

ROGER D. WOODARD, Ed. *The ancient languages of Europe*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Pp. xix, 261.

This is one of five volumes derived from the *Cambridge Encyclopedia of the World's Ancient Languages* (2006), from the same editor and publisher. The ten chapters, prepared by noted specialists, are supplemented by ten figures, 29 tables, and two maps. The contents are indexed separately for subject, grammatical and linguistic terms, languages, and establish laws and principles referred to in the text, e.g., *Grimm's Law*, *Verner's Law*. The first appendix (230 – 246) provides a structural description of reconstructed Indo-European, and serves as an introduction that is as useful as any single piece of literature available. The second appendix offers the TOC of the *Encyclopedia* and of the other volumes in the present series.

We certainly agree with the remark in the Preface, “An ancient language is indeed a thing of wonder — but so is every other language” (1). Since the capacity for language is the faculty that distinguishes the category *human*, the breadth and scope of the diversity of manifestations of that faculty, along with the means to record it and extend it in space and through time, count as the supreme wonders of existence. The designation *ancient* herein is determined to be delimited by the invention of orthography, at the early end of the spectrum, to the end of the fifth century, although this admittedly somewhat arbitrary margin shifts this way and that according the facts of a variety of the languages discussed in these volumes.

The ten chapters and Appendix 1 are listed as follows:

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| 1. Language in Ancient Europe: An Introduction | ROGER D. WOODARD |
| 2. Attic Greek | ROGER D. WOODARD |
| 3. Greek Dialects | ROGER D. WOODARD |
| 4. Latin | JAMES P.T. CLACKSON |
| 5. Sabellian Languages | REX E. WALLACE |

6. Venetic	REX E. WALLACE
7. Etruscan	HELMUT RIX
8. Continental Celtic	JOSEPH F. ESKA
9. Gothic	JAY H. JASANOFF
10. Ancient Nordic	JAN TERIE FAARLUND
Appendix 1	HENRY M. HOENIGSWALD, ROGER D. WOODARD, AND JAMES P.T. CLACKSON

Sir William Jones, who has been so famously and frequently cited on the subject of the comparative study of language, is rightfully quoted at the opening of the editor's "Introduction," for it was his work with Sanskrit, in comparison to the Classical Languages of Europe, with which he was intimately familiar, that gave such great impetus to the field now called historical linguistics. It is also noted that all but lost to modern scholars is evidence of the tongues spoken throughout Europe before the advent of the major languages that history records. We can make informed inferences, for example, about the substrata that contributed to the development of Cantonese (Chinese) by comparison of its features to surviving languages in proximal regions; in the case of the European tongues, this advantage is largely lacking, and we must make what we can of traces and tendencies that survive in the modern vernaculars and whatever descriptive observations may survive in the memoirs and histories that remain.

The chapters here treat of languages in the Indo-European taxon, except for Etruscan, whose speakers resided in central Italy during the latter two-thirds of the first millennium BCE. The major taxa of the region are represented in these articles, which provide the expected and necessary background and history of the languages and their speakers, the orthographic records on which study is based, and a summary of the history of scholarship on the languages. These articles provide comprehensive and substantial information about the aforementioned aspects of study, along with features of the phonology, morphology, syntax and lexicon of the languages,

which extend far beyond what one might expect to find in a language encyclopedia. Any student of language, anthropology, or any discipline that crosses into the history of language and culture in the region will enrich their knowledge by reference to this volume.

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