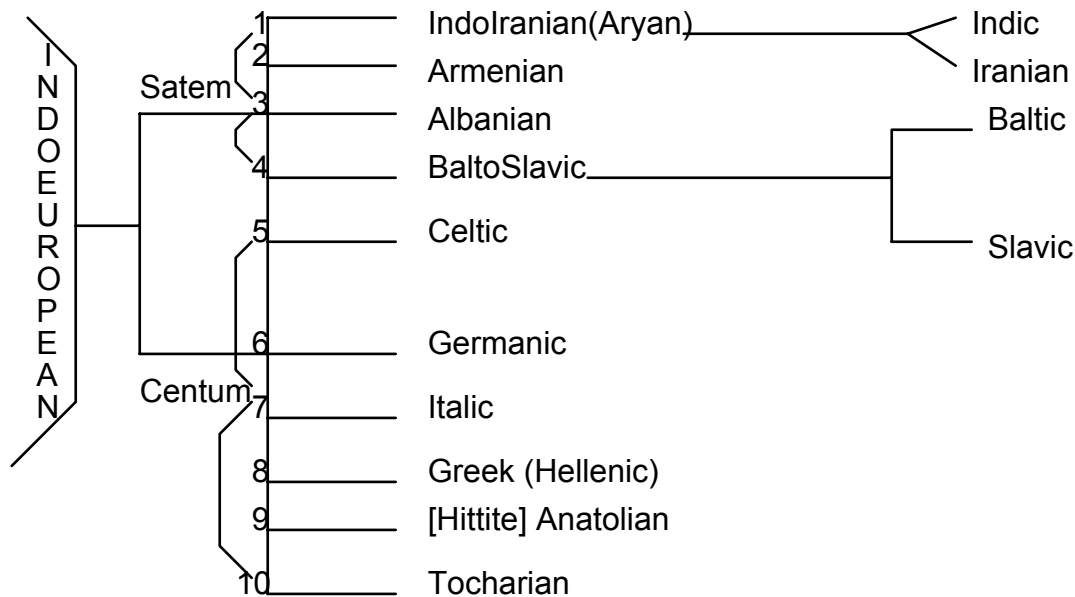


PAPER 7 (HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS)
GENEALOGICAL CLASSIFICATION OF LANGUAGE

We find that languages are related to each other both in the material they possess (words etc.) as well as in the method by which they express themselves (syntax). It seems that the languages of one group are all traceable to a 'common ancestor', and that each has varied according to the environment in which it found itself. Thus the obvious similarity what are known as the Aryan languages of India points to such a common ancestry. Similarly English, German, Dutch and Danish are traceable to another such common ancestor and so also French, Italian and Spanish to a third common ancestor. Going one step further back, we can trace each three ancestors to a type which was, in turn, the ancestor of all these three and that ancestor is known as 'Indo-European family'. This classification is clearly explained by the term 'Genealogical classification of languages.'

Indo-European family is important for understanding historical linguistic method as well as for knowledge of the interrelationship of the world's most widely known and spoken languages. Moreover, because of the political and economic role of the speaker using languages belonging to it, the Indo-European family is probably the most important and the most widely used today. The Indo-European languages are divided into two main groups known as 'Centum' and 'Satem' groups. This two fold division was formulated by Ascoli first; it was thought that this division marked out the Western and the Eastern languages. The Eastern languages are labeled as 'Satem' and the Western as 'Centum'.

SATEM GROUP: Indo-Iranian, formerly also called Aryan or Indo-Aryan, is the name of this sub-group which was carried to the area of India and Iran. It consists of two sub-groups - Indic and Iranian of which the former is more important, for materials in Iranian date from a considerably later period and are less abundant.



The essential Indic material is contained in the Rigveda, a collection of hymns which is as large as Illiad and Odyssey combined. As Rigveda and other vedas were considered

sacred, they were memorized and transmitted orally for many generations. The language of vedas became obsolete and difficult to interpret. Their devotees prepared commentaries. Among these were grammars which informed later generation of priests how to interpret hymns, even how to pronounce them. The result of such linguistic analysis was a standardized language, so completely described and regulated [Sanskrita] that it underwent few further changes. This Sanskrit is known to us as Sanskrit which is dated several centuries before 400 BC with its greatest grammarian Panini. Because of its religious associations, Sanskrit is in daily use today.

Besides Sanskrit there existed spoken languages called Prakrta, Prakrits. Moreover, the classical works of Indian literature were composed in Sanskrit such as "Ramayana" and "Mahabharata". We have three stages of "Indic-vedic Sanskrit", the language of approximately 1200-800 BC; the classical Sanskrit, succeeding it and standardized approximately 400 BC and the Prakrits. Vedic and classical Sanskrit are often referred to as Old Indic, and the Prakrits as Middle Indic which may date about 400 BC to 1000 AD. The Middle Indic dialect on which we have most information is Pali; the language in which Buddhist canon is preserved. At the end of the Middle Indic period we have materials known as Apbhramsas meaning 'off-branching'. From Apbhramsas developed the modern Indic dialects. Most widely spoken of these is Hindi. Others are Urdu, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Punjabi, Sinhalese in Ceylon and Romany, the language of Gypsies.

1. IRANIAN: Iranian materials are as old Iranian before 300 BC. and handed down to us in two dialects - Avestan and Old Persian. The Avesta is the sacred book of Zoroastrian religion. Its oldest poems Gaoas are dated approximately 600 BC and are as archaic in language as those of Rigveda through much more troubled in transmission and accordingly very difficult to interpret. Old Persian is preserved in the inscription of Darius (521-486 BC) and Xerxes (486-465 BC). The inscriptions of greatest importance is a long triangular text in Old Persian, Akkadian and Elamite which was chiseled on a stone cliff at Behistan, Iran.

Middle Iranian may be dated approximately from 300 BC to 900 AD. Its various representatives are attested. Middle Persian or Pahlavi was the language of the Persian empire from AD 300 to 900. Sogdian in the further east and Saka or Seythian in the north were spoken and are not completely described these days.

Various Iranian languages are still in use at present such as Balochi of West Pakistan, Pashto or Afghan, the official language of Afghanistan, Persian, the language of Iran, Kurdish, a language of Western Iran and Turkey, Ossetic in the northern Caucasus and various others. In many other areas Iranian languages have been displaced by Turkic dialects. Since the dialects of two groups are spoken in much of Southern Asia, Indo-Iranian has remained one of the most prominent sub-groups in the Indo-European family.

2. ARMENIAN: Until the 5th century AD. we have no materials on Armenian. It was located on Southern Caucasus and Western Turkey. Oldest Armenian materials are almost exclusive translations of Christian writings. The language of these texts are known as Old or Classical Armenian which was maintained until the 19th century. Modern Armenian exists in two branches: the Eastern, spoken in the USSR and Iran, and the Western spoken in Turkey.

Armenian has been heavily influenced by other languages, mainly Iranian and until 19th century there was doubt whether it should be classed or not as an Iranian dialect.

3. ALBANIAN: The early history of Albanian is even more adequate. Before 1685, when a Latin Albanian dictionary was compiled, we had few materials. This dictionary was followed

by religious translations and collection of folk in the 19th century. There are two dialects - Geg in the north and Tosk in the south.

Like Armenian, Albanian has undergone many changes influenced by Latin, Greek, Slavic and Turkish. It has been considered as a modern representative of Illyrian or Thracian.

BALTO SLAVIC: This group consists of two large sub-groups - Baltic and Slavic. Three principal languages make up the Baltic group - Old Prussian, Lithuanian and Latvian or Lettish. Old Prussian is extinct today but Lithuanian and Latvian are still spoken along the southern coast of the Baltic sea in the Lithuanian and Latvian republics of Soviet Union.

The Slavic languages spoken today are classified in three groups: South, West and East Slavic. South Slavic comprises Bulgarian, Serbo-Croatian and Slovenian. West Slavic comprises Czech, Slovak, Polish and Wendish; East Slavic comprises Great Russian, White Russian and Ukrainian.

CENTUM GROUP: Centum splits into two main groups: Brythonic and Goidelic, the former represented by (a) Welsh (b) Cornish (no longer spoken) (c) Breton and the latter by (a) Irish (b) Gaelic and (c) Manx.

Then we have Germanic which includes (a) Gothic (b) North Germanic represented by Icelandic, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish, and (c) West Germanic represented by English, Frisian, Low German, Dutch and High German.

Then we have Italian in this group. It includes Latin, Umbrian and Oscan. The modern Romance languages - French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and Romanian - are derived from the *Lingua Romantica* of the Roman soldiery.

Though there are few speakers of Greek or Hellenic today, it divides itself into - Achaean, Ionic, Doric and Aeolic. Modern Greek is equally rich in dialect.

Anatolian consists of three principal languages Hittite, Luwian and Lydian. Of these the most important is Hittite since there are a large number of documents some dating back as far as 1300 BC. Luwian and Lydian are attested in only few inscriptions.

The Tocharian languages, which are found in texts unearthed in Central Asia, are attested in the seventh century AD. It has two dialects labeled as A and B - Agnean or East Tocharian for Tocharian A, Kuchean or West Tocharian for Tocharian B. One of the remarkable features of Tocharian is the preservation of palatals as K before back vowels. Nothing is known about the provenance of the speakers of Tocharian.

This is all about the genealogical classification of languages. Some philologists have entirely discovered this method of classification as not being clear enough, but for historical grammar its usefulness is obvious.

