

1. The many interfaces of Indo-European

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Abstract

This inaugural chapter introduces *Indo-European Interfaces*. By emphasizing an interdisciplinary approach that combines historical linguistics, archaeology, and comparative religion it intends to set the stage for future research and debate in this evolving field.

1. The Indo-European language family

The Indo-European language family comprises several hundred languages spoken all over the world, including English, Irish, Urdu, Kurdish, French, and Russian. Each of these languages traces its lineage back to a respective proto-language, such as Proto-Germanic, Proto-Celtic, etc. Accordingly, the Indo-European languages can be categorized into different sub-families: Germanic, Italic, Celtic, Greek, Armenian, Albanian, Indo-Iranian, Balto-Slavic, and the extinct Anatolian and Tocharian branches. Above these families on the genealogical tree stands Proto-Indo-European, the reconstructed common progenitor of all the branches, which, though not preserved in writing, has been linguistically deduced from its linguistic descendants. Scholars universally acknowledge the kinship among these languages, yet the historical narrative detailing their dispersion and the proliferation of the Indo-European languages in prehistoric times remains a subject of ongoing debate.

2. A new picture of prehistory is emerging

Current scientific advances are reshaping our understanding of prehistory. Most recently ancient genetics and isotope analysis have granted us new perspectives on prehistoric population migrations and contacts,

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and sparked a reinterpretation of the archaeological record. These advances provide us with unprecedented insights into the movements and kinship patterns of prehistoric populations.

This improved understanding is largely due to the adoption of an interdisciplinary approach, which has proven invaluable in painting a more comprehensive picture of our past. In an era of rapid scientific progress, historical linguists are increasingly embracing cross-disciplinary approaches, recognizing the immense potential they hold for forging new research avenues. At Stockholm University, scholars working in this new multi-disciplinary framework combining methods and materials from a wide range of disciplines, are brought together at the newly established *Centre for Studies in Indo-European Language and Culture*. At a time when scientific development is accelerating, historical linguists cannot afford to shut themselves off from progress in other disciplines; on the contrary, we should promote and welcome all initiatives for cross-disciplinary collaboration. The present volume is an embodiment of such collaboration, brought forth by the interdisciplinary research project LAMP – *Languages and Myths of Prehistory* and supported by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond.

3. Indo-European interfaces

In preparation for this book, we invited scholars with expertise in various fields, such as historical linguistics, comparative religion, and archaeology. Their contributions address topics where these fields intersect, concentrating on the initial diversification of Indo-European languages and cultures.

The present volume also launches the series *Stockholm Studies in Indo-European Language Studies*, establishing a new venue for scholarly research dedicated to the study of the Indo-European language family from a multitude of perspectives, including linguistics, archaeology, ancient DNA, and comparative mythology. We hope that this collected volume will provide a new outlook on the early speakers of Indo-European languages and inspire cross-disciplinary dialogue, expanding the horizon of Indo-European studies.