

The latest theories on the deep roots of Indo-European

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In this paper, we give an introductory survey of the latest hypotheses concerning the rootedness of Indo-European in the linguistic landscape of the Eurasian continent. We start with a brief recapitulation of why historical linguistics is a real and important science, for the benefit of those who think otherwise. We establish the epistemological status of proto-languages, often dismissed in AIT-skeptical circles as "ghost languages". Applying these insights, we look into the case of the Indo-European language family in statu nascendi. What indications exist of ties with other language families? What conclusion can be drawn from the fact that Indo-European and Semitic share a whole list of grammatical features setting the two of them apart from all other languages? Is there a common origin with some Caucasian languages, as held up by those who favour an Indo-European homeland in the northern borderlands of the Caucasus? Was there an Indo-European language in Mesopotamia predating and influencing Sumerian? What remains of the 45-year-old speculations about a link between Indo-European and Austronesian (!)? How does the position of the Anatolian group within the Indo-European family plead against an Anatolian homeland?