

## Language in Antiquity

### From the Study of Languages in Antiquity to the Discovery of Indo-European Languages in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries

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#### **Abstract**

This succinct article envisages depicting the study of the origin of languages since antiquity till the 18<sup>th</sup> and mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Numerous papers have been written on the subject of the history of linguistics or topics related to linguistics, especially so after oriental scholars deciphered the starting point of European languages by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the discovery of Sanskrit and Old Persian languages, thus coinciding with the unearthing of the family tree of Indo-European languages. From an historical perspective, beginning with the ancient Greek philosophers who first questioned the nature of languages; to the Romans who divulged Latin throughout the Empire; to the study of Hebrew during the early Middle Ages; to the preliminary comparison of Sanskrit during the Renaissance; and finally ending with various European scholars who intellectually linked East and West throughout the Oriental Renaissance in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, this article will highlight the most significant traits of this discovery. To sum up, who and what led to this breakthrough. Lastly, wherever relevant it may be, this expose will also bring to light, European travelers to the Indian continent who may have willingly or unwillingly contributed to the decipherment of the Indo-European languages.

Keywords: Indo-European, oriental scholars, discovery, languages.

#### **Introduction**

This paper does not pretend to elicit historical political material whereby the term orientalism has come to be labelled as a derivative associated with 'Imperialism'. Numerous papers have treated the subject in depth. Surely, Britain, France and other major European powers did colonize the world first commercially and then politically. Asian countries did as well. Nevertheless, these aforesaid foreign powers had a number of talented scholars at their service who translated an immeasurable and indispensable quantity of sacred, as well as profane literature and other scientific material work from Sanskrit, Persian, into English or French. Had it not been for their incessant meticulous work of translation, which otherwise would have remained in the vernacular languages, the origins of the Indo-European languages would have rested in total oblivion. These oriental scholars deciphered and gave to humanity what was embedded and lost in time. This great venture of the discovery of the Indo-European family of languages would, at a later date, cement the ties between East and West.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century term Orientalism was an offshoot of Humanism rightfully named by the French historian of the French Revolution, Edgar Quinet (1803-1875), as the Oriental Renaissance. This term would eventually fall into the hands of the late professor of literature, Raymond Schwab, who had in turn popularized it in his 1934 book and thesis as "The Oriental Renaissance: Europe's Rediscovery of India and the East, 1680-1880."

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In the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Orient intended countries, were then considered the Middle East: Persia, Mesopotamia, Asia Minor and Egypt. With time its geographical field of influence then grew to South Asia, Southeast Asia or East Asia. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the word had ramifications into China, Japan and Korea.

As to the use of the idiom Orient in modern days, a vast majority of European universities still apply the term Department of Oriental Studies: Oxford; Paris; Rome; Venice, to name a few, as opposed to the term Asian Studies applied in most North American universities as the name 'oriental' through its vulgar usage carries ethnocentric connotations. Although in the past it was a standard term in English.

From the beginning of the Italian Renaissance until the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the study of Orientalism had taken two distinctive intellectual paths: the scholarly and the literary. Pertaining to the scholarly, during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a number of on-the-field European scholars translated, thanks to a large extent to Indian pundits, sacred oriental texts from Sanskrit, Persian, Pali into English and French. These texts were then published in European scientific journals of the era: *Miscellanies of the Royal Society of Great Britain and Ireland* as is the case for Great Britain; and *Le Journal Asiatique* for France. Subsequently assimilated by the European literati, who had ad priori no sound knowledge of either Sanskrit or Persian, a whole new cohort of ideas would take effect throughout the Western World: the vulgarization and dissemination of oriental religions: Zoroastrianism, Hinduism and Buddhism, as is the case with Schopenhauer, on one hand, and, on a different scale, this fermentation of newly translated material gave rise to the literary movement known as Romanticism.

Since its very groundwork, these two fields of study were and are still being thoroughly thought-out today. This paper, due to the proportion of the work, will not probe into the literary aspect of the Orient. Numerous thesis and papers have been written on the subject. This paper will focus attention on the historical impact, without leaving aside, wherever relevance it may have the implication of trade between East and West, which have directly and indirectly led to the discovery of the Indo-European languages.

### **Linguistics in Antiquity**

#### *Ancient Greece*

From a cultural perspective, if it had not been for Alexander the Great's colossal endeavour in conquering and Hellenizing the East in retaliation to the Persian's ensuing attacks on Greece, and wishing to extend the empire beyond that of Egypt and India, the West would not have today, in terms of knowledge and invaluable information concerning Eastern cultures, what it had so conscientiously accumulated throughout the ages. Alexander may have unwillingly fermented the ties between East and West. Unfortunately, pertaining to ancient Persian or Indian languages, or whether any of his followers had any inquisitiveness in the decipherment of the aforementioned languages, Europe had to linger for two more millennia until the discovery and translation of the Avesta by Anquetil-Duperron (1731-1805) in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Schwab (1984) notes that "The 1771 edition of the Zend Avesta marks the first approach to an Asian text totally independent of the biblical and classical traditions. The history of languages and history through

languages both begin with this work, which is also, we could say, the beginning of world history” (p. 295).

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the renowned oriental scholar and linguist, Sir William Jones, stated on his much famed Third Anniversary Discourse on the Hindus of 1786 that the Greeks, adroit and proficient as they had been, had not shown the slightest interest in the local dialects and languages where they came to be. “It is much to be lamented, that neither Greeks, who attended Alexander into India, nor those who were long connected with it under the Bactrian Princes, have left us any means of knowing with accuracy, what vernacular language they found on their arrival in this Empire” (Jones & Lehman, p. 4).

Prior to Alexander’s conquest a number of Greek philosophers had debated on the nature and origin of a language, whether, for example, it was a natural course of action, and as a consequence man-made or whether it was conventional; hence, the debate in ancient Greece of ‘naturalism’ versus ‘conventionalism’.

Cratylus (late fifth century BC) was an advocate of the idea that language is natural rather than conventional since the world is in constant flux, as he had envisaged, so could words be. As a result, Plato, in his work *Cratylus*, written around 386 BC, questions whether a language is a system of arbitrary signs or whether words have an intrinsic relation to the things they signify. He goes on to state where do names come from? These include names of Olympian gods, personified deities and many words that use abstract concepts. The Hellenist, Sedley (2006) says that “Cratylus, as an extreme linguistic naturalist, holds that names cannot be arbitrarily chosen in the way that conventionalism describes or advocates, because names belong *naturally* to their specific objects” (p. 1). Socrates (469-399BC) might have been one of the first philosophers to have noticed linguistic changes in Greek since the time of Homer around 730BC. Later on, Aristotle (330 BC) identified four types of linguistic changes in a language, namely: insertion; deletion; transposition; and substitution. Generally, on their investigation into the nature of languages, the Greeks knew little about the historical origins of their own language.

One of the first grammarians was Dionysius Thrax, (170- 90 BC), and so named because his father was Thracian. Though born in Alexandria, he authored his Art of Grammar, which lists eight parts of speech and also lays out a broad morphology including the case structure. Law (2003) notes that “...the earliest grammars to survive belonged to Dionysius of Thrax...The first systematic grammars were written during the first century BC, after Dionysius’s death in 90 BC”(Introduction).

### *Ancient Rome and the Orient*

The Roman Empire had numerous links with the East, not to mention the Near-East, North-Africa and as far as India for its spices and China for its silk. So much so, that Pliny, (AD 23–August 24 79) the Roman historian, complained conspicuously with reference to this commercial tie because it drained Rome of its wealth. “India, China and the Arabian peninsula take one hundred million sesterces from our empire per annum at a conservative estimate: that is what our luxuries and women cost us. For what percentage of these imports is intended for sacrifices to the gods or the spirits of the dead?” (Pliny Natural History, V1.101, 12.41.84). In contrast to this assessment associated with trade between ancient India and Greece, Young (2001) states that

the 'Greek Ptolemaic dynasty had begun her trade prior to Rome but according to Strabo...the volume of commerce between India and Greece was not comparable to that later Indian-Roman trade' (p. 19). Roman trade with India began approximately at the start of the first millennium following the reign of Augustus and his conquest of Egypt (Shaw, 2003, p. 11).

Up until the 7<sup>th</sup> century, Rome improved its transactions with India and the rest of Asia. Unfortunately, after that date Europe and Rome fell into what is known as the 'Dark Ages or 'Early Middle Ages,' from 476 to 100 AD, when Islam took control of all the maritime trade of the Mediterranean Sea as far as the Arabian Sea. Later to the fore, Constantinople, through the Sultanates, had become the absolute sovereign till 1452. Trade fell into their monopoly as well as learning in general.

Apart from the Gandaran civilization and the Indo-Greek Menander I (165 or 155 BC to 135 BC) known as Milinda according to Indian sources, being the most influential figure for the spreading of Buddhism throughout Central Asia, nothing of substantial importance in the realm of scientific enterprise had been undertaken, except for mass conversions into the new doctrine. Similarly, Gatteschi states "...there had not been from the time of Alexander to the last Roman Emperor any other contact of cultural importance with India" (Year and page not given). In reference to the science of numbers mistakenly attributed to the Arabs, she adds "Numbers as we know them today, the concept of a quantity from the unit to ten and more, expressed by one sign and its position, arrived from India to Europe through the Arabs. (Year and page not given). During the Roman Empire, Roman and Greek writers noticed the close similarity between Greek and Latin, not to mention the fact that all Greek gods had a Latin name. From the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC to 500 AD, a number of Roman grammarians had maintained this line of thought.

Subsequent to Dionysius of Thrax's Art of Grammar comes the Ars grammatica by Charisius of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC in five books. Unfortunately the beginning of the first and part of the fourth and fifth book are doomed to history. Then, we have the lost texts of Diomedes and Remnius Palaemon. The latter a Latin grammarian during the reign of Tiberius (42 BC AD 37) and Claudius (10 BC - AD 54, the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D) who wrote an Ars Grammatica in three books. Well-known in Rome, his book was used as pedagogical material for teaching Greek to native Latin speakers. Both Diomedes and Charisius wrote about the same period, but whereas much of Charisius' work has been lost, that of Diomedes is whole. Varro (116-27 BC) wrote *De Lingue Latina*, dedicated to Cicero and which, unfortunately, of the 25 original books; only books V to X are extant. Aelius Donatus, a Roman grammarian and teacher of rhetoric of the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D., and who was also the tutor of St Jerome, wrote an Ars Grammatica which was widely used throughout the Middle Ages. With the discovery of printing, a revised and smaller version of his work 'Ars Minor' is thought to be one of the first books to be printed in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, Priscian (500AD) was a Latin grammarian who wrote the *Institutiones Grammaticae* (Grammatical Foundations) this work was the standard textbook during the Middle Ages (Suetonius, 1914, Robins, 1972, Weisser, 2005).

As a concluding analysis to this chapter, Robins (1972) notes that "Greek and Roman linguists made the major classification of letters, as the representatives of speech and sounds, in terms of their acoustic impressions" (p. 141). Both Greek and Romans "...made articulatory features secondary in their phonetic descriptions" ((p. 141).

### *Early Middle Ages*

In their attempt to spread the Christian faith, missionaries of the Middle Ages in translating the Bible from Greek or Latin texts gave way to the study of Hebrew as well. Ever since the time of Saint Augustine (354-430), in their quest to decipher the origin of languages, Western scholars naively tempted to link all European languages with that of Hebrew. This erroneous notion remained engraved in the minds of European scholars until the advent and the discovery of Sanskrit and Avestan languages, later known as Indo-Aryan languages, which we shall discuss later on.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the study of Hebrew led scholars to believe that Japhet, Genesis 10:5, descendant of one of the three sons of Noah in the Bible, and his two other brothers, Ham and Shem, formed the three major tribes. The first one, Japhet considered the father of the Japhetic ethnic group, was correlated to Europe; Ham, of the Hamitic clan, was linked to Africa; and finally Shem of the Semitic family, was associated with Hebrew and Arabic languages. The result is humanity filling the earth in three large groups who were descendants from the three sons of Noah by their families, their language, their lands, and their nations. The well noted archaeological biblical scholar Albright (2006) states that “The tenth chapter of Genesis . . . stands absolutely alone in ancient literature, without a remote parallel, even among the Greeks, where we find the closest approach to a distribution of peoples in genealogical framework . . . The Table of Nations remains an astonishing accurate document. (Albright, as cited in Boice, 2006). This biblical notion was blindly engraved in European scholarly work until the 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century with the discovery of the Sanskrit and Avesta languages.

In his work *De Emendatione Temporum* of 1583, Joseph Scaliger (1540-1609) having studied Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Arabic, was one of the first European scholars to have extended the initiative of classical history. He revolutionized preconceived ideas of ancient chronology, in a way as to incorporate not only Greek and Roman history into learning, as was the case in most European universities, but to implement as well, Persian, Babylonian, Egyptian and Jewish history, hitherto neglected since the very beginning. He also underlined the significance that these individual ‘histories’ must be compared to one another, thus introducing the comparative method.

His major contribution was that he later identified Greek, Germanic, Romance and Slavic languages by comparing the word ‘God’ in various European languages. Both Scaliger and Leibnitz (1646-1716) rejected the belief of a Hebrew origin to Latin as well as European languages held till the 18<sup>th</sup> century mainly by Christian scholars of the day. Leibnitz also refuted the argument, advanced by Swedish scholars, that some sort of proto-Swedish was the ancestor of the Germanic language. He puzzled over the origins of the Slavic Languages; was cognizant of the existence of Sanskrit, and was fascinated by classical Chinese.

### *The Renaissance*

Well before William Jones’ discovery of the similarity of the European languages with that of Sanskrit in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Niccolo de Conti and Filippo Sassetti in the 1400s discovered striking analogies between Latin, Greek, Italian and Sanskrit. Sassetti started the study of San-

skrit in India and had in mind to translate an Ayurvedic text into Latin when he succumbed in 1588, in Cochin, Kerala, South India, at the age of 48.

Briefly speaking Filippo Sassetti was a Florentine merchant who traveled to the Indian subcontinent around the year 1585 and through his keen observation of both Italian and Sanskrit languages, he soon began to compare words such as: deva/dio/god; sarpa/serpe/snake; sapta/sette/seven; ashta/otto/eight; nava/nove/nine and so on. On this theme Adamo (2003) states "...the antiquity of written Indian culture is compared in importance to that of Greek and Latin. Interesting notes appear on the affinity of the Sanskrit language with Greek and Latin, whose common origin is hypothesized by Sassetti on the ground of his observations many years before linguistics reached the same conclusion" (p. 1).

In addition, during the Italian Renaissance, Dante (1265-1321) in his 'On the Eloquence of the Vernacular' expanded the scope of linguistic investigation from Latin/Greek to include the spoken languages of Europe. As of 1701, scholars had expanded their sphere of the Orient to the study of Hebrew, Chaldean, Syrian and Arabic (Richard, 2001).

### *The 18<sup>th</sup> century Oriental Renaissance*

The lack of intellectual fermentation between Europe and Asia from the fall of The Roman Empire up to the 15<sup>th</sup> century had to a great extent strengthened the notion of the Orient as being 'exotic'. Archaeological excavation as well as the decipherment of manuscripts of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries led to the scientific venture of the European Oriental Renaissance. In his *Génies des Religions* (1841) Edgar Quinet (1803-1875) stated "In the first ardor of their discoveries, the orientalists proclaimed that, in its entirety, an antiquity more profound, more philosophical, and more poetical than that of Greece and Rome was emerging from the depths of Asia. ... [One that promised] a new Reformation of the religious and secular world. ... This is the great subject in philosophy today" (Schwab as cited by Thatagananda, 1984, p. 11).

Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century the notion of Orientalism had been to a large extent purely literary. The scholarly aspect came later when Champollion (1790-1832) deciphered the famous Rosetta stone in 1822. In 1769, the French Sinologist, Joseph de Guignes (1721-1800), tried to link ancient Chinese civilization with that of Egypt in his *Mémoire dans lequel après avoir examiné l'origine des lettres phéniciennes et hébraïque etc...et on essaye d'établir que le caractère epistofique, hieroglyphique et symbolique des Egyptiens se retrouve dans les caractères Chinois et que la nation chinoise est une colonie égyptienne* (Richard, 2001, p. 2). Nonetheless, in his attempt to find a common ground de Guignes may have been one of the earliest scholars to have correlated commercial transactions between the ancient Romans and Chinese in his book *Les liaisons et le commerce des Romains avec les Tartares et les Chinois*.

Although erroneous, as oriental scholars found out, this was a major breakthrough in the history of ideas for it paved the way to modern Indo-European studies. The discovery of oriental languages, such as Sanskrit in India and Avesta, in modern day Iran, sealed a new field of learning known today as comparative philology, comparative linguistics and comparative mythology. Simone (1998) says that "Many themes typical of the set of ideas current in the seventeenth-century linguistic thought continue to be investigated until the end of the following century...The most noticeable example is certainly the slow but sure development of the comparative method,

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and its attendant hypotheses on the kinship of languages and the organization into families, starting from the seventeenth-century search for the original language” (p. 214).

In 1786, at the very beginning of this endeavour, the noted British oriental scholar Sir William Jones, (1746-1794) thought that Sanskrit bore a certain resemblance to Greek and Latin and went as far as saying that they might be related to Gothic, Celtic and as remote as Persian. In other words, with the comparative method of analyzing two languages, in this case Sanskrit and Old Persian words, ‘Oriental’ scholars of the 18<sup>th</sup> century found astonishing similarities between these two languages, thus the name of Indo-European.

In addition to this association of words, scholars also began to see a close likeness between Vedic or Indian mythology, on the one hand, with Greek, Roman, Celtic and German mythology, on the other. Before this burst through, European scholars and intellectuals alike had no idea where their own civilization had taken root. Their ancestral family, lost in time, and later on, divided and subdivided into Germanic and Latin languages, were once and for all rediscovered and firmly settled as a common family of idioms: The study of modern day linguistics derives from this unearthing. Since then, Western universities in both Europe and North-America have created departments of Indo-European languages and civilization. But let us go back to our 18<sup>th</sup> century and enumerate some major innovators.

From the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, British erudite scholars, to name but a few, such as Sir William Jones, Brian Haughton Hodgson, Henry Thomas Colebrooke and Sir Charles Wilkins soon began their monumental task of implementing their roots with the study of Sanskrit and other Indo-Aryan languages. Thanks to their incessant research on manuscripts pertaining to early Buddhism, Brahmanism, Indo-Aryan and Indo-European studies, a link of immense importance was thus found. But the real discoverer of Indian or Indo-European studies was a French oriental scholar by the name of Anquetil-Duperron.

At the time, from the unknown past up to Anquetil-Duperron, a number of oriental scholars had tried to unveil the mystery of the oriental religions and languages, such as Egypt, Assyria, Persia, China and India. Unfortunately, none were fruitful until Anquetil-Duperron’s discovery of the Avesta. The history of Indo-European civilization, before his research and translation work, had been lost in the distant past. The Bible never mentioned India nor has it ever depicted the dissemination of ancient tribes in the East. Knowledge accumulated throughout the centuries was restricted to Greco-Roman, Judeo-Christian and Islamic civilizations. Though accused of not rendering a thorough translation of the Zend-Avesta (1771), as he had interpreted from his Parsis priests, he had succeeded, nonetheless, by giving the European intelligentsia of the time a noteworthy translation of the Oupnek’hat from Persian to Latin.

In 1829, the French Indian scholar Eugene Burnouf noticed, while glancing through Anquetil-Duperron’s Persian manuscripts brought back from Surat, India, striking similarities between the texts of the Avesta and the Rig-Veda. These linguistic and cultural associations lead to the common belief of an independent evolution that occurred after the pre-historical split of these two cultures: India and Persia (Burnouf, 1829).

By the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the study of comparative linguistics and comparative religions gave further rise to three self-regulating schools of thought: The Vedic, which assumed

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that Avesta and Veda had strong cultural ties; The Traditional, which refuted, a priori, similarities between words, but based instead their interpretation on different succeeding ulterior translations of both Sanskrit and Persian texts; and finally, the Modern Parses School, which relied on modern contemporary tradition rather than the old school of thought (de Harlez, Hovelacque, & Bre-al, 1876, 1880, 1893).

Subsequent to the works of Anquetil-Duperron and of Eugene Burnouf, a number of European oriental scholars set forth on translating the Avesta in German, as well as giving the Western world an in depth study of Zoroastrianism, which until then had been lost in time. Following Burnouf's first French version of the Avesta L., Olshausen and Brockhaus published a German edition at Leipzig in 1850; Spiegel printed a third copy in 1851; Westergaard edited a fourth in Copenhagen in 1852; Windischman published his Zoroastrian Studies in Berlin, in 1863; Max Duncker, History of Antiquity in 1864; and Justi a Handbook of the Zend Language in 1864. Other oriental scholars followed the footsteps of their predecessors in the works of Herman; Haug; Wilson, Bleeck, West, Darmester and C. de Harlez.

In 1805, with his book On the language and Wisdom of the Indian, Friedrich von Schlegel introduced the German public and scholars to the newly accepted opinion of Comparative Grammar, comparing Sanskrit with German. Schlegel was also the first scholar to arouse interest in Sanskrit in Germany. As William Jones had held earlier on, Schlegel was interested in finding a common source to the languages of Europe. He mentions a family tree, and as with many linguists of the period, he too thought that European languages derived from Sanskrit on the basis of its greater antiquity. In his book, Schlegel (1772-1829) states "The Old Indic Sanskrit...has a very close relationship with the Roman and Greek, as with the Germanic and Persian languages." (Schegel, quoted by Lehman, W.P. On the language and Wisdom of the Indian, 1967, p. 21). Lehmann (1967) states: "In basing this term on comparative anatomy and incorporating the notion of family trees for languages, he drew on biology for linguistic methodology, foreshadowing Schleicher and his reliance on Darwinism" p. 21).

Rasmus Rask (1787-1832), a Danish scholar and philologist, so as to discover the origin of the Northern European family tree, undertook a journey to Russia, Persia and India investigating and collecting material 'on the field' of Indo-European languages all along his travels, He was the first to point out the link between the ancient Northern and Gothic on the one hand, and the Slavonic, Greek and Latin on the other. In 1822, Rask had mastered no fewer than 25 languages. In his work, in 1818, Rask states that "...a language which is mixed with another very rarely or never takes over changes of form or inflections from this, but on the other hand the more readily loses its own. In this way English has not taken over Icelandic or French inflections...similarly Danish has not taken over German endings" (as cited in Lehmann, 1967, p.2). And also "The language which has the most ingenuous grammar is the most unmixed, the most original, oldest and nearest to the source" (as cited in Lehmann, 1967, p. 2).

*Conclusion:*

*Early traces of the Indo-Europeans*

The Indo-Europeans, as their neighbours the Indo-Aryans, practiced a polytheistic religion centered on sacrificial rites. Their societies consisted of a clerical caste in India, the Brahmins; a warrior caste or Kshatroya; a merchant class as Vaisyas; and a peasant caste, the Sudras.

As of their origins, modern scholars seem to be divided amongst themselves. Concerning the early traces of the Indo-Aryans and the Indo-Europeans, one theory, born out of W.W. II for political Nazi propaganda, stated that the Indo-Europeans derived from Europe and then later migrated to Asia. A second theory suggests that they were a nomadic tribe in Eastern Ukraine and Southern Russia. A third theory formulates that the Indo-Europeans spread peacefully from Anatolia to Asia Minor. A fourth theory depicts the Indo-Europeans connected with the Black Sea deluge theory. And lastly, modern day geneticists see substantial genetic and archaeological evidence for an Indo-European migration originating in the southern Russian steppes.

Today, from the southern Russian steppes, the Proto-Indo-European languages have been divided as such: to the East, known nowadays as the Indo-Aryan branch we have: Iranian (Persian-Farsi-Kurdish); Indian (Sanskrit, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Punjabi, and Urdu); Tocharian; Anatolian; and Armenian. To the West, known as the Indo-European branch we have: Greek; Albanian; Italic (Latin, Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan and Romanian); Baltic; (Latvian and Lithuanian); Slavonic (Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Slovak, Czech, Serbo-Croat, and Bulgarian); Germanic (German, Dutch, English, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian, and Icelandic); and Celtic (Scottish Gaelic, Irish Gaelic, Welsh and Breton).

The study of modern linguistics is the result of a natural evolutionary process originating in Ancient Greece. But the crucial turning point was the study of Sanskrit and Sanskrit grammar in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. The noted and well-known Swiss professor Father of modern day linguistics, Ferdinand de Saussure, was a Sanskrit professor.

Forston (2004) states 'It bears repeating that Indo-European comparative linguistics is not just concerned with reconstructing Proto-Indo-European: it also must account for the histories of all the languages of the family (page X111).

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