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Interest in the linguistic history of the Latin language has seen a good resurgence in interest during the last decade and a half. Much work has improved our knowledge of Latin in relation to the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) parent language as well as that of the closely related Sabellic (or Osco-Umbrian) languages of ancient Italy, and has been admirably synthesized in the historical grammars by A. Sihler, ¹ G. Meiser,² and most recently and exhaustively M. Weiss.³ Each of these handbooks, however, are in essence reference grammars documenting and explaining the changes from reconstructed PIE to Latin, and the learning of Latin historical phonology from these books necessarily entails memorization of individual examples and correspondences as given in their descriptions. Given the complexity of the phonological developments in the history of the Latin language, which in turn form the backbone of historical and comparative grammar, there remains a need for a practical pedagogical aid to master this difficult material in a way other than rote memorization of dictated examples. The appearance of this short and useful workbook by Malte Liesner happily fills that desideratum.

Liesner's book is broadly organized into three main sections, *Grundlagen der Lateinischen Historischen Phonologie* (Fundamentals of Latin Historical Phonology, pp.4–21), *Veränderungen der Vokale* (Changes of the Vowels, pp.22–45), and *Veränderungen der Konsonanten* (Changes of the Consonants, pp.46–85), followed by full set of solutions to all the exercises found in the book (pp.86–93), a

¹ A. Sihler, New Comparative Grammar of Greek and Latin (Oxford, 1995)

² G. Meiser, Historische Laut- und Formenlehre der lateinischen Sprache (Darmstadt,

³ M. Weiss, Outline of the Historical and Comparative Grammar (Ann Arbor, 2009)

⁴ One recalls Georg von der Gabelentz dictum from his *Die Sprachwissenschaft: ihre Aufgaben, Methoden, und bisherigen Ergebnisse* (Leipzig, 1891 p.168)

[&]quot;Sprachvergleichung ohne Lautvergleichung ist gedankenlose Spielerei." (Language comparison without sound comparison is mindless foolery.)

The first section of the Grundlagen der Lateinischen historischen Phonologie situates Latin in its proper historical background, and introduces the essential linguistic concepts required to discuss historical phonology. Treated here are topics such as the relationship between Latin orthography to its pronunciation, the necessary fundamentals of articulatory phonetics, phonemes, allophones, and their featural characteristics, the basics of prosodic phonology as applicable to the Latin language (i.e. the syllabification and accentuation of Latin words), and the modeling of sound changes in languages. All these topics are accompanied by abundant examples and exercises, providing drills that put Latin words in to phonemic transcription, minimal pair analyses, syllabification and accentuation of Classical Latin words, and writing up basic phonological rules in terms of formal notation. While some of the material in this section may seem otiose to students already with formal linguistic training, the clear exposition of these concepts will be useful to Classicists without any formal linguistic background, and the tailored cut of the exposition to specifically those features found in Latin will likewise be equally useful for a readership of linguists who might not have a working philological knowledge of the

Following the discussion of essential concepts, Liesner outlines the principal changes in the vocalic system from a stage of the language reconstructed for late Indo-European following the loss of the PIE 'laryngeals', distinguishing five qualities contrastive for length,⁵ to the vowel systems as attested in Old, Classical, and Postclassical Latin. Each chapter of the section is dedicated to a page of general discussion explaining a particular set of sound changes (e.g. iambic shortening, syncope, anaptyxis, etc.) followed by another full page of exercises that illustrate the process. By necessity Liesner must also discuss some of the consonantal developments in the section dealing with vocalic changes, for example the main phonological development illustrated in chapter thirteen exercise 3C *praediko is the syncope of an internal syllable to

language.

5 i.e. a vowel system containing simple vowels *ā, *ē, *ī, *ō, *ū and diphthongs *āi, *ēi, *ōi, *āu, *ēu, *ōu.

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become *praedkō. But before we reach the Classical Latin form, it must undergo first devoicing of the dental stop /d/ in before the voiceless velar /k/ to become *praetkō, then subsequent regressive assimilation to *praekkō and simplification of a geminate cluster before a diphthong to before it finally may surface as praekō. This presentation of the reconstructed forms as a step-by-step progression of individual phonological developments reinforces the learning of individual sound laws in Latin, even if not yet formally introduced. Complex developments, such as the process of vowel weakening (p.30-31), are keyed to the appropriate references in the comparative grammars of Sihler (1995) and Weiss (2009) where the inquisitive reader may find further discussion on difficult or controversial issues.

The third main section of the book deals with the principal changes in the consonantal system. Many of the inner-Italic processes were already discussed in passing in the discussion of the vocalic system, but here the various assimilations, dissimilations, lenitions, and cluster simplifications are addressed with systematic rigour. A valuable chapter in this section, following the principal inner-Latin developments is the discussion of Analogische Veränderungen, (analogical changes) in the thirty-second chapter. Given a brief explanation of paradigmatic analogy, Liesner then asks students to identify whether a given Latin form is derived directly from the sound-laws or if some analogical reshaping has intervened in the attested form. These are excellent thinking questions, and serve as a good barometer of the mastery of the material to be learned by the reader up to that point. The final chapters of the third section deal with matters of more advanced historical phonology ascertainable only through comparison with other Indo-European languages, the outcomes of Indo-European labiovelars $*k^w$, * g^{w} , * g^{wh} (ch.33), syllabic resonants [m], [n], [n], [n], [n], (ch.34), the voiced aspirates (ch.35), and laryngeals $*h_1$, $*h_2$, $*h_3$ (ch.36). The final two chapters of the section contain no exercises; the former discusses the reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European phonology, briefly examining what is the phonology that we reconstruct for PIE and why, with basic

⁶ Written in Latin orthography as *<praeco>*

⁷ Cf. H.H. Hock *Principles of Historical Linguistics* (Berlin & New York, 1986 pp.167ff.)

illustrative correspondence sets between Latin, Greek, Vedic Sanskrit, Hittite, and the reconstructed PIE phonemes themselves, while the latter briefly outlines the relationship between Latin and the Sabellic languages, with a sketch of the basic difference between the two branches of Italic and bibliography for further reading.

The appendices to the volume discuss the system of Indo-European vowel gradation (Ablaut) as it is found in Latin (A1), a periodized relative chronology of the sound-changes from Proto-Indo-European to Latin (A2), sketches of the consonantal inventories of Proto-Indo-European, Proto-Italic, and Latin (A3), characteristic features of Archaic, Old, Classical, and Vulgar Latin (A4), a diagram with a classification of the Italic branch within Indo-European and the Romance languages with respect to Latin (A5), a bibliography (A6), and a table of phonetic symbols used in the book according to the phonetic shorthand employed by Indo-Europeanists (A7), which is idiosyncratic in important respects from the International Phonetic Alphabet normally used in general linguistics.

One of the key strengths of Liesner's book is its presentation of sound-changes first with observable inner-Latin developments with the changes to the vowels and consonants from reconstructed Proto-Italic preforms to those attested in the various attested stages of the Latin language. It is only much later in chapters thirty-three to thirty-six where the significant bulk of features that are only ascertainable by comparative reconstruction with the other Indo-European languages, which has the advantage of not overwhelming the student with the minutiae of Indo-European comparative linguistics at the outset However, by the end, when the PIE labiovelars, syllabic resonants, and 'laryngeals' are finally introduced, students are fully deriving Latin words step-by-step from their reconstructed Indo-European preforms in the exercises.

In sum, the book is an incredibly useful and welcomed didactic tool for teaching the linguistic history of the Latin language. It can be profitably read in self-study, or as supplementary materials in a

⁸ The school of thought presented on PIE phonology here closely echo the views found in M. Mayrhofer *Indogermanische Grammatik Bd. 1/2: Lautlehre (Segmentale Phonologie des Indogermanischen)*, (Heidelberg, 1986) and the student manual of M. Meier-Brügger *Indogermanische Sprachwissenschaft* (Berlin & New York, 2000).

postgraduate course in Latin historical grammar read in conjunction with one of the standard handbooks (cf. notes 1–3 above). Unfortunately the German language will likely limit its usefulness to English speaking undergraduates, however the examples within could be easily translated and adapted by an instructor for use in an undergraduate classroom. All in all, Liesner's book is a fantastic resource.

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Unfortunately, I am obliged to observe the following corrigenda:

p.4: 'Zwei weitere Vertreter des italischen Sprachzweigs waren das in Norditalien gesprochene Oskisch und das in Süditalien gesprochene Umbrisch..." surely what is intended here is the opposite, "das in Norditalien gesprochene Umbrisch und das in Süditalien gesprochene Oskisch".

p.35 Ü1B: '(1.5)' is missing before the sound change *linnom > līnnom p.45 Ü1B: omits stage (9.18)

p.65 Ü3B: omits stage (9.18)

In a number of examples a preliminary reconstructed form is unsupplied and I am unsure whether by error or intentionally:

p.41 Ü2C: *ín-klaudō p.49 Ü2B: *skabnom p.51 Ü1D: *kuidkuam p.51 Ü2G: *glūbma p.57 Ü4C: *dēgusnō p.63 Ü3D: *tragsma