

COMPARATIVE PHILOLOGY GRADUATE SEMINAR
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Michaelmas Term 1989

THE DISCOVERY OF INDO-EUROPEAN AND OF THE COMPARATIVE METHOD:
Indo-European Phonology from 1816 to the 1980's

Tuesday, 2.15-4 p.m.
Powell Room. West Building, Somerville College
(starting in 2nd week)

Tuesday, 17 October:

Prof. Davies - Towards Indo-European: how and when did comparison start?

Tuesday, 24 October:

Prof. Davies - Rules and Exceptions: Grimm's Law and what followed.

Tuesday, 31 October:

Dr. Penney - Reconstruction: how many 'gutturals' ?

Tuesday, 7 November:

Dr. Penney - 'Centum' and 'satəm' languages ?

Tuesday, 14 November:

Mr D.Langslow - How far should we rely on Sanskrit? The voiced aspirates

Tuesday, 21 November:

Dr.R.Wachter - Sanskrit innovations? The voiceless aspirates.

Tuesday, 28 November:

Mr.S. Colvin - New methodology ? Glottalic stops in Indo-European?

Our aim is to understand:

1) how the very idea of reconstructing the linguistic system of an unattested language spoken before the invention of writing came about;

2) why, how and with what methodology the first phonological reconstructions were produced;

3) what steps were taken to improve on these reconstructions and what alterations they underwent;

4) what is the present position and how far our conclusions and methodology differ from those of our predecessors.

We deliberately intend to limit the detailed discussion to the reconstruction of the Indo-European stops and in particular of the most controversial problems, but we shall also mention progress in the reconstruction of vocalism etc.