

## Editoriale / Editorial

### 2001-2011: The First Decade of a New Glottology

In the first issue 2001 of this journal, Mario Alinei published a predictive article titled *2001: inizio ufficiale di una nuova Glottologia?* (22, 2001, pp. 59-66). His starting point was a critical but trustful reading of the foundational text of the OMLL, the project of the European Science Foundation (ESF) about “Origin of Man, Language and Languages”. The importance of the project was determined by its multidisciplinary approach, and by its attempt to bring together data collected by disciplines such as genetics, neurosciences, archaeology, palaeo-anthropology, cognitive sciences, and linguistics. Six main directions of research were indicated: 1. *Language and Archaeology*, 2. *Language and Brain*, 3. *Language and Genes*, 4. *Language acquisition and Language universals*, 5. *Language and animal communication*, 6. *Language evolution and computer modelling*.

A list of the publications and presentations in the context of research funded through the OMLL Programme can be found on line at the official website <[www.esf.org/omll](http://www.esf.org/omll)> (see also F. d’Errico - J.-M. Hombert, *Becoming Eloquent. Advances in the Emergence of Language, Human Cognition, and Modern Cultures*, Philadelphia, PA, John Benjamins, 2009). With regards to Italy, in the same cross-curricular perspective a huge work is being done by the members of the international workgroup of the Palaeolithic Continuity Paradigm for Indo-European Origins (PCP): the official website <[www.continuitas.org](http://www.continuitas.org)> collects almost 200 texts by linguists, anthropologists, historians and philologists (data at May 2011). Also the Società Italiana di Glottologia has dedicated its 32<sup>nd</sup> annual congress at the subject “Lingue, ethnos e popolazioni: evidenze linguistiche, biologiche e culturali” (the proceeding have been published in 2009).

Despite these encouraging premises, scientific journals of linguistics seem to have lost the opportunity of keeping up to date with the new acquisitions, and from our point of view it is interesting to point out that, on the contrary, «Quaderni di Semantica» has coherently worked in the epistemological frame traced by the fertile perspectives opened ten years ago. For example, and without mentioning more specific articles on relevant topics, one can recall **theoretical works** (cfr. M. Alinei, *Interdisciplinary and Linguistic Evidence for Palaeolithic Continuity of Indo-European, Uralic and Altaic Populations in Eurasia* [24, 2003, pp. 187-216], Id., *The Problem of Dating in Linguistics* [25, 2004, pp. 211-232], Id., *Conservation and Change in Language* [26, 2005, pp. 7-28]; G.

Costa, “*Extra epistemologiam nulla salus*”, o *sullo status della linguistica come scienza* [24, 2003, pp. 229-277]), articles on the **interactions between language and archaeology** (cfr. G. Costa, *Linguistica e preistoria* [25, 2004, pp. 255-269, 27, 2006, pp. 199-223]), **language and genes** (cfr. F. Villar, *Genes and Languages in Europe and South-Western Asia during the Mesolithic and Neolithic Periods*, 27, 2006, pp. 449-487; my review-article on J.-P. Changeux, *Geni e cultura. Rivestimento genetico e variabilità culturale* [Palermo, Sellerio editore, 2007], 29, 2008, pp. 204-213), **language and brain** (cfr. the discussion article by M. Meschiari, *Roots of the Savage Mind. Apophenia and Imagination as Cognitive Process*, 30, 2009, pp. 183-222, with commentaries by P. Brugger, N. Burenhult, A. Mancuso and myself). In the field of the **prehistory of languages**, I should also mention the many studies on totemic zoonyms, meteoronyms and hydronyms (in particular by M. Alinei, X. Ballester, R. Bracchi, J.-Ph. Dalbera, R. Caprini, R. Ronzitti, F. Tamisari) and on the names of prehistoric tools, artefacts, monuments and conceptions (at least 30 articles by M. Alinei, G. Forni, P. Galloni and myself); and I should underline that the most part of these works dates before 2001, thus indicating our journal as a forerunner of the new trends in contemporary historical linguistics. The notion of Iconomastics is in itself a clue to understanding and studying the presence of languages in prehistory.

Ten years only describe the beginning of this New Glottology. In 2001 the sequence of human genome was decoded, but the last two years have been characterized by some new puzzling – and not less important – discoveries by archaeologists and palaeo-anthropologists, indicating for instance that *homo neanderthalensis* might have had the ability to speak in a way similar to *homo sapiens sapiens* (cfr. I. Martínez Mendizábal - J.L. Arsuaga Ferreras, *El origen del lenguaje: la evidencia paleontológica*, «Munibe» 60, 2009, pp. 5-16), or that the antiquity of stone tools and of stone-tool-assisted consumption of ungulates by *hominins* must be extended of 800,000 years (approximately 3,39 million years ago, with the attribution of them to *Australopithecus afarensis*: cfr. P. Shannon *et al.*, *Evidence for Stone-Tool-Assisted Consumption of Animal Tissues before 3.39 Million Years Ago at Dikika, Ethiopia*, «Nature» 466, 2010, pp. 857-860).

In this incessantly updating scenario, we must be able to courageously accept evidences which may contradict our previous opinions. The editorial efforts of «Quaderni di Semantica» will persist and increase in this direction, continuing to encourage debates among specialists of different disciplines, with the ambition of keeping the journal at the forefront of this epochal period for the study of human evolution.

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