

SOME NEW DISCOVERIES

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This brief article presents three words which have never before had the logological spotlight turned on them. It seems surprising that these words have lain unnoticed for so long. What other treasures are there still waiting to be discovered?

SCOLOCS

I believe this is a newly discovered seven-letter palindrome. The word doesn't appear in Dmitri Borgmann's Language on Vacation, and I don't recall it having appeared in **Word Ways** before.

The singular form SCOLOC appears in both Webster's New International Second Edition, and The Oxford English Dictionary. The word is of Irish origin, and means "a scholar". Of the four illustrative quotations in the OED, two of them actually use the plural form SCOLOCS.

Has this word appeared before in **Word Ways** or in any other source dealing with it from a logological aspect?

PYNEPENY

PYNEPENY appears in The Oxford English Dictionary, where it is defined as "a niggard". Why is it interesting? Firstly, it is one of very few eight-letter words composed of four letters, each used twice. It is notable for other reasons, also.

Jack Levine's various lists of pattern words list those words which use each of four letters twice. While there are many tautonyms where the first and second halves of the word are identical, such as BERIBERI, there are fewer which don't have identical first and second halves. Among these are TITANIAN, APPEASES, and UNENDUED -- a total of 21.

However, Levine lists only eight words where all four different letters occur in the first half of the word, as well as in the second half. These eight are ADINIDAN, BILABIAL, MESOSOME, NOTITION, SHAMMASH, SINGINGS, TEAMMATE and VETITIVE.

Yet PYNEPENY is even more remarkable than any of these. If the initial P is moved to the end of the word, it then spells itself backwards. Another way of looking at this is to write PYNEPENY around the edge of a circle. The word can then be spelled out in either direction. The only other words which can be read in this way are MIMETITE, RAPPAREE, RATTAREE and JIPIJAPA. However, none of these has all four different letters occurring in

both the first half and the second half. Language on Vacation introduces the concept of circular reversals (pp 50-52) but PYNE-PENY is superior to any of Borgmann's examples.

PYNEPENY is a unique word!

CONOCUNEUSES

The noun CONOCUNEUS appears in The Oxford English Dictionary, where it is defined as a geometric figure. From the definition given, it would seem to be a solid shape like a cone, but with the pointed part cut off at an angle.

Although no plural form is given, either explicitly or in any of the illustrative quotations, I would assume that a plural can be created by the straightforward addition of -ES, to make CONOCUNEUSES.

CONOCUNEUSES is one of those incredibly rare words, like the six here which contains six different letters, each used twice: CANCELLANSES, CICADELLIDAE, GRADGRINGIAN, HAPPENCHANCE, INTERINSERTS, and TRISECTRICES.

Of course, the pedant will point to the fact that both the Second and Third Editions of Webster's New International Dictionary, as well as Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary, contain the word CUNEUS, along with a corresponding plural form CUNEI. The pedant would deduce that the plural of CONOCUNEUS must be CONOCUNEI.

Of course, in defence of the wonderful CONOCUNEUSES, I would hasten to say that these dictionaries have taken a particularly old-fashioned view of the plural form, preferring the classically correct -I plural to the more modern -ES plural. Even the most recent of these dictionaries, Webster's Third, is now over 30 years old. Webster's Second is over half a century old! No, the modern trend is to create plural forms by the addition of -S, -ES, -IES and the like, turning a blind eye to their classically correct forms.

Can anyone find other evidence to support CONOCUNEUSES?

NOW WE'LL MAKE THE RAFTERS RING

Word Ways readers should be familiar with Kickshaws editor Dave Morice's logological cartoons. His droll artwork can also be enjoyed in Edwin Finckel's \$11.95 paperback of classical and contemporary rounds ("row, row, row your boat" and nearly one hundred more), published under the above title in 1993 by A Cappella Books.