

Re: new book on the spread of IE

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- *From:* Franz Gnaedinger <frgn@xxxxxxxxxxx>
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On Feb 14, 8:38 pm, "Peter T. Daniels" <gramma...@xxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

That's one of the many reasons why your "definition" isn't a useful one. It is far, far, far too broad.

It is very useful. The latest cry in biology is system biology, in Switzerland www.systemsx.ch (if memory serves): instead of taking further apart an organism, biologists wonder and study how the parts work together, and, I say, language plays a key role in these processes, language on every level.

Grimm enunciated only a single "Law," and I don't know whether he called it a "Lautgesetz."

Clearly, you did not understand what "Lautgesetz" means. It is the label for an observed regularity of correspondence among a group of daughter languages, from which an ancestral proto-form can be reconstructed and from which the steps they can be supposed to have undergone in turning into the attested forms can be posited.

A Lautgesetz is not a Law of Nature like Kepler's Law or Boyle's Law etc. etc.

Either sound laws hold and are scientific laws and deserve the term law, or they don't hold and are no scientific laws and don't deserve the term law. Make up your mind.

If it doesn't make sense to you, then you should get into your time machine and visit Leipzig in the 1870s, when the terminology was being developed, and let your objections be known.

Sound laws, in my opinion, are somewhat like a shadow of the physiological conditions of the vocal tract, which is

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why I don't apply sound laws in the first place, but go for the real thing, namely the vocal tract, pronouncing a Magdalenian word silently, over and over and over again, while observing what happens. If I pronounce the word or compound silently, not even whispering, no minimal amount of air flowing along the vocal chords, the verbal morphospace that keeps words in place loosens its grip on the words, and they begin to shift. My way of following sound changes may be less accurate and precise in a special case than the known sound laws, on the other hand it covers a far greater period of time, and includes all sound laws, the known ones and the ones that may be discovered in the future. As in archaeology, where we have the precise methods of dendrochronology and of radio carbon dating, and then we have the less accurate method of thermoluminescence which, on the other hand, allows to date objects much older than 8,000 and 6,000 years, time depth of dendrochronology and C14 dating respectively (numbers as I remember them).

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