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Sense-analysis for a historical dictionary (1973)[1]

Edited by Caroline Macafee, 2015

[5] I want to indicate some of the concepts and principles which underlie my own practice and which I try to suggest to my colleagues for what I regard as the crucial editorial task in the making of a historical dictionary, that of analysing the quotations for each word into the separate sense-divisions in which they will be presented to the dictionary's readers. For obvious reasons I shall make my remarks fairly specific to *A Dictionary of the Older Scottish Tongue* (DOST). In effect, I shall describe some of our editorial procedures on that dictionary and suggest why we perform them.

The immediate purpose of our work on DOST, which, it may be relevant to recall, is among the more detailed historical dictionaries,[2] I see as this: to display, by the arrangement of a comparatively copious selection of illustrative quotations and references, the total range of semantic or grammatical applications of each word; and to delimit the distributions of each of these applications in a number of dimensions – the linguistic dimensions of form, of syntactical situation and of habitual collocation and the extra-linguistic dimensions of time, region and genre. In addition there should be a rough indication of the approximate relative frequencies of each form and use. In short, we have to display every aspect of the distribution of the word – its distribution in application or use, in form, in syntactical or collocational range or restriction of range, in time, in place, and in the stylistic dimension.

Our criteria on DOST for differentiating words for separate entry or as lemmata are similar to, though perhaps not in all cases identical with, those applied by most dictionaries of our sort. I believe we are more given than most dictionaries to separating as distinct entries

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[1] [1] This paper is a revised and expanded version of part of a talk entitled 'How we make the Older Scottish Dictionary' given before the International Linguistic Association, New York, on 10th October 1970. In its present form it was presented at the Table Ronde de Lexicographie Historique held in the Accadema della Crusca, Florence, on 4th May 1971.

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An abridged version in French appeared as 'Le dictionnaire d'ancien écossais: aperçu de son histoire' in *Tavola Rotonda sui Grandi Lessici Storici* (Florence: Accademia della Crusca), 37–44.

The text has been edited for uniformity of style with other Aitken papers. 'Scottish' has been replaced by 'Scots' with reference to the language. The original page numbers are shown in square brackets. Since digital publication does not suffer the same constraints of space as hard copy, I have laid out the lists of examples more expansively, though it will sometimes be obvious that they started off as connected text in the original.

[2] [2] It is one of the 'period dictionaries' which arose out of Sir William Craigie's proposal of 4th April, 1919, to the Philological Society, for a series of detailed dictionaries of the several main stages and periods of the history of English (and Scots): see Craigie (1931). DOST's very exhaustive coverage of Older Scots texts leads to certain differences in editorial method and treatment as compared with the necessarily more superficial treatment offered by OED, notably DOST's frequent recourse to numerous subdivisions within senses to display the details of semantic, grammatical, collocational and formal history: see further Aitken (1964).

phonemic variants or heteromorphs (such as the four Older Scots reflexes of OE *hláford* – *lavird*, *lard*, *lovird* and *lord*), in which Older Scots happens to have been extremely prolific. But we have no rigid rule about this and each case is handled on its own merits. On the other hand we do not as a rule separate what I call orthographic variants – spelling variants which do not or need not imply phonemic differentiation. Issues of this sort bearing on word-separation I propose however, to take for granted and for the rest of my time I shall consider only divisions below the level of the word.[3]

For those words which are represented by more than one quotation-example and, especially, for those for which we have many examples, we on DOST share the belief of most other lexicographers that some form of analysis is necessary to the accomplishment of the aims I stated a moment ago. As an almost invariable [6] rule we begin with an analysis of the applications or functions of the word**,** and, if the quotations number more than a handful, we normally divide these into several distinct 'senses', as we call our main semantic or functional units of sub-division. For our purposes a 'sense' is a group of contexts which share a common semantic or grammatical feature setting them off from all the other contexts of that word. In view of our primary concern with semantic or grammatical applications, in analysing into such senses the total body of quotations for each word, we will look first at the immediate or governing contexts of the key-word, its most closely associated grammatical items (modifiers of nouns, subjects and objects of verbs, regimens of adjectives, and so on) and only thereafter consider the larger structures of which these are constituents. Thus in dealing with the following examples we would group together (1) and (4) on the one hand and (2) and (3) on the other, despite the superficially obvious shared topics in the wider context of the first and second pairs respectively:

(1) the King occupied the high ground,
(2) the King has a high forehead,
(3) the dress has a high neck,
(4) the dress is on a high shelf.

According to these principles, the Older Scots adjective *Latin* is easily divided into one set in which the regimens are persons or topographical terms, and another in which they are one or other of the synonyms for language or elements of language. Or the Older Scots adjective *laith* is used, among other ways, either attributively or without a complement, and may he defined 'loathsome' (a *laith* disease, a *laith* individual, the disease or the individual is *laith*) or predicatively with a complement, and may be defined 'reluctant' (he is *laith* to do something); in this instance, the operative distinction is a grammatical rather than a semantic one, even though it carries semantic overtones.

Separation of homonyms (or items which are identical in form but differ in both application and derivation) does not differ of course in principle from this, except that the differences in use between homonyms are often grosser or more striking than those between the senses or polysemes of a single etymological word.

No doubt there are ways other than this division by sense in which the material for the word might be subdivided, and these might realise some, but I think not all, of the aims I defined for our work: for example, one might subdivide by morphological or orthographic variant forms, or by the word's occurrences in different genres or classes of text (let us say,

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[3] Editor's note: this approach, which originated with Craigie, was modified by AJA so that only major phonemic variants were separated. One example that AJA used to demonstrate the lack of congruity in sense between different forms was *law, lauch* and *laich*, all from ON *lágr*. These three items are compared in tabular form in Macafee (1997: Table 6.1).

However, by the 1980s the separation of forms into different articles was generally felt to be both time-consuming to achieve and difficult for users to consult, and was abandoned from 1986. See Dareau *et al.* (1987) and Dareau (2002).

narrative verse, lyric verse, didactic verse, satiric or comic verse, literary prose, record prose, proverb collections, and so on); and no doubt there are other possibilities. In fact, on DOST we often do subdivide further according to some of these criteria, but only or almost only *after* we have made our main division by sense.

There are, however, good practical reasons for giving primacy to division by sense. This is the one aspect of the word's distributions which is not superficially obvious or at least fairly easily noted but which only becomes clear following a careful study of the contexts. Hence analysis in this dimension will invariably be necessary to complete the description of the word. When the word or a division of the word is evidenced by only a few examples, it may indeed sometimes be justifiable to embrace these without differentiation under a broad general heading, if one can be devised which reasonably precisely subsumes all of them, leaving it to our [7] readers to work out any more refined distinctions for themselves. But when, as must often be the case, the examples number scores or hundreds or thousands some analysis or classification by senses is essential if we are to make at all explicit this aspect of the word's distribution, for in such a case few of our readers will have the time, skill or inclination to carry out this task of sense-analysis themselves. Besides which, in order to do this at all conveniently, they would need to have the raw material presented to them on slips and not as printed lists of quotations. But they can quite well be left to observe for themselves the distribution of each of the various senses in time, for if the dates of the texts are given or generally known this can be seen at a glance. Any obvious restrictions of the distribution of the word or of any of its senses in region, or in the stylistic dimension, can be pointed out by the editor in a suitable note; otherwise, so long as he takes care in selecting his examples for printing to represent fully the word's distributions in these dimensions, it will be easy for the reader to observe what these are, for this too is something which can be taken in at a rapid inspection of the references.

Certainly without this analysis into senses we can hardly hope to give or get a clear overall view of the semantic range and lay-out and the varying grammatical functions of any of the commoner words. Not until we have analysed the 40 or so examples of the Older Scottish noun *lum* into cases of chimney-canopy, fireplace, flue, chimney-stack, and chimney-top, can we assess whether or not its semantic range matches or falls short of that of 'chimney'. Similarly, we can define the noun *maich* broadly as 'male connection by marriage' but only after we have analysed its examples between son-in-law, brother-in-law, father-in-law, male cousin by marriage and those cases which are for one reason or another indeterminate, can we precisely determine its visible range. Furthermore, not until such an analysis has been carried out will we be in a position easily to detect any correlation of sense-division with distribution in some other dimension: for example, in time (as happens when the word, as we say, 'changes its meaning'); or, for that matter in form (as happens when two phonemic variants, like *pass* and *pace* or *parson* and *person* in modern English, are not congruent in sense). If we had simply taken the 200 or so examples of the Older Scots word *lug* with which our excerptors provided us as just equivalent to those of 'ear' and needing no further differentiation, we should have failed to detect that whereas *lug* as an appendage which could be cut off, nicked, pulled, or boxed was in common currency from the late 15th century in a variety of general and special contexts, as the organ of hearing it does not appear till 1581 and remains uncommon thereafter. Equally, without prior analysis of its senses, it would not have appeared that in two out of its four main senses the noun *kirkmaister* was strictly localised.

In deciding *where* to put our divisions between senses, or rather, in deciding how far we ought to subdivide (since the possibility presumably exists of carrying this division down to single instances or, if you like, *ad absurdum*), we must, I take it, be alert to notice where a possible distinction between sense-groups coincides with a boundary in some other

distributional dimension – for example, in time and place, as in two examples I have already mentioned, or in style or register, which also of course happens. Without this coincidence with another distributional boundary [8] the decision how far to subdivide must, I take it, be arbitrary or at least highly subjective; though, as we have just seen in the case of *lum* and *maich*, this is not to say that it is unnecessary.

Or we might say that in deciding how far to subdivide we must take into account the pattern of the entry of the word as a whole. Among the senses of the word *landwart* in DOST are these:

first the phrase *to landwart* to the country, from 1424;

next, the phrase, *in* or *on landwart*, of the same meaning, from 1531;

and *fra landwart*, from the country, from 1533;

then there is the noun, without the article, as in "ony persoun of landwart" (anyone from the country) from 1584, and with the article, "the landwart" (the rural part of the parish) from 1608.

This arrangement shows quite clearly the whole development of the word from its origin in the analysed form of a phrase made up of the preposition *towart* and the noun *land*, *towart land* becoming *to landwart*. It is easy to see this pattern when the work is done, but no doubt other possible arrangements presented themselves when it was being done; for example, one which merely distinguished, on the one hand, an article-less form of the noun *landwart* which happened to be constructed, from 1424, with various undifferentiated prepositions, and, on the other hand, a later form with the definite article, from 1608; this is a possible arrangement but it would not have revealed the word's development as clearly as the one actually given.

So far I have spoken of the separate senses as if these were always or usually capable of being more of less objectively identified in distinctive features of the different contexts, and some of my examples, such as the last one, seem indeed to be of this sort. In practice however, we often do, and, I suspect, sometimes must, equate the separate senses we perceive with subjectively apprehended meanings residing as it were in the word itself. Like other naive readers or hearers of the language he is studying, the dictionary editor, employing his own prior knowledge of the whole of that language, is given to inferring from a wider or narrower context of the word in each of his given quotations its intended use in a particular meaning or function, that the noun in question has, let us say, an animate, male referent in one set of contexts, an inanimate referent in another, and so on.

This subjective approach by meaning is necessary to handle, among others, a particular type of example, of which we meet many on DOST – the ambiguous or indeterminate or both-ways-facing example. As we have seen, our aim is to set up mutually exclusive sense-groups of quotations and, if possible, only mutually exclusive groups. With nearly all words it is indeed possible to allocate many or, usually, most of the quotations to such mutually exclusive groups. There are some words, however, that leave us with a residue of quotations whose contexts offer insufficient indications which of two (or three) determinate meanings is being used (the determinate meanings are those implied by determinate or distinguishable sense-groups). It does not seem possible to maintain an objective position in discussing examples of this kind.

Indeterminacies of this sort may be inherent in the history of the word; alternatively, they may be due to the modern dictionary editor's ignorance of the total context, which of course includes the context of situation, so that he is at a disadvantage [9] compared with the original writer and reader; and there are other possible causes. I have already mentioned two words – *lum* and *maich* – which offer a number of these ambiguous quotations, for whichever of the two causes I mentioned it is in these cases unclear. Another, in which the cause of many of

the ambiguities is fairly certainly the second, is the Older Scots expression *laich house* 'low house'; in some instances this clearly means 'cellar', and in others as clearly 'out-house' (these being lower than the main building they adjoined); in other instances, however, to us, who do not know the *locales* in question, it is quite uncertain which of these is meant. An important case of the first sort of ambiguity – those which are inherent in the history of the word – are those incidences of certain words, only loosely defined by their contexts, which were apt to give rise to shifts of sense of the generalisation or specialisation sorts – such as those which lie uncertainly between the more explicitly defined contexts of words like *knave* (boy, servant-lad, servant, menial, rascal), *lad* (with more or less the opposite development) and *silly*, to give three familiar examples out of hundreds or thousands possible for English. Another such case is that of the many words, including many adjectives and nouns of condition or emotion, which have a general semantic area which is clear enough and perhaps even some examples which could be placed at definable single points within that area but many others which can not now and no doubt never could be more than vaguely located within the overall area.

One possible method of treating such words would be simply to reject the ambiguous examples and quote only the determinate ones. This we sometimes do on DOST with ambiguities which appear to be merely careless, others which are deliberate but nonce, as in puns and word-plays, others again which are grammatical – *the girl guides fish, the German history teacher, flying planes can be dangerous* sort of thing – as long as the senses involved are adequately covered by unambiguous examples. Equally, we are likely to reject out of hand fragmentary or textually corrupt contexts as not our proper business. But, with the other cases I mentioned, to do this would, I take it, seriously falsify the facts of the word's recorded history. Yet this sort of thing does seem to offer a real difficulty to the tidy-minded dictionary editor.

One of our solutions is to define the determinate senses together at the head of a list of examples and to include within the list, presented as a single undifferentiated group, all *three* sorts of examples – those representing the two determinate senses and a third representing the indeterminate. This is the method we have used with *lum* and with *laich house*. Another possibility is to present the ambiguous or indeterminate examples in a separate section of their own, so labelled as we have in fact done with *maich* and in other cases. More often we arbitrarily assign the transitional examples to one or other of the defined or explicit groups and simply point out in a note that some examples might equally probably be assigned to the following or the preceding sense. Sometimes, in these cases, we use the formula originally coined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) for this purpose, that the first sense 'passes into' its successor.[4]

What I have been describing is what we try to do and I believe ideally ought to do. On occasion, our execution of these principles may turn out to be less than [10] perfect: quotations may be assigned to the wrong sense-group or ambiguous or doubtful quotations which strictly ought to be included may be left out. As this is a human endeavour, it is subject to normal human fallibility, more especially if, like most lexicographers, we are working at pressure, so that our decisions are not always as fully considered as in an ideal world they would be.

In carrying out analyses of the kind I have been discussing we must rely on certain personal resources of prior knowledge, for example, of the vocabulary and grammar of the language we are studying (since, otherwise, for one thing we could not make sense of our contexts) and of the real or referential world inhabited by its users (so we need some historical and literary as well as linguistic equipment). We must constantly insist to ourselves on accurately comprehending our texts, in our case presented to us in fragmentary form as

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[4] [3] See, e.g., *Lat* v.[1] 7b and 9b, *Mast(e* a. etc. C 1b, *Mekil(l* a. etc. 8, *Mene* v.[1] 2b, *Nan(e* a. 4, *Narrative* n.1, *Necessar* a. 3.

single quotations; and we must be ready always to explore the fuller contexts when the given context fails to determine a sense. In my own experience misdivision of the material and misplacing of individual quotations almost always results from a failure to master the contexts precisely or fully enough. We will grasp all this more readily if we already possess some knowledge of the whole texts from which our quotations come and their textual histories. And we shall need some expertise in the palaeography and the orthography of the language to detect the corruptions and misreadings which turn up in a language like Older Scots because of the ambiguities to which its handwriting and spelling systems were apt to give rise.

As well as needing to have at our disposal these bodies of general knowledge, we also rely heavily on particular preconceptions and *a priori* assumptions about the word we are editing itself, especially of its presupposed or etymological meanings and of its 'core' or unmarked meanings. Though we will no doubt handle these prior assumptions warily and test them against the quotations, we will rarely be without them, given an adequate knowledge of the language we are studying. They are indeed almost indispensable as starting-points for our analysis.

But perhaps the most important single piece of equipment which we need to carry to our task of analysis is our own internal or personal system of semantic and grammatical categories. It is this that provides the frame of reference by means of which we identify common features of sets of contexts and against which we can measure the nearness or remoteness of the implied meanings or functions of the word in its different contexts, and so decide whether we ought to erect a sense-division or not.

I called this an internal system of categories. And hitherto, so far as I know, lexicographers have been content to rely chiefly on this purely subjective piece of equipment. Of course external systems of notional categories do exist – such as Roget's *Thesaurus* and the system of classification for archives of different sorts. And other attempts at systems of objective semantic classification are being attempted. But I am not aware that anyone has yet addressed himself to one which would be specially useful for lexicographers of our sort. I have wondered, however, whether a comparatively short list of the major categories on which we constantly rely in this work – abstract and concrete, animate and inanimate, personal and non-personal, actions and states, count and non-count, and so on – would not be very helpful [11] to tyro lexicographers. A really full list, on the other hand, would presumably be cumbersome to use as well as laborious to compile; yet its use might contribute to greater clarity in our perceptions of sense-distinctions and greater precision in our definitions. Doubtless, however, the most refined and detailed categorical system and the one which is most immediately accessible will continue to be the private internal system which I suppose most of its make use of at present.

So far I have contrived to avoid mentioning, except in passing, the definitions. In a dictionary as fully illustrated as DOST it is the quotations and not the definitions which carry the main burden of what the dictionary has to offer and are its primary concern. In effect, the dictionary is an alphabetically indexed and analysed collection of quotations, and in principle it should be possible for the user of the dictionary to work out for himself the word's semantic range, the chronological, and regional distributions and so on, simply from the quotations and their arrangement without recourse to the definition at all.

Indeed, on DOST we often find it unnecessary to define some of our more detailed subdivisions of sense or collocational arrangement when these can be embraced by a single more general definition – so long as the full range of sense and use is somehow accurately delimited. For example, when we have two parallel entries for phonemic variants – heteromorphs – we will as a rule define only one of these fully, and for the other refer the reader back to it for detailed definitions.

Still, even if we regard the definitions as subservient to the quotations, we cannot deny that they are also extremely useful.[5] They enable the user of the dictionary to gain a rapid conspectus of the whole range of the entry. They provide him with finding-aids and sign-posts to the particular section of the entry – the particular sub-set of quotations – in which he is specially interested. If he is prepared to take this on trust, they also tell him what the dictionary editor thinks the word 'means' in its different contexts. To the editor himself some sort of rough definitions are virtually indispensable as markers or labels for the compartments into which he will sort out the different classes of contexts in which the word occurs, as counters or tokens which he can, as it were, move around when he has to work out a plausible order of senses – one that proceeds by small and progressive rather than by large and inconsequent semantic jumps.

The definitions also have a contrastive purpose – to indicate clearly to both the reader and the editor how the particular group of quotations being defined is differentiated from all the other groups for that word. The editor they will serve as touchstones: as means of testing whether or how far the groups of quotations he is erecting into separate 'senses' are indeed definably distinguishable. To these ends, they must often be quite specific as to the regimens or governing contexts: that a certain adjective applies to nouns of one class (say, persons and their attributes) in one group of quotations, to nouns of another class (say, events and opportunities) in another; or that a certain verb has this or that semantic or grammatical class of subject, object or dependent construction in its different senses.

In short, so far as the aspect of dictionary work we have been considering is concerned, it will be seen that the definitions serve to make explicit and thus expose for examination the subjective judgements which are governing the editor's analysis [12] of his material.

Having analysed and defined our senses in the way I have discussed, on DOST we then proceed to arrange the senses in chronological or logical or arbitrary order, or, it may be, a mixture of all of these. It then remains to select the quotations we propose to print, avoiding what we take to be redundancies and in any case consciously limiting our scale to a usual maximum of twelve quotations per paragraph, but bearing in mind the needs of our different types of customers – the philologists, literary students, antiquaries, and historians who look to the dictionary for guidance and detailed information – and bearing in mind also the need to represent adequately the distributions of each sense in time, place, linguistic form and so on. Obviously much more might be said concerning both of these procedures, but I shall not attempt this here.

In carrying out these procedures and particularly that of grouping by senses, each individual quotation has to be carefully studied and, as a rule, read and re-read a number of times. This is what makes this stage in dictionary editing much the most prolonged and laborious. By contrast, at the earlier collecting stage, each quotation may have been selected on a snap judgment in the course of one or two cursory readings of the text, or, if computer methods of collection are being used, perhaps without recourse to human reading and judgment at all.

In physical terms the procedures I have been mentioning take the form of the manipulation of large numbers of traditional dictionary slips, a technique which in Britain returns at least as far as Dr Johnson[6] and in other countries, for all I know, may go back earlier still. Yet it is a technique for which no practicable substitute seems at all close at hand and which in any case

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[5] [4] See Meier (1969: 147 f.) for a discussion of different types of definition. A fuller and more formal analysis of definition types is offered by Rey-Debove (1966).

[6] [5] On Johnson's method of collecting and arranging quotations, see Anderson (1815: 115 n.): "He then delivered these books to his clerks who transcribed each sentence on a separate slip of paper and arranged the same under the word referred to." See also *Boswell's Life of Johnson* (Hill ed., 1934: I, 188 and III, 510).

seems very well suited to the business of arranging and rearranging sets of quotations in the way that these procedures require.

Editing

(being a slightly shortened version of DOST's internal booklet of guidance to editorial workers)

Basically, all words represented by more than a few quotations are to be broken down into a number of smaller bundles of quotations, each of these having a common feature setting them off from all the other bundles. As primacy is routinely given to differences of 'sense', one will first look for differences in the immediate contexts in which the word is set. In addition, division or further subdivision may be by spelling, each bundle having its common orthographic feature. Single-member bundles (even though having some theoretic justification) should be the exception rather than the rule. In effect, then, one is displaying the word's distribution by context, immediate collocation (e.g. in specific formulae) and form, just as one also tries to display the distribution of all of these in time, space, and register.

The prime function of the definitions is to sign-post the nature of the quotations following, i.e., to indicate in what specific sort of context the word is here found; hence they will often specify the precise restrictions of neighbouring words (e.g., in many of the commoner verbs). Most definitions are of the usual dictionary substitutable expression type (often plus this specification of precise context). For [13] words of historical or encyclopaedic interest, however, a description of the referent plus some pointers to further information is encouraged as useful to many readers. Form-words commonly have a description of their function, introduced by some such word as "Used" (in such and such a way), "Serving" (to make such and such a distinction), preceding an equivalent word (if available). Definition by Modern English synonyms, including the "same word", is perfectly in order.

The Assistant Editor, faced with a bundle of pre-edited material, may wish to proceed somewhat as follows for each word.

1.   Make sure that the material for the word is complete (i.e. that the pre-editor has not placed a mere variant spelling at some alphabetic distance away). Normally *all* forms of the same word, both orthographic and phonemic variants, will be edited at one time by the Assistant Editor first encountering them. Phonemic variants only are normally given a separate entry (see §13).

2.   Read through the material, taking note of the probable divisions of sense and form and what are the distinctive features of the different groups of quotations. The facts of formal history and association with related words and chronology will also be taken note of.

3.   Read through the cognate OED article, which may suggest the likely shape of the article and against which any special features of the Scottish word may appear. In doing this further quotations may be noticed which should be added to the collection. Read any other dictionaries (especially Jamieson and *The Scottish National Dictionary* (SND)) which may help to suggest the word's sense distribution and 'surrounding' history.

4.   Get the etymology into focus, using OED. The word's development in broad outline will now be evident.

5.   Follow up all references, e.g., to historical commentaries and philological dissertations, in the given material. Is the material now adequate? Is there perhaps useful material to be found in e.g. legal textbooks or in other writings such as ...? (Such sources will of course only occasionally prove useful and only for appropriate classes of word – but the possibility should always be kept in mind.) One other source, often extremely productive and (see §10) space-saving, is earlier entries in DOST itself.

6.   Arrange the material in bundles of separate senses, and, if so decided, forms and specific collocations. In so doing, rough definitions will probably be required as guide-points. Points of division may include, for example: for verbs, *tr., intr., passive, impers.*, single and double object, animate and inanimate, personal and non-personal subjects and objects; for nouns, count and non-count, animate and inanimate, material and non-material, personal and non-personal; with, naturally, a multiplicity of others.

7.   Determine the sequences of the senses, employing as possible: historical order, i.e. beginning with the earliest recording sense if this is decisively distanced in time from the others; etymological order, beginning with the sense closest to the principal sense or senses of the etymological or derivational antecedent; logical order, by consecutive stages from a 'central' sense or senses; order of apparent commonness; a sequence based on some other criterion; a purely arbitrary sequence. Note that it may sometimes be helpful to anticipate the pattern of the article in this respect when deciding how far to subdivide into senses.

8.   Improve definitions and rapidly test them (by substitution) against the quotations. Do they define, i.e. precisely delimit, the range of uses which the following quotations exemplify?

[14] 9.   Look up contexts, amplify as necessary, examine variant readings as necessary, and check that additional material so found is dealt with. Beware of excerpts misleadingly taken out of context, sometimes resulting in 'ghost' senses. Constantly note that material is kept accurate in all details.

If doubtful readings or those from unsound excerptors are required, checking may be delegated to the Press Preparer. Have in mind the considerations raised by discrepancies between dates of composition, authorial revision and dates (often much later) of actual witness texts.

10. Select quotations for printing. In selecting, the full distribution of the word should be indicated. Thus normally the first and last example of each use and form should be given. An adequate scatter of quotations in time, place, type of text, especially prose vs. verse, but also specific varieties of prose and verse, should be given. Quotations should also indicate the various possible syntactic applications of each use, so collocations, word-order, sentence structure etc., should be kept in mind. (Of course, a good deal must often be left to the reader's presumption for those numerous words which behave like most others of their grammatical class.)

Quotations which incorporate a definition should always be used when possible. Those which add some antiquarian or historical information should be preferred to others which do not.

Avoid duplicating quotations. If more than one quotation has already appeared in some article, refer to this rather than repeat. (There are many opportunities for saving space in this way and these should always be looked to.)

Do not quote excessively: the rule-of-thumb is 12 quotations per paragraph, to be exceeded only for specially interesting words. Quotations should be no longer than in necessary to display the relevant information about the context. Often a reference only

or form and reference will do the work of a quotation, where only an indication of the distribution or the frequency of occurrence is required.

In all this *restrictions* of distribution will have been noted and fully illustrated (see §12).

11. Normally, you should make sure that you fully understand all quotations other than supposedly corrupt ones. For quotations selected for printing or referencing, some concentration should be applied to ensuring this. Much the commonest cause of ghost senses, slack and imprecise definitions and misplaced quotations, as well as misleadingly extracted quotations (e.g., those in which the stretch of context extracted suggests an application other than the one apparent in the full context) is failure to master fully what one is quoting.

12. Reconsider definitions. These should be as succinct as possible and normally limited to 20 words in large type. They may be amplified by a small type footnote. Sometimes the quotations themselves make part of a definition unnecessary. Restrictions of currency (e.g., *verse only*, *early only*, *this sense only Sc*(ottish)) should be noted following the relevant definition or at the head of an article.

13. Write the heading. Rare words may be headed by only the one or two spellings actually found. (Commoner words normally have their leading spellings arranged by a system which may be based for vowels on A. J. Aitken's 'Vowel Systems';[7] for consonants normally the commonest Middle Scots form is preferred. Phonemic variants (cognates which may be presumed to have been formally distinct morphemes, [15] like *Lak* and *Lake*) are normally given separate treatment (see §1). Except for the verbs, only irregular inflexional forms need be noticed in the heading. Strong verbs should have all their past tense and past participle forms listed. For weak verbs, an indication should be given, by means of one or two typical forms, of the main types of past tense and past participle forms found.

14. Attempt the etymological note, quoting English cognates and immediate foreign or OE source. Modern Scots and English dialect descendants should also be quoted but only if these throw some further light on the history of the Older Scots word; e.g. if the latter is or may be restricted in regional distribution and the distribution of its descendants throws further light on this.

Is the OED etymology adequate? Especially for purely Scottish words or words which show a largely Scottish bias in use, some further examination may be wanted in foreign dictionaries, such as ... and special glossaries, such as . . .; Medieval and classical Latin are also often of course concerned.

Note any special features or problems of phonology or formation in the word's history.

Any notes made in investigating these or any other points should be carefully preserved in the Reject, to save the Editor's perhaps having to retrace the same ground. At no point should an Assistant Editor 'cover his tracks' by destroying notes (however scrappy) made in the course of his investigations.

15. Reconsider the sequence of senses.

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[7] Editor's note: AJA's table 'Vowel systems of Scots: a rough historical outline', which he also used as a teaching handout and as Table 1 in 'How to Pronounce Older Scots' (1977, 2015), includes the main Older Scots spellings of each vowel.

16. Make any necessary final adjustments to the whole article; ensure that it is complete, philologically and historically, but that all obviously supererogatory material has been taken out.

17. After a batch of copy has been completed, the Assistant Editor must always scan carefully the following works for additional quotations, information and insights: OED, SND, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, Jamieson (1808, 1825), Donaldson (both parts) [Jamieson rev. Longmuir and Donaldson, 1879–87], *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland. 1124–1707* vol. XII Index … This is a routine task in addition to any use he may have made of these works in the course of editing his batch of copy.

18. In the course of his work the Assistant Editor will assemble: Copy, whatever Duplicate exists, and Reject. Give some care to seeing that Duplicate and Reject match the Copy, to save the Editor's time in rapidly checking these.

19. The copying out of portions of over-long quotations is unnecessary; these portions, unless they contain errors or omissions, are merely underlined and left to the Press Preparer to extract. Similarly, requests to the latter include *RO* (reference only), *FRO* (form and reference only), *Ch.* (Check, please), and other more specific ones, as *Varr.* (Variants, please), (Quote from other text, please).

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