

**COMPARATIVE
SYNTAX OF GREEK
AND LATIN**

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Comparative syntax of Greek and Latin by Eustace Hamilton Miles

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EUSTACE HAMILTON MILES

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BY

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IN TWO PARTS.

PART I. containing:—

ORIGINAL AND EARLY MEANINGS,
AND PRINCIPLES OF SYNTAX AND APPENDICES.

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PREFACE.

THE following work must necessarily be very incomplete : my knowledge of Sanskrit is small, and I have probably omitted many valuable details from Greek and Latin and English : and I have hardly been able to introduce any illustration from any other languages : and it is certain that very many will think that I should have done better had I devoted myself to thoroughly sifting and working out some small detail: (in fact, such was the advice which Prof. Brugmann himself most kindly offered me). And indeed, had I been certain that in the forthcoming volume¹ of Brugmann's magnificent work, *infinitely* more attention would be paid to **forms** (which are the only reliable starting-point in Comparative Syntax²),

1831

Pantheon Lib.

¹ Comparative Syntax by Delbrück.

² I mean this, that if we start to explain and reconstruct the history of e.g. the Latin 'Ablative' of the consonant-declension, the Latin 'Infinitive' in -re, and the Latin 'Imperfect Subjunctive', on the assumption that they are respectively Ablative, Dative, and Imperfect, and nothing else, and if we admit, as we must, that forms were regularly used because they conveyed their own meanings, then, when 'Phonetic Law' tells us that these forms are (certainly or probably) not what we have assumed them to be, our construction (however satisfactory it may seem) falls to the ground. 'Phonetic Law' tells us that *nomine* and *mente* are probably (at least partly) Locative, not only Ablative, in form, and that the form in -re is possibly both Locative and Instrumental, or one only, or sometimes one and sometimes the other, etc., anyhow not Dative, and that *esses* is probably a sigmatic Aorist, not Imperfect, in form, and that therefore *nomine* and *mente* are probably Locative etc. in meaning, and the form in -re Locative or Instrumental or both etc. in meaning, and *esses* Aorist in meaning; and common sense tells us that to deny that they probably have these meanings, and to insist on explaining them as certainly

and to **Principles** of development in language, and to the exact extent to which **our present evidence** justifies dogmatism, than seems to have been paid in the *Syntactische Forschungen* (if one may judge from the ideas which have come into English Grammars through it), I might have left this book unwritten, and have been content to wait patiently until the appearance of the new work, and until it had become known to English readers. As it is, this final result seems still far distant, and, if my work, very shadowy, very incomplete, and very inaccurate as it is, beyond all doubt, yet does something towards illustrating the innumerable difficulties and uncertainties, and the many tangled or broken threads, of Comparative Syntax, and does something (however insignificant) towards making Syntax somewhat less uninteresting, and somewhat more a field of enquiry for the majority than it is at present, I shall be satisfied.

If many of the results are, or seem to be, obviously wrong, I must ask the reader to carefully bear in mind that this is not a learned work (as Delbrück's work will be), and that, as I have clearly stated throughout the book, on almost every page, the suggestions are only meant to be suggestions of **some possibilities**, and not of certainties: and I think it will be found that in this respect my work makes an almost entirely new departure. It would be very nice if almost the whole history of Greek and Latin Syntax before the times of which we have evidence were capable of being mapped out neatly, definitely, and with certainty, as it has been usually mapped out hitherto, chiefly on such suppositions as that because some constructions occurred in the Vedic hymns (2000? B.C.) therefore the Latins developed these same constructions and no other constructions by their side. It would be very nice and funny to know that ever since the earliest times the Greeks and Italians, before venturing to form a new construction by analogical extension, ran or swam in the direction of India to ask if this analogical extension existed in

Ablative, Dative, and Imperfect in origin, is only consistent if e.g. we call *εὐκρός*, *Κέρον ἀποθανόντος* and *ποῖ* : Locatives in origin, and the Historic Infinitive a Present or Past Indicative Tense in origin.

early Sanskrit, and, if it did not, forbade any one in Greece or Italy to use it on pain of death: in fact the theory that we can map out certain portions of the history with certainty presupposes very many very ludicrous incidents.

I would say one word to any one who may think this book worth criticising. When e.g. Dr Verrall writes a work which gives a new theory as to the plot of the *Ion*, it behoves the bona fide critic, in any Review which to some extent represents national scholarship, to criticise this new theory, and to say to what extent and why he considers that its views are right or wrong: obviously the Review should accept notes on smaller points (such as the meaning of *στέφην*) either separately as *isolated notes*, or before or after or in course of the criticism of the main *raison d'être* of the book: but no bona fide criticism should be accepted *quâ criticism* without treating fairly of this main contention.

I have noticed that in more than one Review the tendency has been, of late, not to criticise the broad and distinguishing facts, and the main features, but to give a bite here and there like a gnat or a flea: and I have noticed that often a book, rotten as a whole, and rotten in most details, rotten, in fact, from skin to core, is treated as severely or leniently and so gets the same 'character' as a book which is on the whole admirable, but which errs (as nearly all books must err) in some details. It is not that actually false statements are made—a false impression is however infused into the reader's mind, none the less—but all sense of *proportion* is hereby lost: e.g. a right principle is many times more important than a wrong detail, inasmuch as this principle comprises, ipso facto, a quantity of right details. To dote upon a thousand items (sometimes to the exclusion of an exceedingly practical and undeniable principle of common sense), characterises very much of German work, much of American work, and not a little of English work. Attention to minutie deserves greater praise than it obtains among men: but it is apt to overlook the fact that, if we once really grasp the principles of one instance, we often thereby grasp the principles of the other 999. The 1000 instances are also *somewhat* tedious to one who leads

a busy life in other spheres, and who yet would know something about the Principles that underlie those details.

Might I ask my critics to remember that my book has at least **one main contention**, viz. that our evidence does not often justify that dogmatism with which pre-historic forms or constructions have hitherto been mapped out as certainties, and that many views hitherto stated and accepted as certainties still remain to be proved to be certainties?

The **new matter** in this book is, roughly speaking, as follows:

I. It is maintained that, in giving the pre-historic development of most constructions, certainty is impossible and possibility or probability is the most we can attain to: and that the neatest and most definite results are usually also the most inexact.

II. Some *Principles* of development in Syntax (e.g. Analogy, Implication, etc.) are first given, together with some instances from Greek and Latin which may *partially* illustrate them, and then it is suggested how constructions may possibly have been developed from possible original meanings in accordance with them¹.

III. Some of the disadvantages of *grammatical categories*, and of a certain class of *literal translations*, are estimated.

IV. It is maintained that, because a construction occurs in some one language of the Indo-European group, it does not follow from this that it certainly occurred or was certainly the

¹ If such Principles of development in Language, etc. were insisted on (e.g. Principle I: that a word or a construction need not necessarily have the same meaning which it originally had) very much adverse criticism of a writer's style or phraseology might be avoided. To take one instance, a recent trade on the English of the Revised Version might have been left unwritten: for, apart from the occasional bad taste and want of moderation in the language, many of the arguments fail to hold good for the simple reason that the Revisers are not attempting to reproduce original English idioms, but are, to a great extent, writing in the best English of to-day, in which many constructions *have become irreproachable*, which in early English either did not exist, or would not have been correct English if they had been used. To criticise, as this critic does, is like censuring a business-man for no longer wearing the swaddling-clothes which once were appropriate.

only construction used in some other language of the same group, but it generally follows that it may possibly or probably have been one of the constructions once used in that language.

V. A few *philological suggestions* are given, as well as a brief consideration of how far some of the dogmatic results of the New School are certainties (v. Appendices I. ad fin. and V. ad fin. for the final conclusion).

VI. The uncertainty as to how far different meanings were original, or later developments, and as to how far they were originally denoted by distinct forms, and how far by forms differentiated to express distinctions of meaning, is strongly emphasized: (v. Appendices III. and IV.)

VII. Some details are:

- (a) The Infinitive in Greek and Latin.
- (b) The Middle Voice and Changes of Voice and Time (v. Principle XI).
- (c) The three origins of Prepositions.
- (d) The possible original unity of the Accusative, and the possible original unity of the Genitive.
- (e) The possible importance of the Locative.
- (f) The Future Indicative was often the same thing as the Aorist Subjunctive.
- (g) The Latin Aorist-Perfect.
- (h) The treatment of Mixed parts of speech.
- (i) The original meanings of Imperfect, Middle, Relatives, Subjunctive and Optative, Indicative, and the Neuter, etc.

The following are the chief **authorities**:

For *Morphology*, etc.: the grammars of Brugmann, Victor Henry; King and Cookson, Iwan Müller; suggestions in the *Classical Review*: e.g. the Early Italic Declension (Lindsay), the Gerund and Gerundive (Conway); the -r of the Latin Passive (Conway), Conway on Verner's Law in Italy (for the Latin Aorist and Perfect forms).

For *Sanskrit Instances*: Dr Peile's Nala, and some lectures on Nala by Mr R. A. Neil, of Pembroke Coll. A few Vedic hymns (Delbrück), and some lectures on them by Prof. Cowell. The Sanskrit Grammars of Whitney, Monier Williams, and