

The Origin of the Indic Languages: The Indo-European Model  
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Among the overwhelming majority of linguists, the accepted model for the genetic affiliation of the Indic languages (Sanskrit, Pali, Hindi, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Gujarati, Bengali, etc.) is what can be called the Indo-European model. According to the Indo-European model, Indic languages are all descended from a single language which no longer exists (sometimes referred to as Proto-Indo-European), which is also the ancestor of the languages of Iran and most of the languages of Europe. In this paper I will offer a brief presentation of the assumptions underlying the Indo-European model and I shall examine two separate critical appraisals of it by the linguists Angela Marcantonio and Nikolay Trubetzkoy. I shall show that neither of their criticisms succeed in casting sufficient doubt on the Indo-European hypothesis, and neither offers an adequate explanation of the existing linguistic data. In the second half of the paper I shall draw a distinction between the hypothesis of a reconstructed Indo-European parent language, and the reconstruction of the culture and homeland of its original speakers. Acceptance of the hypothesis of the Indo-European model of language relationship need not entail acceptance of any single hypothesis about the prehistoric migrations of speakers of Indo-European languages or about their original culture.