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Raimo Anttila. *Greek and Indo-European etymology in action: Proto-Indo-European *ag-*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2000. (*Amsterdam studies in the theory and history of linguistic science*. Series 4, *Current issues in linguistic theory*; vol. 200). IX, 314 p.

Reviewed by Leonid Kulikov (University of Nijmegen)

There are few monographs totally devoted to just one single root. The new book by the prominent Indo-European scholar Raimo Anttila (A., henceforth) is one of those. It deals with IE **ag-* ‘drive’ and its reflexes in Indo-European languages (among which the Latin root *ag-* in *action*, whence the word play in the title).

The book provides both a general status quo and a bird’s-eye view of the current etymological Indo-European research. It also addresses many particular problems of individual languages. A. presents the relationships between numerous derivatives of the root in question, their developments in Indo-European languages (foremost in Greek, which furnishes the richest evidence), the semantically related word families and, finally, the borrowings to Finno-Ugric languages. (Some of A.’s observations collected in this book have been published in earlier articles and conference papers.) Such a uniquely broad picture of the etymological research makes the reading of A.’s book particularly interesting.

The book consists of 9 chapters. Chapter 1 “Introduction” offers a general survey of the relevant material: the basic meaning of the root in question is ‘drive, lead (particularly of cattle)’, which “implies an external force moving an object” (p. 1–2), as well as connections with semantically related roots. A. explains the main methods and goal of the book as “pattern explanation, reordering the pieces in a new way”, which “creates new explanations, or rather explications” (p. 12). The genre of the study is determined as “a modest lexilogus contribution” (p. 13).

Chapter 2 “Ἀγών and ἄγα” discusses semantics and morphology of Gr. ἄγών, originally probably meaning ‘assembly (for games)’, which provides substantial evidence for **ag-* as a racing term. Calling in question the traditional analysis of the enhancing particle ἄγα as the zero grade of μέγα ‘big’ (i.e. **h₂ǵa*), A. assumes that it rather belongs with the root **ag-* (the final vowel represents the zero grade of the nominal suffix **-He/on-*, i.e. **ag_h-h₂*), originally meaning ‘the activities of gathering, whether sport, other performing arts, or home entertainment involving these very arts; contest; games’ (also probably ‘a (driven) group of people, drove’). He further tentatively explains the name Ἀγαμέμνων as ‘contest-enduring’.

Chapter 3 discusses the noun Ἀγαθός in its relation to the games and culture and explains it as a compound with the root **dhē-* ‘put, place’, i.e. **ag_h-dhē-o-s*, tentatively interpreting it as ‘supporting the *aga*, up-holding the (social) unit’. In Chapter 4 two other names are subjected to analysis: Ἀγαπητός (explained as based on the compound **ag_h-pā-* ‘protect *aga*’) and Ἀγανός ‘driven/driving; effective, effecting’.

In Chapter 5 “Speaking-as-driving words” A. demonstrates the close connection between verbs of speaking and acting (‘driving’), which enables him to explain yet another group of IE forms as originally belonging to **aǵ-*. Cases in point are Lat. *aio* ‘say, affirm’ (which A. etymologizes as **agyō*) as well as several verbs denoting ‘driving, pushing sound’ (e.g. Old Irish *aigid*, *ad-aig* ‘raise cry, shout’, Gr. ὤζω ‘cry OH’).

Chapter 6 “Aggression and sustenance: **aǵ-(r-)* & **g^when-*” discusses the derivatives of **aǵ-* belonging to the semantic domain of the country-side activities: cattle-rising (cf. **aǵ-ro-s-* ‘field’ = ‘an open place where one drove (grazed) animals’), hunting, gathering, agriculture etc. — all treated together as different aspects of the “works of men”. This explains, for instance, why Gr. ἄγρός ‘field’ and ἄγρα (< **aǵrā*) ‘hunt’ are derived from the same root. The author also investigates further connections of **aǵ-* with such meanings as ‘killing, chasing’, uncovering much parallelisms with another root, **g^when-*.

Chapter 7 deals with the verb ἄγμαι (which combines opposite meanings, ‘admire; feel envy, be jealous’), discussing at length its paradigmatic features and related forms.

Chapter 8 “Parallels from Baltic Finnic”, the largest in the book (p. 197–256), is devoted in fact not merely to parallels, but, above all, to Finnic borrowings from Indo-European: *ajaa* ‘to drive’ (one of the earliest), with its numerous derivatives: causative, frequentative etc.; *keno* ‘high, slender’, *kenata* ‘to transport’, *kinata* ‘to drag’; *ākā* ‘anger’ (cf. Low German *āken* ‘to hurt’, English *ache*), and many others, up to such most recent as *draivi* (← Eng. *drive*) ‘enhanced tempo of rhythm in jazz’.

The final Chapter, 9, discusses a few stray issues such as the problem of the derivatives of **aǵ-* reconstructable for Proto-Indo-European (for instance, Gr. ὄγμος and Skt. *ājma-* point to the PIE nominal in **-mo-s*).

To conclude the discussion of the book, a minor “technical” Indo-Europeanist remark will be in order. Although the root in question is now generally reconstructed with the initial laryngeal determining the quality of the root vowel, i.e. **h₂eǵ-* (see e.g. M. Mayrhofer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen* (Heidelberg 1986), Bd. I, p. 51), A. avoids any laryngalist discussion, which one might expect in this study, tacitly opting for the non-laryngalist notation. The only passage hinting at the author’s views on the subject I was able to find appears in the discussion of Skt. *ījate* ‘to stir, to set in motion’ (p. 117). A.’s quotation of its proto-form, the reduplicated present formation derived from our root, **h₂i-h₂g-e-toi*, is accompanied with a noteworthy remark — “if one insists on a laryngeal interpretation or “orthography””

— which seems to point to the author's skepticism towards the general possibility to eliminate the phoneme *a* from the Proto-Indo-European reconstruction.

Alongside with substantive analyses and data, the book is richly supplied with commentaries and digressions on variegated topics (among which “die deutsche Wissenschaft” or the Finnish roots of the Russian field marshal Alexander Suvorov), which animate a lot the general narration and make the reading accessible and worth-while even for a beginner in comparative grammar and etymology. Needless to say, the book is highly recommended for everyone interested in recent developments in historical linguistics and Indo-European etymology.

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