

Bičovský, Jan

[Machajdíková, B.; Eliášová Buzássyová, L. (eds.). Greek – Latin – Slavic : aspects of linguistics and grammatography]

Graeco-Latina Brunensia. 2023, vol. 28, iss. 2, pp. 166-167

ISSN 1803-7402 (print); ISSN 2336-4424 (online)

Stable URL (DOI): <https://doi.org/10.5817/GLB2023-2-12>

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/digilib.79123>

License: [CC BY-SA 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/)

Access Date: 16. 02. 2024

Version: 20240108

Terms of use: Digital Library of the Faculty of Arts, Masaryk University provides access to digitized documents strictly for personal use, unless otherwise specified.

Machajdík, Barbora & Eliášová Buzássyová, Ľudmila (Eds.). (2023). *Greek - Latin - Slavic. Aspects of Linguistics and Grammatography*. (288 pp.). Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto. ISBN 978-3-8233-8527-1.

Jan Bičovský

The volume under review brings together nine scholars from diverse subfields of historical linguistics. As the title and subtitle suggest, the area covered by the contributions is varied in terms of topic, language, and era, and while the papers offer valuable contributions to the respective fields, the thematic incoherence is notable and the preface does not offer much in the way of a unifying framework to make the various contributions reflect on each other. As the editors state, the volume is not a typical conference proceedings, and the pronounced differences in topic and scope result from the selection of abstracts accepted for the eponymous conference which was prevented from happening by the COVID 19 pandemics.

This said, the individual chapters are without exception valuable contributions to their respective fields. First five chapters belong more or less loosely to the field of grammatography itself. The first two deal with the tradition of Latin grammars *per se*. Anneli Luhtala opens the volume with a presentation of what was a relatively neglected area in medieval study and teaching of Latin, syntax. Her exploration of some of the basic linguistic concepts recognizable in the tradition, such as transitivity and government, coordination and subordination, adds considerably not only to our understanding of the evolution of European linguistic science but also its dependence on other fields, especially logic. Tangential to this study is, in a way, Ľudmila Eliášová Buzássyová, who explores the ways classical grammars in the German context from the 1500 to cca 1840 approached the area of word-formation. She notes how subtle changes mani-

fest a gradual shift in defining word-formation and finding suitable analytical tools and categories in these primarily didactic works.

Next two articles focus on Slavic. In her brief paper, Gabriela Múcsková discusses the problems of linguistic categorization of “controversial” phenomena, such as the Slovak conditional particle *by*. Like the next paper, the merits of her chapter are not strictly in analysing the linguistic material as such or providing new insights into the category but rather reflecting on the problems of scientific discourse – especially the ongoing influence of earlier grammatical works.

In a similar vein, Ondřej Šefčík offers a look behind the scenes of the Czech national revival in early 19th c. in the dispute of two conflicting approaches, personified by the progressivism of Josef Jungmann and the conservative Nejedlý, and their disagreement on the shape of Czech orthography, with Nejedlý defending a highly archaic form reflecting the 16th century “Golden Age” of Czech literature, and Jungmann on the side of the reform. As it stands, this will be more of interest to scholars of history than historical linguistics proper, being a case study of a politically loaded controversy which was to some degree typical of the same process in other linguistic environments over Europe.

The next three chapters deal with ancient Greek material. Wojciech Sowa contributed a novel appraisal of a short lexical list Γλώσσαι κατὰ πόλεις, giving forms chiefly attested through Homer which are assigned to various Greek dialects by the list’s anonymous compiler. Sowa’s discussion is valu-

able both in the treatment of individual etyma (such as the problematic ἄα ‚Earth‘) and in the methodological observations on the treatment of such lexical material in general. Although the list has been the subject of several dedicated studies, Sowa manages to bring new hypotheses as well as remind us of the necessity to go back to these seemingly unexciting sources and look closer at the implications of their creation and continued transmission.

Etymological in character is the contribution by Václav Blažek with the focus on the origin of Greek γέφυρα ‚bridge‘. In the detailed, yet inconclusive discussion, this isolated and difficult word is tentatively ascribed to a Hurro-Urartian substrate overlaid by analogy to domestic Indo-European terms.

Of a very different kind is the paper by Martin Masliš, who sets out to test the hypothesis that derivations with low formal fidelity to their base should tend to diverge semantically more often, using Ancient Greek material. Masliš consulted ancient Greek lexicography and brought together a representative dataset for several types of derivations and the conclusions support the hypothesis. While this is in a way simply a confirmation of an intuition that has been guiding etymologists for centuries, this demonstration is valuable both for its results and the

general discussion which formulates very precisely some of the basic tenets of the method as well as their theoretical background.

The last two chapters return to ancient Italy and deal with Latin linguistics. Maté Ittész examines anew the problematic phrase *speculo claras* (Plautus *Most.* 642) and evaluates the hypotheses advanced by several specialists to solve the unexpected, and as Ittész demonstrated, unparalleled use of the ablative with the positive rather than comparative. Ittész argues that none of the constructions adduced as structurally comparable are attested or even implied in the Latin system of comparison and concludes that the phrase should be, after all, emended and *speculo claras* cannot be taken at face value.

Last, but not only not least, but in fact the longest contribution is Reiner Lipp's detailed study on the Latin sigmatic futures of the *faxō* 'I will do' type, its variants in Latin, and its counterparts in Sabellic. A very thorough and detailed exposition of the state-of-art of research on sigmatic formation in Italic and beyond is complemented by numerous original insights and the result is a very convincing account of the pre-history of the *faxō*-type from a semi-thematic *s*-future, which also underlies the Sabellic forms such as Umbrian **ferest** 'you will bring'.

Mgr. Jan Bičovský, Ph.D. / jan.bicovsky@ff.cuni.cz

Ústav starého Předního východu

Univerzita Karlova, Filozofická fakulta

Nám. Jana Palacha 1/2, 116 38 Praha 1, Czech Republic



This work can be used in accordance with the Creative Commons BY-SA 4.0 International license terms and conditions (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode>). This does not apply to works or elements (such as image or photographs) that are used in the work under a contractual license or exception or limitation to relevant rights.