

## REVIEWS

***Indo-European Linguistics: An Introduction.*** By James Clackson. (Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2007. Pp. xxii, 260. Paperback. £19.99. \$32.99.

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Reviewed by MARC PIERCE, *University of Texas*

Recent years have seen the publication of a number of handbooks of Indo-European studies in English, both originally written in English (for example, Fortson 2004 and Mallory & Adams 2006) and translated from other languages (there are now English translations of handbooks such as Beekes 1990, Szemerényi 1990, and Meier-Brügger 2002, among others). The book under review here, by the author of various important works in historical linguistics and Indo-European and classical studies (see especially Clackson 1994 and Clackson & Horrocks 2007), stands up well against such books. In some respects, it differs sharply from them, as it “is deliberately not intended to be a grammar of IE, or a survey of the developments that have taken place between PIE and the daughter IE languages” (p. 2). Instead, this book “aspires [...] to the status of a toolkit” (p. xii); it aims “to be a survey of some current debates and topics of more general interest in the reconstruction of PIE, and a guide to the ways in which some of these issues have been addressed” (p. 2).

The book consists of seven chapters, each of which includes a list of suggestions for further readings and discussion points; there are also exercises at various places in most of the chapters.<sup>1</sup> The first chapter, “The Indo-European language family” (pp. 1–26), reviews the purpose of the book, the IE languages and cladistics, “the time and place of PIE,” and Nostratic and other attempts at long-distance comparison. Chapter 2, “Phonology” (pp. 27–63), looks at the comparative method and phono-

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<sup>1</sup> Material related to the exercises, including solutions to some of them, is available at [http://www.classics.cam.ac.uk/faculty/staff-bios/academic-research-staff/james\\_clackson/indo\\_european/](http://www.classics.cam.ac.uk/faculty/staff-bios/academic-research-staff/james_clackson/indo_european/).

logical reconstruction, the reconstruction of the PIE phonological system, the glottalic theory, the reconstruction of the PIE velars, and the laryngeal theory. The third chapter, “Morphophonology” (pp. 64–89), covers morpheme structure constraints (for example, the theory of IE roots put forth in Benveniste 1935), ablaut, accent, and the possible connections between ablaut and accent. The next chapter, “Nominal morphology” (pp. 90–113), deals with nominal declensions and the reconstruction of number and gender in Proto-Indo-European. Chapter 5, “Verbal morphology” (pp. 114–156), addresses what Clackson refers to as the “Greco-Aryan model” of PIE verbal morphology, which is based largely on evidence from Greek and Sanskrit; the problem of fitting the verbal systems of the Anatolian languages into this model; the *-hi*-conjugation in Hittite (treated recently in significantly more detail in Jasanoff 2003); the PIE middle; and roots and stems in Proto-Indo-European. The next chapter, “Syntax” (pp. 157–186), surveys the principles of syntactic reconstruction, and then discusses PIE word order, clause linking and subordination, alignment change, and phraseology (see Watkins 1995 on this last issue). The final thematic chapter, “Lexicon and lexical semantics” (pp. 187–215), focuses on issues like the reconstruction of PIE lexical fields (numerals, kinship terms, animal taxonomies) and the thorny question of what the reconstructed PIE lexicon can tell us about PIE culture. (It is a bit surprising that Clackson does not address the attempts of various scholars to pin down the exact homeland of PIE speakers based on lexical reconstruction, on which see Mallory 1989, among others, although this issue is touched on in chapter 1.) There is also a glossary, references, and various indices (for words, languages, people, and subjects), although the indices are rather incomplete.

In many respects, this is an admirable book. The tone of the book is much less dogmatic than the tone of such books often is, and Clackson does a good job of highlighting various problematic issues and giving a sober and careful evaluation of possible solutions. To take one relevant example, the section on glottalic theory lays out the controversies involved (mainly the status of the voiceless aspirates and the problem of PIE *\*b*). It describes glottalic theory, reviews its status as a solution to these problems, and ultimately rejects it concluding that a reconstruction must be found that exhibits both “the diachronic explanatory power of the traditional model” and accounts for “the apparent markedness of the *\*d* series” (p. 48; the term “the *\*d* series” refers to the series traditionally

reconstructed as plain voiced stops). The inclusion of exercises and discussion questions will enhance the value of the book as a tool for learning about Proto-Indo-European, and the discussion of issues like Nostratic is also welcome. Despite this, some readers will find this book difficult. I, for one, would be reluctant to use it in a class of beginners; in my view, to get the most out of this book one should have a good working knowledge of linguistic theory, historical linguistics, phonology, and at least one early Indo-European language. Some of the problems, like the question about Etruscan on pp. 25–26, would be very difficult to answer for readers without such a background, and therefore this book is not the ideal starting point for them.

There are inevitably areas where one might disagree with Clackson. Perhaps the most startling of these is Clackson's claim that regular sound change is "not an essential factor to ensure the success of the C[omparative] M[ethod] [...]. Since the method operates on a majority rule basis, it is possible to reconstruct sounds as long as *most* (if not all) of the sounds in a language change in the same way" (p. 32; italics in original). Clackson also points to various sociolinguistic studies that have shown that sound change is "not 'exceptionless'" (p. 32). Sound change is, of course, not exceptionless; it has long been known that a number of factors can interfere with sound changes (the Neogrammarians, for instance, recognized the effects of analogy and dialect borrowing). Be that as it may, while exceptionless sound change may not be necessary for the comparative method, regular sound change is, in fact, the cornerstone of the comparative method as applied to phonology (see Fox 1995 or de Vaan 2008 for further discussion of this point).

Beyond such objections, I would like to have seen a discussion of grammaticalization in the chapter on syntax and a discussion of the possible effects of taboo deformation (as certainly happened in the case of IE words for 'bear') in the section on animal names, and Hopper (1973) should also receive credit for the glottalic theory. There is some imprecision in the references, as translations are not always clearly indicated as such, and sometimes an additional reference or two would have been welcome (for instance, I would have cited Southern 1999 on *s*-mobile and Salmons & Smith 2005 on labiovelar stops in PIE, and it should be noted that an expanded version of Warren Cowgill's paper on the personal endings of thematic verbs in Indo-European was published in Cowgill 2006). Typos and other such slips are generally minor.

It is perhaps inevitable that this book will be compared with Fortson 2004, as they are the two major works on Indo-European written in English of the past five years, and perhaps just as inevitable that the comparisons will not be entirely in favor of Clackson's book. After all, the reviews of Fortson 2004 have generally been glowing (Klein 2006: 382 refers to reading Fortson 2004 as "one of the most pleasant intellectual experiences" of his life). Yet, to neglect this book in favor of Fortson 2004 would be misguided; they should be used in tandem with each other, not to each other's exclusion. As such, this book deserves a place in every Anglophone Indo-Europeanist's bookcase.

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Department of Germanic Studies  
University of Texas at Austin  
1 University Station C3300  
Austin, TX 78712  
USA  
[mpierc@mail.utexas.edu]