

[Appeared in *Language* 77:194-195 (2001)]

**Greek:** A comprehensive grammar of the modern language. By DAVID HOLTON, PETER MACKRIDGE, and IRENE PHILIPPAKI-WARBURTON. (Routledge Grammars.) London & New York: Routledge, 1997. Pp. xxi, 519.

**Dutch:** A comprehensive grammar. By BRUCE DONALDSON. (Routledge Grammars.) London & New York: Routledge, 1997. Pp. xi, 348.

These two recent offerings in Routledge's well-produced and reasonably priced ongoing series of grammars are a study in contrasts. While the grammar of Greek is extensive and thorough, and deserves a place in any linguist's library, the grammar of Dutch is partial at best, and will probably not be terribly interesting to most readers of this journal.

Holton et al.'s grammar truly deserves its subtitle as a comprehensive grammar. It is divided into three main parts: phonology (1-41, including a section on orthography), morphology (43-184), and syntax (185-486), followed by four small appendices, a glossary, and an index. It is a thoroughly modern descriptive grammar, but accessible to non-specialists. The sections on the phonology and morphology are excellent and thorough, covering the areas expected in a modern grammar (phonemic inventory [with only slight deviations from the IPA in transcriptions, e.g.  $\delta$  for  $\delta$ ], the commonest phonological alternations, syllabification, suprasegmentals, full declensional and inflectional information, derivational morphology and compounding), but the part of this grammar which must be singled out for particular praise is its extensive treatment of the syntax of the language. Almost two-thirds of the book is devoted to syntactic phenomena, with a section devoted to several major syntactic categories: verb phrases (187-242), noun and adjective phrases (243-349), adverbial phrases (350-369), prepositional phrases (370-408), and the clause (409-486).

In each section, recent results and perspectives are brought to bear to great effect, though without distracting theoretical commitments. Thus, in addition to information on word order, use of the various cases and verb forms, and specific details on the use of various constructions, we also find sophisticated discussion of question formation (including multiple *wh*-questions), anaphora, clitics (including clitic doubling and clitic left dislocation), coordination, relative clauses (including comparison of *που* and *οποίος* relatives, free relatives, and correlatives) and the effects of topic and focus on word order in matrix and subordinate clauses. This last is particularly welcome, since Greek allows in principle all six possible orders of subject, verb, and object, but different word orders are appropriate in different contexts—other grammars have either been silent on this fact, or have left it vague as to when which order is possible.

Donaldson's grammar, on the other hand, is clearly meant as a supplemental aid to classroom instruction at an intermediate level, and simply cannot be designated as a 'comprehensive' grammar in the usual sense. This is indeed the avowed intention of the book, as D states in the preface ('[t]his ... grammar is aimed at the tertiary and upper secondary student' [xi]), and I have no doubt that it is effective and useful in this role (containing many points of reference for English-speaking learners of Dutch; illustrative of this are section titles such as 'How to render English "-ing" forms in Dutch' [196]). But as a reference grammar, it unfortunately will not satisfy the needs of a linguist, either one who knows the language or not. It consists of sixteen chapters of varying length ('Pronunciation' [1-6], 'Spelling' [7-15], 'Punctuation' [16-17], 'Cases' [18-19], 'Articles' [20-25], 'Demonstratives' [26-27], 'Nouns' [28-53], 'Pronouns' [54-86], 'Adjectives' [87-107], 'Adverbs' [108-130], 'Verbs' [131-224], 'Conjunctions' [225-245], 'Prepositions' [246-266], 'Numerals' [267-283], '*Er*' [284-290], 'Negation' [291-297]), three appendices (298-321), a glossary (322-336), and an index (337-348). On the positive side, it contains extensive and

useful discussions of word formation, including lists of verbs followed by prepositions in non-compositional meanings, comprehensive lists of the various classes of irregular verbs, and good discussion of the various uses of the modal verbs (as well as appendices on letter writing and common abbreviations). It is also rich in lexical detail, illustrating a wealth of careful observations made by the author in the course of his years of experience with the language. But the linguist who looks here for sections outlining the phonemic inventory of the language will be disappointed (only points of difficulty for the English-speaker or regional variation are dealt with); also any discussion of phonology is omitted, to the extent that this is not reflected in orthographic alternations. Perhaps most disappointing for linguists, and in stark contrast to Holton et al.'s contribution to the Routledge series, is the absence of any systematic treatment of syntax. Although various points of word order are dealt with in passing, and although there is an interesting brief chapter on *er* (a perennial favorite of Dutch syntacticians), a reader who wants to know the basic word order of the language, or the variations in word order in subordinate clauses, or the highly complex possibilities in the verbal cluster, or the conditions on scrambling, or even the fact that Dutch is a verb-second language, will search this book mostly in vain. As such, the publisher's blurb claiming that the book 'is a complete reference guide to modern Dutch grammar' seems a bit off the mark. [JASON MERCHANT, *Northwestern University*.]