short explanatory sketch of its structure and content.

LEMMA ENTRY. <i>lemma</i> ‘meaning’ inflectional class.
<input type="checkbox"/> GLOSSARY. Morphologically arranged list of attestations from A69 (main source; cf. Bibliography) and other auxiliary sources (≈ cross references with the word form in the lemmatic sect., ≡ with the word meaning).
<input type="checkbox"/> VOTIC COGNATES. Cognate list in other not-Western Votic lgs.
⇨ REFERENCES. References to other articles of the VoEG (derivative and etymological families, synonyms etc.).
◁ ETYMOLOGY. Often articulated in several paragraphs, according to the complexity of the etymon. §1 Presentation of the problem, primary bibliography, and direct, ascertained etymology (a loanword in BF, likely from Baltic; whilst Lappic sister languages borrowed from Germanic). Internal dynamics of Votic word forms. §2 Cognate lists of the direct sources (Baltic and Germanic) and of their sister families (Slavic). §3 Intermediate source (Scytic, with modern outcomes), and ultimate source (Sumeric through Akkadian). §4 Discarded etymologies: IE * <i>alu-</i> ‘bitter, Bier, Alaun’, with a survey of its supposed evidences.
△ BF COGNATES. List of known cognate forms in all the other Baltofinnic languages. <i>estud</i> ‘beer’ d.*XV.
<input type="checkbox"/> ≈≡ (A68, 9) • ≈ ‘olut    ≡’ (SKES, 428b) • <i>ostud</i> ‘ðlu    ≡’ Jögð. (VKJMS, 204b) • <i>estu</i> ‘ðlu    ≡’ Jögð. (VKJMS, 35b).

□ ≈ *пиво* | *olut* || ≡ Vo.E Mahu (VKMMS, 31) • *olut* | *olut* || ≡ Vo.Ku (VKKMS, 333).

◁ BF and LP borrowing either from BA (more likely for BF) or (more likely for LP) from GE. (→ SKES, 428b; UrIG, 294-5; aNEW, 686a; ALVRE 1987. THOMSEN 1890, 157 and LEW, 8b-9a overtly pro BA; → KARSTEN 1922, 173; IEW, 34 and DEO, 476b pro GE; → EEW, XII.4025 doubtful of GE or BA; → UrIG, 294-5 n° 98 holding that “denkbar wäre teils eine alte balt., teils eine (spätere) slav. Quelle in den osfi. Sprachen”; and → IJal, 932 inclined to a more general *Wanderwort* explanation). Besides the native form *olut* Vo.W an In. or Su.In loanword (*olut*) as well as an Ee. one (*olu*) can also be found; Vo.E and Vo.Ku forms are likely native.

For BA cf. Lit. *alus* ‘Bier’, Lat. *alus* ‘id.’ and oPr. *alu* ‘Met’ (LEW, 8b-9a). For SL cf. dRus. and Russian sSl. *о́ль* ‘σίκερα’ (ĖSRJa, III.132; cf. LEW, 8b ‘sicera, ein berauschendes Getränk’), Rus. dl. (Novgorod, Pskov, Tver’) *олоўна* ‘дрожжи (пивные), гуша || yeast (cerevisiae), lees’ (ĖSRJa, III.132; cf. LEW, 8a ‘Treber, Hefe, Absatz; Überrest von Brage, Bier oder Kwas’; also Blg. and Sln.), Rus *о́л* ‘всякий хмельной напиток || any alcoholic drinking’ (ĖSRJa, III.132) and Sln. *ól* ‘пиво || beer’ (ĖSRJa, III.132). For GE *\*aluþ* cf.: Run. *alu* (POLOMÉ 1954); oNr. *ol* ‘Bier’ (aNEW, 686a), Isl. *öl* and No. *øl* ‘id.’ (aNEW, 686a), Fø. *øl* ‘beer, ale’ (FøRO, 682a), Dan (= gDan.) *øl* ‘beer, lager, ale’ (DEO, 476b and DEED, 646b), Sv. (= fSv.) *öl* ‘beer’ (SvEO, 1458b-9b and SEES, 467b); oEng. *ealu* and *ealoh* = Eng. *ale* (→ OEGr, 259 and EDEL, 13b), oSax. *alofat* ‘Trinkgefäß (eigentl. Biergefäß)’ (HeW, 11a), mNed. *ale* | *ael* = Ned. obs. *aal* (NeEW, 1b-2a; the usual word for ‘beer’ is now *bier*) and mhD. *al-scaf* ‘Trinkgefäß [sic]’ (aNEW, 686a).

The common source of these forms may be a Scythic word (→ UrIG, 295), cf. Scy. (Aln. ?) *‘Αλούθαρος* ‘Bierbrauer’ ANTHN from Olbia (UrIG, 295 and → IĖSOJa, I.130, ultimately from LATYŠEV 1885, I.53; *-aka* is an IR suffix), reflected in Oss. Dig *ælūton* and Ir. *ilæton* ‘пиво || beer’ (IĖSOJa, I.129-31; > Krt. (*aludi* ‘id.’, → *ib.*). Probably the earliest origin of this word is Mesopotamian (more precisely Sumeric: → UrIG, 295 after Salonen AASF B 157 114, 116 q. *ib.*; the existence of beer itself, in any case, can be first traced back to this area: → RÖLLIG 1970), cf. Sum. *ulušin* (BIVKAŠ-ĀŠZĪZ-AN-NA) = Akk. *ulušinnu* ‘Emmerbier’ (ABZ, 112 Nr. 214; → ŠL, II.2.449 Nr. 214/94 and RÖLLIG 1970, 29; more accurately Akk. *ulušivennu(m)* ‘dattelgesüßtes Emmerbier’ AHw, 1411b; the word for ‘beer in general’ was however Sum. *kaš* = Akk. *šikaru*, → RÖLLIG 1970, 28 etc.).

IEW 33-4 shows an entry, IE *\*alu-* ‘bitter, Bier, Alaun’, collecting, besides the GE, BA, and SL words for ‘beer’, also a few pieces of troublesome evidence from Lt. and Gr.: Lt. (→ LtEW, I.34) *ālūmēn* ‘alum’ (Vitruvius, etc.; widespread in Romance lgs. → REW, 30b § 389) and *ālūta* ‘soft and thin leather tanned with alum’ (Cato, etc.; also Romance, → REW, 30b § 390, cf. It. *alluda*, more usual in XVI ce. → DEI, 136b, with the same meaning, etc.); Gr. *ἀλύθ(ο)μος πικρόν παρά Σώφρονι* and *ἀλυμαίνεν* ‘[?]’ (IEW, 33; both glosses from Hesychius, and very dubious ones, rejected from DÉLG). This IEW entry is likely to be abolished, and the Lt. forms (the Gr. ones need better philological investigations) must be explained in another way.

△ Su. *olut* ‘bier, ale’; Ka.N-S and Au. *olut* ‘olut || beer’ (KaKS, IV.36a); [Ly. *pivo* < Rus. *нуво* → LyS, 316ab]; Ve.CE and S *olut* ‘пиво || beer’ (SvEJa, 379); In.C and W *olut* ‘olut || beer’ (InS, 362b); Ee. *ōlu* (*ōlle* GEN) ‘bier, ale’, XIX ce. Ee. also *ōlut* (WEHW, 737); Li.E *vʰl*, Li.W *vʰoʰl* and Li.Sa *oll* ‘Bier’ (LiW, 503b-4a).

Table 1: ‘Beer’: scheme and voice

This example shows how the peculiar half-way position of the Votic language fosters the creation of a reference etymological discussion, almost monographic (but more synthetic) in the style of bottom-up dictionaries like FEW. In this voice the depth reached is the farthest, and the range is reasonably wide, excluding only European language reciprocal loans, and (perhaps less cogently) a detailed presentation of the Lappic languages data. However all etymological dictionaries I quoted in the VoEG article do not shelter a discussion of the same width casually. Moreover, the dictionary that came closest to this standard is IĖSOJa, viz. the excellent Ossetic dictionary by Abaev [1958-89] – unfortunately, the least accessible to an average European scholar. So, the need for works like the VoEG is confirmed.

**'Juniper'**

Another diffusional example, even more complex and branched in almost all of Europe, but less known and settled, is the following one, displaying the word for 'juniper'. The two cases differ, moreover, inasmuch the voice, 'beer' deals with a single etymon, which offers the farthest depth and a medium range, whilst 'juniper' deals with a batch of at least three etyma, and can reach only a medium depth, but requires the largest range.

I dispense here with the explanatory sketch of the whole voice (that is the same as the previous example), limiting myself to the merely etymological discussion.

◁ ETYMOLOGY.

- §1 Presentation of the problem, primary bibliography, and direct, ascertained etymology (native: Finnopermic). Internal dynamics of other BF and Votic related word forms.
- §2 First hypothesis: a loan from Baltic, in its turn connected with Greek, Slavic and Sanskrit (main attestations surveyed) under Indo-European \**ked-* 'to burn'. Connection discarded.
- §3 Second hypothesis: connection with VII century Latin *cadanus* 'juniper'. Survey of all the possible related attestations, viz.: a Southern Italy dialectal word for 'verbascum'; a Gaulish toponym; a Campidan Sardinian word for 'verbascum'. Survey of the proposed etymologies, viz. Sabinian (< IE \**ka-to-* 'sharp', with Sanskrit and Old Irish cognates), Gaulish, pre-Gaulish, "Mediterranean".
- §4 Conclusions reached. There are at least three unconnected families: ① FP \**kačV-* 'juniper' > BF (and Votic), whence also BA; ② IE \**ked-* 'to burn', source of SL, Skt and (?)Gr.; ③ IE \**ka-to-* 'sharp', source both of Sabinian (with S. Italy; Sardinian can be perhaps added to the list) with the meaning of 'verbascum', and of Gaulish (with Galloroman) with the meaning of 'juniper'.

*kataga* 'juniper' d. \*III.

□ ≈ (A68, 118) • ≈ (SKES, 170a) • *katagE* Јѳѳ. 'kadakas | можжевательник || juniper' (VKJMS, 93a) • *katagaza* '=-INES' (A68, 38) • *katagoiza* '=-PL-INES' (A68, 38).

□ ≈ 'вѳѳ | kataja || heather (?) || juniper' Vo.E Mahu (VKMMS, 50) • *kataja* 'kataja | juniper communis' Vo.Ku (VKKMS, 138).

◇ *katagein* 'made of juniper'.

◁ BF stem (→ SKES, 170a and EEW, II.635-6) of controversial origin. It is likely (→ SKES, 170a; KĚSKJa, 118b) to be connected with Ko. *κατι (πομѳѳ) = Ud. капиномѳѳ 'можжевательник || juniper'* (KĚSKJa, 118b) under a FP stem (absent in UEW) \**kačV-* 'juniper' (but the LP and MN cognates proposed in SKES are however to be discarded; the MR one given in KĚSKJa is troublesome as well, but less unlikely), positing in BF a DER-suffix like that of (≈) *petäjä* 'pine' < FP \**pečä* (cf. → HAKULINEN 1957, 1.84 and LAANEST 1982, 208-9): the different behaviour in the BF lgs. of the suffix in the two cases (\**ka* > *-j-g-vA* vs. *-jA*) could be explained in terms of back vs. front environment, and does not cast serious doubts on this hypothesis; the Ee. *-kas* outcome, moreover, is a backformation on the *kkAs-DER* suffix (→ LAANEST 1982, 221-2), as dl. doublets clearly show.

The traditional view (since THOMSEN 1890, 176) holds that BF came from BA, cf. Lit. *kadagys* 'Wacholder', Let. *kadags* 'id.' and oPr. *kadegis* 'ejnholcz = Wacholder' (LEW, 201b-2a); but BA, in its turn, cannot reasonably be connected under the problematic IE radical \**ked-* 'rauchen, rußen' (IEW, 537; Gr., especially, is semantically very afar, cf. DÉLG q.b.) with: ① Gr. *κέδρος* 'cèdre; jénévrier' (DÉLG, 509a; > Lt. *cedrus*); ② SL (→ ĚSRJa, II.156): sSl. *кадѳѳи* 'θυμιάv || to burn incense' (sSlS, 279b) = Rus. *kadúmb* 'id.' (ĚSRJa, q.a.), Čk. *kaditi* (ESJeČ, 234a), Pol. *kadzić* (ĚSRJa, q.a.), Blg. *kadž* (ib.) SCR. *káditi* (ERHrSrJe, II.13b), Sln. *kaditi*, etc. (ĚSRJa, q.a.); ③ Skt. *kadrú* 'Rotbraun' (KEWaI, I.150). Now, since BF is native, and since BA is easy to compare with BF, but difficult for it to be derived from IE, so it seems quite likely that it is matter of a BF loanword in BA and not of the contrary (→ KALIMA 1936, 112 and 1936a, 211. Also cautiously SKES, 170a, KĚSKJa, 118b, LEW, 202a and IEW, 537).

More recently MOREAU 1986-1987 has again (cf. BRÜCH 1922, 196-213 q. also in LtEW and REW q.b.) compared, without bringing new evidence, these forms with the mLt. *catanus* 'Zedernwacholder' (LtEW, I.181; it is firstly found in a VII. Century. ex. Hispanic gloss, cf. DÉLF, 97a), a troublesome form retained in Romance lgs. mainly by Occ. (→ aOcc. *cade* 'cade, grand genévrier', LEVY 1909, 58n, Daude

de Pradas *Romans dels auzels cassadors*, vv. 2095-9 “prendetz la goma del genebre: / so es albre, e sembla pebre / sa fruita cant es ben madura, / et en la nostra parladura / a nom cade; ... [MONACI 1891, 135] || take the gum of the juniper: it is a tree, and its fruit, when it is well ripe, seems like pepper; and in our language it is called *cade*”), whence st. Fr. *cade*, Cat. *cadec* and Cas. *cada*: (→ REW, 169a § 169a and FEW, II/1.490b). In any case, these forms are not the only ones called in, since besides ① mLt. *catānus* and his Galloroman avatars, there are also: ② Camp. *kwātenā* (AIS, 712 § 626) = It. dl. *cātano* ‘verbasco || verbascum’ (DEI, 806b-7a); ③ the TOPN *calocatanos* ‘Wacholder der geschützten Stellen [?]’ reported in Marcellus Emp. XX.78, likely formed with Ga. *cala* ‘geschützte Stelle’ (BERTOLDI, Sill. Ascoli, 528, q. in FEW, II/1.490b; Bertoldi suggests pre-Gaulish source; the meaning of the TOPN is uncertain: for GAMILLSCHEG, 166, q. in LtEW, I.181, it may be ‘Mohn’); ④ Sard.C *cadūmbu* ‘verbascum’ (Bertoldi in FEW, II/1.490b and – DES, I.261-2; – also *cadriumbulu*, *cadumbu*, *cadūmbulu*, *cadūmburu*, *cardūmbulu*, *cardūmmulu*, *carūmbulu*, *codumbu*, *corombu* ‘verbasco, Verbascum blattaria’ DitzLCS, 404; – PAULIS 1992, with a bibliographical review). For this batch of forms various sources were proposed, mainly: ① Sabinian *catanus* ‘spitzblättriges Gewächs’ (LtEW, I.181 and – BRÜCH etc. q.a.) < *catus* ‘spitz | Lt. *acutus*’ (LtEW, I.183-4, witnessed by Varro I.i.7.46), which is ultimately a weak grade verbal adjective \**ka-to-* of IE \**kē(i)* [ \**keH-i-* ] ~ \**kō(i)* ~ \**ka(i)* ‘schärfen, wetzen’ (IEW, 541-2), whence with the same formation (→ IEW, 542) also Skt.V *śitā-* ‘geschärft, scharf gemacht, angerecht’ (KEWai, III.345) and the rare sGha. *cath* ‘saint, sage’ (LÉIrA, C.48; Véndryes doubted a loan from Lt. *catus*, but it seems unlikely to me because *catus* must have been quite an uncommon word, or an unclear connection with sGha. *cáid* ‘saint, pur, noble’, LÉIrA, C.9-10, for which he did not propose any sound etymology, but that can be a *ti*-verbal noun of the long o-grade of the same stem, viz. IE \**kō-*, whence, for ex., Skt. *sāna* ‘Schleifstein, Wetzstein’ KEWai, III.322-3); ② Gaulish, on the ground mainly of the Marcellus TOPN (GAMILLSCHEG q.a.); ③ pre-Gaulish (BERTOLDI, DÉLF, FEW q.a.) or Mediterranean (DEI q.a.).

In my opinion, however, many of the proposed connections, especially that between BF and Italic, are unsound. It should be better to distinguish at least three unconnected etymological families: ① a FP \**kačV-* ‘juniper (*Juniperus communis*)’ (> PE; > MR?; > BF > BA); ② an IE \**ked-* ‘smoke’ (> SL; > Skt.; > Gr.?); ③ an IE (> Skt; Sgha; > Sab. > Lt.) \**ka-to-* ‘sharp’, whence both secondary derivation *catanus* ‘verbascum’ (Sab. > Lt. > Camp. and Sard.) and *catanus* ‘juniper (*Juniperus oxycedrus*)’ (Ga. > mLt. > Oc. > Fr., Cat. and Cas.). The last family is the weakest: as to the Galloroman group, since the IE stem \**ka-* etc. is however attested in CE, it seems unnecessary to me to postulate some specific and unknown pre-IE substratum; the Sardinian affiliation is far less convincing, since, as Wagner already stressed (DES, q.a.), it is only a *Wurzeletymologie*, but nevertheless, it seems better to me than the various “substratum” hypothesis (→ PAULIS 1992).

- △ Su. *kataja* ‘juniper (tree); cade’; Ka.N *kataja*, Ka.S and Au.W *kadaja*, Au. *kadai* ‘kataja | juniper communis’ (KaKS, II.93a); Ly. *kadai* except Ly.S *kadag*, Ly.CW *kada* and Ly.N Boš. and CS Lm. *kadai* ‘kataja || juniper’ (LyS, 97ab); Ve.N Šok. and CE Šim. *kadag*, Ve.CE Pond. *kadağ*, Ve.S Sod. *kadaği* ‘можжевельник || juniper’ (SVEJa, 164); In. *kaitaja* ‘kataja | juniper’ (InS, 145a); Ee. *kadaks* (*kadaka* GEN) ‘juniper; savin; red cedar’ and XIX ce. st. *kadakas* (*kadaka* GEN) ‘Wacholder (*Juniperus communis*)’ (WEhW, 176), IEe.Ta *kataj* (*kadaja* GEN; WEhW, 220) and *kadajane* (*kadajatsē* GEN; WEhW, 176), Ee. dl. *kadajas* (*kadaja* GEN; WEhW, 176); Li.W *gadāg* (*gadāgāD* PL), Li.E *kadāg*, Li.Sa *kadagi* ‘Wacholder’ (LiW, 55a and also 100a).

Table 2: ‘Juniper’: etymology scheme and voice

In this case we are fortunate because there is also a file from FEW (the indisputable king of monographic bottom-up etymological dictionaries), so we can easily make a comparison. And let me say that the comparison is at least not uneven: it is true that the two dictionaries go deeper into different domains (Galloroman vs. BF), but the analytical format of VoEG comes out perhaps wider in scope and more conclusive than its illustrious predecessor.

## Conclusions

With these scanty examples (a lot more would be needed to completely cover my argument, but the space I have been allotted does not consent anymore), I hope to have at least partially brought evidences in favour of a high depth and wide range etymological treatment for languages whose vocabulary, for various (historical, geopolitical, cultural, etc.) reasons, has a large diffusional percentage. My main purpose was to show how such a practice can improve historical and etymological knowledge of the entire European lexicon, especially in the cultural domain: and it seems to me highly instructive that even such a minor and dying language as Votic can make a strong case for this general endeavour. And if this is so, what might be the contribution of a similarly structured etymological dictionary of English, which is a language with an analogous lexical stratigraphy, but which is surely not minor or (luckily) dying?

## Endnotes

1. Vote is spoken (let us still hope so) in a few villages (the main ones are Jögöperä, Liivtsülä, Luuditsa, Baabino, Mati, Pummala, Lempola and Kattila; Kattila subdialect was retained as the standard in Ariste [1969], Barbera [1995] and VoEG) in the interior of the historical Ingermanland (now the Russian St. Peterburgskaja oblast'); Eastern and Kukkuzi Votic had already died out by the middle of the XX century, and Curland Krievin Votic in the XVI century.
2. Due to a lack of space, I cannot explain in detail the VoEG structure and conventions (expounded in Barbera [2000]), or its bibliographic (I hope guessable; A69 stands for Ariste [1969]) and linguistic abbreviations (which refer to the self-denomination of the language itself, and not to its English equivalent, so *mnD* stands for Middle Low German instead of \**MLG*, etc.).

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