Paleohistory and Migrations

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1 Indo-European Urheimat

1.1 Early, wrong theories

Early philologers had little clue as to where Indo-European languages could've expanded from. William Jones posited Persia, while most linguists thought of India as being the origin point, seeing that Sanskrit was aparantly the 'oldest' language. There was little understanding here that languages *inevitably* changed, so the idea circulated that Sanskrit or some other old Indo-European language could be the proto language itself.

Nationalists famously ran with the idea of a common racial origin of Indo-European people. Nationalists from Germany/Italy/Romania/Iran/India would posit that the glorious Indo-European masterrace came from Germany/Italy/Romanian/Iran/India respectively. For more examples of this, go to YouTube.com, search "Indo-European," pick any video and read the comments.

1.2 The Kurgan Hypothesis

The standard theory of Indo-European origins is called the *Kurgan Hypothesis*, coined by Marija Gimutas in the last century. This places the PIE Urheimat on the Pontic Steppes around 4,000BC with an acheological culture called the Yamna culture, partially associated with the building of *kurgans*, a kind of burial mounds in the area.

Gimbutas's orginal formulation of the hypothesis was, however, laden with... quasi-socio-political oddities. She believed that the prehistoric, pre-IE people of 'Old Europe' were a peaceful egalitarian feminist culture who were more or less mowed down by the horse-riding patriarchal Indo-European shitlords. There wasn't so much evidence for this (either the invasion or the peaceful indigineous Europeans), but the trope became common in popular culture and what Gimbutas called 'archeomythology' (see *The Blade and Chalice*, *The DaVinci Code*, some of the stuff people say about the Minoans, etc.). Needless to say, contemporally linguists and archeologists view it as mere speculation in a paucity of evidence.

The Horse, the Wheel and Language

(Refer to the eponymous book by David Anthony)

The Kurgan Hypothesis is significant in that it associates Indo-European expansion with some very significant material culture developments such as the domestication of horses, and later the spread of the chariot.

The steppe people of this period show a high consumption of animal meats, especially horses, although also goats, sheep, bovines, etc. It also appears that the spread of Indo-European people coincides with the spread of lactose tolerance.

1.3 Out of Anatolia

Another option, albeit not nearly as widely accepted, is the idea that the PIE is in Anatolia and spread with the rise of agriculture several thousand years before the Kurgan Hypothesis would come into play.

Colin Renfrew is the main (... *only?*) competent proponent of this view, although some retarded-ass computational people have come out in favor of it because it works with their BS diffusion models.

The hypothesis recapitulates the same data as the Kurgan Hypothesis, saying that Indo-Europeans expanded into the Baltic and then into the steppes around the time Gimbutas expected them to be there.

2 Invasion vs. Migration vs. Diffusion

It's unclear *how* Indo-European langauges expanded as they did. The traditional idea had been that Indo-Europeans expanded out violently, partially because that seems intuitive, partially because if you swint your eyes hard enough, you can see some circumstantial evidence for prehistorical invasions (some passages in the Rig Veda, highly suspect evidence in Mohendjo Daro).

2.1 Near East and India: Imposition of a ruling-class

Early Indo-European groups that expanded into Asia seem to have imposed themselves on natives as a permanent ruling class. The Hittites[1] ruled over the Hattian people in Anatolia, while to their southwest, the Mittani, an indigenous population speaking Hurrian was ruled by a nameless Indo-European group.

Note that the Indian Caste System is likely a piece-meal (although imprecise) continuation of the social dynamic the Indo-Aryan migration. North and High Caste Indians tend to have genetic (and physiological traits) more like steppe people and Europeans, while truly indingenous Indians do not.

2.2 Europe: The Diffusion of Indo-European Culture

European people lack the more categorial genetic distinctions present in Indians. This seems to lend to the hypothesis that the genetic difference between the native people of Europe and Indo-Europeans was small, or genetic contact was constant.

Notice that European Indo-Europeans were much more linguistically (and apparently culturally) diverse than their Indic cousins, in addition to the well known language families floating around the region: Celtic, Italic, Slavic, Baltic, Germanic, Greek, Albanian etc. we also have languages which are partially attested but apparently Indo-European: Illyrian, Venetic, Thracian among many others. The *diverity* of these languages, specifically in Eastern Europe, seems to lend additional circumstantial evidence to a origin point nearby.

Indo-European people seem to have diffused into Europe via the **Corded Ware culture** starting from ~3,000BC. The people of the Corded Ware culture are genetically fraternal with the people of the Kurgan/Yamna culture. There are other material cultures associated with individual Indo-European families:

- The Hallstatt culture, south central Europe and the Alps, from 800BC, generally tied to the Celts

- The Jastorf culture, south Scandinavia, from 600BC, generally tied to Germanic

2.3 The Tarim Basin: The Case of the Tocharians

The Tocharian language is not attested until the Common Era, but it is very clear that the Tocharian language split off from the main dialect chain *very* early, probably only shortly after Anatolian did. Tocharian is associated with the early Afanasevo culture in southern Siberia, very close to China (from 3,500BC). This kind of early date would allow the Tocharians to be isolated from phonetic changes that spread later among Indo-Iranian languages (like the *k-*k^w merger and palatalization of *$\acute{k}$ (Satemization)).

Tocharian shows *massive* evidence of language contact and perhaps individual innovation:

- While many of the PIE oblique cases are lost, Tocharian has grammaticalized many new ones from postpositions: *perlative*, *allative*, *comitative*, and a new non-IE ablative and locative. This seems to be the result of contact with Turkic languages.

- Gruppenflexion

- The voicing and aspiration distinctions in all series of stops are totally lost, i.e. *p, *b, *b^h > p. This is strange, however, considering that nearby Turkic languages, *do* have voicing distinctions.

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[1]Keep in mind that 'Hittite' is an exonym, apparently derived from the people the Hittites ruled, the Hattians. This word comes to English through the Bible.

The Tocharians were pot-smoking Buddhists, apparently fundamental in the transmission of Buddhism to China. They controled the portions of the Silk Road and at some times ruled Iranian peoples (the Bactrians and Kushans), who later invaded India.

Genetically, it seems that Tocharians were distinct from their non-Indo-European neighbors. We have a selection of 'Tarim Mummies' with associated artwork both of which show us that the Tocharians had caucosoid bone structure[2] and lighter hair/eyes.

The name Tocharian is known to be an 'incorrect' title for these people (it comes from a term for a Bactrian group mistaken for them). They may have called themselves the $\bar{A}k\tilde{n}i$ 'marchers.'

2.4 Iranian People

Iranian people, ignoring bizarre exceptions like the Persians, are the most nomadic Indo-European group. For most of early written history, the Indo-European Urheimat above the Black Sea towards the Aral Sea is home to a tapastry of Iranian people, with unclear borders between them (the Saka, Sythians, Sarmatians, Sogdians). Iranians are closely genetically and linguistically tied to Indic people, with a split occuring around 2,000BC (it's been speculated, with questionable assumptions that this split was religious in nature).

Keep in mind, Iranian people may not have been in modern-day Iran at all during the Bronze Age, as *Indic* people seemed to rule tribes like the Mittani. But gradually, several Iranian tribes gradually moved into the Iranian plateau and became 'civilized,' such as the Medes and shortly after, the Persians, Kurds, Parthians etc.

Again, Iranians moved about and it's hard to pin down or distinguish certain tribes. Probably the single most geographically promiscuous Indo-European tribe ever was the Alans, an Iranian people who, depending on the century could be found in Spain, on the Aral Sea, on the Danube, Georgia. The Ossetian language descends from theirs.

An Lushan, a Sogdian (Iranian), was the man responsible for (depending on the source) the most devistating human conflict in history, the An Lushan Rebellion.[3]

Iranian people also establish themselves in India for a period (the Kushan Empire) and famously attempt an invasion of Greece (the Persians under the Achaemenid Empire).

The expansion of the Turks and Slavs mostly removed Iranian languages from the steppes.

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[2]This doesn't rule these particular mummies out from being Turkic peoples, as Turkish people usually have a bone structure with both caucasoid and mongoloid aspects.

[3]Steve Pinker cites the deathtoll from this conflict at around 36 million, two-thirds of the empire. But who believes Steve Pinker anyways. . .