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Unveiling the Roots of a Common Past: A Comparative Analysis of Sanskrit and Latin

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ABSTRACT

This review of international literature examines the linguistic connections between Sanskrit and Latin, two classical languages that have significantly influenced the intellectual, cultural, and religious legacies of South Asia and Europe, respectively. The review is based on selected foundational and recent scholarship in Indo-European comparative linguistics and presents here a comparative analysis of Sanskrit and Latin similarities in Lexicon, Morphology and History using the comparative method with the help of Proto-Indo-European (PIE) theory. This work points to similarities in vocabulary and similar structures, such as an ablaut system and case system, that strongly lead to a hypothesis of a common ancestral background. In a methodical sense, the results of the study are presented as a synthesis of selected sources of peer review and scholarly literature, and are compared to Sanskrit–Latin similarities by using lexical comparisons, phonological comparisons, morphological comparisons and PIE reconstruction. In addition to underscoring the wider significance of cross-cultural research, this review shows the importance of comparative linguistics in understanding the common histories and languages of ancient civilisations.

INTRODUCTION

Sanskrit and Latin are two “dead” (no longer spoken) languages that make up the foundation for many other languages around the world. The first evidence of Sanskrit dates back to around 1500 B.C.E. in the Indian Subcontinent, in the form of Vedic Sanskrit (Ramesh, 2023). This version of the language was present in the Vedas, the written texts of Hinduism, and it is considered the oldest example of Sanskrit literature in existence. Over time, the language evolved into Classical Sanskrit, around the 5th century BCE, with the publication of *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (grammar book) by the grammarian Panini. Classical Sanskrit is widely documented, both through Panini’s works and in the myriad of Sanskrit’s secular and religious literature, including famous texts like the *Mahābhāratha*, *Ramayana*, and *Panchatantra*. Sanskrit is most often composed in the Devanagari Script, but other regional writing systems have been used. Throughout history, Sanskrit was typically spoken as a formal language, with informal variations known as Prakrit Languages being spoken by the common people. Most notably, many modern South Asian languages, including Hindi, Bengali, and Marathi, can be traced back to Ancient Sanskrit and the Prakrit language (Mandavilli, 2016).

Latin is first hypothesised to have originated near the Tiber River, in present-day Italy, around the 7th

century BCE (Marra et al. 2018). This form of Latin - Old Latin - was written in a script resembling Greek letters, before evolving into Classical Latin around the 1st century BCE, where it was refined. Over time, Latin's script slowly evolved into the Roman Alphabet we commonly see today. Latin gives us access to a wealth of literature from prominent writers like Cicero, Virgil, and Horace. Similar to Sanskrit, Latin was a formal language, playing a large role as the official language of governmental and religious institutions, such as the Roman Catholic Church. For over 1,000 years in Europe, Latin was the predominant language used in almost all forms of education and writing until the Renaissance. Eventually, Latin stopped being spoken as Latin-derived Vernacular languages slowly became the dominant tongues present in Europe (Lipski, 2022). Despite this, Latin's influence still holds strong as all the Romance languages, like French and Spanish, along with English, directly evolved from this language.

For centuries, these separate languages were spoken in two distinct areas, with Latin in Europe and Sanskrit in South Asia, and because of this, they were seemingly unrelated. However, in the past 300 years, linguists began to notice similarities between them. The main problem explored in this paper is not whether Sanskrit and Latin look or sound similar, but how these similarities can be studied through proper linguistic comparison. Although the relationship between Sanskrit and Latin within the Indo-European language family is well established, not every similarity between the two languages can be treated as evidence of common inheritance. Therefore, this paper focuses on the criteria used to evaluate proposed Sanskrit-Latin cognates. The research question guiding this study is: What criteria distinguish a substantive Sanskrit-Latin cognate claim from a nominal one?

To address this question, the paper examines representative Sanskrit-Latin lexical and morphological similarities using the comparative method and Proto-Indo-European (PIE) reconstruction. The semantic correspondence, regular phonological correspondence, reconstructed PIE roots, morphological consistency, cross-branch Indo-European evidence, and chronological plausibility all have to be considered. The study does not attempt to determine the overall degree of resemblance between Sanskrit and Latin, but rather considers how similarities between individual forms can be systematically evaluated as evidence of a common linguistic heritage. The Proto-Indo-European language theory and the Indo-European language family will be discussed first. Next, the paper will examine common vocabulary between Sanskrit and Latin and then their common grammar, focusing on how the selected examples can be evaluated through the criteria for stronger cognate claims. Finally, the social implications and limitations of these connections will be discussed.

REVIEW OF RECENT AND RELEVANT LITERATURE

Recent literature on Sanskrit, Latin and Indo-European comparative and historical linguistics has moved beyond the identification of similarities in words and focussed on systematic comparison, historical reconstruction, morphology, sociolinguistic context and inter-disciplinary evidence. The significance of Andrijanić (2017) stems from its examination of the Sanskrit – Latin cognate list compiled by Filip

Vezdin and the demonstration of the need to interpret early comparative work with great care, and to avoid it being accepted as a list of word similarities without verification.

The grammatical side of the Sanskrit–Latin comparison is also reinforced by recent morphological studies. Calabrese and Petrosino (2023) compare the verbal systems of Sanskrit, Ancient Greek and Latin, with the conclusion that they preserve and restructure inherited Indo-European verbal material in different ways. Grestenberger (2023) also reinforces the significance of diachronic verbal morphology to Indo-European comparison, Jamison (2024) provides recent Vedic data that can be of assistance in the context of Indo-European linguistics.

Work on the origin and migration of Indo-European has also taken a turn and extended the field beyond the mere linguistic comparison. In the linguistic phylogenetic analysis of the origins of the IE languages, Heggarty et al. (2023) present a hybrid model, and the genetic and geographical analyses of Indo-European dispersal and Indo-Iranian populations presented by Lazaridis et al. (2025), Guarino-Vignon et al. (2022) and Ghalichi et al. (2024) are of relevance. Note that these studies are to be used with great care as a genetic proof of specific Sanskrit–Latin word histories is not possible, but can be used to give a background to the Indo-European movement and divergence of communities.

In recent historical sociolinguistic studies, the social and cultural value of Sanskrit and Latin has also been reevaluated. Dobrić et al. (2025) illustrate such languages as Sanskrit, Latin, and Classical Arabic, which gained special transregional prestige in addition to ordinary spoken language. A related study by Dobrić et al. (2025) also maintains that Sanskrit and Latin remained vibrant long after the end of their political support, indicating that they also relied on the stability of the written word, the presence of learned communities, and cultural authority. All these recent studies confirm that the Sanskrit-Latin comparison has not only lexical resemblance, but it is a part of a broader discussion which also includes grammatical comparison, migration, social structure and cultural history.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: PROTO-INDO-EUROPEAN THEORY AND THE COMPARATIVE METHOD

With approximately 3.39 billion speakers, the Indo-European language family is the most populous group of languages in the world. It encompasses over 440 languages, including Sanskrit and Latin, along with English, Greek, and Persian/Farsi. Latin is the main origin language of the Italic Branch of Indo-European, where it serves as the predecessor of Italian, French, and the other Romance Languages. Likewise, Sanskrit is the oldest member of the Indo-Iranian section. In this case, Vedic Sanskrit. Despite the many contemporary branches of the Indo-European family, all are theorized to have originated from a common ancestral language: Proto-Indo-European (PIE).

There are numerous theories over the origin of the PIE language, but the most widely accepted is the Kurgan Hypothesis proposed by Marija Gimbutas, a Lithuanian archaeologist, in the 1950s. Her theory dates PIE as far back as roughly 4500 B.C.E. in the Pontic-Caspian Steppe around the Black Sea, with

emphasis on the Yamnaya people who resided there (Gimbutas et al. 1986). Using archeological and linguistic evidence, Gimbutas and others hypothesized that the Yamnaya people were particularly successful in domesticating horses and other animals. For thousands of years of major, primarily horseback, migrations, the descendants of the Yamnaya group were able to settle all over Europe and Asia, with language splits happening at different times. More recently, large-scale DNA research was able to highlight a genetic link between the Caucasus Lower Volga people, acting as predecessors, to the Yamnaya people, pinpointing an even more ancient origin of the speakers of PIE (Lazaridis, Patterson, Anthony et al. 2025). This research may reinforce the idea of the Yamnaya people's association with PIE. However, it relocates the earliest speakers of PIE away from the Black Sea Steppe and instead to the Caucasus region.

As PIE speakers spread and settled away from their homeland, their language gradually evolved, and over time, this led to the formation of numerous branches all originating from PIE. These linguistic branches reflect the geographic spread and cultural influence of the early Indo-European-speaking peoples. One of the earliest proposed was the Anatolian Branch, including Hittite, which appeared in modern-day Turkey around 2000 B.C.E. Sometime later, the Hellenic (Greek) Branch emerged, and it was closely followed by the Indo-Iranian Branch, with Sanskrit developing around 1500 B.C.E. in Northern South Asia. Later, the Italic Branch formed in the Italian Peninsula, with Latin becoming prominent by 700 B.C.E. (Laia, 2022).

Before Gimbutas, there were numerous other linguists and scholars who greatly contributed to the fields of historical and comparative linguistics. Notable were the works of Sir William Jones. While in India working as a Judge, Sir Jones studied various Sanskrit and Hindu texts and founded the Asiatic Society in Kolkata, an organization dedicated to Asian studies. In his 1786 lecture to the society, Sir Jones famously stated how he believed Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit were connected through a shared ancestry (Cannon, 1971). Through his research, he found many cognates and shared grammatical systems between the three languages that he believed were too similar to "have been produced by accident" (Jones, 1786, para. 34). His works challenged prevailing Biblical theories about racial and linguistic developments, and they were one of the earliest works to publicly recognize ideas about PIE. In addition to Sir Jones, other linguists were crucial in the development of comparative linguistics centered around Sanskrit. Ultimately, curiosity surrounding the relationship between Sanskrit, Latin, Greek, and other languages is not limited to contemporary times, and research from the past three decades has helped compose a clearer picture of their connections. Comparative linguistics is essential in tracing these connections, revealing PIE as the foundational source and highlighting how ancient languages can trace human migratory and development patterns.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In this study, the qualitative comparative review design is used to analyse the relationship between Sanskrit and Latin in a linguistic perspective using the reconstruction theory of Proto-Indo-European (PIE). As this study is not of experimental nature, but it is of the historical language comparison, the method used is an analytical, interpretive, and comparative method. It does not attempt to reconstruct PIE from scratch, but critically examines a few comparisons between Sanskrit and Latin in the light of existing Indo-European scholarship. Theories used in this research are PIE theory and method used is comparative-historical linguistic analysis.

Source Selection and Scope

The literature employed in this study was chosen from scholarly literature in Indo-European Linguistics, Sanskrit Grammar, Latin Historical Linguistics, Comparative Philology, Archaeology and Archaeogenetics. Peer-reviewed journal articles, books, edited volumes, and well-known linguistic works were given priority. Sources were selected on the basis of their direct reference to the comparison of Sanskrit and Latin, PIE reconstruction, Indo-European sound change, identification of cognates, case systems, ablaut, the dispersal of languages, or archaeological and genetic evidence concerning Indo-European-speaking populations.

General websites, encyclopedic entries, and non-peer-reviewed online documents were not used as primary evidence for claims of language and were considered background sources. The study covers only selected examples which are helpful to evaluate Sanskrit-Latin cognate relationships. It does not attempt to compare the whole vocabulary and grammar of both languages. Rather, it is based on representative examples which highlight patterns in the language in general.

Corpus and Comparison Criteria

The linguistic corpus comprises a representative sample of selected Sanskrit and Latin words, grammatical segments and morphological elements, as described in the classical Indo-Europeanist literature. Only examples were selected that were semantically comparable, had a plausible connection to a reconstructed PIE root, and had regular phonological correspondence. This will help prevent using superficial similarities between words.

According to this study, cognates are defined as words that have an origin in a common ancestral word instead of words that sound or look alike. A Sanskrit-Latin word pair was treated as stronger evidence of cognacy when it demonstrated related meaning, regular sound correspondence, support by PIE reconstruction, cross-branch Indo-European evidence, chronological plausibility, and morphological consistency. These criteria were applied consistently across the selected examples to distinguish stronger

cognate relationships from uncertain cases. Those examples that did not exhibit these features were not considered to be conclusive evidence for cognacy.

The purpose of the comparison is not to compare the similarity between Sanskrit and Latin with other language pairs of Indo-European families. Instead, the analysis examines the possibility of individual Sanskrit–Latin correspondences meeting pre-designed criteria for cognacy. Where it contributes to the reconstruction of an inherited relationship, evidence from other branches of the Indo-European family is taken into account.

Analytical Procedure

A structured narrative comparative method was used for the analysis. The examples chosen were examined for semantic similarity, the support of Indo-European etymological research, a plausible reconstruction of the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) form, and regular phonological similarity. The morphological consistency, cross-branch Indo-European evidence, and chronological plausibility were also taken into account. Examples with inadequate support were classified as ambiguous or not included in the higher-level cognate group. The analysis is thus based on establishing supported cognate relationships, not on superficial similarity or on word-for-word comparison.

As such, it is not an exact match, word for word. There is the potential of shared inheritance (lexical evidence), a potential for systematic similarity (phonological evidence), and greater structural continuity (morphological evidence). Such a format allows for the article to build the argument rather than simply making comparisons.

Exclusion of Borrowings and False Cognates

When discussing kinship in comparative linguistics, the question of borrowing is of significance because words can be borrowed from one language to another, not only from a common ancestor. The word was excluded or treated with great caution when it was limited to one pair of languages, had irregular sound development, only had loose semantic similarity, or could be better explained by later contact. A proposed cognate that did not meet these criteria would be less compelling if it were not regularly phonologically corresponding, if it had no supporting PIE reconstruction, and if it did not fit known historical chronology or if it could be accounted for by chance resemblance or as a loanword.

The revised manuscript differentiates between stronger examples and examples which are less certain or controversial in order not to overwhelm the reader with evidence. Good examples have good sound correspondences, accepted PIE roots, and semantic development. Doubtful cases are cases where the semantic connection might seem tempting but is not clear in terms of phonology and/or etymology.

Use of Archaeological and Genetic Evidence

The primary approach of the study is linguistic comparison, but there is also archaeological and genetic evidence for context. This type of evidence is not considered direct evidence of particular words'

histories. Instead, it positions linguistic divergence within the wider context of migration, settlement and population mobility. The chronology and plausibility of Indo-European dispersal is therefore discussed in the light of archaeological and genetic evidence, particularly with respect to the division of Indo-Iranian and Italic branches.

Epistemological Justification and Limitations

Comparative-historical linguistics became the epistemological basis of this study because it assumes that systematic comparison of sound, meaning, and grammatical structure of language can help us to reconstruct language relationships. However, PIE is not a language that has been recorded directly, but reconstructed. It is important, then, to note that claims concerning PIE roots, cognacy and linguistic inheritance should be tentative, and not definitive. It is also limited in scope by the fact that it is based on secondary scholarship rather than a complete reconstruction of Sanskrit and Latin. Similarities are only considered meaningful evidence if they are related to the comparison statement.

Archaeological and Genetic Corroboration

While the main evidence for the connection between Sanskrit and Latin is linguistic, the study of Sanskrit and the knowledge of its history can be supplemented by archaeological and genetic evidence. Archaeological models of Indo-European expansion, particularly in relation to migrations of steppe populations and subsequent regional differentiation, help place the development of the Indo-Iranian and Italic branches in the broader context of population movements. These are not direct evidence for any sound changes or cognate relationships, but add to the historical plausibility of a common Indo-European source.

The genetic analysis of ancient populations also adds to this conversation by tracing patterns of migration, admixture and population movement throughout Eurasia. If combined with linguistic reconstruction, these lines of evidence provide an explanation as to how related language branches may have migrated to different parts of the world and evolved separately through time. In this regard, the archaeological and genetic evidence corroborates the chronological scheme of the paper: They support the general dispersal pattern of Indo-European-speaking communities; the linguistic comparison of Sanskrit and Latin is made on phonological correspondences, shared morphology and reconstructed PIE roots.

Lexical Similarities between Sanskrit and Latin

One of the clearest indicators of a common origin language for Sanskrit and Latin is found in their shared basic lexicon. A linguistic treatise penned in 1802 lists many identified cognates with fundamental words in both languages, such as those describing family members, natural elements, body parts, numbers, and everyday life, displaying striking phonetic and semantic parallels.

The similarities that the author, Filip Vezdin, aka Paulinus a Sancto Bartholomaeo, concluded to be between these two languages were due to a common linguistic heritage, which was later understood through the lens of Proto-Indo-European.

Filip Vezdin was an 18th-century Carmelite missionary and scholar (1748-1806). He went on to study theology in Hungary and lived more than 10 years in the present-day state of Kerala in India as vicar and rector. In India, he studied Malayalam and Sanskrit and did typological studies of Indian languages for Europeans (Andrijanić, 2017). Vezdin wrote a number of important publications in Sanskrit, as well as on the religious and social fabric of Indian society. Two of his major linguistic studies were universally recognized as some of the earliest published works on the Indo-European comparisons of the languages. The first of these appeared in Rome in 1798, namely, a Dissertation on the Antiquity and Affinity of the Zend, Sanskrit and the German Languages, and the second, which is more pertinent to the present paper, was a Dissertation on the Origin of the Latin Language and its Relation to Oriental Languages, published in 1802.

But Vezdin's early comparative work was groundbreaking for its time, and Contemporary Comparative Linguistics has developed methods to compare words based on systematic sound laws, and not just on surface similarity. This is crucial because not all the words that look and sound alike are considered true cognates. May include false cognates, borrowings or cases of uncertainty. Vezdin's original list contained acceptable identifications, unacceptable identifications, loanwords, and other examples that were not so clear, as Andrijanić (2017) points out. The revised analysis, therefore, does not require the use of a long unfiltered list, but draws upon representative examples that are more useful in illustrating Sanskrit–Latin kinship.

For comparative linguistics, there must be regular phonetic correspondences and accepted historical reconstruction to make the lexical similarity convincing. There are a number of good examples of inherited Indo-European words in Sanskrit and Latin. For example, Sanskrit pitar and Latin pater have a shared inherited kinship term, and Sanskrit mātar and Latin mater have a similar shared inherited pattern for the word “mother.” Another significant case is Sanskrit bhrātar, Latin frāter, where similarity of meaning is not the sole basis for the relationship, but the regular development of the sounds from the roots. Examples such as these are more convincing than superficial similarities, which are confirmed by Indo-European scholarship and by a wider comparison between the branches (Fortson 2010; Clackson 2007; Mayrhofer 1986-2001; de Vaan 2008).

It is therefore preferable to have a smaller table, and it is better that it is used methodically. Representative examples have been retained where Sanskrit and Latin forms can be traced back to probable PIE forms, regular sound correspondences, and semantic continuity can be established. These examples demonstrate the examination of inherited vocabulary not just by visual or auditory comparison, but by systematic comparison. The revised analysis leaves the representative examples in Table 1 unchanged, where Sanskrit and Latin forms are regularly related by sound correspondences and regular semantic shifts, as well as by plausible proto-Indo-European roots.

Table 1. Representative Sanskrit-Latin Cognates and Their Reconstructed PIE Roots.

Sanskrit	**Latin**	**Meaning**	**Reconstructed PIE Root**	**Comment**
pitar	pater	father	ph₂tḗr	Strong cognate: semantic and phonological correspondence with PIE support
mātar	mater	mother	méh₂tēr	Strong cognate: semantic and phonological correspondence with PIE support
bhrātar	frāter	brother	bhréh₂tēr	Regular phonological correspondence with PIE support
nāman	nōmen	name	h₁nómn̥	Shared inherited noun
pad	pēs, pedis	foot	pṓds / ped-	Shared body-part vocabulary
dant	dens, dentis	tooth	h₃dónts	Shared body-part vocabulary
hṛd / hṛdaya	cor, cordis	heart	ḱerd-	Shared body/inner-life vocabulary
daśa	decem	ten	déḱm̥	Shared numeral
nava	novem	nine	h₁néwn̥	Shared numeral
sapta	septem	seven	septḿ̥	Shared numeral
aṣṭa	octō	eight	oḱtṓw	Shared numeral with regular sound development
trayas	trēs	three	tréyes	Shared numeral
deva	deus	god/deity	deiwós	Shared religious/cosmic vocabulary
dāna	dōnum	gift	deh₃-	Related to the root “to give”
asti	est	is	h₁ésti	Shared verbal form from the verb “to be”

The above table does not, therefore, aim to list all proposed Sanskrit–Latin cognates. Instead, selected examples are included that will be helpful in the demonstration of how cognacy can be established by the modern comparative method. For each example, a reconstruction of the Proto-Indo-European root is provided, and a plausible relationship between Sanskrit and Latin, both in terms of sound and in terms of meaning. Words that are suspected of being derived from the same root, such as Sanskrit *udara* ‘abdomen’ and Latin *uterus* ‘womb,’ are excluded from the list of secure cognates because they require more convincing etymological and phonological support. This illustrates that the criteria are applied not only to identify stronger cognates but also to exclude relationships that lack sufficient evidence. This distinction demonstrates the practical application of the screening criteria and prevents semantic or superficial phonetic resemblance from being treated as sufficient evidence of cognacy.

Selected examples show that strong Sanskrit-Latin cognate claims are particularly evident in basic semantic fields, supported by broader sets of Indo-European patterns. The kinship terms, numbers, parts of the body and basic religious terms are particularly significant because they do not lend themselves to being explained as recent borrowings so easily as do technical or cultural words. The table further reveals that there is no similarity in the individual sense of the word but there is a similarity of patterns in Sanskrit and Latin in terms of sound, sense and inherited structure.

Moreover, the Sanskrit–Latin cognates chosen in the comparison exhibits the best evidence in areas of basic semantic fields like kinship words, numbers, body parts, and basic verbs. The categories are significant because they are less likely to have been gained in recent years and more likely to retain inherited vocabulary. The samples also demonstrate that cognacy can't be inferred from similarity in meaning or from similarity in sound only. Stronger cases, like pitar/pater, mātar/mater, nāman/nōmen, and asti/est, are backed up by reconstructed PIE roots and by regular phonological pattern and semantic continuity. Uncertain examples, however, must be treated with care when the phonological or etymological evidence is weak. As a result, it is argued that the argument of Sanskrit–Latin similarities is best substantiated by systematic application of comparative criteria rather than from superficial resemblances.

However, it is important to handle any case which is doubtful or controversial with care. The word pairs may seem homonymous in meaning but secure cognates can only be taken as such if they are backed by an established Proto-Indo-European reconstruction and regular phonological development. A couple like Sanskrit udara "abdomen" and Latin uterus "womb" can appear to be semantically related, but may not be claimed as a confirmed cognate without more substantial etymological evidence. These are cases that are not accepted identifications and should be discussed separately.

Vezdin's work is still worth reading, however, as a foretaste of the understanding of the correlation of Sanskrit and Latin that is now familiar. This section restates the main argument, namely that Sanskrit/Latin are cognates, and acknowledges the methodological limitations of cognate comparison at the same time, choosing paradigmatic examples to further the argument, while removing and/or qualifying potential objections.

Shared Grammar, with Emphasis on Case Endings and Sound Shifts

The Indo-European family preserves a wealth of grammatical parallels between its daughter languages. Among these, Sanskrit and Latin exhibit particularly rich morphological systems that, while divergent in application, reveal common principles in the organisation of nominal and verbal paradigms. This section explains a comparative exposition of two central grammatical domains: the structure of the case systems and their use of ablaut.

Sanskrit and Latin share similar case systems as a result of their common heritage. Both use inflectional morphology, or word endings, to signify grammatical case change. In Sanskrit, eight cases are preserved:

nominative, accusative, instrumental, dative, ablative, genitive, locative, and vocative (Watkins). Latin, alternatively, retains typically six endings, losing the instrumental and locative forms (Ohio State University). However, Latin still preserves relic uses of its lost locative case in certain words, further showing its historical similarity to Sanskrit.

In both Sanskrit and Latin, ablaut operates as a non-affixal morphological process, where root vowel alternations signal grammatical or derivational changes without using affixes. The primary ablaut grades are the zero grade, where the vowel is reduced or absent, the full grade, including "e" or "o"; and the lengthened grade, with a long vowel like "ē" or "ō" (Britannica, 2025). Sanskrit employs ablaut more systematically and productively than Latin, integrating vowel gradation directly into its tense, mood, and derivational morphology. It further distinguishes between guṇa (full grade, often "a," "i," or "u") and vṛddhi (lengthened grade, typically "ā," "ai," or "au"), both of which are systematically applied in verb conjugation and noun derivation (Whitney, 1924). The root *kar* ("do") illustrates the Sanskrit ablaut system clearly through its zero, guṇa, and vṛddhi grades. In its zero-grade form, the vowel is reduced or absent, seen in √kr, where the root appears with minimal vocalic content. In the guṇa-grade, the root surfaces as √kar, featuring the inserted full *a* vowel characteristic of the present tense stem. In its vṛddhi-grade form, the root becomes √kār, showing a lengthened vowel (*ā*) used in noun derivation. (Calabrese and Grestenberger, 2023). These gradations reflect how internal vowel change, rather than affixation, marks grammatical and derivational distinctions in Sanskrit morphology, since words with these modified roots had different meanings.

In Latin, ablaut is no longer a productive grammatical system, but rather, it is evident in fossilized forms, especially within the verb system. These remnants are most clearly seen in the alternations between the present, perfect, and supine stems of certain verbs, particularly in the third conjugation. Although Latin speakers did not actively use ablaut to form new words, these vowel changes reflect earlier Indo-European patterns that shaped the language's historical development as a residual feature. Thus, Latin preserves the outcomes of ablaut, even if the original system has been lost. For example, Latin shows ablaut distinction in verbs like sedēre ("to sit") vs. sīdere ("to sit down"): sedēre displays an e-grade root in its present stem (sedē-), while sīdere preserves a zero-grade root (as sīd-) in its present stem via a reduplication process (Leppänen, 2019, p.125).

Social implications of the Similarities between Latin and Sanskrit

The connections between Sanskrit and Latin discussed in the previous sections have been observed, documented, and studied for nearly 450 years. In 1583, an English missionary stationed in Goa noticed the similarities between Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin. Since then, numerous philologists and comparative linguists have added their observations and research to the mounting evidence that supports the languages' common origin. The establishment of the concept of Proto-Indo-European (PIE) has resulted in the identification of broader points of interconnectedness beyond cognates and grammatical patterns. It suggests the possibility of a shared ancestral linguistic community.

To maintain a common language, groups of people had to have been connected by geography, interaction, and social exchange. This implies the existence of social and cultural bonds far deeper than what we would expect if only looking at the current cultures as they exist today. Indeed, there are important social implications to be drawn from the existence of the PIE language and the interactions assumed among the people who spoke early Indo-European languages. For example, shared cognates related to family, nature, numbers, body parts, and everyday life point to similarities in social structure, kinship organization, and economic behavior.

Kinship terms are especially important because they reflect basic social relationships. Words connected to father, mother, brother, and family suggest that early Indo-European-speaking communities may have shared similar ways of naming and organizing family relations before the languages diverged into separate branches. Similarly, shared vocabulary related to nature, animals, and daily life can give scholars insight into the environment, occupations, and material culture of ancient communities. Before diverging into the two distinct cultures now associated with Indian and Western European traditions, these communities may have shared certain concepts of family, society, and environment as part of their common linguistic background (Pronk, 2023).

Additionally, with the reconstruction of the PIE language, historians and linguists have been able to hypothesize certain complex aspects of the economy and agricultural practices of these ancient groups, such as the presence of animal domestication and pastoral life (Cavalli-Sforza, 2024). Archaeological and genetic research also adds broader context to these linguistic findings by showing how population movement and migration across Eurasia may have contributed to the spread and later separation of Indo-European language branches. Such evidence should be used with caution. However, Linguistic relationships can establish common origins and cultural relationships, but not full social networks of ancient communities.

Taken together, the migration, isolation and cultural change of the PIE family of languages throughout Eurasia, with Sanskrit evolving in South Asia and Latin in Europe, provides a long history of migration, isolation and cultural change. The people who spoke these early related languages might have interacted in similar ways at an earlier point, but later communities became more segregated and created separate cultural identities. Therefore, the social significance of Sanskrit and Latin does not lie in claiming that Indian and European cultures are the same, but in showing that distant civilisations can still preserve traces of a shared linguistic and historical past.

CONCERNS AND LIMITATIONS

There is enough literature and corroborated theories of the kinship of Sanskrit and Latin to conclude their common origin, but it is important to approach this assumption with caution. There are similarities found between the two languages that also appear in other languages, which can make it difficult to determine whether the connection is unique or part of a broader pattern of linguistic evolution. It is entirely possible that the occurrence of lexical and morphological similarities is possible without a common descent, and instead originated through borrowings from unrelated languages that came in constant contact with each

other and inevitably influenced one another. Additionally, PIE itself is a reconstructed language dependent on the earliest existing attestations of the individual languages. Therefore, our understanding of it is built upon educated hypotheses derived from the philological traditions of ancient languages. Since this reconstruction was done through collaboration and research, it is not static. Some conclusions remain tentative and open to reexamination and revision as new methods and evidence emerge.

CONCLUSION

Finally, this review shows the potential of a systematic set of linguistic criteria in the context of Proto-Indo-European (PIE) reconstruction for evaluating proposed cognate relationships between Sanskrit and Latin. The results do not show significant differences between substantive cognate claims when the claims are based merely on surface similarity versus when there is semantic correspondence, regular phonological development, plausible PIE reconstruction, and/or morphological or cross-branch evidence. While Sanskrit and Latin arose in very different geographic areas, evidence for their cognate relationships can reach beyond superficial similarities. Both use some common vocabulary, have a regular system of correspondences between their sounds, and employ a set of grammatical features (e.g., ablaut systems, case systems) that point to a common Indo-European origin.

The central finding of this paper is that Sanskrit-Latin similarities are strongest when they are supported by systematic linguistic evidence. Words such as *pater* and *pitṛ*, or *mater* and *mātṛ*, do not simply reflect chance similarity, but rather the type of sound correspondences expected of languages that have descended from a common ancestor. Similarly, the presence of complex inflectional systems and inherited grammatical patterns strengthens the argument that these languages are historically related through PIE. At the same time, the study shows that not every similar-looking word should be accepted as a cognate. Doubtful cases must be examined carefully through reconstructed roots, phonetic development, semantic plausibility, and the possibility of borrowing or later contact.

The contribution of this paper lies in demonstrating the methodological value of systematically screening and evaluating Sanskrit-Latin cognate claims. The study uses a process of parallel analysis of features of lexical and morphological similarity across a representative sample of words to identify stronger cognate relationships as well as weaker, more uncertain or less well-supported ones. The primary contribution is the systematic examination of the linguistic evidence, which is supported by the wider historical and cultural evidence. These relationships also demonstrate the patterns of commonality in family structures, society, and historical trajectories that can be uncovered through the study of ancient languages.

Future research can expand this discussion by comparing Sanskrit and Latin with other Indo-European languages such as Greek, Old Persian, and Gothic. Further work can also examine doubtful cognates in greater depth and integrate linguistic evidence more closely with archaeological and genetic research. In this way, the study of Sanskrit and Latin continues to offer valuable insight into the common linguistic and cultural past of ancient civilizations.

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