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Patterns of migration from early prehistory to the present

When and where were the various proto-languages that have given rise to the present diversity spoken? If we knew this, it would be possible to reconstruct migration routes corresponding to the expansions of different language families and to measure rates of migration.

Recent research by members of the ASJP consortium has now made it possible to approach these questions. Wichmann et al. (2010) have developed a method to hypothetically identify homelands of language groups through a systematic application of the well-known idea that the area of greatest diversity of a given group corresponds to the homeland; and Holman et al. (forthc.) have developed a method akin to glottochronology, whereby similarity measures for language groups are turned into absolute ages through calibration (by using 52 language groups that can be dated by historical, archaeological or epigraphic means and correlating these dates with the lexical similarity scores for each group).

Given a lexical dataset covering one half of the world's languages (and many dialects thereof) it is now possible to picture the way that the more successful language families in the world have expanded in or into different world areas and to measure migration rates. The present study combines more than 1415 dates for different taxonomic levels of the world's language families with geographical coordinates representing the hypothetical homeland of each group, and the results are discussed.

The presentation also features the (official) world premiere of the first ASJP movie, "The Linguistic Conquest of the Globe as Seen by its Conquerors", directed by S. Wichmann and produced by H.-J. Bibiko.

Holman, Eric W., Cecil H. Brown, Søren Wichmann, André Müller, Viveka Velupillai, Harald Hammarström, Hagen Jung, Dik Bakker, Pamela Brown, Oleg Belyaev, Matthias Urban, Robert Mailhammer, Johann-Mattis List, and Dmitry Egorov. Forthcoming. Automated dating of the world's language families through lexical similarity. *Current Anthropology*.

Wichmann, Søren, André Müller, and Viveka Velupillai. 2010. Homelands of the world's language families: A quantitative approach. *Diachronica* 27:2: 247-276.