

# Some Thoughts on Linguistic Archaeology



**Wan-Sze:** Linguistic archaeology is a fascinating field, and in many ways it seems to be in its infancy.

**Will:** (laughing slightly, not bothering with the veracity of the previous statement) Indeed, just as traditional archaeologists dig through ancient ruins to unravel mysteries, so can we also dig through ancient texts. For example, the connection between *Gaia* — that ancient Greek Earth-Goddess — and the Vedic deity Gayatri often goes unnoticed, despite the fact that several scholars have independently pointed it out.

**Kasim:** (playfully adopting the speech of a cranky old man) I think a word of caution is in order. There are many false positive Type I errors: just because two words sound similar does not mean they are connected.

**Nadia:** Indeed. A classic logical conflation is to mistake correlation for causality. Moreover, I hesitate to call linguistic archaeology a "new" science. What older scholars described as philology became, to some degree, a form of linguistic archaeology.

**Kasim:** Anyway, this conversation has become as agglutinated and warped as many words do over time. Would you care for a cup of tea? The right tea can work wonders sometimes.

- T Newfields

Beg.: 2010 Tokyo Fin.: 2017 Yokohama

