

ON PRINCIPAL CRITERIA

In certain historical and cultural studies of human societies, of which onomastics (esp. toponymics) and substratum investigation (as one branch of historical and diffusional anthropology) come to mind, it would be of advantage for us to work towards an agreed set of criteria on which a metric of ordered principles (rules, or laws) could be based.

We already have a number (many?) of such formulations which are well known and define or illustrate desired criteria of broad or useful applicability. It should be noted at the outset that, what may astonish, terrify, or disgust our colleagues in e.g. disciplines of economics, sociology, or some branches of archaeology, in our sciences we find large quantitative enterprises and statistics at best marginal, and we tolerate very small numbers of exempla in our data; what matters to us is the careful and responsible construction of refutable series of inferential propositions concatenated upon tested outputs. (There is only one solitary irreproachable example of an Old Latin inherited ablative singular, the coin legend *BENVENTOD*; true thematic locatives in Greek are οἴκει and τῆλε).

I propose the following formulations as an approach, and would welcome criticism:

Rules which are general in our universe¹,
and in context² which give
idiosyncratic forms or paradigms³
with a coexhaustive account⁴ of them and their occurrence,
stratified for chronology⁵,
with stratification hidden by further change preferred⁶,
in complete syndromes of geography⁷
or of society⁸
and of grammatical integrality (systematicity)⁹
with plausible accord in social and pragmatic function or structure¹⁰.

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¹ e.g. Pythagoras, Isaac Newton, David Hilbert, Werner Heisenberg, Gregor Mendel. Many great findings of logicians and mathematicians belong here, but I am not competent to explicate them. Here belongs the useful prohibition against the *argumentum ex silentio*, and the clarification of (non-)vicious circularity.

² Occam, Leskien, Verner, Holger Pedersen (Albanian gutturals and sibilants), Dempwolff (Austronesian).

³ Meillet, Wackernagel (2nd position).

⁴ Pāṇini, Lachmann, Graziadio Ascoli (on Lautgesetz), Saussure-Kurylowicz, Sapir on Bloomfield (Algonquian), Hübschmann (Armenian), Saussure-Fortunatov-Saxmatov... (Baltic-Slavic accents).

⁵ Jacobi, Osthoff, Grassmann, Bartholomae, T. Michelson (Arapaho).

⁶ see E. P. Hamp, «Whose were the Tocharians? - Linguistic subgrouping and diagnostic idiosyncrasy», in: Victor H. Mair ed., *The Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Peoples of Eastern Central Asia* (JIES Monograph N. 26), Washington D.C. & Philadelphia 1989, vol. 1, 307-346, this article also discusses or mentions some other criteria here.

⁷ Gillieron, Pop, Weinreich, Bártoli.

⁸ M. Mauss, Labov.

⁹ Saussure, Sapir, Hjelmslev, F. Sommer (Old Irish infixes), Karlgren (Ancient Chinese), Ruipérez (Greek middle endings).

¹⁰ Delbrück (IE kin), Sapir (northern origin of Navajo), Bloomfield, Boas, F. Siebert (Heimat of Algonquian).