

Studies in the languages and language contact in Pre-Hellenistic Anatolia

Federico Giusfredi, Zsolt Simon (eds.)
Elena Martínez Rodríguez (editorial assistance)



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Edicions

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Foreword

The study of loanwords and, in general, of the linguistic contacts of Anatolian languages both within and outside Anatolia has always been an important field in Ancient Anatolian studies. The dramatic development of the last three decades in Hittitology and related fields opened new horizons. This is reflected also in current wide-scale research projects, first of all in the “Pre-Classical Anatolian Languages in Contact” (PALaC) in Verona and in the “Digital Philological-Etymological Dictionary of the Minor Ancient Anatolian Corpus Languages” (eDiAna) in München and Marburg.

This led the editors of the present volume, Federico Giusfredi (the principal investigator of PALaC) and Zsolt Simon (research fellow at eDiAna), to create a forum where the most recent results of loanword and linguistic contact research in Ancient Anatolia could have been presented and discussed. Although it was initially conceived as a workshop, this could not have been realized under the current conditions. Thus, the editors decided to turn the cancelled event into the present book.

The volume opens with an overview of the origins of the linguistic landscape by F. Giusfredi and Alvisè Matessi. This is followed by the analysis of the Luwian word for ‘salt’ by Ignasi-Xavier Adiego, who argues that it represents an Indo-Aryan loanword. The next two papers are also devoted to the languages of the Luwic group: Valerio Pisaniello explains a Lycian toponym attested only in the *Ethnika* of Stephanus of Byzantium from an Anatolian word for ‘wheat’, while Marioneta Vernet argues that the Aramaic phrase “the god of Kaunos” in the Letoon inscription is based on Carian.

Moving westwards, the Anatolian–Greek language contacts are one of the most hotly debated issues. This volume presents two contributions to this topic. On the one hand, Filip De Decker argues that despite recent views the Hittite and the Greek modal particles for expressing *irrealis* do not constitute an isogloss, and provides a thorough analysis of the historical syntax of the Greek *irrealis*. On the other hand, Andreas Opfermann investigates the origin of the word “scandal” via Latin and Greek back to the Luwic languages.

Having arrived to Ancient Italy, the book closes with the paper of Zs. Simon, who, re-investigating the popular theory of Anatolian loanwords in Etruscan, concluded that there is no evidence for this hypothesis.

Finally, the editors would express their gratitude to I.-X. Adiego, who accepted this volume in the series “*Barcino Monographica Orientalia. Series Anatolica et Indogermanica*”, to the European Research Council for funding the PALaC project, as well as to the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft for funding the eDiAna project that financed the work of some authors, including the editor Zsolt Simon. The editors also thank E. Martínez Rodríguez for her assistance with the formal preparation and formatting of the manuscript.

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The editors
Verona & München, May 2021

Archaeolinguistics and the historical study of contacts in Anatolia

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1. *The origin of things and the Indo-European problem*

1.1. *Introduction*

The query about the origin of things is a dangerous one. It is very rare, in historical sciences, for data to be old enough and complete enough to allow an uncontroversially acceptable reconstruction. Yet the temptation seems to be irresistible for scholars in many disciplines, and historians, archaeologists, and linguists are no exception. While the research carried out by the team of the project PALaC (*Pre-classical Anatolian Languages in Contact*) concentrated on the study of linguistic and cultural contacts in the historical ages of the Anatolian and “peri-Anatolian” world, it proved impossible to proceed without facing the problem of the original substrate-superstrate relationships between the Early and Middle Bronze Age cultures in these areas. As a substrate-superstrate model involves an asymmetry both in prestige and in the time of occupation of a contact region, the attempts to model interferences and influences are affected by the problem of establishing the dia-

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chronic precedence of a given culture with respect to another one, which, in turn, calls into question the problem of matching pre-literate material cultures with historical ones (by historical, we mean cultures that produced written documents, and whose official linguistic code and identities are, therefore, allegedly known).

The field of research that tries to investigate the proto-history of language-culture pairings is sometimes called “archaeolinguistics”. Examples of archaeolinguistic problems include: the identification of a material culture with a historical linguistically-defined civilization (e.g., the Luwians, or the Proto-Anatolians, with Western or South-Western Anatolian material cultures), the identification of the origin of an allegedly intrusive demographic component (e.g., the problem of the *Urheimat* of the Indo-Europeans), or, in some cases, with the involvement of the natural sciences, the attempt at matching not just the linguistic and the material *facies* of an ancient group, but also its genetic material.

In this section, we will concentrate on the first two aspects of the archaeolinguistic agenda, and we will try to offer an overview of its methodological limitations, which, in general, depend on methodological scope of the very disciplines it aims to combine, rather than on the combination thereof.

1.2. “Proto-Indo-European United”: the “sin” of the linguists

For those who study Anatolia, the query about the origin of things coincides, basically, with the problem of explaining and understanding the meaning of the Indo-European presence in the area. What are the Indo-Europeans? Many definitions may be given, and some, coming from the most optimistic scholars, may contain very precise descriptions of their cultural features: they were selective incinerators, worshipped specific deities, organised knowledge in lists of body parts or other significant taxonomies derived from their exquisite experience of the world, disliked dragons and probably invented poetry.¹ As a matter of fact, this way of thinking is historically dangerous, and it is certainly methodologically shortsighted, if not blind. The Indo-Europeans are a hypothetical cultural group of people who are assumed to have spoken a common language we reconstruct. No one was able to prove any of the hypotheses on their origin based on linguistic criteria, nor is anybody capable of explaining *when* exactly Proto-Indo-European would have

1. It would be impossible to provide here a complete list of references. The reader may, however, cf. the *Encyclopedia of Indo-European Culture* (Mallory – Adams 1997), containing entries such as *Anatomy* (17-19), *Dragon* (169), *God* (230-232), *Goddess* (232-233), *Indo-European Homeland* (290-299), *Poetry* (436-439), *Snake* (529-530).

been an undivided living spoken language. All the attempts to reconstruct the original culture of the Indo-Europeans are based on the individual judgment of scholars about what must have been a conservative ancient feature preserved in written records which, in the best possible scenario, must have been composed at least a couple of thousand years after the age of the “Proto-Indo-European Utd.”.

All ancient languages that have been recorded in an age that is *relatively* close to the age of the Proto-Indo-Europeans show traces that indicate interference from much earlier times. Sumerian, for instance, is attested at least one thousand years before the first Indo-European textual record, and yet it is certainly affected by other languages of the Mesopotamian Chalcolithic (ca. 5000-3000 BCE), as demonstrated by the presence of substrate and foreign lexical material.² Old Egyptian seems to entertain contacts with the languages of Darfur and Chad.³ Yet, when dealing with the Indo-European problem, linguists reconstruct the proto-language using – legitimately – the only available method: internal reconstruction. While this is methodologically correct, the limits of the scope should be evident before taking a step too far: the recognition of inherited phonetic and morphological material is solid,⁴ but the recognition of cultural content related to it is completely hypothetical, because semantic change is not mechanical and because the choice to consider a concept “old” enough to correspond to an original culture is subject (1) to the individual judgment of the single scholars or schools and (2) to the historically unlikely idea that a unitary culture existed that spoke the pure uncontaminated reconstructed language at a given time and in a given region. If any of this does not hold up (and, as we have argued, we believe much of it may not), the cultural reconstruction becomes extremely speculative, and the very problem of the linguistic definition of a “cultural identity” proves to be much more complex than previously recognised.⁵

2. On the existence of substrata and circulation of foreign lexical material – possibly from more than a single language – in Early Mesopotamia, see the overview and critical discussion by Rubio (1999). While the scholar suggests that the situation was a «complex and fuzzy web of borrowings whose directions are frequently difficult to determine», phenomena of interference unquestionably existed.

3. Cf. Cooper (2017), with reference to previous scholarship.

4. The solidity of the reconstruction of language-internal diachronic change depends on the absolute regularity of context-induced phonetic laws. Other kinds of linguistic change, e.g. those involving semantics and syntax, are less predictable and therefore impossible to reconstruct with certainty.

5. A related problem is, of course, the one regarding the methodological issues we face when trying to identify an original core-lexicon of Proto-Indo-European words (and concepts). For a recent discussion of these further methodological issues, cf. the observations by Simon (2020: 241-242).

Indeed, groups are normally defined by a set of behaviours that leave a trace in the material culture, and this is undeniable, but at the same time they are defined by a shared linguistic code. However, neither can the material culture be regarded to as a mechanical indicator of identity (we will come back to this point later), nor can the linguistic code be regarded as a unique homogenous language, but rather as a mixed-code deriving at the same time from inheritance and interactions. When the interactions cannot be traced back to solid comparanda, because we found ourselves beyond the limits of historical records, any reconstruction is, by definition, speculative (or, if the problem of proto-historical interactions is ignored, inherently flawed).

1.3. *Proto-Indo-European intrusion: the “sin” of the historians*

If the overconfident use of linguistic reconstruction to explore cultural history is highly risky and very problematic, the opposite approach is unfortunately not much better. If one compares the way the Indo-Europeans appear to linguists with the way the historians deal with them, a significant mismatch emerges, which, to our knowledge, has not yet been discussed in literature.

According to Mario Liverani, in his ever-green 1988 book *Antico Oriente: storia, società, economia*, what we can confidently tell about the Indo-Europeans' advent in the areas they will historically (co-)occupy is that with the crisis of the second urbanisation (or of a comparable technological and social wave), new demographic components arrived and took over the same social structures that were produced by the societies that had preceded them. It is funny that the way the linguists describe the role of the Indo-Europeans and the way we historians interpret it are apparently not just different, but actually opposite. Even funnier is the fact that this observation has never been explicitly raised in scholarly literature. On the linguistic side, we would be dealing with an exquisite innovative culture that reshaped the world with its *Weltanschauung*, while on the historical side we are dealing with an intrusive element that mostly reused technical, social, and cultural achievements and structures produced by the former major cultures in the regions affected by the new demographic wave.

If the position defended by the most optimistic linguists who think they can describe the original Indo-European culture has been shown to be methodologically weak, we will now proceed to discuss the symmetrical weakness of the minimalist view that may arise from a reductionist interpretation of Liverani's brilliant observation.

The symmetry of the two flawed approaches is striking. Just as impeccable as the methods of internal linguistic reconstruction, if they remain language-internal, equally impeccable is Liverani's observation about the social reuse of the former structures by the new leading cultures after the *emergence* of the Indo-European element in many areas of Eurasia. The relationship between the Hittite element and the Hattian one resembles that between the Mycenaean and the Minoan ones, as well as that between the Indo-Iranian elements and the non-Indo-European components of Iran and the Indian Subcontinent.⁶ Even smaller areas, like Sicily, may have followed this very pattern.

Yet even in this case a methodological leap often occurs when we try to move from the *description of historical data* to the attempt to use them to describe proto-historical patterns.

One thing is to observe that the historical civilizations that used Indo-European languages co-existed with civilizations that did not; another thing is assuming that we can, based on this fact, establish that the presence of the Indo-European element was geographically intrusive with respect to the non-Indo-European one in a given region.

The very fact that we cannot, out of sheer methodological impossibility, identify either the cultural identity frameset or the linguistic identity of proto-historical and pre-historical groups, means that we simply cannot state anything safely as regards the chronology of the arrival of specific cultural and linguistic elements in an area. The fact that the Hattians were not Indo-European does not imply that they were settled in Anatolia before what a migrationist theory would deem the "arrival" of the Hittites and Luwians (or rather Proto-Anatolian), nor can the degree of internal variance in alleged demographic waves in terms of linguistic and cultural "lineage" be safely assessed.

2. *Let's move backwards*

2.1. *The linguistic and cultural map of Anatolia during the Late Bronze Age*

As the imperialistic adventure of the 14th century BCE's Hittite rulers⁷ produced a wave of diffusion of the Anatolian linguistic (and epigraphic) traditions

6. On the non-Indo-European substrata of the Indian subcontinent see the introduction by Woodard (2008: 3-5).

7. We obviously refer to the formation of the so-called Hittite Empire during the 14th century BCE: while the use of the term "empire" is probably too daring when applied to interregional

outside of their original areas, let's start our journey backwards from the situation we can assess from the early Late Bronze Age (from the 16th century BCE).

The cuneiform sources that are available, and their interpretation by historians, archaeologists, and linguists, allow us to describe at least a few "civilizations" that inhabited Anatolia and modern Eastern Turkey.

The Hattian component is the only linguistically attested non-Indo-European one and we can assume that, at this stage, it coexisted with Hittite at least in the central bend of the Kızılırmak river,⁸ with Hittite possibly having spread from the South Eastern parts of Cappadocia (but this is a case of political expansion, not a proto-historical migration!). As for the Indo-European ones, we can place the Hittite area in the same area as the Hattian one (with a wider extension to the lands south of the river, regardless of the direction of such an expansion). The Palaeans were probably settled in the North, somewhere in Bithynia and Paphlagonia,⁹ while the Luwians were generically settled both in the Central and Western Anatolia and in Cilicia, where we know from historical sources that the Northern Mesopotamian Hurrian elements were beginning to intrude (again, in terms of political expansion, perhaps producing some sort of mixed culture that might already have had some impact on the local linguistic varieties).

Other components are however more difficult to place in a specific geographical position. This is especially valid for the best attested Iron Age languages: Lycian (A and B), Lydian, and Carian (as well as the later Sidetic and Pisidian) certainly did not appear out of the blue during the 1st millennium BCE.

The geographical collocation of the Bronze Age forefathers of the Lycians (the peoples of Lukka) in almost the same region that the Lycians will occupy during the Iron Age is generally unproblematic, at least if one deals with the issue at a

formations that preceded the Neo-Assyrian and Achaemenid ones, the wide geographical horizon of the Hittite influence is what matters for the purpose of the present paper, because it was certainly responsible for the diffusion of the Luwian linguistic element to Syria.

8. For a discussion of a possible wider area of diffusion of Hattian (or, at least, of Hattian toponyms), see Simon (2018: 263-264), with reference to previous scholarship.

9. But see Simon (2018: 263-264) for the possibility of a wider diffusion.

macroscopic level.¹⁰ As for the Carians, whether or not they can be identified with the Bronze Age land of Karkiša remains open to debate.¹¹

The problem of the origin of the Lydians on the other hand is extremely interesting, as it represents a fantastic example of how two half-hints should not be considered equivalent to a whole piece of evidence, especially when they do not complete each other but actually represent generalisations within the frameset of different scientific approaches. The “Lydian homeland” would allegedly lie in the northwestern part of the Anatolian peninsula. While the material culture that emerges in the Hermos area around the 12th century BCE¹² may or may not be connected with the Lydian peoples, the idea that their original geographical region extended further to the North derives from surprisingly weak and scattered arguments. First, it has appeared linguistically tempting to consider Lydian as closer to the Luwic languages than to Hittite.¹³ While cultural evidence, being late, should not be used to support linguistic genealogical proximity, some other arguments are more technical, and include, for instance, the presence of shared morphological traits. The problem of the filiation of Lydian is complex and we are not going to discuss it here; it will suffice to emphasise that genealogical proximity, if any, does not entail geographical contiguity at all stages of the diachronic development of an area. That the Lydians were probably always settled in the Western area of Anatolia is also historically and archeologically convincing. The problems come when one proposes a northern homeland, such as the one suggested in the following map, based on the one published by Melchert (2003: 9 Map 1):

10. But cf. the outstanding monograph by Gander (2010), with detailed discussion of many specific details that remain problematic.

11. Cf. Simon (2015) for a critical discussion; Hawkins (2013: 36) for a reply to Simon’s criticism (the article appeared before Simon’s one, but it quotes the original conference presentation). Cf. also Schürr (2018) and Oreshko (2019, in particular 140-144).

12. For an overview see Roosevelt et al. (2018).

13. For a recent overview and proposal regarding the genealogical relationships of the Anatolian languages, see Rieken (2017).



Figure 1: the alleged Lydian homeland

The position of the tentative collocation of the label “Lydian” (duly followed by a question mark) in this map is basically that of the heart of Mysia. Why Mysia? If one ignores the obviously unreliable observation by Strabo (*Geography* XII 8.3, Jones 1928) according to which the Mysian language would have been *μυζολύδιον ... καὶ μυζοφρύγιον* (a mix of Lydian and Phrygian), the only serious reason would be that Lydia proper was probably a part of a Luwian area in the Late Bronze Age.¹⁴ As the southern regions are no viable alternative, because they correspond to Caria and Lycia, a possible solution appears to be to move north.

The biggest problem with this line of thinking is the confusion between the “politically Luwian” area and the “culturally/demographically Luwian” area.¹⁵ Even if the Ephesos/Sardis region was part of a world that was politically dominated by the Luwian-speaking(?) dynasties of Western Anatolia, this tells us little as regards the presence of a local Lydian demographic component, that may very well have been already there.¹⁶ The history of the Ancient Near East is constellated with situations in which substrata are invisible or almost invisible until a catastrophic

14. Another argument that appeared in literature, based on the alleged etymologies of the very toponym Maša, has been convincingly refuted by Simon (2021: 189).

15. The very concept of a politically Luwian area is certainly confusing: we simply use it to refer to a kingdom ruled by a king who bears a Luwian name and acts as an opponent to the Hittite campaigns in Western Anatolia. This would, e.g., apply to Arzawa, but also to the Šeha River Land.

16. For a critical discussion of the evidence for the diffusion of Luwian in Western Anatolia, see Yakubovich (2010), Chapter 2. A lively debate followed, which cannot be discussed in detail, but was very recently critically assessed by Melchert (2020).