

# **THE HOME OF THE INDO-EUROPEANS**

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The Home of the Indo-Europeans by Harold H. Bender

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## FOREWORD

Far-reaching results have followed the discovery, a century or more ago, of the relationship of most of the languages of Europe with one another and with those of India and Persia. The study of these relationships developed into the independently influential science of comparative philology. It shared with Darwinian evolution the responsibility for the vast expansion, both culturally and historically, of the 19th century horizon of human thought. It brought to the modern world new conceptions of the past and a new consciousness of nationalism and racial fraternities that was not without political importance in the recent war and in the readjustments that followed it. It was early evident that the speakers of these languages of Europe and Asia were the heirs of a common culture and that their several dialects were the descendants of a prehistoric tongue, the so-called Indo-European, which was not identical with that of the Hebrews, the Babylonians, the Egyptians, or other ancient peoples.

The Indo-Europeans, it is true, emerge from the obscurity of antiquity as independent nations, scattered from the arctic circle to the equator and from the Atlantic Ocean to the Bay

of Bengal, more or less firmly established in their seats, with different languages, customs, religions, and even complexions, and for the most part quite unconscious of their kinship. But early history and tradition find many of these peoples in strange lands, surrounded or preceded by alien races. The Celts were not always in Britain, nor the Hellenes in Greece, nor the Hindus in India. They must all have been descended in some way from some localized prehistoric group of people who were united by a common speech and a common civilization.

The effort to locate the original home of this prehistoric people has for several generations engaged the imagination and the pen of countless philologists, anthropologists, and archeologists. Opinion is sharply divided between those who argue for Asia and those who argue for Europe, between those who favor Russia and those who favor Germany, between those who think they have identified and placed the Indo-Europeans racially and those who believe the race was either mixed or forever unknown, between those who consider the problem solved and those who doubt if it ever can be solved.

And to make confusion worse confounded an unfortunate element has been introduced into the discussion, particularly within the past decade, when national glorification of self and calumination of foe induced even scholars of



repute to trace the ancestry of their enemies to Belial and that of their friends to the Indo-European prototypes of the Patroons, Pilgrims, and Puritans. Germans insist that they belong to the Nordic race and that the Nordic race is the pure Indo-European stock. French, English, and American writers claim that the Germans are not Nordics, or, if they are, then not the Nordics but the Alpines are the true Indo-Europeans.

No definite answer to this great question is as yet scientifically justified. But a probable, tentative, general solution is slowly crystallizing in the minds of many philologists—and the problem *is* primarily a linguistic one. This little book attempts to present an independent investigation of the philological evidence, and at the same time to disclose to English readers the present state of a discussion that has hitherto been best known and best advanced on the Continent.



## THE HOME OF THE INDO-EUROPEANS

### *The Indo-Europeans*

In the Later Stone Age<sup>1</sup> there lived somewhere a people or a group of peoples who spoke a tongue from which were descended the languages of the Hindus and the Persians, the Greeks and the Romans, the Slavs, the Celts, and the Teutons, including the Scandinavians and the English, that is, the present speech of perhaps a quarter of a billion people in Asia and most of the inhabitants of Europe<sup>2</sup> and North and South America. Comparative study of these various languages has reconstructed to a considerable extent not only the speech but also the daily life, the government, and the religion of this Neolithic people, known as Aryan, Indo-Germanic, or Indo-European,<sup>3</sup> which had

<sup>1</sup> The Later Stone Age, or Neolithic, is distinguished from the Old Stone Age, or Paleolithic, primarily by the ground or polished stone implements that characterized it, as contrasted with the rudely chipped flint instruments of the earlier period.

<sup>2</sup> The principal non-Indo-European languages of Europe are the Basque in the French and Spanish Pyrenees, the Turkish in the south of the Continent, the Lapp and Finnish in the north, the Estonian and the virtually extinct Livonian on the Baltic, the Magyar in Hungary, and various dialects scattered through Russia. Practically all the remaining speech of Europe is Indo-European.

<sup>3</sup> The term 'Indo-Germanic' arose when the Germanic lan-