Introduction
to Hebrew Linguistics
('Inleiding Hebreeuwse Taalkunde')
UvA, Week 2, February 17, 2012

Tamás Biró

Reading for today

Read: Chaim Rabin: *A Short History of the Hebrew Language* (1973), pp. 5-24.

(Available from http://www.birot.hu/courses/2012-introhb/.)

Warnings:

- Written in 1973: not state-of-the-art in 2012.

- Slight ideological biases: religious, national.

Question: have you observed such a bias?

Numerals

	Standard Arabic (Avital et. al)	(Stefan)	(Nellie)	Hebreeuws
1	Weched	wahid	wahid	Achat
2	Ithnen	itnen	itnen	Shtayim
3	Telethe	talata	talata	Shalosh
4	Arba	arb3a	arba'a	Arba
5	Chamsa	xamsa	hamsa	Chamesh
6	Sita	sitta	sitta	Shesh
7	Saba	saba3a	sab'a	Sheva
8	Tamenia	tamanya	tamanya	Shmone
9	Tisa	tissa3	tis'a	Tesha
10	Ashara	3ashara	asara	Eser

(Compare to Dutch!)

Indo-European numerals

	PIE	Sanskrit	OCS	Lith.	Armenian
1	$Hoi(H)nos$	ékas	jedinъ	víenas	mi
2	$duoh_1$	dvā́(u)	dъva	dù	erku
3	treies	tráyas	trьje	trỹs	erek'
4	$k^wetuōr$	catvā́ras	četyre	keturì	č'ork'
5	$penk^we$	páñca	pętъ	penkì	hing
6	$(s)uéks$	ṣáṣ	šestь	šešì	vec'
7	séptm	saptá	sedmь	septynì	ewt'n
8	$h_3ek̑teh_3$	aṣṭā́(u)	osmь	aštuonì	ut'
9	$(h_1)néun$	náva	devętь	devynì	inn
10	dék̑mt	dáśa	desętь	dẽšimt	tasn

Proto-Indo-European   Old Church Slavic Lithuanian

Source: Robert Beekes:
Comparative Indo-European Linguistics, An Introduction.
(John Benjamins, 1995) P. 214.

Indo-European numerals

Toch. A/B	Greek	Latin	OIr.	Goth.
sas/ṣe	heĩs	ūnus	oén	ains
wu/wi	dúō	duo	da	twai
tɾe/trai	treĩs	trēs	tri	þreis
śtwar/śtwer	téssares	quattuor	cethir	fidwor
päñ/piś	pénte	quīnque	cóic	fimf
ṣäk/ṣkas	héx	sex	sé	saihs
ṣpät/ṣukt	heptá	septem	secht	sibun
okät/okt	oktō	octō	ocht	ahtau
ñu	ennéa	novem	noí	niun
śäk/śak	déka	decem	deich	taihun

Tocharian A/Toch. B   Old Irish   Gothic

Source: Robert Beekes:
Comparative Indo-European Linguistics, An Introduction.
(John Benjamins, 1995) P. 215.

Verbs: perfect tense

Nienke:

Present tense
  Singular:
  1 c eskunu
  2 m teskunu
  2 f teskeni
  3 m yeskunu
  3 f teskunu

Perfect tense
  Singular:
  1 c sakantu
  2 m sakant
  2 f sakanti
  3 m sakana
  3 f sakanaa

Introduction to historical linguistics

Comparing languages:
Contacts or no contacts? This is the question

- Similarity between to languages can be due to:
  - Common ancestor
    (Proto-Semitic *shalaam > Hebr. *shaloom ~ Arabic salaam*)

  - Language contact, areal and cultural factors
    (<u>borrowings</u>: Hebr. שק ~ Engl. *sack*; Hebr. טלוויזיה ~ *Eng. television*)

  - Language universals: [t] sound in both Hebrew and Dutch.

  - Language typology: 2 genders in both Hebrew and French.

  - Chance: suffix *–i* to derive adjective from geographic noun in both Hebrew and Hungarian: Hebr. ישראלי ~ Hung. *izraeli* 'Israeli'.

NB: observe conventional notations: [t], ~, *example* 'meaning', *, >.

Comparing languages:
Contacts or no contacts? That is the question.

- <u>Comparative linguistics</u>: genetic or typological.
- <u>Historical linguistics</u> (since 19th cent.): Similarity due to common ancestor. Search for genetic relations.
- <u>Language typology</u> (20th cent.): Language *universals* + some variations = language types. Similarity due to belonging to the same type. Search for universals.
- <u>Areal linguistics</u> (20th cent.): Similarity due to geographic closeness and language contact. E.g. Balkan *Sprachbund*, or Baltic languages.

Answering Why's in linguistics

Given a (linguistic) observation: why is it so?

- **Because it has developed so:**
  historical explanations.

- Because this is how it is encoded in the brain:
  cognitive explanations.

- Because this is how it can fulfill its (social) function(s):
  functional explanations.

communicative

- Because this is how the child can learn it.

- …

- **By coincidence**: Quite often the best answer, don't be afraid of it!
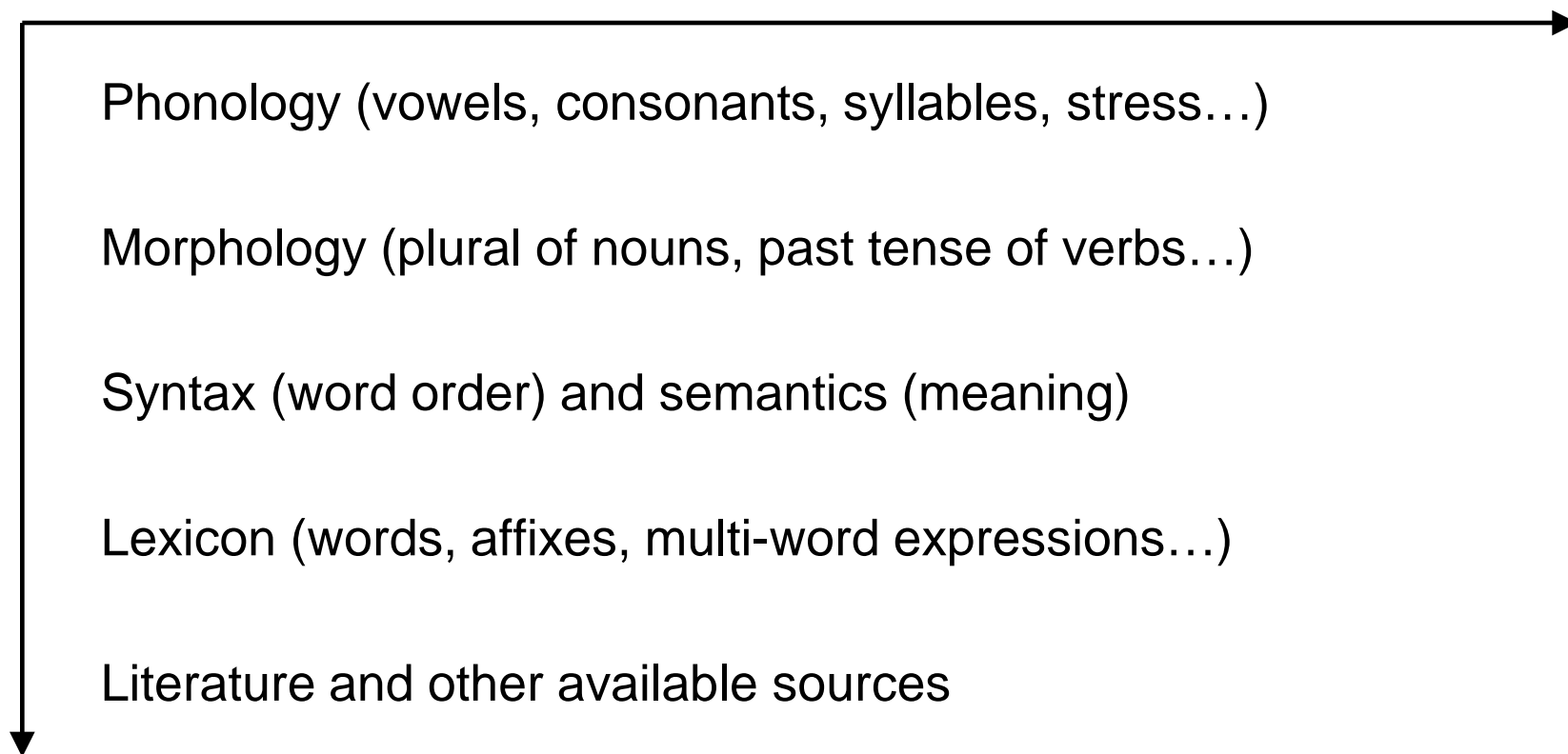
Why interested in linguistics?

- Aristotle and philosophers of language since:
    - <u>Philosophical</u> questions: what is meaning (of a sentence, of a word)?
    - Tool for other fields of philosophy: rhetoric, poetics, aesthetics…

- (Late antiquity and) Middle Ages (and since):
    - "<u>Philology</u>": tool to decipher the meaning/message of (old and/or holly) texts

- (Late 18th) and 19th century: *language as a <u>historical</u> phenomenon*
    - <u>Historical linguistics</u> (tool for history: history of language ≈ history of people)

- Early 20th century: *language a <u>sign</u>; language as a <u>social</u> phenomenon*
    - <u>Structuralism</u> (uncover structure of language), <u>semiotics</u> (study of signs)

- Since 1957 (Noam Chomsky): *language as a <u>biological</u> phenomenon*
    - <u>Generative linguistics</u>; the <u>cognitive turn</u>: information processing in the brain.

(Contemporary developments: balancing between different approaches.) 11

Two dimensions:
synchrony (one state) *vs. diachrony* (change)

1500 BCE   500 BCE   200 CE   1200 CE   1948   2012

Phonology (vowels, consonants, syllables, stress…)

Morphology (plural of nouns, past tense of verbs…)

Syntax (word order) and semantics (meaning)

Lexicon (words, affixes, multi-word expressions…)

Literature and other available sources

Socio-historical context (contact with others…)

The prehistory of Hebrew:

the Semitic language family

Hebrew: prehistory and four periods

0. Proto-Semitic, proto-NW-Semitic
    proto-Canaanite, "proto-Hebrew"

1. Biblical Hebrew

    Pre-classical BH, classical BH, post-exilic BH; Qumran

    Masoretic Hebrew = Tiberian Hebrew

2. Mishnaic/Rabbinic Hebrew

3. Medieval Hebrew – dead or alive?

4. Modern Hebrew, Israeli Hebrew (Israeli language)

    Haskala, language revival, contemporary IH

The Semitic languages: Akkadian

Mesopotamia

- ## Sumerian:

  A language isolate.

  4th -3rd millennium BCE.

- ## Akkadian:

  East Semitic language.

  Since mid-3rd millennium BCE.

  2nd millennium: *lingua franca of the Middle East: Mari, Ugarit, Canaan, Egypt/Tel el-Amarna*

  Spoken: until mid-1st mill. BCE

  Written: until Roman times.

Source: http://edanedanan-pentatonic.blogspot.com/2010/11/10-kerajaan-terbesar-dunia-dalam.html
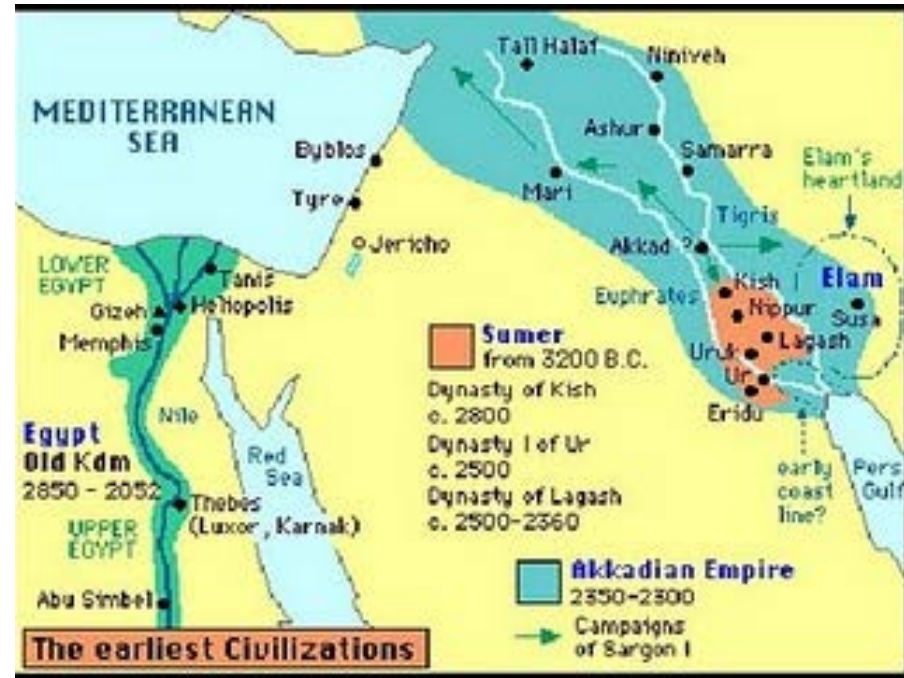
The Semitic languages: Akkadian

- Periods and dialects:

2600-1950 BCE	Old Akkadian	
1950 – 1750/1600	Old Assyrian	Old Babylonian
1500/1600 – 1000	Middle Assyrian	Middle Babylonian
1000 BCE – 600 CE	Neo Assyrian	Neo Babylonian
600 BCE – 50 CE	---	Late Babylonian

Script: <u>cuneiform</u> (wedges)

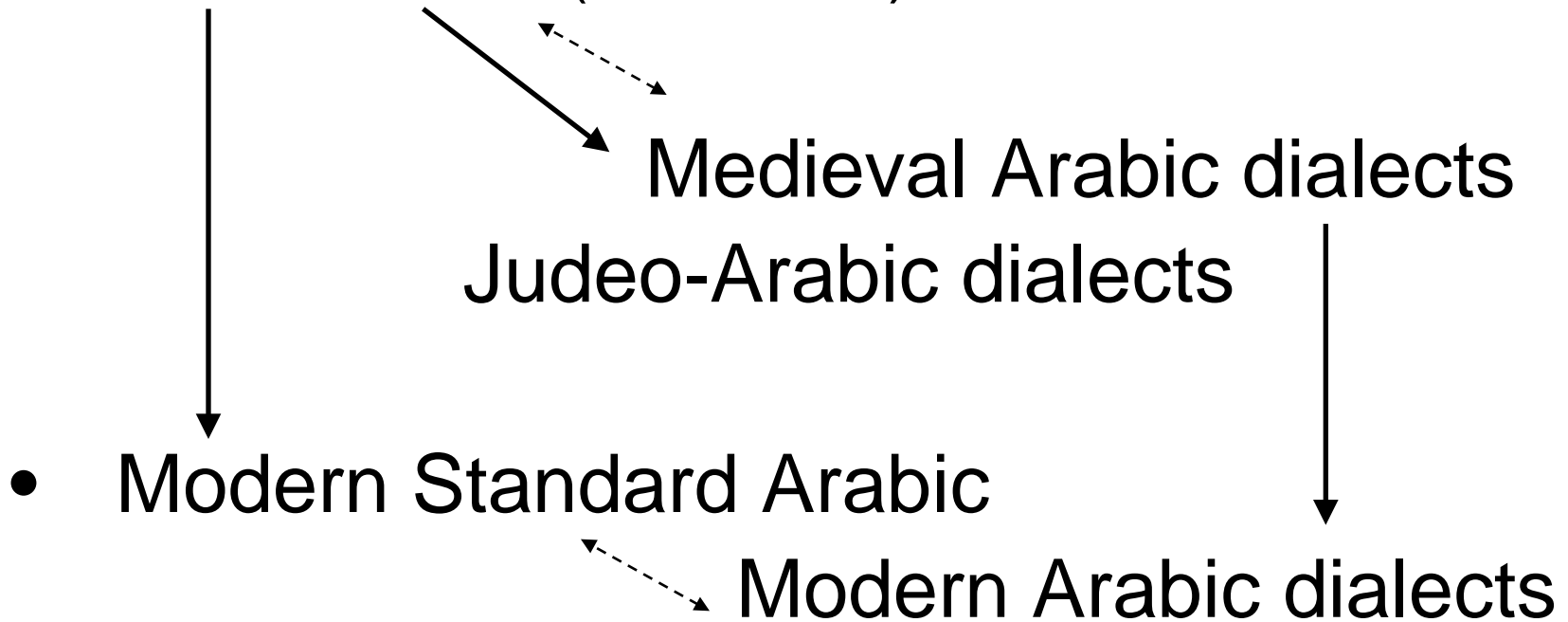-Borrowed from Sumerian

-Syllabic + logograms + determinants
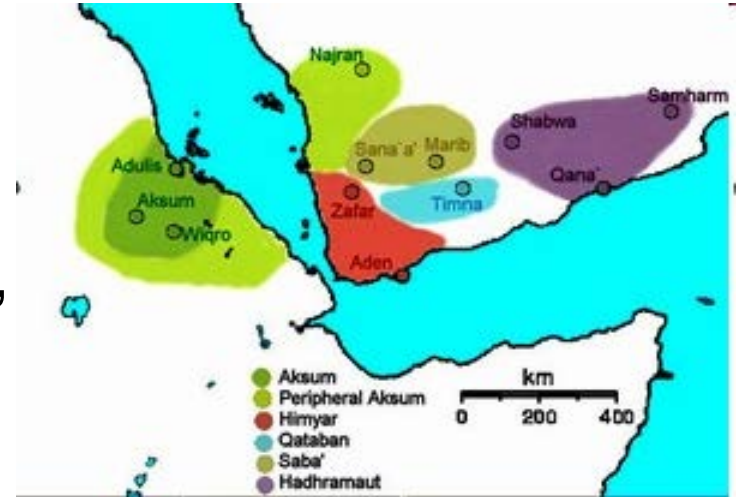
-Polyphonous signs

Source: http://www.language-museum.com/encyclopedia/a/akkadian-cuneiform.php
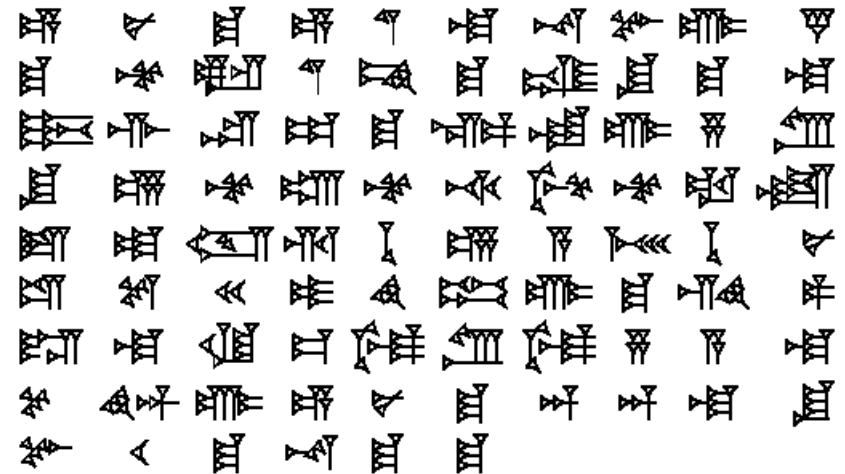
The Semitic languages: Arabic

- Pre-Islamic Arabic
- 7th cent. CE: Arabic of Qur'an, Classical Arabic
- Middle Arabic (800-1200)

Medieval Arabic dialects

Judeo-Arabic dialects

- Modern Standard Arabic

Modern Arabic dialects

diglossia!

The Semitic languages: Ethiopian and South-Arabian languages

- Old (Epigraphic) South-Arabian languages:
  - (in Yemen) Sabean, Minaean, Qatabanian, Hadhramautic

- Ethiopian languages:
  - <u>Ge'ez</u>: holy tongue of the Ethiopian Coptic Church(es)
  - Modern Ethiopian Semitic languages: Amharic, Tigre, Tigrinya, and many-many others

- Modern South-Arabian languages (in Yemen & Oman)
  - Mehri, Soqotri, Shehri, Bathari, etc.

http://www.ancientscripts.com/s_arabian.html http://socotra.info/assets/images/new4/letter_300.jpg

The Semitic languages: North-West Semitic

- Ugaritic: 2nd millennium BCE.

- Aramaic: 1st millennium BCE – today

  => <u>Syriac</u>: 1st millennium CE – (today: by Syriac churches)

- Canaanite lgs: since 2nd half of the 2nd millennium BCE

  - Tel el-Amarna glosses

  - Phoenician: 1st half of 1st millennium BCE

    => Punic: 1st millennium BCE in Western Mediterranean

  - Hebrew: 1st millennium BCE – today

  - Ammonite, Edomite, Moabite: early 1st millennium BCE

Further Semitic languages:
   Amorite (NW-Semitic?), Eblaite (East Semitic?), etc.   19

The Semitic languages: subgroups

A probably standard approach:

<u>East Semitic:</u> Akkadian (and Eblaite?)

<u>West Semitic:</u>

    <u>North-West Semitic:</u>

        Ugaritic, Aramaic, Canaanite

    Arabic: go to NW (Central Semitic = Arabic + NW)?
            or go to South? or go apart? Different opinions!

    <u>South Semitic:</u>

        Modern SA, Epigraphic SA, Ethiopian

The Semitic languages: subgroups

Problem with the "family tree approach":

- Dialects and perpendicular waves of innovation in the protolanguage?

- Frequent contacts even after splitting apart?

- Theory of waves of migrations ("leaving the desert")

  1. Akkadian (cca. 3000 BCE to the East)

  2. NW: Amorite (Amurru, cca. 2200 BCE toward the East), then Ugarit and Canaanites (to the NW)

  3. Aramaic tribes (cca. 1100 BCE, to Syria)

  4. Arabs (since Roman times until today, cf. Bedouins)

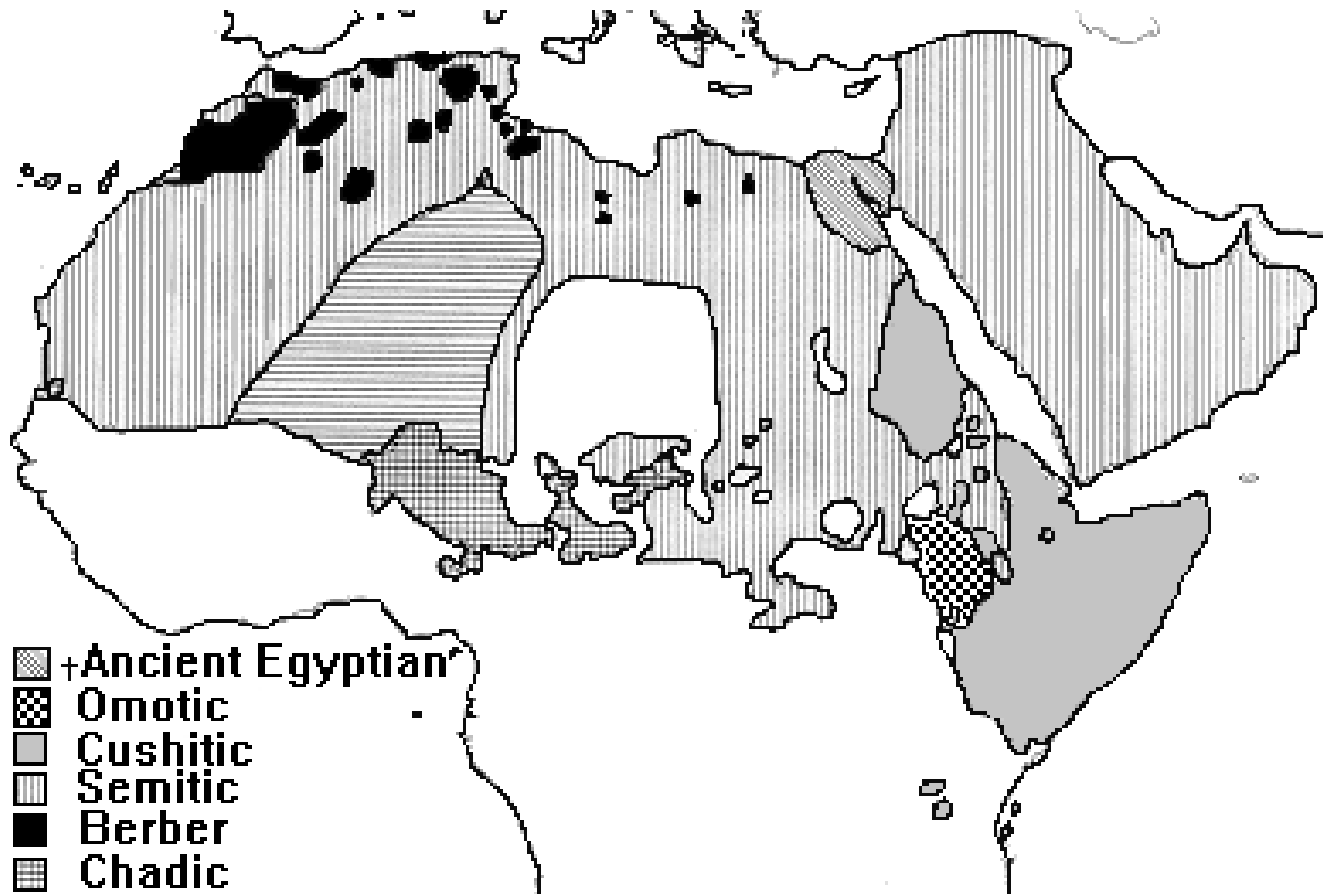 5. Southern Arabian and Ethiopian (toward the South)

The prehistory of Semitic:

The Afro-Asiatic language phylum

The Afroasiatic language family,
a.k.a. *Afroasiatic language phylum*

- <u>Semitic</u> language family

- <u>Egyptian</u>: old Egyptian => Coptic

  - Egyptian script: hieroglyphic, hieratic => demotic

  - Coptic script. Cf. Coptic orthodox church

- Berber language family (North-Africa: Atlas, Sahara)

- Cushitic language family (East-Africa: Ethiopia, etc.)

- Chadic language family (West-Africa: e.g., *Hausa*.)

- Omotic language family (SW-Ethiopia)

  1950: Joseph Greenberg. Since: many different subgroups proposed.
  Common ancestors: when, where, how did they live?   23

The Afroasiatic language family,
a.k.a. *Afroasiatic language phylum*

Source: http://linguistics.byu.edu/classes/ling450ch/images/aamap.gif, *Adapted from Bomhard 1984:181.*

The Afroasiatic language family,
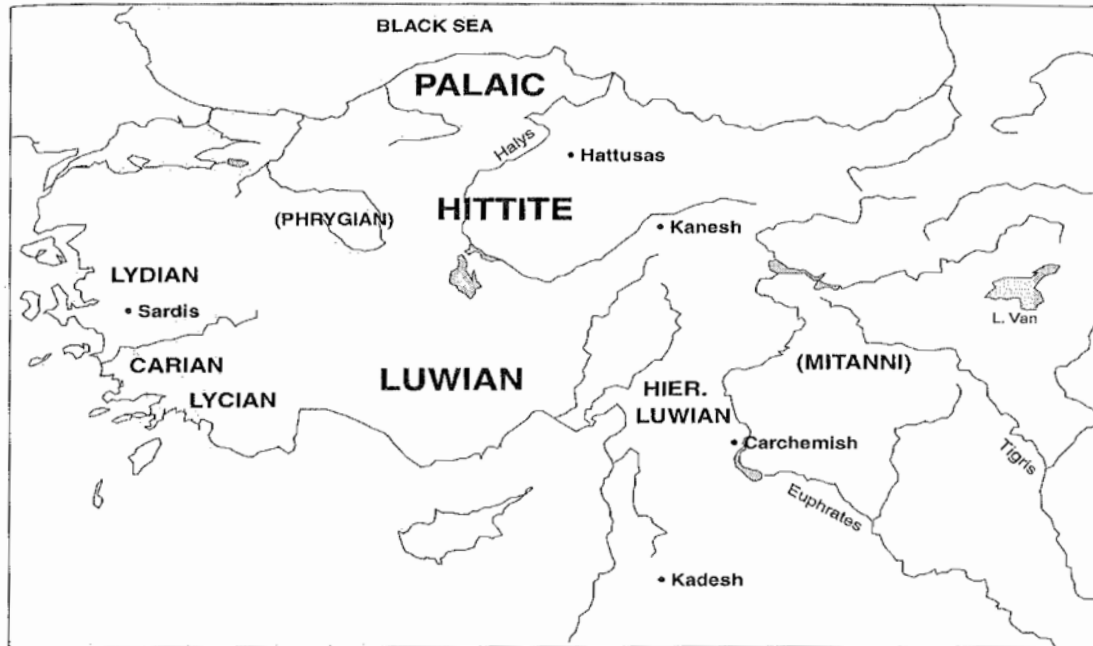## a.k.a. *Afroasiatic language phylum*

Source:
http://alma.matrix.msu.edu/african_languages

The prehistory and context of Hebrew, Semitic and Afroasiatic:

Other language families

Other relevant language families

Source: Robert Beekes: *Comparative Indo-European Linguistics, An Introduction.* (John Benjamins, 1995) P. 305.

NB: Originally in Dutch, recommended!

Map 4. The Anatolian languages — This group probably arrived from the north-west, across the Bosporus. The family has completely died out. Best known is Hittite, from about 1700-1200 B.C. The other languages are Palaic, Luwian (both written in cuneiform), Hieroglyphic Luwian (which survived till the 8th century B.C.), and in the west, Lycian, Carian and Lydian, known from about the 5th and 4th centuries B.C. (in alphabetic writing). — Phrygian arrived much later (after 1200 B.C.) and does not belong to this family. The Mitanni, in the 15th century B.C., spoke (non-Indo-European) Hurrian, but their rulers were Indo-Aryans.

Other relevant language families

- Nostratic theory?? Proposing common origin for most old-world languages: proof is scarce, hard to distinguish from loan and coincidence.

- Uralic (incl. Finno-Ugric) family; Eastern Asian languages; Caucasian languages; etc.

- Language isolates: <u>Sumerian</u>; Elamite; Hurrian & Urartian…

- Turkic language family: Turkish, Azerbaijani, Uzbek… and <u>Karaim</u>.

- <u>Indo-European languages</u>

  - <u>Hittite</u> (2nd millennium BCE) and related Anatolian languages

  - <u>Persian</u> (since the middle of 1st millennium BCE)

  - <u>Greek</u>: Mycenaean, Classical Greek, Koinè (Hellenism, NT), medieval (Byzantium), modern (Katharevousa vs. Dimotiki)

  - Etc.: e.g., language of the Philistines?

Indo-European: some pics
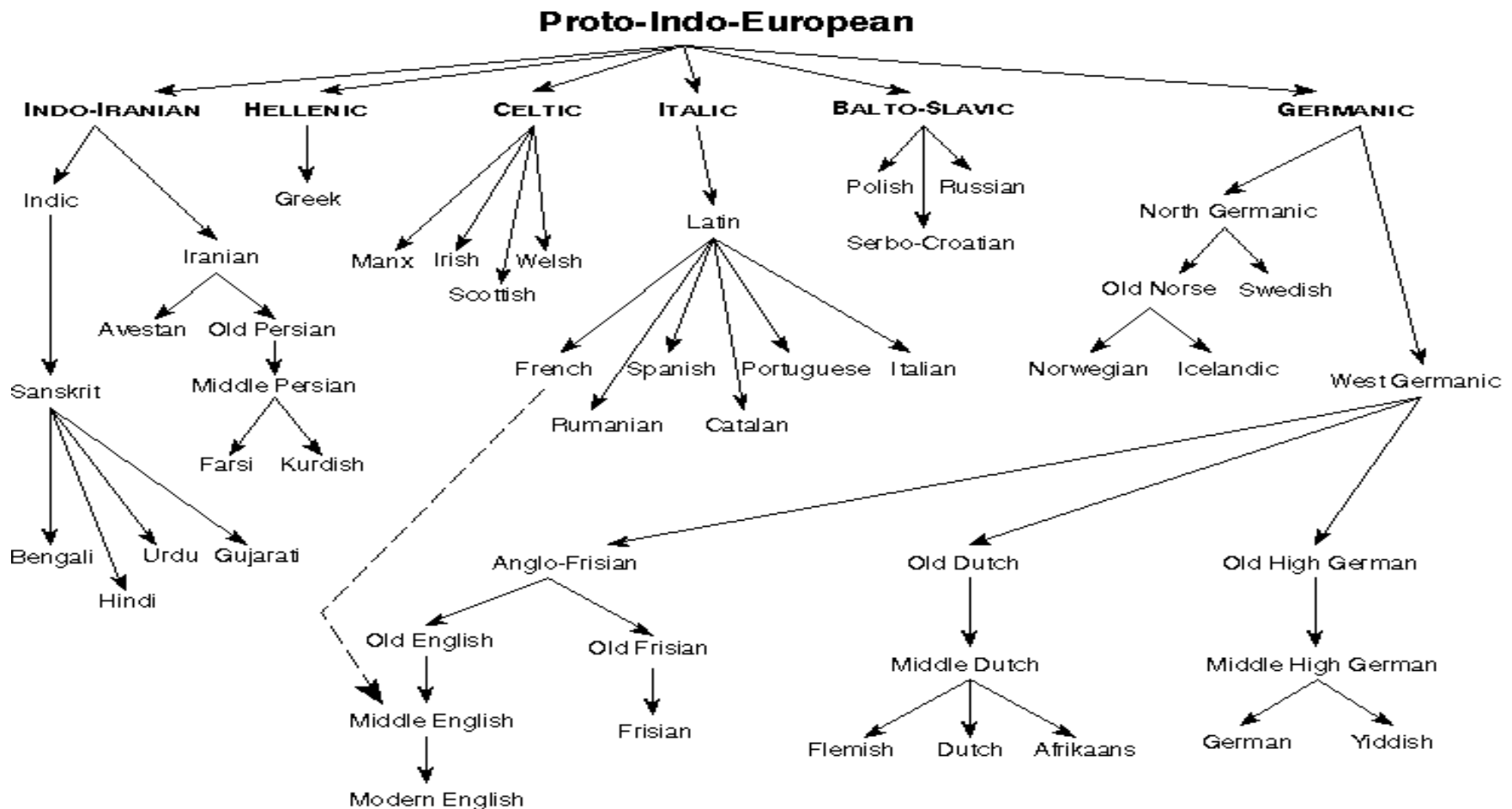
Prepared by Jack Lynch, jlynch@andromeda.rutgers.edu

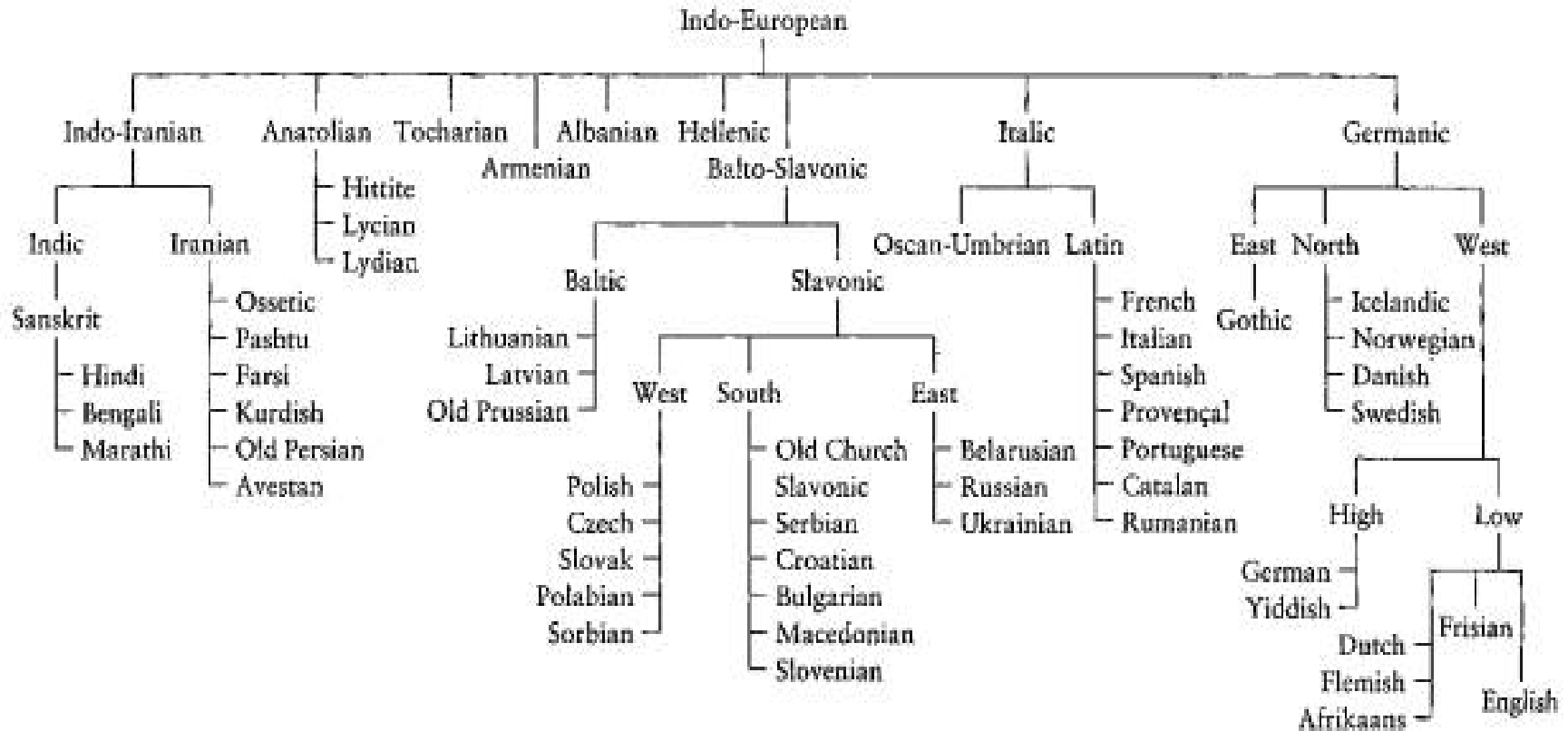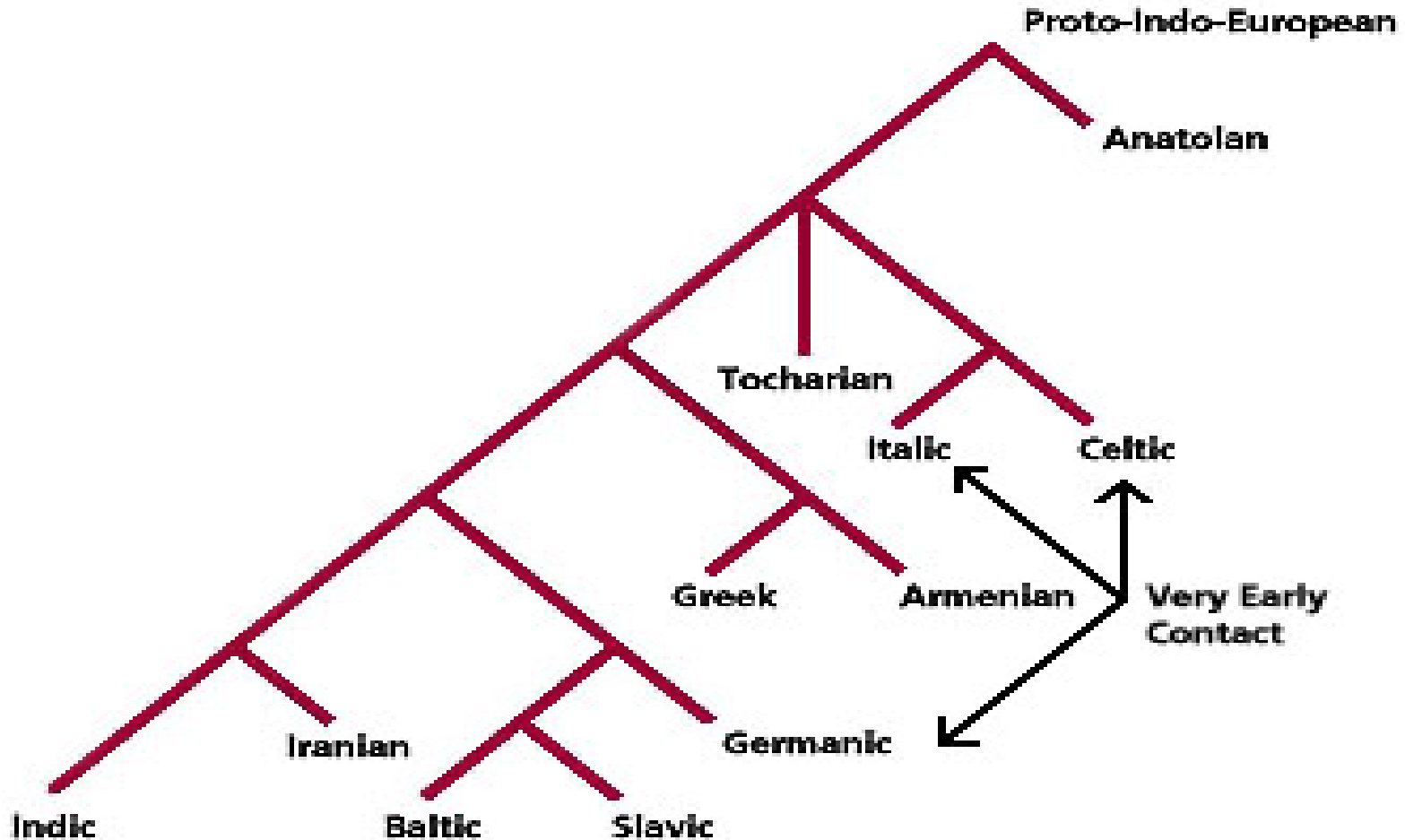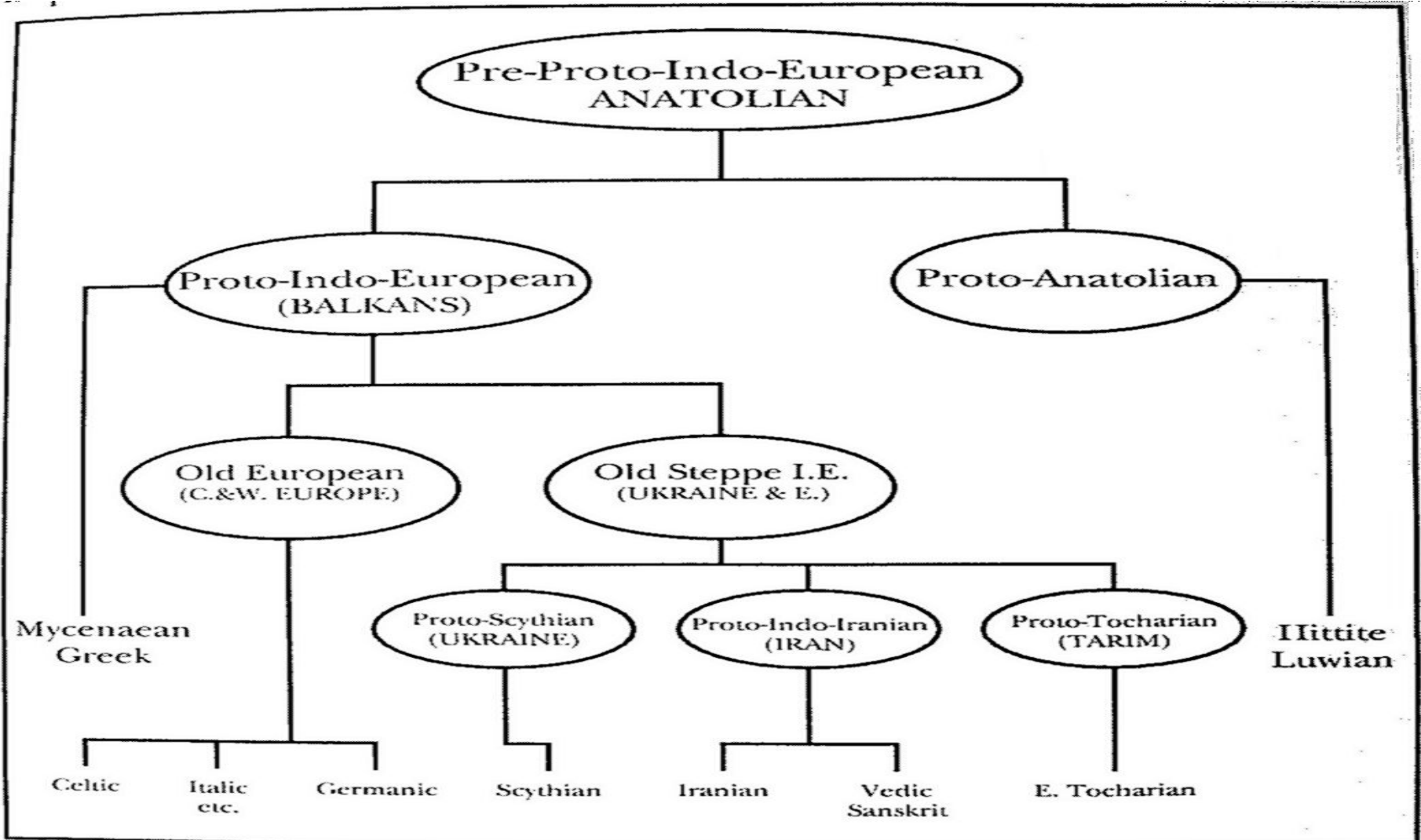*Source:* http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/language.gif

Indo-European: some pics

Figure 2.1 The Indo-European language family

Indo-European: some pics

Proto-Indo-European

Anatolian

Tocharian

Italic   Celtic

Greek   Armenian   Very Early Contact

Iranian

Indic   Baltic   Slavic   Germanic

Indo-European: some pics

Reading and assignment
for next week

Next week: NW-Semitic; history of Aramaic.

Reading: Jana Loose (ed.). *De Talen van het Oude Nabije Oosten*. Ex Oriente Lux, Leiden. Peeters, Leuven, 1999.

"Syrië en Palestina: De Noordwestsemitische talen" (pp. 77-120).

Download: http://www.birot.hu/courses/2012-introhb (username, passwd)

Assignment: Compare Deut. 6:4-9 (Shma) in MT vs. Targum Onkelos. List similarities and differences.

At most 1 page. Email by Thursday noon to: t.s.biro@uva.nl.

Subject: "Assignment 2". Preferably no attachment, please.

See you next week!