

Robert S. P. Beekes: *Comparative Indo-European Linguistics. An Introduction*, 2nd edition revised and corrected by Michiel de Vaan, Amsterdam-Philadelphia, John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2011. xxiv + 415 pages, with 16 maps & 25 illustrations.

Reviewed by Mariona Vernet
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

With his second edition of the *Comparative Indo-European Linguistics. An Introduction*, Robert Beekes presents a new version of his handbook of Indo-European Linguistics, first published in 1995 from the Dutch original of 1990 (*Vergleijkende taalwetenschap: Een inleiding in de vergelijkende Indo-europese taalwetenschap*. Utrecht: Het Spectrum). It's appearance coincides with that of a number of introductory or survey handbooks of Indo-European Linguistics, such as Meier Brügger's *Indogermanische Sprachwissenschaft* (2010, 9th edition), Fortson's *Indo-European Language and Culture. An Introduction* (2010, 2nd edition), Clackson's *Indo-European Linguistics. An Introduction* (2007), Sihler's reworking of Buck's *New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin* (1995), Szemerényi's *Introduction to Indo-European Linguistics* (1996), an English version of the *Einführung in die vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft* of 1970. Beekes's handbook has been revised and corrected by Michiel de Vaan, and published by the renowned John Benjamins Publishing Company. It is of a high standard, including the type-setting, which is especially problematic in the case of the Proto-Indo-European reconstructed phonemes. Some misprints are inevitable in a book of this kind,¹ although a few editorial errors are also observable, such as mistakes in pagination,² and some are disturbing, e.g. the PIE vocalic sonants **r*, **ṛ*, **ṛ̥*, which, although Beekes prefers to set down always as **r*, **m*, **n* for phonological reasons (see pp. 4-5 of this review), sometimes are incongruently depicted as **r̥*, **m̥*, **n̥* (which is the traditional notation).³ In this sense, there is a lack of systematization regarding the notation of these PIE phonemes.

The book consists of 18 chapters, three appendices, a bibliography, maps, illustrations and indexes. The 18 chapters are arranged into two main parts: 'Part I. General section' (Chapters 1-10), and 'Part II. Comparative Indo-European Linguistics' (Chapters 11-18). Part I is, in turn, divided into two sections: 'Language change' (Chapters 5-8) and

¹ *In was long thought* (p. 28), instead of *It was long thought*.

² *See section 11.4.8*, instead of *See section 11.3.6* (p. 49). *Phonetics* 298, instead of *Phonetics* 297 (p. xiii).

³ Such as in **mytó-* 'dead' (p. 63) or in **ṛ-* 'un-, not-' (p. 140) and inspite the fact that in Beekes's book, vocalic sonants are usually noted as **r*, **m*, **n*: "Skt. *a* < PIE **e*, **o*, **n*, **m* = Sanskrit *a* can reflect PIE **e*, **o*, **n*, **m*. eg. Skt. *-ca* 'and' < **-k^we*, Skt. *sá* 'he' < **so*, Skt. *a-* 'un-' < **n-*, Skt. *saptá* < **septm*" (p.60).

'Reconstruction' (Chapters 9-10). Chapters 1-4 are however not subordinated to any section. In my opinion, it would have been better for Chapter 4, devoted to Sound Change, to have been placed in the 'Language change' section, instead of preceding it, since sound change is one of the factors that makes languages change. Part II is also divided into two sections: 'Phonology' (Chapter 11) and 'Morphology' (Chapters 12-18), which could be considered as the core section of the book. According to this distribution, Beekes's monograph seems to follow the approach adopted in traditional Indo-European handbooks (such as the Grammars of Brugmann 1886, Krahe 1943, Szemérenyi 1970, etc.) in the sense that it makes no reference to PIE syntax. This point of view is, of course, respectable. However, since the field of PIE syntax has made a great deal of progress in recent decades, it would have been interesting to make a reference to it. The 'Bibliography' (pp. 311-342) is arranged into three parts: 'I. General introduction'. 'II. Language change', and 'III. Indo-European Linguistics'. This is useful for the student and scholar interested in some specific aspect of the field, because the bibliography is arranged topically into smaller sections (such as introductions and grammars, dictionaries, languages, etc.). In each section the bibliography appears to be arranged alphabetically, although in most cases this is not the case and seems not to follow any other criterion.⁴ This discrepancy, which has already been mentioned by some reviewers of the first edition, should have been resolved in this new edition. Another debatable feature is that this book has virtually no citations. Beekes makes no direct reference in the pages of this volume to the handbooks, articles and dictionaries mentioned in the bibliography. Apart from his own personal views, most of what he reports is anonymous, and the result can often be disconcerting, especially for the student having no training in it. In the 'Indexes' (pp. 387-415) an index of the Proto-Indo-European reconstructed forms is missing (only the English translation of these forms appears).

The first chapter (pp. 1-9) is a general introduction to historical and comparative linguistics and to the language families of the world. In mentioning the different Semitic languages (p. 5), a reference to Ugaritic, a Northwest Semitic language spoken in Ugarit, Syria, is missing. Ugaritic has been a great literary and linguistic discovery, since it reveals parallels between the Old Testament and the ancient Israelite culture. For the comparatists, Ugaritic, seen in texts from the 14th through to the 12th centuries BCE, is also of great importance since it is older than Phoenician, Aramaic and Hebrew. The second chapter (pp. 11-33) explains the genesis of comparative linguistics, and presents

⁴ As in the 'Eurasia and Oceania' sections (pp. 311-312), 'Linguistic surveys of modern Indo-European languages' (p. 313), 'Specific' (p. 314), 'Old Iranian. Grammars' (pp. 319), 'Tocharian. Dictionaries' (pp. 320-321), 'Celtic. Grammars' (p. 326), 'Fragmentary languages. Thracian Macedonian, Messapian and Sicily' (p. 329), 'Participles' (p. 340-41).

the different branches of the Indo-European languages. As to the origins of the discipline (pp. 13-17), a reference to the Dane Rasmus Rask and the German Franz Bopp is missing, despite these individuals being considered the founding members of Indo-European Linguistics at the beginning of the 18th century.⁵ It also fails to mention the *Junggrammatiker* or the Neogrammarians, a group of young linguists from Leipzig, whose main member was Karl Brugmann, and who in the late 19th century proposed the Neogrammarian hypothesis of the regularity of sound change. In an introductory handbook of Indo-European Linguistics addressed not only to scholars but also to students, the lack of such information should be avoided. Regarding Indo-Iranian (p. 19), Beekes affirms that “Indo-Iranian is without doubt the most archaic of the Indo-European languages” (whose relevant data can be assigned to a period around the 15th century BCE). A claim about the archaic status of Indo-Iranian cannot be simply asserted. It should, at the very least, be contrasted with a mention of Hittite, seen from the 16th century BCE onwards (Anitta text). Moreover, it must be supported with at least some discussion of the criteria for judging archaism from innovation. In my opinion, the contrast between Indo-Iranian and Hittite, which has a more simple morphological system in comparison with the rich system of Indo-Iranian, should be mentioned. Specialists in the languages of the different IE subgroups will inevitably find details to quibble about here. For instance, on p. 21, in reference to Lycian, it is mentioned that ‘in 1973 a sizeable inscription was discovered in Xanthos with a translation in Greek and Aramaic’. However, it should be noted that this trilingual Stele (Lycian-Greek-Aramaic) was discovered not in Xanthos, but in the Letôon of Xanthos (a sanctuary situated some kilometers away from the city of Xanthos), and reveals the foundation of a cult for the goddess Leto by the citizens of Xanthos. This trilingual Stele is different from another also sizeable trilingual Stele (Lycian-Greek-Milyan) discovered in the city of Xanthos, which describes the military and economic activities of a local dynasty, and is referred to as the ‘trilingual Stele of Xanthos’. It is therefore important to make a clear difference between ‘the trilingual stele of the Letôon’, and the ‘trilingual stele of Xanthos’, both of which have been of immense importance in advancing the understanding of the Lycian language. As to the recent deciphering of Carian (p. 21), a mention of Adiego and his crucial article of 1992 is lacking. I would not say that ‘only when a bilingual inscription (Carian-Greek) was discovered in Kaunos in 1996, was a definite decipherment of (part of) the Carian alphabet possible’, but rather

⁵ In 1818 Rask published the *Undersøgelse om det gamle Nordiske eller Islandske Sprogs Oprindelse*, in which he traced the affinity of Icelandic to the other European languages, particularly Latin and Greek. In 1816, Franz Bopp published *Über das Conjugationssystem der Sanskritsprache, in Vergleichung mit jenem der griechischen, lateinischen, persischen und germanischen Sprache, nebst Episoden des Ramajan und Mahabharat in genauen metrischen Übersetzungen aus dem Originaltexte und einigen Abschnitten aus den Veda's*. Both monographies are considered to be the foundation works of the discipline.

that this discovery could corroborate the deciphering already made by Adiego in collaboration with other scholars in 1992.

Chapter 3 (pp. 35-53) is devoted to the culture and origin of Indo-Europeans. It is well-presented and informative, especially for students. On p. 49 Beekes assumes, without any explanation, that PIE had glottalised consonants, as do some of the Caucasian languages. According to the author, it would not be improbable for Indo-European to be related to the Uralic family. A claim that PIE had glottalised consonants cannot be simply asserted. I believe this view should be treated with extreme caution, especially given the fact that the view that PIE had glottalised consonants has yet to be fully accepted by the *communis opinio*. Occasionally there is a lack of elaboration in the presentation of certain issues, as in the case of the origin of Etruscan. On p. 46, Beekes affirms that: 'Hittite has no more than 500 words inherited from PIE; the rest must have been borrowed from languages from those areas which the Hittites came to inhabit. Etruscan is a remnant of such an original language, but then in Turkey, from which it originated'. The author makes no mention of the fact that the origins of Etruscan and the Etruscans remain a disputed issue among scholars. Although there is strong evidence that Etruscan came from Asia Minor and that the inscription of Lemnos could be a linguistic relative (Van Der Meer 1992), the issue deserves more attention than this simple assertion. Beekes seems to follow only his own conclusions (Beekes 1993).

Chapter four (pp. 55-71) deals with sound change. The first subchapter (pp. 55-57) is devoted to the sound law and the 'Ausnahmslosigkeit', yet, surprisingly, no mention is made of the Neogrammarians, who were the first to propose the regularity of the sound change. On p. 70, *a propos* of the reconstructed PIE system $*p : *b : *b^h$, a direct mention of Greenberg's universal, according to which if one language has b^h it must necessarily have p^h , is missing.

The fifth chapter (pp. 75-82) explains one of the most important factors that creates language changes: the analogy. Chapter six (pp. 83-84) describes other form-changes and the seventh chapter (pp. 85-92) is devoted to vocabulary changes. A whole chapter is devoted to introducing morphological and syntactic change (pp. 93-98). On p. 96 Beekes suggests that the PIE middle voice had intransitive ('I wash myself') and transitive forms ('I do it for myself'). In the first case, instead of 'intransitive' it would have been better to have used another word to describe the form, such as 'reflexive', because the sentence 'I wash myself' is also transitive (with 'myself' being the direct object of the verb). Chapters 9 (pp. 99-103) and 10 (pp. 107-115) deal with internal reconstruction and the comparative method respectively. In these two chapters Beekes demonstrates his erudition regarding the Indo-European tradition with a philological accuracy and a methodological rigour.

PIE phonology is discussed in Chapter 11 (119-167). A few observations can be made concerning this phonological system. Beekes considers $*i/\underset{\sim}{i}$, $*u/\underset{\sim}{u}$, $*m/\underset{\sim}{m}$, $*n/\underset{\sim}{n}$, $*r/\underset{\sim}{r}$ and

**l̥* to reflect consonantal or vocalic outcomes of the single PIE phonemes **i*, **u*, **m*, **n*, **r* and **l*. This is a welcome observation, since it reduces the visual confusion in the sense that it does not provide the phonetic variants of these sounds in reconstructions. However, as has been mentioned in Footnote 3, in the pages of this volume there are reconstructed forms with **ṃ*, **ṇ*, **ṛ* and **ḷ*, which are incongruent with this reconstruction. Regarding the reconstruction of the PIE velars **k* **g* **g^h*, a question mark is placed inexplicably after the word *velars* in the table of the PIE phonemic system (p.119), inexplicable in the sense that the reconstruction of the PIE velars has not been questioned. Another question is the need to reconstruct two or three series of velars. Pages 124-126 discuss the problem of the reconstruction of three velar series. Beekes mentions that none of known languages has three series, although some scholars believe that Albanian may have preserved the three series. In this context a reference to Luwian is missing, since according to some scholars (Watkins) this language could also have preserved the three series: Luw. *kar-š* (< *(*s*)*ker* ‘to cut’); Luw. *cui* (< **k^wi-* ‘qui’); Luw. *zārt* < **k̥rd-* ‘heart’). The problem of the reconstruction of the phoneme **p* /*θ*/ is explained on pp. 135-136. An explicit reference to the fact that it was Brugmann who reconstructed this unvoiced interdental fricative, and that he called it *thorn* due to the name that appears in the runic alphabet, is missing. In his handbook’s table of correspondences (see for instance p. 121), Beekes shows the IE languages in the following order: PIE, Skt., Av., OCS, Lith., Arm., Alb., Toch., Hitt., Gr., Lat. OIr. and Goth. In my opinion, Hittite, Greek and Latin appear excessively distant from PIE, if we take into account their antiquity, their large corpus and their importance to the reconstruction of PIE. As for the PIE sonants, and more precisely the development of **ǵ* in Greek, apart from *z*, *h* and *ϕ* a reference to the Greek development *y* (λεῖχῶ < **leig^h-*) is missing. When Beekes explains the treatments of a PIE laryngeal before a sonant in Greek, there is no reference to Rix’s law, which describes the treatment in Greek of initial laryngeals before pre-consonantal syllabic resonants, showing *a* (< **h₂*), *e* (< **h₁*), *o* (< **h₃*).

Chapter 12 (pp. 171-178) is an introduction to PIE morphology. Regarding the ablaut, and more precisely the place where the full grade of the root appears (p. 175), it would have been interesting to make a reference to the *Schwebeablaut*, the oscillating ablaut that some roots in *(*s*)*Tr/l-* show: **greb^h-* and *gerb^h-* ‘scratch’, for instance. Nonetheless, while speaking of the origin of the ablaut (pp. 176-177), Beekes makes a very good analysis of the question.

The morphology of the substantive is explained in Chapter 13 (pp. 179-217). It is highly detailed and is full of the discussion of nominal types and paradigms. On p. 190 and the following pages, when Beekes explains the different inflectional types, he does not make any reference to Jochem Schindler, the Austrian Indo-Europeanist whose contribution to the Proto-Indo-European nominal inflection and ablaut was decisive. Chapters 14 (pp.

219-223), 15 (pp. 225-236), 16 (pp. 237-243) and 17 (pp. 245-250) are devoted to the adjective, the pronoun, numerals and indeclinable words respectively.

The verbal morphology is explained in Chapter 18, the final chapter. Although it is a very good explanation, an explicit reference to Rix (1986) and LIV (*Lexikon der Indogermanischen Verben*) is missing. There is no mention of verbal aspect and its complex interplay with tense. In recent decades verbal morphology has made a lot of progress in Indo-European Linguistics but the Proto-Indo-European Aspect theory and the Proto-Indo-European *Aktionsart* are not mentioned in this handbook.

The conclusion of this review is that, while Beekes's handbook often reflects personal opinions and occasionally a lack of objectivity that may confound in some cases, these observations in no way alter the fact that Beekes deserves the deepest gratitude of the community of scholars and students for this well set out handbook, a work which demonstrates the highest philological quality and adherence to traditional standards of Indo-European Linguistics.

References

Adiego, Ignacio-Javier. 1992. 'Recherches cariennes: essay d'amélioration du système de J.D. Ray'. *Kadmos* 31, pp. 25-39.

Beekes, Robert. 1993. "The position of Etruscan". In Gerhard Meiser (ed.), *Indogermanica et Italica. Festschrift für Helmut Rix zum 60. Geburtstag*, pp. 46-60.

Brugmann, Karl. 1886. *Grundriß der vergleichenden Grammatik der indogermanischen Sprachen*, Strassburg (digitally printed version of 2009, Cambridge University Press).

Clackson, James. 2007. *Indo-European Linguistics. An Introduction*, Cambridge.

Fortson, Benjamin W. 2010². *Indo-European Language and Culture. An Introduction*, Malden, MA.

Krahe, Hans. 1943. *Indogermanische Sprachwissenschaft*, Berlin.

Meier Brügger, Michael. 2010⁹. *Indogermanische Sprachwissenschaft*, Berlin-New York.

Rix, Helmut. 1986. *Zur Entstehung des urindogermanischen Modusystems*, Innsbruck.

Rix, Helmut. 2001². *Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben*, Wiesbaden.

Sihler, Andrew L. 1995. *New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin*, New York.

Szemérenyi, Oswald. 1970. *Einführung in die vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft*, Darmstadt (the English version *Introduction to Indo-European Linguistics* was published in 1996).

Van der Meer, Lammert Bouke. 1992. "The Stele of Lemnos and Etruscan Origins", *OMRL* 72, pp. 61-71.