



An Introduction to the Indo-European Languages

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An introduction to the Indo-European languages. By PHILIP BALDI. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983. Pp. xvi, 214, with 2 maps. \$12.95.

Reviewed by BRIAN D. JOSEPH, *Ohio State University*

In the preface, Baldi states that he is 'attempting to avoid [the] superficial treatment' of the branches of the IE family 'found in most introductory works', while at the same time giving a 'comprehensive linguistic survey of the Indo-European groups that synthesizes the vast amount of information available in the specialized handbooks of the individual stocks' (xiii–xiv). His idea is thus an ambitious one, that of providing thumbnail sketches of the most salient facts about the major representatives of the various IE subgroups (taking the admittedly controversial view, pp. 118–22, that Baltic and Slavic are separate branches). Besides general information about the branches—geographic setting, date of extinction or decipherment if relevant, dialectology etc.—B gives a structural sketch (in fact, usually a mix of synchronic and diachronic information) and a sample text for Latin and Oscan/Umbrian (Italic), Old Irish (Celtic), Sanskrit and Avestan (Indo-Iranian), Greek, (Old) Armenian, Albanian, Lithuanian (Baltic), Old Church Slavonic (Slavic), Gothic (Germanic), Tocharian, and Hittite (Anatolian). In addition, there is a general introduction about 'the concept of Indo-European' and methodology; a section with brief mention of several minor IE languages (Ligurian, Lepontic, Sicel, Raetic, Thraco-Phrygian, Illyrian, Messapic, and Venetic); and occasional discussion of controversial matters, e.g. Balto-Slavic and Italo-Celtic.

In principle, such a book could be useful in the way that B envisions it, namely as a text 'in general courses in Indo-European languages and linguistics', but also as 'something more than a classroom text'—perhaps for interested people in other fields within linguistics or in other disciplines? In fact, there have been earlier attempts to produce such books; cf. Pisani 1947 and Lockwood 1972. However, considering that those books are no longer in print, it is not unreasonable that a book like B's would be in order. However, his execution is so flawed that the work cannot possibly be used in a classroom, and it certainly is not suitable for the educated non-linguist or non-Indo-Europeanist who hopes to learn something about the IE languages. Every chapter contains numerous errors of fact, misleading statements, and significant omissions; the untutored reader could come away from this book with much misinformation about Indo-European, the IE languages, IE linguistics, and historical/comparative linguistics in general. Moreover, the lack of detailed grammatical information in the interlinear glosses associated with each sample text renders them less useful than was no doubt intended.

Part of the problem stems from B's apparent decision (though nowhere stated

or defended) to follow traditional, or sometimes merely available, modes of description for each of the languages discussed, including terminology (e.g. 'conjunctive' rather than 'subjunctive' for Albanian, 92), even when these get in the way of cross-language comparison. What emerges is not so much a series of structural sketches of the languages in question, but rather a series of guidelines for looking through the literature on those languages—an introduction to terms that are used in talking about the languages, not an introduction to the languages themselves.

This misguided emphasis leads B to produce 'structural sketches' that are often nothing more than lists of elements (as with the tenses of Lithuanian, 102); to state categorically (28) that Latin nouns occur in five declensional classes (the traditional organization, though in fact significant differences in subgroups of the 3rd declension might warrant a different over-all division); but also to say that Tocharian nouns are 'generally divided into two main subgroups ... [with] ... subdivisions of considerable complexity' (148; again, the handbook account). In addition, it leads B to consider orthography in some cases where he intends to discuss phonology, e.g. regarding the so-called 'breathings' of Greek (74–5, and see below)—handbooks often mention them as part of the philological (but not phonological!) interpretation of Greek.

Another major failing in the exposition arises from two recurrent comments that detract considerably from the discussion. Again and again (cf. 19 re the PIE case system, 20 re the IE verb, 45 re Old Irish syntax, 77 re the syntax of Greek moods, and 136 re the Gothic vowel system), B tells the reader that a particular phenomenon in a language is most complex—perhaps too much so to be treated in the work. Curiously, however, a number of (in fact complex) phenomena are dismissed as 'manageable' (cf. 92 re Albanian syntax, 100 re Baltic historical phonology) or 'unremarkable' (76 re Greek syntax). B does acknowledge in one instance that such statements are 'purely relative and evaluative' (45), and it is certainly true in general that many tricky issues need to be given short shrift in introductory works; but B's over-use of such characterizations weakens the credibility of his presentation.

In view of the large number of misstatements and omissions, it seems advisable to go through the book, chapter by chapter, to bring the more problematic statements to light:

CHAP. 1: INTRODUCTION. P. 3: To say that the 'scientific study of language began late in the eighteenth century with the discovery of Sanskrit in India by Europeans' ignores the considerable scientific linguistic activity in ancient India, in the Classical world, among the Arabic grammarians etc. P. 8: The implication that morphological type (inflecting/agglutinating etc.) is a reliable criterion for genetic relatedness is misleading.—Hittite *eš-zi* can be included in Table 3, with forms of the verb 'to be'. P. 9: The Sanskrit nominal forms in Table 4 should be labeled more carefully; e.g. inst.sg. *ásvā* is Vedic, and acc.pl. *ásvāms* is arguably the underlying form but certainly not the usual citation form. P. 18: The Skt. reflexes of the labiovelars include palatals before original front vowels, as in one of the forms cited: *sáce* 'follow'. P. 19: Though B is here only repeating what is usually said about Hittite alone preserving the laryngeal sounds, it is actually Anatolian in general (including Luvian and Palaic) that does so, and the real issue is preservation of laryngeals as consonants (thus Gk. prothetic vowels are generally accepted as showing a trace—in vocalic form—of original consonantal laryngeals). P. 20: Vedic subjunctive and injunctive are omitted from a listing of Skt. moods. P. 21: B's facile acceptance of W. P. Lehmann's typological methods in diachronic syntax contrasts markedly with his earlier caution regarding the comparative method.

CHAP. 2: ITALIC. P. 27: Saying (j) is the 'typical written form' of the Latin palatal semivowel is misleading; it is not true for most handbook citations or most inscriptions. P. 28: Using 'deponent' as a synonym for middle voice is to confuse forms with categories; similarly, calling the infinitive a verbal 'mood' is unusual. P. 34 ff.: In discussing the relation of Latin to Oscan/Umbrian, B mentions several similarities that are in fact irrelevant or inconclusive—e.g. 'the organization of the nominal system into five inflectional categories and the verb system into four' (not necessarily a property of the languages themselves, but of their traditional descriptions); 'the merger of the reflexes of *bh, *dh as f in initial position' (the medial reflexes are quite different, and the Faliscan facts need to be considered); and 'general agreement of the verb "to be"' (actually only in the 1sg. present, itself a real diachronic puzzle—and cf. the difference in vocalism in the 3pl., La. *sunt* but Oscan *sent*).

CHAP. 3: CELTIC. P. 42: Citing a proto-form *wiri for the nom.pl. forms Old Irish *fir* 'men' and La. *virī* 'men' is odd, given early La. instances of nom.pl. forms in *-oi* (does B mean the gen.sg. here?) P. 46: The omission of any mention of Old Irish inflected prepositions is glaring.

CHAP. 4: INDO-IRANIAN. P. 51: Saying that this is the 'only group that directly attests to a period of common development between two branches of the Indo-European family' is misleading; in Stammbaum terms, the branching of Indo-Iranian into Indic and Iranian is no different qualitatively from, e.g., the branching of Greek into the dialect groups of Ancient Greek. P. 57: The statements of Skt. sandhi are inexact in places—thus only final voiceless stops become voiced between vowels, not medial or initial voiceless stops; final *s r* become visarga only before *p ph k kh* and voiceless sibilants, and in sentence-final position. Pp. 58–9: In the listing of Skt. voices, tenses, and moods, B does not mention the special passive aorist 3sg. The conditional is not, strictly speaking a 'tense'; the periphrastic future is omitted from the list of tense forms; and the Vedic injunctive (an augmentless preterit but with a distinct modal value, as argued by Hoffman 1967) is also left out. P. 62: Differences between the consonantal systems of Avestan and Sanskrit are duly noted, but Av. *s* corresponds to Skt. *ś* (not *s*), and Av. *h* to Skt. *ś* (not *h*). P. 64: The value of a marker *-u* for 3rd person imperatives as an indicator of Indo-Iranian unity is lessened by its occurrence in Hittite. B fails to mention 'Brugmann's Law' here (by which PIE *o → IIr *a: / ____ [+son] [+syll]), despite its probative value in subgrouping.

CHAP. 5: HELLENIC. P. 68: Greek digamma stands for consonantal [w], not vocalic [u] (again on 74). P. 69: The change of *t* to *s* in Attic/Ionic and other dialects does not occur intervocalically, as B suggests, but rather before *i* (and after both consonants and vowels, with some other restrictions as well). P. 73: The so-called 'spurious diphthongs' that result from contraction, though written *ε* and *ο*, are not true diphthongs, as B implies. P. 74: In giving the Gk. consonantal system, B confuses orthography with phonology, stating that '[ŋ] listed above replaces the sound *g* occurring before *k, g, kh, or ks*'; in fact this merely reflects a spelling rule for the velar nasal—which replaces [n], not [g]. P. 75: Again, the discussion of Greek 'breathings' (signs for presence and absence respectively of [h] initially before syllabics and /r/) confuses orthography with phonology (even though their occurrence is labeled as a 'feature of Greek phonology').

CHAP. 6: ARMENIAN. P. 79: Close connections between Armenian and Greek within Indo-European, though not fully accepted, are hardly the 'shaky conjecture' B claims. P. 81: We are told that the 'Old Armenian consonant system is a ... systematic one' (!)

CHAP. 7: ALBANIAN. P. 88: B's discussion of the change of intervocalic *n* to *r* in Tosk suggests, wrongly, that the dialect has no intervocalic [n]. P. 89: The differences between Ghëg and Tosk in the formation of the infinitive (with *me* and *për* respectively, both followed by participials) deserve mention in the list of dialect divergences. P. 90: The phonetic values of graphic ⟨rr⟩ and ⟨ll⟩ are not palatalized liquids, as B suggests; rather they are an apical trill and a voiced raised-dorsal lateral, respectively (cf. Newmark et al. 1982, a work not listed in the references). P. 91: B says nothing about the proclitic particles that precede adjectives (his discussion implies that they are nominal definite articles), nor does he call attention to the obligatory proclitic with genitive forms of the noun (though it is included in the paradigms). P. 92: The admirative mood is listed, but it surely deserves some elucidation.—Albanian syntax deserves more treatment than being called 'in general quite manageable'; nothing is said about clitic doubling, about the common use of finite subordination in Tosk, or about the syntax of the nominal/adjectival particle system.

CHAP. 8: BALTIC. Pp. 94 ff.: Here and elsewhere in this chapter, 'the conservative nature of the Baltic languages' is stressed and actually overemphasized, even though B attempts to put to rest

some of the popular myths associated with this putative characteristic. With this emphasis, however, B fails to note many obvious and important innovations as such (e.g. the 'generalization of palatalization as a distinctive feature of the entire [phonological] system 'of Lithuanian, 99, or the definite forms in the adjective and passive forms of the verb, 101). Only on 100 does the truth about the reputed 'conservatism' come out: 'when we speak of Lithuanian as the most conservative living language of the Indo-European family, it is the noun morphology that provides the main impetus for our claim.' Thus B perpetuates to a large extent the myth about which he advised caution.

CHAP. 9: SLAVIC. P. 106: I find odd the statement that 'the Slavic languages are important for historical Indo-European studies [in part because,] as a consequence of the rich inflectional system, [they show] a relatively free word order that provides valuable insight into the interplay between syntax and morphology in inflectionally complex languages such as Proto-Indo-European'. Couldn't the same be said about many other (ancient and modern) IE languages? P. 112: B's discussion of Old Russian could be taken to imply that it derives from Old Church Slavonic.

CHAP. 10: GERMANIC. P. 126: Stearns 1978 should now be cited in any discussion of Crimean Gothic.—It is unclear what is meant by B's statement that 'each of the individual languages [of West Germanic] is highly inconsistent'. P. 134: To say that 'ablaut is a far more important feature in Germanic than in any other Indo-European language' is surely to overstate the case (cf. Greek, Sanskrit). P. 135: The claim that Go. syntax is influenced by Greek needs to be tempered with a consideration of the difference between translation syntax in a particular work (e.g. the Gothic Bible) and real influence on the language as a whole, outside the medium of translation.—The discussion of Go. absolute constructions is methodologically flawed: B states that such constructions 'are not reconstructible for Proto-Germanic, since they are not found outside Gothic'; but it is certainly possible for an archaic feature to be found in just one branch of a subgroup. Since other IE languages have similar absolute constructions (admittedly with case variation, which makes reconstruction tricky), there is every reason to believe that the Go. absolute is NOT borrowed wholesale from Greek. P. 137: While probably a typo, [ð] does not belong among the stops in the table of Gothic consonants.

CHAP. 11: TOCHARIAN. P. 144: The statement with regard to loans from Tocharian B into Tocharian A, that 'simple parallel borrowings between two similar dialects of the same language would usually be remade phonologically in the receiving language', is simply not true; dialect borrowing is a real phenomenon (cf. *bust/burst* and the like in English). Pp. 144–5: The discussion of how Tocharian fits into the centum/satəm split overlooks the likelihood that Albanian maintains a trace of an original three-way contrast in the gutturals—whereas Tocharian, far from being a clear centum language, does not even show a clear two-way contrast in reflexes of the gutturals. P. 146: B's assertion that Tocharian *ä* 'is usually derived from the Indo-European **a*₂, or "second laryngeal"' is completely wrong, based on a misreading of Windekens (1976:24)—where the **a*₂ mentioned is not the vocalic counterpart of the second (*a*-coloring) laryngeal, but rather 'shwa secundum'. This epenthetic vowel seems to have broken up (certain types of) PIE clusters, perhaps giving the correspondence of Gk. *i* to La. *a* in *pītnēmi* 'spread' ≈ *pandō* 'spread', from [**ptneH-*], (morpho)phonemically /**ptneH-*).

CHAP. 12: ANATOLIAN. P. 153: The Hittite 2sg. present ending *-ši* could be added to the list of obvious IE features in the language.—Mention is made here for the first time of the injunctive mood in the PIE context (see above re Chaps. 1 and 4); mention in the same context of the precativ mood (an optative of the aorist, found only to a limited extent in Sanskrit) is odd indeed. P. 154: When B contrasts Hittite, as largely postpositional in its syntax, with 'the majority of the older languages', he ignores the fact that Latin (one of the majority languages cited) shows traces of earlier postpositional syntax, e.g. *nobiscum* 'with us'—and that, in internal reconstruction, just such synchronic irregularities are more significant than synchronically regular patterns. P. 160: B's discussion of Hittite phonology is severely flawed. He flatly states that Hittite has eliminated the voiced/voiceless contrast of the proto-language; but in fact, by most accounts, this is exactly the contrast indicated by the distribution of single vs. double stop symbols. (The exact interpretation of this spelling rule—usually referred to as 'Sturtevant's Law' and never mentioned by B as such—is a matter of some controversy.) B's examples for single vs. double writing of stops actually involve fricatives(!), for which the interpretation of the contrast is even more controversial.—B

prominently mentions the single occurrence in the entire Hittite corpus of an assimilation between a final nasal and a following initial stop (/halkin pianzi/ written once as <hal-ki-im pi-an-zi> 'they give grain') as evidence for the existence of sandhi. This surely gives a mistaken impression about Hittite and about sandhi in general: is such an assimilation really so unusual from a phonological standpoint? The example most likely shows a fast-speech phenomenon which happened (accidentally) to be recorded by a scribe; what is interesting about it is that such assimilations were usually suppressed graphically. Curiously, B completely overlooks the widespread occurrence of similar assimilations in ancient Greek inscriptions (and so says nothing about 'sandhi' in Greek!)

CHAP. 13: MINOR INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES. Pp. 165 ff.: The treatment here is most uneven, with notable omissions both of languages (e.g. Ancient Macedonian) and references (e.g. Katičić 1976 on the ancient languages of the Balkans). P. 168: Curiously, in view of B's separation of Baltic and Slavic elsewhere, he here lists it as a single IE subgroup.

I have been quite negative—but of necessity, since Baldi has not been very successful at what he set out to do. He does end up providing a survey of the major branches of the IE family, but the material included in each chapter must be approached with extreme caution. However, the concept of the book itself is not flawed; a good survey of this sort could indeed be usable in the ways intended. Thus a competent revision could well yield a useful work. However, given the rather large number of problems with the book in its present form—the listing above is far from exhaustive—one cannot be too sanguine about the prospects of a successful revision.

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Scratch a historical linguist and you are likely to find a belief that languages are moving inexorably toward or away from a state of paradise. Of course, it takes a scratch, because such a belief is rarely worn on the sleeve. Nonetheless,

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