

Facets of Hebrew and Semitic linguistics

Yale, week 2, September 03, 2013

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Hebrew: prehistory and four periods

0. Proto-Semitic, proto-NW-Semitic
proto-Canaanite, “proto-Hebrew”
1. Biblical Hebrew
2. Mishnaic/Rabbinic Hebrew
3. Medieval Hebrew
4. Modern Hebrew, Israeli Hebrew (Israeli language)

The Semitic languages

An overview

Semitic languages (1): Akkadian

Mesopotamia

- Sumerian:

A language isolate.

4th -3rd millennium BCE.

- Akkadian:

East Semitic language.

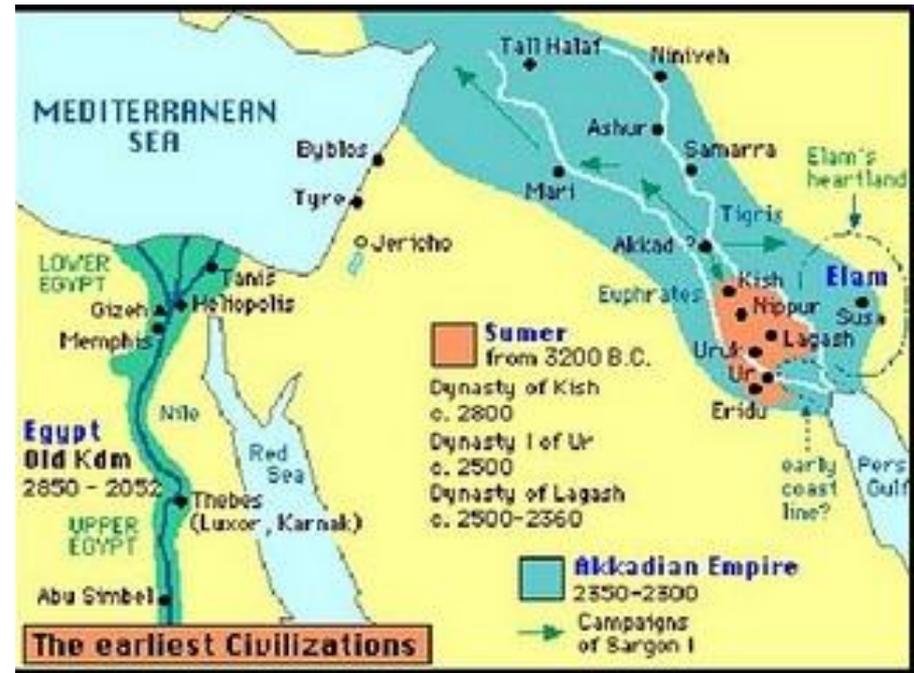
Since mid-3rd millennium BCE.

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>

Semitic languages (1): 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: cuneiform (wedges)

-Borrowed from Sumerian

-Syllabic + logograms + determinants

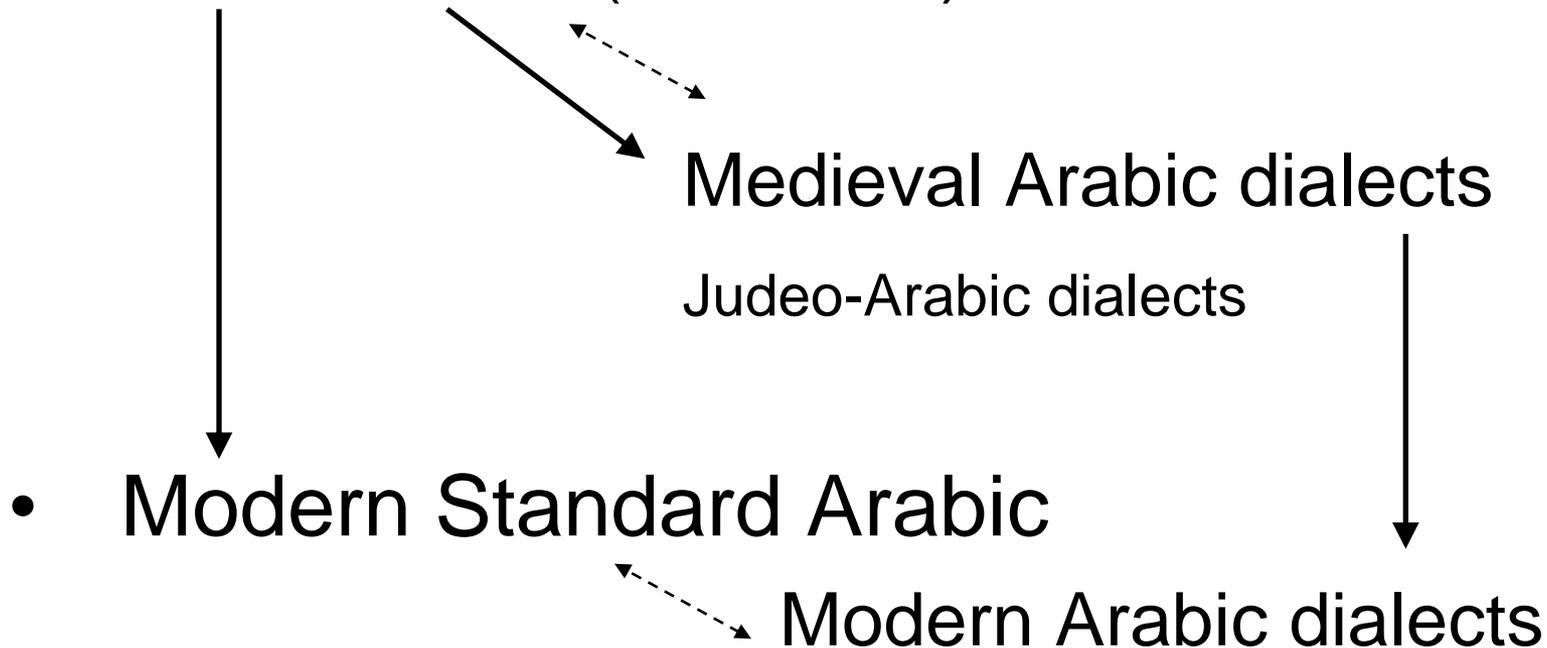
-Polyphonous signs



Source: <http://www.language-museum.com/encyclopedia/a/akkadian-cuneiform.php>

Semitic languages (2): Arabic

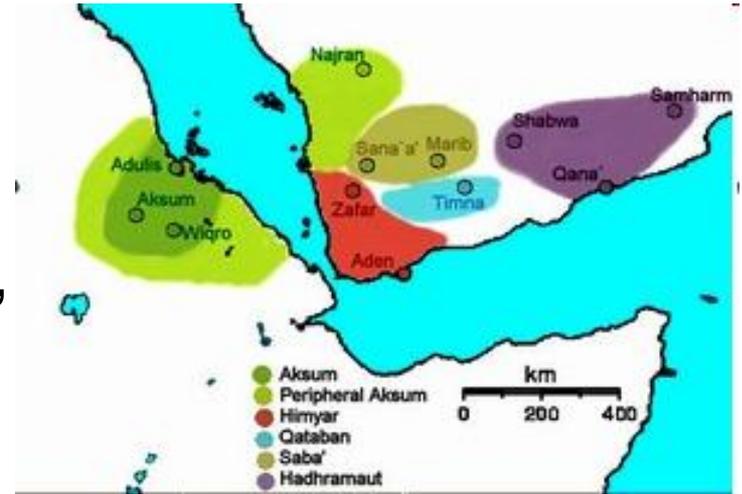
- Pre-Islamic Arabic
- 7th cent. CE: Arabic of Qur'an, Classical Arabic
- Middle Arabic (800-1200)



diglossia!

Semitic languages (3-5): Ethiopian and South-Arabian languages

- Old (Epigraphic) South-Arabian languages:
 - (in Yemen) Sabean, Minaean, Qatabanian, Hadhramautic
- Ethiopian languages:
 - Ge'ez: 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.



Semitic languages (6-7): North-West Semitic

- Ugaritic: 2nd millennium BCE.
- Aramaic: 1st millennium BCE – today
 - => Syriac: 1st millennium CE – (today: by Syriac churches)
- Canaanite langs: 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.

The Semitic languages: subgroups

A probably standard approach:

East Semitic: Akkadian (and Eblaite?)

West Semitic:

North-West Semitic:

Ugaritic, Canaanite, Aramaic

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

South Semitic:

Modern SA, Epigraphic SA, Ethiopian

The prehistory of Semitic:

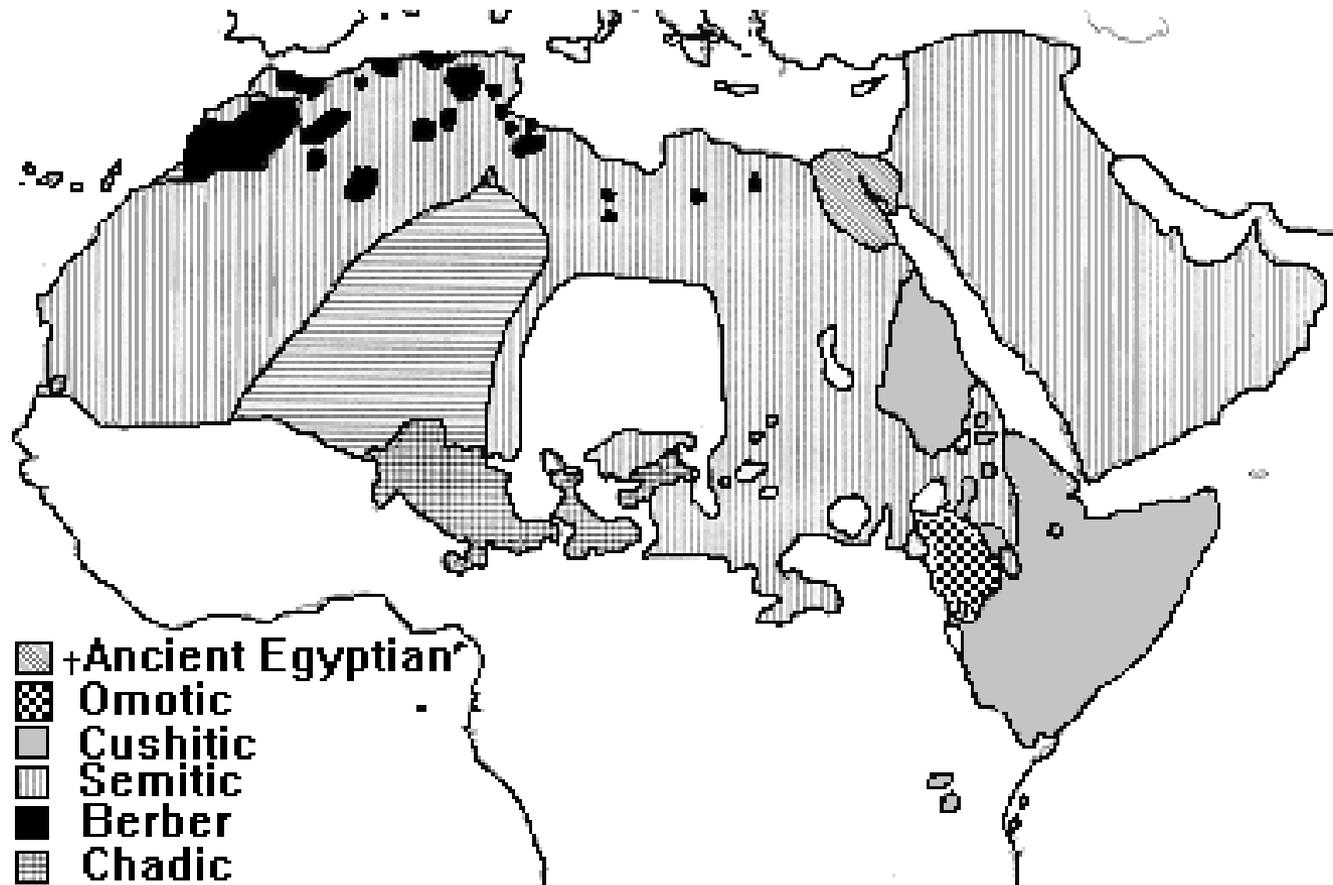
The Afro-Asiatic language phylum

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

- Semitic language family
- Egyptian: 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?

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

Introduction to historical linguistics

Indo-European numerals

	PIE	Sanskrit	OCS	Lith.	Armenian
1	<i>Hoi(H)nos</i>	<i>ékas</i>	<i>jedinъ</i>	<i>vienas</i>	<i>mi</i>
2	<i>duoh₁</i>	<i>dvā(u)</i>	<i>dъva</i>	<i>dù</i>	<i>erku</i>
3	<i>treies</i>	<i>tráyas</i>	<i>trъje</i>	<i>trỹs</i>	<i>erek‘</i>
4	<i>k^wetuōr</i>	<i>catvāras</i>	<i>četyre</i>	<i>keturi</i>	<i>č‘ork‘</i>
5	<i>penk^we</i>	<i>pāñca</i>	<i>pęť</i>	<i>penki</i>	<i>hing</i>
6	<i>(s)uéks</i>	<i>ṣáṣ</i>	<i>šestъ</i>	<i>šeši</i>	<i>vec‘</i>
7	<i>séptm</i>	<i>saptá</i>	<i>sedmъ</i>	<i>septyni</i>	<i>ewt‘n</i>
8	<i>h₃ekteh₃</i>	<i>aṣṭā(u)</i>	<i>osmъ</i>	<i>aštuoni</i>	<i>ut‘</i>
9	<i>(h₁)néun</i>	<i>náva</i>	<i>devęť</i>	<i>devyni</i>	<i>inn</i>
10	<i>dékmt</i>	<i>dása</i>	<i>desęť</i>	<i>dėšimt</i>	<i>tasn</i>

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.
<i>sas/še</i>	<i>heĩs</i>	<i>ūnus</i>	<i>oén</i>	<i>ains</i>
<i>wu/wi</i>	<i>dúō</i>	<i>duo</i>	<i>da</i>	<i>twai</i>
<i>tre/trai</i>	<i>treĩs</i>	<i>trēs</i>	<i>tri</i>	<i>þreis</i>
<i>štwar/štwer</i>	<i>téssares</i>	<i>quattuor</i>	<i>cethir</i>	<i>fidwor</i>
<i>pāñ/pis</i>	<i>pénte</i>	<i>quīnque</i>	<i>cóic</i>	<i>fimf</i>
<i>šäk/škas</i>	<i>hék</i>	<i>sex</i>	<i>sé</i>	<i>saihs</i>
<i>spät/šukt</i>	<i>heptá</i>	<i>septem</i>	<i>secht</i>	<i>sibun</i>
<i>okät/okt</i>	<i>októ</i>	<i>octō</i>	<i>ocht</i>	<i>ahtau</i>
<i>ñu</i>	<i>ennéa</i>	<i>novem</i>	<i>noí</i>	<i>niun</i>
<i>šäk/šak</i>	<i>déka</i>	<i>decem</i>	<i>deich</i>	<i>taihun</i>

Tocharian A/Toch. B

Old Irish

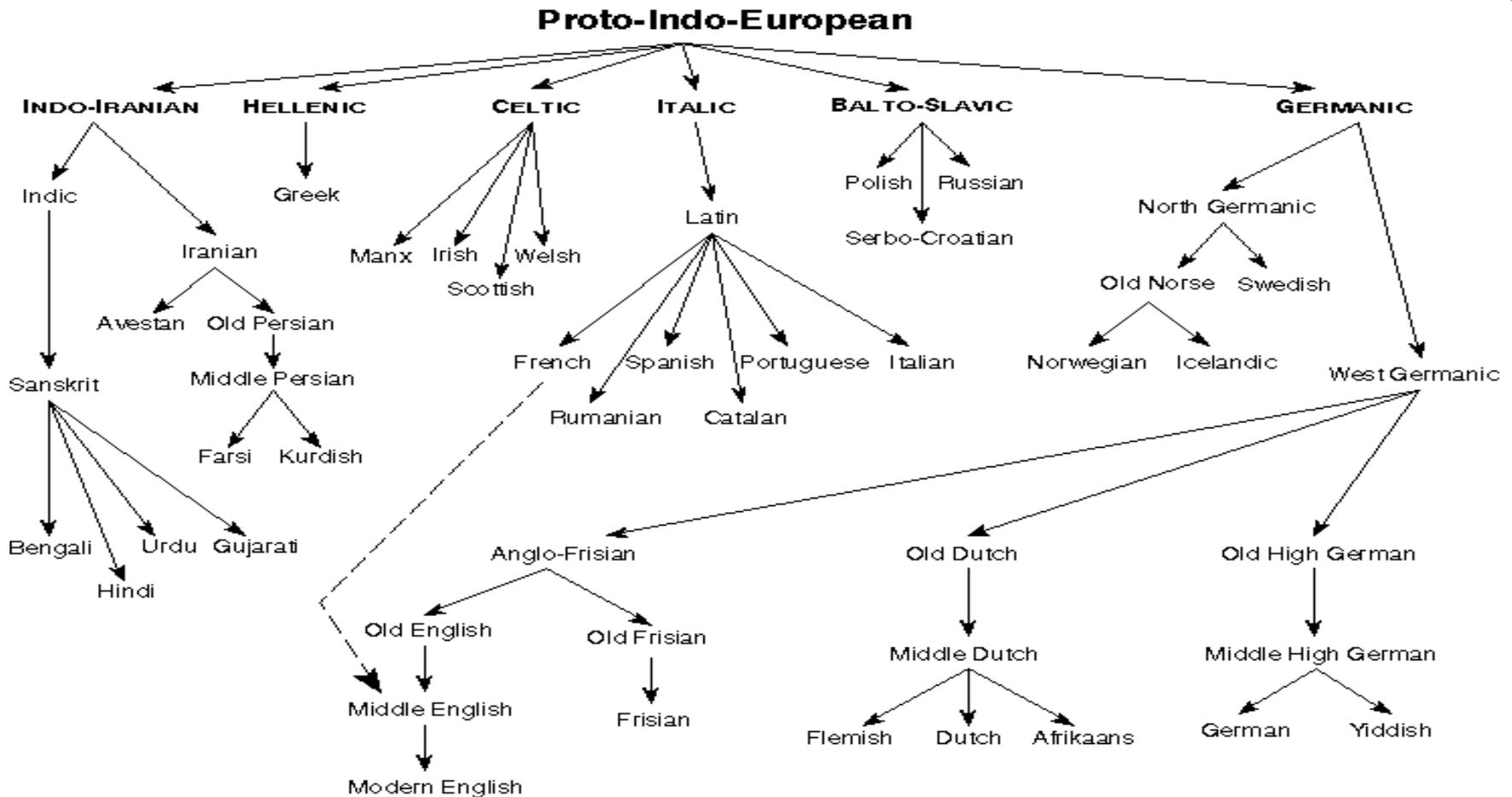
Gothic

Source: Robert Beekes:

Comparative Indo-European Linguistics, An Introduction.

(John Benjamins, 1995) P. 215.

Indo-European: some pics



Prepared by Jack Lynch, jlynch@andromeda.rutgers.edu

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

Indo-European: some pics

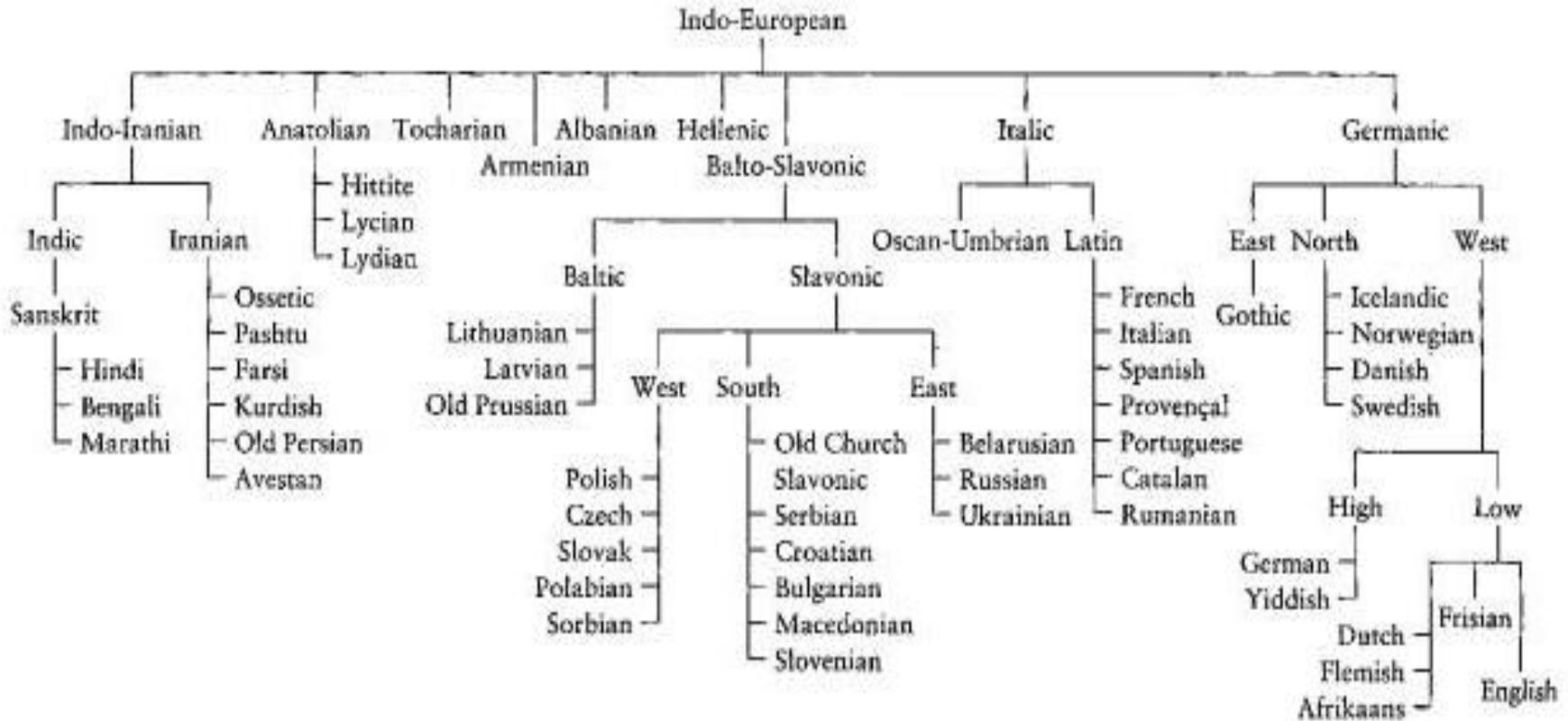
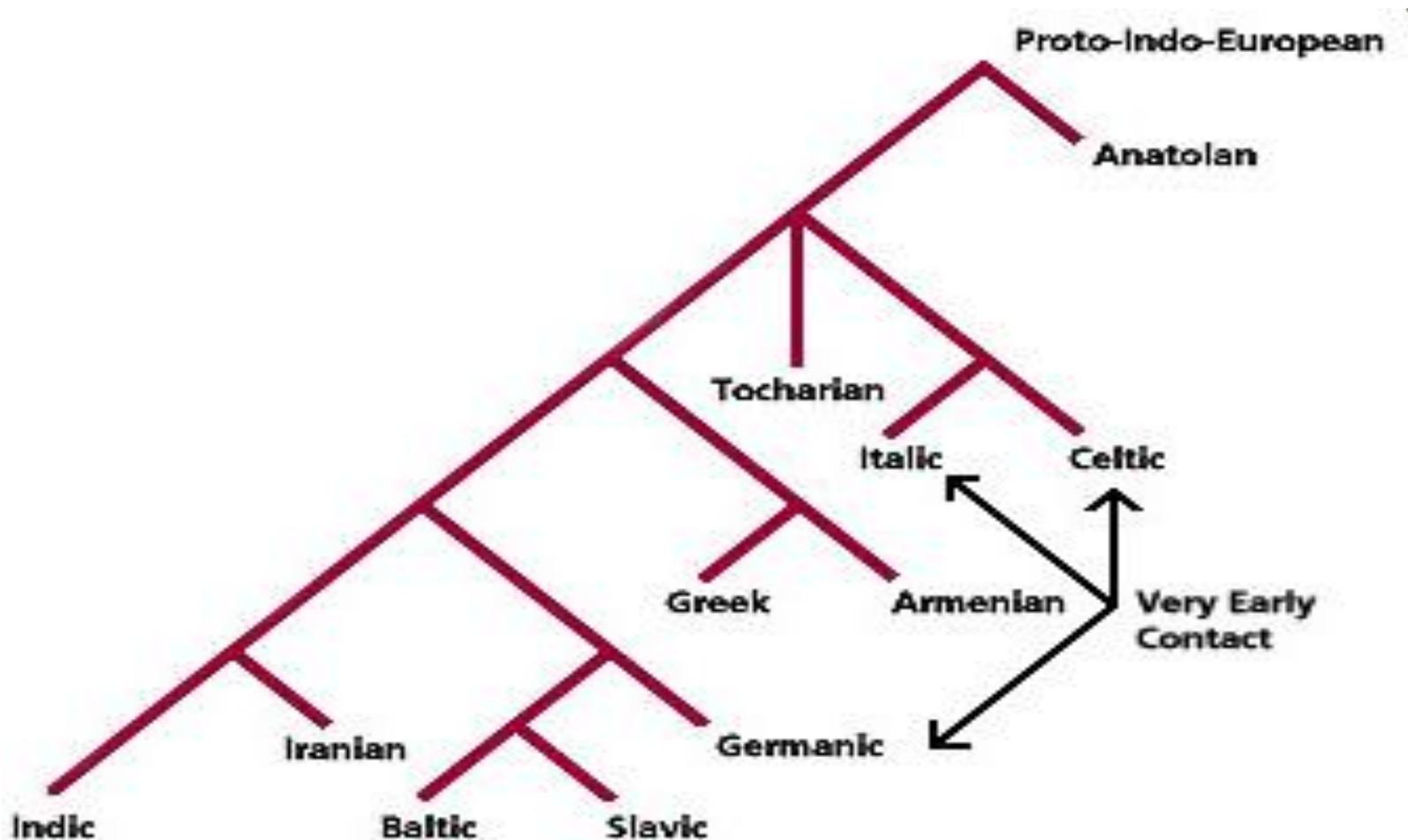
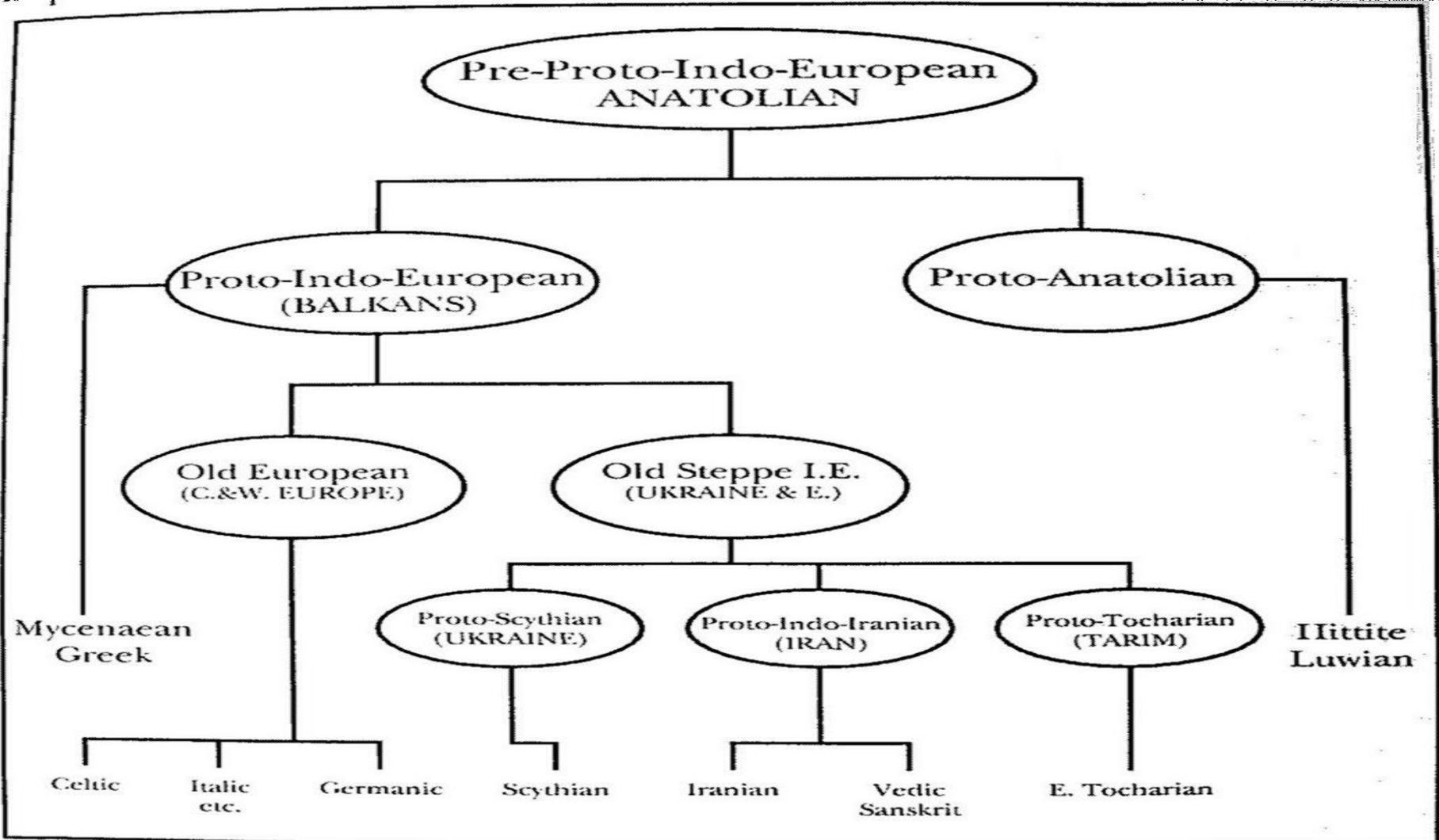


Figure 2.1 The Indo-European language family

Indo-European: some pics



Indo-European: some pics



Isoglosses for Semitic:

	<i>Akkadian</i>	<i>Ugaritic</i>	<i>Hebrew</i>	<i>Cl. Arabic</i>	<i>Ge'ez</i>
'king'	šarru(m)	malku	melex	malik	nəgūš
are there cases?	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
'build'	banū	bny	bānā	banā	nadaqa
'you, masc.'	attā	atta	attā	anta	anta
Past tense formed with	prefixes	suffixes	suffixes	suffixes	suffixes
Dual: is there sg, du & pl?	Yes	Yes	No / not productive	Yes	No
Definite article	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes?

Which **isogloss** to use when drawing a “family tree”?

Take into consideration:

- Possible innovations/changes in more recent languages.
- Possible language contacts (with each other, with other languages).

See you next week!